

Researching Japanese Political Rhetoric: A Case Study on Hatoyama's Policy Speech, Oct. 26th 2009

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Introduction

The election of August 30, 2009 in Japan was seen by many as a watershed moment in Japanese post-war politics. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), after a nearly continuous hold on power since being formed in 1955, was soundly defeated by the relatively new Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in the lower house elections. This would lead to the first change in government by a majority opposition party in 54 years, what the *New York Times* referred to as "Japan's biggest political upheaval since World War II."¹ This was certainly big news in Japan, but in many respects the foreign media reacted more strongly to this election than many media outlets in Japan. Richard Parry, of *The Times*, referred to the election as a "political tsunami"², and Victor Cha, an Asian studies expert called it "the biggest political change in Japan in many decades"³

The significance of this election and the political change it may portend in itself seems to warrant an examination of the political discourse emanating from the new leadership in Japan. Beyond that, however, is the fact that Japanese political rhetoric has received little treatment among scholars of rhetoric either in or outside of Japan. As such, any speech by a political (or other) leader in Japan can offer insights into characteristics of particular types of political discourse and also the role of rhetoric in Japanese political culture. It is with both of these aims, both the narrow

text specific within the circumstances at the time, and the broader, cultural general that I examine the first policy speech given by Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio⁴ on the opening of the extraordinary session of the Diet on October 26th, 2009.⁵ While the limited scope of this research will not allow for broader generalizations to Japanese rhetoric, the aim in case studies is to at least hopefully suggest directions for further research.

This research will begin with a discussion of my approach to Japanese rhetoric generally, and an overview of a basic rhetorical approach for examining these types of speeches in Japan. The third section looks more specifically at the practice of giving policy speeches by prime ministers upon the opening of both regular and extraordinary sessions of the Diet and some of the unique characteristics of these speeches. This is followed by a review of the circumstances both of the election and events at the time of the speech, particularly as they might affect audience expectations with regard to the speech. This lays the foundation for a textual analysis of the speech in terms of its overall content and structure. While this research is intended to be largely descriptive/analytical, in the final section, I offer an assessment of the speech based on the textual analysis and also examine some of the reactions to the speech within Japan, particularly as published in Japanese media reports. This is not intended to lead to some conclusion about the effectiveness of the speech. As noted below, not many Japanese pay a great deal of attention to these speeches in their entirety, but rather read or hear about selected passages or policies introduced in the speeches. These reactions to the speech, however, do suggest how the Japanese public look at these kinds of speeches and the kind of expectations they may have toward this kind of political discourse, at least within the limited parameters of this particular speech.

An Approach to Japanese Rhetoric

Historians study the Japanese to understand and explain who, what, how, and why concerning various past events, which all helps us to better understand the present in some degree. Political scientists likewise examine the political processes, to understand how the country is governed, how it has evolved and the dynamic influences affecting its day to day and long term operation, adding both to our understanding of Japan as a 'democracy', and perhaps adding to our theoretical understanding of political systems. My particular focus relies a great deal on the work of historians, political scientists, sociologists, and for that matter, just about anyone writing about Japan, but I am concerned with communication in Japan, in particular public communication, or public, political discourse. Drawing on various sources to contextualize the texts examined, my analyses focus on clarifying the characteristics of the discourses as examples of Japanese rhetorical practice, or as rhetorical artifacts, and examining the interaction of various aspects of this particular text within the political, social and cultural developments current at the time of the text's creation in Japan.

One underlying assumption propelling this research recognizes that while all cultures and societies are created and maintained through various forms of communication, each culture will have a unique rhetorical currency. While this may seem like common sense now, not so long ago articles were being published arguing that Japan, for example, had no rhetorical tradition, period (a view encouraged by some Japanese).⁶ This is not to disparage such work. But this conclusion was based on a definition of rhetoric as a recognized, developed academic discipline, as it has been, albeit with some seasons bleaker than others, throughout most of Western history. While useful as a starting point, it tells us little about communication processes in Japan. The more commonly held view now echoes what Howell wrote when describing rhetoric in 18th century England. "A theory

of communication is an organic part of a culture. As the culture changes, so will the theory change."⁷ While he was referring to more specifically to changes in England, others have clearly established the need to examine, focusing here particularly on the various cultures found in areas of East Asia, a broad range of a country's literature to discover how the peoples themselves viewed communication practices.⁸ In the case of Japan, a central aim has been to look for evidence on how Japanese have viewed communication processes, how those processes have been affected through the introduction of ideas from the West, and, where possible, what prescriptions are stated or implied for rhetorical practitioners. A broader aim of this research is to contribute to this on-going project, to better understand Japanese rhetorical currency, particularly as it pertains to public discourse. From this perspective, rhetorical practice, and theory that attempts to explain it, are an organic part of the culture, continually evolving over time. In so far as communication processes are inextricably linked to the value and belief systems of a culture, we can expect to find common threads of consistency over time, allowing for some descriptive account of rhetorical practices.

A Rhetorical Approach to Policy Speeches

Granting the likelihood that Japanese rhetorical practice will have its own unique characteristics, it nonetheless provides a useful point of departure to begin with the broader conception of rhetoric from the Western tradition. Aristotle defined rhetoric as the "ability, in each particular case, of seeing the available means of persuasion."⁹ Aristotle was treating rhetoric as practiced in his time, this definition especially used for purposes of instruction. It is useful to the critic, however, as a starting point for examining rhetorical practices in Japan, if one starts by looking at how each of the key elements applies in the Japanese context. Clearly,

the means to ends and their interaction with 'given situations' will vary from culture to culture, just as they will evolve over time. Using these elements as guides suggests four more specific questions from which to examine discourse. 1) What are the 'ends' implicit or explicitly stated in the speeches? This seeks to get at the functions or purposes the speeches are intended to serve. 2) What are the means employed to achieve those ends? Here I examine the rhetorical devices employed and the obstacles (rhetorical exigencies in the overall situation) they seem designed to overcome. 3) What are the unique characteristics of the situation in which those means to ends are employed? That is, what are the constraints of the immediate circumstances, and the larger historical, political, and cultural situation that have a bearing on the whole 'policy speech' making process. 4) What is the role of the speaker (the Prime Minister) in making and giving policy speeches. As discussed below, a number of people frequently have input into the content of policy speeches (though exceptionally not in this case). Beyond this, however, is the position or ethos of the prime minister within the larger Japanese political system, particularly with respect to this prime minister, heading up the first new government in more than half a century.¹⁰

Policy Speeches and the Parliamentary Process¹¹

"Policy speech" as a translation of the Japanese terms used to refer to these speeches (*shiseihōshinenzetsu* or *shoshinhyōmeienzetsu*) is inadequate if it is taken as suggesting that policy proposals will be presented and their efficacy demonstrated or somehow argued. The use of the Japanese terms changed in the post war period, with the term *shiseihōshinenzetsu*, more nearly equivalent to 'policy speech', being used for speeches opening the regular sessions of the Diet, and *shoshinhyōmeienzetsu*, more accurately translated as a statement of [the government or prime ministers'] views,

for opening extraordinary sessions. The latter speeches are generally shorter and more focused, but can be indistinguishable from regular session speeches in some cases (particularly when a newly elected prime minister is giving the speech, as was the case here). However, broadly speaking, the generalizations about their functions discussed below refer more accurately and consistently to the "policy speeches" given at the opening of regular session of the Diet.¹²

Examination of samples of speeches reveals a number of sometimes overlapping functions they seem designed to serve. Some of these are explicit in the speeches themselves, while others are suggested indirectly or suggested from the context in which the speeches are given. Clearly, as the generic title in translation suggests, these speeches can be presumed to deal with policy. And they do, a point I will discuss in more detail below. The speeches, as noted earlier, are also given at the beginning of Diet sessions, suggesting a second purpose, the formal opening or beginning of Diet proceedings. This purpose is clearly indicated in the beginning of most speeches with a formulaic expression:

Here at the start of the fourth Diet, it gives me great pleasure to speak to you on [the Government's] policy plans.¹³

The opening section will also frequently include a statement reflecting on the legitimacy of the speaker. In the opening above, Yoshida continues, "The scandal leading to the resignation of the Ashida cabinet has brought about the formulation of the present cabinet."¹⁴ Such statements offer little if any new information to the audience but serve merely to formally reaffirm the legitimacy of the speaker. In other speeches, similar remarks may reflect on a recent election which may or may not have produced a new prime minister, but the purpose remains essentially the same. At other times, such as the opening of an extraordinary session needed to complete work on legislation carried over from the regular session, such remarks are

frequently omitted.

At the start of a new government, prime ministers will often express their humility and the heavy responsibility they feel in leading the government:

Having been named by the Diet to take on the heavy responsibility of the prime ministership, it is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to express the government's views [on policy].¹⁵

The mention of selection by the Diet (confirmation by the Diet after selection by the Party) also serves again to reaffirm the legitimacy of the government, while expressing humility in the face of the task at the same time, an expression with potential to enhance the speaker's ethos in a culture where ostentation, in this situation in particular, would be viewed negatively.

With some variation the introductory sections of the speeches, usually no more than a few sentences in length, serve to formally mark the beginning of Diet proceedings, to reaffirm the legitimacy of the government, and, particularly in the case of a new prime minister, make reference to the speaker as a man of humility, prudence, and sincerity.

A second purpose of the speeches, ostensibly the primary purpose of the speeches, concerns issues of policy. The speeches most often will move quickly into a discussion of policy immediately following the introductory remarks. This section of the speeches makes up more than ninety percent of the speeches on average, and is generally organized around general policy themes rather than making reference to specific policy or legislative proposals. The exceptions to this are most often references to past policy in relation to the need to alter or amend a particular policy, as a means of introducing background to clarify the issues involved, or merely to report, often treating foreign affairs, or the effects of policies the government might be following at the time. In discussing specific policy or legislative

proposals for the coming session, the treatment tends to become much less specific, offering general statements of what the government thinks are the important issues involved in policy areas like education, social welfare, national infrastructure, economic policy, housing, and other areas. But what they do achieve through this process is a setting of the legislative agenda, as these speeches then become the basis for opposition parties to query the government of the day on policy.

This lack of specificity contrasts with the speeches from the throne in Great Britain, which serve similar functions to the Japanese policy speeches. Like the Japanese policy speech, the Queen's speech is largely authored by the cabinet and top party leadership (minor stylistic editing by the Queen's secretary) and is the product of considerable behind the scenes deliberation. Queen's speeches, however, more clearly lay out the legislative agenda for the coming session. Hence considerable attention is focused on what will or will not make it into the speech since exclusion from the Queen's speech usually means legislation (of any major sort) has little chance of passing that session.

While not equivalent as a speech type, the U.S. president's annual State of the Union, while serving a number of functions, also frequently serves as a platform for the president to argue for specific policy initiatives and seek national support.¹⁶ And while we might expect something called a "policy speech" to be more deliberative or argumentative in nature, the functions seen in examining the Japanese speeches suggests something similar in some respects to British Queens Speeches or U.S. presidential State of the Union addresses. Prime minister policy speeches do discuss policy, as do the British and U.S. examples, but it is also clear from examination of the content and the setting of the speeches that the primary purpose lies elsewhere than to argue for the efficacy of specific policies.

The Rhetorical Context of Hatoyama's Policy Speech

As noted in the Introduction, the routing of the LDP in the August election was seen as a significant moment in Japanese political history. The election of the DPJ with Hatoyama at its head was seen by many as a chance for Japanese to make a break with the past and to finally emerge from the frustrating period of economic low or no growth that has continued for the most part since the bubble burst in the early 1990s, and a break from the previous three LDP prime ministers whose short reigns were largely viewed as ineffectual and lacking direction. As many commentators and Hatoyama himself suggested, much of the electoral result can be credited to voter frustration as much as to any positive appeal of the incoming administration. As noted in the *Economist*, voters "frustrations have been building up for decades, [and] have finally demolished the crumbling dynasty that has ruled them for the past half century."¹⁷ Likewise, Gerald Curtis, a Japanologist at Columbia University noted "It was as though an anti-LDP fever gripped the nation."¹⁸ Certainly the missing pension records, increasing income disparity, child poverty, increasing homelessness, all contributed to what some described as "a collective identity crisis" that clashes "with the view of their society that the Japanese cherish."¹⁹ Even Hatoyama noted this when he commented on the day after the election "I believe that everyone felt great rage towards the Government" and that "everyone was convinced that there had to be a change."²⁰ This resentment towards the ruling party and the government suggests less support (and expectations for) the incoming DPJ administration than it does represent "an expression of disgust with the weak leadership and complacency of the LDP."²¹

Considering these circumstances, Hatoyama would face considerable rhetorical obstacles in his first policy speech. Since this first speech would mark the start of the extraordinary legislative session, there would be very

little the government could accomplish to assuage the general dissatisfaction and distrust among many Japanese that led to the election result in the first place. Likewise, because of the continuing questions over his political funding (which he mentions in his speech) and that of others in the DPJ in the weeks leading up to the speech, one could not blame many in the Japanese public for thinking that politics was continuing as before and lower their expectations for the incoming administration.

These questions over political funding also will effect Hatoyama's ethos as speaker, as will his family his history as the son, grandson, and great grandson in a long line of senior Japanese politicians. While the DPJ and their policy manifesto was sold as representing something new, it was not lost on some at least that in fact he represented "much that is regressive in Japanese politics."²² Part of this lack of expectations in political leadership also seems to be endemic to Japanese political culture more generally, as reflected in the public reaction to the election result. While such big change in political fortunes could be expected to bring more public attention in countries like the United States (as was the case in the election of Obama in 2008), "on Sunday night [of the election] horns did not honk and crowds did not gather. Even the DPJ disappointed television crews when it told them it was not hosting a victory party."²³ The same *Economist* article argues that this seems very much a part of Japanese political culture, noting that while Japanese people vote in fairly high numbers they have little interest in what politicians actually do, partially the result of the historical fact that Japan has never experienced anything like a people's revolution, but tend to have change flung upon them.

The result, from all this, is that though it is clear the Japanese public are eager for change and desire to see some effective policy implemented that will help improve the economy and their lives in general, the expectations among the general public with regards to this speech would likely

have been low, as they are for these kind of policy speeches in general, for reasons noted above. As will be seen in the analysis below, Hatoyama clearly saw the election victory as a historically significant moment, and for that reason chose to construct a speech that marked that event, and define its significance in terms of what he believed it would mean for Japan.

The Audiences for the Speech

Essentially there were three main audiences for the speech, two domestic and one foreign, the latter a diverse multitude of countries whose primary interest would have been to see what if any new policy directions would be forth coming. This audience is of little concern for the purposes of this analysis, as those audiences would mainly be mining the speech for the reasons stated above, and, such that it was, the speech contained very little by way of new of specific policy directions that would have diplomatic repercussions.

The domestic audiences are more important of course. The first of these are the Japanese people themselves, many of whom would not watch the speech in its entirety, but would read secondhand reports of the speech and read or watch selected sections of the speech. The immediate audience comprised the members of the Diet, in particular the DPJ members, nearly half of whom were freshmen. The LDP were also part of this audience but, as later comments will indicate, were often hostile to the speaker's message and should not be considered part of the primary target audience. As will be seen in the analysis that follows, various parts of the speech were created with special emphasis on different audiences.

Hatoyama's Policy Speech: Textual Analysis

As noted above, prime ministerial policy speeches have the ostensible purpose of introducing the government's policy directions and vision for

the future. The special circumstances – the first change of government in more than 50 years – seems to call for something a little different. Hatoyama decided to forgo the usual listing of policy and consultation with various ministries and compose something more personal.²⁴ The result was a speech which clearly had the hallmarks of prime minister policy speeches, but which also clearly had in mind more than the upcoming Diet session, and a good deal of focus was on the political events of the previous few months in a sense to define for his audience the significance of those events.

He begins his speech introduction with a brief narrative to induce his immediate audience to recall the recent election, with the secondary effect of establishing a sense of a historical time frame which he will return to in his conclusion:

Almost two months have passed since that scorching summer day of the general election, and almost forty days since I was designated Prime Minister and a new Cabinet was inaugurated based on a policy agreement of the three-party coalition consisting of the Democratic Party of Japan, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's New Party.

In the general election, the people of Japan chose to have a change of government. It is the first time for this to occur materially since democracy took root in Japan.

Noting that this was the "first time for this to occur materially since democracy" was established in Japan emphasizes the historical significance he places on these events and indicates one purpose of the speech: to mark and establish the historical importance of the events now playing out in Japan. All policy speeches tend to have a ritualistic function of marking that a new government has been formed, and a rehearsing of shared values and the commitment on the part of the government to working for the betterment of the people's lives. In Hatoyama's speech, however, there is

clear emphasis on marking the occasion not only as the formation of a new government, but also one that is significantly different from that which came before. To further this argument, he mentions the often repeated complaints of what has not been working and why, the "mutual support among politicians and bureaucrats...policies that failed as a result of the fetters and vested interests....the concerns over pensions and medical care" and the general lack of faith people have in politicians in general.

To emphasize his conviction and to rally the members of the Diet he includes midway through his introduction a direct appeal to the Diet members:

Honourable members of the Diet gathered here,

Recall the sweltering days of summer when we summoned all our strength to do battle in the election. Recall the voices you heard directly from the people in towns and villages, on mainstreet and on small back streets, up in the mountains and down by the sea, in schools and in hospitals all around the country.

Honourable representatives, let us reflect on the public's wishes we now harbour in our minds and together let us unwaveringly bring them to fruition. Let us engage in hearty debate here at the Diet that is not for the party, nor for politicians, and of course not for any election, but truly for the people, to the utmost extent of our ability.

The crux of change is to start now. Let's make today the day of a new departure.²⁵

Again in this section he returns to the use of a descriptive narrative to encourage his audience (especially the DPJ) to recall the historic election and remind them of its significance. His repetitive use of the "Let us..." "Let us..." "Let us" phrasing (which as noted are rhetorical questions in the original) and their dramatic delivery in the Diet served as a rallying call to

fellow DPJ members and to emotionally highlight the significance of the undertaking they were about to begin.

The second part of his introduction attempts to demonstrate that the government is already working to implement the change he has stated the government was elected to carry out, specifically by changing the way the government decides policy and its relationship to the people. He refers to the DPJ Manifesto pledges of putting policy in the hand of politicians rather than bureaucrats, "turning this structure around 180 degrees to a new type of politics," a "politics of political leadership and popular sovereignty."

The remainder of this section details two areas in particular where the government plans an exhaustive cleanup. For the first area, a review of projects underway through the Government Revitalization Unit, he discusses the work already done (savings of three trillion yen) and the government commitment to continuing on with this work. He also refers specifically to stopping the practices of *amakudari* and *watari*, with the added emphasis on the "public disclosure and provision of administrative information" and will also "promote open decision-taking on public policy through the participation of the public by soliciting policy proposals from them." This latter statement echoes his call for "popular sovereignty" made earlier.

The second area he treats is future focused, looking at the reform of how tax monies are allocated and budgeted. Again emphasizing the need for public scrutiny, he calls for "a top-down formulation of the budget in a manner that is clearly visible to the public and which looks at multiple fiscal years." Again he refers to work already completed as an indication of the direction of the changes the government plans to make. "We have already switched our thinking on large-scale public works such as dams and roads, airports and seaports, whose construction had until now been

presumed to proceed, to starting again by reassessing whether they are truly needed by the people." Here again the focus is on decision making by politicians, specifically referring to the National Policy Unit which will work "under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister Naoto Kan and myself." In this section he also refers to a slogan or shorthand for this new policy direction, as his focus on changing the emphasis "from concrete to people." Here, as in the campaign for the election, Hatoyama reiterates his government's emphasis on "safeguard[ing] the daily lives of the people."

The later part of the introduction seems to have a number of functions, one to demonstrate that the government is indeed doing the people's work and is having desired results. Having been in office for only a short time meant that Hatoyama did not have a lot of specific achievements to pepper the speech with, but in so far as he could include some specific results—ten million yen in savings, specific new structures in place for making policy decisions—this section seems to serve that purpose well. The latter part, focusing on the more forward looking aspects of proposed changes, seems to serve more as a reaffirmation of the commitments made during the campaign, a reassurance that the party the people elected is still the party the people elected.

In the final paragraph of the introduction Hatoyama makes reference to the problems surrounding his political funds and the distrust this has caused in Japanese politics. He apologizes for this and pledges to cooperate with the ongoing investigation. While this statement will hardly put the issue to rest, it at least is recognition that he has a responsibility to clarify the issue.

The body of the speech is structured more clearly along the lines of traditional policy speeches, divided into four sections dealing with different aspects of policy, two on what might be called domestic policy, one on economic policy, and a final section on foreign policy. The biggest

difference in this particular speech is Hatoyama's emphasis on explaining his concept of *yu-ai* (友愛) and how this will affect policy direction rather than detailing specific policies

To introduce his concept of *yu-ai* Hatoyama tells the story of an old woman from Aomori Prefecture that he met on the campaign trail. He tells how the woman told of her son's inability to find work that in the end led him in desperation to take his own life. He cites the figure of the more than 30,000 Japanese people per year who take their own lives in desperation. He uses this story to demonstrate that one important part of his concept of *yu-ai* is to "ensure that the perspectives of the disadvantaged in society and minorities are respected in politics. I declare here today before all else that this idea is the origin of my politics of *yu-ai*." This again he links to his idea of creating a "nation of 'popular sovereignty' in its true sense, [and] what is needed above all is politics that treasures human life and protects people's daily lives."

The remainder of this section and the next section continues to elaborate on this concept of *yu-ai* and how this will translate into policy. He mentions people's insecurity over their pensions, concerns about medical and nursing care, child-rearing, education, and in all cases he links these concerns and how his government will deal with them to this concept of *yu-ai* and creating "[a] humane society. . . where the entire society comes together to support its weaker members, including children and the elderly." This section also mentions other policy initiatives, replacing the Long Life Health Care System, the child care allowance, free public high school tuition, and other Manifesto policies, but not to argue their efficacy, but rather to place them in the context of the idea of *yu-ai* as the guiding principle of domestic policy.

The second section on domestic policy also begins with an extended anecdote about a visit to a chalk factory that hires people with disabilities.

In the retelling of this anecdote, Hatoyama introduces a conversation between the president of the factory and a Buddhist monk:

At a gathering attended by the president one year, he posed a question to the head priest of a Buddhist temple who happened to sit next to him. "The workers at my factory can't read letters or numbers, and they would no doubt be much happier in an institution for the disabled. Why then, I wonder, do they work so hard, commuting on crowded trains and reporting to work on time every day?"

The point of this anecdote was, as the monk answered, that "people feel happiness when they are praised, appreciated and needed, and those with disabilities, senior citizens and patients with intractable diseases are no exception." And that the idea of mutual inclusion and having a place in society, and being needed are also very much a part of this concept of *yu-ai*. To further this explanation Hatoyama introduces a quote from Albert Einstein: "We are here for the sake of each other, above all, for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also, for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy". The point of this of course is to further the notion that a society constructed on the basis of *yu-ai* will be one in which everyone recognizes these basic truths as they relate not only to those close to us but to the whole of society with which we bound by these common values.

The latter part of this section details declining fortunes of the regional areas and the need to revitalize these areas through the creation of new bonds and ties to reconnect these areas again into viable communities. The goal should not be:

to revive communities of the past but should be to seek out a new type of community. By taking advantage of sports or artistic and cultural activities, child-rearing, nursing care and other volunteer work, the environmental protection movement, regional disaster

prevention initiatives, linkages through the Internet and other means, attempts should be made to re-knit networks of trust among residents so that at least "everyone knows someone". This can lead to the formation of new bonds within society built on the sharing of values, such as the awareness that the seemingly cranky old man actually has a wonderful smile when working as a volunteer or that the taciturn Brazilian resident is really kind-hearted and is very good at teaching football to children.

He also alludes here to the importance of volunteer work and the work of NPOs that he discusses in more detail in the following section. Encouraging people to get involved in some kind of activity is offered as a way of furthering the mutual support and inclusiveness that he presents as central to his concept of *yu-ai*. The inclusion of the Brazilian in the example is further emphasis of this point and also recognition of the many foreign workers in Japan who are also suffering from the economic downturn and who also need support.

The following two sections on economic and foreign policy more clearly follow the more usual pattern of listing policy proposals and goals, albeit with a sprinkling of Hatoyama's political philosophy and hints of *yu-ai* thrown into the mix as well. In economic policy this means a shift away from the idea "that we should leave everything to market forces so that only the strong survive, or that we should pursue economic rationalism even at the expense of people's daily lives." Like the shift in spending "from concrete to people" Hatoyama now advocates a change to "an economy for the people," by less emphasis on "economic rationalism and growth rates." The focus is to be shifted to "give greater emphasis to the quality of people's lives by preparing adequate safety nets with regard to employment and human resources development, by ensuring food safety and public safety and by adopting the consumers' perspective." The list of concerns here have

been much in the news in recent years and demonstrate that the new government is committed to acting on them, without giving any specific policy proposals for action. The paragraphs following do offer some specific proposals for helping small and medium-sized enterprises, emergency employment measures, elimination of petrol taxes, and others, but again these are discussed in terms of their aims but not in terms of how they will or can be implemented or how in some cases they will be funded. As mentioned earlier, making arguments for or against specific policies is not normally within the range of functions of these "policy speeches" to any great extent. While this particular speech deals in even less detail about specific policy than most previous policy speeches, that was clearly Hatoyama's choice based on his understanding of the rhetorical exigencies of the situation. Hence the primary emphasis in this section is in line with Hatoyama's stated intention in the introduction to change the way the government does its business, in the case of economic policy, shifting to a growth model based on domestic consumption and empowering the regions "so as to create vibrant local communities where decisions on regional matters are taken by the local residents . . . to create a new nation in which hard-working residents can become the protagonists of their own communities." And in a similar vein to the *yu-ai* concept of mutual assistance and inclusivity, he offers "a new concept of local autonomy, under which all the inhabitants of regional communities assume responsibility for the future of the towns and villages in which they live." While this section is less focused on political ideals than the former two, clearly the main thrust is not to delineate specific policy proposals but to emphasize and clarify what Hatoyama is offering as a new direction in politics and government.

In the final section on foreign policy there is less room for maneuver in terms of making new policy proposals or announcements as these would potentially have an effect on on-going diplomacy. In this section Hatoyama

runs through the list of international issues facing the country and touches upon policy plans that had already been announced or were in progress. This serves largely to reassure the country and the international community of the issues which the new government sees as priorities and that the government is attending to them. The newest aspect of Hatoyama's treatment of foreign policy was his offering his vision of a Japan that would be a bridge between East and West, and also between the developed world and developing countries.

Japan is a country that is blessed with experience and strengths in not only the economic field but also in a broad range of areas, spanning the environment, peace, culture, and science and technology, among others. As I stated at the United Nations General Assembly, that is why it is Japan that must rise up to overcome global challenges including climate change, nuclear proliferation, as well as poverty issues in Africa and elsewhere, and become a "bridge" linking east and west, developed and developing countries, and diverse cultures.

Hatoyama argues that by earning the respect and trust of the international community it can become that "bridge." One of the ways he proposes to do that is by becoming a leader in the fight against climate change, reiterating his pledge to "set a Japanese target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 compared to the 1990 level." He also refers to his plan to implement "the 'Hatoyama Initiative' for assisting developing countries" and to "promote actions to conserve the environment of the world and of Japan and pass them down to the children of tomorrow under an initiative to be known as 'Challenge 25'." While these are clearly new policy plans for the new government very little is offered by way of explaining their detail or likely effect, the primary effect of including them in the speech is to indicate that something is being done on issues of concern to most people in

his audience.

This section continues through the various international issues affecting Japan—North Korea, Afghanistan, Pakistan, denuclearization, and global peace, in particular with respect to the Asia-Pacific region. There is also mention of the US-Japan security alliance and its importance for peace in the region and the necessity to resolve the Okinawa base relocation issue. The latter of course is an issue of great importance in domestic politics as well, not least for the people of Okinawa. But, as there is little new information in this rehashing of foreign policy issues that was not already in the public domain, this section seems almost to function in a less discursive than performative sense, a sort of enacting of the government (the prime minister) being on the job (a point I will touch on again below).

He concludes this section by touching on the importance of developing deeper trust between Japan and its East-Asian neighbors in particular, and on further culture and educational exchanges between other countries. With the latter again he refers to

significant expansion of both the hosting of international students in Japan and the number of Japanese studying abroad, greatly increasing the number of specialists in the various languages and cultures of the region, and also enhancing the system for interchangeably transferring university credits earned in Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea. It is with a view to the long term that I will undertake these initiatives to foster the human resources who will sustain East Asian and Asia-Pacific cooperation thirty years hence.

Here again "significant" is hardly specific enough to provide clarity, but mentioning of the credit transfer is an issue much discussed in international exchange. Perhaps the most significant comment in the closing of

this section is his return to earlier parts of the speech, tying in his emphasis on educational and cultural exchange with the development of "'people's lives and culture as part of an economy for the people' and to promote the concept of an East Asian community.'" He once again links policy here with that of earlier sections and the emphasis there in taking care of people and his concept of *yu-ai*.

In the final concluding section, Hatoyama provides a clear summary of the main points he has discussed with a special emphasis on his philosophy of the *yu-ai* society. He reintroduces the concept by talking about the Japan as an "archipelago of earthquakes and natural disasters" and the kind of Japan he wants to create.

I wish to create a Japan that is loved and trusted by the people of other countries as well as a Japan brimming with such appeal that when a disaster does strike, people from all over the world and particularly people from neighbouring Asian countries hasten to Japan in the spirit of *yu-ai*, or "fraternity", wanting somehow to rescue Japan, help the people living in Japan, and protect Japanese culture. This is my honest wish.

As was clear from early on in the speech, introducing his political philosophy and his vision for Japan was a primary objective in this speech. In earlier sections the concept was applied to domestic issues for the most part and how he saw it contributing to improving life at the domestic level. The concluding remarks here suggest how relations would be with Japan's neighbors if that ideal can be achieved and were it to be shared with the rest of the East-Asian Community.

In the remainder of the conclusion, Hatoyama ties the speech together by taking a historical perspective again, linking the events of the summer election and the formation of the new government with other historical changes in Japanese history.

Japan is a country that 140 years ago achieved the drastic reforms of the Meiji Reformation. Now, the undertakings of the Hatoyama government are a "bloodless Heisei Reformation", so to speak. The current Reformation restores sovereign power to the people, breaking from a system dependent on the bureaucracy. It is also an attempt to transform the very shape of our nation from a centralised state to one of regional and local sovereignty, and from an insular island to an open maritime state.

As was evident in the beginning of the speech one of the speech's purposes was to mark the formation of a new government, but one very different in kind from that which preceded it, a "bloodless reformation" no less, with the purported aim of restoring "sovereign power to the people." He notes further that this radical change he wants to bring to Japan will not be forced upon them by "the external pressure of Black Ships nor vast stretches of burnt-out ruins following defeat in war," but that they must push through reforms "against such a backdrop [of the present system] represents a comparable if not greater challenge to the trials and tribulations undergone by our Meiji predecessors." This appeal for both audiences attempts to further strengthen his argument that his new administration does in fact represent real change, and, for members of the DPJ, strengthen their resolve and unity in moving forward.

Acknowledging that difficulties may lie in their path, he appeals to future history, or to the legacy the government can/should leave behind: "I am resolved to create a strong government with lofty ideals, on which future historians will reflect as 'having carried out, towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, reforms which looked ahead at the Japan of thirty to fifty years into the future'." He concludes with further appeals to the Diet members to join in this mission to remake Japan, depicting the present situation as a choice, "a crossroads" between following

the policies of the past "a path from maturation to decline under the same ideas of yesteryear," or policies that will lead to "novel breakthroughs and enrichment beyond this maturation, drawing on a fresh spirit of volition and intellectual power to formulate initiatives." In keeping with his historical analogies Hatoyama presents the current situation as make-or-break, which for many people suffering from unemployment or other ill effects of the economic and social downturn might not have sounded too far off the mark.

Hatoyama closed his speech with a personal pledge to commit himself to lead the change and put all his effort into make the government's reform plans a reality, to "changing history in the true sense and leading Japan to a dramatic leap higher," and a final appeal to members of the Diet and the public to "lend your support to the challenge of this transformation we are undertaking." Here again he ties this appeal with those made at the beginning of the speech

Evaluation

As noted earlier, the purpose of this analysis was not to determine the effectiveness of this speech, but to study it as a rhetorical artifact of a particular moment in Japanese political history. I will, however, offer some assessment based on the textual analysis of the speech, and conclude with some quotes from how the speech was viewed around Japan.

The speech was somewhat unusual as a prime minister's policy speech. The length (52 minutes) was about 1.5 to 2 times longer than most policy speeches on average, but clearly Hatoyama's purposes in giving the speech and the historical significance he placed on the events leading to the speech warranted for him the extra time. This was, in his own words a momentous historic occasion, and even at 52 minutes does not seem overly long for a speech in a country where lectures normally run for 90 minutes. The speech

was also unusual in that its content was drafted entirely by Hatoyama himself. There was evidently some consultation with top DPJ leadership but the content was his own creation. And rather than go on about specific policy detail, one goal was to give the Japanese people a real sense that the government had in fact changed.²⁶ Hence the emphasis not only on the concept of *yu-ai*, but also the repeated references to how specifically the process of policy formation and budget allocation would change and become a politically led process, and to the vision of Japan that Hatoyama holds for the country. To what degree the public audience believe the government can actually achieve these aims is a different matter. From a purely textual perspective these policy goals were clearly outlined and delineated through repetition, explanation, mention of the specific policy formation organs and people involved being put in place to take up the task. The intentions and the focus of those intentions were clearly communicated.

The speech was also unusual for the considerable number techniques more often associated with political speaking in the West. While these techniques can and are used on occasion in Japan, it is very unusual for a policy speech of this type. His use of the extended historical style narrative at the beginning and end of the speech helped create the sense of the historical importance of the moment, enhanced further by the descriptiveness of the language used. The use of the extended anecdote in his discussion of *yu-ai* was likewise effective for getting across idea of what this concept means and well as an effective use of plain-folks appeal—those in similar situations or with similar experiences can easily identify with the everyday characters in appearing in the anecdotes.²⁷ Likewise, specific mention of an unnamed Brazilian and the Ainu problems also added flesh to his discussion of *yu-ai*.²⁸

The style of the speech was also somewhat unusual in its use of language. In this case we could say the language was pure Hatoyama as he

authored the speech entirely himself. This made the style consistent throughout and straightforward in expressing the persona of the author. While not all reactions to the speech were positive, about the language and style all the comments examined for this research were positive. Often saying things like it was clear and easy to understand: "Until now, it has been my usual habit to turn off the television halfway through these speeches. This time I was glued to the TV. This time the prime minister, in his own words, fervently appealed to the public in a way I could easily understand."²⁹

The reaction of the political parties was perhaps more predictable, with positive and negative or mixed reactions pretty much falling along partisan political lines. In the Diet itself the DPJ members gave the prime minister a standing ovation, very unusual for a policy speech in Japan, and certainly a suggestion that the purpose of rallying the party was somewhat effective. Some other comments from the DPJ: "His wish for getting everyone to work together was clearly communicated." "This was very different from speeches written by bureaucrats." "It was refreshing to hear the speech in his own words." "His call for us to build a new Japan together at the end of the speech was filled with emotion. I really felt we will do this."³⁰

The reaction the LDP, and the negative reactions appearing in the media largely focused on the lack of specifics for the policy proposals he discusses in the speech. A Nikkei editorial said the idealism expressed in the speech sounded nice, but complained that there was no specific information about where money would come to fund programs, or how they would actually work.³¹ LDP comments echoed similar sentiments but also attacked the speech for being too long,³² and the President of the LDP, Tanigaki, complaining about all the applause and cheering, said it made him think of Hitler speaking at a Nazi Youth rally.³³

Whatever these responses indicate, comments from the LDP were

Endnotes

predictably negative on the whole with the reverse being true for the governing party. Media responses were more mixed with leftish leaning publications generally appreciating the appeals to the ideals Hatoyama discussed, but also noting the need for more specific policy proposals to be flushed out. In view of the situation and the nature of these "policy speeches" as discussed earlier, the process of forming a government and putting the policy formation mechanisms in place would not have been enough time to have such specific policy developed, and these speeches are not normally the place where specific details are argued in any case.

Hatoyama's purpose in this speech was to mark a historical moment in time and to argue that in fact Japan was on the brink of making change for the better. This performative aspect seemed to work well. The proof will ultimately be in the pudding. As the *Economist* concluded:

The wonder of Japan is that it sometimes meanders for years, decades, even centuries, and then erupts into a burst of creativity and reinvention. This may be one such moment, when the toppling of a political monolith unleashes hidden depths of civic action. But that will only happen if the DPJ grows bold enough to lead the way.³⁴

This was a skillfully crafted speech, delivered in a moving and passionate way. From the textual analysis, we can see the elements necessary for achieving the desired aims. The public attitudes to politics and politicians, and the difficult economic circumstances make appeals to such high ideals more difficult to get accepted. Whether this speech is forgotten in history or is remembered as the speech that marked the beginning of major changes in Japan, its fate will be closely linked to that of Hatoyama's "Heisei Reformation."

¹ Martin Fackler. "A Political Puzzle Also Known as 'Space Alien' Is in Line to Lead Japan." New York, NY; Sep 6, 2009, A 10.

² Richard Lloyd Parry. "Humiliation for old guard after wave of change ends party's 54-year dominance :Japan. " *The Times* 31 Aug. 2009, Times of London, ProQuest. Web. 11 Jan. 2010.

³ Victor Cha, "Focus on Policy not Politics," Op-Ed, *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 2010 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/08/opinion/08iht-edcha.html?scp=5&sq=hatoyama%20yukio&st=cse> Jan. 11, 2010.

⁴ This paper will follow the Japanese custom of putting Japanese names in the family name-given name order, except in cases where Japanese expats or those living abroad have published cited sources in English.

⁵ The speech to the 173 extraordinary session of the Diet, in both Japanese and English provisional translation can be found at http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/hatoyama/statement/200910/26syosin_e.html. For this analysis I will quote from the provisional English translation. Other Japanese media cited as sources will be translations of the author unless otherwise noted.

⁶ This is the central thesis, for example, in John L. Morrison, "The Absence of a Rhetorical Tradition."

⁷ Howell. Wilber Samuel. *Eighteenth Century British Logic and Rhetoric*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971, 9.

⁸ See for example the treatment in R.T. Oliver, *Communication and Culture in Ancient India*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971.; *Culture and Communication: The Problem of Penetrating National and Cultural Boundaries*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1962.; Okabe Rōichi, "Ibunka no retorikku," In Furuta, Gyou ed. *Ibunka Komyunikeishon*. Tokyo: Yuuhikaku Sensho, 1987, 163-183; "Yukichi Fukuzawa; A Promulgator of Western Rhetoric in Japan." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (April 1973) 186-195; and Ishii Satoshi, "Ibunka kara Mita Nihonteki Komyunikeishon no Ruikai: Nihonjin no Retorikku no Genryu toshite no Sekkyo," *Nihon Komyunikeishon Kenkyusha Kaigi Proceedings* (Nagoya, Japan: Nanzan University, 1990), 17-30.

⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric, On Rhetoric*. Trans. George A. Kennedy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.1.2.1. Since Aristotle's time numerous other definitions have

modified this definition, particularly with respect to the notion of "persuasion" (in that it ignores the importance of audience participation in the overall creation of message and effect), and any would have sufficed so long as they contain the three elements discussed below – message (means)-persuasion (ends)-situation. In so far as I am interpreting these terms to suit the Japanese case Aristotle's definition seemed as appropriate as any other.

¹⁰ I am not discounting the coalition in power for ten months in 1991-92, however, as a coalition of many smaller parties, none of which were a party in majority, this is considered different in kind to the present situation in which the DPJ is the party of majority in both Houses.

¹¹ This review is adapted from an unpublished manuscript "The Rhetoric of Post-World War II Japanese Policy Speeches: From Empire to Democracy, presented 18 June 1998, Durham University, England.

¹² All "policy" speeches prior to Prime minister Yoshida Shigeru's speech of 30 November, 1953 were recorded as shiseihōshinenzetsu. According to the editors of the anthology of speeches covering the first one hundred years of the government cabinet system, 1885-1985, this was in keeping with customary practice (歴代総理大臣演説集 閣制度百年史編纂委員会 東京内：大蔵省印刷局 1985 p1161). The reason for the change is not clear, but the less explicit label, as "government or prime ministers" opinions, may point to a desire to differentiate between the two and more clearly place more importance, at least formally, on the shiseihōshinenzetsu opening regular sessions.

¹³ Yoshida Shigeru, 4-4-48. 歴代総理大臣演説集, 459.

¹⁴ 歴代総理大臣演説集, 459.

¹⁵ Hatoyama Ichirō, 歴代総理大臣演説集, 541.

¹⁶ K. K. Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson give an overview of State of the Union addresses in *Deeds Done in Words*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Chpt. 4.

¹⁷ "Lost in transition; Japan's election." *The Economist* 5 Sep. 2009: Academic Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 11 Jan. 2010.

¹⁸ Quoted in "Lost in transition; Japan's election." *The Economist* 5 Sep. 2009: Academic Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 11 Jan. 2010.

¹⁹ "Lost in transition; Japan's election."

²⁰ Quoted in Richard Lloyd Parry. "Humiliation for old guard after wave of change ends party's 54-year dominance :Japan." *The Times* 31 Aug. 2009, Times of London, ProQuest. Web. 11 Jan. 2010.

²¹ "Humiliation for old guard after wave of change ends party's 54-year dominance :

Japan."

²² Richard Lloyd Parry. "'Mr Wippy' seeks change, But will he melt away:Japan." *The Times* 16 Sep 2009; 37.

²³ "Lost in transition; Japan's election."

²⁴ 鳩山首相、「友愛社会」説明へ 26日の所信表明演説で5つの方針 朝日新聞 2009年10月21日 p4.

²⁵ The English translations using this "Let us" as used here and elsewhere are actually stated as rhetorical questions in the Japanese original and have considerably more rhetorical impact. The first usage in this section is rendered in Japanese: 議員の皆さん、皆さんが受け止めた、国民一人ひとりの願いを、互いにかみしめ、しっかりと、一緒に、実現していただくではありませんか。 Also note, the provisional translation makes use of British spelling which I have left as in the original.

²⁶ The drafting process is reviewed in 鳩山首相、「友愛社会」説明へ 26日の所信表明演説で5つの方針 朝日新聞 2009年10月21日 p4.

²⁷ This goes all the more for the people being talked about. The president of the chalk factory, Ooyama Yasuhiro, after hearing his factory talked about in the speech, stated, "I feel I have been paid paid for all I've done. I am filled with happiness. I hope this will lead to the hiring of more handicapped people." Quoted in 演説に登場「とても光栄」大田区のチョーク会社、首相、20日に視察 日本経済新聞 朝刊 2009年10月27日 43p

²⁸ Abe Kazushi, the vice-director of the Ainu Kyoukai, reported stated, "I am really pleased that he mentined us in his speech. I hope we can now see the implementation of the UN declaration on aboriginal peoples and put an end to the poverty and discrimination against the Ainu people." In 鳩山首相演説、アイヌ民族に言及「歴史・文化を尊重」朝日新聞 朝刊・北海道 2009年10月27日 p29

²⁹ 土肥勝治(声) テレビ見続けた首相所信表明 朝日新聞 朝刊・名古屋 2009年11月3日 p11

³⁰ All the comments are from (政権交代@三重) 鳩山首相所信表明 「自分の言葉、新鮮」朝日新聞 朝刊・三重県 2009年10月27日 p29

³¹ 大場俊介 「臨時国会が召集、首相所信表明、理念に重点、具体策見えず——経済策、危機感薄く」日本経済新聞 夕刊 2009年10月26日 p2

³² This and other comments are reported in (政権交代@三重) 鳩山首相所信表明 「自分の言葉、新鮮」朝日新聞 朝刊・三重県 2009年10月27日 p29

³³ 自民酷評「具体性乏しい」鳩山首相、初の所信表明 朝日新聞 朝刊 2009年10月27日 p4

³⁴ "Lost in transition; Japan's election."