

**Part IV**  
**Museums and Local Communities**

# The Situation of Community Museums in the North of Thailand

Nitaya Kanokmongkol

**Abstract** The community museums in the North of Thailand have different patterns: Ethnicity museums and local historical museums. Most ethnicity museums are located in the community of those ethnic people, and present ethnic identity, history, and folklore. Local historical museums are located in historical areas related to the folk life of the communities, and present the history of the areas and the communities. The author considers community museums in Thailand just one type of local museum managed by people, temples, and private units. The situations of the local museums might not be as stable as those of the national museums because the idea of each community unit is different in its understanding of the museum's social function. And nowadays, most local museums are just used as tourist places for the community economy.

## 1 Introduction

Museum establishment is not an original idea of Thailand but a Western influence when the Royal Court had a relationship with European countries in the Western colonial period of Asia. The first Thai museum started in 1857 when King Rama IV established a private collection gallery in the Royal Palace. He collected masterpieces, fragments of rare plants and animals, and scarce minerals from different regions. In the reign of King Rama V, the museum was used to present the country as a civilized land by changing it to the National Museum Bangkok open to the public and European guests. In the next reign, archaeological sites and ancient objects were protected as historical evidence, so museums had the mission of preserving, exhibiting, and teaching the public about archaeological evidence. In this time, regional national museums were established to protect artifacts in the regions (Jiraphong 1991). It was an important period for transmitting the museum idea from the Royal Court to the regional people, and introducing local museums later established by regional units and regional communities. Nowadays, the concept of the

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local museum in Thailand is the “regional museum” of which there are several kinds according to the type of collection, story presentation, and organization, such as temple museums, company museums, learning museums in schools, folk museums, and community museums.

## 2 Community Museum: A Subtype of the Local Museum

Local museums in Thailand were born of the situation in each place and period. Most local museum owners are villagers who just want to build a collection gallery but without purpose or considering the type of their museum as a museological idea. Therefore, if we learn about and understand local museums in Thailand, we can know the basic situation of local Thai people. So the type of museum in Thailand should be recognized based on the understanding of the museum owner as one of three types: national museum, company or private museum (Fig. 1), or local museum.

For the types of local museum (Figs. 2 and 3), we can recognize subtypes from their collection, objective, and function. For example, a community museum is a local museum whose purpose is the following:

1. There is interaction with the community around the museum;
2. The community is the museum owner (Sirindhon Anthropology Center 2008).
3. The community uses the museum as a medium to promote their human rights or identity of ethnicity culture.



**Fig. 1** Ban Kamaoon Museum, Chiang Mai: a private museum



**Fig. 2** Wat Laihin Museum, Lampang: a local museum located in a temple and managed by a community of Ban Laihin village



**Fig. 3** Wat Pazang Museum, Lamphun: a local museum located in a temple and managed by an abbot of Pazang Temple

The information from research papers about the situation in northern local museums by Chiang Mai Rajabht University (Jiraphong 1991) and Fine Arts Department (Fine Arts Department 1993) during 1991–1993 says that the number of local museums in the north is 170. There are only six local museums that function as community museums. There were just a few community museums in the northern area 20 years ago. Now, the number of community museums has increased but some community museums in the last list have closed because of unstable policy and museum organization. In most local museums managed by temples or communities, the head was the abbot of the temple, director of the school, chief of the village, etc., so when the head changed, the policy also changed. If there was a new chief without interest in museum work, that museum always closed.

### 3 Community Museums in the North of Thailand

The community museums in the north have different patterns depending on collection, content, and organization. We can recognize patterns of community museums to be the following:

#### 3.1 *Ethnicity Museum*

Most ethnicity museums are located in the community of those ethnic people. They have two objectives: the first is presentation of ethnic identity, history, and folklore as a place of memories, as a place for teaching their community, and as an ecotourist place. The second objective is a tool for promoting human rights or their cultural identity as one path of Thai society.

Thai museologists often say that this type of museum is a living exhibition because they model ethnic life such as traditional houses, barns, and folk life collections to exhibit as original houses that might already be changing in the real way of life. Visitor services are not formal services like in national museums or private museums. A visitor can visit by themselves during the day. But if they need a museum guide or an event for group tour visitors, they must make an appointment with the temple or community in advance.

Ethnicity museums organize interactive activities with community at least once a year. The most numerous type of activity is religious ritual fairs, using the museum as the center of the fair.

It is not only the outside form of the museum that is different; the management is also different in each museum.

As for Tai Khoan<sup>1</sup> Museum at San Kang Pla Temple in Chiang Mai (Fig. 4), the current abbot of the temple built this museum in 1994 to present the cultural uniqueness of the Tai Khoan people, who are the community around the temple. Although the abbot is not a Tai Khoan person, he wants to support the community



Fig. 4 Tai Khoan Museum at San Kang Pla Temple, Chiang Mai

around the temple to preserve their identity and present their social life. He interacts with the Tai Khoan community by calling for cooperation in building a traditional Tai Khoan house to be a museum in the temple area and donation of appliances to collect and display in the museum. Each year, the abbot will organize a Buddhist event so that visitors will visit this museum and see its merit. He said that the community of Tai Khoan will benefit from selling local products to visitors in this event.

Some notice from this museum management that the community does not really have a role in the museum because the abbot has all authority. And the community built an ethnicity museum in the village for their events after the museum was built at the temple. This is one case of a pale image of the community museum in Thailand.

The Tai Yong<sup>2</sup> Museum at Pa Tal Temple in Chiang Mai (Fig. 5) is located in the temple and its purpose is to present the identity of ethnic people, the same as the Tai



Fig. 5 Tai Yong Museum at Pa Tal Temple, Chiang Mai

Khoan Museum, but its management is different. The Tai Yong are an ethnic people who live around Pa Tal Temple. In 1999, they started to establish a museum in Pa Tal Temple, which is the center of the community, to present their unique culture and call for their ethnic people's rights to be admitted by society. They also use the museum as an ethnic cultural center for their youth.

The special point of this museum is establishment and management by the community. They share money to raise a budget of 300,000 baht for building the museum and donation appliances for the museum collection. The first museum gallery models a traditional house and displays its collection based on the original function of each room. The second gallery is an old barn from the village to model their folk agricultural methods. The last is a gallery of the Yong language, with a collection of palm leaf and mulberry manuscripts, and a small classroom for learning the Yong language of the community. Nowadays, the museum is used as a center for the community to organize activities to promote power of mind of the community to preserve their ethnic culture.

One ethnicity museum purpose is to be an eco-tourist site such as the Garden & Museum of Mong<sup>3</sup> Village in Doi Puy, Chiang Mai. It was established and is managed by 15 Mong families in the community. In 1987, they modeled three galleries to display a collection of Mong appliances with an explanation board. In the time after harvest, a group of Mong ladies come to do needlework and sell their products to tourists. During holidays, a student will guide the tourists at the museum to earn money, which cost is part of the community budget for museum maintenance.

This museum really seems to be a community museum because it is managed by the community and supports their economy.

### 3.2 *Local Historical Museum*

This community museum is located in a historical area related to the folk life of the community. The main objective of the museum is to present the history of the area and the community. An important part of their collection is folk objects from this area and communication.

Wat Kaet Museum (Fig. 6) is a local historical museum in the Wat Kaet Karam business quarter on the bank of the Ping River in Chiang Mai. This museum started by collecting many votive objects in Wat Kaet to display as a collection in a gallery. These objects are appliances offered by the Wat Kaet community to Buddha, so they are important local historical evidence to relate the story of the families, the community, and all in this area.

The interesting point of this museum is management and cooperation by the community. The Committee for Preservation and Development of the Business Quarter has authority in the museum and organizes events.

The First Royal Factory Museum (Fang) in Chiang Mai (Fig. 7) is a museum where the current effects of royal projects in development of the ethnic communities in the area are displayed. The museum tries to interact with the community around the museum through the “Youth Guide”: the youth who take a guide training and

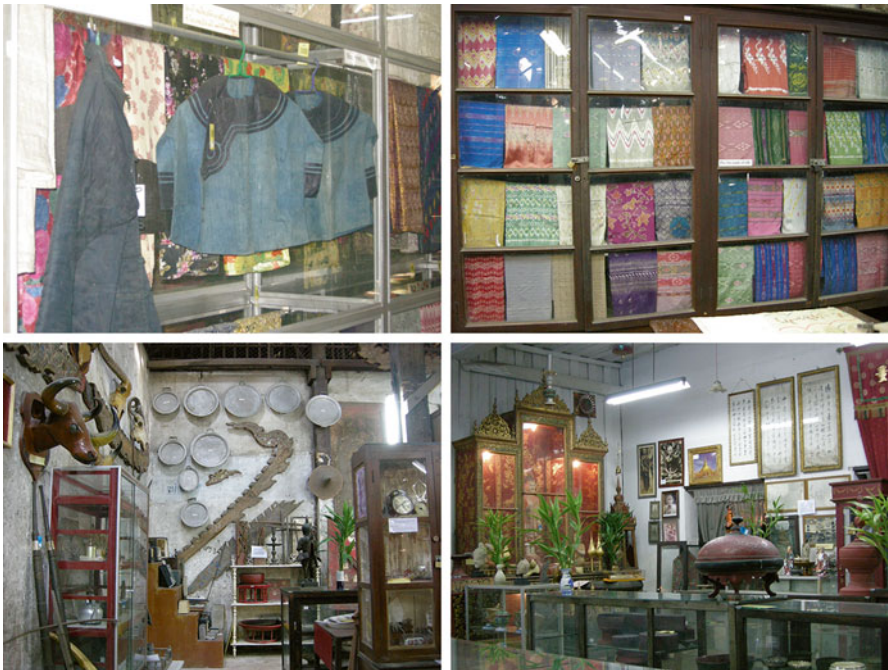


Fig. 6 Wat Kaet Museum: a local historical museum





**Fig. 7** The First Royal Factory Museum (Fang) in Chiang Mai

work at the museum in their holidays. The museum staff support them in guiding visitors through the village. The museum said, this is a way to link museum's content and benefit to the community around museum.

Community museums in Thailand might be just one type of local museum managed by people, temples, and private units that is a path of the local community. Their situations might not be as stable as those of the national museums because the idea of each community unit is different in its understanding of the museum's social function. And nowadays, most museums are just used as tourist places for the community economy.

#### Notes

1. The Tai Khaon is a group of ethnic people whose original settlement was in the north of Myanmar. The Tai Khaon people emigrated to populate northern Thailand in the Lan Na period, an old kingdom of northern Thai, thirteenth century (Kanokmongkol 2005).
2. The Tai Yong is a group of ethnic people whose original settlement was in the north of Myanmar. The Tai Yong people emigrated to populate northern Thailand in the Chiang Mai period, eighteenth century (Kanokmongkol 2005).
3. The Mong is a hill tribe who live on mountains in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and South China (Kanokmongkol 2005).

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# Interactive Museum Activities That Provide Venues for Innovation: Case Studies from the Lake Biwa Museum

Taisuke Ohtsuka

**Abstract** How to define and construct a better relationship of coexistence between humans and nature through interactive museum activities is discussed based on the experiences of Lake Biwa Museum, Shiga, Japan. A better relationship cannot be determined objectively, and there is no justification for imposing one person's subjective good on others. So the museum has avoided expressions that imply value judgments. Experience-learning programs and interaction using staff communicators in the exhibition rooms may have helped visitors to conceive the formation of a better relationship, but appear to have done little toward arriving at mutual agreement or understanding. Workshops may be an effective means of exploring conceptual agreement and understanding among various people. Although our exploration toward mutually intelligible concepts of a better relationship is still at a quite primitive stage, some concepts such as sustainability appear to have been accepted by most residents of Shiga Prefecture. Thus, the Restoration of Fish Breeding in Paddy Fields project is analyzed as a social innovation generated by collaborative and interactive activities in which the museum has engaged. The original idea behind this project was advanced by a researcher of the museum who learned much about local experiences from farmers around Lake Biwa. The cooperative response of the prefectural government and local communities to the museum's suggestion appears to be based on rich social capital. Although the museum's researchers contributed no more than the idea and some related knowledge, other actors such as farmers, prefectural agencies, and researchers in other research institutes organized and advanced the project. The museum is still engaged to the extent of studying the project's effects or consequences, connecting researchers to the regions involved, and providing project-support participant events. We hope that further innovation along these lines will contribute to a "better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes."

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## 1 Introduction

Museums must organize their activities in accordance with their own philosophies or missions. Nowadays, many Japanese museums set their own direction to construct better social and/or social-natural relationships. For instance, the mission of the Ibaraki Nature Museum is to “enhance harmonic coexistence of humans with nature, and promoting the amenity of cultural life.” The Museum of Nature and Human Activities, Hyogo has a basic philosophy of “harmonious coexistence of nature and humans.” The basic philosophy of the Lake Biwa Museum is “better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes.” They all aim at the betterment of coexistent relationships of humans with nature. This implies that the current state of these relationships is recognized as neither harmonious nor satisfactory. In other words, these museums seek to foster more sustainable and nature-friendly local societies. The following two problems arise, however, in attempting to organize practical activities that support such a philosophy or mission.

- How are better relationships defined?
- How can better relationships be realized?

In the present report, I will try to answer these two questions based on the experience of the Lake Biwa Museum; it is a prefectural museum of Shiga, 80 % of whose total area is occupied by the catchment of Lake Biwa.

## 2 How Are Better Relationships Determined?

Naturally, within the philosophy of the Lake Biwa Museum, a “better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes” cannot be defined objectively, because the concept is rooted in value judgments. Although scientific knowledge can contribute to the judgments, it cannot generate a sense of value by itself directly. Moreover, scientific activities are now generally regarded as model-building in a search for better explanation or predictive performance. Such models are not necessarily based on naïve realism, i.e., the belief that we can perceive the objective world directly.

There is no justification for imposing one person’s subjective “good” on others. Such “good,” however, can be imposed by an authority and/or power. An example of imposed value is displayed in the declaration formulated by Shiga Prefecture (2000) as a part of its Mother Lake Plan 21 concerning the Lake Biwa Comprehensive Development Plan launched in 1972 as a national program and concluded in 1997; this declaration stated that the “plan succeeded in providing a more effective utilization of the water resources of the lake and in significantly reducing flood damage,” without critical remarks. Meanwhile, not a few people had opposed this development plan, mainly because they believed it would cause the destruction of the lake environment, and indeed, some negative effects on Lake Biwa’s ecosystem have

been reported (e.g., Nakanishi and Sekino 1997; Ohtsuka et al. 1996). Therefore, the conclusion that the development was “good” for people is imposed or, at least, one-sided. Mother Lake Plan 21 also states that “we must make the transition from the modern way of life based on mass production and consumption to one that is in harmony with the environment and is based on a symbiosis of humans and nature.” Even within the same declaration, the standard of value appears to have largely shifted away from appreciation of the development noted above. It is still the case, however, that the values are imposed on people.

From its inception, the Lake Biwa Museum has studiously avoided the use of value-judgment expressions regarding a “better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes.” Nunotani (2014) explained the reason as follows: “Social problems arise depending on the social situations of the age, and naturally, their evaluations also change in successive periods. Therefore, our museum will provide people with information for thinking about such problems instead of making evaluations.” This attitude has been consistently implemented by the museum in its exhibitions and other activities. Although the museum does not impose any concepts of values on people, there is also little evidence that its activities contribute much to consensus-building on its theme of better coexistence. There may be two different reasons for this. One is that the visitors themselves often expect or require a museum to present value judgments on the topics covered by the exhibits instead of thinking by themselves. Such users may feel that making their own value judgments is difficult. Another is the lack of a consensus-building process. Even if the users could construct concepts of values by themselves, making such concepts mutually agreeable or even intelligible is not guaranteed.

Kada (2001) argued for a strategy of translating knowledge into social action. It needs at least two steps, the first of which is personal experience, i.e., experiencing something directly and finding its meaning in one’s own life. The second is shared social experiences, i.e., personal experiences that are shared in and supported by communities. Interactive museum activities are presumably effective for learning by experience. In particular, as far as the participants are constructing experiential learning occurring in a museum, it should to a great extent contribute to this process. The Lake Biwa Museum devised a new system to enhance the experiences of visitors when it opened in 1996. It is based on a group of communicators in the exhibition rooms who are now called *Tenji-koryu-in*. They communicate with visitors directly and/or mediate the interaction of visitors with the exhibitions. An effective way to conduct such mediation is to listen to the experiences of the visitors related to the exhibition context (Fig. 1). This helps connect the exhibition contents with the visitor’s own experiences and promotes reconstruction of the experiences, a process called *Jibun-ka* or “personalization” by Yukiko Kada. Such experiences may also expand common understanding and thus contribute to the construction of mutual agreement or understanding. Personal and internalized experiences are necessary for this, but are not in themselves a sufficient basis for mutual agreement or understanding. Doxastic conflict is often encountered even among people educated through similar experiences. Value relativism can prevent immediate conflicts and the consequent decrease in motivation, but also mutual agreement and understanding.



**Fig. 1** Activities of communicators called *Tenji-koryu-in*

One possible approach to overcoming both doxastic conflict and value relativism is to examine the interests or motivations that underlie the value judgments. If the differences in the interests or motivations that serve as a basis of concept formation become clear, different concepts of values will become mutually understandable. Another approach is the organization of joint activities among diverse members or groups. Common experiences in such activities can form a common concept of values. In addition, contradictions between different concepts of values in collaborative activities possibly serve as a driving force in constructing innovative concepts (Engeström 1987; Engeström 2008).

Workshops may be a good avenue for exploring routes toward mutually intelligible or understandable concepts, because they can be organized so as to provide common experiences, to explore the underlying interests or motivations of each concept, and also to create dialectical discussion seeking innovative ideas or concepts. The Lake Biwa Museum, regrettably, has not organized such a workshop, but a series of annual workshops with similar aims has been organized by the Mother Lake Forum founded in 2012. These are called “Biwa-Comi Meetings” where “Comi” denotes community, communication, and commitment. The theme of each workshop is set by the committee. Various actors involved in the Lake Biwa catchment area discuss potential measures towards a better future for the lake. Interests, motivations, and problems are shared on the basis of mutual respect for different situations, experiences, and concepts. The workshops are not focused on agreements or conclusions, but give weight to shared interests, motivations, and problems. They aim to be a venue for finding mutually different or common concepts and for considering what each of the participants can do for the lake (<http://mlf.shiga.jp/biwacom>). This practice appears to be improving year by year, and they thus stand far ahead of the Lake Biwa Museum. On the other hand, one must beware that such a practice comes to work as a control system for governmentality, i.e., a measure whereby governments try to produce citizens best suited to fulfill those

governments' policies. The concepts, methods, and achievements of the "Biwa-Comi Meetings" need to be evolved critically, and new interactive museum activities not based on predetermined public policies should be constructed.

### 3 How Can Better Relationships Be Achieved?

As is discussed above, our efforts to arrive at a mutual agreement on, or understanding of, a "better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes" is at a rather primitive stage. Nevertheless, some consensus among most regional actors has surely been found. For instance, a public opinion poll in Shiga Prefecture found that the local political topics ranked as the top three in terms of satisfaction level are "environmental arrangements that enable experiences of nature in our own backyard," "food security," and "maintenance of beautiful rural landscapes and green forests" (Shiga Prefecture 2014). This indicates that many residents regard the satisfaction with these as "good" and the related political measures as having been successfully worked out. Interestingly, they are all deeply associated with sustainable relationships between humans and nature in the Lake Biwa watershed. Therefore, it seems that the concept of sustainability can be accepted as a common "good" by most residents in Shiga Prefecture.

Aspirations for sustainability usually come from the recognition that it has been impaired. Many of us may feel that nature has retreated from our living areas, food security has been threatened, and the landscapes around farming and mountain villages have deteriorated, at least that such was the case in the past. Such experiences direct us to regenerating a sustainable relationship between humans and nature. Because such regeneration cannot be a simple restoration to the original state, it requires exploratory trials and social innovations, i.e., new strategies, concepts, ideas, and organizations that meet social needs. With this in mind, I will now introduce and analyze a case in which the Lake Biwa Museum contributed to a social activity aimed at regenerating a sustainable relationship with Lake Biwa.

In 2001, Shiga Prefecture started its "Sakana-no-yurikago-suiden" project, that is, "Restoration of Fish Breeding in Paddy Fields," around Lake Biwa. This project aims at rural environmental improvement by encouraging the resumption of fish migration between rice paddies and Lake Biwa. Land consolidation programs executed between the 1960s and 1980s raised the level of the rice paddies, and therefore generated considerable vertical drops (usually more than a meter) between the rice paddies and the water surface of the drainage canals. As a consequence, it became impossible for fish to enter the paddies for spawning. To remedy this situation, participating rural communities usually set fish-ladder cascades that work by elevating the water level of the upper reaches of a drainage canal through the installation of a series of successively higher flashboards; this sort of installation enables fish to enter the paddies adjacent to the canal by way of their drains (Fig. 2). By 2011, this program had expanded to about 1.2 km<sup>2</sup> of paddy fields (Ohtsuka 2014).



**Fig. 2** A fish-ladder cascade set in a drainage canal (© Shigefumi Kanao)

The “Sakana-no-yurikago-suiden” project was originally inspired by the results of a comprehensive research program on paddy fields conducted by the Lake Biwa Museum from 1996 to 1998. In this collaborative study, some researchers learned from rice farmers that many fish used to spawn in rice paddies (Kada 2000; Yasumuro 2000). The most surprising story concerned the *uojima*, or fish island, phenomenon: during the rainy season in early summer, vast numbers of fish often invaded the paddy fields around Lake Biwa to spawn there, agglomerating to make an “island” (Kada 2000). After the research program terminated, a researcher released a pair of adult round crucian carp, *Carassius buergeri grandoculis* (Fig. 3), into a rice paddy and thereby obtained a few tens of thousands of juvenile fish. Based on these preliminary results, Yukiko Kada, who had been the principal researcher of the above-mentioned research project, was convinced that fish such as the round crucian carp could still propagate and grow in rice paddies if the paddies were accessible. This fish is an especially important for residents in Shiga Prefecture because it is an endemic subspecies of Lake Biwa, and is designated as endangered in the Environment Ministry’s national red list, but is nonetheless a major fishery resource as a principal ingredient in *funa-zushi*, a specialty food of Shiga (Maehata 2013; Ohtsuka 2014). Dr. Kada persuaded officials of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Shiga Prefecture to undertake a new official project to enhance fish breeding in rice paddies. Preliminary efforts to develop fish passes and to design experiments to confirm the utility of rice paddies as fish nurseries were started in 2001. Soon after, local people in various places around Lake Biwa began to take steps to implement these ideas (Kada 2012).





**Fig. 3** Round crucian carp, *Carassius buergeri grandoculis* (©Lake Biwa Museum)

There are three important points to note in evaluating the role of the Lake Biwa Museum in this important social innovation. First, the original idea of this project was advanced by a researcher from the museum who relied on testimony concerning personal experiences of farmers around Lake Biwa (Kada 2000, 2012). The idea was probably deemed acceptable by the local communities because it was based on their own experiences. Second, the cooperative response of the communities and local government to the program suggested by the museum appears to have been based on rich social capital (Tanaka 2006). According to the definition offered by the OECD (2007), social capital is “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups.” In the present case, it may be largely attributable to the regional social characteristics of Shiga Prefecture (Makino and Yang 2010), but the community-based approaches of both the museum researchers and the local government officials contributed to an increase in the social capital in these regions. Third, the museum researchers did not contribute more than the original idea and some related background knowledge during the first few years of the project. Technical development mainly took place at other research establishments, policy formation and implementation was undertaken by officials of the prefecture’s Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the practices were carried out by local communities (Tanaka 2006). In this case, the orientation of the museum’s studies, toward problem-posing rather than problem-solving, was probably conducive to establishing and maintaining this collaboration.

After the “Sakana-no-yurikago-suiden” project was moved into the action phase, the Lake Biwa Museum studied its effects or consequences while also introducing to the communities new researchers from inside or outside the museum who could enhance the program’s effectiveness. In addition, some of the museum researchers frequently provided support as lecturers or interpreters to public viewing programs



**Fig. 4** Museum researchers providing support to public viewing programs

mainly conducted by local farmers' groups and coordinated by officials of the local government (Kanao and Ohtsuka 2013) (Fig. 4). It is hoped that such collaborative and interactive activities including the Lake Biwa Museum among the actors will produce further social innovations that bring a "better relationship of coexistence between humans and lakes" closer to fruition.

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# Museums as Hubs for Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding Communities

Isao Hayashi

**Abstract** Among many museums throughout Japan that address the subject of disaster, the attention was drawn to the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor which is composed of four facilities and three parks. One facility in Nagaoka acts as gateway to the Corridor, another in Ojiya is responsible for disaster prevention education, the one in Kawaguchi aims to reveal the connections born between people, and the one in Yamakoshi recounts the history, culture, and reconstruction of the village. Memorial parks were established in Myoken as a “park for prayer,” in Kogomo as a “park for remembering,” and at the Epicenter as a “park for beginnings.” The author thus introduced the significance of involving the local people in the planning process and management of facilities that represent and reflect their own experiences.

## 1 Introduction

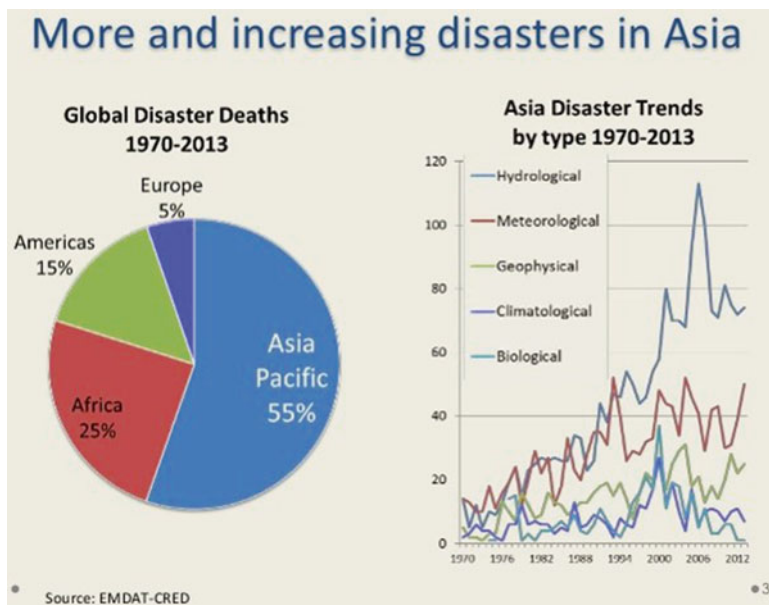
Disaster-induced deaths in the Asian-Pacific region account for more than half of the total number of victims in the world (Fig. 1). Needless to say, most countries, regions, and communities have been making efforts to reduce the number of deaths caused by all kinds of disaster. At the same time, recently, working out recovery strategies from a disaster in advance is one of the new focal issues in the field of disaster studies.

After the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake, in the “Towards Reconstruction” presented by the Reconstruction Design Council at the end of June 2011, the first item listed among the Seven Principles for the Reconstruction Framework stated that “there is no other starting point for the path to recovery than to remember and honor the many lives that have been lost. Accordingly, we shall record the disaster for eternity, including through the creation of memorial forests and monuments, and we shall have the disaster scientifically analyzed by a broad range of scholars to draw lessons that will be shared with the world and passed down to posterity.” Moreover, in order for this to be incorporated, the establishment

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**Fig. 1** Global disaster deaths and Asia disaster trends for 1970–2013 (Source: Thomas (2014))

of facilities, such as memorial parks, monuments, and severely damaged buildings, for conveying experiences and lessons learned from the disaster in the future was planned as part of the reconstruction plans of the municipalities and prefectures affected by the disaster, and some of those localities are already in the process of implementing these plans. Museums have been recognized as an important medium for disaster risk reduction by transferring and sharing past disaster experiences.

There are many museums throughout Japan that address the subject of disasters. The Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution in Kobe is a facility introducing the destruction and activities in the rescue and recovery process of the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. There are about 500,000 visitors a year, and it is not only an exhibition hall, but also a research institution related to disasters and disaster prevention that holds training programs mainly targeting government officials in charge of disaster prevention. The *Inamura-no-Hi no Yakata* (Fire of Rice Sheaves Mansion), located in Yuasa Town of Wakayama Prefecture, is a facility that encompasses the neighboring Tsunami Educational Center and in which the old house of Goryou Hamaguchi, the hero in the story of the “Fire of Rice Sheaves,” serves as a memorial hall. The Mt. Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall in the Shimabara Peninsula of Nagasaki Prefecture serves as a facility related to volcanoes. These facilities are large-scale, specialized museums related to disasters, and not only do they have exhibitions on past disasters, they are also places where people can learn about measures against potential future disasters, namely disaster prevention and reduction. There are also many other facilities that have adopted the subject of

disasters as part of their exhibitions. The common thread is that these facilities have the goal not only of introducing past disasters, but also of putting lessons learned from disasters to use for future disaster prevention and reduction.

The Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor is unique and it deserves attention. In addition to preserving and disseminating memories and records of the disaster, passing on lessons learned from experiencing the disaster, and cultivating awareness of disaster prevention and reduction, the Corridor had local people involved in the establishment and management of the facilities, it is positioned to assist in rebuilding the lives of those people, and aids in reviving and developing communities located in intermediary areas between plains and mountains severely damaged by the earthquake. I will introduce here the significance of involving the local people in the process and management of the facilities that represent and reflect their own experiences.

## **2 Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor**

### ***2.1 Chuetsu Earthquake***

The Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, which had its epicenter in the Chuetsu region of Niigata Prefecture, occurred at 5:56 pm on October 23rd, 2004. A distinctive characteristic that can be pointed out about this earthquake was that it brought about great destruction in mountainous areas. In particular, following the earthquake, mountains crumbled, roads became blocked, and 61 villages became isolated. The evacuation of all of the villagers from the former Yamakoshi Village was publicized as a representative example of this. In the mountainous areas where there was great destruction, the earthquake served as an impetus for many people to leave the region, and this further spurred depopulation and aging of the population, which had been worsening even before the earthquake. Therefore, an issue central to reconstruction was the matter of achieving sustainability in mountainous areas and, as a pillar of reconstruction, Niigata Prefecture set out to “obtain new sustainability that is full of vitality” for the revitalization phase.

### ***2.2 Outline of the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor***

The Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor aims to prevent experience of the disaster from fading as time goes by, to the extent possible, leaving sites affected by the disaster as they are. For the corridor facilities, four facilities and three parks were established as places that convey memories of the earthquake, and act as bases for the collection and use of earthquake archives.



**Fig. 2** Nagaoka Earthquake Disaster Archive Center – *Kiokumirai* (Memories for the Future)

Each of the four base facilities has its own distinctive characteristics. The Nagaoka Earthquake Disaster Archive Center—*Kiokumirai* (Memories for the Future) (Fig. 2) acts as the gateway to the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor, and it is positioned as the core facility of the corridor. It is set up such that people can learn about the earthquake disaster in general here, and learn more detailed information at the other facilities. The Ojiya Earthquake Disaster Museum—*Sonaekan* (Preparedness) (Fig. 3) is in charge of disaster prevention education. This facility conveys lessons learned from the experience of the earthquake in an easy-to-understand manner, and with the aim of putting those lessons to use as customary measures, it divides post-disaster life into the four phases of 3 h post-disaster, 3 days post-disaster, 3 months post-disaster, and 3 years post-disaster, and shows the necessary measures to be taken so that they can be understood in terms of each phase. The *Kizuna* (Bonds/Ties) Center of Kawaguchi (Fig. 4) plays the part of revealing connections that were born between people (between neighbors, between residents and outsiders, etc.) as a result of the disaster. It not only focuses on past connections that were made at the time of the earthquake, but also relationships that are progressively continuing to develop. The Yamakoshi Restoration Exchange Center—*Orataru* (My/Our Place) (Fig. 5) plays the part of recounting the path of the history, culture, and reconstruction of the village. While talking about life in the village, voices of the local people recount the path they took to return to Yamakoshi and to



Fig. 3 Ojiya Earthquake Disaster Museum – *Sonaekan* (Preparedness)



Fig. 4 *Kizuna* (Bonds/Ties) Center of Kawaguchi





Fig. 5 Yamakoshi Restoration Exchange Center—*Orataru* (My/Our Place)

revive their hometown, even after being subjected to the extensive destruction of the earthquake.

The three memorial parks are located in places representative of the earthquake. Myoken Earthquake Memorial Park (Fig. 6) was established as a “park for prayer” located near a disaster site where several cars were engulfed in a large-scale landslide. Every year on October 23rd, many flowers are offered to the departed on a flower altar. Kogomo Memorial Park (Fig. 7) was established as a “park for remembering” located near the site of a village that was submerged by a river channel blockage due to the biggest landslide of the Chuetsu Earthquake. The submerged houses still remain as they were at the time of the destruction. The local residents there established and operate an exchange facility called *Satomian*, where they currently sell local products, such as vegetables, to tourists while they discuss aspects of the disaster and lessons learned. The Epicenter of the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Park (Fig. 8) was established as a “park for beginnings” located at the site of the epicenter of the Chuetsu Earthquake. As an event to mark the first anniversary of the earthquake, local residents and other participants, including myself, found the site of the earthquake epicenter using GPS technology. It was located in the center of a terraced rice field.



**Fig. 6** Myoken Earthquake Memorial Park



**Fig. 7** Kogomo Memorial Park



Fig. 8 Epicenter of the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Park

### 2.3 Resident-Led Initiatives

Yamakoshi's residents conceived of the Yamakoshi Restoration Exchange Center—*Orataru*. As the name indicates, the residents actively take part in the management of the Center's exhibition facilities. An NPO founded by Yamakoshi's residents, NPO Chuetsu Disaster Prevention Frontier, is commissioned to manage the facility, and they not only give tours of the building but they also foster storytelling guides who tour all of Yamakoshi, as they convey the story of their earthquake experience and lessons learned. Management of the *Kizuna* Center of Kawaguchi is also commissioned to an NPO founded by Kawaguchi's residents, the Life Support Echigo-Kawaguchi. At the Ojiya Earthquake Disaster Museum—*Sonaekan*, storytelling programs, lectures, etc. are carried out through collaboration with an NPO founded by Ojiya's residents, NPO Disaster Prevention Support Ojiya. In this manner, the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor functions to collect and disseminate memories of the Chuetsu Earthquake, and local residents are actively involved with its management.

## 3 Background to the Establishment of the Facilities

There are many museums in which citizens carry out volunteer activities or museums that are established by a municipality but total or partial management is privately commissioned, i.e., publicly built and privately operated museums. One significant

distinctive characteristic of the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor facilities is that from the stage at which the establishment of the facilities was under consideration, places were secured where local residents could share their options, and residents have been actively participating in the management of the facilities since their opening.

A distinctive characteristic of the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake was that it hit mountainous areas where depopulation and aging of the population was already worsening. Due to the earthquake, mountains crumbled, sediment blocked roads and became embedded in rice paddies and reservoirs, and in some cases, terraced rice fields and ponds themselves caved in. At one point, 61 different villages were isolated in a state in which it was difficult for relief supplies to be delivered.

The Chuetsu region is an area that is subject to heavy snowfall and is also an area prone to landslides. Despite the harsh environment, *Koshihikari*-brand rice is produced on the terraced rice fields created on sloped surfaces formed from landslides, and buyers from places such as China, America, and Europe come to the Chuetsu region seeking Japanese colored carp. It is a land that has bred its own unique culture such as bullfighting, fireworks, and *Bon* festival dances that vary slightly between each village. However, it was feared that the villages in the mountainous regions affected by the earthquake would further decline by becoming uninhabitable and the residents “descending the mountain” to live in urban areas. The existing decline and aging of the population was in fact exacerbated by this earthquake, which is why Niigata Prefecture adopted “obtaining new sustainability that is full of vitality” as one of the pillars in their reconstruction plans.

In mountainous regions where the decline and aging of the population worsened further due to the earthquake, reconstruction was carried out by first rebuilding individual lives (rebuilding houses and restoring farmlands) and then by rebuilding regional communities. In order to rebuild communities, in addition to restoring infrastructure, shrines and community centers that were the foundation of the community were repaired and rebuilt, events aimed at revitalization were held, and plans for autonomous reconstruction were developed and implemented. Furthermore, exchange programs with outside groups were actively carried out, and community businesses were born, such as farm restaurants and inns jointly managed by the community. These initiatives and the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor have created a synergistic effect.

#### **4 Intermediary Organizations and Reconstruction Fund**

Operation and management of the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor is being conducted by the Chuetsu Organization for a Safe and Secure Society. This organization is a public interest incorporated association founded in 2006. This association aims to encourage and support activities related to recording and researching the Chuetsu Earthquake Disaster, while utilizing the research results to create a safe and secure society and to promote disaster prevention and safety industries, by taking advantage of a conglomeration of educational and research institutions in the

Chuetsu region, through the cooperation and participation of various entities (government, educational and research institutions, companies, and individuals). The Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake Reconstruction Fund established in 2005 is being used as the source of funds for developing the facilities. The Reconstruction Fund is retained under a government reconstruction initiative, and was established with the aim of advancing, over the long term and in a flexible manner, aid and self-support for victims and reconstruction countermeasures in affected areas, and reviving the affected areas into attractive localities. The director of the fund is the governor of Niigata Prefecture. The scale of the fund was 300 billion yen, and operating at an interest rate of 2 % per year, would amount to 60 billion yen over 10 years (Fig. 9).

Since the memorial facilities were viewed as something that would contribute to future disaster response by recording and disseminating the life-rebuilding process, a tool for expressing gratitude for the support received from throughout the nation, and something indispensable to the reconstruction of affected areas, the Reconstruction Fund contributed to the development expenses of the memorial facilities.

The Chuetsu Organization for a Safe and Secure Society acted as a coordinator for connecting support groups, such as the Chuetsu Reconstruction Citizens' Council and specialized institutions like libraries, and residents in affected areas, and it is thought that these connections are also being put to use in the management of the memorial facilities. A portion of the collected materials is currently being exhibited in the Memorial Corridor facilities.

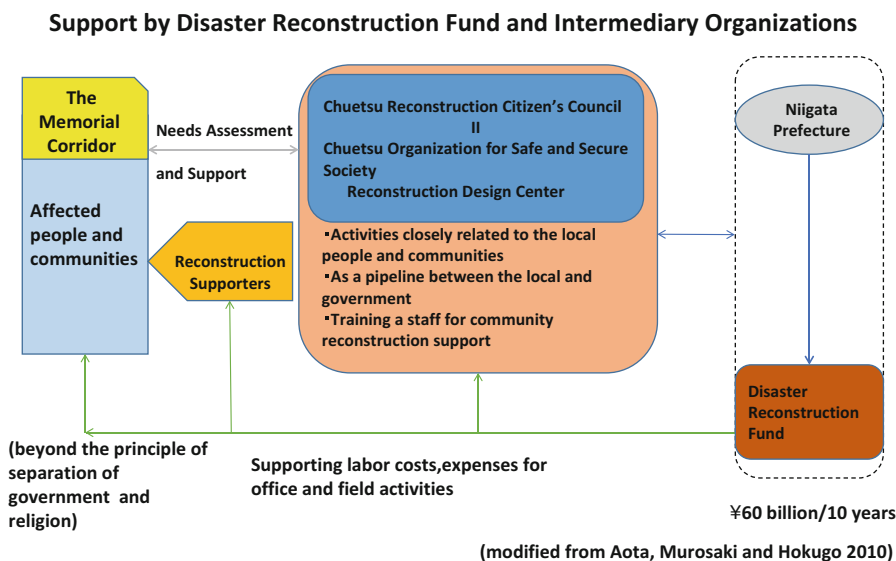


Fig. 9 Support by Disaster Reconstruction Fund and Intermediary Organizations (Modified from Aota et al. (2010))

## 5 Summary

Interspersing earthquake disaster memorial facilities and the like as a circuit throughout the affected areas, and disseminating information about the earthquake itself and lessons learned, while operating in conjunction with facilities such as roadside rest areas and farm restaurants, lead to the activation of a community in which residents are active players. This serves as a highly suggestive reference case for newly appearing disaster-affected areas, such as those affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, who are searching for models of post-disaster reconstruction. Moreover, this not only serves as a reference case for reconstruction from disaster but also serves various people, such as administrative officials in charge of regional development, general citizens, and members of volunteer disaster prevention organizations who value connections between neighbors, or even families and small groups of youngsters who want to become acquainted with “mountain life” by interacting with the locals. In response to such needs, the Nagaoka Earthquake Disaster Archive Center—*Kiokumirai* in the center of Nagaoka City plays the role of introducing facilities and routes in the circuit that can be visited.

Although the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution in Kobe is a sort of centralized information facility that one can visit to learn a lot about the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, through circulating multiple facilities, the Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor introduces the disaster conditions of the regions where each of the facilities is located and the efforts that residents made toward reconstruction, and with this as a backdrop that makes up the region, the history, culture, and issues are also introduced. There are many spots scattered throughout the route circulating those regions that bring visitors into contact with the life of the people and records and memories of the disaster.

The Mt. Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall in the Shimabara Peninsula of Nagasaki Prefecture is also an example constituting a field museum comprising multiple facilities that convey the story of the volcano eruption disaster, such as the Sand Arrestation and Future Museum, the Heisei-shinzan Nature Center, and Onokoba Primary School, which was burned in the pyroclastic flow. However, there is little information about the whole field museum and not many opportunities for exchange with the locals. The Chuetsu Earthquake Memorial Corridor, on the other hand, is a facility where visitors can receive guidance from the Nagaoka Earthquake Disaster Archive Center—*Kiokumirai* as the gateway, can have the route they visit customized, and can learn about disaster and disaster response in the context of the culture and history of the region through interacting with locals at the destinations they visit.

### Notes

1. The Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, *Towards Reconstruction: Hope beyond the Disaster* (2011) p. 2.
2. Yamakoshi Village was merged into Nagaoka City Municipality in April 2005.
3. The three pillars of reconstruction are “creative restoration” (restoration phase), “new sustainability full of vitality” (revitalization phase), and “creation of new norms for daily life beyond disaster reconstruction” (development phase). Third Niigata-Chuetsu Earthquake Disaster Reconstruction Plan.

4. Five Reconstruction Funds were launched before the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011: Unzen-dake Eruption (1991.9~, \109 billion); Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (1995.9~, \900 billion); Chuetsu Earthquake (2005.3~, \305 billion); Noto Peninsula Earthquake (2007.8~, \50 billion); and Chuetsu-Oki Earthquake (2007.10~, \120 billion). Aota et al. (2010), p. 4.
5. In the original estimate, development expenses alone were expected to be approximately 4.1 billion yen. However, the Nagaoka Earthquake Disaster Archive Center is a rented facility and the other three facilities were able to use existing buildings under a free loan, so the total amounted to 2.8 billion yen. Of that, it was decided in a Board of Directors meeting in May 2010 that the fund would contribute 2 billion yen.

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