

# “Regional regime and norm building: Redefining Japan’s regional role in Asia through Environmental and Human Security”



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**Abstract:** The year 2011 was marked by popular media perceptions of China surpassing the Japanese economy in terms of sheer size. Notwithstanding, Japan remains a formidable economic power not only in terms of size, but more importantly in the crucial areas of technological development,

embeddedness in the global market system, as an influential player in international institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the second largest donor of foreign aid. Furthermore, Japan’s long-standing alliance with the United States and size and sophistication of its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) accord Japan with the status and capabilities to have both a regional and global role in international relations. Despite these strengths, Japan’s influence in regional and international relations remains limited due to sensitivities and perceptions of its wartime imperialist legacy, strategic interests of neighboring states and domestic norms stressing pacificism, economic development and developmentalism. To overcome these international and domestic hurdles, this paper argues that Japan is attempting to create and forge new regimes based on shared norms vis-à-vis human and environmental security.

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**Moderator /Discussant: Takeshi IIDA, Assistant Professor, Waseda University**

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