

## International Symposium “Disaster & Memory” (2023/10/18-19)

Theme: Disaster’s remains; Memories; 3.11; Fukushima nuclear accident; Minamata disease; Second World War; Biodiversity loss

Venue: IRIDeS. Aobayama campus of Tohoku University (Sendai, Japan)

On October 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow Mathieu Gaulène (International Research Collaboration Office) co-organized with the associate researcher Romaric Jannel (Kyoto University) an international symposium in IRIDeS called “Disaster and Memory”. This event benefited from the support of Associate Professor Sebastien Penmellen Boret (International Research Collaboration Office) and financial support from the International Research Collaboration Office of IRIDeS. This event reflected how the concept of “memory” is intertwined with how disasters are perceived and represented. As our societies evolve in the 21st century under the new paradigm of Anthropocene, where disasters seem to be on the rise, the question of how to memorialise them and place them in a “grammar of disasters” to authorise meaning and resilient actions becomes salient and common theme of the discussions.

This international symposium brought together 13 researchers from different universities in Japan (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Iwate, and Tohoku University) and abroad (University of Nimes, France) who discussed various cases of disasters from different perspectives (sociology, law, anthropology, computer science, history, biology, philosophy, and semiotics).

Within the four sessions held over two days, the IRIDeS Assistant Professor Julia Gerster (Disaster Culture and Archive Studies) made a presentation about “*School memorials as “Lieux de Mémoire” in the cultural and collective memory of the Great East Japan Earthquake*”, JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow Mathieu Gaulène made a presentation about “*From the memory to the imagination of disasters*”, and Assoc. Prof. Sebastien Penmellen Boret about “*The Temporality of Memoryscapes: A Study of the Memorial Monuments of the Great East Japan Earthquake*” which was concluding the two days of the symposium, and introducing the visit of the memorial monuments and reconstruction area of Yuriage in Natori.



Discussion of the first session on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Report by Mathieu Gaulène and Sebastien Penmellen Boret  
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This visit was the occasion to exemplify the discussion on how memory is used to prevent and cope with disasters and how the memorialisation process occurs after a disaster, such as the Great East Japan Earthquake of 3.11. Assoc. Prof. Sebastien Penmellen Boret introduced the participants during the visit to different memorials for the tsunami victims in the coastal area of Yuriage (public/private memorials). He described the evolution of the community in link with the memorialisation and reconstruction processes.

In conclusion, this event has been an opportunity to open discussions between researchers from different disciplines, use other methods of research and open to everybody's different perspectives on how to describe what is a memory of a disaster.



Visit of the memorials of Yuriage, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023