



Global Center of Excellence for
Education, Research and Development
of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation
of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities

Newsletter No.13

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October 2009

Estimating Public Interest in Cultural Heritage Disaster Mitigation

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In Japan, numerous reports about disaster mitigation and disaster damage appear regularly in newspapers, on television programs, and in other mass media. But how many such mass media reports include information about cultural heritage assets?

Figure 1 shows the number of newspaper reports that include keywords associated with disaster mitigation in four national and eight local newspapers in Japan between 2004 and 2007. It can be seen that there are many stories about disaster mitigation in each newspaper. An especially large number of such reports were identified in the local newspapers of the Tokai, Hokkaido and Hyogo areas. It is understandable that numerous reports about disaster mitigation appear in the newspapers of areas where large natural disasters have occurred in recent years, as well as in the areas where future natural disasters have been predicted.

Figure 2 shows the number of newspaper reports that include keywords associated with both disaster mitigation and keywords related to cultural heritage. Figure 3 shows the percentage of newspaper reports that includes keywords related to cultural heritage disaster mitigation. It is understandable that many newspaper disaster mitigation reports include information about cultural heritage assets, especially in the local newspapers of areas such as Kyoto, where numerous assets related to the cultural heritage can be found.

Of course, the characteristics of mass media reports do not always fully coincide with public opinion. However, it is likely that the contents of mass media reports are influenced by the public interests of citizens in the area where the newspapers are sold. Therefore, analysis of the characteristics of mass media reports is a useful method for estimating the public interest of citizens as it relates to cultural heritage disaster mitigation. The fact that many newspaper reports regarding disaster mitigation include information on the cultural heritage indicates that citizens consider the cultural heritage to be assets that should be protected from natural disasters.

A decision to protect cultural heritage assets from natural disasters as a public policy also involves a decision to use citizen taxpayer revenue for cultural heritage disaster mitigation. Thus, it is necessary to show the importance of cultural heritage disaster mitigation, in the overall context of disaster mitigation, to answer the question, "Why is cultural heritage disaster mitigation needed as a public policy"? This indicates that providing an explicit explanation of the importance of cultural heritage disaster mitigation is an important role of studies related to cultural heritage disaster mitigation.

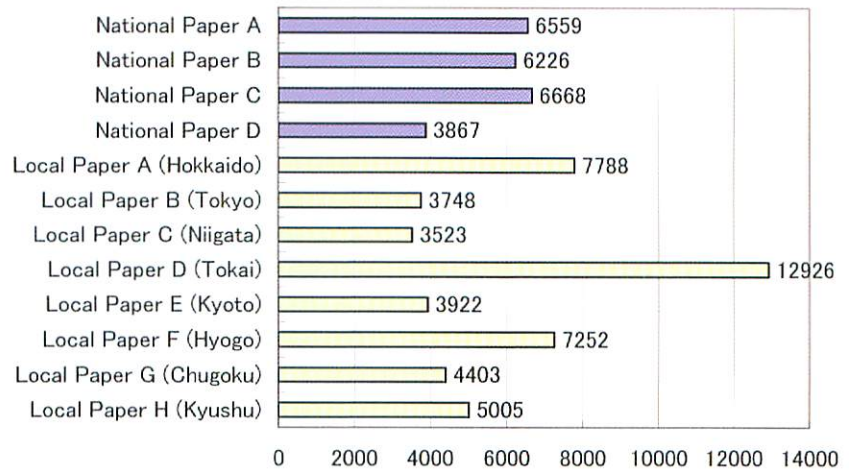


Figure 1: Number of Newspaper Reports on Disaster Mitigation

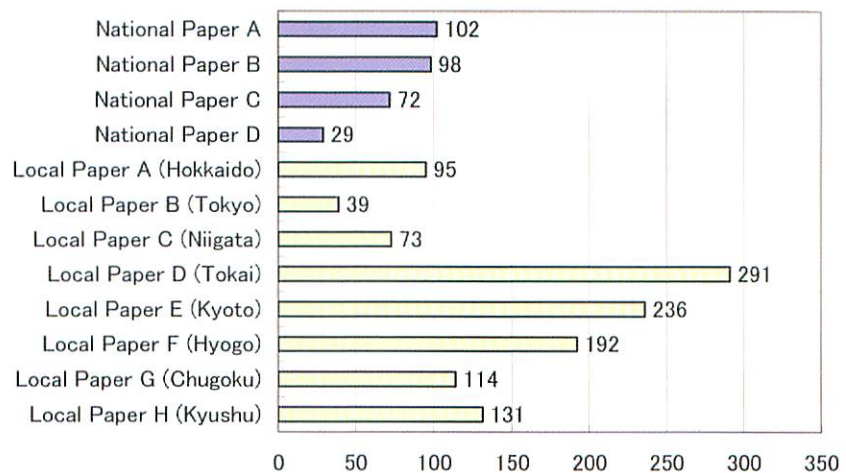


Figure 2: Number of Newspaper Reports on Cultural Heritage Disaster Mitigation

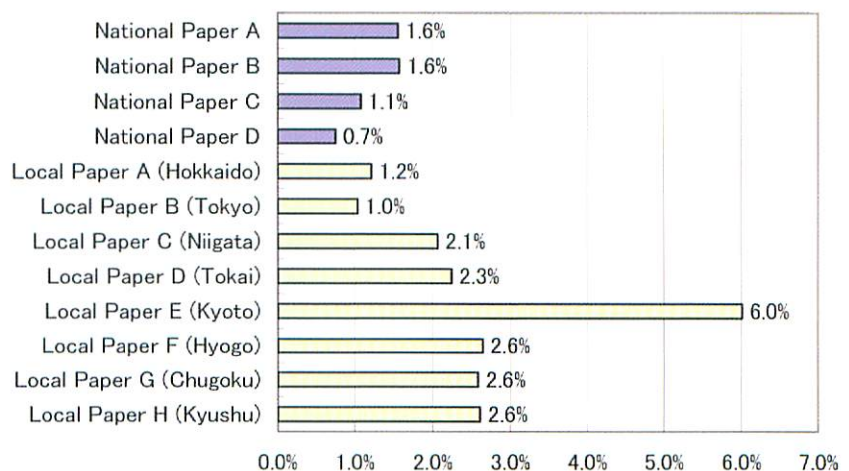
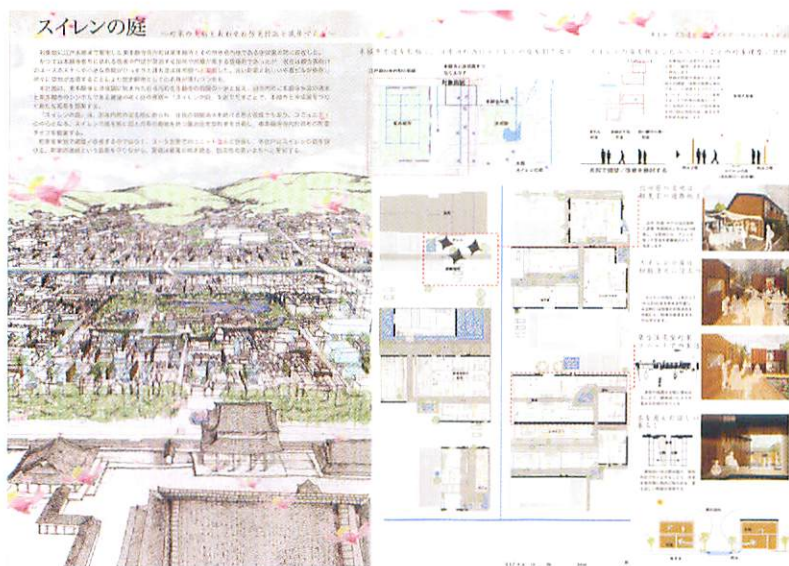


Figure 3: Percentage of Newspaper Reports on Cultural Heritage Disaster Mitigation

Cultural Heritage Disaster Mitigation '09 competition and conference

The second step jury and the commendation ceremony of the 1st Ideas Competition for Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities were held in Kyoto's Higashi Honganji Temple on Saturday, June 20, 2009. From the 68 works submitted from all over the country, seven entries had been selected during the first step examination meeting in May, following which the authors were invited to attend the second step examination where they would present their ideas to eight juries empanelled before live audiences. After the jury decisions, a commendation ceremony was held for a total of ten works awarded the Prizes in the Kikoku-tei residence, which is a detached precinct of the Higashi Honganji Temple. Details of the awards and the competition process can be seen on competition homepage (<http://www.bunkaisan-competition.jp>). The award ceremony was attended by about 180 audience members and we deeply appreciate the cooperation and participation of the applicants as well as the spectators.

The Conference on Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities Disaster Mitigation '09 was held simultaneously with the second step jury of the competition. During this conference, 41 papers were presented before approximately 200 conference attendants. The next conference will be held on June 2010. Interested persons can obtain the proceedings of the above events free at our office. However, please note that most of the papers are only available in Japanese.



The winning entry of the competition

by Akiko Noguchi, Waseda University Graduate School of Creative Science and Engineering

Three universities join international workshop at Italy's Trieste University

A joint workshop that was attended by participants from the Ritsumeikan University Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage, Trieste University and Thammasat University was held at Italy's Trieste University from August 23 to August 31. This event was the second international workshop following the first held in Bangkok last year.



the first international workshop in 2008

During this workshop, the seismic hazards in L'Aquila and Udine, as well as the case of flooding in Venezia were addressed. A review session on disaster mitigation in historic cities marked by masonry structures was held by members of the self-governing body of L'Aquila and participating researchers of the attending universities. Five researchers from our Global COE group participated, including Professor Kanegae, PhD holders, and graduate students.

Joint research agreements with neighborhood self-governing bodies of Kyoto's Kami-Takano and Kinugasa school districts

The Ritsumeikan University Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage and the Ritsumeikan University Global COE for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities have entered two year joint surveillance study agreements with the neighborhood self-governing bodies of the Kami-Takano (Sakyo-ku) and Kinugasa (Kita-ku) school districts. These agreements aim at an expansion of the local plan for disaster prevention of historic areas.

Examples of the activities planned include the following:

- Safety & Relief Map investigation
- Decision on a sustainable community plan (SCP)
- Instituting a community drinking water security program for periods immediately after disasters that use disaster-relief vending machines
- Examination of community strategies for disaster mitigation of cultural assets
- Joint research, such as refuge guidance for foreign tourists using message boards

Newsletter No.13 (October 2009)

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