

Recovery and revitalization to a mature society

– In place of a greeting



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I will take on the role of Institute Director following NAGAOKA Toru's retirement, Professor of the Faculty of Law, who held the role for the past five years.

Since 2005, I was involved as director in the Institute of Disaster Area Revitalization, Regrowth, and Governance administration during the founding period. Later, I engaged in research on disaster area revitalization, regrowth, and governance at the institute. The research focused mainly on the rehabilitation of people from disaster-affected areas' lifestyles based on the concept of "human-centered recovery." The proposal of, among other things, the "Draft Basic Law on Disaster Recovery and Revitalization" (2010), the formulation of the "Draft Law on Comprehensive Support for Disaster Victims" (2019), and the implementation/analysis of the "National Survey on People Seeking Refuge due to Nuclear Incident" (2020) are representative results of that research. Active work is underway, beginning with study groups on the "legal system," "seeking refuge/evacuation," "rehabilitation of Tohoku," "international comparative law," and the "sustainable regional

recovery and rehabilitation international seminar,” coordinated by Senior Researcher SAITO Yoko. I want the research activities and network to be handed over to the next generation based on the new research results.

While in recent years, earthquake disasters and torrential rain disasters have frequently occurred in Japan, with the COVID-19 crisis, the entire world has been “affected by a disaster.” I think that the limits and problems of the modern and contemporary growth/development-based society have once again been demonstrated. While nuclear disasters have the same origin, the abnormal acceleration in global economic competition has triggered the destruction of natural ecosystems, and the excessive movement of people has increased the spread of viruses. Instead of putting our life energy into competing with others (other people, companies, cities, and countries and nature), we want to apply it to add originality and ingenuity to our environment for enjoying a peaceful daily life.

The concept of “recovery and revitalization” from a disaster is once again being questioned based on a new perception that does not necessarily consider population decline and economic contraction to be negative. What is being sought is the possibility and the task of “recovery and revitalization” that focuses on a mature society rather than “recovery and revitalization” of the growth society. The coronavirus pandemic has provided us with a chance to reconsider the state of our daily lifestyles. For instance, it has led us to appreciate nearby parks and landscapes, which we have usually ignored, get into contact with nearby people, and become aware of our senses again. We can also rethink modern-day “regional recovery and revitalization.” I think that the institute’s concept of “human-centered recovery” ought to be further developed by incorporating social and cultural values such as “the quality of daily life,” “the richness of social interaction,” and “a sense of a calm happiness.”

I sincerely appreciate your continued cooperation, guidance, and encouragement for the Kwansei Gakuin University Institute of Disaster Area Revitalization, Regrowth, and Governance.

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