

§2. Collection of Historical Materials on Fusion Research in Japan by Oral History Method

Namba, C., Kubo, S., Iguchi, H., Matsuoka, K., Kimura, K., Endo, M., Amemiya, T. (Nihon Univ.)

1. The purpose of oral history in Fusion Science Archives

Fusion Science Archives (FSA) at NIFS was established in 2005. Since then historical materials related to fusion research and/or organizations have been collected and preserved at FSA. They are expected to serve as the evidence of various facts or actions taken by fusion research community in the past. These written documents, however, are not enough for future generation to understand the detailed facts of the historical matters or events. In some cases it is very difficult to understand the relation between the events and their background due to a lack of necessary documents. In these cases oral histories through interviews with fusion researchers who played important roles in the past may supply us useful information.

2. Procedure of interview

Generally, the interview is carried out through the following procedures:

(1) Select the theme of interview and appropriate interviewee, (2) set-up the questionnaire for interviewee based on the survey of documents, (3) interview (by an interviewer or in sometimes, by plural interviewers), (4) editorial works on interview records (the first step is proceeded by interviewers and in the second step together with interviewee), (5) register the record of interview as a historical document in FSA, (6) analyze the record of the interview, (7) present the report of the interview and its analysis at the scientific meetings such as the annual meeting of The Japan Society of Plasma Science and Nuclear Fusion, and the Physical Society of Japan.

3. Accomplishments in 2015

In 2015 fiscal year, the editorial works on a record of interview with Dr. Masaji Yoshikawa, the former President of Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI, at present Japan Atomic Energy Agency, JAEA), was completed and the report was published. In the course of the editorial works, Dr. Teruo Tamano, who worked at General Atomics, USA from 1971 to 1991, gave us some additional information. This helped us to understand the background of fusion and plasma physics research at GA of those days. Also we are grateful for GA in providing a group photo taken on the occasion of a farewell party in 1987 for some of those leaving the fusion program (from the booklet 50 Years of Fusion at General Atomics “To

Create a Star on Earth”). This Interview was held on October 31, 2013 at Tokyo Office of JAEA (Fig.1).



Fig. 1 Interview with Dr. M. Yoshikawa

An interview with Dr. Hiromu Momota, Professor Emeritus of Nagoya Univ. and NIFS was newly planned and took place on February 17, 2015 at NIFS (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Prof. H. Momota on the interview

The editorial works on a record of interview with Dr. Momota, was completed and the report was published.

Dr. Momota played a leading role in planning of so-called R-project of Institute of Plasma Physics, Nagoya University. This project was not undertaken as a real experiment. The interview was focused on the reason why the project was not realized. He pointed out the attitude of researchers facing the project as one of the reasons.

Recently we started a preparatory work for an interview with Dr. Ichiro Kawakami, Professor Emeritus of Nihon University, which will be held at the mid of 2016 FY. Dr. Kawakami was an editor of Japanese journal “Kakuyugou Kenkyu (Fusion Research)”. The first number of this journal was published in July 1958. This journal served not only as a scientific journal in plasma physics, but also as the organ journal of “Nuclear Fusion Research group” of Japan, and provided research information to researchers. Dr. Kawakami served as an editor of this journal a long time from the beginning of its publication.

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