Preserving documentary heritage in tsunami-hit Japan: lessons learned

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2011.3.11 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami
Magnitude 9.1, Mercalli intensity scale IX(violent),
Tsunami height max.40.1~43.3 m.(=ca.14 floors high),
24, 590 dead

The Four Zoas:
Night The Eighth
By William Blake

“That Man should Labour
& sorrow
& learn & forget & return /
To the dark valley
whence he came
to begin his labours anew.”

(8:568-75, E385)
Preparedness is all that matters.

One can do only what is already prepared, at the most.

Photos by courtesy of Prof. Akihiro Kijima, Tohoku University
Preserving documentary heritage in tsunami-hit Japan

→Documental Heritage Rescue Network

Not only entails historical preservation, but also helping shattered and endangered communities recover their identity and dynamism by giving them back a sense of their continuity.
Preserving documentary heritage.
We were prepared, to a certain degree.

→In 1995, “NPO Kobe documentary heritage network” (http://siryo-net.jp) was established.

→In 2003, “NPO Miyagi documentary heritage network” (http://miyagi-shiryou-net.blogspot.com) was established.

→2011.3.11 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami
Activities by “NPO Miyagi documentary heritage network” ~ Before 2011 Earthquake

Photos by courtesy of Prof. Daisuke Sato, Tohoku University
Activities by “NPO Miyagi documentary heritage network” ~ After 2011 Earthquake

Rescuing the documentary heritage from a warehouse in Ishinomaki-city

Photos by courtesy of Prof. Daisuke Sato, Tohoku University
Activities by “NPO Miyagi documentary heritage network” ~ After 2011 Earthquake
Rescue documentary heritage hit by tsunami

Photos by courtesy of
Prof. Daisuke Sato, Tohoku University
Tsunami = Salt water from the sea
→ Documents damaged by salt water
→ First of all, soak the documents in fresh water.

And ask Japan.
Activities by “NPO Miyagi documentary heritage network” ~ After 2011 Earthquake
Rescue documentary heritage hit by tsunami by volunteers.

Great happiness out of unhappiness, in front of the warehouse.

Photos by courtesy of Prof. Daisuke Sato, Tohoku University
Documentary heritage could be rescued by amateur volunteers for free.

But, works of art, only by professionals at a high cost.
Rescue the cultural heritage
= Nothing more than
“critical care in ER (Emergency Room)”.

Later,
the cultural heritage
need to leave the ER, recover well, get dressed,
put tie and hat on
and go out on the street again.
Be prepared:

Build countrywide networks between local authorities, archives, libraries, museums and universities

Documentary heritage networks in Japan

日本学術会議 史学委員会 文化財の保護と活用に関する分科会
『文化財の次世代への確かな継承ー災害を前提とした保護対策の構築を目指してー』
“Cultural heritage
 (= National treasures, important cultural heritage, not-yet designated cultural property etc.
 Temples, shrines etc.
 Archives, libraries, museums etc.)

location map“
on the Google Earth
with active-fault lines added.

But attention to
"Information Disclosure"!
Membership system is needed.
Or, “treasure hunting map” → risk of robbery.
Set the official rules in advance to fit the realities of disaster.

What is your job description?

→ In that, “to rescue cultural heritage at the time of disaster” should be clearly described.

Otherwise, you will be

→ volunteer, working alone, on your own risk, during your private vacation, with your own money, and not covered by workers’ insurance.
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

(https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework)
But still what will happen will be “beyond expectations, calculation, measurement and possibilities”.

Disasters and damages are inevitable. → Be prepared, but with a “Disperse System”.
At the time of disaster: not enough manpower.  
→One must cope and coordinate over a large area.  

→One will need to cope with not only documentary heritage but also with many other kinds of cultural properties, e.g., arts, historical architectures, folkcraft articles, a specimen of animals, plants, minerals, fossils, or rocks.
Not just tangible cultural properties, but also in-tangible cultural properties, e.g., traditional performing art, festivals, craftmanship, wisdom regarding the nature etc.

International Research Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the Auspices of UNESCO (IRCI) (https://www.irci.jp), in Japan.

Established in 2011 as a Category 2 Centre of UNESCO to promote the 2003 Convention and its implementation, and to enhance the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through instigating and coordinating research in the Asia-Pacific region.
Fundamental Selection policy = **Do not select.**
Try to preserve the ”**whole image**”, not “precious” detail.

The world as universal set.

Criterion: **Quality** → Preserving “the superior”.
Subset: not reflecting the **original** whole scheme, image.

Criterion: **Quantity** → Thinning the whole.
Subset: maintaining the **whole scheme**.

Rescue not just “designated properties”, but also “not-designated properties”.

"Alexander the Great"
Said to be from Alexandria, Egypt
2nd - 1st Century B.C.E.
British Museum
Fukushima nuclear power plants → Hit by tsunami → All power supply loss → Explosion → Radioactive contaminated cultural properties.

- Radio-iodine in the air has a half-life of 8 days. Do not approach the radioactive contaminated zone for at least 8 days, preferably 3 half-lives (=24 days).
- Radioactive cesium in the soil. Study and analyze the current of the air, rain and geographical features of the land. Mapping the contamination status and its official announcement by the government is needed.
- Wall should be thicker than 20 cm. Stop air-conditioner.
- Archives, libraries and museums are good refuge shelters.
- Geiger-Mueller counter is needed. Cultural properties with more than 1,300cpm, leave behind.
- Workers (male) should be in their 50's or older. Integrate radiation exposure.
- Management of Radioactive contaminated cultural properties report; → Soviet, Chernobyl, no report → Japan, yes

Education for disaster prevention

Disaster Archives on the internet;

"National Diet Library
Great East Japan Earthquake Archive HINAGIKU"
(http://kn.ndl.go.jp/#/)

"Michinoku Shinrokkuden"
(Great East Japan Earthquake Archive
by Tohoku University)
(http://shinrokkuden.irides.tohoku.ac.jp)
Importance of family photo

Family photos rescue

What is religion?

= Salvation for the bereaved family.

Your family in a photo = “Holy Family”
The sublime (θαυμάζειν) ←1775 Lisbon earthquake Mw8.5-9.0 with tsunami, 55~62 thousands dead.

When we face something beyond our calculation, measurement and possibilities, we feel immense greatness, the sublime (θαυμάζειν) which can be expressed maybe only by art.
Disaster monument *in situ* with location information = the most important.
Not merely restoration, but building back better.
Japanese Funds-in-Trusts (JFIT) for MoW

Global Policy Forum, Capacity Building etc.

UNESCO has enjoyed a long-standing and solid cooperation with the Government of Japan.

Japan deposited its first Funds-in-Trust in 1969.

Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT) is covering all the fields of UNESCO as education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture as well as communication and information, helping UNESCO to fulfil its mandate “Building peace in the minds of men and women”.

For the future → "Inter-Generational Ethics" is the fundamental concept of all.

Defect of democracy?
Not yet born future generation cannot vote today.

The principle that sovereignty resides in the people

= Preserving cultural heritage, because it is the Future people that owns the Present, consisting of assets from the Past.

= Sustainability
Creativity $\equiv$ Revolutionary

Success within one-generation is the main concern. Claim title and rights (and money), but feel indifferent towards consequences of new inventions in the future.

Generativity $\equiv$ Visionary

~ Erik Erikson

Inter-Generational Ethics is the concern. Don’t claim rights, but think of future generations and feel responsible towards consequences of what we do now.

Resilience and Sustainability

~ Steve Jobs and William Blake
Thank you very much.

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