

Panel Special Session I
Tohoku University

ABSTRACT

The 6th International Graduate Students and Scholars Conference (IGSSC) on Indonesia Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University Indonesia

SPECIAL SESSION

“The Role of Religious Culture and Social-Human Sciences after Disaster”

Organized by:

Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS), Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia
and the Department of Religious Studies and Center for North Asian Studies,
Tohoku University, Japan

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Survey after the 3.11 Tohoku Earthquake and the role of Anthropology

Hiroki Takakura (Tohoku University, Japan)

This paper reports the findings of the intangible cultural heritage survey in the region affected by the 3.11 Tohoku Earthquake and resulting tsunami. Most of the victims in this region were not urban city dwellers, but residents of rural areas or fishing villages, in which the local people preserve their folk performing arts or traditional festivals. With a perspective of reflective anthropology, I explore my experiences as a researcher working in the earthquake-affected area and argue the role of anthropologists who study local cultural heritage after large disasters.

The Varieties of Restoration of Local Festivals Affected by 3.11 Tohoku Earthquake

Katsuhiko Takizawa (Nagasaki University, Japan)

In this paper, I explore the significance of local festivals for communities by analyzing the various restoration processes of local festivals in areas affected by the 3.11 Tohoku Earthquake. Many of festivals which were interrupted by the earthquake have been restored since 3.11 as a symbol of community revival. However, there were numerous difficulties faced by villages when restarting the festivals. I focus especially on these difficulties, which were deeply related to the structure and resilience of the communities.

Indigenous Perspectives on Natural Disasters: The Contribution of Religious Studies

Samsul Maarif (Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia)

This paper will discuss indigenous cosmological perceptions in Indonesia on “nature”. It will specifically discuss how the indigenous peoples of Indonesia perceive what we call “natural disasters”. Building on insights from scholars of indigenous religions such Kenneth Morrison, Graham Harvey, James Cox, Sam Gill, this paper will first problematize the

cosmology claimed to be essential in “world” religions and universally applied to all cultures. This cosmology is characterized as hierarchical: supernatural (the domain of God, gods, spirits), culture (the domain of human beings), and nature (the domain of non-human beings, such as animals, the land, mountains and so forth). This paper will show that the hierarchical cosmology is alien to some indigenous peoples of Indonesia, particularly when we account for how they respond to natural disasters. This study will then explain an alternative cosmology, characteristically “dimensional”. Indigenous peoples, whose cosmology is dimensional and foundational to their (indigenous) religions, perceive natural disasters, including volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, as purposeful actions of certain (non-human) beings, such as mountains, the land, and the oceans. This paper will conclude that an alternative cosmology must be incorporated in conceptualizing disaster managements in which indigenous peoples are impacted or the subjects.

Panel Special Session II
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Religious Issues in Disaster: Comparison between Indonesia and Japan

Suhadi (Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia)

Indonesia and Japan are two countries which are both centers of natural disasters in Asia. Unfortunately, comparative disaster research from the perspective of cultural/religious studies is rarely done. If such studies were conducted, they would be very useful in helping each country reflect on the role of religions (in both Japan and Indonesia) in disaster preparedness, as well as rehabilitation after a disaster. Japanese and Indonesian people could also learn from each other. This paper is an initial and preliminary study which compares the religious issues that arose following the Aceh tsunami in 2004, as well as some other disasters in Indonesia, as well as religious issues which arose after the 3.11 disaster in Japan. Although Japanese and Indonesian people have different models in regards to their way of religiosity, the trend of religious involvement in disaster recovery in both countries is interesting to study. In addition, the functions – and sometimes also conflicts -- of religions are important to study in order to know, in the context of natural disaster events, the development of religious roles in the contemporary Indonesian and Japanese public spheres.

The Seeds of a Modern Disaster Paradigm? Famine and Understandings of Disaster in Colonial Indonesia

Sander Tetteroo (Leiden University, Netherlands/Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia)

In the past, as in the present, Indonesia has suffered many calamitous events, ranging from relatively small-scale and localized events, such as flash floods (*banjir*) and fires, to wide-ranging famines and deadly earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The governments and societies of colonial and independent Indonesia have struggled to respond to and cope with the outcomes of such calamities. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it will briefly discuss the response of the Dutch colonial government to a famine that struck the archipelago from the years 1900 to 1904. In particular, it will focus on three aspects: (1) the relief measures taken by the colonial government, (2) societal philanthropy, and (3) the framing of the disaster by colonial administrators. The formulation of the concepts ‘disaster’ and ‘famine’ are strikingly similar to modern-day terminology, tentatively suggesting that a link exists between present and past conceptualizations of the phenomena. Second, this paper will briefly outline the writer’s current research project, which concerns (religious) philanthropy in response to natural disasters in the late colonial period as well as the Sukarno era (c. 1890-1965). In this section, I highlight the typical philanthropic responses to natural disasters in the Indonesian colony: the formation of charitable committees to raise money for victims, holding public events to raise money, and appealing to the potential givers’ consciences in order to solicit donations. While the initiative for such fundraising was often taken by Dutch/European residents, the early twentieth century saw the creation of several Indonesian charitable initiatives, such as by the Tionghoa Hwee Koan and Muhammadiyah. Disasters also incited (philanthropic) responses by political organizations, such as the early nationalist Budi Utomo and Sarekat Islam movements. My research will focus on the connections between these religious and secular initiatives, the government, and society in response to particular calamities, such as volcanic eruptions (Kelud 1919, Merapi 1930), earthquakes (Wonosobo 1924, Padang Panjang 1926, Yogyakarta 1943), famines, and epidemics. In particular, my interest lies with the conceptualization of disasters by such organizations and how these conceptualizations informed their respective actions.

Reevaluating Religious Role as a Social Resilience in post 3.11 Japan

Kimura Toshiaki (Tohoku University Japan)

The role of religion in the modern world is one of the most popular topics in religious studies, along with sociology of religion. Giddens contrasted pre-modern religious worldviews and modern reflective thought, and indicated that risk recognition is a uniquely modern phenomenon. However, he also admitted that modern people still use religion as an alternative for coping with the uncertainty caused by risk recognition. Concerning religious roles in the modern world, there are two basic ideas. Secularization theorists emphasize the function of religion in offering private salvation. Luckman talked about privatization of religion and Beck contrasted pre-modern institutional “religion” and modern private “religious” attitude. He thought that even the concept of God would change to “god for myself” in modern world. On the other hand, scholars who pay attention to the “public role” of religion, like Casanova, discuss religion as something which will be, or should be, reintroduced into the public sphere in the modern world. In the same way, Inaba urges both religious scholars and specialists to pay more attention to the “social contribution of religion”. In this paper, I take two cases of religious disaster aid following the Great East Japan Earthquake as examples, and discuss the potency of local religion as a form of social resilience. My point is that the “localness” of religion, especially the local community’s reliance on those religions, is in some cases useful in coping with social crises, such as the disaster in Japan.

Religion and Culture in the Perspective of Geography after Disaster Events

Junun Sartohadi (Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia)

Disaster can occur at any time in any place on the earth’s surface. Disasters may not happen all the time, but they seem to follow a certain cycle. Certain types of disaster also happen at certain locations, and humans, by using knowledge and technology, may predict future occurrences. Disasters are always followed by changes in physical environment systems. The culture of the people who live in disaster-prone areas is developed under the influence of a specific physical environment during the pre-disaster period. This culture is the product of long, complex interactions between humans and environmental systems. The culture is a reflection of the people’s perspectives of their physical environment, and might not be easy to change within a short period of time in response to changes in the physical environment. Community resilience is an important component in disaster management, and a manifestation of their capability to survive under the threat of disaster. Belief that disasters come from God makes the community responsive towards any threat on their lives. However, in the most cases the people are not yet adaptive towards the new physical environment systems. This situation makes them vulnerable to the next disaster. Religion should teach these people that God always provide threats and opportunities in a balanced way. Said opportunities should be managed together with the existing natural hazard in order to mitigate the risk of future disasters.

Community Resilience and Disaster Risk Management Based on Local Wisdom in Nagari Mandeh, West Sumatra

Zikri Alhadi, ArieYulfa, and Siska Sasmita (State University of Padang Indonesia)

Nagari Mandeh, a village surrounded by hills off the western coast of Sumatra, faces two types of natural disaster: landslides, a regular disaster which endangers the lives of the community every time heavy rain falls; and earthquakes, which can cause tsunamis. Today earthquakes are the main issue dealt with by the disaster management policies of Pesisir Selatan Regency. These government policies are implemented through a bundle of earthquake and tsunami preparedness programs. However, this remote area is not properly managed. Fortunately, the community has its own resilience scheme, based on local wisdom, which is presented in form of an early warning system for earthquakes which is based on the sounds of *kuwou* birds and rumble of old gravestones. Unfortunately, under the Back to Nagari movement, the role of *nagari* leaders in developing disaster resilience has not been taken into account. The fading functions of clan institutions – the *niniak mamak* and *bundo kanduang* – debilitate components of the *nagari*, which do not handle a vital function in the extended family. Almost all of their roles are related to taking care of the *anak kamanakan* (sons and nephew relations) for the nuclear family.

The Role of Religious Places in Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness in Indonesia: Making Vulnerable Communities Resilient

Wawan Yulianto (Islamic Help UK)

IR Indonesia, UN OCHA and Nahdatul Ulama conducted a preliminary study of the potential role of mosques in disaster preparedness in West Sumatra and West Java from 2010 to 2011. This study is significant not only in describing the role of mosques during a disaster, but also during the recovery phase and in strengthening social cohesion. It also suggests that the role of other religious institutions, such as churches, is also important during the emergency phase, as demonstrated when Islam-based agencies used a church as a distribution center prior to distributing aid to tsunami victims in Mentawai Island, West Sumatra, in 2010. Although the role of religious institutions in disaster situations in Indonesia is evident, there has yet to be any DRR programs implemented using this resource. While aid assistance was mainly delivered using internationally agreed standards, this local context should also be taken into consideration. This paper investigates the DRR program on The Role of Religious Places in a Disaster Situation in Indonesia, using West Sumatra as a pilot. This model is in accordance with this research project's specific objective, namely to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability of local communities and institutions through support strategies which enable them to better prepare for, mitigate and respond to natural disasters. This paper is based on field work conducted at five mosques and one church in the most disaster-prone area of West Sumatra, where training on disaster preparation, mitigation, and early warning systems was offered.