I would like to explore two topics as they relate to Japan since the Heisei Era, which began on Jan. 8, 1989, following the accession of Emperor Akihito. The Heisei Era, which ended on Dec. 31, 2019, marked the 30th year of Japan’s post-Cold War political and economic transformation. The first is the growing importance of institutional politics, particularly in the context of Japan’s role in the Asia-Pacific region. The second is the increasing prominence of non-state actors, such as transnational corporations and civil society organizations, in shaping Japan’s foreign policy. In this paper, I will examine the role of institutional politics in Japan’s foreign policy, focusing on two examples: the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

**APEC**

APEC is an intergovernmental forum for the 21 countries around the Pacific Rim to promote cooperation in trade and investment. The forum was created in 1989 and has since evolved into a significant player in the global economic order. Japan has been a key player in APEC, hosting the annual leaders’ meeting and contributing to the organization’s agenda. The forum has become increasingly important in recent years as a platform for addressing issues such as climate change and the digital economy.

**TPP**

The TPP is a regional trade agreement that was signed by 12 countries in 2015 and entered into force in 2017. The agreement includes provisions on trade, investment, and labor and environmental standards. Japan has been a key player in the TPP, and the agreement has been seen as a way to boost Japan’s economy and improve its trade prospects.

I will argue that institutional politics play a crucial role in shaping Japan’s foreign policy, and that the increasing importance of non-state actors is changing the nature of that policy. The future of Japan’s foreign policy will depend on how well it can balance the interests of these different actors.