

§ 29. Archival Studies on the Nuclear Fusion Research at Universities in Japan (III)
—An Interview with SEKIGUCHI Tadashi, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo—

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*Passed away on January 9, 2003.

Objective of the Interview

The time span of half a century for nuclear fusion research is so long that some of the key persons in the early stage of the research have retired, and others already passed away. Thus we have adopted interview method as one of the ways to obtain the primary document.

Interview

In FY2002 the following interview was held.

- (1) Date: April 13, 2002.
- (2) Place: Nihon University, College of Science and Technology.
- (3) Interviewee: Sekiguchi Tadashi, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo, who played an important role at the critical times of the nuclear fusion research in Japan.
- (4) Subject: The circumstances of the fusion researches in Japan later half of 1980's. (We had an interview with the same interviewee in FY2000 on the same subject during the previous period 1965-1986, and published a report on it as NIFS-MEMO-33.)
- (5) Report published: NIFS-MEMO-40.

Procedure of the Interview

(1) Questions in advance

Questions from interviewers were first gathered and summarized as follows: The questions in outline were handed to the interviewee in advance.

- Activities of Science Council of Japan
- Starting-up of the Japan Society of Plasma Science and Nuclear Fusion Research
- Establishment of National Institute for Fusion Science
- Role of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from Monbusho on the nuclear fusion research in Japan
- The others.

(2) Response from the interviewee

The response from the interviewee to the questions above mentioned was obtained. The summary of the

response in length of 12 pages was distributed to the interviewers prior to the interview.

(3) Talk given by interviewee

The interviewee gave a talk toward the plural interviewers.

(4) Questions and answers

Questions and answers were given in the course of interviewee's talk.

(5) Discussions

Discussions were held to understand the historical facts in the interviewing group

(6) Transcription and record making

After preparing a rough transcript, all the interviewers checked and edited it for accuracy and clarity. The response given in advance by the interviewee was also checked and confirmed for authenticity. The edited transcript then went on to the interviewee for corrections or additions.

(7) Publication

NIFS-MEMO-40 consists of the question outline, the response by interviewee and the interview record.

Outcome of the interview

The interview was very successful, mainly due to the cooperative manner of the interviewee. We could not only experience the days with the speaker but also get many access points to further studies.

It is crucially important for interviewers to prepare themselves on the subject and the questions to be asked. In the present case, the number of interviewers and audience was 20 or so, and there happened a problem what is the essential difference between an interview and a colloquium or something like a press conference.

Following points have come up to us through the interview:

(1) Pre-interview preparation

- Prepare enough materials concerning the subject or topics to be explored
- Define the focal points of the interview and to formulate them into detailed and significant questions
- Keep the general direction given in the question outline

(2) To make sure whether the interviewee preserves any materials that ought to be deposited.

(3) To treat sensitive personal information or what the interviewee wants to be kept confidential with care because of ethical considerations.

(4) To develop the effective interview method in a more practical way, including the technique of oral history.

Future plan

We are planning to extend the interview toward more persons and subjects including those in the field of industry.