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Coping with Natural Disasters in Japanese Urban Planning

Part I: How to make Cities more Resilient? Disaster Risk Reduction in Japanese Urban Planning (Prof. Dr. Uta Hohn)

Part II: Reconstruction Work and Disaster Control after the Great East Japan Earthquake: Report from Ôtsuchi-machi, Iwate (Prof. Dr. Kenjirô Ômura)

On March 11, 2011, an earthquake of magnitude 9,0 and a tsunami devastated wide areas on the seacoast of the Tohoku region. 15.769 people lost their lives and 4.227 were posted as missing (as of Sept. 6, 2011). About 115.000 dwellings have been destroyed completely. The task of reconstruction is immense. At the same time the strategies, concepts and instruments of disaster prevention need to be reassessed. Coping with natural disasters in Japanese urban planning means both: damage mitigation by preventative measures and adaption as well as building more resilient cities in the course of reconstruction.

In the first part of the common lecture Uta Hohn will start with an overview of natural hazards and natural disasters in Japan. Then, using the example of Tôkyô, the structural and socioeconomic reasons for the spatial distinctions of risk potentials in the case of a big earthquake will be explained. The next step will be to illustrate the development path of strategies, instruments and projects in the struggle of policy, urban planning and local people to mitigate disaster risks. Besides successful examples the manifold difficulties in setting up more resilient cities will be revealed.

In the second part Kenjirô Ômura will at first explicate the specific character of the damage and the influence of the Great East Japan Earthquake comparing with the past great earthquakes in the modern history of Japan. Then using the example of Ôtsuchi-machi, he will point out, how the small town was damaged and how it struggles to reconstruct and to revitalize the community in the process of reconstruction planning. The next step will be to illustrate the new planning instruments enacted by Japanese government to support the damaged local authorities. Finally tasks and proposals for sustainable communities will be presented.

CV Hohn

1980-1986	study of geography and history at Ruhr-University Bochum (RUB)
1986	state examination for high school teachers at RUB
1986-1988	scientific assistant of Prof. Dr. Peter Schöller (Institute of Geography, RUB)
1988-1990	scientific assistant of Prof. Dr. Winfried Flüchter (Department of Geography, University of Duisburg)
1989	PhD at the University of Duisburg, Department of Geography, on the thesis "Deutsche Städte im Luftkrieg. Regionale Unterschiede der Kriegszerstörung deutscher Städte und Folgen des Luftkrieges unter bevölkerungsgeographischem Aspekt" (The destruction of German towns in World War II)
1990	"Duisburg Award" of "The Society of Friends of the University of Duisburg" for the PhD thesis
1990	"Great Japanese Certificate" of the University of Duisburg
1990-1998	assistant lecturer (Department of Geography, University of Duisburg)
1993-1994	"Professional Fellowship" granted by the Japan Foundation: visiting researcher at the Hitotsubashi University, affiliated with Prof. Dr. Keiichi Takeuchi (Institute for Social-Economic Studies)
1997-1998	scholarship of the German Research Foundation (DFG) for writing the postdoctoral thesis (habilitation)
1998	habilitation at the University of Duisburg, Department of Geography, with the postdoctoral thesis "Stadtplanung, Stadterneuerung und Stadtumbau in Japan. Planungsgeschichte, Planungsrecht, Planungspraxis und planungstheoretische Reflexionen" (Urban planning, urban renewal and urban restructuring in Japan. Planning history, planning law, planning practice, planning theory)
1998-2000	assistant professor at the University of Duisburg
2000	"JaDe Award" of the "Society for the promotion of cultural relationships between Japan and Germany"
2000-2003	visiting professorship for human geography at the Institute of Geography, University of Dortmund
2001	"Scientific Award for Human Geography" of the "Frithjof Voss Foundation – Foundation for Geography"
since 2003	professorship for Urban and Metropolitan Studies at the Institute of Geography, Ruhr-University Bochum
2004-2006	head of department, Institute of Geography, RUB
10.2005-03.2006	visiting professor at the Institute of Policy and Planning Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Japan
since 2005	annual summer and autumn schools on comparative research on urban and regional development in metropolitan regions in Germany, Japan and China in cooperation with the Institute of Policy and Planning Sciences, University of Tsukuba, and the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai
2008-2011	dean of the Faculty of Geosciences, Ruhr-University Bochum
2010-2013	research project "Steering metropolitan transformational processes in the context of the Japanese "Urban Renaissance" policy, exemplified by the Kansai metropolitan region", funded by the German Research Foundation

CV Omura

1966 – 1971 1971 March	Study at University of Tokyo graduated as Bachelor, Department of Urban Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Tokyo
1971 April – 1977 March 1974 June – 1976 September	Researcher at Institute of Behavioral Sciences in Tokyo Scholarship from DAAD 1974 October – 1976 September, Study at Laboratory of Urban Planning of Prof. Adolf Bayer, University of Karlsruhe, Germany
1977 April – 1984 March 1984 February	Assistant Professor in Department of Urban Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Tokyo Promotion to Doctor of Engineering at Faculty of Engineering, University of Tokyo
1984 April – 1994 August 1985 May	Head of Urban Development Division, Building Research Institute, Ministry of Construction Award for Papers of 1984 by the City Planning Institute of Japan
1994 September – 2004 March 1999 April – 2001 March	Professor at Institute of Policy and Planning Sciences, University of Tsukuba Chair of Institute of Policy and Planning Sciences, University of Tsukuba
2003 April – 2004 April 2004 April	Professor at Institute for Social Sciences, University of Tokyo Professor at Department of Social Systems and Management, Graduate School of Systems and Information Engineering, University of Tsukuba
2006 May – 2010 May 2006 May – 2010 May	President of Association of Urban Housing Sciences Chair of International Affairs Committee and Director of City Planning Institute of Japan