



Arrival of the Emperor at Tokyo after the Victory (1895). Source: Met Museum

National Myths and Nationalism in Contemporary Japan

Kiyonobu Date (Sophia University)

3.00 - 5.00 p.m. | **Des mythes nationaux du Japon contemporain : Entre le besoin de démythification et de déconstruction**

Discussants: Jean-Michel Butel (INALCO), Patrick Michel (CNRS-EHESS)

John Nilsson-Wright (University of Cambridge)

5.00 - 7.00 p.m. | **Identity, Populism and the Romantic Impulse: Japan and the Politics of Nostalgia**

Discussants: Hamit Bozarslan (EHESS), Jean-Frédéric Schaub (EHESS)

Thursday 21 February 2019

From 3.00 to 7.00 p.m.

EHESS, Room BS1_28

54 bd Raspail 75006 Paris



National Myths and Nationalism in Contemporary Japan

Chair: Sébastien Lechevalier (EHESS), Frédérique Matonti (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne)

National Myths of Contemporary Japan **Wavering between Demystification and Deconstruction**

| 3.00 - 5.00 p.m.

| Language: French

Studying national myths can provide insight into (religious) faiths and sets of value that have contributed to maintaining the operation of a particular social system. It is especially the case for a country like Japan, where the boundaries between the secular and the religious are not so clear-cut. Certain national myths have helped sustain our belief in the prolongation of so-called “postwar” era, but some of these myths have proved not as tenacious as what people have believed. In this lecture, I will take up three myths: the myth of ethnic homogeneity, the myth associated with the end of war and the myth that nuclear power is safe. This will enable us to critically revise the assumption about the “peaceful state” of postwar Japan. In the social sciences, myths and faiths are often negatively perceived as something requiring disillusionment, but I would like to argue that some aspects of national myths which have contributed to the sustenance of peace should be preserved or even renewed.

Kiyonobu Date is Associate Professor of the Department of French Studies in the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University (Tokyo). He received his PhD degree at University of Lille 3 (co-direction with EPHE) in 2007. He has published a monograph, *L'Histoire religieuse au miroir de la morale laïque*, Editions Keisô, nov. 2010. He is currently interested in religious studies in special reference to French, Quebecois and Japanese secularism.

Discussants: **Jean-Michel Butel** (INALCO) & **Patrick Michel** (CNRS-EHESS)

Identity, Populism and the Romantic Impulse Japan and the Politics of Nostalgia

| 5.00 - 7.00 p.m.

| Language: English

Anti-globalization and the emergence of populist/authoritarian politics in Europe and North America suggests that the pillars of the post-1945 era are crumbling. In Japan and South Korea, political tensions are frequently shaped by divisions over competing narratives of national identity. Understanding the appeal of these narratives and the romantic impulse that drives some leaders to embrace contentious historical arguments at home, while practicing rational, pragmatic politics abroad, highlights the danger of assuming that countries such as Japan will remain immune to the populist contagion.

John Nilsson-Wright is Senior Lecturer in Modern Japanese Politics and International Relations in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge. His work concentrates on the Cold War relationship between the United States and Northeast Asia, with particular reference to the security and political relationships between the United States and Japan and the two Koreas, but has expanded to include contemporary regional security issues and political change.

Discussants

Hamit Bozarslan is Professor at EHESS. His research interests focus on the history of modern and contemporary Turkey, the Kurdish issue, the question of minorities in the Middle-East, and the history and sociology of violence in the Middle-East.

Jean-Frédéric Schaub is Professor at EHESS, Director of Excellence Laboratory TEPSIS and of Politika.io website, specialist in Iberian Studies. His latest book is *Race Is about Politics: Lessons from History* (2019, Princeton University Press).