

# Japanese Public Bureaucracy in the Era of Globalization

HORI Masaharu<sup>\*</sup>

## **Abstract**

*Since the late 1990s, Japanese public bureaucracy has dramatically adapted to the international movement toward new public management. The concept was introduced into Japanese public administration through the Policy Evaluation System (Gyousei Hyouka Seido) for the central government. Bernard S. Silberman, addressing Max Weber's famous hypothesis of state bureaucratic rationalization, pointed out the divergence of bureaucratic structures in developed countries, and questioned differences between the United States and United Kingdom, and Japan and France. Silberman considered rationalization as a response to political crisis, aiming toward a redefinition of the relationship between the public and political domain. If so, I may claim the convergence of Japanese bureaucratic structure to the Anglo-Saxon type. Also, according to David Held's perspectives, I will try to explore the impact of globalization on Japanese public bureaucracy, and to reconsider Japanese administrative thinking in light of the Japanese way of adapting to foreign thinking since the opening of Japan to the world. From what has been discussed above, I am left with the following questions : Why does not the Japanese public bureaucracy, explicitly or implicitly, reject NPM reform, since it will result in more control from politicians ? Why does the public bureaucracy seem to be self-contradictory, maintaining the traditional bureaucratic identity of Rechtsstaat (administration proactively conducted by legal discipline) in spite of embracing managerialism focused on efficiency and effectiveness ? How will the above newly reformed dichotomy between politicians and bureaucrats gradually evolve towards new governance based on civic engagement in Japan ?*

## **Introduction**

The Japanese people have a lot of experience passing traditional boundaries, particularly in Commodore Perry's requests for opening the country in 1853, and General MacArthur's demands to accept democracy in 1945. Now, seeing a global world culture developing in economics and politics, Japan has an opportunity to promote a new authority for individual persons and achieve a major breakthrough in the paternalism and elitism of

---

<sup>\*</sup> Professor of Public Administration, Faculty of Law, Ritsumeikan University.

government authorities.

I recently analyzed the state of Japanese public administration and bureaucracy in relation to new public management (NPM), using a typology of six basic principles in public administration — self-sufficiency, direct control, standardized establishment procedures, uniformity, accountability upward, and an apolitical process (Guy and Wright, 1996 ; Hori, 2002). The Japanese public bureaucracy shows a powerful ability to maintain its traditional authority in “direct control” and “accountability upward.” In other areas, however, a movement of bureaucrat-led reforms has made substantial, if rather slow progress in implementing NPM in the Japanese bureaucracy. For the foreseeable future, Japanese public administration is converging with the standards of administrative management influenced by NPM in North America and Western Europe.

In this paper I will explore the current transition in Japanese public bureaucracy by applying a framework developed by Bernard S. Silberman (1993). I will examine new strategies for 21<sup>st</sup> century governance, developing among Japanese leaders in business, labor, and the academy, in response to the era of globalization. Finally, I will address emerging questions in this discussion.

### **A Framework for Public Bureaucracy**

Addressing Max Weber’s famous definition of state bureaucratic rationalization, Silberman (1999) first points to the diversity of bureaucratic structures in developed countries. To find order in this diversity, he chooses to consider Weber’s ideal types “not as a series of scalar indices of structure but rather as a description or definition of role characteristics” (p. 3). He then focuses on similar types of rational bureaucracy that have developed in both organizational and professional modes in spite of quite different polities and different stages of social and economic development (pp. 14-15).

Silberman characterizes two modes of bureaucracy : (a) an organizational mode with “the presence of rules governing the criteria for higher offices that stress entry into the organizational career prior to appointment to office” (p. 10), and (b) a professional mode with “the rule that professional or preprofessional training (not necessarily directly related to assuming bureaucratic roles) is the primary criterion for holding higher administrative office” (p. 12).

Finally, he considers bureaucratic rationalization as a response to political crisis (see Table 1) that redefines the relationship between the public and private sectors (see Table 2). The rationalization process, according to Silberman, is not so much a general social system for maximizing social utility, but rather a political process that restates the meaning and nature of the modern state. When political and organizational leaders continually face issues related to their official positions, they tend to react with “ad hoc rational strategic responses” (p. 425). This is the process that leads to organizational rationalization in both

**Table 1** *Bureaucratic Structures*

Political Succession	Leadership structure	
	Social network	Party structure
High Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social leadership</li> <li>• Organizational orientation</li> <li>• Bureaucratic domination</li> </ul> [Japan in pre-WWII, Germany in the pre-Nazi period and to some extent in the postwar era]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party leadership</li> <li>• Organizational orientation</li> <li>• Single-party domination of administrative posts</li> </ul> [Former Soviet Union, and other communist countries, Nazi Germany]
Low Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Leadership</li> <li>• Professional Orientation</li> <li>• Bureaucratic Consensus</li> </ul> [Great Britain and Canada in early 20 <sup>th</sup> century]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-Party Leadership</li> <li>• Professional Orientation</li> <li>• Party Domination of Administrative Posts</li> </ul> [USA, and Switzerland from late 19 <sup>th</sup> to early 20 <sup>th</sup> century]

*Note : Adapted from Silberman (1993), Table 3.1 (p. 82).*

**Table 2** *Comparison of Public and Social Characteristics in the USA and UK, and Japan and France*

	USA and UK	Japan and France
Possession of knowledge and expertise	Civil society	State organization
Education system	Parallel public and private	State organization

*Note. Adapted from Silberman (1993), pp.416-417.*

public and private spheres. Silberman's schema is interesting, because it offers a framework for comparative research in public bureaucracy.

In the framework of bureaucratic structures provided in Table 1, Silberman identified a position for Japan pre-WWII, but left open how Japan should be understood today. Using Silberman's framework, I plot the past, present, and future positions of the Japanese polity in Table 3.

Under a one-party majority political system since the 1960s, the Japanese economy experienced rapid growth with the support of the United States in high technology, oil energy, and security. The leadership structure was based on a "catch-all party," with support from farmers, small business, industries, and labor unions. During this period, it seems that Japan moved from quadrant (A) to quadrant (C). Since 1993, through the triumph of a conservative coalition in the election of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, Japan moved toward quadrant (D).

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) turned over the government in 1993 after a no-confidence resolution against Prime Minister Miyazawa, passed due to the new parties

**Table 3** *Japanese Polity : Past, Present, and Future*

Political succession	Leadership structure	
	Social network	Party structure
High uncertainty	(A) Japan in pre-WWII	(B) Future ?
Low uncertainty	(C) One-party majority system since 1960s	(D) Conservative coalition since 1993 [also USA]

coming out of LDP. The new coalition changed the election system in February 1994, from the multiple-seat constituency system to a parallel system combining a single-seat system (300 seats) and proportional representation (200 seats). It is likely that the impact has strengthened the power of conservative coalition regimes as Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Mori, Mr. Obuchi and Mr. Koizumi (Watanabe, 1994). However, facing a challenge of global transformation, with increasingly high uncertainty.

In one important aspect of its international relations, Japan stands at a crossroads, facing a decision whether to maintain the Constitution of 1946 or revise it by deleting Clause Nine as a public declaration of Japanese pacifism (Kato, 2001). In 2002, the Special Committees for Study of the Constitution of Both Houses made a midterm report after hearing views from the people. Political forces that favor revision have a majority of seats in the Diet. In the near future, by amending the Constitution, there is a strong possibility that Japan could have an important political role in the international community, even becoming one of the permanent members of the U. N. Security Council. In a new stage of development, Japan could make a controversial step from quadrant (D) to (B).

We can examine more closely what this shift means by looking at leadership and agenda setting by leaders supporting the central government. In a broad view, the top leaders in Japan share a sense of impending crisis, a hollowing out of their reason for being, and they continue to search for new forms of governance and civil society in the era of globalization. The sense of crisis is acknowledged in a January 2000 report by the Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: *The Frontier Within : Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium*. The report's main points illustrate the issues.

### ***Demise of the Japanese Model***

“This model was the ‘catch up and overtake’ model, followed not only in the postwar period but ever since the Meiji era (1868-1912). Japan must now seek a better model. But the world no longer offers ready-made models. The time when answers could be sought from without has passed” (ch. 3, p. 3).

*Japan's goal*

“... building a new system of governance, empowering the individual, and creating a new public space,” based on “the fostering of a spirit of self-reliance and a spirit of tolerance” (ch. 3, p. 3).

*Newly Changed Systems and Methods*

*New style of governing system : from governing to governance.* “A top-down, or public-sector to private-sector image of governance, exalting the bureaucracy and looking down on citizens,” is moving toward a new style of governance with new rules and systems of “disclosure and sharing of information, presentation of opinions, transparent and rational decision making, steady implementation of policy decisions, and ex post facto policy assessment and review.” These changes involve relations between “individuals and organizations, whether government, companies, universities, or nongovernmental organizations” (p. 8).

*New ideology of Japanese identity : tough yet flexible individual.* Acts feely with “self-responsibility, self-reliantly supporting him- or herself, and also, “takes risks on his or her own responsibility and tackles the challenge of achieving personal goals with a pioneer spirit.” So, by empowering individuals, “engaging in free and spontaneous activities, participating in society, and building a more mature system of governance” will create “a new public space” (p. 8).

The commission's report suggests Japanese governance and society should aim toward a so-called Anglo-Saxon type, where an empowered individual has a “tough” responsibility requiring a “flexible” response in a highly competitive world, and a strong civil society relies upon a lot of nongovernmental organizations to fill the gaps left by a passive government retreating from the public sphere in favor of a strong market economy. The commission evidently denies a positive role for government. The people are to be thrown into a highly competitive market economy without preparing a safety net for them. It would seem this type of society paves a way for the cruel law of jungle.

Passive government does not necessarily mean a weak one. An existing regime could definitely strengthen its pivot of authority more than before. Rather than a new innovation, it appears this proposal for changes in governance represents a new version of a very old type of domination. If this is so, it is worth asking whether this is really the result of convergence with an Anglo-Saxon type, or instead represents a kind of isomorphism produced by processes of rationalization indigenous to Japan. The dichotomy between international versus indigenous influences deserves closer scrutiny (Henderson, 1990). It cannot be assumed that a new kind of governance like NPM is used by the same methods or words as originally imported from OECD/PUMA, World Bank and IMF.

Accordingly, we need to look more closely at Japanese public bureaucracy and its new strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Governance in the Era of Globalization**

Globalization is difficult to characterize, due to contributions of different ideological viewpoints (Held, 2000). Anthony McGrew (2000) summarizes the main theories of global governance in three categories: traditionalist, globalist, and transformationalist (see Table 4).

These categories are plain and easy to understand, and may be fruitfully applied to the context of Japanese public bureaucracy. The traditionalist argument appears to include the perspective of comparative public administration in the 1950s and 1960s (Dwivedi and Henderson, 1990). A new system has been insufficiently discussed in academic circles. In March 1999, the Study Board on the Public Service Personnel System made a “Recommendation on Basic Direction of Public Service Personnel System”; and in December 2001, Mr. Koizumi’s cabinet decided on a “Guideline for Reform of Public Service Personnel System.” The cabinet takes a rigid view of personnel management by the National Personnel Authority, which looks like an impediment to public officers wanting to manage a human resource more efficiently and effectively (Sakamoto, 2001). Labor unions have already rejected the guideline, because they consider it not as a fair evaluation but an arbitrary tool (Rengo-Kankoubumon, 2001; Kokkororen, 2001). The guideline has already changed the existing system, however, introducing a competitive factor into promotions and a performance incentives in pay bonuses. Previously, a bonus was literally a diligence allowance, considered a kind of seniority wage. The new definition appears to be influenced by new public management (NPM) reform (Haruyama, 2003).

The Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP), chaired by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, introduced the concept of NPM into Japanese public administration with a report of reform principles submitted to Mr. Koizumi’s cabinet on June 26, 2001. The report, *Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Policy Management and Structural Reform*, was authorized by the cabinet on the same day. The word, definition and explanation of “New Public Management” in Japanese appeared on the section of “Reform of Policy-Making Process” (Hori, 2002).

Using the three types of global governance introduced in Table 4, we can compare Japanese public bureaucracy before and after the NPM reforms according to a traditionalist’s perspective (t), a globalist perspective (g), and a transformationalist perspective (tr) (see Table 5). According to McGrew’s explanation, these three perspectives probably demonstrate general tendencies in the context of contemporary politics and governance in Japan. The following is a tentative attempt for further discussion.

**Table 4** *Theories of Global Governance : Summary Grid*

	Traditionalist (hegemonic governance)	Globalist (rule of global capital)	Transformationalist (technocratic governance, governance from below)
Key agents/ agencies of rule	Dominant states	Global corporate and financial capital	Epistemic communities, NGOs, social movements
Who rules ?	Hierarchy — the USA as hegemon	Cosmocracy — transnational business civilization	Polyarchy — diverse social forces and interests
In whose interests	National and geo- strategic interests	Global capital	Sectional and collective people's, planetary interests
By what means ?	Coercion and consent	Structural power — global markets constrain what nation-states can do	Application of knowledge, procedures and technical deliberation, mobilization across borders, transnational coalition building
To what ends ?	Maintenance of global order conducive to hegemonic interests	Stability and reproduction of global capitalist order	Keeping efficient, accountable and effective governance, contesting globalization from above

Source : McGrew (2000), Table 4-3 (p.160) with additions by Hori.

The traditionalist's hegemonic governance shows that the Japanese state may emphasize continuity before and after globalization. Under the globalist's rule of global capital, the state may be forced to disconnect indigenous attitudes and behavior, and then choose Anglo-Saxon types. The transformationalist may consider a way toward the rebirth of Japanese society as a polyarchy. Table 5 shows that several aspects of Japanese public bureaucracy (Tuji, 1984) will be changing before and after globalization toward one of these three perspectives, operating in the following areas.

First, departmentalism has a strong legacy in an old bureaucracy. With a new functionalism, aiming to harmonize efficiency and democracy, three choices are possible — continuing, discontinuing and transforming. A traditionalist may appraise departmentalism as a good means of coercion and consent. A globalist may prefer discontinuing, because the structural power of global capital could provide a subordinate mechanism that no longer requires departmentalism. A transformationalist may look for an alternative, transforming toward a condition of polyarchy.

Second, a traditionalist and globalist may perceive a disharmony of efficiency and democracy, due to subtly different motives. Both consider efficiency as important to keep business activity in a good condition, but they differ in their regard for democracy. The traditionalist regards democracy as a sufficient one the latter does. In contrast, the transformationalist could try to transform a disharmony between efficiency and democracy

**Table 5** *Comparison Before and After Globalization in Aspects of Japanese Public Bureaucracy*

Basic Aspects *	Before	After
Departmentalism	Strong as a legacy of an old bureaucracy and a new functionalism	(T) Continuing (G) Discontinuing (Tr) Transforming
Harmony of efficiency and democracy	Disharmony	(T) Continuing (G) Continuing (Tr) Transforming
Superiority of legislative power over the executive power	Nominal/functional	(T) Nominal/functional (G) Substantial/reverse functional (Tr) Transforming
Presence of bureaucracy	independent	(T) independent (G) dependent (Tr) dependent
Relationships between politicians and bureaucrats ( type = $p > b$ , type = $p < b$ )	vertical dimension (vd) + type : strong horizontal dimension (hd) : —	(T) vd + type : strong hd : — (G) vd + type : weak, hd : weak (Tr) vd + type : weak, hd : strong

\* Referring to Tuji (1984).

by finding their synergistic correlation (Yorimoto, 1978). Yorimoto mentions an importance of establishing “a functionally interconnected social system” in researching a case of recycling activity (Yorimoto, 2002 : p. 233). And then he understood that the social system, “a framework capable of producing multiplied effects by properly distributing the roles played by the various entities,” is based on so-called sublation between efficiency and democracy (ibid.). I would support that, and need to develop its mechanism in a certain public problem into a general theory.

Third, a traditionalist may consider the superiority of legislative power over the executive power as a nominal discipline in the Constitution, and employ substantial powers. A globalist may establish a structural power of global capital, which internalizes an executive power that constrains what nation states, with their core of legislative powers, can accomplish. The transformationalist could attempt to establish a polyarchy, substantially holding the superiority of legislative power over the executive power, providing important roles for diverse social forces and interests to maintain efficient, accountable and effective governance, and contest globalization from above.

Fourth, a traditionalist may continue to hold an independent presence of bureaucracy against legislative power. Conversely, for different reasons, a globalist and transformationalist may both agree to its dependence. While the globalist needs a dependent bureaucracy obedient to the requests of global capital, the transformationalist needs a bureaucracy loyal to the above representatives.

Finally, relationships between politicians and bureaucrats are of two types : an alpha



type, with politicians over bureaucrats; and a beta type, with bureaucrats over politicians. A traditionalist, keeping a strong vertical relationship, would change from a beta type to an alpha type, to strengthen the hegemony of the state in an unstable world. Both globalist and transformationalist are consistent with a weak vertical dimension, and a beta type, but they disagree in the horizontal dimension, the globalist preferring weak relationships, and the transformationalist preferring strong relationships. While a globalist refuses any kind of hegemonic forces, the transformationalist develops a strong polyarchy, with a horizontal dimension that opposes globalization from above as promoted by global capital.

### **Rethinking Japanese Public Administration**

The wide social reforms after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 learned from the developed countries of the West as a model. The Meiji Constitution provided for imperial absolutism in 1889, after the Meiji government had suppressed the movements for freedom and popular rights. The Imperial Rescript on Education was proclaimed in 1890 to control even people's spiritual life. Accordingly, in making the modern state, the Japanese people were encouraged to adopt politically and morally passive attitudes and behavior, as described in the following section.

#### ***Individual and Society in Transition***

*“A monotonous cylinder made of cloth.”* Japanese thought has been influenced by religious cultures such as Shintoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Both Buddhism and Confucianism reached Japan from China and Korea. Shintoism is the indigenous religion in Japan. Shintoism responded to other religious cultures, but has no founder and no scriptures like the others, or like the Bible in Christianity. For this reason, Masao Maruyama described Shintoism with the metaphor of “a monotonous cylinder made of cloth,” intending to characterize its syncretistic and miscellaneous features embraced from imported religions from abroad (Maruyama, 1961, pp. 20-21). In fact, Shintoism has myriad gods, *yaoyorozu-no-kami* (eight million gods), who are believed to live in all natural objects and phenomena.

After the Restoration, Shintoism became the imperial state-owned religion, and the emperor became deified, though he was a Buddhist in the Edo era. Governing authorities used Confucianism to educate the people as obedient subjects. The “mandate of Heaven,” familiar to many revolutions in the history of China, was lacking in Japan. Buddhism, a secularized and institutionalized religion in the Edo era, survived as a subordinate religion and supportive tool for mass mobilization until Japan's defeat in 1945.

Ethically speaking, as an important note, ‘a monotonous cylinder made of cloth’ means there was no absolute being who could play a normative role for ruling the inner

psychic world. Although the new Constitution of 1946 prescribed popular sovereignty, most people are inclined to regard it not as an absolute and moral value, but a formal and legal one. With nearly sixty of social and political experiences under the Constitution, people are gradually growing to be independent. This is a starting point for the birth of an independent person in civil society.

**Hybrid culture.** Shuichi Kato called “a monotonous cylinder made of cloth” a “hybrid culture” (1979), in its most positive sense. This version of the concept has the intended meaning to “interiorize the historical challenge of the West, to live out in oneself the confrontation of the two cultures and transform it into a creative force” (p. 113). Typical persons representing hybrid culture were Ogai Mori (a novelist and army surgeon, 1862-1922), Soseki Natsume (a novelist and English lecturer, 1867-1916) and Kitaro Nishida (a philosopher and professor, 1870-1945).

As just the opposite position of thinking, Tenshin Okakura (1862-1913), following Ernest Fenollosa (visiting professor of Tokyo Imperial University, 1853-1908), wrote some books in English on Japanese culture and art for his need and desire to “objectify and universalize Japanese culture” and “take the culture beyond particularity to universality” (Kato, 1979, p. 112). Whether both positions are reasonable and compatible should be discussed in the era of globalization, but this conundrum probably remains unsettled. However, a vulgar view of hybrid culture has already been available and fixed.

A vulgar view of hybrid culture means an arbitrary compromise between a Japanese and a Western style (*wayo-setyu*<sup>1)</sup>). For example, most Japanese people (Buddhist and Shintoist with about 94% of all members of religious organizations [Asahi Shimbun, 2003, p. 237]) have no doubts about conducting a Christian wedding ceremony as a Buddhist, seeing a gala day for children of three, five and seven years of age, who dress up in traditional kimono and visit the local shrine, and performing a funeral service according to Buddhist rites. In the spiritual world, whose *wayo-setyu* has yielded their attitude and behavior of justifying the status quo of politics and society after waiting and seeing how the wind blows. At the same time, for concealing that, they show a marked tendency to stress an emotional decision, even the real world and realpolitik need much more impassiveness and matter-of-factness.

**“Wakon yosai” approach of governing authorities.** Since the Meiji Restoration, governing authorities under foreign pressures led to a national undertaking to translate academic works in natural and social sciences from Western countries. Maruyama (1961) has pointed out that the imported works were narrow, special fields, disconnected from the basic sciences in Japan, including common thinking; and this led those who studied the works into a type of “octopus trap” (*takotsubo-gata*) like an unfavorable image of only

---

1) ‘*Wayo-setyu*’ originally means a proper combination of a Japanese and a Western style (Shinmura, 1990), but its common usage means a arbitrary one.

studying a little part of modern science, in contrast to a more favorable image of a “bamboo whisk” (*sasara-gata*), which wholly absorbs a modern science originating in classical philosophy. To integrate the foreign body of ideas, a new phrase was born: *wakon yosai* (learning from the West through keeping Japanese spirit). The phrase is modified from the common phrase during the Edo era: *Wakon Kansai* (learning from China through doing that).

**“Kanson-minpi.”** The phrase “*kanson-minju*” represents a prejudiced and biased view of differences between the positions of officials and national government on the one hand, and ordinary people and private associations on the other. *Kanson* honors the former, while *minpi* slights the latter. The concept has been created by gathering high and talented persons with advanced knowledge from all over the country to serve as officials and government leaders. This representation has been fundamental from the Meiji state to the present. Surprisingly, the phrase was born in the Imperial, but was kept to justify bureaucratic rule in political, social and economic administration. As a matter of polyarchy, it remains important to pay attention to the attitude and behavior of *kanson-minpi*.

**Dichotomy between “*tatema*” and “*hon*ne.”** *Tatema* means a word of principle, whereas *hon*ne means an actual intention. The dichotomy shows the complicated Japanese feelings about attitude and behavior. Why don’t people frankly show *hon*ne? The easy answer is that they tend to prize social harmony and a status quo, and at the same time, believe that frankly stating one’s thoughts might be regarded as a revolt to authority. Related to the clear dichotomy between words of principle and words of intention, a recent study noted a more marked tendency toward norms in Japan than in other countries (Stockwin, 2003).

A related dichotomy exists between *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) of family, local community or other organizations. Dividing the insider from the outsider justifies a kind of nepotism for the former, combined with *hon*ne concerning outside matters. Conversely, talk outside of a group ought to use *tatema*, except for several “close” friends. Paradoxically, the use of *tatema* seems to represent communication that is meant to be superficial, unproductive and irresponsible.

**Denotation/connotation of terms used in translation.** *Jiyuu* was first used as a translation of “liberty” in 1866, and appeared in an English-Japanese dictionary in 1870 (Kato, 1991).<sup>2)</sup> *Kenri* (right) appeared about 1878. The word originally appeared in a Chinese-translated version (1864) of *Elements of International Law* published in 1836. *Kenri* is composed of *ken* and *ri* — *ken* signifying a connection with *kenryoku* (power, authority), and *ri* adding a note of selfishness, benefits and self-interest. Both governing and governed people considered ‘asserting *kenri*’ as something inherently dishonest, whereas “asserting right” to

---

2) ‘*Jiyuu*’ has the double meaning of liberty and freedom.

Western people, though the meaning differs somewhat between languages, generally refers to a just and necessary regard for life, property, and free speech (and other civic virtues).

*Kenri* is an abstract term without the plural form, indicating the concept is not intended to fit an individual, but becomes concrete only in a collective sense. The inability to think of right in individual terms may explain the difficulty of Japanese people to “bring a case before the court,” especially when it might involve high-ranking persons. In this respect, the increasing number of trials since 1980 is an interesting development, possibly indicating a new sense of individuality and individual rights in society.

### *Accountability and NPM (Setsumei-Sekinin)*

In recent administrative vocabulary, the word and meaning of “accountability” was imported with NPM in the late 1990s as *setsumei-sekinin*.<sup>3)</sup> The word was used in the Basic Law on the Administrative Reform of the Central Government (Law No. 103), related to setting up the policy evaluation system in 1999 (Hori, 2002). *Setsumei* means to explain something about a new policy and program, and particularly outputs and outcomes of implementing them. *Sekinin* is literally equal to accountability connotatively. The combined word redefines accountability.

The policy evaluation system also operates under the principle of *setsumei-sekinin* as “See” in the management circle of Plan-Do-See (Hori, 2002). In other words, unsurprisingly, it is equivalent to a system of self-evaluation for the activities of bureaucrats.

Table 6 compares the meaning of *setsumei-sekinin* with “accountability” as defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (Bradbury, 1996). Bradbury pointed out that it consists of three parts: answering the represented, acting upon and accepting responsibility. In contrast, *setsumei-sekinin* is stressed only to provide people more a detailed explanation without doing that, because the governing authorities think few doing so incurs their distrust of administrative behavior. Accordingly, both words look the same, due to using them in each country in the context of NPM reform; but their contents are so markedly different that the greatest care is needed to discuss and evaluate the experience and meaning of each in relation to reform. However, there is to discuss a subject that lies behind this difference of both words. Namely, there are few dominant people such as bureaucrats, business leaders and scholars, who refuse such tricks of the governing authorities. Seeing that they are no responsible institutions, consisting of independent persons, not seeing through them and clarifying their responsibility, but acting that way

---

3) According to MacGrew’s perspectives, those who translated accountability into *setsumei-sekinin* seems to be traditionalists. They had translated deregulation into *Kisei-kanwa* in 1980s. Japanese people understand that *Kisei-kanwa* is not to rescind a regulation, but to relax it. There are a similar phenomena in Asian countries as well as in Japan. Cheung and Scott (2003) point out that Asian countries have defended their own “sensibilities” and tend to change a meaning of “governance values” (p. 6) as well as accountability.

**Table 6** *Comparison of setsumei-sekinin with accountability*

	Accountability	<i>Setsumei-sekinin</i>
Answer to the represented on the disposal of their powers and duties	Yes	No
Act upon criticisms and requirements	Yes	No
Accept (some) responsibility of failure, incompetence, or deceit	Yes	No

solely for the purpose of protecting their own interests and positions, Japanese people should mature as political and social persons as well as economic ones, and need to bring up a part of themselves as their excellent leaders for establishing the responsible governing authorities.

From what has been discussed above, further discussions need to analyze features of these traditional methods of Japanese thinking, which behind an administrative word will be transformed by an impact of globalization, according to MacGrew's three perspectives. In doing that, its impact can be considered not only as external ones such as economic, social, political and administrative influences, but also as internal ones such as Japanese thinking deeply related to develop an independent identity of becoming responsible for their own opinions, decisions and actions. It is needless to say that an administrative thought of Japan reflects the independent identity of Japanese.

Table 7 compares several methods of Japanese traditional thought before and after globalization. First, according to "monotonous cylinder," a hybrid culture and "*wakon yosai*" approach, a traditionalist may think of keeping them due to the Japanese true way of thinking or the value in use for making an excuse before the Japanese people when a misunderstanding between foreign countries and Japan occurs. A globalist eradicates them, and a transformationalist gradually changes from a person with "monotonous cylinder" to one with a particular philosophy or belief, from with a hybrid culture to with a literally true one, from with '*wakon yosai* to with learning from the world connected with those spirit through developing their own independent identity.

Second, concerning about *kanson-minpi* and *tatemaie and honne*, while a traditionalist think of keeping both by the above reason, a globalist and transformationalist obliterate them. On the one hand a globalist and transformationalist have an unbiased view of them no matter who are public officials or business and ordinary people, on the other hand globalist integrates unthinkingly *tatemaie and honne* into *tatemaie*, and transformationalist does that with more consideration for the background of *honne*.

Third, this is a translation that has played a key role for communication between foreign countries and Japan up to now. Its feature with one-way from foreign languages to Japanese is so useful to import advanced things from developed countries. Nevertheless, the impact of globalization needs the growth of two-way translation for developing mutual

**Table 7** *Comparison of Before and After Globalization in Japanese Thought*

	Before globalization	After globalization
“Monotonous cylinder”	Working explicitly	(T) Continuing (G) Discontinuing (Tr) Transforming
Hybrid culture	Working explicitly	(T) Continuing (G) Discontinuing (Tr) Transforming
<i>Wakon yosai</i> approach	Functioning	(T) Functioning (G) Dysfunctioning (Tr) Transforming
<i>Kanson-minpi</i>	Explicitly	(T) Explicitly (G) Disappearing (Tr) Disappearing
<i>Tatema</i> and <i>honne</i>	Explicitly	(T) Explicitly (G) Disappearing (Tr) Disappearing
Translating	One way from foreign languages to Japanese	Two ways from English to Japanese, and vice versa
Individual type	Dependent	(T) Dependent (G) Atomic (Tr) Independent

understanding. Nowadays, the Japanese people need to actually use foreign languages and show their opinions. A traditionalist’s position may be weakened by of two-way translation because it introduces comparative views into a Japanese society, but by it a globalist and transformationalist automatically don’t seem to have their advantageous positions. However, two-way translation is neutral for everyone.

In my opinion, it is important to understand that a domain of two-way translation is possible to call a battlefield for war of achieving worldwide hegemony. When each individuals produce translation, they can’t avoid to think of the meaning and future of globalization, and in doing that, can make a view of it while shaping their identity, and know which MacGrew’s perspectives is best fitted to a globalization whose advantages will outweigh its disadvantages as well as people, region and country. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that translating for Japanese is related to actively choose a direction of globalization.

Finally, there are three types of individuals toward authorities : dependent, atomic and independent. A traditionalist don’t want to change a status quo of individuals, dependent type, due to an effective control of people. On the one hand, a globalist may change it into a metaphor of an organic and atomic character which can’t be factored

further. This character lacks a cultural and normative side of people and may leave them a monoculture of global capital. On the other hand, a transformationalist may put people on a knot of cooperative networks by recognizing a person to be an independent with an indigenous character. Additionally, the individual type provides an indicator of what perspective the governing authorities have chose at the present.

### *Questions and Answers*

As a result of this discussion, I can turn to a few questions where tentative answers are possible, regarding the so-called global transformation of governance and civil society as it relates to Japan.

*Question 1. Why does not the Japanese public bureaucracy, explicitly or implicitly, reject the NPM reform, due to the threat of more control from politicians ?*

Answer : Japanese public bureaucracy thinks NPM reform has several merits : internationally participating in activities of OECD and World Bank, publicly showing a positive attitude to the Japanese people, and inwardly establishing a common goal for a new form of governance. It also considers a realignment of all parties, excluding the Communist Party, as an important point for achieving establishing a two-party system, which can then expect a high governability, based on strong leadership, definite policy, and impartial accountability, regardless of partisan/factional politics (CEFP, 2001 ; Congressional Forum for New Japan, 2002).

*Question 2. Why does Japanese public bureaucracy seem to be self-contradictory, holding the traditional bureaucratic identity of *Rechtsstaat*, the administration proactively conducted by legal discipline, in spite of embracing managerialism focused on efficiency and effectiveness ?*

Answer : First, Japanese public bureaucracy regards *Rechtsstaat* with an exegetical understanding, based not on the original concept, which might restrict its own activities, but as legitimating them against and beyond court jurisdiction (Watanabe, 1988). It also holds managerialism without accountability upward to the Diet (Japanese Parliament) in terms of the system of self-evaluation for activities of bureaucrats (Hori, 2002). An index of efficiency in the system does not signify compatibility between public and business administration. For bureaucrats, the concept of efficiency is based on a budget of each program, calculated and appropriated by itself (the Study Group for Establishing Principles of Accounting for IACs, 2000). Therefore, Japanese public bureaucracy seems not to be self-contradictory, but to follow the beaten track looking for an excellent performance, while having no foresight to reorganize itself by itself.

*Question 3. How will the above newly reformed dichotomy between politicians and bureaucrats gradually evolve toward new governance based on civic engagement in Japan ?*

Answer : All Japanese people have taken notice of the performance of national and local governments, and public corporations, teetering on the brink of financial collapse. The total of outstanding central government bonds amounted to 364 trillion yen at the end of FY2000 (73% of debt/GDP ratio, 67trillion yen of FY1990). At the same time, the long-term debt of all local governments amounted to 176 trillion yen at the end of FY1999 (over 30% of GDP debt/GDP ratio) (Asahi Shinbun, 1999. 7. 16, 2003. 3. 30.). The Japanese economy is in a deflationary spiral, and seems for the moment incapable of making a substantial recovery. The president of the Federation of Economic Organizations (*Nippon Keidanren*) addressed a plan for the rising consumption tax from 5% to 18% of 2016, or 16% of 2014 (Asahi Shinbun, 2003. 1. 1.). Several solutions for finding a way out have been offered to the people. For example, some authorities of local governments have planned a downsizing of both the number of the administrative staff and volume of social welfare activities. Another idea is to outsource volunteers and private/public works, similar to the Public-Private Initiative (PPI) in the United Kingdom. Others attempt to develop a civic-empowered society by using a collaborative scheme, eliminating public works projects for dams and public utilities (Hori, 2003). Avoiding collapse is likely to require more civic engagement in public activities for rebuilding a new civic governance.

## Conclusion

In the era of globalization, Japan politics has moved from a position of low uncertainty and social network to a position of low uncertainty and party structure, and will possibly move to a position of high uncertainty and party structure under the conservative coalition supported by so-called political reform in 1990s. The governing authorities aim to achieve a new form of governance and society, based on an Anglo-Saxon type. Their vision will not be automatically realized without the consensus of Japanese people. The public bureaucracy, prevailing on them, may be a crucial factor for controlling Japanese politics and for choosing one of three perspectives. What is important is said that choosing a perspective may reflect the individual type concerning about whether or not the Japanese people remain dependent, or become atomized or independent persons in the context of political thought in Japanese history. In other words, there is a concern whether or not the Japanese people can use Japanese public bureaucracy as their civil servants, and then whether or not NPM has the advantages of controlling Japanese public bureaucracy.



This paper focuses on traditional thought and its adaptation, especially translation from foreign languages to Japanese. Translating may subtly change the meaning of an imported word in the growth of globally intensive communication. Although Japanese public bureaucracy has been influenced by NPM, it seems to take indigenous characteristics to characterize and utilize the nature of reform. We may need to examine isomorphism of Japanese public bureaucracy in term of an Anglo-Saxon type.

### References

- Asahi Shimbun (2003). Number of Believers (original source : Agency for Cultural Affairs). In *The Asahi Shimbun Japan Almanac 2004*. Tokyo : Asahi Shimbun.
- Bradbury, J. (1996). Accountability. In I. Mclean (Ed.), *The concise Oxford dictionary of politics*. Oxford : Oxford University.
- Cheung, A. B. L., & Scott, I. (2003). Governance and public sector reforms in Asia : Paradigms, paradoxes and dilemmas. In A. B. L. Cheung & I. Scott (Eds.), *Governance and public sector reform in Asia*. London : Rotledge Curzon.
- The Congressional Forum for New Japan (21 Seiki Rintyou). (2002). *Seiji no kouzou-kaikaku [Structural reform for politics]*. Tokyo : Toshindo.
- The Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP). (2001). *Policies for macroeconomic management and structural reform of the Japanese economy*. Original Japanese version of report available online (Aug. 24, 2002) : <http://www5.cao.go.jp/shimon/index.html> (0621toushin12.pdf). English summary available online (Jan. 8, 2004) : <http://www5.cao.go.jp/shimon/2001/0621outline-e.html>
- Dwivedi, O. P., & Henderson, K. M. (1990). State of the art : Comparative public administration and development administration. In O. P. Dwivedi & K. M. Henderson (Eds.), *Public administration in world perspective*. (Ames : Iowa State University).
- Haruyama, K. (2003). *Koumuin seido kaikaku no genjyo to kadai [The state and questions of civil service reform plan]*. Available online (Jan. 8, 2004) : <http://www.jichiroren.jp/labo/is/no35.html>
- Held, D. (Ed.). (2000). *A globalizing world ? Culture, economics, politics*. London : Routledge.
- Henderson, K. M. (1990). Rethinking the comparative experience : indigenization versus internationalization. In O. P. Dwivedi & K. M. Henderson (Eds.), *Public administration in world perspective*. (Ames : Iowa State University).
- Hood, C. (1996). Exploring variations in public management reform. In H. A. G. M. Bekke, J. L. Perry, & T. A. J. Toonen, *Civil service systems in comparative perspective*. Bloomington : Indiana University.
- Hori, M. (2003, June). *The Japanese idea of administration : Its heterogeneous characteristics*. Paper presented at the Roundtable on Administration in Translation : Beyond Traditional Boundaries of the 16<sup>th</sup> Public Administration Theory Network Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK.
- Hori, M. (2002, August). *Japanese public administration and its adaptation to new public management : From an optimist's view*. Paper presented at the 98<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA.
- Kato, S. (1991). Meiji shoki no honyaku [Translating in the beginning of the Meiji era]. In Kato & Maruyama (Eds.), *Honyaku no shiso [Thought in translating]*, Tokyo : Iwanami syoten.
- Kato, S. (1979). *A history of Japanese literature : Vol. 3. The modern years*. Tokyo : Kodansha

International.

- Kato, T. (2001, April). *Japanese regulation and governance in restructuring: Ten years after the 'post-Fordist Japan' debate*. Paper presented at the international conference, "East Asian Modes of Development and Their Crises: Regulationist Approaches," Tunghai University, Taichung, Taiwan.
- Kokkororen. (2001). *Koumuin seido kaikaku hantait touso nyu-su [News against reform plan for civil service system]*, (No. 75, 12.19). Available online (Jan. 8, 2004): <http://www.kokko-net.org/kokkororen/>
- Maruyama, M. (1961). *Nihon no shiso [Japanese thought]*. Tokyo: Iwanami syoten.
- McGrew, A. (2000). Power shift: From national government to global governance? In D. Held (Ed.), *A globalizing world? Culture, economics, politics*. London: Routledge.
- Peters, B. G., & Wright, V. (1996). Public policy and administration, old and new. In R. E. Goodin & H. D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The new handbook of political science*. New York: Oxford University.
- Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (2000). *The Frontier Within: Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium*. Available online (Jan. 8, 2004): <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/21centry/report/overview.html>
- Sakamoto, M. (2001). Public administration in Japan: Past and present in the higher civil service. In A. Farazmand (Ed.), *Handbook of comparative and development public administration*. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Silberman, B. S. (1993). *Cages of reason: The rise of the rational state in France, Japan, the United States and Great Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Study Group for Establishing Principles of Accounting for IACs. (2000). *Dokuritu gyousei houjin kaikai kijyun oyobi dokuritu gyousei houjin kaikai kijyun tyukai [The principal of accounting of IAC audits]*. Explanation available online (Nov. 22, 2000): <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/account/dai12/houkoku2.html>
- Rengo-Kankoubumon. (2001). *Komuin seido kaikaku taikou to sono mondai ten [The guideline and some questions]*. Available online (Jan. 8, 2004): <http://www.komu-rokyo.jp/komu-shiryo.html>
- Stockwin, J. A. A. (2003). *Dictionary of the modern politics of Japan*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Shinmura, I. (Ed.). (1990). *Kojien* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Tuji, K. (1984). Public administration in Japan: An overview. In K. Tuji (Ed.), *Public administration in Japan*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo.
- Watanabe, O. (1994). *Kenpou kaisei to seiji kaikaku (The revision of the Japanese Constitution and political reform)*. Tokyo: Aoki Shoten.
- Watanabe, Y. (1988). *Ho to shakai no Syouwa shi [An historical view of Japanese society and Law in the Showa era]*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Yorimoto, K. (2002). The establishment of a cooperative relationship between the central and local governments with the aim of implementing sustainable development. In National Institute for Research Advancement (Ed.), *Sustainable Development, Environmental Conditions and Public Management*. Tokyo: NIRA.
- Yorimoto, K. (1978). *Yakuwari-Sojyougata no Gyousei o Motomete [In the pursuit of a new public administration with synergistic mechanism]* In Japanese Society of Public Administration (Ed.), *Gyousei no Sekinin-Yoiki to Hiyou-Futan [The Administrative Responsibility and the share of cost]*, *Annals of the Study of Public Administration*, No. 33. Tokyo: Gyousei.