

Resettlement and Participatory Reconstruction —The case of the un- or natural disaster—

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I. Introduction:

The topic of “resettlement” is now the contemporary issue in social anthropology. The theme of the resettlement can not be inseparable from the socio-economic development project. The destroyed society can not be reconstructed without people’s participations to the process of reconstructing policy making. Over the past twenty-five years, social anthropology has made important contributions to the development field, especially in Europe and United States. And the viewpoint of development economists has not yet been expanded to include appreciation for cultural and human development. It would, therefore, seem obvious that development anthropology would have made a significant contribution to understanding the effects of violence and natural disaster on affected societies and nations. It would also seem obvious that development anthropology would be providing major input for the design, implementation, and evaluation of humanitarian assistance and recovery projects. As the specific example, both my own personal involvement with the survivors of the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake in 1995 and my review of the anthropological literature unfortunately, reveals that this is not the reality of the situation. For example, Japanese anthropologists, with few exceptions, have not applied their anthropological knowledge to improving the well-being of Japan’s survivors of natural disasters.

According to the dictionary of anthropology, the concept of the refugee is defined as persons who, in response to physical, economic, military, or political pressure must leave their country of origin to move to another nation-state. The anthropologist, Lucy Mair (1984) adds additional insights into the problems of the homeless. She indicates that there are two major causes of homeless populations. These include those displaced by development projects, such as the construction of dams, which create lakes submerging thousands of persons, homes, and villages. The other case she identifies is displacement due to war and political upheaval. Again, her concept of homeless persons which is very similar to the definition of refugee excludes those populations left homeless by natural disasters. Survivors from international guidelines on refugees and displaced persons such as DAC (Development Assistant Committee of OECD=Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris) provides the ideal resettlement policy designed for the refugee and displaced person to be applied to the disaster victims and their communities. These guidelines for aid agencies on involuntary displacement and resettlement in development projects could be applied to the refugee from natural disasters as well. But unfortunately each government seldom follows. Development

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anthropology, while primarily focusing on sustainable social and economic agendas, has unwittingly contributed as well to this neglect of those affected by natural disasters. While the psychological and social consequences of natural disasters are strongly influenced by cultural and social conditions within these survivors' social environment; while the mental health impact of trauma is partially culture-specific; and while individual and community responses to disaster and recovery depend upon social values and family ties which influence post-disaster behavior and the allocation of resources—it is obvious to me that social anthropology has considerable knowledge to contribute to the reconstruction of communities destroyed by unnatural or natural disasters.

I would like to give our research (Harvard Program in Refugee and Trauma) in the aftermath of the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake as an example of my concerns. Our findings have been published in a research manuscript called *The Invisible Human Crisis: Mental Health Recommendations for the Care of Persons Evacuated and Displaced by the Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake* and is available to you in the lobby in Japanese and English.

II. Major findings from evacuees in Nagata district:

Evacuees' center is the second disaster for them because the condition of the evacuees' center is extremely far from the general concept of Basic Human Needs.

Ex. Lack of the correct information on the relief and reconstruction aid policy from Government.

No immediate general medical service.

No privacy in the center which makes evacuees irritated and traumatized.

Not enough water and no hygienic treatment like shower or bath, temporary Toilets and the garbage collection system.

Elderly people and children are forgotten by the government administration.

No heater and "Futon", only provided a few blankets.

Cold meal.

Complains for temporary housing system which breaks down the Solidarity of the neighborhood system.

Lack of the Mental Healthcare Specialist who can give the therapy for the mental depression.

Completely breakdown of the administrative organization

III. Analytical Implications:

First of all, in such a condition which was mentioned above, what kind of "Human Dignity" they can be allowed to maintain is the biggest question. All evacuees are asking themselves why they are the only one to have been suffering from the man-made calamity which is caused by the delayed action of the administration.

Secondly, the administrative body should know the importance of the neighborhood system which can only encourage evacuees to reorganize the corporate autonomy for the town reconstruction and development which is based on the concept of "Human (evacuees) Oriented Development" (Y. Kikuchi, 2004: 8). Anthropologists' understanding is that the nation is the form of socio-cultural organization. In another

word, people centered development policy is badly needed for them.

IV. How to resettle:

Most of evacuees are enthusiastic to live together with neighbors whom they shared the locality and time. This is a quite important factor to consider the local reconstruction. Because traditionally the Japanese people can not get along to help each other among kinsmen after they got married and have been independent from their natal family. They prefer to have the reciprocal relationship with nonkinsmen in the same locality. In fact, some of evacuees said that they can stay with and receive the support from their kinsmen for a few days. Instead of being mentally fatigued with even parents and children and siblings, it is said that they had better live or stay at the evacuees' center even if they suffer from the natural disaster. It means that the times was changed. The kinship relationship is no longer function to resolve such a disastrous situation. For this reason, especially elderly people strongly prefer to live the place where they have the local identity. For the local identity, they would like to hold a town or district festival which can encourage local people to recognize the membership with the local identity. Really they are looking for it, which is the local corporate

group (neighborhood system). From the social anthropological view point, I must advocate that first of all, all victims can be allowed to choose the temporary housing place and move as neighboring groups because the local group or town festival must be concerned by the administration in terms of the motive power for the redevelopment and construction. As we know, these folkloristic elements can support to understand the depth of the people's local identity which can encourage them to have the strong willingness to reconstruct their destroyed town.

According to evacuees, when they moved to the evacuees' center, they tried to find out the safety of their neighbors and in a few days, they started to talk about the rebuilding expenses by themselves. For this reason, they do not like to move to the temporary house which located far a way from their natal area. It is not worthy to let them scattered. Rather such a policy makes them distrust the administration. They would like to build the temporary house at the place where their houses were burned for their local solidarity.

Before the making policy, political authority must definitely research like these key questions on the effects of resettlement: Key Questions (Gardner,K and David Lewis, 1996:89).

What is the nature of local power and hierarchy?

How is difference and inequality structured?

Are particular groups marginalized?

Do some groups monopolize political power and resources?

What is the nature of the household?

How is the household organized?

How is decision-making power located within the household or who else?

How do these factors customarily change overtime?

Who lives where?

How are local property relations organized?

What goods are high valued?

What access do different social groups or household members have to property or other resources?

What are the usual patterns of inheritance?

How do these factors relate to the household development cycle?

How is work organized?

What are the main tasks done in the community, and during what seasons?

Who does what work?

What is the importance of kinship roles or relations in allocation of labor?

How suitable is the proposed relocation site, given the above economic, social and cultural factors?

These above key questions are not applicable to the whole areas. But it helps for the policy maker to make the reconstructing design.

V. Recommendations:

For the reconstruction, the government should employ the policy of "Participatory Reconstruction and Redevelopment". Otherwise sufferers would not trust the administration. The central government must establish the head quarter for the disaster country plan, not only at Tokyo or the central capital in any countries.

It is obvious that evacuees would expect that temporary houses in areas are more attractive than their original house and environment. This is the reason why the participatory reconstruction manner should be practiced to absorbed their opinion and hope. In the same way, DAC guide lines emphasized that community participations and integration with evacuees are very important. In other words, the cultural and psychological acceptability of resettlement plan can be increased by moving people in groups, reducing dispersion, sustaining existing patterns of group organization, and retaining access to cultural property (temple, memorial tablet and pilgrimage center, etc.), if necessary, through the relocation of that property. At the same time, local leadership must be encouraged to assume responsibility for environmental management and infrastructure maintenance. Especially we should pay attention to ensure that women and vulnerable groups such as minorities and evacuees should be represented and actively involved in such arrangement.

Government must not concern only the breakdown of buildings, but also of social structure and administrative system. For the temporary solution, the neighbor city or Prefecture can assist and send the professional administrative officers until Kobe local government can manage by herself. In other words, local and central government must link with such a informal neighborhood system which is based on Rin-jin ai (隣人愛) (neighbors love and help each other) and informally vitalize the local member like through Festival. In other words, more mutual dialogue with victims and more knowledge of their circumstances would indubitably be practicable and would never be wasted (Mairy, 1984: 133).

In teams of Mental Health Care, social and cultural anthropologist should be included as the role of the community diagnosis as the role of Cultural diagnosis. At the same time, these social sciences can contribute to the policy of Participatory Reconstruction which is based on the human oriented concept. And then we can expect natural disastrous victims will be able to prevent from becoming the development and

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reconstruction refugee (Y. Kikuchi, 2004: 45).

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