

# Research on the damage and reconstruction of the Great Kanto Earthquake from the perspective of foreigners

Ch. Chiho Ochiai

(Associate professor, Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies,  
Kyoto University)

## [SYNOPSIS]

This 1<sup>st</sup> September marks the 100th anniversary of the Great Kanto Earthquake. In this research, first, documents related to the Great Kanto Earthquake in Kanagawa Prefecture were collected, and clarify the situation and response from the perspective of foreigners at immediately after the Earthquake to its recovery. Until now, the situation at the time of the Earthquake has been known from a limited number of documents written by foreigners. However, there is a high possibility that reports, diaries, letters to family members, photographs, etc. that are stored overseas. Therefore, the study tried to find and collect these new materials.

The survey uses the Internet to find store materials related to foreign survivors who were in Japan at the time of the disaster, as well as people who informed or were informed about the situation which are stored in overseas libraries. Through the search, several new materials were found, including diaries, letters to the family, and photographs taken by them. However, many of the newly discovered materials include handwritten letters and signatures, and it will take time to decipher them, and further work is required in the future. On the other hand, due to the impact of the COVID-19, it was difficult to directly confirm the documents. Therefor, part of the study targeted Hakone, where many foreigners were staying at the time of the earthquake, and collected information. New materials were discovered from a Fujiya hotel, and we were able to grasp the damage situation for several days immediately after the disaster, and collect information on the damage and restoration/reconstruction of transportation facilities. Many saviors had a painful experience witnessing the tragic situation while evacuating from the disaster site. In addition, through the foreigner's network, they were able to grasp the disaster situation of their acquaintances who died. In addition, many schools and religious people actively carried out relief and fund-raising activities in their home countries.