

Symposium commemorating official launch of the Great East Japan Earthquake Archive

On March 26, 2013, the Symposium commemorating official launch of the Great East Japan Earthquake Archive “The records, the will to preserve them and the effort to hand them down to future generations” was held in the Tokyo Main Library of the National Diet Library (NDL), co-sponsored by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Approximately 230 people were in attendance.

At the beginning of the symposium, Mr. Tetsuo Yamaori (Scholar of religious studies) delivered a keynote speech entitled “Living Memory and Wearing Memory.” Mr. Yamaori, mentioning two proverbs carried throughout the ages -- “A new natural calamity visits us just when we have forgotten about the previous one” and “Save your pennies for a rainy day” -- argued that in order to overcome disintegration of memories, it is not enough to just record them, but we have no other choice but to take in the views of life and death, nature, and the world of our ancestors who survived with worries and fears in a disaster-prone archipelago.

Then, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) introduced the purpose and system architecture for the [NDL Great East Japan Earthquake Archive "HINAGIKU"](#) which started full-scale operation through collaboration between the MIC and the NDL on March 7, 2013 (see [NDL Newsletter, No. 188, April 2013](#)).

After the brief introduction of “HINAGIKU,” three case studies in records management, from a library and two other institutions were presented, and described activities related to the Great East Japan Earthquake as follows:

- The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) highlighted a few examples of support provided to victims and efforts to share information about their activities, concluding that the continuous transmission of the current status in the disaster areas provides the most support.
- The Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation mentioned the importance of recording support activities of the forefront NPO/NGO groups with increasing roles of disaster prevention and response, and pointed out the cost of creating records and that, now in the third year, this year marks the turning point of the human resources, budget and the public attention.
- The historical archive section at the Nagaoka City Central Library described its experiences of

collecting records in evacuation centers after the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake in 2004. To avoid severe burdens on evacuees to the Nagaoka City after the Great East Japan Earthquake, they carried the collection by targeting abandoned or discarded materials at shelters, in collaboration with various divisions of the city hall and private supporter groups.

During the panel discussion coordinated by Mr. Daisuke Tsuda (Journalist/Media activist), experts collecting records relating to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake had active discussion concerning the importance of preserving the related records, the roles of the earthquake archive, and future prospects.



<<Panel discussion: Mr. Amano, Mr. Inagaki, Mr. Tsuda,
Ms. Inaba and Mr. Shibayama (from left)>>

Mr. Fumihiko Inagaki (Director of Revival Design Center at Chuetsu Organization for Safe and Secure Society), who supported reconstruction from the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, commented as follows: The archive is especially for the sufferers. The archive system architecture should not be considered alone but designed as a part of reconstruction support activities, aiming to encourage afflicted people's initiative.

Ms. Yoko Inaba (Adjunct Instructor of Tezukayama University / Former Director of Information Processing and Management Division, Kobe University Library) in charge of the "Shinsai Bunko" (the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Disaster Materials Collection) at the Kobe University Library pointed

that sufferers' experiences are to be shared not only among themselves but also with the next generation.

Mr. Akihiro Shibayama (Assistant Professor of International Research Institute of Disaster Science at Tohoku University) handling the earthquake records archiving project "*Michinoku Shinrokuden*" mentioned that the lessons from the disaster should be spread around the world in gratitude for supports to affected areas.

Mr. Kazuhiko Amano (Associate Professor of Fukushima Future Center for Regional Revitalization at Fukushima University), who was involved in support activities at evacuation centers in Fukushima Prefecture, said: The NDL Great East Japan Earthquake Archive is expected to be a knowledge database, which archives a variety of information about rehabilitation and reconstruction, and which can be utilized in a variety of ways in a future disaster.

In addition, Mr. Tsuda stated that the NDL serves as a hub that links industry-government-academia and communities in ensuring the continuation of the archive system.

This symposium was a valuable opportunity which featured lively discussion in concrete terms by people experienced in preserving records. One of panelists made a comment that as the next step, the NDL would hopefully develop "HINAGIKU" by hosting a symposium on the topic of "Knowledge to utilize them, efforts to expand them," with each player reporting progress. Responding to the comment, the NDL wishes to continue efforts toward the archive being utilized in the reconstruction projects and anti-disaster measures.

You can access [videos and handouts of the symposium](#) (Japanese only) via "HINAGIKU."