

ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Historical Inquiry Into Debate Education In Early 20th Century Japan: The Case Of Intercollegiate Debates In Yūben

Abstract: This paper analyzes intercollegiate debates hosted by Yūben (1910-1941), a monthly magazine specializing in oratory. From 1930 to 1935 Yūben held a total of 14 intercollegiate debates in which college students argued over such controversial topics as capital punishment. By examining the transcripts of the debates, relevant Yūben articles, and historical documents on academic debate in the United States, the paper seeks to trace the American influence on debate education in early 20th century Japan.

Keywords: American influence, history of debate, intercollegiate debate, modern Japan, Yūben

1. Introduction

This paper aims at shedding light on the influence of American-style academic debate in early 20th century Japan by scrutinizing intercollegiate debates hosted by *Yūben* (1910-1941), a monthly magazine specializing in oratory. Despite the fact that *Yūben* was the most influential publication devoted to promoting speech and, to a lesser extent, debate in Japan at the time, very few studies have been conducted to examine its role and impact. A close analysis of *Yūben* thus offers us a new window into debate education in pre-World War II Japan and thereby provides further historical insights into argument practices in non-Western societies.

From 1930 to 1935, *Yūben* held a total of 14 intercollegiate debates in which college students were invited to argue over controversial policy topics of the day such as capital punishment and international marriage. Importantly, the debates were billed as an experiment with the debate format being widely practiced in the West back then. While the first debate was allegedly modeled on the British style,

the subsequent debates were in fact more similar to those practiced at American schools. More specifically, as opposed to the traditional (elocutionary and belles-lettristic) style of debate, the intercollegiate debates in *Yūben* emphasized research, the use of evidence, and a direct clash of arguments. Given that a similar shift from elocution to argumentation occurred in the United States around the same time, it can be surmised that contrary to popular belief, American debate practices continued to influence debate education in Japan during the 1920s and 30s. By examining the transcripts of the debates, relevant *Yūben* articles, and historical documents on academic debate in the United States, the paper seeks to trace the American influence on debate education in early 20th century Japan and to consider why *Yūben* was so eager to introduce American-style debate shortly before the breakout of the Pacific War.

2. *Yūben* in a historical perspective

As Aonuma, Morooka, and Senō (2013) note, “the modern Japanese forensic practice has always been under the American influence since its inception” (p. 1). It is telling that Yukichi Fukuzawa’s *Kaigiben* (*How to Hold a Conference*, 1874) and Sadamasu Ōshima[i] and Aikoku Horiguchi’s *Kagi Bempō* (*Rules on Holding an Effective Conference*, 1874), which were among the first books on Western debate in Japan, were renditions of James N. McElligott’s *the American Debater* and Luther Cushing’s *Rules of Proceeding and Debate in Deliberative Assemblies*, respectively. At the same time, the British influence was equally, if not more, noticeable in those days. For example, Kenkichi Ōi’s *Kaigi Shinan* (*Instructions for Conducting a Meeting*, 1878) and Gendō Nishimura’s *Seiyō Tōron Kihan* (*The Principles of Western Debate*, 1881) were both partial translations of Frederic Rowton’s *the Debater*.

Efforts to introduce the American and British styles of debate to Japan continued to be made in the first decade of the 20th century when Seiji Noma, founder of the major publishing house Kodansha (then named Dainihon Yūbenkai [the Great Japanese Oratorical Society]), launched *Yūben*. Published in February 1910, its inaugural issue was immediately sold out; the subsequent issues were also widely read among students, intellectuals, and politicians (Tomasi, 2004, p. 147). Rōichi Okabe (1987) elaborates on the role the magazine played in stimulating public interest in Western-style oratory:

Every month it carried diverse articles on Western rhetorical theory and practice, many texts of speeches delivered by prominent Japanese, and translated texts of

speeches of British and American orators. This monthly magazine was instrumental in nurturing the seed of Western rhetoric on Japanese soil at the turn of the century and in promulgating learning and knowledge of the Western world to the enlightenment-conscious people of the late Meiji and early Taisho era (1912-1926). (p. 37)

Although Okabe's article is highly informative especially for non-Japanese readers, it is not without problems. One shortcoming is its failure to separate speech from debate. While it is true that "[t]he *Yūben* magazine, especially during its first six years of publication, was instrumental in introducing American public address to Japanese cross-nationally" (Okabe, 1987, p. 49), articles on debate were few and far between in its early issues. Hence it is not clear if and how much *Yūben* sought to promote debate activities in those days. Although *Yūben* carried out written debate competitions (*daikenshō tōronkai*) twice for a brief period of time, they were not actual debates but a selection of readers' opinions for and against pre-announced topics such as strengthening Japan's naval forces. Moreover, while *Yūben* had frequently organized or sponsored speech meetings and oratorical contests since 1914 (Tomasi, 2004, p. 147), it had not been until 1930 that it began to hold a debate event.

Seen in this light, the novelty of the intercollegiate debates, which are the focus of this paper, stands out. Two years prior to the first intercollegiate debate, Tadashi Kiyosawa (1928) reported on Japan's first international oratorical contest between University of Oregon debaters and Japanese students. Interestingly, the University of Oregon students visited Japan as part of the world debate tour and initially challenged Japanese students to debate. However, it turned out that they did not engage in any debates during their five-day stay in Japan (Harper, 2003, p. 90) because the Japanese students were not ready to debate in English and proposed an oratorical contest instead. For Kiyosawa (1928), their reluctance to debate was hardly surprising, but still disappointing as it attested to the lack of debate education in Japan:

Although rare in Japan, this thing called debate is very popular among university students in the United States. Just like they compete for a championship in baseball, [universities] oftentimes send teams (composed of three members) of students with intelligence and argument skills to debate on a particular issue for a victory. What the University of Oregon students proposed was a debate meeting like this. **[ii]** (p. 105)

Given that Kiyosawa was a regular contributor to *Yūben* and would judge several debates a few years later, he might have affected *Yūben's* decision to be firmly committed to debate.

3. *Intercollegiate debates in Yūben*

Yūben held its first intercollegiate debate on June 11, 1930 at the Tokyo Imperial University Young Buddhist Association's Hall. The transcript of the debate appeared in the August issue. Students from Waseda University, Keio University, and Tokyo Imperial University constituted two mixed teams and debated the proposition "Could a war between Japan and the United States break out?" Along with the college debaters, several distinguished guests including a politician and a naval officer partook in the debate as commentators.

The debate began with a speech by the affirmative team. Each speech was followed by an open forum (or cross-examination) in which not only the opposing team but also the audience were allowed to ask questions. The members of each team alternated giving speeches; the last two speakers, however, both represented the affirmative side, which means only two debaters out of the six took the negative position. Presumably the participants in the first debate were given leeway to choose their own preferred side and that *Yūben* was not able to find a third student willing to argue against the topic.

It took three more years after this first debate until *Yūben* finally undertook to hold intercollegiate debates on a regular basis. We are not exactly sure why it took so long, but it can be speculated that the first debate was deemed far from satisfactory as encapsulated in Etsujirō Uehara's following scathing post-debate comment: "Overall, I must say that none of the six persons speaking on this topic gave it thorough consideration" ("Nichibei," 1930, p. 46). Along a similar line, a *Yūben* editor provided an explanation for the three-year hiatus at the beginning of the second debate:

Many teachers have advised us to hold a debate meeting in Yūben for some time; and we had also felt the need to do that. But as we had been thinking about holding a debate in a place like an auditorium, we had been a little reluctant. Besides, if we were going to launch [an event like this], we wanted to serialize it so that it would last for quite a long period. [So we asked ourselves:] "Are we capable of it when we are so busy editing the magazine every month?," "could our debate set a good example for [members of] oratorical societies many of which

currently conduct debates in uproar?," "debaters may need more experience and audiences may need more training in order to conduct a debate worth publishing in the magazine? These questions and concerns have kept us from carrying out [a debate] until today. ("Jisatsu," 1933, pp. 27-28)

Following the second debate on suicide in September 1933, the magazine held a total of 13 intercollegiate debates almost every month until March 1935.

Table 1: Intercollegiate debates held in Yūben from 1930 to 1935

Propositions	The Affirmative	The Negative	Issues
1. Could a war between Japan and the United States break out?	Waseda, Keio, Tokyo Imperial Universities	Waseda, Keio, Tokyo Imperial Universities	Vol. 21 No. 8
2. For or against suicide?	Meiji University	Toyo University	Vol. 24 No. 9
3. Rustic civilization or urban civilization?	Nihon University	Senshu University	Vol. 24 No. 10
4. Should temples be allowed to possess private property?	Komazawa University	Rissho University	Vol. 24 No. 11
5. For or against the death penalty?	Hosei University	Rikkyo University	Vol. 24 No. 12
6. Party politics should be rejected.	Tokyo Imperial University	Waseda University	Vol. 25 No. 3
7. The block economy should be strengthened.	Meiji University	Keio University	Vol. 25 No. 4
8. Should women be allowed to work outside?	Aoyama Gakuin University	Takushoku University	Vol. 25 No. 5
9. Would a war advance culture?	Meiji Gakuin University	Daito Bunka Gakuin University	Vol. 25 No. 8
10. Popular literature or pure literature?	Waseda University	Keio University	Vol. 25 No. 9
11. Is the current enthusiasm for sports excessive?	Toyo University	Senshu University	Vol. 25 No. 11
12. International marriage	Nihon University	Rikkyo University	Vol. 25

should be rejected.			No. 12
13. Birth control should be practiced.	Chuo University	Hosei University	Vol. 26 No. 1
14. The summer vacation should be abolished.	Tokyo University of Agriculture	Takushoku University	Vol. 26 No. 3

Table 1: Intercollegiate debates held in Yūben from 1930 to 1935

Table 1 shows the propositions used in the debates, the universities students represented, their sides, and the issues in which the transcripts appeared. Most debates took place in a conference room. No visitors were allowed to attend the debates except for the last four in which a small number of students were admitted.

Two judges were invited to adjudicate each debate; In most cases one of them was an expert on the topic and the other was someone well versed in Western-style oratory. For example, in the eighth debate on women and work, Fusae Ichikawa, an eminent advocate for women's rights, served as a judge. No judges, however, were asked to cast a vote; instead, their primary role was to provide commentary on the debates. Some judges even gave advice in the middle of the debate, which signals that more emphasis was put on education than competition

in *Yūben's* debates.

Another distinctive feature of *Yūben's* intercollegiate debates was that they were regulated by fairly strict procedures. Except for the first debate each team consisted of five members and was assigned to a particular position. As for the format, although there were some variations, a debate typically proceeded as follows. In the first phase the negative team opened a debate with their ten-minute speech followed by the affirmative speech of the same length. There was a recess between the first and second phases. The second phase was called *jiyū tōgi*, or free discussion/debate, in which the affirmative and the negative engaged in a back-and-forth exchange of arguments. Although each student was given 5 minutes to present his views, at least in the early debates, few seemed to have adhered to the time limit. Some debaters spoke overtime; some others did not make any arguments but asked questions to the opponents.

Not only were *Yūben's* intercollegiate debates regulated by fairly strict rules, but the debaters were also encouraged to undertake research and engage in evidence-based argumentation. Until then, two types of debate had been predominant in Japan: "*gijitai* (parliamentary debate type) and *benrontai* (oratorical debate type)" (Okabe, 2002, p. 284). As the name suggests, the former was a simulation of the procedure of a national assembly. The most popular form of *gijitai* debate among students was *gikkokai* (mock parliament). In a mock parliament students were split into the ruling party and the opposition party and conducted a spirited debate over a particular policy. With the chairperson's permission, a student orator was able to speak multiple times in one debate. As with British debating unions, mock parliaments "were meant to give training not just in performing public speeches, but in the very practise of government of the time through the learning of rules and procedures" (Haapala, 2012, p. 31). Therefore students were more interested in debating the question than learning argument skills through debate. The *benrontai* debate, on the other hand, divided students not into two parties (or teams) but into two opposite positions. Neither was the number of speakers or the length of speeches predetermined. Instead, all who wished to speak were allowed to take the podium and speak back and forth between the two sides until the chairperson called it a day. Also, students participating in the oratorical type of debate cared more about excellence in oral performance than the quality of arguments.

In contrast to these traditional styles, *Yūben's* intercollegiate debates encouraged

the logical cohesion of arguments among the team members. For example, Toyohiko Kagawa, chair of the second debate, advised both teams to work as “one organic unity” and maintain consistency throughout the debate (“Jisatsu,” 1933, p. 29). The importance of research was constantly underscored as well. For example, after the second debate Kagawa suggested that the students use more statistics to buttress their points (“Jisatsu,” 1933, p. 41). Kiyosawa echoed the same point after the fifth debate on the death penalty, suggesting that three important components of debate were logic, material, and delivery (“Shikei,” 1933, p. 79). All in all, emphasis on teamwork, reasoning, and research distinguished *Yūben’s* debates from the conventional ones. Importantly, as elaborated in the next two sections, this was a deliberate attempt on *Yūben’s* part to transplant a new form of debate in Japanese soil.

4. *American influence*

At the beginning of the first debate, Kinzō Gorai, chair of the debate, stressed its “academic” nature in contradistinction with the mock parliament:

This debate is a purely academic debate. There are various ways to conduct mock parliaments, but they are sort of imitations of the Diet in that [participants] were split into political parties and played the roles of ministers. Consequently, they could devolve into bad practices such as imitating violent behaviors in the Diet. It is imperative that future debate meetings use the purely academic form of debate, the one adopted at Cambridge and Oxford in Great Britain. (“Nichibei,” 1930, p. 31)

We can only speculate on why Gorai stated that the debate adopted the Oxford and Cambridge style. We are also unsure why the negative team started the debate. One possibility is that he may have had in mind an international debate between Harvard and Oxford in October 1922, for a rather extensive article on the debate appeared in the March 1925 issue of *Yūben*. As Noboru Tanigawa (1925), then a graduate student at Harvard, reported, the British and American teams debated the proposition “the U.S. should join immediately the League of Nations.” Notably, the debate began with a speech by the negative side (Harvard). Another possible reason is the use of an open forum, which was arguably peculiar to the British system of debating back then. Yet another reason is the adoption of a popular vote system, another characteristic of the British style (Moore, 1992, p. 56). Although the audiences did not actually cast a vote due to time constraints, it was announced that a decision would rest on audience votes.

While the first debate was allegedly modeled on the Oxford and Cambridge style, the subsequent debates more closely resembled the American-style debate. Among others, they were team debates with the length and order of each speech predetermined. In addition, the second through last debates emphasized research and teamwork, which also signaled that they were indebted more to the American style of debate. Baird (1923) spells out the differences between the American and British styles in the early 20th century:

With little or no reference to his colleague he [the British debater] gives his individual argument, usually some fifteen minutes long. If he persists, no bell shuts him off.... He follows no formal brief, reproduces no carefully wrought manuscript.... [T]he British system is a judgeless, open forum, parliamentary discussion rather than a competitive sport... In his purpose, style, and delivery the Oxford collegian thus differs sharply from the conventional American debater. (p. 216)

This does not mean, however, that *Yūben's* debate format was identical to the American one. For one thing, five persons constituted a team in *Yūben's* debates, whereas two- or three-person team debates were common at American schools during this period (O'Neil & McBurney, 1932; Nicholas, 1936). For another, *Yūben's* debates initially consisted of opening speeches and free discussion without any rebuttals. Unfortunately, we don't have any conclusive evidence to explain these discrepancies. What we do know is that frequent references were made to the American policy debate format in *Yūben*. For instance, speaking from his own debating experience at Western Seattle High School, Toshī Endō (1927) wrote that two or three speakers made up a team and each was given 10 minutes for constructive work and three minutes for rebuttal (p. 268). Similarly, when asked about the proper team size at a round-table discussion *Yūben* organized in 1934, Kiyosawa replied: "In the United States each university chooses three representatives and each [speaker] is given 20 minutes to speak in turn" ("Tōronnetsu," 1934, p. 133). When further asked if there was any four- or five-person debate format, Kiyosawa answered "rarely. The format is fixed... In a three-person debate, the first speakers introduce their arguments, the second engage in refutation, and the last summarize [the debate]" ("Tōronnetsu," 1934, p. 133).

The debates became a little more Americanized from the 12th debate with the introduction of rebuttal speeches. More specifically, while each team was still

composed of five members, the third phase was added in which both sides were given opportunities to summarize the debate. This indicates that continuous efforts had been made to improve the structure of a debate. Unfortunately, the 14th debate on summer vacation, which appeared in the March 1935 issue, became the last debate. The magazine itself went defunct in 1941, the year Japan declared a war against the United States.

5. *Reconceptualizing the concept of eloquence (Yūben)*

What can be extrapolated from the above account of the intercollegiate debates is an attempt on *Yūben's* part to reformulate the concept of eloquence by shifting its emphasis from elocution and elegant use of language to reasoning and plainness of speech. Interestingly, the English word 'debate' (more precisely, the English-based loanword '*dibēto*') was used instead of its Japanese translation (*tōron*) to distinguish the form of debate *Yūben* promoted from the conventional ones. It is well known that Fukuzawa translated debate and speech as *tōron* and *enzetsu* to promulgate Western-style oral discourse in the 1870s; here the process was reversed to reclaim the values of debate in early 20th century Japan. For example, at the start of the second debate Kagawa encouraged both teams to prize "the virtue of debatemanship" and refrain from ad hominem attacks and ridicule ("*Jisatsu*," 1933, p. 29). Along the same line, Kiyosawa (1933) defended his use of the word '*dibēto*' by asserting:

Some may say that it is better to use a Japanese word rather than an overly-westernized katakana word like debate [dibēto]. But debate is a common word around the world and it is not worth the effort to translate it into Japanese. (p. 142)

Implicit in Kagawa, Kiyosawa, and other *dibēto* proponents' argument is their dissatisfaction with the ways debates were conducted in schools and society at the time. The following comment by Totsudō Katō, chair and judge of the fourth debate, is illustrative of this point:

Debate in our country has been so chaotic now. This is no more evident than in the Imperial Diet. I hope you will conduct [this] new form of debate with firm determination that it will [help to] rectify this problem and form the basis for a future style of debating in Japan. ("Jiin," 1933, p.100).

Then why did *Yūben* seek to redefine the concept of eloquence in the 1920s and 30s? To answer this question, one must recognize that the popularity of oratory

was rapidly waning during this period. For instance, members of the Third Higher School's oratorical society dropped by more than two-thirds (from over 60 to less than 20) within 4 years between 1926 and 1930 (Inoue, 2001, p. 95). Similarly, according to a survey conducted by Himeji High School Alumni Association in 1931, only 1 out of 152 respondents chose *Yūben* as their favorite magazine (Inoue, 1999, p. 90). In short, eloquence (*yūben*), which used to be considered a passport to success, was generally perceived as anachronistic by the late 1920s (Inoue, 2002, p. 81).

Table 2: *Yūben* articles on debate from 1926 to 1934

Titles	Authors	Issues (Year)
Tips for a successful debate and how to put them into practice	Takesuchi, Jō	Vol. 17 No. 3 (1926)
Why isn't debate practiced in Japan?	Kayahara, Kazan	Vol. 17 No. 9 (1926)
Debate tips and tricks	Imai, Saburō	Vol. 20 No. 7 (1929)
Ways of debating	Tsurumi, Yōsuke	Vol. 21 No. 6 (1930)
I highly recommend debate training to all of you	Kiyosawa, Tadashi	Vol. 24 No. 2 (1933)
Quick guide to learning the ways of debating	Kiyosawa, Tadashi	Vol. 24 No. 6 (1933)
A study group to generate enthusiasm for debate	Panel composed of five intellectuals	Vol. 25 No. 1-2 (1934)
American students' enthusiasm for debate	Negishi, Yoshitarō	Vol. 25 No. 8 (1934)
Report on a debate meeting by [students enrolled in] the Meiji University Preparatory Course	Nakamura, Hokusai	Vol. 25 No. 8 (1934)

Table 2: *Yūben* articles on debate from 1926 to 1934

Faced with this decline in popularity, *Yūben* made several attempts to rejuvenate the importance of eloquence; one of them was to promote an alternative style of debate. As table 2 shows, *Yūben* regularly carried articles on debate around the time it hosted the intercollegiate debates. This testifies to its systematic effort to spread a new form of debate in Japan.

Importantly, many of these articles not only stressed the benefits of debate but also tried to reconfigure the concept of eloquence itself. For instance, Kazan Kayahara maintained that the lack of debate activities in most college oratorical societies was indicative of a serious weakness of Japan's national character. For as he sees it, "[i]t is impossible to conceive of eloquence without debate. Yet Japan does not have debate, but only speech, which indicates that there has yet to be any true eloquence in Japan" (Kayahara, 1926, p. 36). Similarly, the *Yūben* editor who moderated the aforementioned round-table discussion stated that "speech meetings are fairly popular in youth clubs as well as among students. I wonder how much eloquence would be refined if we could bring at least half of their enthusiasm to debate ("Tōronnetsu," 1934, p. 144).

Interestingly, this shift from elocution to argumentation coincided with increased emphasis in the American debate community on research rather than eloquence (Keith, 2010, p. 16). According to Brown (1996), “[a]lthough the American elocutionary movement remained similar to that of England, it gradually became less interested in elocution itself and more concerned with intercollegiate debate and argumentation” (p. 214). Besides, *Yūben* attempted to reposition debate from political practice (as with mock parliaments) to academic exercise around the time “judging shifted from judging the question to judging the debate” on the U.S. college debate circuit (Keith, 2010, p. 15).

More importantly, several regular contributors to *Yūben* were well aware of this shifting trend in the United States. For instance, in the article entitled “Ways of Debating” Yūsuke Tsurumi (1930) cited the changing nature of public speaking styles in the United States and used it as a rationale for promoting debate education in Japan:

There used to be such great speakers as Daniel Webster who composed polished prose in the world of public speaking in the United States; the style of speech, however, has dramatically changed over the past two decades under the influence of the [former] Harvard University president, the late Dr. [Charles William] Eliot’s speeches. That is, flowery, declamatory styles have been abandoned and replaced with plain, conversational speeches (p. 64)

Likewise, Jūji Kasai (1928), who once received the Julius Rosenwald Prize for Excellence in Oratory as a student at the University of Chicago (“Jiuji,” n.d.), argued that true eloquence consisted in expressing one’s will as briefly, simply, clearly, and succinctly as possible. He therefore found it ludicrous for many Japanese to acclaim those who would speak for a few hours as eloquent speakers (p.162). By the same token, St. Paul’s University professor Yoshitarō Negishi pointed out that unlike Japanese students, American students’ speeches were rarely cut-and-dried because they learned how to compose and present clear, logical, and substantive speeches through debate (p. 256). Conversely, in Negishi’s view Japanese students tended to cling to the old-fashioned mannerisms and present cookie-cutter arguments as they received little debate training.

Despite *Yūben*’s systematic efforts, the alternative style of debate did not take hold in pre-World War II Japan. As Meiji University professor Takahiro Akagami (1940) regretfully wrote in retrospect: “under the auspices of this magazine

Yūben, the need for debate was emphasized at one point and it was frequently tried in Japan. But in the end such attempts didn't yield expected results for various reasons" (p.106).

5. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that persistent attempts had been made to introduce an alternative (mostly American) style of debating to Japan in the early 20th century. This runs counter to the common conception that "the popularity of Western speech and debate declined all of a sudden at the turn of the century" (Okabe, 2002, p. 288). In fact, even a year before the outbreak of the Pacific War, Akagami (1940) stressed the need for debate training by attributing Japan's weak diplomacy to the people's poor debating skills (pp. 105-106). Similarly, Kasai (1928) suggested that the Japanese Exclusion Act of 1924 was passed partly because the Japanese people were too reticent to speak out against the legislation (p. 167). In Akagami and Kasai's views, debating skills could be used to improve the deteriorating diplomatic relations between Japan and the United States.

In fact, some students and intellectuals made last-ditch efforts to avert a war in the face of the escalating tensions between the two countries. In 1934 a group of concerned Japanese students organized the first Japan-America student conference out of the belief that "peace in the Pacific depended on friendly relations between Japan and the U.S. and that this amity was rapidly eroding" ("The Japan-America," n.d., n.p.). They invited about 70 American university students and professors to Japan in order to talk about major problems confronting the two countries. Although it was named *Nichibei Gakusei Tōronkai* (literally, Japan-US Student Debate Meeting), it was basically a round-table discussion without any rigorous procedures. Having been disappointed to see Japanese students insist on their opinions, Kiyosawa (1934) wrote that only if debate had been taken more seriously in the students' universities, they would not have so stubbornly clung on to their own ideas without responding to American students (pp. 92-93). We are not suggesting that the Pacific War could have been avoided if the Japanese were more skilled at debating. Our point is that we should pay more attention to the fact that there was a grassroots movement to ease the diplomatic tensions between Japan and the United States shortly before the war and that some students and intellectuals regarded debate as a valuable cultural resource to achieve that goal.

Lastly, while we agree with Okabe (2005)'s view that "Western rhetorical ideas

were too artificial and technical for most Japanese people to emulate” (p. 165), it should also be noted that “the artificial and mechanical concepts of Western elocutionary rhetoric” (Okabe, 2005, p. 165) were deemed outdated in Western societies as well. More importantly, *Yūben*’s attempt to promote academic debate in the 1920s and 30s coincided with the shift in emphasis from elocution to argumentation in the United States. Unfortunately, little is still known about the American influence on debating activities in early 20th century Japan. Although we often take for granted that debate practices in Japan have always been under the American influence, the question of “how” has yet to be fully explored. Much still needs to be done to understand how American practices have actually influenced the ways of debating in Japan.

NOTES

- i.** Macrons have been placed over elongated Japanese vowels except in the case of major cities and well-known company (or university) names (e.g. Tokyo and Kodansha).
- ii.** All translations in this paper are the authors’ except where otherwise noted.

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