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## Focus

### Area Studies in the Age of COVID-19



I believe COVID-19 hit the news in Wuhan in January last year. At that time, it was unimaginable that, the disease could affect the world as it has. I had, for my own research, an international conference on Arctic Studies scheduled to be held in Tokyo in March 2020. A heated discussion with the organizers ensued and, at the

beginning of February, the event was effectively canceled. Since that time, I had hoped that things would get back to normal with the arrival of autumn, but that has not been the case and things are more unpredictable than ever.

There have been many changes at the university as well. Most classes are being offered online, and all extracurricular activities have been suspended. While classes are continuing, it is important to point out that education is not the only function of the university. The university is a place where diverse groups of people of all ages come together to create new knowledge and, in turn, bring vitality to societies. As an educator, it saddens me that this year's new students have to experience their university through a computer screen.

That said, there are many positive aspects to holding classes online. Small classes and the like have become more active, and location constraints have been removed, allowing distance learners to participate in weekly classes. For example, the annual online conference of my affiliated academic association with 2000

member was a huge success. Joint research activities have also seen an unexpected increase in effectiveness. What's more, we can now record online meetings, and this allows us to view or listen to missed meetings and classes, even at 2x speed! While there are some limitations, technology has allowed us to interact, even when our schedules do not align.

The biggest problem we are facing at the moment is that field research, which is an essential part of Area Studies, is not possible. In some fields, it is possible to conduct in-country surveys by comparison. However, there is no way for us to interview locals or gain access to research materials on-site in Russia, China, and Mongolia. Originally, we had planned on asking our partner joint research teams in each country to conduct surveys. However, this didn't work out as infection control measures are preventing them from going out and doing so.

Advancing the work of Area Studies without being able to travel is a difficult problem to solve. There are many topics that need to be addressed such as the need to digitalize materials, including written materials and specimens, and methods for studying cyberspace. These are long-term problems though, and there are also practical problems that require short-term solutions. For example, we urgently need to find a solution for Area Studies graduate students so that they can gather data needed for their doctorate theses.

All of these issues make me feel that the field of Area Studies is at a major crossroads. **(Hiroki Takakura)**



## Recent Events

### The Politics and Pitfalls of Maritime Governance

An international seminar was held at the University of Aberdeen (UK) on June 17-19, 2019. Prof. David Anderson (anthropology) represented the University of Aberdeen, and Prof. Hiroki Takakura of our center represented Japan. The event was held as part of the international joint research project “Political Ecology of Coastal Societies”, and was the second time the forum was held. Note that this activity was funded by a Japan-UK social sciences exchange grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Prof. Anderson is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of Siberian anthropology and Arctic studies and has enjoyed a relationship with Prof. Takakura through international academic organizations and symposiums since 2004. In 2019 we invited Prof. Anderson to present at the Tohoku Forum for Creativity, held by Tohoku University. It was at this time that we agreed on a plan for our respective universities to work together and hold the seminar.

Aberdeen is known as a North Sea oilfield town of Scotland. The University of Aberdeen was founded in the 15th century and is one of the oldest universities in the UK. The University of Aberdeen is known for its granite buildings, but the venue for our seminar was their avant-garde glass-walled library. In addition to Prof. Takakura, Prof. Alyne Delaney and Ms. Nao Sakaguchi attended from Tohoku University. Also, researchers from Hitotsubashi University, the National Folk Museum, Sophia University, and Hokkaido University traveled from Japan to attend. Presenters from the UK included five members from the University of Aberdeen, and 17 members from three universities including Cardiff University. Prof. Anderson argued that political ecology has, to-date,

been centered on land and the third world and, as such, there is ample room to study corporate, governmental, and local resource utilization in the seas of the first world. The delegates from Japan presented on Tsunami seawall construction and the state of coastal fisheries after the Great East Japan Earthquake. The delegates from the UK discussed the relationship between Scottish oilfield development and coastal society. During the program, we visited the port of Aberdeen and learned about their current situation from a coastal conservation administration official.

Through this exchange, the researchers from both Japan and the UK recognized that there is potential in conducting a comparative research project on the sustainable development of coastal societies in Japan and the UK. Also, an agreement was reached to hold a research seminar at Tohoku University, including a tour of the disaster area, in October 2019. **(Hiroki Takakura)**



Group photograph after the seminar

## Recent Events

### New Possibilities for Economic Development in Northeast Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) - Focused on Logistics and Environment

In recent years, China, which has lauded itself as the “World’s Factory” has come to face an unprecedented predicament due to foreign investment moving to Southeast Asia, economic growth slowdown due to excess production capacity, and the impact of the trade war with the U.S. Meanwhile, the relationship between the neighboring countries represented as Japan and South Korea remain at a low level, and the world is worry about North Korea’s missile tests. In addition to these political and economic factors, the effects of climate change have caused enormous socio-economic losses to every country. With the economic development of Northeast Asian countries becoming increasingly unstable and uncertain, breakthrough measures for achieving sustainable development are needed.



Presentation by Professor. Jusen Asuka

Based on the above background, the international symposium was held at the Suruga campus of Meiji University on Dec. 7, 2019. During the symposium, we had a multi-

faceted discussion on new possibilities for economic development in Northeast Asia under the “BRI”. This discussion focused on logistics and the environment. Professor Jusen Asuka (Tohoku University) gave a presentation on changes in coal production and consumption and the state of new coal-fired power plants in China, and pointed out the “BRI” caused various problems as coal-fired power generation export. Professor Yonghao Zhu (Fukushima University) lectured on the progress and problems of the “BRI” from logistics, including Trans-Eurasia transportation and port development. Regarding the impact of the “BRI” on the aviation industry and air transport, Professor Ippei Machida (Meiji University) used data to demonstrate changes in China’s aviation industry, airports, and airlines caused by the publication and implementation of long-term development plans. He also pointed out the importance of energy security from the standpoint of the current state of aviation fuel refining capacity, which is essential for the implementation of the “BRI”. Professor Hongmei Li (Jilin University) delivered the report entitled “The current state and problems of China-Japan-Korea logistics cooperation”; Professor Zhenshan Bao (Yancheng Teachers University) delivered the report entitled “Retail Cooperation and Competition in



Northeast Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative”; and Weimin He (Guangdong Ocean University Cunjin College) delivered the report entitled “Unbalanced Regional Economic Development and the Search for a Model for China-Japan Regional Economic Exchange-Economic Exchange between the Beibu Gulf Region and Japan.”

This symposium was attended by scholars from different research fields to discuss the possibilities of international cooperation for the sustainable development of the Northeast Asian region through interdisciplinary collaborative research. **(Dan Jin)**



Group photograph after symposium

## Recent Events

### Urban Mongolia: Phases of Transformation

This symposium was sponsored by the Study on Resources and Management of Northeast Asia (Environmental Anthropology Group, Chief: Hiroki Takakura), which is one of the joint research groups of the Project Unit for the collaborative study on the environment and resources of Northeast Asia (Chief: Hiroki Oka).



Professor Oka speaks on purpose of Symposium

In Session I entitled Urbanization and Transformation of the Dwelling Culture in Mongolia, Hiroshi Yatsuo (Tokyo Polytechnic University), who majored in architectonics with a focus in city planning, explained the purpose of the session and, then the following seven presentations were made that consider both the historical and present aspects of Ulaanbaatar’s living environment. Go Sakamoto (Nagoya Sangyo University): Public Acceptance around the Redevelopment Projects in Ulaanbaatar; Noriyuki Sato (Fudan University): ‘Urbanization’ of Khuree and Chinese Merchants; Yuko Matsumiya (Meiji University): Contradiction between Top-Down and Bottom-Up: How State-Led Redevelopment of *Ger* Areas Impedes the Dwellers’ Subjective Improvement of Living Standards; Hiroshi Yatsuo (Tokyo Polytechnic University): From Nomadic to Fixed Dwelling: The Emergence of Settlement Culture in the *Ger* Area in the Socialist Era in Ulaanbaatar; G. Lubsanjamts (Tokyo University): Mongolia’s Urban Planning System and Transformation of Ulaanbaatar; Kunihiko Ozawa (Almec VPI.): Urban Policy and Housing Problems in Modern Mongolia; and E. Purev-Erdene (Mongolian University of Science and Technology): Development Paradigm of Ulaanbaatar Region and the Capital City.



Professor Yatsuo speaks during Session I

In Session II entitled Mongolian Rural and Urban Relationship in Regard to *Dzud* (cold and snow disaster), member of the CNEAS anthropology group of NIHU project and holder of multiple research achievements on the



Professor Ozaki speaks during Session II

topic of the relationship between Mongolian nomads and cities, Takahiro Ozaki (Kagoshima University) explained the purpose of the session and, then, the following five reports on the various aspects of disaster mitigation in response to disasters such as *Dzud*, medical care, livestock farming, suburbanization of pastoralists, and urban migration were given: Masato Shinoda (Nagoya University): Are Dzuds Climate-driven or Man-Made? Regional Gaps of Disaster Mitigation; Shinji Otani (Tottori University): Effects of *Dzud* on Human Health and Medical Problems in Mongolia; Takahiro Tomita (Ritsumeikan University): Industrialization of Pastoral Production and *Dzud* in the Socialist Period; Takahiro Ozaki (Kagoshima University): Suburbanization of Pastoralists from Remote Areas after *Dzud* in 2000s; and Kaoru Kakinuma (Shanghai University): *Dzud* and Rural-Urban Migration.

While Mongolia is known as a nomadic country, it is also an urban society in which more than half of its population lives in cities. In particular, Ulaanbaatar is said to have a population of 1.5 to 1.8 million people. Ulaanbaatar was built during the socialist period and, especially after democratization, has seen rapid economic development resulting in the population density of the city growing to exceed its environmental tolerance. This is a problem common to many cities but, in the case of Ulaanbaatar, it is compounded with its nature as a city of a nomadic nation that has a unique relationship with nomadic pastoralism. The symposium succeeded in shedding light on the multi-faceted issues facing Ulaanbaatar, and showed that it is important to study both the urban environment and the rural grassland environment.

**(Hiroki Oka)**

## Recent Events

### THE RUSSIA-JAPAN WORKSHOP 2020: Russia-Japan Forum of Asian Studies I



Since 2013, the Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University has held Japan-Russia workshops on the topic of Asian studies. Up until recently, these workshops have been co-sponsored by the Institute for the Humanities, Novosibirsk State University. However, this year, we had the pleasure of additional co-sponsorships from The School of Arts and Humanities, Far Eastern Federal University, and the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Tohoku University. We were joined this time by Prof. Elena Voytishek and two of her students from Novosibirsk State University, and Prof. Sofia Lim and two of her students from Far Eastern Federal University. Also in attendance from Tohoku University were Prof. Hiroki Oka from the Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Also in attendance from Tohoku University were Prof. Hiroki Oka from the Center for Northeast Asian Studies and seven students from the and seven students from the Graduate School of Arts and letters, the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, and the Graduate School of Environmental Studies. Last but not least, Prof. Petr Podalko from Aoyama Gakuin University was with us as a guest lecturer. Prof. Podalko spoke on Russian language education in Japan, Prof. Voytishek on Chinese incense culture, Prof. Lim on democratic movements in pre-war

Japanese universities, and Prof. Oka on migrant labor in Qing dynasty Mongolia. Student presentations were diverse and included topics related to Japan such as waste recovery in Japan, foreign migrant labor, the movement for environmental conservation, and color variations in pottery of the Heian period; topics related to China such as Chinese modern art, civilian rule in the later Han times, imperial cortege in Tang China, the propaganda policy of the Guomindang party of the Republic of China, and the history of Manchouguo education policy; and non-conformism in Soviet Russia. Many questions were asked during the Q&A session.

(Hiroki Oka)



Group photograph of participants

## Recent Events

### Integration of Humanities with Sciences: New Logistics Understanding Human Adaptations in Northeast Asia



The aim of the 2018 Forum for Creativity “Geological Stabilization and Human Adaptations in Northeast Asia” was the comprehensive understanding of area studies in the Northeast Asian region through the integration of arts and science. During the forum, four workshops were held linking the four fields of anthropology, religion, archeology, and geology, to provide an international network of researchers and a forum for researchers to hold cross-disciplinary discussions. With the support of the Tohoku Forum for Creativity, the program hosts (myself and profs Kanomata, and Takakura) extended invitations to four speakers: Dr. Lasse Sørensen of the National Museum of Denmark, Prof Minoru Yoneda of The University Museum of The University of Tokyo, Prof. Daria Ivanova of Far Eastern Federal University, and Dr. Takahiko Ogawara of the Fossa Magna Museum. The topic of the forum dealt with what is required of new research on the integration of art and science and, specifically, what sort of research is most desired. The frontier of art-science integration methodology surrounding human history was also discussed. Thirty-TWO participants attended the event including two senior researchers and Nineteen young researchers (undergraduate and post-doctorate students). i nine were from

overseas (five countries were represented).

We learned that, interdisciplinary research is supported at the research institute and at the national level in Denmark. Danish, researchers in specialized fields such as material science, in which synchrotron radiation facilities are utilized, and machine learning closely collaborate with researchers in the anthropology and humanities disciplines to achieve international results. We can learn from these successes and create a new framework that allows for flexible innovation at the Center as well.

(Tatsuki Tsujimori)



Dr. Sørensen of the National Museum of Denmark begins his lecture



## Awards

### IEICE (Institute of Electronics, Information and Communication Engineers), Achievement Award June 2019

#### Development of the ALIS land mine detection sensor and humanitarian demining activities

##### Award recipients: Motoyuki Sato and Kazunori Takahashi

Land mines left after the end of civil wars have greatly affected the use of public lands and farming, and have been an obstacle to economic recovery. Humanitarian demining activities to remove land mines and return the land to residents attracted worldwide attention after the 1997 Ottawa Treaty. However, only a small number of countries have actually completed the removal of land mines, and it is anticipated that the work of demining will continue for at least the next 20 years.

In 2002, we received a report from the Committee for the Promotion of Research on Humanitarian Anti-Personnel Mines Detection and Removal of the Science Council of Japan and, since then have been working to develop ALIS (Advanced Land Mine Imaging System). ALIS is a sensor that combines an electromagnetic induction sensor (metal detector) with a ground penetrating radar (GPR), and is manually swung back and forth by an operator to detect land mines. ALIS is the only land mine detection sensor in the world that can perform synthetic aperture radar (SAR) processing on acquired data to three-dimensionally visualize objects buried underground.

We successfully developed and put ALIS into practice in Cambodia with the support of the JST promotion project and a JSPS Kakenhi grant-in-aid for scientific research. The results have been academically recognized with outstanding paper awards from SAGEEP (Symposium on the Application of Geophysics to Engineering and Environmental Problems) and IEICE.

In 2009, we formed an ALIS team consisting of six people from the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) and, since

then, our prototype equipment has been used to complete the removal of land mines from 254,867 m<sup>2</sup> of farmland, detecting a total of 82 antipersonnel land mines. Our measurements showed that there is no need to excavate 12,081 of the 15,621 locations where metal was detected. In other words, our measurements showed that about 77% of the pieces of metal detected in the ground had no possibility of being land mines. These results are a testament that ALIS is more efficient than conventional metal detectors and is the most important reason for using ALIS instead of conventional metal detectors in Humanitarian demining. It is not commonly known that “machine removal” of land mines involves running over land mines with heavy machinery, is limited to rural areas, and that hand-held land mine detection sensors must be used to verify removal after the machine work is completed.

Joint research with corporations has allowed us to miniaturize and reduce the weight of ALIS hardware, leading to ALIS’s commercialization in 2017. This device is equipped with software developed by the award recipients. The software has received two patents and is installed on an Android tablet device. Since ALIS was tested and found to be effective, CMAC and the Japanese NPO IMCCD started full-scale removal efforts in the Cambodian minefield in January 2019. Our research was recognized as being extremely original and important from the standpoint of utilizing radio science technology for international peace-building, and was awarded this award. **(Motoyuki Sato)**



ALIS being used in Cambodian mine field

## Awards

### Emeritus Professor Arata Hirakawa Receives Special Municipal Government Achievement Award from Sendai City

On July 1, 2019, a memorial was held celebrating the 130th anniversary of the implementation of the municipal system and the 30th anniversary of the designation and implementation of the ward system of Sendai City. At this event, Emeritus Prof. Arata Hirakawa (Divisional Director of the Uehiro Research Division of Historical Materials Study, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University) was awarded a Special Municipal Government Achievement Award from the mayor of Sendai City. Prof. Hirakawa received this award for his new research on city planning based on disaster prevention and disaster mitigation, and his contributions to the recovery effort after the Great East Japan Earthquake and to the advancement of the local communities. His dedication as an educator and contributions to the advancement of Sendai City were also listed as accomplishments.

Prof. Hirakawa majored in Japanese history. In 1985, he began working as an associate professor in the Department of Education at Tohoku University. Moreover, he has worked as a professor in the Center for Northeast Asian Studies since its inception in 1996. He has achieved significant results on and off campus throughout a career including serving as the fourth-generation director of the center for a time and, thereafter, as the director of the International Research Institute of Disaster Science. Currently, he is engaged in study and research as the divisional director of the Uehiro Research Division of Historical Materials Study.

Prof. Hirakawa has been constantly engaged in the preservation of historical documents and activities benefiting the local community. While researching the history of Miyagi Prefecture, he came across a record of the efforts to rescue the cultural treasures damaged in the North Miyagi Prefecture Earthquake (July 26, 2003). Inspired by this, he built an organization made up of historians, graduate students, and local residents to preserve and pass down irreplaceable historical documents to future generations. These efforts have rekindled awareness of the importance of preserving historical documents, and Prof. Hirakawa’s work has been recognized as being instrumental in creating an environment of everyone learning together. As mentioned in the reasons given for the award, Prof. Hirakawa’s efforts have held great significance for the recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and have been a driving force for the implementation city planning focused on disaster prevention.

This award represent decades of study and is an inspiration to those working with Prof. Hirakawa. All of the staffs at the Center celebrate his achievement and are excited to see what he does next. **(Kenichiro Aratake)**



Professor Arata Hirakawa and Sendai City Mayor, Kazuko Kori

## New Staff and Visiting Scholars

### Assistant Professor **Daniel Pastor Galan**

Frontier Research Institute for Interdisciplinary Sciences, Tohoku University  
2019.6 - present  
Geology, Tectonics, Earth history



### Visiting Scholar **Viktor Viktorovich Kondrashin**

Director, Center of Economic History, Institute of Russian History, The Russian Academy of Sciences  
2019.7 - 2019.9  
Agricultural history



### Visiting Scholar **Kennet E Flores**

Assistant Professor, The Brooklyn College of the City University of New York  
2019.6 - 2019.8  
Geochemistry, Tectonics



### Assistant Professor **Masumi Isogai**

2019.10 - present  
Historical studies, Oriental studies



### Assistant Professor **Takahiro Hirano**

2019.10 - present  
Evolutionary ecology, Malacology, Paleobiology



### Research Fellow **Anwer Sayed Abdelhameed Ahmed**

2019.1 - present  
Electromagnetic waves



### Research Fellow **Yukari Ohno**

2019.10 - 2020.4  
Theoretical ecology



### Visiting Scholar **Inna Safonova**

Laboratory Head, Evolution of Paleo-Oceans and Mantle Magmatism, Geology-Geophysical Department, Novosibirsk State University  
2019.9 - 2019.11  
Geochemistry, Geology



### Visiting Scholar **Mohammad Shariar Shovon**

Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Rajshahi University  
2019.10 - 2019.11  
Petrology, Tectonics



### Visiting Scholar **Mengwen Zhu**

Junior Fellow, Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts, Southern University of Science and Technology  
2019.12 - 2020.1  
Chinese literature



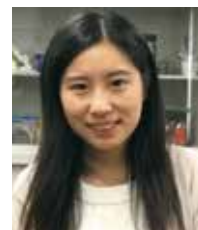
### Assistant Professor **Sunhee Lee**

2020.3 - present  
Social anthropology



### Assistant Professor **Yuanyuan Teng**

2020.4 - present  
Regional economics, Chinese studies



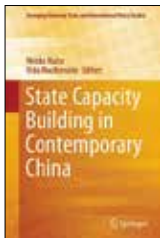
## Publications

The language of the following books is in Japanese, unless otherwise noted.

### ■ Northeast Asian Monograph Series

Yukihiro Kawaguchi and Mio Horie eds., *Internal Migration in China: Encounter with Inner Others*, Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, December 2020.

Hiroko Naito and Vida Macikenaite, eds., *State Capacity Building in Contemporary China (Emerging-Economy State and International Policy Studies)*, Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd., March 2020. (English)



Kenichiro Aratake, Teiji Nomoto, and Hiroyuki Fujikata, eds., *Michinoku History Course: The Tohoku Region during the Edo Period as Depicted in Contemporary Documents*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan Inc., November 2020.

### ■ Northeast Asian Books

Kenichiro Aratake and Yohichi Takahashi, eds., *People and Areas Connected by Ancient Documents: Future of History Data Preservation Activities*, Sendai: Tohoku University Press, September 2019.

### ■ Northeast Asian Studies

Northeast Asian Studies is a periodical academic journal for the purpose of contributing to the development of area studies and its related fields in Northeast Asia. Northeast Asian Studies, February 2020.

### ■ CNEAS Monograph Series

Research results of CNEAS joint research projects, and individual projects, irregular publication (in house publications)

Kenichiro Aratake and Yoichi Takahashi, eds., *Shinto Priest Historical Documents of the Shiogama Shrine in the Edo Period*, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University Series No.66, February 2019.



### ■ Researcher's Initiative Publications

Kyosuke Terayama, *Soviet Far Eastern Policies of Stalin: Reconsidering Northeast Asian History with Archive Materials*, Tokyo: Kokon-shoin Publishing, March 2020.

Yu Fukuda, *When We Reflect Upon the Disaster: Sociology of Post-disaster Ritual*, Tokyo: Keio University Press Inc., March 2020.

Shinichiro Tabata and Masanori Goto eds., Hiroki Takakura. *Humans and Societies in the Arctic: Sustainability and Development*, Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press, March 2020.

Sakura Koretsune and Hiroki Takakura eds., *Door of Disaster Documentary Film: On Sharing Memories and Records of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake*, Tokyo: Shinsensya, January 2021.



## Letters

Mengwen Zhu

Southern University of Science and Technology

### Junior Fellow, Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts

Working in the field of classical Chinese studies, one simply cannot bypass the rich contribution made by generations of Japanese Sinologists. For over a century, the Japanese scholarship on Chinese literature, history and philosophy has developed into a unique academic tradition, making vital impact on the scholarship both in China and in the West. This visit to CNEAS, therefore, has provided me with a great opportunity to get a closer look into the world of my Japanese colleagues.

During my stay, I was fortunate to have made acquaintances with scholars working on China's middle period in the Department of Humanities at Tohoku University, who subsequently invited me to one of their reading seminars. Being a first timer at this kind of seminar, I was struck by the detailed and meticulous approach towards the texts. It differed from the seminars I experienced in China where understanding the texts was taken for granted while reading almost never got close enough, or those in the U. S. where reading of the texts could easily be sidetracked or overwhelmed

by translational efforts. In comparison, through this distinctive style of reading seminar, one gets to experience a stimulating "reading space", built around the texts, the grouped readers, the presenters and the discussants. Centered on a particular piece of texts, this type of seminar invites the participants to read from various angles and distances, and to explore the many facets and strata of the textual significance. All in all, I was thoroughly inspired by such reading seminar as an effective approach towards better interpreting the texts, which forms the foundation of our work in humanities. This two-month visit, albeit short, has been particularly fruitful in terms of granting me an insight into the Japanese scholarship in Chinese studies.





## Letters

Inna Safonova

Geology-Geophysical Department, Novosibirsk State University

### Laboratory Head, Evolution of Paleo-Oceans and Mantle Magmatism

I am the Head of the Laboratory of Evolution of Paleo-Oceans and Mantle Magmatism (LEPOM) at the Geology-Geophysical Department of the Novosibirsk State University and a Leading Research Scientist at the Sobolev Institute of Geology and Mineralogy SB Russian Academy of Science, both in Novosibirsk, Russia. I have been cooperating with colleagues from Japan since 1998 - Tokyo Institute of Technology, University of Tokyo, Gifu University, AIST, etc. But I had never worked in Sendai before autumn 2019, when I joined the team of Prof. Tatsuki Tsujimori as a visiting professor. I am a researcher focused on the Central Asian Orogenic Belt, the world largest Pacific-type accretionary orogen. Therefore I am interested very much in the geology of the Japanese Islands, which accretionary and supra-subduction complexes are actualistic analogues of many fossil Pacific-type foldbelts. During my work in CNEAS I was cooperating and communicating with Tōhoku University staff and students on research projects in Japan and Central Asia, in particular, on the Mino accretionary complex and on objectives in Kazakhstan and Mongolia. The results of this projects shed light upon the protoliths of metamorphic rocks hosted by the Early Paleozoic Itmurundy and Tekturmas accretionary complexes of Kazakhstan related to the evolution of the Paleo-Asian Ocean and on the tectonic nature and petrogenesis of Late Paleozoic felsic to mafic igneous rocks of Central Mongolia formed at the active margins of the Mongol-Okhotsk Ocean.

During my stay at CNEAS we have finalized two papers on the Paleozoic Itmurundy and Tekturmas accretionary complexes of Kazakhstan which were submitted and later published, respectively, in *Gondwana Research* journal and *Geological Journal*, top rank journals in Earth Sciences. In addition, we created a basis for one more paper of Mongol-Okhotsk ophiolites and active margin units, which is now under preparation and hopefully will be submitted to *Lithos* soon. Certainly, these 3 papers and other papers planned to be jointly prepared in future will keep the team of Prof. Tsujimori in particular, and Tōhoku University in general on the forefront of Earth Sciences. We have a lot of “hot potato” topics, understudied localities and prospective opportunities to continue our cooperation and friendship and to make a significant contribution of our understanding of how Asia was born, how it evolved, which treasures it still keeps undiscovered and what Asia will be after 50-100 million years from now. Finally, I would like to express my most cordial thanks to the CNEAS, Tōhoku University and to Professor Tatsuki Tsujimori for the fruitful and inspiring fall which will remain in my memory forever.



## Editorial

### Editorial postscript:

We are sending you the eighth volume of the CNEAS Bulletin. This Bulletin highlights some 2019 and 2020 activities of CNEAS. For this issue, we received letters from Dr. Inna Safonova (Head of the Laboratory of Evolution of Paleo-Oceans and Mantle Magmatism (LEPOM) at the Geology-Geophysical Department of the Novosibirsk State University) and Dr. Mengwen Zhu (Junior Fellow at Southern University of Science and Technology). We are glad to have communication from them with updates on their present situation.

We could not predict a year ago that a pandemic would spread across the world. The challenges faced by the world's pop-

ulation – unimaginable one year ago- continue today. Similar to 3.11, when a fisherman stated “‘I don't believe it' is no longer in my vocabulary,” what was undreamed-of a year ago, is now daily life. As scholars, we find ourselves putting research on hold and adjusting our activities. And like many after the tsunami of 2011, we find ourselves waiting for life to go back to “normal”; in our case, with fieldtrips and in-person interviews. But like post-3.11 life, we adjust to a “new normal,” with on-line technology and new research methods. Though challenges will continue, we wish everyone a productive and healthy year.

The CNEAS Bulletin is published once a year by the Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University.

The Bulletin promotes a continuing exchange of information with

former visiting scholars and others who related to the Northeast Asian Studies.

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