

Uchino, Tadashi, University of Tokyo, Japan

Rethinking Shifting and Elusive Nation of the National in an Age of Globalization

In 1950, the Government of Japan began to designate certain individuals or groups who embodied intangible national cultural values as living human treasures, just as places or things of great cultural value are designated as national treasure. The first question that should come to our mind is the year 1950, when Japan was not yet officially independent before the San Francisco Treaty was signed in 1951. Where, how and why did the idea of designating the intangible national cultural values as living human treasures come from? The paper will look at this question from various angles, especially focusing on the issue of the re-formation of national identity in the postwar period, trying to inquire and theorize the notion of embodiment in the discourse of tradition, which still seem to haunt and constitute the national imaginary even now.