



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

Newsletter No.19

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February 2013

*Ritsumeikan Global COE "Disaster Mitigation for Historical Cities" Statement
- Toward disaster countermeasures designed for fostering cultures -*

Numerous recommendations have been offered regarding preservation of cultural heritage, but few of them address measures for dealing with natural disasters. Accordingly, such measures have only been actually implemented in limited areas. Under such circumstances, disaster prevention measures that have been put into practice, although small in number, demonstrate a variety of innovative ideas intended to prevent the extinction of cultures, and we can learn a lot from those pioneering endeavors. However, we believe, based on extensive knowledge gained through activities conducted in our Global COE Program for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities, that more advanced measures should be implemented in respect of natural disasters. Looking ahead, disaster countermeasures to protect cultural heritage and historic cities are also expected to help foster new cultures.

The process of passing on cultural heritage from antecedents to future generations is, in effect, preservation of that culture. The present generation must not let the culture become extinct. In this sense, it is only natural that people today should be held accountable for taking measures to protect cultural heritage and historic cities against the effects of natural disasters. That said, since it is impossible to guard against all damage that might be inflicted by a natural disaster, we need to base our planning on the idea of disaster mitigation; i.e., minimizing the degree of disaster-caused damage to such heritage and cities. Of course, each cultural property has its own irreplaceable value, and even partial damage could undermine that value. From this perspective, we have to focus on preventing disaster damage to cultural heritage. We need to identify the true value of each cultural property and acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to effectively protect what should be conserved.

Moreover, we should not forget to commit to creating new cultures and passing them on to our successors. In Japan, where we are required to be constantly prepared against the possibility of natural disasters, we need to take measures to prevent or mitigate disaster damage to cultural heritage and historic cities, thereby fostering new cultures. We should not confine ourselves to a defensive position of simply taking measures to protect cultural heritage against the effects of disasters. Rather, it is vital that we assign to disaster management a constructive meaning of serving as a cultural incubator. It is unimaginable that communities affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake could be restored without ensuring the continuity of different cultures from different epochs. In order to ensure rewarding lives for members of society, we should not only pass on cultural heritage bequeathed by our ancestors to future generations but also implement effective disaster prevention measures with a view to fostering new cultures.

To this end, we need to develop a series of steps proceeding from accurate assessment of the vulnerabilities of cultural properties through identification of their historical significance and formulation of disaster management plans based on well-established scientific technologies to implementation of such plans. Although we already have people with expertise in each of these areas, it is recommended that personnel who can contribute to integration of those steps into comprehensive action be developed as soon as possible.

Feb. 2013

On the Conclusion of the Global COE Program

Takeyuki Okubo (G-COE Project Leader, Professor of Ritsumeikan University)

Ritsumeikan University's Global COE Program for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities is approaching the conclusion of its activities.

As a 21st century COE program, over the past five years this undertaking involved a range of continuing activities aimed at expanding on the basic theoretical structures for the protection of cultural heritage sites and historically valuable cities from natural disasters and putting those structures to work in real-world applications. Additionally, it was driven by the goals of establishing a universal science for mitigation of the effects of disasters on human cultural heritage sites that exist within a diverse array of community settings and, concurrently, through education programs geared to domestic and foreign audiences, sought to share its accomplishments with the international community and lay foundations on a global-scale for a full-fledged academic discipline in this field. To these ends, one distinguishing feature of this program was that it stepped beyond the conventional frameworks of disaster science and disaster prevention engineering, posed questions relevant specifically to the protection of cultural heritage sites from disasters, and pursued an interdisciplinary approach that fused the applied perspectives of the humanities and social sciences.

Throughout our long history as humans, we have nurtured culture and developed cultural assets and historically valuable cities that stand out as crystallized manifestations of culture. However, many of the material artifacts of our cultural heritage have succumbed over time to earthquakes, fires, floods, and warfare and only a small fraction of that heritage still survives. Rescuing from disasters and leaving in their entirety to future generations the cultural assets we have inherited from our forebears as well as the historical cities in which they reside will lead to the protection of historically valuable communities and the lives of the humans that sustain them from future disasters. Given this context, our ultimate goal lies in the pursuit of new forms of culture that incorporate the ideas of disaster prevention and mitigation.

Ritsumeikan University will continue working in the interest of protecting historical cities and their cultural heritage sites from disasters. As a leading global center in this field, the university is committed to establishing an environment for education and research that is capable of demonstrating its capacity for social contributions through the ongoing development of a science for the mitigation of the effects of disasters on human cultural heritage, the acquisition of applied disaster prevention technologies that reflect cultural values, and the training of personnel who will be prepared to contribute to society as experts or as young researchers in the field. We ask that you provide us your continuing support and cooperation as we move forward with this quest.

Report of G-COE Final Symposium

Final Symposium on Global COE Program for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities, entitled “Protecting Cultural Heritage from Disaster for Future Generations”, was held in the Prism House at Ritsumeikan University’s Biwako-Kusatsu Campus. The symposium, with the participation of external evaluation committee members, consists of a presentation on the overall activities during 5 years and reports on achievement in educational and research projects. “Handbook for Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage”, which is the compilation of the GCOE activities, was also introduced.

1. Opening Address: Kiyofumi Kawaguchi (President of Ritsumeikan University)	cultural heritage Ryoichi Fukagawa (Professor, College of Science and Engineering) Keiichi Ogawa (Associate Professor, College of Science and Engineering)
2. Keynote Speech: Tamehito Reizei (Director of the Reizei Family Foundation and Visiting Professor of Ritsumeikan University)	3) Handbook for disaster mitigation of cultural heritage Takeyuki Okubo (Professor, College of Science and Engineering)
3. Objectives for the Global COE Program for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities: Takeyuki Okubo (G-COE Project Leader, Professor of Ritsumeikan University)	5. Achievement in international and educational activities: 1) Report on international joint research Hitoshi Taniguchi (Professor, Rits-DMUCH) 2) UNESCO Chair Programme International Training Course Naoko Itaya (Associate Professor, Rits-DMUCH) 3) Educational activities Kazuyuki Izuno (Professor, College of Science and Engineering)
4. Achievement in research activities: 1) Historic disasters and cultural assets in Kyoto Masafumi Yamasaki (Professor, College of Science and Engineering) Akihisa Yoshikoshi (Professor, College of Letters)	6. Comment from the external evaluation committee: Takeshi Nakagawa (Professor, Waseda University)
2) Improving environment for disaster mitigation in the areas surrounding	7. Closing Address: Kenzo Toki (Director of Rits-DMUCH)

Publication of “Handbook for Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage”

As one of the accomplishments deriving from the activities of this global COE program, we now plan to release a Handbook for Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage.

The science of disaster protection and mitigation for cultural heritage sites and the historical cities in which they are located constitutes a relatively new field. Largely for that reason, the vast majority of urban municipalities still have not prepared their own manuals of disaster prevention measures or procedures. To address this situation, the Handbook details potential countermeasures to protect cultural heritage sites from a variety of disaster events and aims to provide helpful information of value to the preparation of manuals of disaster countermeasures for cultural heritage sites in urban settings. The Handbook can also be utilized to formulate practical guidelines for use by responsible personnel in the field and as a “toolbox” for the development of countermeasures that are optimized for cultural heritage sites and historical cities subject to a varied range of circumstances. It can also serve as a useful reference for not only persons directly involved in disaster-prevention operations but also students engaged in the study of disaster prevention for cultural heritage sites as well as laypersons with a general interest in this field.

The Handbook comprises an explanatory section on procedures detailing what to protect and what to protect it from and how, together with a supplemental list of topics for consideration and specific methodologies. When it is released, we will place a notice to that effect on the website of Ritsumeikan University’s Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage (<http://www.rits-dmuch.jp>). We sincerely appreciate your continued interest.

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1. Introduction
2. What to protect
3. What to protect it from
4. How to protect it
5. Methods to assess the current condition of cultural heritage assets
6. Noteworthy features of natural disasters
7. A sampling of various disaster countermeasures
8. References

The 7th Symposium on Disaster Mitigation for Historical Cities

We are pleased to announce that the 7th Symposium on Disaster Mitigation for Historical Cities will be held on July 13, 2013, in Kyoto, Japan. The role of cultural heritage is immeasurably important in human lives and societies. However, invaluable treasures have been damaged or lost due to natural disasters such as earthquakes and associated fires, floods, ground deformations, etc. Unhappily, there are very few studies and countermeasures focused on disaster prevention for historical cities, although scientists and engineers have systematically developed tools to preserve lives, cities, buildings and individual facilities from often inevitable natural, hazardous phenomena.

The purpose of the symposium is to bring together the recent activities and results relevant to the urban cultural heritage disaster mitigation, and discuss the future cooperations among the researchers. The peer reviewed papers will be presented at the conference. This is the capstone activity of our project. Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University is due to take over the project from the Global COE program research team.

Organizer: Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University	Traditional Procedures for Mitigating Disasters (Historical Disasters) Disaster Mitigation Technologies for Preserving Cultural Values (Disaster Mitigation Technologies) Comprehensive Planning for Disaster Mitigation, Emphasizing Cultural Heritage (Disaster Mitigation Planning and Policy)
Important dates: Draft paper submission May 7, 2013 Final paper submission June 14, 2013	Venue: Kyoto (the place is not decided yet.)
Call for Papers: You are invited to submit papers for peer review to be presented at the conference. Authors are required to submit the PDF file of the full paper (4-8 pages) until May 7 using the template shown below. Submitted papers are then sent to two reviewers. The reviewers give a recommendation to accept, accept with revisions, or reject. Based on the reviews, the editor notifies the author of acceptance or rejection and forwards to the author the anonymous comments of the reviewers. Authors of accepted papers incorporate changes suggested by the reviewers and return the manuscript to the editor by June 14. The reports without peer review are also welcome.	Official Language: Japanese
Conference topics: Papers focusing on the following topics are invited for presentation in the conference.	Registration fee: FREE
Assessing the Values of Cultural Properties and their Vulnerabilities (Cultural Heritage and Vulnerability)	Program: The program will be informed on the web-page. (http://www.rits-dmuch.jp/) The presentation time will be about 10 minutes.
	Contact address: Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University 58, Komatsubara Kitamachi, Kita-ku, Kyoto 603-8341 JAPAN
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Exhibition

On the ground floor of the Research Center for Disaster Mitigation Systems is an Exhibition Hall where we show exhibitions of historical documents and other materials related to disaster prevention, as well as displays of the findings of more recent research. Documentary images of damage inflicted during earthquakes are also available for viewing.

<Current Curated Exhibition>

Global COE Program for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities: Research Findings Poster Exhibition
What we should do to inherit to the next generation, and protect cultural heritage from disasters?

- Period...15 January - Late February, 2013
- Entry fee...None
- Exhibition Hall opening times...9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
- Closed...Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays and university vacations (summer holidays, year-end and new-year holidays)

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Ritsumeikan University**

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