



Scuola Italiana di Studi  
sull'Asia Orientale  
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# 2015 KYOTO LECTURES

Tuesday, April 21st, 18:00h

**Nathan Hopson** SPEAKER

## Spiritual Homeland Internal Colony Another Japan Tōhoku in Twentieth-Century Thought and History

This talk will examine the conflict of *ressentiment* and the gravity of nationalism in postwar Tōhoku studies. Collective identity is a process of mythmaking, of selective memory and interpretation fueled by “chosen glories” and “chosen traumas.” “Chosen traumas” bequeath the task of recuperation and “restoration” of group honor. After Japan’s 1945 defeat, intellectuals in Tōhoku discovered “chosen glory” in a distinct, even independent, regional history and culture. Trauma was found in historical maltreatment by the Japanese “center(s),” and fused with rejection of Japan’s imperial past as the Northeast was recuperated as a source of political and cultural legitimacy for the postwar. As it will be argued, though it began as an intellectual movement to validate regional identity and imagine a distinct and subjective history and identity for Tōhoku, and to propose this as a model for Japan’s postwar path, the movement to see Tōhoku as “another Japan” was co-opted into popular and academic neo-*Nihonjinron* (discourses of Japanese-ness) in the 1990s. However, the four years since 3/11 have once again prompted the resurgence of disaffected views of the Northeast’s ancient and modern histories as separate from and victim of Japan.

**Nathan Hopson** is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Letters at Nagoya University. He is currently completing a book manuscript on the intersections of regionalism, nationalism, and Japan’s national identity politics on the world stage, using the intellectual history of Tōhoku as a case study. Since receiving his doctorate in 2012, he has taught Japanese and East Asian history at universities in the United States and Japan, and was a postdoctoral associate at Yale University’s Council on East Asian Studies (2013-2014). Previous works include “Systems of Irresponsibility and Japan’s Internal Colony” (*Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 11, no. 52, 2013); “Takahashi Tomio’s Henkyō: Eastern Easts and Western Wests” (*Nichibunken Japan Review*, 2014); “Takahashi Tomio’s Phoenix: Recuperating Hiraizumi, 1950–71” (*Journal of Japanese Studies* 40, no. 2, 2014); “Sengo shisō to shite no Tōhoku: Takahashi Tomio o chūshin ni,” in *Gurōbaruka no naka no Nihonshizō: Chōki no 19 seiki*, ed. by Namikawa Kenji and Kawanishi Hidemichi (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 2013).

**This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room, 1st floor).**

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