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# **The Role of the Emperor in Postwar Japan: An Analysis of Emperor Showa's Addresses at Parliament Openings**

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## **Abstract**

Japan has the oldest continuous monarchy in the world. Despite the change of emperors throughout Japanese history, the question remains the same: What precisely is the role of the emperor in a highly developed country with a liberal democracy? This research will attempt to answer this continuously asked question with a discourse analysis of Emperor Showa's addresses at the opening ceremony of the National Diet (Japanese parliament) between 1947 and 1988. By putting forward the context of the reign of the Showa emperor, one of the most controversial figures in modern times in terms of the role he is believed to have played in the decade of Japanese expansionism during WW II, this research will argue that the emperor is not a mere symbolic figurehead. This research will ultimately prove with its empirical findings that the emperor serves the collective memory of Japan by possessing an integrative power and thus contributes to the stabilization of the country.

**Keywords:** Japanese Emperor, Showa Emperor, Parliament Openings, Discourse Analysis, Japanese Monarchy

## **Introduction**

The changing nature of the emperor reflects that it is a dynamic topic, which is still being hotly debated both in and out of Japan. Since the mid-nineteenth century, each era has coincided with the reign of an individual emperor, starting with the "Meiji" (enlightened rule) from 1868 to

1912 and “Taisho” (great righteousness) era subsequently. The “Showa” (enlightened harmony) era corresponded with the reign of Emperor Hirohito from 1926 to 1989. The “Heisei” era, which is translated as “achieving peace,” began in 1989 after Hirohito died and Akihito ascended to the throne from 1989 to 2019. The new imperial era is now named “Reiwa” (beautiful harmony), with Naruhito taking the throne in May 2019. Despite the change of the emperors throughout history, the question remains the same: What precisely is the role of the emperor in postwar Japan? This research will attempt to answer this continuously asked question with a discourse analysis of the Showa Emperor’s addresses at the opening ceremony of the National Diet (Japanese parliament) between 1947 and 1988. By putting forward the context of the emperor, this research will argue that the emperor is not a mere symbolic figurehead. This research will prove with its empirical findings that the emperor serves the collective memory of Japan by possessing an integrative power and thus contributes to the stabilization of the country.

It is not odd to state that most studies tackled the emperor’s role in politics. One dominant opinion is that the Emperor’s role is no more than a religious and cultural symbol. Herschel Webb, who contributed to the field by particularly analysing the Tokugawa Period, stressed that between the years 1600-1868, with the exception of the two decades preceding the Meiji Restoration, “emperors were not only politically impotent, but they were virtually imprisoned (in the imperial palace in Kyoto).”<sup>1</sup> Webb added, “The effective government of the time permitted the throne to retain certain ceremonial prerogatives, but the emperors had no true powers of state.”<sup>2</sup> Ben Ami Shillony has too participated in the field, putting forward that the historical role of the Japanese emperors was not the same as the kings and emperors in most other countries. Despite the dynasty being so sacred that no one could even dare to overthrow it in history, the emperors of Japan were, in fact, weaker than royals in other countries.<sup>3</sup> Shillony accepts the fact that the imperial court of Japan adopted the trappings of the imperial court of China, however, it never administrated the state in

1 Webb, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period*, p. ix.

2 Ibid., p. 4.

3 Shillony, *The Emperors of Modern Japan*, p. 1.



the way that the Chinese monarchs did, putting forward that this was the norm in Japan.<sup>4</sup> David Titus, whose tremendous contribution has been a great benefit to the field, also agrees to the argument that the emperor was a mere ornament in actual politics, a powerless figurehead in the pre-war system,<sup>5</sup> analysing the imperial palace in which the emperor enjoys his unique place. However, he adds, the emperor continued being “the super-intendent of the supreme right of rule – he was perceived as the locus of final political authority.”<sup>6</sup>

A counter view to particularly Shillony is illustrated by Herbert P. Bix concerning the emperor Showa. According to Bix, the emperor “exerted a high degree of influence and was seldom powerless to act whenever he chose to and when he did not exercise his discretion to influence policy or alter some planned course of action, his decisions bore consequences.”<sup>7</sup> He even claims that Hirohito was the “major protagonist” of WWII, questioning the lack of the emperor’s war responsibility,<sup>8</sup> which was the general consensus at the Tokyo International Military Tribunal that has formed the legal foundation for the continuation of Japan’s monarchy in the post war period. Shillony accepts the fact that the Meiji Constitution established the emperor as a supreme ruler, invested him with the powers to declare war and determine policy, and gave him direct command over the armed forces. Bix claims that this derived from “the ancient notion that the emperor was the medium through which the gods worked their will.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Hirohito was burdened with “enormous responsibilities from which he could have no escape so long as he ruled.”<sup>10</sup> Yet the historic facts are different in the eyes of Shillony. “In both the ancient tradition and the modern practice, the emperors were symbolic rulers, sanctioning the policies of those whom they had officially ‘chosen’, but who in fact gained power by their own means.”<sup>11</sup> According to Kenneth J. Ruoff, too, only a

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4 Ibid.

5 Titus, *The Making of the ‘Symbol Emperor System’ in Postwar Japan*, p. 540.

6 Ibid.

7 Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, p. 12.

8 Ibid., p. 520.

9 Shillony, *Collected Writings of Ben-Ami Shillony*, p. 54.

10 Ibid., p. 442.

11 Shillony, “Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan by Herbert P. Bix,” p. 142.

few emperors are thought to have served as actual rulers. He even exaggerates arguing that “It is not clear what significance the emperor held to the majority of Japanese before the modern era.”<sup>12</sup>

Bix was not alone in his arguments however, particularly regarding the role of the emperor in the decade of Japanese expansionism during WWII. David Bergamini, in *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy* published in 1971, criticized the emperor in the narrative of the World War II even before Bix,<sup>13</sup> proposing that the passive image of the emperor was, in fact, a total cover-up. Peter Wetzler's *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision Making in Prewar Japan* (1998)<sup>14</sup> also puts forward the view that the emperor's primary goal was to protect *kokutai* 国体(National Polity),<sup>15</sup> which was later mentioned by Bix in his book, concluding that the emperor partly shares the war responsibility.

It is not hard to guess that these discussions about the emperor's war responsibility have also achieved a certain popularity among the scholars in Japan, some of whom have taken a negative position, criticizing the emperor particularly in terms of the failure for taking any responsibility for the war. Kojima Noboru's *Tenno* 天皇 (The Emperor) published in 1974, Kawahara Toshiaki's *Tennō Hirohito no Shōwa-shi* 天皇裕仁の昭和史 (Emperor Hirohito in the history of Showa) published in 1983 and the co-authors Yamada Akira and Atsushi Koketsu's book; *Oso sugita seidan: shōwadenkō no sensō shidō to sensō sekinin* 遅すぎた聖断: 昭和天皇の戦争指導と戦争責任 (The Sacred Decision that Came too Late: Showa Emperor's War Guidance and War Responsibility) published in 1991 could be the examples that can be referred. Perhaps Koketsu Atsushi criticized the emperor in his article more than anyone else, stating that the pre-war emperor system survived by attributing responsibility for earlier war activity to the Japanese Army.<sup>16</sup> The right-leaning Takeda Tsuneyasu, relative of the

12 Ruoff, *Japanese Symbol Monarchy in Japan's Postwar Democracy, 1945-95*, p. 3.

13 Bergamini, *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy*.

14 Wetzler, *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision Making in Prewar Japan*.

15 The ideology of National Polity is that sovereign and people form one body. For further please see; Murakami Shigeyoshi 村上重, *Kokka Shintō* 国家神道 [State shinto]; Kiyohara Sadao 清原貞雄, *Kokutai Ronshi* 國體論史 [Historical study of national polity]; David Magarey, *Emperor and Nation in Japan*, pp. 237-238.

16 Koketsu *Gendai tennōsei no yakuwari no yakuwari wa doko ni aru no ka* 現代天皇制の役割の役割はどこにあるのか [Where is the role of the modern emperor system], p. 16.

Meiji Emperor and an instructor of Keio University, however, strongly believes that “from when the Meiji Constitution was promulgated until the present time, the emperor directly made a decision on national polity only once: the imperial decision to end the war in 1945.”<sup>17</sup> According to him, all other decisions were taken by the institutions that possessed the corresponding authority.<sup>18</sup>

That said, with the *Tenno Ningensengen* 天皇人間宣言 (Declaration of Humanity) address of Emperor Hirohito below, which was broadcast over national radio on January 1, 1946, the postwar emperor system made its start, after the surrender of Japan WW II.

The ties between Us and Our people have always stood upon mutual trust and affection. They do not depend on mere legends and myths. They are not predicated on the false conception that the emperor is divine, and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and fated to rule the World.<sup>19</sup>

The emperor’s voice heard on the radio and the content of his New Year’s address, which paved the way for the new Constitution which defined the emperor as “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people,” were a real shock to the Japanese. Needless to state that it was considered as an epochal time in history. It contributed to reshaping the emperor’s image and creating a new imperial system with the enactment of the Constitution of Japan (promulgated on November 3, 1946 and coming into effect on May 3, 1947), which states that the people of Japan are the state and sovereignty ultimately lies with them” but which also fails to elucidate what it means to be “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people.”

It is necessary here to cite Bix’s point as he signifies that by emphasizing his qualities as a human being and asserting that the basis of his relationship with the people had always been one of trust and affection, the emperor, in effect, had inaugurated his own “adoration.”<sup>20</sup> He also con-

<sup>17</sup> Takeda, “Did the Emperor of Japan really fall from being a ruler to a symbol?,” p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Hirohito, “Declaration of Humanity.”

<sup>20</sup> Bix, “Inventing the ‘Symbol Monarchy’ in Japan, 1945-52,” p. 330.

siders the popular books and news articles that followed and the manipulated photographs that accompanied them were a necessary condition for the construction of the symbolic monarchy as a constitutional revision, which would come a few months later.<sup>21</sup> The emperor has been described as an extraordinary natural scientist, a “sage” (*tetsujin*), a “personality of great stature” (*idai na gojinkaku*), and, above all, a “peace-loving, highly cultured intellectual” (*heiwa aiko no bunkajin*) who was “always with the people” in those writings.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, it is significant to add that Hirohito, according to Wetzler, affirmed the supreme importance of the imperial house by emphasizing his descent from the gods, even after Japan’s defeat and occupation. Before the emperor’s famous renunciation of divine status, he is stated to have told his vice-grand chamberlain, Kinoshita Michio (1887-1974) as follows:<sup>23</sup>

It is permissible to say that the idea that the Japanese are descendants of the gods is a false conception, but it is absolutely impermissible to call chimerical the idea that the emperor is a descendant of the gods.<sup>24</sup>

Wetzler correctly argues that though Hirohito disavowed the divine origins of the Japanese people, he reaffirmed the special symbolic relation between the imperial house and Japan’s gods.<sup>25</sup> When the Japanese version of the Imperial Rescript denying the divinity of the emperor is analysed, it can clearly be seen that the emperor uses *Akitsumikami* 現御神 (living god), which is not the same kanji in the *Kojiki* as it describes the emperor *Arahitogami* 現人神 (manifest deity), the living representative of a divine imperial line.<sup>26</sup> Emperor Hirohito’s comment that he denied divinity but not his nature as manifest deity further shows the undeciphered layers of the question.

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21 Ibid.

22 Noboru, *Ningen tenno*, as cited in Bix, “Inventing the ‘Symbol Monarchy’ in Japan, 1945-52,” p. 331.

23 Wetzler, *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision Making in Prewar Japan*, p. 3.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 William Wetherall, “Imperial Rescript denying divinity,” Yoshabunko.com, 2019, [http://www.yoshabunko.com/empires/Imperial\\_rescript\\_1946-01-01.html](http://www.yoshabunko.com/empires/Imperial_rescript_1946-01-01.html).

Having become the 124th emperor of Japan at the age of twenty-five after the death of his father and recording the longest imperial reign in Japanese history and the longest in recent world history, Hirohito marked the period from many respects as Japan experienced a great upheaval and change wrought by the 1929 Great Depression, a series of wars between 1931 and 1945 the “15 year War”<sup>27</sup> resulting in the devastation of the country as well as the destruction of the empire, a tremendous foreign occupation between 1931 and 1952, an unprecedented recovery from the ruins of war, and the country’s rapid development as an economic superpower.<sup>28</sup> The emperor who graduated from the Peers’ School at Tokyo at the age of eighteen was proficient in Japanese and Chinese classics, both in French and English, and in political science and history. The living representative of the divine imperial line was known by his citizens through his frequent tours in rural districts.<sup>29</sup>

Amidst these discussions, one might also agree to the point made by Stephen S. Large that the “Emperor himself is lost in the mists of generalization and inference”<sup>30</sup> and that the controversies with regard to his political role and place in history may never be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction due to inadequate information. As Large correctly points out, even if new material comes out, they would not include the personal writings of the Emperor himself, like a diary he may have kept, personal letters, and the like and therefore, scholars are forced to rely on indirect resources comprising the memoirs and diaries of court officials, politicians, military men and foreign officials who interacted with the Emperor in one context or another, as well as on Japanese government documents and various secondary sources including biographies, histories, and so forth.<sup>31</sup>

That said, one should acknowledge the notable study of Azuma Shoji, which examines the speech style of Emperor Hirohito during his long 27 In historical studies of Japan, the term ‘15-year war’ is very commonly used as a convenient shorthand reference to the complex decade of the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s. According to Ienaga Saburo The Pacific War began with the invasion of China in 1931 and the events of the period 1931 to 1945 are inseparable. Ienaga Saburo, *The Pacific War, 1931–1945: A Critical Perspective on Japan’s Role in World War II*, xiii, p. 3.

28 Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Bibliography*, p. 1.

29 Gowen, *An Outline History of Japan*, pp. 411-412.

30 Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Bibliography*, p. 4.

31 Ibid.

8-year visit to the countryside in an attempt to encourage war-defeated Japanese between 1946-54. Shoji identifies that the emperor converged his speech style to that of listeners who were lower in social status, in accordance with the speech accommodation theory and further suggests that “the attribution of the meaning of the message is determined by the listener’s evaluation of its appropriateness.” However, this study has limits to help better our understanding of the role of emperors in Japan specifically due to its focus on the Occupation Period (1945-52).

Put simply, the review of the extant literature on the topic clearly exhibits that it is still a topic which needs to be sufficiently investigated and analysed. Thus, this research attempts to fill some of the gap to further decipher the role of the emperor by putting forward in which context he reigns as “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people” through analysing the opening speeches of the emperor at the National Diet from 1947 to 1988. In addition, the track record of the previous studies reveals that the emperor’s speeches, which have not been analysed until this point, are significant as a primary source in terms of understanding the role of the emperor in postwar Japan with a neutral approach.

### **Theoretical framework**

This research applies the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) in order to answer its research questions. Due to CDS being a discipline committed to exploring the relationship between languages, it is considered the most suitable approach to this study.

In addition, this study has benefitted the power division of Kenneth E. Boulding as he divides power into three forms: First, coercive or destructive power where threats are a common form of practice, second, economic or productive power such as exchange and trade, which is based on a model of supplying or withholding materials from people depending on whether they are desired or needed, and third, which will be this research’s thesis base, integrative power such as building and maintaining relationships and social bonds based on love, amity, trust, and so on.<sup>32</sup>

Given that CDS applies an interdisciplinary research approach in an

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32 Boulding, *Three Faces of Power*, pp. 15-251

attempt to elucidate power structures that exist within society,<sup>33</sup> among various approaches to discourse analysis, this research applies to the “discourse-historical approach” which is defined as an inductive approach attempting to integrate background information associated with a particular discourse to explicate discourses of prejudice.<sup>34</sup>

### **Research Questions:**

This study will seek answers and insights into the following questions by analysing the speeches of the emperor at the National Diet Opening Ceremonies from 1947 to 1988 in pursuit of delineating the context of the emperor’s reign.

- What is the role of the emperor in post-war Japan between the years of 1947 and 1989?
- How did the emperor position himself in Japan? Or how is the emperor positioned in Japan?
- What precisely is the context of the emperor’s reign? What action is required to “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people?”
- Did the emperor possess any kind of power?

### **Methodology & Data Collection**

The methodology of this research is comprised of two stages. Stage one is constituted of a quantitative analysis of textual data of the Emperor Showa’s speeches at the National Diet Opening Ceremony between the years of 1947 and 1988. In this stage, a text mining software is employed in order to assess the emperor’s speeches. The software used is KH Coder, an open-source software which allows users to conduct quantitative content analyses and text-mining of text. The analysis aims to assess what issues occur most frequently in the emperor’s speeches as a basis for locating themes that the emperor most frequently discusses. Themes are defined as clusters of terms within a community.

This stage is split into the following steps: First, speeches of the emperor at the National Diet Opening Ceremony from 1947 and 1988 were

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<sup>33</sup> Nye, *The Future of Power*.

<sup>34</sup> Fairclough et al, “Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction,” p.364.

collected and compiled into a dataset appropriate for the KH coder usage. Second, a co-occurrence analysis (the range of individual co-occurrence of a word in the same sentence) of centrality and community, a hierarchical cluster analysis showing combinations or groups of words that have similar appearance patterns and a collocation analysis are conducted on the dataset to identify themes. By doing so, it is intended to identify themes by detecting areas in his speeches of high repetition, which is taken to reflect a degree of salience or at least emphasis.

Stage two provides the qualitative analysis of texts of research methodology using the discourse-historical approach, attempting to integrate background information associated with a particular discourse to explicate discourses of prejudice. Thus, the qualitative analysis is supplemented by the findings in stage one and the themes identified through the quantitative analyses are subject to qualitative analysis in order to understand the main patterns of usage for each keyword in a theme. Stage two 'zooms-in' to the analysis of text specifically, to critically analyse the emperor's speeches.

For both stages, all texts, from the 1st session to the 113rd session of the National Diet, 107 speeches in total, were retrieved from archived speeches provided at <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/sangiin/main.html> (国会会議録検索システム, Diet Record Retrieval System). To note, the emperor's speeches at the 14th, 54th, 63rd, 83rd, 103rd, 105th sessions of National Diet Opening Ceremony could not be collected due to their being missing from the system. However, the data is constituted of speeches from every single year from 1947 to 1988, without a year missing.

## **Findings**

### **Results of the Quantitative Analysis**

The first stage was fruitful in terms of detecting themes with COA (Cooccurrence Analysis),

HCA (Hierarchical Cluster Analysis), and Collocation Analysis. The COA provided themes such as 'Nation and National Diet', 'Cooperation', 'Our Country' and 'Internationalism', 'Effort', 'World Peace', 'Trust', 'Economy', 'Friendship', 'Development', 'Public Welfare', and 'Stabili-



ty.' With HCA, the themes such as 'Election', 'Democracy', 'Constitution', 'Mission of the Institution' (referring to the National Diet), 'Problems inside and outside' were detected. In addition, the Collocation analysis further provided us with 24 themes such as the 'whole nation', 'opening ceremony', 'highest institution', 'foreign countries', 'stability improvement' and 'domestic and international problems.'

### **Results of the Qualitative Analysis**

Having carried out the text-mining analysis, the findings of the qualitative analysis provided a more detailed picture. In a clear-well put structure composed of 3 main parts, the emperor first expresses his pleasure to take part in the opening ceremony and to be with all the people representing the whole nation. This introduction part of his speeches also witnesses the emperor welcoming new cabinet members after the elections. With his body paragraph of his speeches, the emperor mainly presents the agenda of the country, sets out the targets regarding the country's situation in a broad sense and with his conclusion, the emperor directs his speeches to the entities; Kokkai (National Diet / Parliament) and citizens, calling them to act in a cooperation and to accomplish the missions of Japan.

Based on the results of the qualitative analysis of the speeches, which is divided into three subsections in this research; Post-war Recovery (1947-52), Resurgent Japan (1952-1973) and Toward the end of the Cold War Period (1973- 1989), one might clearly conclude that the emperor contributes to the legitimization of the National Diet and Constitution. The emperor referring the National Diet as the 'highest institution' in Japan in pursuit of the legitimization of the National Diet can be reasonably understood during the occupation period. However, according to the results of the qualitative analysis, the emperor always found it necessary to mention the National Diet as the highest institution along with the significance of the protection of the Constitution, featuring these themes in almost every speech from 1947 to 1988. The emperor clearly urges for the acknowledgement of the Constitution, rehabilitation and reconstruction of his country, asking the world for faith, overcoming crises, unifying and cooperating so as to return "as a member of the international community."

In addition to his encouragement for winning the trust of the entire world and cooperating with the Allied Powers, the emperor also warns the National Diet “to raise its authorities.” When tracked down, it is apparent that the emperor refers to the Showa Denko Incident in 1948 when members of the Ashida cabinet were accused of receiving bribes from Showa Denko, a fertilizer manufacturer.

Having said that, the emperor has some specific implications that can be interpreted as clues to a humanizing emperor icon in contrast to a God-like deity. After using *watakushi* (わたくし) ‘I’ for the first time in his speech on the 23rd of January 1948, one can quickly realize the fact that the emperor shifts his language from *futsuugo* (informal language) to *teineigo* (formal language) in his 3<sup>rd</sup> speech. Moreover, *to omoimasu* と 思います (I think), which is not used before, appears later. In linguistics, “think” is one of the six primitive mental predicates in the Natural Semantic metalanguage theory,<sup>35</sup> and thinking is a basic mental concept.<sup>36</sup> Verbs which refer to mental processes usually involve a human participant, which is the ‘Cognizer’.<sup>37</sup> Given the ‘Cognizer’ being the emperor here, it can be inferred that the God-like figure has become a ‘human’. An emperor who shows an executive power fades away and an emperor expressing his opinion and emotions as a human or a citizen of the country emerges. While driving his human side forward, however, he observes and approves the steps taken during the reconstruction period of Japan as he states; “The citizens’ life finally began showing signs of improvement with the favour and aid of the Allied Power.”

The emperor’s address on October 11, 1951, appears to be heavily focused on the Peace Treaty, for which he was preparing his citizens for a long time. He clearly calls his citizens to ratify the San Francisco peace treaty, but also warns “many difficulties” would accompany the restoration of full sovereignty to Japan. He declares that “We have to expect difficulties as we stand alongside other peace-loving democratic countries,” and adds that “I think it is necessary at this moment for all the Japanese people to renew their appreciation for the goodwill and assistance grant-

35 Goddard & Wierzbicka, “Meaning and Universal Grammar: Theory and Empirical Findings.”

36 Fortescue, “Thoughts about Thought.”

37 Halliday & Cristian, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar.”

ed Japan by the Allied powers since the end of war and to cause a resolution of immovable decision to be dealt with in the future." He further states: "I wish the Diet, as the highest organ of the state, should discharge its mission thoroughly in deliberating on bills in preparation for the full independence of our country." The emperor clearly advocates for the full independence in his speech. However, his carefully framed speech makes no allusion to the companion security agreement under which the United States undertakes the defence of Japan by continuing to keep a garrison of bases. The 13th session of the National Diet takes place on January 22, 1952, where the emperor significantly highlights that "We have already passed the approval of the National Diet, have ratified it and now waiting for it to come into effect." He clearly demonstrates his approval and calls for collaboration. Furthermore, the speech on June 1953 focuses on Japan returning as a member of the international community since the Peace Treaty came into force.

The emperor also mentions the disasters, as he does today, affecting the country such as the North Kyushu Flood and the Wakayama Flood which occurred in 1953. In 1956, the economic white paper declared: "Japan is no longer in the post-war period." This can also be seen as a shift from "recovering the economy" to "increasing the welfare of the people" in the emperor's speeches.

As mentioned before, the emperor makes no direct allusion to the Security Treaty. However, in May and June, 1960, when Japan was rocked by some of the largest protests that erupted over the passage of a revised security treaty between Japan and the United States, the emperor, on October 18, 1960, called for public order by stating the importance of esteeming the principle of obeying the laws, cooperating with each other, and making the utmost effort to promote national interests in accordance with the principles of democracy in a moment when the domestic and internal situation was critical.

Prime Minister's Yasukuni Shrine Visit in 1985 and the 1964 Olympics were neither directly nor indirectly mentioned. One would expect the emperor to make a particular remark regarding the 1964 Olympics as they elevated Japan's international position and are often referred to as Japan's

return to the international community, which was his long-standing wish. Mosley claimed that the emperor emerged for one happy moment during the Olympic Games by quoting his conversation with the United States Ambassador, Edwin O. Reischauer; "This is the happiest moment of my life. I fear I have been cut off too much from my people. This is the first time I have been to a public spectacle since 1957, and it is most enjoyable." He added; "But I don't think I am out of touch. I am very keen on television. I do not need to envy any more people who travel to different places. It has made all the difference to my life."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the emperor's opening speech at the National Diet neither includes his pleasure nor any of the themes such as "international" and "cultural states" although almost all of his previous speeches hint at "internationalism." However, he clearly refers to the broad spectrum of developments on both the domestic and international front, taking place at the height of the Cold War. First, an American nuclear submarine wanted permission to enter a Japanese harbour for shore leave and restocking of supplies in August 1964, causing uproar across the political spectrum when the government granted permission. Second, the People's Republic of China detonated their first nuclear weapon on October 16, 1964, during the Olympiad itself.<sup>39</sup> It is apparent that the emperor appreciates his citizens' efforts in dealing with those issues rather than causing a spark in nationalism. However, Japan's membership in the United Nations and particularly Okinawa's reintegration in 1972 seem to have pleased the emperor as he mentions these developments many times.

The emperor also pays due attention to important issues in diplomacy in his speeches. On October 28, 1972, the emperor defines the domestic and foreign situation as *hendousuru* "変動する" (fluctuating). When tracked, after the 1971 U.S.- China re-rapprochement, re-establishing Japan-China diplomatic ties ahead of the US in September 1972 seems to have worried the emperor. When on January 21, 1974, the emperor defines the situation of domestic and foreign affairs extremely "tough" by clearly referring to the Oil Crisis that hit the country in October 1973.

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<sup>38</sup> Mosley, *Hirohito Emperor of Japan*, p.350.

<sup>39</sup> Droubie, "Phoenix arisen: Japan as peaceful internationalist at the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics," p.2311.

Along with the diplomatic problems, the emperor also mentions the friendly relations created such as re-establishing relations with Soviet Union in 1953, with China in 1972, and with ASEAN Countries in 1977 in accordance with the Fukuda Doctrine. It is clear that the emperor gives importance to creating diplomatic ties with other nations as he routinely establishes the links between economy/public welfare and maintenance of the friendship with foreign countries by implying that the sustainability of one is essentially predicated on the stability of the other.

## **Conclusion**

The emperor does not seem to be indifferent to the updates of the country diplomatically, economically, and politically. When tracked, it can easily be concluded that the emperor appears to be a person who speaks in accordance with the developments and conditions of Japan. While driving his human side forward, he does not necessarily become someone who can simply be defined as a figurehead. The emperor who shows an executive power fades away and an emperor expressing his opinion and emotions as a human being and a citizen emerges.

The emperor clearly urges his people to unify and warns them about the impending problems when needed at the same time, playing the role of protector “father.” Lastly, it can be concluded that the emperor clearly possesses integrative power through which he serves the collective memory of the country and thus contributes to the stabilization of Japan.

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