

**UNSW@ADFA**

**Research & Research Training Office**

**Faculty Seminar**

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### **The Perils of Japanese Politics**

**Abstract:-**

On 28<sup>th</sup> May last year, Japan's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Matsuoka Toshikatsu, committed suicide. This was a stunning reversal of fortune for an ambitious and apparently successful politician. His death left a lot of questions unanswered. The immediate question was: 'What were the circumstances that drove Matsuoka to take his own life?' Although the answer to this question can never be definitive, it is possible to speculate on a number of possible causes. With the passage of time, Matsuoka's death has also thrown up a number of larger questions about the nature of Japanese politics: 'Where does his suicide fit in the larger context of similar events in the past?' 'What does his example tell us about how Japanese politicians conduct their activities? My research attempts to write the final chapter on Matsuoka's life and death by linking it to a broader analysis of Japanese political corruption and 'money politics'.