

<International, Lateral Bonds >

We appreciated your emails from overseas saying this tragedy is felt by all of mankind. Some say Japan is no longer internationally isolated.

Let me share my personal experience. The day after the earthquake, I got an SOS email from a Taiwanese researcher. She said that an American mother of her friend whose son teaches at a high school in Osaki City is very anxious in Washington D.C. because she only received a short text message from him right after the earthquake and had not been able to again contact him. I searched for him through Google's Person Finder service and left a message asking him to call his mother. It turned out he could not charge his battery. He had been taking care of students who remained in the school. They suffered from power outages as well as a lack of water, food and medicine. I soon forwarded the message to an emergency office in Sendai. Also I could relieve his mother by informing her that the tsunami would not reach Osaki City, more than 30 km from the coast. Thus, even though I am elderly and nearly gave up in assisting those in the disaster area, I could lend a hand through my daily use of email communication.

<Historical, Vertical Bonds>

On the JACAR website, I searched for "Kanto Dai Shinsai," the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. The search results related to laws such as the one proclaimed on September 2nd of 1923 in the Emperor's original script, since JACAR's dictionary specifies 'Kaigen-rei' or martial law as one of the keywords. You can refer to these historical records to learn how the government acts in emergencies as well as to identify problems in the Japanese manner of decision-making and the characteristics of Japanese organizations. Therefore, I believe that the JACAR will help facilitate an essential inquiry into the relationship between natural disasters and official documents.

Another thing that can be pointed out in looking at historical comparisons is that the Japan disaster revealed the importance of following two factors: electric power and computers. We realized how much highly developed modern societies rely on them. If you allow me to comment on a small bit of luck we had at JACAR, I suggest that computer servers be installed on solid floors so that earthquake and flood would not damage them. Also prepare a spare power supply just in case. I believe 'fail-safe' technologies have to be further pursued as much as possible.

< JACAR's Mission>

More than ever, I feel that JACAR, as a digital archive, stands at the intersection of lateral, international relations and vertical, historical relations. We will continue our efforts to contribute to you who wish to learn from history.
