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# KYOTO LECTURES

Wednesday, June 21st, 18:00h

Ran Zwigenberg

SPEAKER

## Citadels of Modernity Japan's Castles in War and Peace

Both home and abroad, Japan's castles serve as prominent symbols of local, regional, and national identity. Castles occupy the center of most major Japanese cities and are universally recognizable as sites of heritage and as a link to the nation's past. The current prominence of castles obscures their troubled modern history. After the restoration of 1868, castles, no longer of immediate military significance, became symbols of authority, on one hand, and of vaunted tradition on the other. Castles were major sites of exhibitions, where they were often contrasted with Japan's achievements in acquiring modern technology, serving as potent illustrations of *Wakon-yōsai* (Japanese spirit and Western technology). As the specific role castles played changed over time, they became sites of fierce contention. Particularly, castles were a major factor in the militarization of Japanese society before the Second World War and, after 1945, were important tools for demilitarizing Japan both physically and symbolically to turn it into a "nation of peace and culture." This talk examines Japan's castles from the late nineteenth century to the present to reconsider narratives of continuity and change in modern Japan; examining the changing role of castles in Japan's troubled politics of history.

**Ran Zwigenberg** is assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University. His research focuses on modern Japanese and European history, with a specialization in memory and intellectual history. He has taught and lectured in the United States, Europe, Israel, and Japan, and published on issues of war memory, atomic energy, psychiatry, and survivor politics. Zwigenberg's first book, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), winner of the 2016 Association for Asian Studies' John W. Hall book award, deals comparatively with the commemoration and the reaction to the Holocaust and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. For more information on this and other projects, please see <https://pennstate.academia.edu/RanZwigenberg>

**This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 1, 1st floor).**

**École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)**  
29 Betto-cho Kitashirakawa, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, 606-8276 Japan

**Italian School of East Asian Studies (ISEAS)**  
4th Floor, 4 Yoshida Ushinomiya-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, 606-8302 Japan

EFEO | T: 075-701-0882 F: 075-701-0883 E: [efeo.kyoto@gmail.com](mailto:efeo.kyoto@gmail.com)

ISEAS | T: 075-751-8132 F: 075-751-8221 E: [iseas@iseas-kyoto.org](mailto:iseas@iseas-kyoto.org)

