

No more "feminine" politics?:

New strategies in local feminist politics in urban Japan.

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What made me stand up as a candidate for mayor of Yokohama was my wish for a society where women can fully exert their capabilities and participate in their own economy. Now, the time is ripe. Together with women's more active role will come further economic growth and richer civic life. I strongly hope that Yokohama will lead Japan and the world as a city where women's social advancement can produce such ideals.¹

The above statement was made by Yokohama's first female mayor, Hayashi Fumiko², former chairperson of the major supermarket chain Daiei Inc., who won the 2009 and 2013 election as an independent candidate. It sheds light on some new strategies held by urban feminist politicians as discussed in this paper.

Theories of urbanism have been impacted by feminist thought since the 1960s, when women sought to correct the omission of women from urban history and to challenge the separation between male/ female, public sphere/ private sphere, city/ suburb, which led to an emphasis on male, public sphere, city. As a corrective women reminded us that the "personal is political", and called for greater sensitivity to the environment.³

However, these feminist theories are based mainly on Anglo-American material. Much less has been published about feminist urbanism in Japan. This article hopes to encourage further thought on how the intensified processes of multiple and complex social, economic and maybe even cultural tessellations have impacted on the construction, shifting and dismantling of urban feminist thought and life in Japan, focusing here mainly on urban feminist politics.

¹ Part of the opening speech by the mayor of Yokohama in the APEC Women and Economy Forum which was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, from June 28 to June 30, 2012. <http://www.city.yokohama.lg.jp/shimin/danjo/event/openingspeech.pdf>. Retrieved 2014-02-1.

² Hayashi Fumiko the mayor of Yokohama (population: 3.7 million), is not to be confused with the famous novelist and poet Hayashi Fumiko (1904–1951).

³ Nan Ellin, *Postmodern Urbanism*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), pp. 68-69.

Women comprise 51.3 percent of the total population of Japan⁴, yet, while there are no legal constraints on the rights of Japanese women to nominate for public office, they are proportionally under-represented in local and national elected assemblies. According to a report published by the Japanese Gender Equality Bureau at the Prime Minister Office, as of January 2014, at the national level, they rate only 8.1 percent in the Japanese Diet Lower House and 21 percent in the Upper House⁵, while at local level, the rate of female members of prefectural assemblies is 8.6 percent, and the rate of female members of city, ward, town and village assemblies is 11.3 percent⁶. Among prefectural governors we find only 6.4 percent are women and among mayors⁷ the rate goes down to 1.4 percent.⁸

Clearly, when it comes to women's leadership Japan is a land of deep resistance, with structural and emotional impediments. These impediments have been discussed by political commentators, who identified institutional as well as cultural obstacles that women candidates face when running for political office. They pointed at the fact that the realm of politics is 'male' in both an empirical and a normative sense: the presence of women within it

⁴The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Statistics of Japan 2012". <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/jinsui/tsuki/index.htm>. Retrieved 2014-02-1

⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "Women in National Parliaments" (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>); Retrieved 2014-02-1.

⁶ Gender Equality Bureau, "Women in Japan Today, 2013". Retrieved 2014-02-1. It should be noted, though, that women have done better in elections in more diverse and larger urban areas: they comprised 16.1% of city representatives in major cities in 2006, and 21.5% in the capital Tokyo (Gender Equality Bureau, "Women in Japan Today, 2006"). Hashimoto and Miwa explain this difference claiming that constituencies with urban population, such as special wards of Tokyo Metropolitan Government and cities, send more women to assemblies, since a large part of the population have no party affiliations, which are often based on profit-driven paternalistic connections in their communities rather than the public interest or a good cause, and innovative platform and policies addressed by female candidates are accepted with relative ease. (Hiroko Hashimoto and Atsuko Miwa, "State of Women in Urban Local Government Japan"). <http://www.unescap.org/huset/women/reports/japan.pdf>. Retrieved 2014-02-1. It should further be noted that some scholars argue that the local level, not the national level, is the main arena for women and their influence over policy in Japan [Joyce Gelb and Margarita Estevez-Abe, "Political Women in Japan: A Case Study of the Seikatsusha Network Movement", *Social Science Japan Journal* 1 (2): 263-279, (1998); Tokuko Ogai, "From the Personal to the Political: Women Activists in Japan", in Peter H. Smith, Jennifer L. Troutner and Christine Hunefeldt, eds., *Promises of Empowerment: Women in Asia and Latin America*, (New York: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004) 88-102 and Yasuo Takao, "Japanese women in grassroots politics: building a gender-equal society from the bottom up", *The Pacific Review* Vol. 20, 2007, pp. 147-172]. However, as of January 2014 the statistical figures do not agree with this claim, and the reasons for the change are worthy of further research.

⁷Governor is the formal translation of the Japanese term 知事, *chiji*, while the titles that are translated as "mayor" are those of the: heads of cities 市長, *shichō*; heads of towns, 町長, *chōchō*; heads of villages, 村長, *sonchō* and the heads of Tokyo's special wards, 区長, *kuchō*.

⁸ Source: Gender Equality Bureau, "Women and Men in Japan 2012", in: http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men12/pdf/1-2.pdf. It should further be noted that even though the historical debate on women's place in local politics was held in 1931, and the suffrage bill was passed in 1945, a woman mayor was elected in Japan first only in 1991.

is restricted and they are viewed as the ‘Other’, an existence excluded from mainstream norms, values, and patterns of behavior⁹.

How, then, do women manage to beat the odds in their race to the political seat? And how do they manage to fruitfully participate in the political arena once they have entered?

Takao¹⁰ and others have pointed at the role of government bodies and the legislature bodies in the promotion of women into politics, a tendency that has recently culminated with the Gender Equality Bureau at the Prime Minister Office announcing in 2011 its plan to reach the goal women filling 30 percent of the seats in decision making bodies by the year 2020¹¹. Several scholars have lauded the efforts of women in local community groups such as the *seikatus sha kurabu* (seikatus Club Co-operative Union), and outlined the success of these women in making political inroads via these means¹².

Other scholars have shed light on the fact that women run for political office on specific issues that have tended to receive little attention from male politicians, such as those pertaining to women, children, the elderly and the environment¹³. These issues stem from the

⁹ See for example: Susan Pharr, *Political Women in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley, “Introduction,” in Gelb and Palley, eds., *Women and Japan and Korea: Continuity and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 1–5; Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Kimiko Kubo and Joyce Gelb, “Obstacles and Opportunities: Women and Political Participation in Japan,” in Gelb and Palley, eds., *Women and Japan and Korea*, 120–49; Joyce Gelb, *Gender Policies in Japan and the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 20–21; Yasuo Takao, “Japanese women in grassroots politics: building a gender-equal society from the bottom up. *The Pacific Review* Vol. 20, 2007, pp. 147-172; Masako Aiuchi, “How women won or lost in the Japanese Lower House election: case studies of women candidates who ran as challengers”, *Political Science*, June 2001 vol. 34, pp. 221-24; Tomoaki Iwai, “The Madonna Boom: Women in the Japanese Diet.” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 19 (Winter): 103-120 (1993); Misako Iwamoto, “The Madonna Boom: The Progress of Japanese Women into Politics in the 1980’s.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34 (2): 225-226. (2001) and Tokoku Ogai, “Japanese Women and Political Institutions: Why Are Women Politically Underrepresented?” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34 (2): 207-210 (2001).

¹⁰ Yasuo Takao, “Women in Japanese Local Politics: From Voters to Activists to Politicians” *Japan Focus* 2008.

¹¹ Gender Equality Bureau, “Promotion of “Positive Action” –Aiming to attain the target of 30% by 2020”, (From the “ White Paper on Gender Equality 2011 ” Summary). http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pdf/ewp2011.pdf. Retrieved 2014-02-1

¹² See: Robin M. Leblanc , *The Art of the Gut: Manhood, Power, and Ethics in Japanese Politics*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California. Press, 2010); Robin M. Leblanc, *Bicycle Citizenship: The Political World of the Japanese Housewife* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999); Gelb, Joyce and Margarita Estevez-Abe, “Political Women in Japan: A Case Study of the Seikatsusha Network Movement.”. *Social Science Japan Journal* 1 (2): 263-279, (1998); Tokuko Ogai, “From the Personal to the Political: Women Activists in Japan”, in Peter H. Smith, Jennifer L. Troutner and Christine Hunefeldt, eds., *Promises of Empowerment: Women in Asia and Latin America*, (New York: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004) 88-102 and Takao.

¹³ See for example: Naoko Sasakura, “Aokage Takako: Housewife Turned Political Representative from Seikatsu Club Seikyo.” In *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda. (New York: The Feminist Press, 1995), pages 374-383; Robin M. LeBlanc, *The Art of the Gut: Manhood, Power, and Ethics in Japanese Politics*, (Berkeley. Los Angeles. London: University of California Press, 2010).

"traditionally" perceived gender roles, which have been utilized both by opponents to women in politics, and by their supporters since the first debates on enfranchisement in Japan. Thus, for example, in 1931, during a debate held in the Lower House on a bill to grant women suffrage, Baron Ida Iwakusu (1881-1964), member of the House of Lords, expressed his fear that

"If most of the women of Japan stop performing their daily chores and allow themselves to deal with political issues it will be very dangerous to the interests of the nation. Those who support women's suffrage base their argument on the abstract claim that women are equal to men. ...[But granting suffrage to women] will turn women into machines and will encourage them to use contraceptive... The main duty of women is to be at home".¹⁴

At the same time, supporters of the bill also based themselves on the same gender roles assumption, as pointed out by Garon: "[n]early every speaker ...highlighted the special qualities that women would bring to local politics. Taguchi Ichimin ...agreed with his old colleagues that 'cities, town, and villages are to a certain degree extensions of the household when it comes to, say, sewers or public toilets'"¹⁵.

Thus, since the 1920s and up until today, regardless of party or ideology, female politicians tend to have a different agenda to men¹⁶. In 2002, for example, the three women who were governors in Japan at the time: Ota Fusae (governor of Osaka), Shiotani Yoshiko (governor of Kumamoto) and Domoto Akiko (governor of Chiba) jointly submitted a package of detailed policy measures to Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro. These policies covered five key areas: food safety, better emergency medical care for children, an improved environment for raising children, reducing domestic violence and child abuse and women's health issues. Additionally, they expressed their hope that one day half of the nation's governors would be women. To promote this philosophy, they jointly organized a forum in their respective prefectures to broaden understanding of their fundamental core objectives¹⁷.

¹⁴ *Japan Times and Mail*, 25.3.1931, p. 1.

¹⁵ Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 138

¹⁶ Naoko Sasakura, "Aokage Takako: Housewife Turned Political Representative from Seikatsu Club Seikyo," in by Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda (eds.), *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, p. 373.

¹⁷ J. Sean Curtin, "Women in Japanese Politics: Part Four - Female Governors Advance", *Social Trends* #34: April 28, 2003. http://www.glocom.org/special_topics/social_trends/20030428_trends_s34/. Retrieved 2014-02-1.

This brings us to an important factor that has been neglected in the framework of this academic discourse – the rhetoric of these politicians. Language, according to Ofer Feldman, constitutes political society. "In other words, the essence of politics is talk"¹⁸. It becomes evident, then, that for women to enter the political arena and to make an impact in politics, their voices must be heard. Furthermore, as I shall show here, although women still confront numerous obstacles on their way to politics, their presence in what continues to be perceived as a male sphere has begun to transform the political arena. I suggest that the study of the political discourse employed by women who have made their way into leading positions in politics and whose voices are included in the political world holds one of the many keys to the answers for the questions posed above and to advancing women's opportunities to transform political discourses, or maybe even lives in Japan, as Feldman writes: "such discussion might directly affect the quality of the future"¹⁹.

Scholars such as Dalton²⁰ and others, who discuss women's tendency to utilize their femininity in their political races, stress their "feminine" style and content. Here, however, I examine the discourse of three prominent female local politicians in order to illustrate how women's political rhetoric has changed from the simply "feminine" style and content, to a more complex rhetoric, making *creative use* of the salient perception that women are closer to the home than men are.

The androgynous rhetoric space

I claim that nowadays many female politicians are successful when they recognize niches in which their agendas meet with mainstream (i.e. men's) rhetoric, sometimes with the support of international organizations. To explain this point I borrow Bhabha's concept of rhetorical spaces²¹. I suggest that instead of accepting the binaries of male/ female (spaces), national politics/ local politics (spaces) and public/ private (spaces), these politicians creatively *restructure* a new rhetorical space, drawing selectively and strategically from opposing categories to open new alternatives, of a gender-neutral rhetoric that occupies the androgynous in-between space.

18 Ofer Feldman, *Talking Politics in Japan Today*, (Brighton and Protland: Sussex Academic Press, 2004), p.2.

19 Ofer Feldman, "Epilogue: Where do We Stand" in Christ'l De Landtsheer, Ofer Feldman, eds., *Politically Speaking: A Worldwide Examination of Language Used in the Public Sphere*, (Westpoint: Praeger, 1998), p. 204.

20 Emma Dalton, "The Utilization of discourses of Femininity by Japanese Politicians: Tanaka Makiko Case Study", *Graduate Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, Volume 6 Number 1, March 2008, pp. 51 – 65.

21 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

The change in these female politicians' discourse is enabled by many factors. One of the most important among them is the declaration of the Japanese government that it aspires to expand women's participation in policy and decision-making processes (discussed above)²². A sentence from a speech by Hayashi Fumiko, the mayor of Yokohama, in the APEC Women and Economy Forum which was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, from June 28 to June 30, 2012, would illustrate the integration of "women's issues" and government policies into a prominent female politician's rhetoric:

The compatibility between female work and childrearing has been the primary political goal of the Japanese government.²³

This sentence elucidates how Hayashi created an "in-between rhetoric space", in which private/ female public / male approaches meet. In so doing she created a more androgynous style of political discourse, with the rhetorical options available to both female and male politicians.

Another focal-points in Hayashi's speech, an issue that was also central in both her 2009 and 2013 elections campaigns, was her success in reaching the "zero" target on the waiting list for nurseries in Yokohama (as of April 2013²⁴). Childcare waiting lists are an urban problem in Japan. As of April 2010, most waiting lists were found in urban areas, with Tokyo alone accounting for 32 percent of the total number of children on childcare waiting lists nationwide²⁵. The Japanese government has been dealing with the problem of daycare centers for children for years, at least since it was faced with the historically low total fertility rate (the average number of children that would be born per woman if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years and bore children according to a given fertility rate at each age, TFR) of 1.57 in 1989. Shocked, the government brought the situation to the public's attention, and in attempt to raise the country's birthrate they introduced the "Angel Plan" of 1994, the

²² Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Promotion of "Positive Action"—Aiming to attain the target of "30% by 2020"— (From the "White Paper on Gender Equality 2011" Summary), http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pdf/ewp2011.pdf, Retrieved 2014, 2-1.

²³ <http://www.city.yokohama.lg.jp/shimin/danjo/event/openingspeech.pdf>. Retrieved 2014-02-1.

²⁴ http://www.yokohama-city.de/download/Newsletter_May2013.pdf .

²⁵ Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan (MHLW), 2010. "About Childcare-Center and Other Conditions (as of April 1st, 2010)" <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/houdou/2r985200000nvsj.html>. Retrieved 2014-02-1. According to government estimates there were 25,000 children on waiting lists to get into certified daycare centers, compared to 2.25 million children already enrolled as of 2012. But that doesn't take into account discouraged parents who have given up waiting, and those who send their children to uncertified centers while they wait for a space at a certified facility. The actual waiting list including all those children is probably between 600,000 and 850,000, according to various research institutes and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (source: Mizuki Kawabata, " Access to childcare and the employment of women with preschool-aged children in Tokyo", CSIS Discussion Paper No. 114, September, 2012).

"New Angel Plan" of 1999 and the "New-New Angel Plan" of 2004. The "Angel Plan", formally titled "Basic Direction of Measures for the Support of Child Rearing in the Future" (*Kongo no kosodate shien no tame no shisaku no kihonteki hōkō ni tsuite*) suggested that childrearing is an issue that should not only be considered as a problem of a parenting couple or a household. Instead, it suggested, it is an issue that should be dealt with also by the state and public institutions as well as of work places and local communities. In order to implement the Angel Plan an extension of child care facilities for young children under the age of three and the diversification of child care services were on the agenda. The following plans added amendments to the Childcare Leave Law to support income, and further plans were made to provide with satisfactory daycare services for working mothers.²⁶

In her speech Hayashi combines references to this point with reference the concept of "Womenomics", a term coined by Kathy Matsui in 1999, who advocated that Japan could increase its gross domestic product by as much as 15 percent simply by tapping further its most underutilized resource—Japanese women, with the Japan government's inclusion of childcare facilities in its "Angel Plan". The concept of "Womenomics" made further steps to mainstream politics when in April 2013 "Womenomics" was included as one of the three pillars of Japan's growth strategy as mapped out by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

All these references to mainstream-male dominated bodies' policies combine carefully in Hayashi's speech with her reference to women's enthusiasm about childcare facilities:

The compatibility between female work and childrearing has been the primary political goal of the Japanese government. The Angel Plan announced in 1994 had "support for simultaneous child rearing and work" at the top of its list. ...Although the childcare leave system has been gradually improving, the volume of childcare centers was not able to accommodate the needs of all working mothers, creating a large number of children on waiting lists in urban areas. In 2010, the size of the list in Yokohama was approximately 1,500 children. Upon taking office as mayor in 2009, I declared to reduce the number of children waiting to "zero". The response from the people around me was truly cold, with

²⁶ For A short discussions of the "Angel Plan" see for example: Sherry I. Martin, "Japanese Women: In Pursuit of Gender Equality," in Joyce Gelb and Marian Palley, eds. *Women and Politics Around the World* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), pp. 397-419. For a longer discussion of the plan/s see: Annette Schad-Seifert, "Coping with Low Fertility? Japan's Government Measures for a Gender Equal Society", (Tokyo: DIJ Working Paper 06/4, 2006). <http://www.dijtokyo.org/doc/WP0604-%20Schad.pdf>; Toru Suzuki, "Lowest-low Fertility and Governmental Actions in Japan," Proceedings of The PIE International Conference on Declining Fertility in East and Southeast Asian Countries, (Hitotsubashi Collaboration Center, Tokyo, 2006)

most government officials and politicians claiming that “such a goal could not be achieved”. In contrast, I received a great deal of support from women who were eager to work but desperately in need of childcare.²⁷

Finally, Hayashi received the Prime Minister's blessing for her achievement when the Yokohama model was hailed by Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe as a beacon for other cities to emulate²⁸.

Use of ideographs

I further examine local leaders' rhetoric drawing on McGee's “The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology”²⁹. McGee defines the ideograph as: “an ordinary language term found in political discourse. It is high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal. It ... guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable and laudable”.³⁰ Ideographs “exist in real discourse”³¹ and are easily recognizable and believable. So ingrained are they in society's psyche, that the fundamental logic of the ideographs is unquestionable³². Here I am interested in the use of the ideograph both by the hegemonic space and by the marginalized space, and especially in the space in between.

The terms “green” and “*mottainai*” are two examples of ideographs which are commonly used by female local politicians. Both terms are associated with environmental issues, which were once considered “women's issues”³³. Recently, however, and especially after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and *tsunami* disaster, environmental issues have become part of the more mainstream rhetoric³⁴. They were thus widely used in the elections campaign of Kazumi Inamura, who was elected the City Mayor of Amagasaki³⁵ in November 2010 with an overwhelming 54.3 percent of the votes. Inamura had been co-spokesperson of Greens Japan - *Midori no Mirai*, represented “Greens Japan” at the 2008 “Global Greens” Congress in Sao

²⁷ <http://www.city.yokohama.lg.jp/shimin/danjo/event/openingspeech.pdf>. Retrieved 2014-02-1.

²⁸ Official site of Japan's Prime Minister, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/96_abe/actions/201305/21yokohama_sisatsu_e.html. Retrieved 2014-02-1.

²⁹ Michael Calvin McGee, “The 'ideograph': A link between rhetoric and ideology”, *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 66: 1-16. (1980)

³⁰ Ibid, p. 15

³¹ Ibid, pp. 6-7

³² Ibid, pp. 6-7

³³ See Dalton (note 21 above) as well as Hashimoto and Miwa (note 6 above).

³⁴ Furthermore, the ideograph “green” has become a formal part of politics since a “Green Party” (*Midori no Tō*) was formed in 2012.

³⁵ Population: 450,244 as of January 2014.

Paulo, Brazil, and at the 1st and 2nd Asia Pacific Greens Network Conferences in Brisbane 2006 and Taipei 2010. She had also been a member of the Hyogo Prefectural Assembly for several years. In her elections campaign she focused both on her promise to continue her predecessor's policies promoting participatory democracy and information disclosure and to add to this a suite of policies to implement her vision of an environmentally sustainable society.

Another ideograph, less used out of Japan, but with a much longer history in Japanese culture is "*mottainai*". *Mottainai* means wasteful or wasting and it conveys a sense of regret concerning waste, thus translating roughly to "Don't Waste!". This ideograph, *mottainai*, was widely used by Kada Yukiko, a former professor of agriculture at Kyoto Seika University and currently (2013) the governor of Shiga prefecture, as her slogan aimed at cutting wasteful spending in both her 2006 and 2010 gubernatorial election campaigns. During the years she served as a governor, she indeed came through with her campaign promise of stopping wasteful governmental spending on huge, unneeded projects such as the Ritto shinkansen station and the Daidogawa Dam in Otsu. Kada worked to stop pork barrel projects and kept her campaign promise, winning her the people's trust, and further raising a forceful anti-nuclear campaign in the name of protecting Lake Biwa.³⁶

The achievements of the politicians discussed above show that the different agendas female-leaders hold do not remain on paper. They pass bills that others oppose, put money into projects that others ignore and seek an end to problems that others just talk about. In 2012 governor Yukiko Kada initiated a lecture series she called *School for future politics (Mirai seiji juku)*. These lectures have been published in two volumes (thus far), including a lecture by Kada and a lecture by Inamura. It will be interesting to see in the near future whether these women can really change urban politics in Japan, or maybe even national politics.³⁷

Conclusions

Clearly, the three women discussed in this chapter exemplify a new persona of women politicians, even if because of the limits of this article the examples discussed here could not be exhaustive. If previous scholarship has suggested that women in politics operate within a "feminine" rhetorical paradigm, this study has shown how politicians are changing to reflect a

³⁶ "Election Watch: Lake Biwa Inspires Anti-Nuclear Party Chief, But Will Veterans Dampen The Mood?", *The Asahi Shinbun*, November 28, 2012.

³⁷ *Chihō kara seiji o kaeru: Mirai seiji juku kōgi II (mirai seiji juku kōgi 1)*, *Chihō kara seiji o kaeru: Mirai seiji juku kōgi II (mirai seiji juku kōgi 2)*, (Kyoto: Gakugei shuppansha, 2013).

more contemporary approach to seeking, gaining and maintaining office. These women politicians have not denied their womanhood, but they have expanded their strategies. They have focused on issues traditionally associated with women, but they have transformed them into issues that concern the whole society. The ideographs in their discourse clearly illustrate these conscious rhetorical strategies. Neither totally masculine, nor completely feminine in nature, these themes form a discourse that erase the boundaries of the earlier defined spaces, creating a new in-between rhetorical space. Finally, if previous scholarship has pointed at female politicians' stress on their being housewives and mothers, here we have seen politicians who stress their bringing to their campaign and to their leadership professional experience, whether in business, in international "green" politics or in the academia.