Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy
Center for Policy Studies
Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy

**After Fukushima:**
Colonization and the Dead in Contemporary Japan

by
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5.30 PM, Wednesday, March 4th
Popper room, Monument Building, CEU

**About the lecture:**

The disaster in Northeastern Japan has exposed the structure of liberal democracy under global capitalization. Japanese Postwar society launched the idea of liberal democracy alongside a harmonious social order. However, after Fukushima, most of Japan has understood that inequality and exclusion are the pre-requisites to maintain this harmonious society. The Tsunami victims who lost their lives, families, properties or homeland, all lived in peripheral seashore areas.

There is now restoration from the damages caused by Tsunami, earthquakes and the troubles of nuclear power plants. However, far from harmony, there are big gaps between the affected areas in Northeast Japan. On the one hand, big cities like Sendai and Iwaki received economic aid from civil engineering works to rebuild roads, houses and towns. On the other hand, small villages near the seashore or near the Fukushima nuclear plant were excluded from the route of restoration. Some families have moved to other western districts in Japan, while the older people or husbands had to or would remain in their old villages.

Visiting areas attacked by the disaster in Northeast Japan, there are many fissures and conflicts in local communities, with some families receiving huge amount of money from TEPCO, and others not. Such inequality has always existed alongside the economic growth that led Japanese society to be one of the top countries with nuclear power plants.

Through a critique of postwar Japanese society, we seek visions of a society in which there is a sensibility to the Other’s pain. There are so many rumors that the ghosts killed by Tsunami have appeared in Northeast Japan besides the Fukushima seashore areas and near nuclear power plant. Why do the Ghosts appear there? Why not in Fukushima?

**About the speaker:**

Jun’ichi Isomae is an Associate Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto, Japan. He taught postcolonial theories and Japanese modern religion at University of Zurich, Ruhr University of Bochum and Tubingen University. He received his Ph. D. from the University of Tokyo. His recent research focuses on the hegemony of discursive formation, plurality and exclusion through the analysis on the dichotomous history of “religion” and “history” in modern Japan. He is the author of *Japanese Mythology: Hermeneutics on Scripture* (Equinox Publishing, 2010) and *Genealogy of Religious Discourse in Modern Japan: The Concept of Religion, State and Shinto* (Brill, 2015), and the co-editor of *Overcoming Modernity: East Asian Community and the Kyoto School* (World Scientific Publishing, forthcoming).

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