



## The 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai Disaster and the Role of Religious Practitioners

Sponsored by the Department of Practical Religious Studies at Tohoku University



2015/3/17 (Tue) 13:30-15:40 at Tohoku University Kawauchi-kita Campus Room C-201

### Program

1. Opening Remarks Hara Takahashi (Tohoku Univ.)
2. Lecture(1) Rev. Taio Kaneta (Soto-shu, Tsudaiji Temple) “Activities of *Café de Monk*”  
Lecture(2) Yozo Taniyama (Tohoku Univ.) “Significance of Interfaith Chaplains(*Rinsho Shukyo-shi*)”
3. Panel Discussion: On the Role of Religious Practitioners in Public Sphere
  - (1) Tomoko Hosoya (Sisters of Charity of Ottawa)  
“Disaster Relief Activities of Caritas Ishinomaki Base”
  - (2) Genshu Toyama (Nichiren-shu) “On the Activities of Team Vihara”
  - (3) Shido Tanaka (Jodo Shin-shu Honganjiha) “Working as an Interfaith Chaplain in Numaguchi Clinic”

Discussant: Eiichi Shinohara (Soto-shu, Chojuin Temple)

Chair: Hara Takahashi (Tohoku Univ.)

\*Simultaneous Interpretation: NOT available

\*Handout in English: Available

\*Questions in English are welcome; an interpreter is available on the floor.

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Endowed Department of Practical Religious Studies at Tohoku University was founded in April 2012. It has offered training course for interfaith chaplains (*Rinsho Shukyo-shi*), to provide spiritual care in the public sphere. Since the establishment of the program three years ago, 95 trainees from various religious background have finished the course.

In this symposium, we try reconsidering the role of religious practitioners in the disaster areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake. We also explore the current activities of interfaith chaplains who have completed our course. The questions to be asked are; What role can religious practitioners in Japan play on the basis of their experience of the great disaster? What are their future possibilities? What are the issues that they face?

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# PANELISTS

**Rev. Taio KANETA** was born in 1956. He received his B.A. and M.A. from Komazawa University. At present he is the chief priest of Tsudai-ji Zen Temple, the manager of itinerant active listening café “Café de Monk”, and the chair of the Department of Practical Religious Studies Steering Committee. In the training program of interfaith chaplains at Tohoku University, he has taught readiness and preparedness as a religious leader to the trainees, through his lectures and field training, grounded on his own experiences in the Great East Japan Earthquake.

**Rev. Yozo TANIYAMA** was born in 1972. He received B.A.(1994), M.A.(1996) and Ph.D. (2000) from Tohoku University. He worked as a Buddhist chaplain in the vihara palliative care ward of Nagaoka-Nishi Hospital from 2000 to 2003. He has taught clinical thanatology at Shitennoji University (Osaka), St. Thomas University (Hyogo), and Sophia University (Tokyo). At present he is Associate Professor of Practical Religious Studies at Tohoku University; and has developed and been in charge of lectures, group work and field training of the training program of interfaith chaplains. He is co-author of *Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved* (eds. by J. S. Watts and Y. Tomatsu, Wisdom Publication) and *Religion and Psychotherapy in Modern Japan* (eds. by C. Harding, F. Iwata and S. Yoshinaga, Routledge).

## Panel Discussion: On the Role of Religious Practitioners in Public Sphere

**Sr. Tomoko HOSOYA**, Roman Catholic nun, Sisters of Charity of Ottawa. Born in 1961. Joined the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in 1997. *Rinsh!-sh"ky!-shi* (Interfaith chaplain) 6<sup>th</sup> session trainee.

Having worked in a Roman Catholic kindergarten, in April 2013 I became involved in support activities for those affected by the Great East Japan earthquake. From April 2013 I have been active as a member of the volunteer base Caritas Ishinomaki. Four years after the disaster, an increasing number of those affected are seeking “heart to heart connections” and a place to belong. I work in close association with those who bear an emotional burden stemming from the disaster and now live day to day amid a range of concerns. I hope to stay in close contact with these people, and continue to quietly communicate “the existence of one who far transcended human feelings”, as we continue to accept one another’s values.

**Rev. Gensh! T" YAMA**, Born in 1977, Deputy Head Monk of the Nichiren sect J!gy!ji temple, *Rinsh!-sh"ky!-shi* (Interfaith chaplain), Director, Sh"katsu Kaunsera-Ky!kai (legally incorporated body), President, Chi-mu Biha-ra, Guri-fu Sapo-to Badei (Grief Support Buddy).

I became a monk having studied at Chiba University Faculty of Sciences Department of Chemistry and Rissu University, Faculty of Buddhist Studies, Department of Religion.

Within what is referred to as “Funeral Buddhism”, we may look to the truth at the heart of it, and therein, through funerals, look to the lives of many. Thus, we may approach the importance of coming closer to life and not be limited to postmortem concerns. In so doing, we gain a striking sense of the importance of looking at death.

I am currently involved in a number of activities through which, alongside the practice of memorial ceremonies for the dead, we may come closer to life and a wise understanding thereof. These include grief support for those who have lost someone important to them, the activities of *Rinsh!-sh"ky!-shi* (Interfaith chaplains) which consider the ways in which persons of religious vocations may draw close to the living, and Team Vihara, which includes members from a range of occupations and is not limited to those of a religious vocation.

**Rev. Shid# TANAKA**, Born in 1988, Originally from Gifu City, Gifu Prefecture. Monk of the J!keiji temple, affiliated to the J!doshin sect Honganji branch. *Rinsh!-sh"ky!-shi* (Interfaith chaplain) 5<sup>th</sup> session trainee, Graduate of the Ryukoku University Graduate School of Practical Shin Buddhist Studies. Currently *Rinsh!-sh"ky!-shi* (Interfaith chaplain) at the Numaguchi Clinic (part of the Tokuy!kai legally incorporated medical institution)

I have been employed at the Numaguchi Clinic (in #gaki City, Gifu Prefecture) since April 2014. Our clinic is especially involved in at-home treatment, and I am a member of the at-home treatment team responsible for the mental and spiritual care of our patients. The patients I visit are in the terminal stages of their illnesses, or suffer with chronic illnesses. I work with many different people involved in medical care and treatment on a daily basis to meet the needs of an aging society with a high national death rate.

Commentator:

**Rev. Eiichi SHINOHARA** is the Head Monk of the !S! sect Ch!juin temple and Chairman, NPO *Jisatsu B!shi* (Suicide Prevention) Network *Kaze*. He was born in Toyo'oka City, Hyogo Prefecture in 1944 and graduated from Komazawa University Faculty of Buddhism. Rev. Shinohara has served as a S!t! sect Human Rights Counselor, as the head of the S!t! sect Chiba Prefectural Office of Religious Affairs (*Sh"musho*) and as director of the *Dekiru koto kara* volunteer group.

Chair;

Hara TAKAHASHI  
Associate Professor  
at the Department  
of Practical  
Religious Studies,  
Tohoku University.  
Born in 1969.