In the early morning hours of September 21, 1999, a devastating earthquake struck the central region of Taiwan. This earthquake became known as the 921 earthquake or the “Ji-Ji” or “Chi-Chi” earthquake. The magnitude of the 921 earthquake was \( M_c = 7.6 \) (Richter scale) or \( M_L = 7.3 \) (the system used in Taiwan). There were 10 aftershocks greater than magnitude 6. Of these, an \( M_L = 6.8 \) occurred about 30 hours and 120 hours after the main shock, respectively. An \( M_L = 5.3 \) aftershock was recorded as long as 260 hours later causing collapses of already damaged structures. As of October 8, the death toll stands at more than 2,350. Over 8,700 people were injured, and dozens remain missing. Approximately 10,000 buildings/homes collapsed and over 7,000 more were damaged.

The Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER) and the National Center for Research on Earthquake Engineering (NCREE) have had a research collaboration agreement to carry out fundamental earthquake engineering research in areas of mutual interest since 1995. Shortly after the 921 earthquake, we, as representatives of the two Centers, discussed the possibility of an MCEER-NCREE workshop, which subsequently took place on Oct. 3-5, 1999 in Taiwan. The purpose of the workshop was to identify important short-term strategies/actions for post-earthquake restoration and research needs, including specific cooperative projects for investigators from both centers to work as teams based on the 921 experience.

The workshop began with a briefing led by Professor Loh on the earthquake. This was followed by a brief presentation by Paul Flores, EQE, on short-term restoration strategies following the Northridge earthquake and by Mr. Tomio Saito, Director of Hyogo Prefecture in Japan, on Kobe’s experience with short-term restoration strategies. The group then began its reconnaissance mission with a visit to Taichung. The next day was dedicated to reconnaissance, with MCEER and NCREE investigators paired together to focus on specific areas.

On the third day, participants made brief presentations concerning their field observations, discussed the mechanics of authoring reconnaissance reports, and identified additional individuals to contribute to the reports. Their preliminary reports are included in this issue of MCEER/NCREE Response and are also available on our web site at http://mceer.buffalo.edu. A more substantial reconnaissance report will be published in the coming weeks.