

Systems of Irresponsibility and Japan's Internal Colony

無責任の体型と日本の内国植民地

Nathan Hopson

In the wake of the March 11, 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, much has been said about the character of Japan, and especially about Tōhoku and its people. In the early weeks and months, the exceptionally good behavior of an overwhelming majority of Japanese in the face of a disaster of almost unthinkable magnitude was the object of much admiration. Especially in the foreign press, mixed in with cringe-inducing references to the "Fukushima 50" as "nuclear samurai"—if anything, "kamikaze" would have been the more appropriate image—the tropes of "orderly" and "law-abiding" Japanese and "stoic" residents of Tōhoku were repeated frequently even by scholars whose careers are mostly built around combatting sloppy generalizations. Diverse voices from around the world, including those of Chinese netizens—more often cited as a bastion of virulent anti-Japanese sentiment—were joined in approbation. Sympathy and aid poured in from around the world, and the domestic media proudly relayed this news to their Japanese audiences.



'Fukushima 50,' Japan's nuclear samurai

THEY live on a remote island, 100 miles from the mainland, in a dark, unventilated and/or plain. The computer monitors at Japan's original Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station are arranged in a row in the middle of a room, as if they were the only people remaining at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station and Japan's last chance of preventing a broader nuclear catastrophe.

They are also known as the "Fukushima 50" who are working their lives to prevent a nuclear disaster from becoming a catastrophe. They are called the "Fukushima 50" because the workers inside the group of 50. There are in fact about 20 people at the plant, taking turns working and sleeping in a three-story building.

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station is not the only one of its kind in Japan. It is one of a number of power plants that have been built in the past few decades. Most of them are built in the mountains, and they are built in the mountains. And they are built in the mountains.

Even at normal times, workers must wear masks, full-body suits with gloves, boots and double-layer gloves when they enter areas with possible radiation.

Some of them wear oxygen tanks on their backs to breathe air in case of a power outage. They are also wearing masks to prevent them from breathing in any radioactive particles that may be in the air.

Engineers have now linked up an array of sensors to help them monitor the plant's status. They are also wearing masks to prevent them from breathing in any radioactive particles that may be in the air.

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Fig. 1: The "Fukushima 50" as "nuclear samurai"

after 3/11 Ishihara continued to champion the social and moral disintegration wrought by postwar economic growth, arguing that this catastrophe was the long-awaited opportunity to escape from the postwar régime.

Much of the discourse in the months immediately following March 11 included an appeal to super-individual sources of value. For Ishihara it was the negative invocation of evil "egoism" to urge a return to collectivist values. His stance was unusual mostly in its poor wording—more than a touch ironic for such a decorated wordsmith. Concepts like "communality" were evoked both to mourn the general loss thereof in Japanese society and to admire the retention thereof in Tōhoku, backward seat of traditional culture and values. The common thread in these arguments was that both social ties and mores, and also government leadership, needed to be strengthened. Disaster was "nationalized" by many observers, and its victims made exemplars of core Japanese values—whether as bearers of the national torch of Japanese cultural excellence or as the keepers of a sacred flame burned low to embers amidst the gusting winds of modernization, globalization, and change.

In 1970, the US-Japan security treaty (Anpo) was renewed for a second time, signaling the failure of progressive, antistate protest and organization and bringing student demonstrations to a close. This was also the year of the Osaka Expo, which echoed the 1964 Tokyo Olympics' message that Japan had not only recovered politically and economically from defeat, but was once again a privileged star amongst the developed nations of the world. By the end of the

It was clear immediately after the earthquake and tsunami, however, that very few specific, actionable ideas about how to rebuild were forthcoming, a problem exacerbated by confirmation of reactor meltdowns and radiation leaks. Faced with the enormity of the 3/11 catastrophe, many pundits and observers simply reheated pet theories and repeated old ideas. The immediate aftermath of disaster is often an opportunity to repeat long-held beliefs or vague platitudes in the hope that they remain applicable and will find new ears, and the days after of March 11 were no exception. Old attitudes are comforting and hard to abandon; when our beliefs are shown to be ineffective or obsolete it is quite common to respond by urging that their failure is the result of insufficient application of these beliefs rather than any defect therein: "If it didn't work, do it more until it does." A smattering of new ideas may quickly appear, but these are usually either shouted down or ignored. And in many cases, these apparently new ideas are actually old ideas that had simply remained unvoiced or unheard prior to the crisis. New ideas—at least the acceptance of new ideas—tend to come later if at all; neither philosophical nor discursive change occur as fast as the pace of events.

Some saw in March 11 a chance for Japan to make another new beginning, though these declarations were almost entirely devoid of specifics. The trope of "overcoming" (modernity, the West, etc.) was resurrected by talking heads proclaiming that Japan had entered a new era. Amongst those who saw the chance for a new beginning, some offered historical precedent and analogy to prove their point. Comparisons were made with past disasters, most often the 1923 earthquake that devastated the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area or the physical and mental deprivation and desolation after Japan's surrender in August 1945. If the latter comparison was intended to express hope that out of tragedy could come a new and positive beginning, the former was more ambiguous. 1923 is remembered less as a moment of renewal than as one of disaster followed by missed opportunities for rebuilding. Analogies to 1923 and 1945 came from across the political spectrum, and therefore gave expression to diverse political agendas predating March 2011. Take, for example, then-governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintarō. Ishihara, known for his hardline nationalism and inflammatory comments, was, in this sense at least, always an odd fit for Tokyo.² He made this exceptionally clear when he attributed the March 11 earthquake to "divine retribution" against a country and a people that had lost their way, drowning in egoism and hedonism—a comment made only stranger by the fact that the governor of Tokyo seemed to be implying that Fukushima was a den of self-absorbed debauchery. This was not, Ishihara emphasized, Japan's true identity. Rather, it was imperative that Japan "use the tsunami to wash away egoism, to wash away the many years of crud built up on the hearts of the Japanese." Ishihara later (uncharacteristically) retracted this comment in the face of massive public outrage, but only long enough to turn it into an entire book published later the same year.³ As governor of Japan's social, political, and economic capital,



Fig. 2: Ishihara Shintarō retracting his remark that the 3/11 tsunami was “divine retribution”

1960s, Japan was home to a “well-off majority” increasingly willing to pursue economic growth and to stay out of politics. In exchange for depoliticizing society, middle-class Japanese were promised economic wealth and fast, stable growth. By the end of the millennium, the disintegration of the “bubble economy” and Japan’s persistent failure to rekindle economic growth had eroded confidence in this model. In the previous three decades, the strength of the post-1970 social contract that historian Oguma Eiji calls the “1970 paradigm,” was based on the existence of a stable, well-off middle-class.⁴ The oft-cited polls indicating that nine of ten Japanese considered themselves “middle-class” during subsequent decades are evidence of, and a key condition for, the paradigm’s success.⁵ The paradigm was fraught and questioned from the outset. After all, it was in the 1970s that problems of environmental pollution and degradation, gender, minorities—ethnic Koreans and Chinese, mostly—living in Japan and essentially indistinct from “Japanese,” and other issues of majority-minority power imbalances and discrimination were also brought to the forefront, not infrequently by the victims themselves. Nevertheless, overall, nonpolitical stances (*nonpon*) dominated—not least because they were amply rewarded economically.

The obverse of the 1970 paradigm was often expressed in anti-modern, anti-science, and/or anti-industrial terms. In the 1970s and 1980s, critical attitudes toward contemporary mainstream socioeconomic culture often fed an interest in ecology, and with it a revaluation of premodern or non-modern cultures, including Japan’s own.⁶ In any case, after 3/11, this marginal thread was revived in anti-nuclear proclamations and demonstrations. Nuclear power was emblematic of scientific, rational economic progress, and the postwar economic order. Conveniently, there were already established critiques of both that could be quickly and effectively mobilized when matters at Fukushima Daiichi went sideways. From there, it was but a step toward the anti-modern, anti-(Western) civilization and anti-monotheistic stance expressed by commentators including religion scholar Nakazawa Shin’ichi and philosopher Umehara Takeshi.⁷ It bears

repeating that these are not new ideas, but the adaptation of existing dogmas and creeds to new evidence.

System of Irresponsibility

Among the many ideas about Japan and about Tōhoku that resurfaced after 3/11, two deserve special attention. One is philosopher and critic Maruyama Masao’s “system of irresponsibility.” In the first years after Japan’s surrender, Maruyama diagnosed the wartime system as a complex “system of irresponsibility,” in which “proximity to the ultimate value,” i.e. the imperial institution and person, was the measure of political legitimacy and moral authority. The emperor, state, and society were coterminous, meaning that affairs of state were ascribed ultimate value and infallibility, and society was the undifferentiated vehicle through which affairs of state were to be carried out. Morality emanated out concentrically from the emperor. This was a system without personal accountability, nor even the awareness of personal accountability, Maruyama argued.⁸ Whether Maruyama’s sweeping generalizations are accurate or not is beside the point. His argument—that a formalized, regularized social system devoid of personal accountability was a root cause of Japan’s long and destructive war and the multitude of atrocities committed during its course—has been applied both to Tepco’s abject failure to prevent or stave off nuclear meltdown and to the inability of the behemoth utility and Japanese government and regulators to handle the outcome of this failure.

The denials, cover ups, and generally gross mishandling of the nuclear disaster at Fukushima Daiichi by both Tepco and successive Japanese regimes have been called symptomatic of “everything that is wrong with... Japan: cronyism, collusion..., corruption, weak regulation.” Equally accurate, and even more damningly, the wartime specter of Maruyama’s “system of irresponsibility” has been raised by more than one observer.⁹ Despite full awareness of the possibility of precisely the sort of catastrophe that occurred in March 2011, Tepco failed outright to take any preventative steps. Following the meltdown, the company attempted to cover up the scale of the disaster. More than two years later, the fiasco lumbers on, with tens of thousands still displaced, clean up proceeding at a snail’s pace, radioactive pollution worsening daily, and no end in sight. Despite the worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl, one that released terabecquerels of radiation into the environment, not a single indictment has been made at any level, and not a single politician has been (directly) forced to resign. With hundreds of metric tons of radiated water seeping daily into the ocean and groundwater from leaky tanks, and total radioactive pollution measured in units so large as to defy comprehension, Tepco limps along and the government continues to promote Japanese nuclear power abroad as “safe,” not to mention eco-friendly, and cost-efficient despite the ongoing cavalcade of catastrophic failures at Fukushima Daiichi. “Each step Tepco takes seems only to produce new problems,” and nowhere has the question of responsibility been sufficiently addressed.¹⁰ The fury of survivors that was seen in the first months after 3/11 yielded almost nothing.¹¹ Beyond the ritual removal of Tepco’s CEO and some populist media outrage, there has been little attempt to address the issue of human responsibility. And as for the company itself, Tepco has made a mockery of the concept of responsibility through constant repetition of the word “*sōteiga*” to describe its every failure. The word is an interesting one, denoting something “unpredictable,” even when the company’s own internal documents made precisely the predictions whose possibility is being denied.¹² It is a well-chosen mantra for a well-oiled system of irresponsibility.

Tōhoku: Japan’s Internal Colony

The second concept of note describes Tōhoku in its relationship to the Japanese nation-state. Historians have argued for decades that Tōhoku is Japan’s “internal” or “domestic colony,” and that the ostensible “backwardness” of the Northeast resulted from policy decisions by the government during Japan’s rush to modernize after the 1868 Meiji coup d’état. The exploitative character of regional development in the Northeast was already recognized in the late nineteenth century. Though the 1881-1890 rush to lay rail in Tōhoku was welcomed as the path, literally and figuratively, to civilization and progress, a few years after the 1891 completion of the Tōhoku Main Line, Nitobe Inazō bitterly described the railroad as a giant “straw,” bleeding rural Japan dry to feed the hungry cities.¹³ Hara Katsurō’s 1920 English-language survey of Japanese history, the first penned by a Japanese author, offered this analysis:

The principal cause of the retardation of progress in [Tōhoku] lies... in the fact that it is a comparatively recently exploited part of the Empire. Since the beginning of historic times, the Japanese have pushed their settlements more and more toward the north, so that the population in those regions has grown denser and denser. If this process had continued with the same vigour until today, the northern provinces might have become far more populous, civilised, and prosperous, than we see them now. Unfortunately for the North[east], however, just at the most critical time in its development, the attention of the nation was compelled to turn from inner colonisation to foreign relations.¹⁴

In the early postwar years, influential historian Ishimoda Shō described Tōhoku as a bleak, “backward periphery ruled by the oldest form of feudalism” and nothing more than “a colony... of the center.”¹⁵ Nitobe, Hara, and Ishimoda were all born in Tōhoku, so it is perhaps not difficult to understand their anger and humiliation when confronted with the maltreatment of their native region by the state and business conglomerates (*zaibatsu*).

Since the 1980s, economist Okada Tomohiro has been one of the most vocal proponents of the view that Tōhoku was a colony manufactured by and for Tokyo in the Meiji period (1868-1912). In 1983, Okada eloquently described the economic peripheralization of Tōhoku in world-system terms, writing that “Tōhoku served as a ‘domestic colony,’ on the one hand providing rice and other primary industry products and labor for both the capitalist market and the colonization of Hokkaidō, and on the other importing foreign rice and light industrial goods.”¹⁶ The following year, historian Iwamoto Yoshiteru explained the

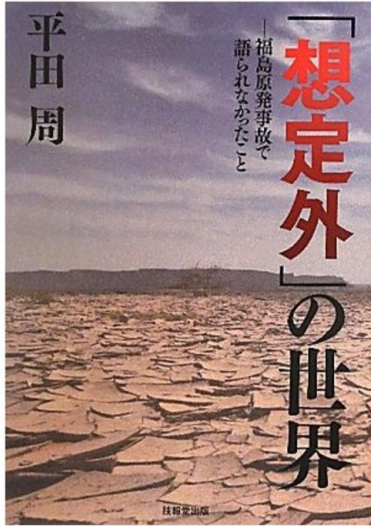


Fig. 3: One of many books to criticize Tepco's repeated use of "sōteigai"

situation as a result of the distinctly *imperialist* economic modernization process that Japan had learned from Europe and the United States. Iwamoto argued that fin-de-siècle Tōhoku seemed less a dark, backward area than an exciting frontier. But as the Tokyo-Yokohama and Osaka-Kobe areas became industrial centers, Tōhoku was transformed into a food supply base... As England and other advanced nations had their colonies to produce food, Japan made Tōhoku its rice producer—in other words an internal colony.¹⁷

After 1913, a bad famine year in the Northeast, the government embarked on a number of failed "Tōhoku development" efforts. In the 1910s, the major development project was ostensibly modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority, but the real intent and actual effects are amply summed up by the choice of Matsui Haruo as head of the government's oversight agency. Matsui served simultaneously as the secretary of the national Resources Department. Under the all-encompassing aegis of "national defense," major zaibatsu appropriated the "human and material resources" of Tōhoku for military development and buildup. The development of electrical power in Tōhoku followed a similar trajectory, with the majority of electricity produced by Tōhoku's eleven power plants consumed in Tokyo—a precursor to the power distribution of the Fukushima Daiichi plant operated by Tepco.¹⁸

Some of the most important postwar intellectuals working on Tōhoku have taken up the mantle of this critique since March 2011. Intellectual historian Kawanishi Hidemichi has borrowed the sociological concept of the "national sacrifice zone" to explain the placement of nuclear power plants and other dangerous or otherwise unpleasant "NIMBY" facilities in Tōhoku. This term has described regions carved out domestically in the American West and abroad in areas like the Marshall Islands to fulfill the United States' military and industrial interests with little regard for the safety and livelihoods of local communities.¹⁹ "When in the past the myth of nuclear power as 'safe, secure, and clean'" was unassailably robust in public consciousness, why were these facilities not constructed in the metropolises they served? The answer is simple: the Northeast is Japan's "nuclear power colony," replied Kawanishi.²⁰ Kawanishi is not the first scholar to notice that Tōhoku was being sacrificed for Tokyo, nor the only one to describe this sacrifice in comparison with that of Okinawa.²¹ On the eve of America's 1972 return of Okinawa to Japan, historian Tōyama Hideki had already identified the former Ryūkyū kingdom as the sacrifice for Japan's "national polity," and after 3/11, critic Takahashi Tetsuya drew out the parallel between the Northeast and Okinawa explicitly in a book on the "system of sacrifice" that victimized both.²² Okinawa was, and is, made to bear the brunt of the American military presence; Tōhoku was, and is, made to bear the brunt of the Japanese hunger for rice, electricity, and cheap labor.²³



Fig. 4: The inaugural issue of *Tōhokugaku* (1999)

Another important voice to join in this criticism is that of Akasaka Norio, a folklorist, critic, and highly visible public intellectual often credited as the father of "Tōhoku-ology" (*Tōhokugaku*). Akasaka had been the first director of the Tōhoku Culture Research Center (TCRC) at Yamagata's Tōhoku University of Art

and Design (TUAD) from its opening in 1999, but he was in Tokyo when the March 11 quake hit, having left Yamagata to take a position at Gakushūin University beginning in April. After the disaster, Akasaka was named to the government's newly established advisory panel on post-3/11 recovery, the Reconstruction Design Council. A month after 3/11, Akasaka visited the stricken areas for the first time. His first impression, he recollects, was that to his surprise, "Tōhoku was still a colony." The veneer of prosperity had been washed away by the tsunami, revealing structural prejudice alive and well amidst the wreckage and carnage.²⁴ The Northeast not only remained an economic periphery, but as Okinawa had been made to take on the consequences of Japan's "subordinate independence" vis-à-vis the United States, Tōhoku had been fashioned into a dumping ground for the externalities of postwar economic growth. The justification for this was always that American bases and Japanese reactors were "job creators" in an otherwise moribund local economy. Recalling an encounter with a Japanese anti-nuclear protester from Okinawa who remarked that "Towns with nuclear plants and towns with [American] military bases are identical," journalist Kang Sung noted, "The same 'benefaction theory', i.e. that whether by an expansionist central regime or by a power utility, colonization is for the good of the locals, "has been used to legitimize both nuclear plant location and colonialism."²⁵

More than a millennium ago, the Shirakawa area of southern Fukushima marked the boundary between the Japanese state and the northern territories it both feared and desired. Even after southern Tōhoku fell under the state's sway, the toll road barrier at Shirakawa was for centuries a powerful symbolic point of demarcation, indicating civilization to the south and savagery to the north. "North of Shirakawa" was "Michinoku," an old name for Tōhoku indicating a barbarian outland that had never completely assented to the court's *mission civilisatrice*. Even in the twentieth century, southerners still sometimes scoffed, "The mountains north of Shirakawa are a dime a dozen," and in the 1980s beverage giant Suntory's president, Saji Keizō, invited frenzy and boycotts in Tōhoku with very public and vitriolic comments about the allegedly dodgy racial makeup of Tōhoku's people and the consequently low level of culture in the region.²⁶ The power of these abiding prejudices and structural disparities was only too clear after 3/11. Before March 2011, Akasaka had developed a strong sense of the Northeast's internal diversity, coming even to see contemporary Fukushima as culturally and economically more a part of the Kantō region—including Tokyo and Yokohama—than of Tōhoku. However, he remarked, the tragedies of 3/11 inscribed once again an impenetrable boundary at Shirakawa, and "Tōhoku" was once again transformed into "Michinoku."²⁷

Akasaka is probably only partially correct. After Ishihara Shintarō's "divine retribution" remark, scholar-critic Tanaka Yūko fired off an angry riposte. Tanaka wrote, "Watching panicked children search for lost parents or husbands for their wives, there cannot be many people in the world who would use the meaningless adjective 'Japanese' to describe them. Their name is not 'Japanese'... Never has the word 'Japan' been more meaningless."²⁸ She was wrong, of course: domestically, at least, the Japaneseness of victims has been emphasized more than their universal humanity, repeated ad infinitum and made a fundamental rationale for aiding them—as fellow Japanese and as fellow members of an economy shaken by disaster and threatened by failure to get quickly back on track. Calls of "Ganbare Nippon!" ("Go Japan!") were paired with "Ganbare Tōhoku!" as the "Japaneseness" of the tragedy was forefronted.



Fig. 5: This emblem, pairing "Ganbare Nippon!" ("Go Japan!") with "Ganbare Tōhoku!" is emblematic of the tendency to see 3/11 and its aftermath in national terms.

But as Oguma points out, the rhetoric of "national" disaster emanating from Tokyo media outlets was at least as much the consequence of a perceived threat to Tokyo's environment and economy as of a sense of national solidarity. If a disaster of similar magnitude struck distant Okinawa, he writes, it is hard to imagine the same furor or framework. Oguma also suggests that plans formulated in Tokyo to "restore" Tōhoku have more to do with preserving a comfortable urban-rural power balance and the sense of Tōhoku as Japan's materially poor, spiritually rich homeland than with any real concern for the affected areas. If plans were animated by genuine concern for the livelihood of Tōhoku people, they would seize this opportunity to update the physical and economic infrastructure rather than simply return it to its previous state. That previous state was—as Kang Sung noted—little more than a self-serving colonial lie.²⁹ This same distrust of Tokyo can be seen in an email sent to Akasaka from one of the evacuees soon after March 11, 2011: "We [need] a 'renaissance,' not to commit the same mistakes. It would be completely meaningless to 'restore' the idiotic way things were."³⁰ If Oguma is correct, the message is clear: Michinoku is only Tōhoku, only part of Japan, so long as it remains in its proper place. It was only possible for Akasaka to see Fukushima as part of Kantō when it was a docile colony reliably supplying essentials to the capital. At the first hint of trouble, the old Shirakawa barrier slammed shut again.

What is revealed by these references to the wartime system of irresponsibility and the renewed consciousness of Tōhoku as Tokyo's sole remaining colony? Maruyama intended his analysis to be limited to "ultranationalist" Japanese state and society, but in fact his exegesis can also be read as a biting critique of banal,

systemic, impersonal evil *in toto*. Thus interpreted, Maruyama's schematic is a cautionary call to vigilance and action, relevant not only to Tōhoku, and not only to Japan. It is also a reminder that rule of law alone is not enough to guarantee justice or prevent a slow slide into discrimination and disparity. As for the growing understanding of Tōhoku as an abused and exploited colony, Kawanishi seems to have put his finger on the significance of this most astutely. By referencing the notion of "national sacrifice zones," he makes the problem of Tōhoku both universal and contemporary. Tōhoku (and Okinawa) are not *Japanese* colonies, they are colonies in a global system in which the great urban metropolises and centers of power and wealth shed dangerous and dirty facilities and waste products to outlying regions. Though scholars and critics have advocated for social justice models transcending the Westphalian state and unconstrained by the state-driven framework of international law, there is more than enough reason to doubt that the dawning recognition of such affinities with other "sacrifice zones" will form the basis for transnational solidarity or global social movements.³¹

However, if this were to come to pass it would lend an odd credence to Inoue Hisashi's 1981 novel, *Kirikirijin*.

Counted among the greatest works of modern Japanese satire, Inoue's dense narrative chronicles the (fictional) secession of the (fictionalized) area of southeast Iwate and northwest Miyagi prefectures hit hardest by the 2011 tsunami. The newly independent "Kirikiri" is the result of an irredentist nationalism harkening back to Tōhoku's autonomy in the twelfth century. Upon declaring its secession from Japan, the newly formed nation remodels its economy around self-sufficiency and cutting edge medical research and care, including cloning, hybridization, and transplants. Instead of the colonial structure of primary industries producing goods for Tokyo, Kirikiri aims for a relatively autonomous resource bloc, producing its own food, geothermal energy, etc., and acquiring cash income mainly from its medical industry and gold. The latter is a nod to the Northeast's history as Japan's major gold producer in antiquity, and to the fact that Kirikiri has regained with that gold the autonomy it had bought the region before. Simultaneously, the state of Kirikiri explicitly positions itself as part of a global substate subaltern—most memorably by inviting athletes from Quebec, Botswana, and Scotland for an international table tennis tournament.³²

Comparisons of the March 11 disaster to the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 are actually quite useful, if only to prove the point that for all the rhetoric about new beginnings, old ideas ruled the day in both cases. After the great Kantō temblor, plans to remodel Tokyo as a grand new international capital were rejected and much of the city returned to its pre-quake state, touched only by the top-down logic that remade parts of central Tokyo into a capital fit for the modern Empire. "A 'post-disaster utopia,' if one ever existed in early September 1923, evaporated once attention focused on reconstruction."³³ After 3/11, a few scattered voices suggested that this was an opportunity to completely rethink the uncontaminated coastal areas, but the overwhelming majority of proposals and policies have been directed toward restoring the pre-3/11 status quo. Regardless of the path taken, what is needed is neither reconstruction (*fukkō*) nor restoration (*fukko*). In the words of the anonymous emailer who railed against "meaningless [attempts] to 'restore' the idiotic way things were," what is needed is a lofty but realistic plan for "renaissance" that escapes both the system of irresponsibility and the colonial logic of Tōhoku development. Perhaps Japan's choice of the Kitakami Mountain Range in southern Iwate as a candidate site for the International Linear Collider (ILC) is an indication of a



Fig. 6: "Passport" to the fictional country of Kirikiri, setting of Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin*

real socioeconomic renaissance to come.³⁴ But in the meantime the rhetoric of "reconstruction" drags irresponsibly on, as does the shameful reality that even reconstruction is barely proceeding and the national government remains uncommitted.³⁵

Nathan Hopson is a historian of modern Japan. He is currently a postdoctoral associate at Yale University's Council on East Asian Studies, where he is completing a book manuscript on Japanese postwar regionalism and nationalism in global context. Forthcoming works include "Takahashi Tomio's Phoenix: Recuperating Hiraizumi, Part 1 (1950-1971)" (*Journal of Japanese Studies*, 40, no. 2), and "Takahashi Tomio's *Henkyō*: Eastern Easts and Western Wests" (*Nichibunken Japan Review*, summer 2014).

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Notes

¹ "Banyan: Japan and the Uses of Adversity," *The Economist*, March 2011; "Japan's Catastrophes: Nature Strikes Back," *The Economist*, March 2011; Mari Galloway, "McGill Professors Fight Sensationalizing of Japan Disaster," *McGill Daily*, April 2, 2011; Suzanne Goldenberg, "The Truth about the Fukushima Nuclear Samurai," *The Guardian*, March 21, 2011; Marnie Hunter, "Orderly Disaster Reaction in Line with Deep Cultural Roots," *CNN*, March 2011; Hugh Patrick, "After the Tohoku Earthquake, Japan's New Beginning," *East Asia Forum*, April 2011; Kumiko Makihara, "A Battered Nation on the Mend," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2011, sec. Opinion; William Pesek, "The Japan Earthquake: The Cataclysm This Time," *Businessweek.com*, March 17, 2011; Abi Sekimitsu, "Even Japanese Amazed by Stoicism of Disaster-Struck North," *Reuters*, March 21, 2011; Fukushima Kaori, "Nihonjin no nintaizuyosa ni sunao ni odoroku," *Nikkei Business Online*, March 21, 2012; Richard J. Samuels, "3.11: Comparative and Historical Lessons," *Japan Focus*, May 20, 2013.

² Ishihara's popularity has been ascribed by some to his bombastic nationalism, straight talk, and willingness to "Say No," a reputation he earned first as coauthor

of *The Japan That Can Say No*, and which he parlayed into a campaign slogan in 1999: "The Tokyo That Can Say No" (to American military bases and other perceived infringements of Japan's sovereignty). "[Tōkyō saisei e Ishihara-shi ni iūseki](#)." *Sankei Shinbun*. April 12, 1999, sec. Shuchō.

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