

## Winter School on Disasters and Memory (2024/2/26 - 3/2)

Theme: Compound Disasters, Nuclear Disaster, Recovery, Collective and Cultural Memory, Student Workshop

Venue: IRIDeS, Sendai, Ishinomaki, Minamisanriku, Kesenuma, Futaba, Namie, Tomioka, Iwaki

The Kataribe World Network (KWN), Assistant Prof. Anna Wiemann of Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), and IRIDeS Associate Professors Julia Gerster (Disaster Culture and Archive Studies) and Liz Maly (International Research Collaboration Office) co-organized a winter school on disaster memory. In total eleven participants, including four students from LMU, traveled across Miyagi and Fukushima Prefecture to learn from people and places affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and their role in disaster memory transmission.

The Winter School on Disaster and Memory commenced on Feb. 26th with a workshop organized by IRIDeS and joined by Yamagata University and Leibniz University Hannover as part of their separate winter school. The session featured presentations by IRIDeS faculty aimed at preparing the participants for their field research and introducing them to current academic discussions connected to the Great East Japan Earthquake, recovery and memory. The workshop ended with the students presenting their findings from a group work on disaster perceptions. About 60 people from various universities joined the workshop.

The second day of the Winter School program began with a visit to the designated disaster heritage site Kadonowaki Elementary School in Ishinomaki, where the group engaged in discussions with director Richard Halberstadt, gaining insights into the recovery of Ishinomaki City and the background of turning the school into a memorial. Afterward, the participants proceeded to the NEWSee museum, learning about the “wall newspaper” (*kabe shinbun*) that was handwritten every day on large sheets of paper and distributed to the shelters to ensure access to correct information in the direct aftermath of the disaster. At Okawa Elementary School, where 74 children and 10 teachers died in the tsunami, the group learned about the failed evacuation practices and different attempts at negative heritage preservation. The day ended at Hotel Kanyo in Minamisanriku, which served as a shelter for tsunami survivors in 2011.

On Feb. 28, participants joined the hotel's Kataribe Bus, offering insights into local disaster response and personal accounts of Mr. Shun Ito. The day included visits to KWN president Kazuma Goto's house, where he shared his experiences and insights into local culture as a kataribe. In the afternoon, the group learned about the influence of repeating disasters on local culture through a Kataribe and Kiriko experience with Mayumi Kudo, enriching participants' understanding of traditional rituals and community resilience. After a guided tour through the memorial park, the group headed to Kesenuma. In the evening, participants joined a workshop on gender and disaster and young people's perceptions facilitated by KWN members Chiharu Yoshida and Shun Ito.

Feb. 29 began with a visit to the Rias Ark Museum for an observation of the permanent exhibition on disaster-affected objects. Participants then proceeded to the Koyo Highschool Memorial Museum for a guided tour by the young kataribe Ms. Sato, and discussions with Kenichi Sato, former Director and city officer, responsible for designating evacuation sites before the 3.11 disaster. The lively discussion among the group focused on adapting evacuation measures and how to prepare for disasters that may go beyond the expected (*soteigai*).

From March 1<sup>st</sup>, the tour continued in Fukushima Prefecture. Participants departed for the GEJE and Nuclear Disaster Museum for an observation of the exhibition, gaining critical insights into the impacts of nuclear disasters on communities and the environment. In Namie Town, the group witnessed a

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Kamishibai performance by members of the Tsutaetai project, offering a cultural experience intertwined with discussions on disaster memory. The afternoon included a Kataribe guided tour through Tomioka, just recently released from the exclusion zone. The group got to see examples of recovery, such as newly opened shops or the Tomioka winery, as well as the challenges faced by communities in the coastal areas of Fukushima, such as depopulation and remaining issues regarding decontamination.

The final day of the Winter School program featured a visit to the Kataritsugi Event in Iwaki City, organized by IRIDeS Michinoku Shinrokuden. This year's event featured seven short stories based on survivor narratives. The stories were read by Keiko Takeshita on stage accompanied by music. Further, a handmade kamishibai on disaster preparedness was performed by students of Iwaki Tanki University. The Winter School concluded with a farewell dinner, offering participants an opportunity to celebrate their shared experiences.

Overall, the Winter School on Disaster and Memory provided a platform for interdisciplinary learning, collaboration, and reflection, highlighting the importance of memory in understanding and addressing the complexities of disaster management and recovery.



Kamishibai performance in Namie Town



Guided Tour at Kadonowaki Elementary School



Walk through the Minamisanriku Recovery Park



Kataribe and Kiriko Experience

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