

## ~ Think Together about the Relocation of the National Diet and Related Organizations ~

### In FY 2005, the hundredth on-line lecture meeting was held

In order to spark up discussion at all levels of society concerning the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) has been holding on-line lecture meetings since FY 1999, inviting intellectuals in various disciplines. The hundredth on-line lecture meeting was held in FY 2005. Taking this opportunity, we have reviewed the opinions of the hundred lecturers.

#### 1. Lecturers

In terms of occupation, university professors were the largest percentage, accounting for 41 percent of all lecturers. Together with researchers from think tanks and research institutes, who accounted for 15 percent, the majority of all lecturers were academics. Critics and writers as well as corporate managers and business leaders accounted for relatively large percentages. Regarding their ages, more than 70 percent of lecturers were in their 50's or 60's when they delivered their lectures.

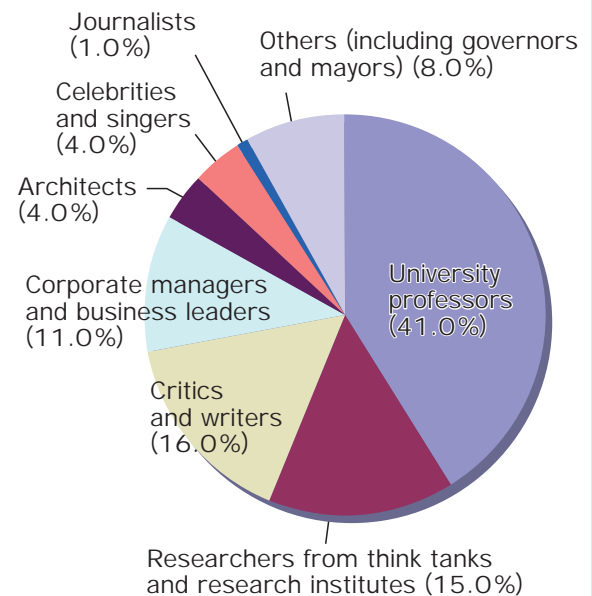
#### 2. About the lectures

##### 1. Significance and effects of the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations

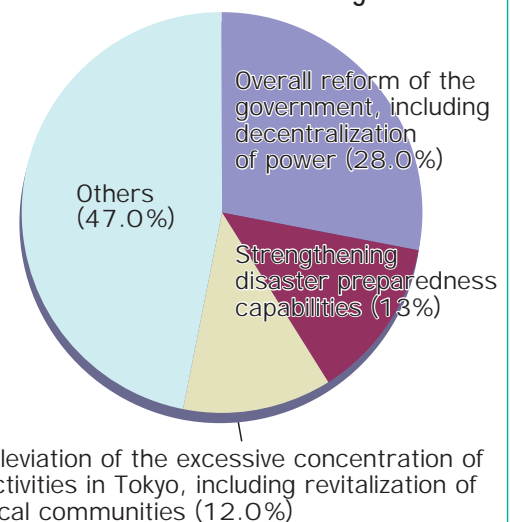
As for the significance and effects of the relocation, the largest percentage, 28 percent, of lecturers mentioned the overall reform of the government (including decentralization of power). This was followed by strengthening disaster preparedness capabilities (13%), and alleviation of the excessive concentration of activities in Tokyo, including revitalization of local communities (12%). Approximately half of the lecturers mentioned these three points, which were also mentioned in the Report of the Council for the Relocation of the Diet and Other Organizations submitted in December, 1999, as the significance and effects of the relocation.

Apart from these three points, many lecturers mentioned the significance and effects from the viewpoints of people's lives and a society that supports better lives (10%), how future cities should be (9%), and the history and tradition of Japan (9%).

Lecturer occupations



Significance and effects of the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations



\* The point that each lecturer placed the greatest emphasis on in their lecture was selected and counted.

## 2. Lecture topics

As for lecture topics, topics related to overall reform of the government accounted for the largest percentage, 16 percent. This includes a wide range of issues from overall reforms of the political and social frameworks (6%) to reforms of capital and regional systems, including *doshusei* (regional system) and other systems for decentralization of power (10%). Lecturers also referred to reforms from a more comprehensive theme of how the future of Japan and its nation-building should be (10%). Including these themes, more than one fourth of lecture topics were related to reforms.

Alleviating the excessive concentration of activities in Tokyo (14%) was a major concern. Differing perspectives include improving the attractiveness of Tokyo (3%) and revitalization of local communities (4%) as well as proposing overall problems (7%). Concerning responding to social changes (10%), many lecturers mentioned our information-oriented society and the changes in industrial and social structures.

## 3. Problems concerning the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations

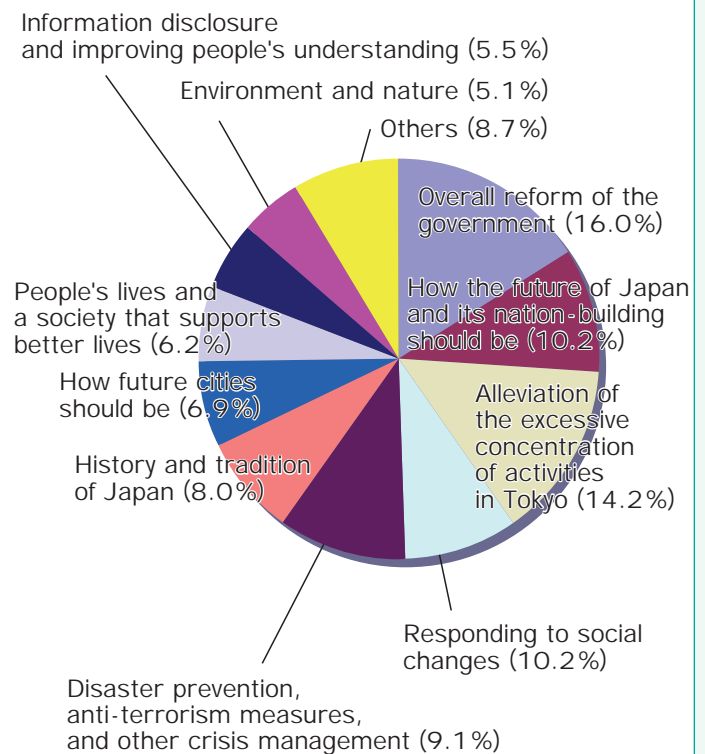
Approximately half of the lecturers referred to problems concerning the discussion on the relocation and how the relocation proceeds. The most frequently mentioned problem was insufficiency of national discussion and lack of interest (11%). In particular, lecturers pointed out that national consensus is necessary and that substantial information provision and promotion are necessary.

This was followed by problems in establishing the issue (10%). Lecturers pointed out that clear national principles should be established and that there are problems with how the issue was proposed and the process of selecting candidate sites.

Divergence between the initial purposes and the present circumstances (8%) includes opinions like social and economic situations having changed since the relocation was initially proposed as well as the reasons for the relocation never having been persuasive.

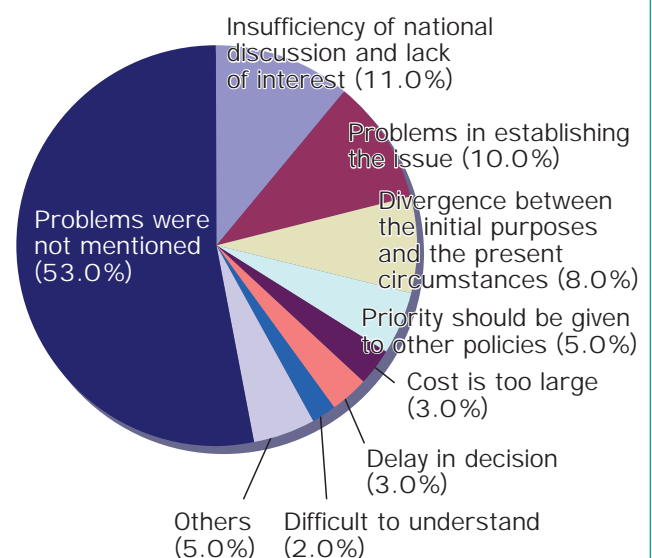
We will continue to hold on-line lectures inviting intellectuals in a wide range of disciplines. We hope you will look forward to them.

Lecture topics



\* All points that each lecturer mentioned in their lecture were counted.

Problems concerning the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations



\* The point that each lecturer placed the greatest emphasis on in their lecture was selected and counted.

## On-Line Lecture Meetings Being Held

The following lectures have been newly added after November, 2006. Please visit the Web page at <http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudokeikaku/iten/onlinelecture/index.html> for more information.

### Ms. Miyuki Tomari (Director of the Biomass Industrial Society Network NPO)

Theme: Desirable relationship between a sustainable society and cities

#### Summary

- It is the Japanese government's responsibility to prepare back-ups for government functions as soon as possible.
- Japan should have national strategies for sustainability like the EU does.
- We are facing the danger of exhausting our natural resources. People living in advanced countries, like Japan, should work harder to reduce consumption of natural resources.
- Tokyo is too large to be sustainable. In order to progress towards a sustainable society, the relocation of capital functions may have positive impact.
- When decentralizing capital functions, people's attitudes towards employment, culture, and education should be changed.
- The new city, where capital functions will be relocated, should have much greenery and be free from stress so that it is pleasant to live in the city.



### Prof. Kishie Shigekawa (Professor at the Graduate School of Environment and Disaster Prevention Studies, Fuji Tokoha University)

Theme: Each and every citizen and local community must lead in urban disaster prevention

#### Summary

- In Japan, where many risk factors including typhoons and earthquakes are, it is an important policy task to overcome weaknesses against disasters.
- In order to minimize damage, the most significant contribution is often made by citizens, local communities, and volunteers.
- As for disaster prevention education, families and local residents should be involved, rather than leaving it to schools.
- Many disaster victims living in temporary housing say that loneliness and a sense of isolation are hardest. When securing the living of victims, it is very important to solve their psychological problems, even more important than solving physical problems.
- When relocating capital functions, it is very important that people who already live in the relocation destination integrate well with new residents. If they do not integrate well, it will cause problems in disaster prevention.



### Prof. Hiroshi Ouchi (Professor at the Faculty of Engineering, Shibaura Institute of Technology)

Theme: Capital function relocation that is both urgent and important, and new urban design

#### Summary

- Concerning the capital function relocation issue, there are many misunderstandings and much apathy. The media often uses the expression capital relocation, but the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations is easier to understand. Also, the rivalry between regions over inviting the new city heated up in the discussion process. This caused apathy among people who do not live in the candidate sites.



- As for the cost of the relocation, we should have calm discussions from the viewpoint of national disaster prevention. We should examine what type of dangers and crises we have to deal with, and how much we should spend for "insurance" to cover such dangers and crises.
- Since the capital relocation issue was mixed up with the issues of overconcentration and governmental reform, the purpose of the relocation became vague, and difficult for people to understand.
- The greatest purpose of the relocation is to create a system to hold Cabinet meetings and the Diet in a place that would not be affected by a disaster even when Tokyo is struck by the disaster. For that purpose, I would like to propose to hold an extraordinary diet session outside Tokyo. In the mid- and long-term, a decentralizing-type relocation of capital functions is desirable.
- The capital function relocation is a good opportunity to think about urban design. I hope the capital function relocation creates a new urban model that goes beyond Brasilia and Canberra.

## ★ T o p i c s

### Recent Major Activities Related to Relocating the National Diet and Related Organizations in Each Region

- The Fukushima Prefectural Government held an art contest, inviting elementary school pupils living in the Prefecture to submit a painting of A City Submerged in Forest. The award ceremony was held on November 3 in Fukushima City, and the best work and other selected works have been on exhibit around the Prefecture since then.
- The Tochigi Prefectural Residents' Meeting for the Relocation of the National Diet and Related Organizations had an information corner at the Tochigi Housing Fair 2006 from October 13 to 15, the Furusato Tochigi Fair 2006 on October 28 and 29, and the Tochigi Industrial Fair 2006 from November 16 to 18. All three fairs were held in Utsunomiya City. Panels were exhibited and pamphlets were distributed to promote the relocation of capital functions.
- On October 28, National Institute for Fusion Science (NIFS) Open House was held at the NIFS in Toki City. The Gifu Prefectural Government exhibited panels, distributed pamphlets to visitors, and conducted a questionnaire to promote the significance and necessity of relocating capital functions.

### Accessing Various Information

Various information concerning the capital functions relocation has been provided on the MLIT Homepage on the Internet. Please visit this web-site.

Also if you are interested in items in this leaflet and others, please let us know. We are pleased to send related documents to you. We are awaiting your contact.

### We are Waiting for Your Opinion

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