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Building 19 Room 711

Co-sponsored by the "History,
Memory, and Narrative in
Contemporary Japanese Politics"
Research Group



The Waseda Institute of Asia-
Pacific Studies WIAPS
Colloquium Series presents

*Japan as a Liminal Power:
Evolving Grand Strategies from
Meiji to Reiwa*



Our project employs a historical institutionalist approach to examine its evolution of Japan's grand strategy as a liminal power from the Meiji period, starting in 1868. We present four historical and contemporary "critical junctures" as key determinants of Japan's grand strategies: the Meiji era, the inter-war era between World War I and II, the Cold War era, and the Post-Cold War/Indo-Pacific era. In particular, we focus on the contemporary era where Japan that has constructed its "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy/vision. In each period, the strategic environment changed, and thus a window of opportunity opened that offered Japan's core decision-makers a chance to construct – or reconstruct - the country's grand strategy. We identify and analyze three sequential processes that have led to each critical juncture: (1) an anticipated or actual change in the global or regional strategic balance; (2) core domestic decision-makers' perception and decision that contributed to those changes; and (3) the domestic decision-making environment in each period (existence of strong/weak domestic veto players and institutional constraints).