

## 65) Preservation of disaster heritage sites and development of disaster legacy centers [recovery phase, early and late reconstruction phases]

**[Issues]** (1) How to build consensus on the preservation of earthquake-damaged sites.  
 (2) How to set up, maintain, and manage bases for passing on the legacy of the earthquake disaster.

### **[Situation and issues created by the Great East Japan Earthquake]**

Since tsunamis are highly recurrent disasters that can occur repeatedly in the same area, damaged buildings and facilities are an important medium for passing down memories of the tsunami. However, they also become reminders of painful memories for victims. In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, many buildings and structures became the subject of debate over whether they should be preserved as disaster heritage sites or demolished. Issues include how to build consensus, and secure financial resources for their preservation and maintenance. In addition, since facilities such as reconstruction memorial parks, disaster heritage sites, and memorial museums are scattered across a wide range of the affected areas, it was necessary to ensure that each facility attracts visitors and to establish a system for utilizing these facilities effectively so that visitors are able to learn about the experiences and lessons from the earthquake in an effective manner.

### **[Initiatives in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake]**

- Creating time to deliberate on these issues by temporarily transferring ownership of disaster heritage sites to prefectural governments (issues 1, 2)

Based on results from the November 2013 meeting of 15 mayors of coastal cities and towns regarding the preservation of disaster remnants, Miyagi Prefecture established the Miyagi Prefecture Expert Council on Disaster Heritage Sites comprised of private-sector experts, etc., to assess the significance of preserving these disaster remnants and the value of candidate sites in the prefecture. For example, in September 2012, the town council of Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture, decided to carry out an “early demolition” of its Disaster Prevention Countermeasures Office Building, but in a report issued in January 2015 by the Expert Council, the building was assessed as being “a valuable disaster heritage site that should certainly be preserved.”<sup>(1)</sup> Based on this report, Miyagi Prefecture proposed to Minamisanriku Town that ownership of the Disaster Prevention Countermeasures Office Building be transferred to the prefecture, and that a decision on whether or not to preserve the building be made after a given period of time. Minamisanriku Town deliberated on this proposal of prefectural ownership and preservation in their discussions at special committee meetings. As a result, an agreement on the temporary preservation of the former Minamisanriku Town Disaster Prevention Countermeasures Office Building was signed in September 2015, and it was decided that the prefecture would assume responsibility for its maintenance and management until March 2031, 20 years after the earthquake.<sup>(2)(3)(4)</sup>

- Creating forums for local residents to participate in deliberations on the preservation or demolition of earthquake remnants (Issues 1, 2)

Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture, established the Ishinomaki City Disaster Heritage Sites Coordinating Council (June-December 2015 ) to deliberate on issues, repair costs, and maintenance costs that would arise if the Kadonowaki Elementary School building and Okawa Elementary School building that were damaged in the disaster were to be preserved as disaster heritage sites. In addition, a questionnaire was conducted for city residents, views were exchanged with two councils that had submitted requests, and public hearings were held on the matter of disaster remnant sites, after which the decision was made in March 2016 to partially preserve the Kadonowaki Elementary School building and preserve the Okawa Elementary School building in its entirety. Subsequently, in order to reflect the wide range of opinions on the development of both sites, the Disaster Heritage Site Study Council (former Kadonowaki Elementary School building) and Disaster Heritage Site Study Council (former Okawa Elementary School building) consisting of experts, local residents, NPOs, and administrative agencies were established (July 2016 - March 2017). Five meetings were held in all to hear a variety of opinions and formulate a maintenance policy (Case study 65-1).

- Preservation and maintenance of disaster heritage sites using government grants, donations, etc. (Issue 2)

The Reconstruction Agency provided support for initial costs needed for preservation through its reconstruction grant. Projects where the following could be verified were eligible for support: 1) relevance to reconstruction city development, 2) appropriate allocation of costs, including for maintenance and management, and 3) agreement among residents and other relevant parties.<sup>(5)</sup>

- Integrated development of Reconstruction Memorial Parks, disaster heritage sites, and memorial museums through cooperation among related parties (Issue 2)

Development of reconstruction memorial parks is underway in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures. When local authority-developed reconstruction memorial parks are built, the national government, in cooperation with local authorities, develops national government-managed facilities for memorial and prayer in the form of installing hills, plazas, etc., that serve as core facilities of these parks.

The Miracle Pine Tree in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture, is well known to people in and outside of the disaster areas as a symbol of recovery that withstood the massive tsunami. The city established the Miracle Pine Tree Preservation Aid Fund to preserve this solitary pine tree, and in July 2013 reached its goal of 150 million yen. Preservation of the pine tree was completed by the end of the fiscal year.<sup>(6)</sup> In Rikuzentakata City, the Former Roadside Station Tapic 45 and Miracle Pine Tree, both of which are disaster heritage sites, have been integrated into the Takata Matsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park, alongside the Great East Japan Earthquake Tsunami Memorial Museum and Roadside Station Takata Matsubara. The park partially opened to the public in September 2019.<sup>(7)</sup> In addition, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Museum was developed adjacent to the Reconstruction Memorial Park in the Nakano district of Futaba-machi,

Fukushima Prefecture. It opened in September 2020 to serve as a base for passing on to future generations the various records, experiences, and lessons learned from the complex of disasters and information on the progress of reconstruction.<sup>(8)</sup>

• Networking disaster memorial groups and facilities via the 3.11 Densho Road (Issue 2)

The 3.11 Densho Road (Disaster Memorial Road) Promotion Organization,<sup>(9)</sup> in cooperation with the Disaster Memorial Network Council,<sup>(10)</sup> is promoting various initiatives associated with the "3.11 Densho Road" which is a network of disaster memorial facilities. Disaster memorial facilities are grouped into three categories from 1 to 3, according to their ease of visiting and ease of understanding the information being provided at the facilities. Facilities that have taken care to promote understanding among visitors by assigning guides, providing storytelling activities, etc., are allowed to use common pictograms for facility signage, etc., and are widely publicized as memorial facilities under a unified concept. Connecting individual facilities as a "network" in this way rather than as "points" leads to effective disaster education (Case study 65-2).

→ *Related item: 53) Promoting reconstruction tourism*

#### **[Lessons learned and know-how gained]**

- (1) With respect to the preservation of disaster remnant sites, allocate a sufficient period of time to gather and consider diverse opinions.
  - With respect to the preservation of earthquake disaster sites, establish a forum for dialogue consisting of diverse entities, including government agencies; businesses in commerce, industry, and tourism; residents; and experts.
  - Give careful consideration to the timing and duration of dialogue as public opinion may shift over time.
- (2) Public and private sectors collaborate and cooperate in the development and maintenance of disaster memorial facilities.
  - Attract visitors by developing locations with convenient transportation, and by integrating disaster memorial facilities with tourist facilities and facilities for having personal interactions.
  - Secure funds for maintenance and management through a variety of methods, including donations and fundraising, as well as public funds.
  - Form a network of disaster memorial facilities, etc., and carry out activities to pass on lessons learned from the disaster that are consistent throughout all affected areas.

#### References

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- (2) 南三陸町「南三陸町東日本大震災対策特別委員会会議録」2015年2月13日  
<https://www.town.minamisanriku.miyagi.jp/index.cfm/17,12914,c,html/12914/20170104-102459.pdf>
- (3) 南三陸町「南三陸町防災対策庁舎の「県有化」に係る意見募集結果」  
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- (4) 宮城県「みやぎニュースクリップ／旧南三陸町防災対策庁舎県有化の一時保存に関する協定書締結」2015年9月1日  
<https://www.pref.miyagi.jp/site/newsclip/15090101.html>

### 3. Passing Down of Memories and Records

- (5) 復興庁「震災遺構の保存に対する支援について」  
<https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/m13/11/20150121091851.html>
- (6) 陸前高田市「奇跡の一本松保存募金について」  
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- (7) 岩手県「高田松原津波復興祈念公園 基本構想」  
<https://www.pref.iwate.jp/kendozukuri/toshigesui/kouen/1010063/kousou.html>
- (8) 東日本大震災・原子力災害伝承館 <https://www.fipo.or.jp/lore/>
- (9) 一般財団法人3.11 伝承ロード推進機構 <https://www.311densho.or.jp/>
- (10) 震災伝承ネットワーク協議会 <http://www.thr.mlit.go.jp/sinsaidensyou/sisetsu/index.html>