

International Symposium  
Crisis of Wellbeing and Wellbeing in Crisis Across Borders

**Date:** 5-7 December 2024

**Venue:** Chi-no-Yakata (TOKYO ELECTRON House of Creativity)  
Katahira Campus, Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan  
[https://www.tfc.tohoku.ac.jp/about\\_us/facilities.html](https://www.tfc.tohoku.ac.jp/about_us/facilities.html)

**Organizer:**

National Institute of Humanities, Global Area Studies Program (GAPS) and East Eurasian Studies Project (EES)

Center for Northeast Asian Studies (CNEAS), Tohoku University  
<http://www2.cneas.tohoku.ac.jp/english/index.html>

International Research Institute of Disaster Sciences (IRIDeS), Tohoku University

**Organizing Committee:**

Hiroki Takakura, Sebastien P. Boret, Hiroko Naito, Moe Terao, Yukihiro Kawaguchi, Ikuno Ochi, Alimtohte Shiho, Sanae Ito and Mitsu Hatakeyama, Sanae Ito

Full Programme

**5 Dec:** Tour of the remains of the Great East Japan Earthquake site

**6 Dec:** Seminar of early career scholar (dinner)

**7 Dec:** Science conference (dinner)

Session1. Transition and Transformation: The Quest for Well-being in a Dynamic Environment

Session 2. Nomadism, Borders, and Well-being: Strategies of life around crisis and mobility in contemporary pastoralists

Session 3. People with Disabilities in Times of Disasters and Wars: Mobility, Welfare, and Social Inclusion

Session 4. Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Wellbeing of Indigenous peoples

Session 5. General discussion

Travel conditions

The round-trip tickets between the cities of affiliation for invited participants and Sendai City (economy class tickets or Shinkansen express railway tickets) and the accommodation related to this symposium (in Sendai and other cities on the route) are provided to the invited speakers from the organizer.

Titles, abstracts and papers

We would like to ask the speakers to submit the abstracts for the programme and the draft papers for the discussants to improve the discussions.

- **31 July:** Deadline of titles and abstracts (200-300 words)

- **20 November:** Deadline for the full draft papers (minimum 3000 words)

\*We might develop the publication project through this conference.

Contact

Moe Terao (Research fellow, CNEAS) [moe.terao.b4@tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:moe.terao.b4@tohoku.ac.jp)

## Details of the conference

### *Rationale*

This symposium aims to understand the current global challenges, such as war, disasters, climate change, and population issues focusing on local and global well-being from the perspective of anthropology, history, and area studies. Conflicts and disasters considerably hinder people's livelihood and well-being developed through their existing cultures and societies. Concurrently, we observe that climate change and demographic changes, including aging, gradually force the adaptation of conventional/current forms of well-being. We have already observed that amid crises, human societies create happiness and comfort in adaptive ways, as in the case of disaster utopias. These two social processes occur across various boundaries, such as local, ethnic, and national levels, a special feature of our time. During this symposium, we will learn from multiple ethnographic cases and theoretical considerations to discuss crisis of well-being and the well-being in crisis across borders. This event will also be an opportunity for knowledge exchange and exploring the possibilities of future joint research between Japan and international scholarships.

### *Session Description*

Session1. Transition and Transformation: The Quest for well-being in a dynamic environment Moderator: Hiroko Naito (IDE-JETRO, Researcher)			
Speaker 1	Yuen Shan (Ruby) Lai	Lingnan University Hong Kong	Assistant Professor
Speaker 2	Ryuta Hagiwara	Hitotsubashi University Tokyo	PhD Candidate
Discussant	Sayaka Ogawa	Ritsumeikan University Kyoto	Professor

In East Eurasian countries, authoritarian regimes have persisted for a long, and there have been backslides into authoritarianism in many countries that democratized since the late 1980's. Statistical data indicates that authoritarianization often occurs through leaders changing the system. This means that it is happening at the different stage from the activities of society. During such political stages, what do citizens in these countries seek, and how do they accept or reject these changes? The case of Hong Kong, which this session addresses, is an excellent example to observe citizen's preferences amidst authoritarianization. Hong Kong is a region with a unique environment shaped by its relationship with mainland China and its colonial history. After its return to mainland China in 1997, Hong Kong's citizens enjoyed a partial form of democracy and freedom under the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. Although its political landscape has been gradually transformed by the Chinese government, especially after the movement in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's geographical, societal, and economic uniqueness remains. This session explores what well-being Hong Kong citizens seek and how they struggle to seize it in the context of its relationship with mainland China and overseas countries.

Session 2. Nomadism, Borders, and Well-being: Strategies of life around crisis and mobility in contemporary pastoralists Moderator: Moe Terao (CNEAS, Research fellow)			
Speaker 1	Ariell Ahearn	University of Oxford Oxford, UK	Lecturer
Speaker 2	Byambabaatar Ichinhorloo	National University of Mongolia Ulaanbaatal, Mongolia	Lecturer
	Daniel Murphy	University of Cincinnati Cincinnati, US	Associate Professor
Discussant	Ayumi Nakano	Chukyo University Nagoya	Lecturer

In Mongolia, where nomadic life has its roots, moving from one place to another in search of resources or to escape danger is an integral part of life strategies. The mobility of people, goods, and animals and the networks linking them across borders and localities are social functions that are essential for improving and maintaining people's livelihoods. Therefore, border crossings in Mongolia is not solely about evacuation but already part of people's well-being. Traditional images of nomadism, accompanied by nostalgia and nationalism, concurrently raise people's emotions and evoke a sense of well-being. However, in the context of global economic, political, and climatic changes, the values and realities of mobility have changed. In this session, we will discuss how the pursuit of well-being and mobility strategies are being implemented from the perspectives of both pastoralists and urban people, and consider the mobility associated with crises and the potential for well-being in such mobilities.

Session 3. People with Disabilities in Times of Disasters and Wars: Mobility, Welfare, and Social Inclusion Moderator: Sébastien Boret (IRIDeS, Associate Professor)			
Speaker 1	Abby Ewen	University College London London, UK	PhD Student
Speaker 2	Madoka Nishiura	University of Tokyo Tokyo	PhD Candidate
Discussant	Keiko Kitagawa	Saga University	Emeritus Professor

This panel examines the problems of mobility, welfare, and inclusiveness faced by people with disabilities during crises in Eurasia. International media reported the struggles of almost 3 million people with disabilities trying to evacuate from fighting zones. They suffered from isolation, illness, and poverty. These struggles remain identical to those exposed by research on other disasters related to the pandemic (COVID-19 pandemic), natural hazards (2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami), and climate change (2003 European Heatwave). Relying on the principle that vulnerabilities only manifest during a crisis and are not created by crisis, this panel explores the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities during various crises while grounding their analysis of the specific socio-cultural contexts. For instance, our discussion shows how particular vulnerabilities are the products of specific social organizations and cultural patterns. Furthermore, the panel considers the idea of well-being for people with disability during crisis, focusing on trans-local or trans-national movements. Finally, the panellists conclude with a discussion on anticipating and reducing the impact of the crisis on vulnerabilities and a sense of well-being, not only for people with disabilities but also for the whole society.

Session 4. The Russian Invasion of Ukraine and the Wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples Moderator: Hiroki Takakura (CNEAS, Professor)			
Speaker 1	Stephan Dudeck	University of Tartu Tartu, Estonia	Research Fellow
Speaker 2	Victoria Peemot	JSPS/University of Helsinki Sendai/Helsinki, Finland	Post-doc.Fellow/ Researcher
Discussant	Takehiko Inoue	Osaka Kyoiku University Osaka	Associate Professor

How do ethnic minorities or indigenous people avoid the risk and construct well-being in a crisis? Is their way different from that of the majority or a nation? This session argues the relationship between the crisis and the well-being of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The war created more than 6 million Ukrainian refugees while dividing Russian citizens pro and con the war. The indigenous peoples in Russia also face the same dilemma. As observed among ethnic Russians, some migrate out of the country, while others choose to remain. This situation induces a reflection of their history and their positionality as a citizen, which might be a reason causing huge social mobility across the state border. By describing these social processes ethnographically, we would like to consider the meaning of their well-being and hope. We also extend our discussion to the underlying causes of their decision and its impact on their future.

Session 5. General Discussion Moderator: Sébastien Boret (IRIDeS, Associate Professor)			
Comment 1	Donatas Brandišauskas	University of Vilnius Vilnius, Lithuania	Professor
Comment 2	Minoru Mio	National Museum of Ethnology Osaka	Professor