The Development of Japanese Private Higher Education:

The Late Tokugawa and the Early Meiji Period

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Abstract
This thesis examines the development of Japanese private higher education from the late Tokugawa to the early Meiji period and its role in Japanese modernization. The feudal foundation and modern ideas shaped the transformation and the development of private higher education. At the same time, the role played by various educators, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, is of great importance in inheriting the legacy and in launching further projects. Meiji Restoration could hardly take place without the fruits of education in the late Tokugawa period and it could neither process significantly without early Meiji private academies’ support. The ideology and national consciousness in the private higher institutions at the time, developed in a turbulent society, determined the direction of Meiji government’s succeeding actions. This thesis starts with the research of Tokugawa’s education environment and continues in analyzing the early Meiji’s social atmosphere for private academies. A close exploration of a pioneer educator, Fukuzawa Yukichi and of his Keiō University, one of the most outstanding private institutions from then till now in Japan, provides an access to approach the ideas of leading thinkers and policymakers. As Fukuzawa and his contemporaries admitted, that at that time, the urgent need for an integrated nationality took over the dominative consideration in formulating education strategies. On the flip side, the education those thinkers had promoted, helps Japan preserve the national independence.
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**Bibliography**
When Perry arrived off Japan’s forbidden coast, a loud knock at the door of that closely shut nation, the whole country, especially the intellectual elite, sensed the impending cataclysm. Heavy clouds of change seemed to loom in the national climate. The ruling government of the time, the Tokugawa Bakufu, was hesitating about how open to be in its policies regarding the West. Under those intensive threats from overseas, Japanese radical thinkers and reformers did not wait long for the Bakufu to linger on with its last breath. The Meiji Government took over the old feudal regime with the Meiji Restoration, which led Japan on her way to modernization.

In this thesis, the development and changes in private higher education during this national far-reaching transformation brought by the Meiji Restoration will be examined in order to watch closely to the interactions and integrated relations between the purpose and corresponding systems of education, and national wills. ¹

To portrait a rough picture of how private higher education institutions have been constructed and developed, the specific time period and relevant historical facts of domestic and international environment, which were intertwined to form the Bakumatsu education legacy and modern Meiji trends, form the focus. This thesis traces and explores conditions for education during the late Tokugawa around 1853, a time period when Western culture and Christianity had already made their intrusions into Japan, and stops at the year of 1875, when Fukuzawa Yukichi published his Bunmeiron no Gaiyaku (the Outline of a Theory of Civilization) which could be

¹ 'university' will be carefully used in this thesis because private institutions were only allowed to be named university after 1918, the launch of University Order. Henry DeWitt Smith, "The Origins of Student Radicalism in Japan," Journal of Contemporary History, 5, no. 1 (1970): 87-103,
seen as a report of previous changes accomplished in initial years of Meiji Restoration and an extended wish of the encouragement of popular learning. Fukuzawa Yukichi, a pioneer figure in establishing the first preeminent private institution at the end of the Tokugawa period and kept performing an important role in Japanese education through the first decade of Meiji period, provided an agency for contemporary audience to observe a general pattern of the development of one private higher education institution through that time. In the meantime, the profound significance that Fukuzawa and his ideas had projected on the social education culture and norms I examined.

The thesis starts with background research of Tokugawa’s education legacy bequeathed to modern Japan. The research gave voice to the facts of Bakufu restrictions, proportions of public and private school systems. Further thoughts and reconsiderations of how government and nation-wide private education were connected, in terms of the purpose, the curriculum and the social environment of private schools, are provided following the background introduction. In that larger historical picture, intellectuals and activists who brought up education institutional changes and various social philosophies, instead of one dominant Chinese Confucian, in formulating national ideology were educated and nourished. Those institutional changes and the national ideology formed in late Tokugawa through Meiji period were absolutely reflected in early Meiji Japan’s attitude towards private higher education. The last focus after examining the guiding ideology is the process of how educators realized their theories into practices. A close case study with Fukuzawa Yukichi and his Keiō Gijuku is the stepping-stone for further
interpretations. This part of the thesis is constructed based on government actions, which were mostly executed by the Ministry of Education, and on numerical realities of private high education institutions, and on Fukuzawa’s perspective. Both these quantitative and qualitative changes taken place during the early Meiji are subjects to be scrutinized.

To record and interpret the transformation of private higher education institutions from the late Tokugawa period to the early Meiji, I inspect separate understandings in the feudal foundation and modern leading ideology. At the same time, the liaison in between, the role that was played by thinkers and educators at the time, is also of great importance in inheriting the legacy and in launching practical projects.

I will return to the undeniable significance of the private higher education in these two time periods in later paragraphs. The benefits and limitations that private academies, through that time period, had brought to Japanese civilization and modernization are demonstrated by the historical facts and integrated interpretations. As a vital aspect of Japanese nationality, education in Japan has developed along with the socio-political changes and responded to the demands of national interests. In this way, private higher education has contributed its particular pragmatist spirit to the historical process of Japan, closing the feudal era with a westernized state order. Nevertheless, it is necessary to pay attention to the mutual interactions between education and politics in Japan at the time, rather than claiming one-way influences.

**Introduction of private education in Bakumatsu period** (early nineteenth century)
The modernization of education that followed the 1868 Meiji Restoration did not come in an educational vacuum. The long history of schooling, gradually established during Tokugawa era, helped to realize the early Meiji government’s ambitious educational movements. The contributions have been presented largely in terms of two groups of schools: officially sponsored schools for the governing samurai elite and various institutions for lower ranking samurais and commoners. This wide diffusion of a basic literacy equipped Japan ready when the process of industrialization and political change began, to put the nation’s best intellectual resources to good use.

The widespread official schools distributed in each domain were given great credit for educating the leadership class in the values of the state. From the very beginning of the Tokugawa period to the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries, those official schools, which were founded by and under the charge of the Bakufu or local Daimyos, functioned well to transform semi-illiterate warrior class into a fully literate class of loyal bureaucrats. By the nineteenth century, however, when the country was no longer stable with a growing sense of external and internal crisis, a demand for ability in leadership undermining traditional practices was called. Therefore towards the end of the period, those dynamic intervened to shift the balance between the nature of feudal government and the consequential needs resulted from social changes. During this latter part of the Tokugawa period, a broad range of private academies called shijuku proliferated. By the 1840s, shijuku were designed to provide practical training in various areas resonating the changing social environment beyond the Chinese studies. These included around
1,500 boarding schools that catered mostly to samurai youth and showed greater acceptance of commoners than official schools did.\(^2\) As Richard Rubinger remarks, those *shijuku* had become agencies of changing Japanese education from a traditional pattern of hereditary succession to a more modern function of schooling.\(^3\) What’s more, another noteworthy phenomenon, when various *shijuku* had brought to Japan a cumulative growth in the quantity of education, is the background those *shijuku* had provided for nurturing a modern leadership generation. In considering the education patterns of the early Meiji leaders, there is the fact that many came from the lower ranks of the samurai class, a group that was often restricted from attending the *han* schools (or fief schools indicating official academies under the supervision of Daimyo or Bakufu). Fukuzawa Yukichi, a leading educator and the founder of Keiō University, for example, acquired his primary Chinese education from a private tutor. Those samurai who were cut off from access to official schools found themselves comparable alternatives in *shijuku*, no matter in the Chinese studies or in the military studies area. It is the same to commoners also, for those ambitious among the lower orders to enter the leadership to the end of the period.

However, among all those recognized impacts of private education institutions in Bakumatsu period, there existed an undeniable ambiguous fact, which is that distinctions between primary and higher education were never explicitly recorded. On the one hand, most of the *shijuku* were merit-based schools with nine grades of studies. Students had to pass a

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competitive examination in order to enter a higher grade for further studies. The ninth grade, mostly the highest level, was usually taught directly by the head teacher of the *shijuku* and students were expected to read and compose poetry under his individual guidance. On the other hand, in terms of the education contents, Dutch studies (Western studies), as one of the most essential genre of the *shijuku* occupied the second largest proportion of the distributions of the private academies after the Chinese studies, which would both be elaborated in the following sections, were mostly concentrating on specific practical knowledge, such as medicine and science of various kinds. From the beginning when Dutch schools spread, all of those practical knowledge and scientific techniques were taught in translated documents. So Chinese or Confucian studies were commonly conceived as an elementary prerequisite for further studies and Dutch studies, in this sense, were broadly considered as higher education. It is hard to find a clear focus on higher educational institutions in those *shijuku* but nevertheless, it is undoubtedly that the modernization and developments of private higher education in the Meiji period had roots going back a generation in the shijuku patterns of the late Tokugawa period.

In this rank-conscious and etiquette-ridden Tokugawa society, how and under what precondition, by the end of the period, a man’s life and power increasingly depended less on who he was at birth than on what he could do by his ability? At the same time, by responding the growing crisis at the late Tokugawa, why is it that a sizable number of the men who rose to lead the country received their education mostly from private schools? It is because of the significant developments of *shijuku*, particularly in the final decades of the period. This chapter provides an
overview of shijuku in terms of its definition and origins with an additional concern of political atmosphere, the introductions of three main categories of shijuku, the Chinese, the Dutch and the Kokugaku schools whereby their growth and expansions in the big picture and the liaisons and legacy shijuku in late Tokugawa had bequeathed to private schooling system in early Meiji.

Overview

The focus on the development of schooling in the late Tokugawa period would probably lead many to neglect a much longer tradition of “private” education in Japan. At least as far back as the Heian period (794-1185), for upper class and members of a particular family or clan, education was usually provided as a “private” affair. From then on, Buddhist temples too came to the stage functioning as education institutions or places for members of the clergy and even commoners included. “It is clear that until the seventeenth century, support from feudal authorities played a very minor role.”

When the Tukugawa family took over the sovereignty, the Bakufu considered Bun and Bu, the civil and military arts, as two equal constituents of the Way of samurai. By emphasizing Bun, the Bakufu were looking for mass literacy as a tool keeping men in good order. Thus from the beginning of the Tokugawa period, samurai class were asked to receive formal book education and by the end of the period, the majority of the children from samurai families above foot-soldier rank were receiving formal education in one of the more than two hundred schools

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4 Rubinger. Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan. 41.
which had been established by fief (domain) authorities.\(^5\) Those official schools under the domain or the Bakufu were in origin simply private schools given assistance and finally adopted by the fief.

But in all, how do we define the meaning of “private school” in the context of Japanese history? The most distinctive defining feature of “private institutions” from official schools is financial support. “Private” schools in the Tokugawa contained mostly two forms, “terakoya” and “shijuku”. Considering them as “private,” it did not necessarily refute the village, town or official support in any other way, for in some cases, both “terakoya” and “shijuku” did receive some support and “terakoya”, sometimes were even controlled by local groups of village. It means that the support was limited and did not reach the point of actual control. In addition, another pre-understanding worth mentioning is that except “terakoya”, and seldom “shijuku”, the term “private school” were rarely used during the period while the schools were referred to by their names rather than their type. This lack of consciousness of the difference between “private” and “official” school, reflected the long tradition of “private learning” without governmental regulations in Japan and indicated, at the same time, the common co-existence of those two educational institutions.

Inside the “private” school system, all of the academies operated independently from government supervision and finance. However, nevertheless, “terakoya” and “shijuku” distinguished themselves from each other. The word “tera” – the Buddhist temples – were

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considered as the only centers of formal education in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries. Many local commoners with talent or were literate by chance would open their house for children of peasant or farm families who had limited education opportunities. Their unregulated private academies were collectively named and known as “terakoya”. According to Dore, given the growing volume of references to terakoya in literature and the development of book production, it is convincing that a rapid proliferation of popular terakoya education began around the end of the eighteenth century. By the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, around 15,000 terakoya were recorded. Shijuku, however, were recognized as advanced research institutes with much more particular interests in the curriculum than terakoya’s basic literacy. Similar as terakoya, shijuku also sprang up in every part of the country and relied largely on student payments. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the growth of cities and a prosperous merchant class provided financial support for the development and diffusion of shijuku over the country. However, in contrast to the terakoya, besides a more systematic curriculum either in the Chinese studies, the Japanese studies or the Western studies, the majority of teachers at shijuku were from the samurai class while the teachers in terakoya were mostly composed by commoner youth. Moreover, even though both terakoya and shijuku catered mostly to lower ranks of the society, as late as the middle of nineteenth century, ordinary household were not able to send their children beyond the terakoya level. Those commoners who went to shijuku were who could afford the expense and, for the most part, had family tradition.

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6 Duke. The History of Modern Japanese Education. 56
7 Rubinger. Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan.11, Table 2.
since wealthy commoner families had their fathers and brothers all attending. This financial burden to entrance excluded most of the peasant families, which gave us the reason why most of the leading figures in the early Meiji period educated in shijuku were from lower samurai and wealthy commoner families. Shijuku, at the same time, will be the major theme discussed in this paper.

Since most of the members of leading groups in the early Meiji period had gained their innovative thoughts and ideas out of their education experience, the fact that most of them received education from shijuku, inevitably questioned the nature and purpose of official education and the ones of shijuku. In Tokugawa period, the samurai class as a whole was regulated under a basic Confucian education, the core of which was primarily moral refinement. The morality, promoted by the ruling class, was to stress the fulfillment of duty and the proper observance of status distinctions. Thus it would be unnecessary and probably dangerous to educate the non-samurai. Even in the school, sharp divisions of status existed and affected the school administration. However, in the numerous private schools, a full-scale Chinese education, education in Dutch or Western learning and Japanese classics were provided under a merit-based promotion system. On the eve of modernization in late Tokugawa, shijuku was demonstrated to play a critical role in assisting a better transformation.

**Three major schools**

Learning in the Tokugawa period was composed of three major schools. Throughout the
long tradition of education in Japan, Chinese learning was fully realized in philosophy, history, medicine and other sciences. There was a newcomer in the nineteenth century, ‘Dutch learning’ (later ‘Western learning’), which gradually unfolded into a comprehensive study ready for the reforms and innovative movements which followed. In addition to Chinese and Dutch influences, Japanese learning, the study and exaltation of Japan’s literary, political and religious traditions, arose from the Kokugaku movement. Shijuku provided all of them and, rather than official schools, in most cases were the only places where the study of Dutch studies and Japanese learning were taught. In this paper, which focuses on higher education in the Bakumatsu period, Dutch learning, which gained its flourishing moment in nineteenth century towards the end of Bakufu with advanced knowledge teaching, is given greatest attention.

Before a close look at the three schools, a pre-discussion of how the nineteenth century served as a significant turning point in the development of all of those three needs to be laid out. As introduced in the overview, shijuku, like the official schools, were distributed all over the country. However, it is because shijuku were mostly out of the Bakufu or Domain’s governance, theoretically, that students from anywhere could have a seat and be allowed entrance as long as they paid the tuition. When a shijuku ran successfully with a famous teacher and educator, there were always ambitious youth traveling cross the domains for self-cultivation. The domains, in the Tokugawa political system, were ruled by their daimyo with full powers of local government delegated them by shogunal grant. Thus haunted by the fear of potential interference in the domains’ internal affairs, both the daimyos and the Bakufu government placed strict restrictions
on inter-domain communication and travels were for certainty forbidden. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, people had begun to move in significant numbers, in the reasons of religious pilgrimages or business. These reasons were which permission was generously granted for and therefore provided the possibility for growing numbers of students traveling to another han to attend their desired academies. Conversely those youth’s pursuit of education stimulated the intensive traveling phenomenon. In the nineteenth century, Japan was in unstable circumstances, which provided a chance for these young men to exchange their views and thoughts in various shijuku and for a nationwide scholar communication to develop.

Due to the long Confucianism education history in Japan, Chinese studies shijuku, were unquestionable among the earliest to develop and the most numerous shijuku type of the Tokugawa period. Chinese studies, sometimes alternatively called Confucian studies, enjoyed great official preference and promotion from the very beginning of the Tokugawa era. By the Bakumatsu period, those Chinese studies shijuku had educated numerous religious leaders, scholars, doctors and political leaders. Both official schools and shijuku had similar curricula and drew heavily on Confucian ethical concepts and the studies of Four Books and Five Classics from ancient China. However, as society changed in the nineteenth century, Chinese studies was no longer the end of study, but a beginning. Furthermore, it was no longer limited to Confucian scholars and the ruling class, but gradually became part of the popular literacy due to the economic prosperity and national needs for talent intelligence in the unstable international

8 Rubinger. Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan. 29-31.
Dutch studies came to Japan with the international trade between Japan and Western countries, mostly Holland in Nagasaki, in the forms of advanced medicine and medical cure. At the very beginning of Dutch studies schooling in the late eighteenth century, young students traveled and studied directly under the Dutch in Nagasaki. On the Bakufu side, the attitude of the official education institution to Dutch studies was ambivalent. In 1811, the Bakufu set up an official translation office for Western books and founded a special institution of foreign studies in 1856, the Office of the Investigation of Barbarian Books, the Bansho Shirabesho, as ‘a window to the West’. The Tokugawa government also forbade the teaching of Western knowledge in the official schools, until the very late in the period. Dutch studies, from the beginning, through the nineteenth century, were developed in shijuku only. By the middle of nineteenth century, Dutch schools became more systematized schools and appealed to a larger number of students instead of small groups of medical students in the old time. They were considered as advanced and specialized schools teaching practical courses and technical science compared to Confucian schools. Moreover, Shijuku teaching Dutch studies were expensive and were mostly located in big urban areas. According to Rubinger, the most important teaching centers were located in Edo, Nagasaki, and Osaka while Confucian and Japanese shijuku were diffused in small towns.

In the 1850s and 1860s, when the nation’s survival became a question, Bakufu sensed the

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keen need for the study of the West, and Dutch scholars were in great demand for translating and copying Western books and for consulting related to the West. Furthermore, a rapid increase in the number of students registered in Dutch schools after the coming of Perry in 1853, also suggests this significant shift in the official attitude toward the education, which certainly encouraged a much broader national consciousness of being involved with European civilization. Therefore, under these circumstances, both commoner and samurai youth studied in the Dutch schools were eligible to be recruited into government positions. Dutch schools reached across class lines and helped the talented men of the country develop new ideas, diverse thoughts and independent outlooks on the world. Some of the ideas composed the early Meiji ideology, such as pragmatic attitudes, freedom and equality of human rights, the emphasis of individuality, and so on. Those schools, cultivating the leading figures of the next generation, became the agents of great changes underway.

Japanese studies (Kokugaku or National studies) was the revival of indigenous Japanese culture in the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries. In the curriculum of shijuku offering National studies, Shintoism, Japanese history, and literary classics were added. Those shijuku spread in various towns and villages appealing to rural merchants and farmers. National studies usually appeared as a protest against the Confucian and the Dutch shijuku, emphasized on national pride and pure Japanese philosophy. Perry’s arrival, representing foreign threats, undoubtedly stimulated this growth in national consciousness. However, even though those Kokugaku

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shijuku did not achieve a status as universal as that of Confucian shijuku or Dutch shijuku, it provided new thoughts to the talents in the end of the period and made itself an undeniable component of Japanese nationalism which gradually developed into radical movements. Thus the main tone of reviving Japanese native religion and custom had given rise to the idea of restoring the emperor in his proper place. With Dutch schools educating practical sciences and Kokugaku and Confucian schools nurturing the morality, the Bakumatsu and the early Meiji Japan intertwined both in the ideology of education.

Legacy bequeathed

In order to examine the early Meiji ideology in education institutional reforms and private schooling, one has to start from the continuities between Tokugawa tradition and Meiji modernization. By the Bakumatsu period, all of those types of shijuku coexisted and this highly complex and sophisticated network of those private schools provided education in various fields of knowledge to almost all classes of society. The Tokugawa legacy, in education, was a rich one. In the following paragraphs, the changes and efforts which were made by shijuku institutions in the closing years of the Tokugawa period will be mainly demonstrated in firstly, the cultivation of Meiji leading educators and well-equipped citizens and secondly, the merit-based competitive schooling administration as an evolution of the education practices in modern Japan.

At the end of the Tokugawa period, shijuku institutions provided a broad sort of learning for talents, under the social tendency of traveling cross the domain for studying. They supported
a comprehensive and diverse training background from where the leading students of the day would receive important knowledge and stimulated them to question the disordered national atmosphere with solutions at hand. There emerged the Meiji leaders and leading educators. The existence of various *shijuku* made it possible for youth from any class of the society to enter the leadership with ambition and innovative ideas at the end of the period. Those leaders’ *shijuku* experience not only supported them with a widely differentiated educational and intellectual life, but also foreshadowed those leaders’ educational reforms and experiments after the Restoration, such as the creation of a modern school system (both public and private institution) and reforms of the curriculum in private higher education.\(^\text{12}\) It is noteworthy that those who found a proper time and an opportunity to destroy the old world and initiated inspiring changes via and after the Meiji Restoration, were educated and formed by the traditional education in Tokugawa feudalism. Those who were the first generation of Meiji leading figures were all, more or less, educated in Tokugawa *shijuku*. The essence of *shijuku* went far beyond the Bakufu’s expectations when the government showed its tolerance and marked its importance in history.

From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, wide diffusion of basic education provided either by official schools for samurai or by private academies for lower ranks of the society received increasing attention and emphasis. The widespread literacy was achieved, which awakened the national subjects for self-improvement and active engagement in government affairs. As Dore addressed, when people were widely accepted the notion of individual

self-improvement, they would consequently show more desire for national improvement.\textsuperscript{13} On the other hand, the promotion of modernized schooling system would never be succeeded without mass literacy and popular recognition of calling for changes.

School administration in the Tokugawa period had undergone a shift from a fixed rank-based to a merit-based system. The problem lied in the ideal status system became fierce and incompatible in late Tokugawa period. The nature of education was questioned as educating intelligence or stabling the strict social status, as the Bakufu proposed. This modification of status distinctions and differentiated talents were practiced by the Confucian educators since the Confucian ethics promoted innate talents rather than rank but due to the nature of the Bakufu government and the need to freeze the social mobility, it was not until the nineteenth century, when the country confronting unstable crisis that official schools showed their preference for talented men. In the case of shijuku, which were untrammelled by the government, were consistent in insisting a system based on achievement and academic accomplishment. In contrast with the spirit of competition and self-respecting promoted in shijuku, unjustified feudal system brought the disappointment and frustration of lower samurai and commoners. When those talented men from lower ranks of the society took over the regime, they, continue the shijuku tradition, were establishing school system for production of the intelligence, particularly in private education.

The differences between Japan in the 1860s and Japan in the 1870s were significantly

\textsuperscript{13} Dore. \textit{Education in Tokugawa Japan}, 292.
moulded by *shijuku* education. Since Dutch studies, based on basic Chinese literacy, were considered as higher education, the great scale of learning from the West set up the fundamental tone, which was practical learning, in private higher education in the early Meiji period. Those educators, policy makers and university founders, who received their critical thoughts from the Tokugawa *shijuku*, deserve further observation in their practices after the Meiji Restoration.

**Introduction to the early Meiji period**

After the civil war and Meiji Restoration, Japan was gradually transformed from a collection of separate domains, each with its own cultural patterns and feudal autonomy, into a united nation. To the populace, a sense of Japaneseness as a national citizen, rather than a sense of membership of one specific region, was promoted and implanted by the early Meiji leaders. Even though during the initial several years right after the restoration, Meiji government had faced great difficulty in keeping all the domains under control and stabilizing the centralized authority, those government leaders were strongly convinced that knowledge needed to be spread and compulsory education for the common should be enforced. Their belief and determination could be seen in the well-known Charter Oath, which was issued on March 14, 1868, by the Meiji government in the name of the youthful Emperor Meiji, “Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world, so as to strengthen the foundation of Imperial rule.”\(^{14}\)

However, in those early years of Meiji government, both economic and social conditions

obstructed the process of establishing a modern national school system. In spite of the political threats from several domains, which were so strong that they had survived the civil war, Meiji government was also going through an internal fight on the leading ideology in education system among the officers. At the same time, outside the government, talented men such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, as if by mutual consent, advocated common education and higher education for practical skills, which could cultivate intelligent men more suitable for national needs. It has to be noted that during the previous era, there was never a national school system established or a clear division between higher and primary schools. Education, in each domain, was left to local clans by the Bakufu, where was far away and slow to communicate. As the new policy of a nation-wide normative school system, the Japanese higher education system was also a by-product of the birth of the modern Meiji government.

This thesis closes the interpretation regarding the publishment of the first and the most important proclamation in Meiji Government in 1872, the Gakusei, outlining the public education scheme for the nation. This document had marked the beginning of the modernization of Japanese education and the development of the ideals and attitudes towards private higher education will be examined. Before 1872, there was only one private school offering higher education, Fukuzawa’s Keiō Gijuku. The limited development of private academies will not be hard to understand if taking the internal and external crisis that Japan was facing into consideration. The Japanese government was struggling to consolidate the fruit of the Meiji Restoration and from their standpoint, under the purpose of maintaining the national sovereignty
and independence, their best and the only choice was to invest all substantial staff, facilities and budget in the imperial schools. In this early period, the government had sensed the urgent need for both the universal compulsory primary education for the commonness and higher education for the elites, in order to develop a national consciousness, to enhance the basic civilization and to replenish the leading groups. The first and the most representative modern imperial university, Tokyo Imperial University, was yet officially established until 1877 but its two predecessors, the Tokyo Kaise Gakkō, (polytechnic) and the Tokyo Igakkō, (medicine) were already recruiting students as two national institutions of higher education.¹⁵

To track the development of private institutions as Keiō Gijuku and its potential comrades on the way, the research could not avoid the paralleled modernization of the public schooling system. In this section, a historical background of governmental policies and ideologies and their corresponding influences on, both public and private, education system will be provided. At the same time, a close examination of Fukuzawa and his Keiō Gijuku allows a careful scrutiny of this prominent leading educator’s worries and strategies for his nation.

Resonation with the changing intellectual and political landscape¹⁶

From Tokugawa to Meiji, Japanese education had endured a surely not smooth or easy process. The immediate post-restoration period was full of uncertainties and the government was

having an extremely unstable time. Facing both domestic and international impending threats, the goal of the state, understood by the early Meiji leaders, was to make the country rich and strong. Therefore all aspects of the national policies should serve that end.\textsuperscript{17} Japanese education, the purposes, content, system and method, were also undoubtedly designed for those national interests. Put another way, political interests shaped early Meiji education. The idea of subordinating education to the political goals was not new in the Meiji period. As analyzed in the late Tokugawa section of this thesis, the public education system could not escape the supervision of the government, which made them obliged to political purposes. According to Motoyama, this dependence upon politics is still the hallmark of Japanese education even today. Hence in order to appreciate the development of the private and public higher education and to justify the restrictions that the government had put on private institutions, one must not overlook the linkages between the modernization of Japanese education and the changing intellectual and political landscape.

Right after the restoration, Japan was undergoing a complex political evolution with two great missions at hand. One was to abolish the feudal domains and the other was to move the capital to Tokyo. Both two indicated Meiji government’s steel to establish a unified nation with centralized authority so that they can issue and intrude their own policies upon the country. The education system was apparently not as critical a concern as other problems the government was

\textsuperscript{17} Motoyama. \textit{Proliferating Talent}. 13-18.
dealing with.\textsuperscript{18} Along with the reforms that the government had taken to establish its new authority and reduce the threat from the domains, the dominating ideology in schooling system also transformed which we can track from the shifted priorities of the political goals and the changing social environments.

When old feudal domains remained as formidable obstacles for the central government implanting its own authority, Iwakura Tomomi, the head leader in the early Meiji government, planned a Shintoist education mainly for court aristocrats. Iwakura had prioritized the education of the imperial aristocracy under the leading philosophy of Shintoism at this time because the Shintoists’ slogan ‘unity of rites under the Emperor’ was exactly the intellectual basis for the new government, which overthrew the Bakufu in the name of Emperor. Even though it remained unknown whether Iwakura’s Shintoist educational plan was out of his ideological belief in returning to the ancient imperial polity or out of the purposes to abolish the feudal domains in an orthodox theory, it was true that the political realities demanded capable leaders from court aristocrats.\textsuperscript{19} However, those court aristocrats, after the restoration, appealed arrogant and reluctant to learn and Iwakura’s Shintoist education plan came to a deadlock. The turmoil of these conditions came to a turning point when the Emperor entered into the Shogunate’s former stronghold, Edo (Tokyo). When practical politics and the keen needs for maintaining national independence from international threats were called, the samurai leaders inside the government


\textsuperscript{19} Motoyama. Chapter 2.
could not constrain their dissatisfaction with Iwakura’s Shintoist education project any longer. Those samurai leaders agreed to Iwakura at the first place only because of the urgent domestic conditions and when Iwakura and his court aristocracy did not react active or productive to help the state grow stronger, they favored international and universal values, such as Western studies. An open-country policy was being pursued and the government started to look at the training of capable men in the knowledge of the West.

Different opinions about the dominating ideology in education system represented different powers in the ruling system. Iwakura Tomomi insisted to establish an imperial government by developing the court aristocracy by even transferring his support to the Confucianism, which was less controversial than Shintoism might be. Meanwhile, when Iwakura was frustrated with the aristocracy, the samurai leaders showed their persistence of a Western-studies-based education scheme. To them, it was the time to prepare for the future and cultivate new talent by sending outstanding individuals to the West for study. It was now when the new ideology of combining the best of native and foreign thought emerged.

When the Tohoku war between the central government and several last domains ended on October 23, 1868, Japan’s political center was officially transferred to Tokyo and the Meiji government was finally able to launch nationally unified education policies.\(^{20}\) Along with the take over of Tokyo, a great number of populations had crowded into the city. Their need of education stimulated the government to have this edict issued in 1869; “the most essential task

\(^{20}\) Motoyama. Chapter 2, 105-110.
now, at the moment of reform, is nourishing human talent. A university must therefore be established.\textsuperscript{21} It must be noted here that though higher education was mentioned and called for at this juncture of time, the Meiji leaders who issued this edict had not yet connected the higher education to individual self-cultivation or national civilization. Led by Iwakura, the government emphasized the higher education in the sense of moral obligations. Iwakura now had shifted his mind to establish a Confucianist educational system, stressing on the duty for the emperor. In the new political climate that developed after the complete unification of the nation, new educational ideas came into being. The westernized idea of connecting education to the activation of an individual’s own capacity for knowledge emerged and in spite of various educational ideals, the leadership group as a whole agreed that education became an urgent issue to pay attention to.

Daigakkō (university) had been defined and in order to strengthen the central authority, Daigakkō was regulated to be directly subordinated to the Grand Council and two newly opened schools of higher education in Tokyo, the Shohei Gakkō and Kaise Gakkō were not part of the universal education system, but rather are institutions training ‘talents’ for government services only. University was at the time organized as the state’s paramount educational institution and the government’s highest agency for the management of education.\textsuperscript{22} Besides the establishment of the institutions of higher education per se, the ideology that was set as the principles of the university spirit had shifted from Shintoism to Confucianism and then to the Way combining traditional and foreign values in which the Western practical science and skills were mostly

\textsuperscript{21} Motoyama. Chapter 2, 112-116.
\textsuperscript{22} Motoyama. Chapter 2, 120-125.
advocated. In this very early age of the Meiji government, whatever philosophy and knowledge suited the purpose of enriching and strengthening the new nation would be involved in the discussion. The subordinate nature of the university to politics could not be more obvious.

The only private institution at the time, the Keiō Gijuku, though it enjoyed the freedom of criticizing the contemporary conditions and designing its own curriculum, still could not neglect the eager desire for a strong and wealthy independent nation of the country. As the Imperial higher education was designed to produce the talent for the state bureaucracy, private academies, represented by Keiō Gijuku, tended to train their students for non-bureaucratic professions such as business, journalism, law, and medicine.\(^{23}\) This national pragmatism was the answer to the relevant domestic and international problems, which did not allow Japan much time to response.

**Fukuzawa’s ideas and his Keiō Gijuku**

A pioneer of western culture and modern education in Japan, Fukuzawa Yukichi had contributed plenty of inspiring lectures, writings and, most importantly, his Keiō University, to today’s Japan. Recognized as one of the most outstanding and enlightened figures in the early Meiji period, he made his contributions mainly in two facets, his encouragement of Western Learning and his pragmatic attitude toward private institutions. On the one hand, he, as a determined advocator for Western civilization, emphasized the keen need for Japan at the time to give up the nostalgic sentiment for the past and to embrace modernized Western civilized

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\(^{23}\) Smith, *The Origins of Student Radicalism in Japan*, 93-95.
knowledge and thoughts. On the other hand, he emphasized the importance of maintaining the traditional core of national spirits. At the same time, his steady pragmatic attitude toward education, which was reflected on his instructions in his own private academy, draw a more distinct line between public and private schooling in terms of socio-political functions than the situation in the Tokugawa period. However, some of his thoughts seemed self-contradictory in the 1870s, including his shifting opinions about mass education and his idealistic appreciation of individual independence. The fundamental motto of his Keiō University that each one should be, and be considered as, independent mentally and physically in disregard of social status and economic standing, ran into disaccord with his preference for higher class and rich families when he was shaping the student body. Nevertheless, he was still considered as a prominent educator in the early Meiji period and his leadership in the modernization and development of Japanese private higher education deserves a special look.

Fukuzawa Yukichi was born the fifth son of a lower-ranking samurai family in Osaka in 1835. At that time, Japan was in total isolation with the only opening to the outside world, Nagasaki. Fukuzawa, as stated in the former paragraphs, was not eligible for public schools established by Bakufu or the local Domain; he received his primary Confucian education in a small private academy near home and was allowed to study Western science from Dutch teachers during the closing days of the Tokugawa period. In 1858, when Perry came and the U. S. – Japan Treaty of Friendship was signed, Fukuzawa, who had almost finished his language

learning and Dutch studies, opened his small private school to teach Dutch language in Edo (Tokyo); this was the beginning of the distinguished Keiō University of today.25

From the 1860s, Fukuzawa was continuously employed by the Tokugawa government as a translator of diplomatic documents, as an official staff member visiting Europe, and as an assigned officer studying in the universities of the United States. “First of all, it is urgent that our people enrich and strengthen our country. The foundation must be an educated citizenry.” This, in a letter from London to a member of his clan, was Fukuzawa’s first statement referring to the future of Japan.26 This is also the starting point of his call for the ultimate improvement of Japanese civilization. However, when Fukuzawa brought many of his enlightened ideas and ambitious plans back to Japan from abroad, he was expelled from the government due to the isolationist policies of the feudal Tokugawa Shogunate. Disappointed in the government and anxious about national crisis, Fukuzawa concentrated on studying the many books he had collected during his travel to the West, managing his private school teaching Western Studies and writing. In 1868, he moved his school to a new location in Edo, where the school is today, and named it Keiō Gijuku. It could be called the first modern private school in Japan to be established independently of both the national government and the regional association. After the Meiji Restoration, the content and the focus of Fukuzawa’s writings had shifted from simple introductions of western culture, nations and institutions to the strong appeal for national enlightenment.

26 Yasukawa. *Fukuzawa Yukichi [1834-1901]*. 22
In 1875, extending his former ideas written in his *Encouragement of Learning*, he published *Bunmeiron no Gaiyaku* (*Outline of a Theory of Civilization*). In this great work, he explicitly expressed his understanding of the situation Japan was faced with at the time and made the firm statement that “our country’s independence is the goal, and our people’s civilization is the way to that goal.”

Fukuzawa had had his mind profoundly influenced by Western civilization during his overseas experience and had developed his full and complete theory and opinions about the greatest and the most basic direction, into which Japan should look before taking anything else into consideration. Fukuzawa stressed and demonstrated, two essential qualities in his critical thinking learned from the Western cultures in his book, the fact that everything is relative and the fact that everyone is independent. According to the theory of relativity, Fukuzawa insisted that since every issue had its merits and demerits, then an appropriate time, place, and audience needed to be taken in consideration before evaluating and applying knowledge or concepts. He persuaded the common people passionately with the conclusion that the “unorthodox views of today will most certainly become the common ideas and theories of the future.”

At the same time, he encouraged scholars to be brave and to stick with what they believe, without fear of the opinion of the “wrong many”. Fukuzawa fully utilized the concept of relativity in advocating a lofty viewpoint for the civilized individuals to boldly think ahead that in terms of human civilization, Japan was absolutely able to make few

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steps ahead to catch up with the Western countries and surpass them. Furthermore, in prevailing on the common populace to agree to learn from the Western cultures without being doubted as treasonous, he pointed out that Western civilization was relatively the most advanced culture for that time period and meanwhile, civilization was a developing progress that did not belong to any country.

His ideas of the relative nature of objects formed the basis of his argument of civilization and the idea of independence became his theory’s core. Fukuzawa’s appeal of independence can be mirrored in four of his contentions: the independence of learning and education behavior or institution from the control of the government; the independence of individuality, which would always qualify one to have the sense of protecting self-interest instead of showing benighted obedience; the independence of thinking abilities, which would motivate one to raise questions and to embrace newer and broader thoughts; the last and the most important, national independence, which was the premier concern of the country before speaking about any other issues.

Fukuzawa had examined the history of Japanese civilization from the relationship between the ruling government and the ruled common people. He concluded with pity “in Japan, there is a government but no nation.” In Japan, the power had always remained one-sided, and between the rulers and the ruled, there was a giant chasm. Every factor of civilization, such as knowledge and virtue, religion, and physical subjects were belonged to the ruling class. Thus it was always

and only the ruling class’s story of developments or retreats of civilization. The common people were not educated to be expected as civilized or enlightened. They were not the ones to blame but the government was. Government, in a nation’s civilization, should play the role of a mediator keeping everything in order but not develop an absolute authority, whose the major job became ruling others. All of the products of civilization served and went to the ruling class, including talents from education institution. Gradually, learning was no longer a private endeavor and most of the schools were interested only in producing future government officers. In other words, education become subordinate to the government without any true spirit of teaching various knowledge and skills and the only purpose of learning was to be competent rulers.

Schools’ dependence on the government also caused the lack of individuality. Since everyone in schools was taught to study for future service and ruling position in the government, there was never an awakening of self-identity and position. Furthermore, the ruling class possessed every place and position where people’s intelligence could be employed. Youth were taught and used to the norm that one usually just abandoned his born position and joined the ranks of the upper classes in order to have his talent applied. Hence, the major division between the rulers and the ruled constantly existed. Once there were talents and intellectuals were born and raised up in the ruled crowd, they simply left their own status and fled to the ruling part. In Fukuzawa’s statements, people were no longer independent in the sense of not valuing their own positions and trading their individuality for short-term jobs and convenience.
When it comes to the issues of independent mind of the talented, Fukuzawa took the example of the hard time the Meiji government was enduring. Meiji Restoration had successfully restored the nation and abolished feudal shogunate system, but, however, the government still found it rough to lead the populace. To Fukuzawa, the reason that the government had problems handling its affairs was the fault of wrong public opinion. For the independent thinking of common people, Fukuzawa expressed his lavish appreciation of western culture, in which questioning the world had already become a custom. Fukuzawa was encouraging people to free their hearts and human spirit so that they could seize the sense of being an independent mind having wild ideas and courage to ask questions in his book.

At the point of pursuing national independence, Fukuzawa’s voice resonated with his contemporaries’. The urgent need for an integrated nationality took over the dominative consideration in formulating education strategies. As Fukuzawa interpreted, national independence could only be achieved after individuals had achieved their independence. In other words, Japanese people should self-cultivate and advance toward civilization so that Japan, as a country, could preserve the national independence. All of the three issues of independence ahead serve this end.

In his theory, civilization was a tool and was also a complex conglomeration with various components. Learning, business, industry, medicine and all other studies, which all could be counted as the ingredients and the means to the development of civilization. Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism had indeed contributed to the making and the birth of Japanese
civilization. However, they did not agree to the change and progress of the society. Fukuzawa therefore suggested a pragmatic attitude toward the content of learning here by defining the ancient virtue learning as useless. His argument in developing civilization, which was defined simply as knowledge and virtue, has a severe preference on knowledge. After his examination of world history, related to his theory of relativity, he pointed out that the appropriate time for virtue to have its value was the primitive and under-developed times when people could barely control their own situations and ask questions. The appropriate place for virtue to have its dominant place is family. The real world had left very small place for virtue to play. He added another point before he drawn to the conclusion that Japanese and Western countries both had their own morality and belief which could not be decided that whose is better but if in terms of the levels of intelligence, the West appealed better in every single area. He, thus, stated that Japan’s most urgent need at the time was intelligence. It was also a national consensus among the civilized men that in the 1870s, they firmly favored the practical learning.

As the founder of a private education institution, a school completely out of the governmental financial support and other beneficial privileges, Fukuzawa did not have to worry about producing political leaders for the government and set Independence and Practical Learning as the two major mottoes of his Keiō Gijuku. Independence should be physically and mentally independent without influenced by the authority or social tendencies and it is the basic of Keiō’s education; Practical learning, refers to the sciences which are helpful for tangible

practices in life. It is not only the simple learning of scientific facts but also the capability of utilization of the knowledge and this is considered as the spirit of Keiō.

Even though Fukuzawa had criticized the interruption the government had made to education, he still could not ignore the fact that after the Meiji Restoration, public schools, which were established by the government, still occupied the greatest proportion of Japanese education. The imperial university, which enjoyed the most research funding and resources, still played the role of producing the next leading generation and was seen as the “escalator” to the ruling class. Private institutions, on the other hand, without the politic-oriented constrictions, developed their curriculum in a tendency of emphasizing business, law, and medicine. This was probably not Fukuzawa’s expectation of an independent intelligent sphere without government inserting its own purposes in education, but Fukuzawa may only compromise to the situation that Japan has not reached the level of civilization which is high enough to realize his idealistic assumptions.

However, Fukuzawa overthrown some of the points made by himself in this outline years after. For instance, he had persuaded all of the common people to learn and achieve enlightenment so that the public opinion could be corrected and with the division between the rulers and the ruled disappearing, people would develop the sense of individuality. As the populace gained progress in civilization, the nation would also achieve hers. However, when this comes to the practical administrative issues in his own Keiō Gijuku, he started to hesitate. Fukuzawa was concerned whether or not the children of the very poor should receive higher education. He set the tuition high and fixed because he had an initial fear of “the poor with
wisdom”, which he considered as one of the most dangerous consequences of education. His worries absolutely contradicted his statements before in his book. He shifted his standing from an independent scholar, thinker and educator to a loyal government man and he became one of whom he had cited as examples of leaving individuality and self-position behind.

Fukuzawa Yukichi, though probably had the most modernized thoughts and ideas at the time, still could not become an independent pure educator as he illustrated in his theories but compromised to the national benefits. However, his behaviors were reasonable according to the crisis Japan was facing. As the very slogan reflected in the early Meiji government policy, ‘enriching the country and strengthening the army’, Fukuzawa Yukichi, with his contemporaries, and the modernized Japanese education under their guidance, were characterized by a double nature: they seemed to be profoundly influenced by principles of western civilization but still in fact, they had always been subordinate to the need of the government and the economic interest of the state.

Fukuzawa’s writings and thoughts, as his earnest concerns of preserving the national independence through education and civilization, have represented the ideas of educators in the late 1800s. Their patriotic intent to preserve the sovereignty of Japan and their applying education as a means to strengthen the nation need to be viewed and evaluated from historical vantage point.

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31 Yasukawa Fukuzawa Yukichi [1834-1901]. 29.
Conclusion

In examining every step Japan had made to develop its private higher education, an idea of the internal relationship between the changing education mode and the turbulent society at the time emerged. I strongly believe that when the nation was beset with instability and disorder, the longing for prioritizing national richness and power grew stronger. In education, the national historical background explained the urgency of achieving national strength, instead of focusing on individual interests. The role of Japanese education needs to be interpreted under the purpose of serving the end of maintaining national benefits. To a broader extent, I consider the occurrence and the success of Meiji Restoration as results of Japanese education tradition, particularly in the growth of private schools.

Meiji Restoration could hardly take place without the legacy bequeathed by the fruits of education in the late Tokugawa and it could neither process, though not smoothly, significantly and brought Japan prosperity and science without early Meiji private academies’ support. Education in Japan, private institutions included, helped shape the national characteristic via its long-term teachings and it must be in part responsible for state affairs. I discuss from two perspectives, the identity of common people and the particularity of Japanese social structures.

In the history of Japan, the common people were educated to show absolute obeisance to the central administration and held few interests in national affairs. When Europe went through the Industrial Revolution and sailed all across the oceans to open the locked doors of Asia by force, Japan, as China and India, found the outdated worldview began to disintegrate and the
social order to collapse. What makes Japan different from other Asian countries is that Japanese managed to solve the crisis fast with the country united. Education inside the country gave the major direction to Japan’s actions. As introduced, when Tokugawa era drew to a close, education had already permeated in most areas of the country and Japan had achieved national literacy in general. But, the educated common people did not appear as great danger to the ruling class, neither did they launch radical revolutions to overthrow the authorities, which was taken place elsewhere when other nations struggled to survive under foreign invasions. R. P. Dore provides an explanation, that “in the Confucian definition, the purposes of education were primarily moral,” therefore schools tended always to encourage submissive acceptance of the existing order. Because popular education was preceded with official approval and when it came to private academies, those institutions were still rooted in Confucian studies, there were small grounds to deviate the educated into subversive ways, in a nation which Confucius ideology were planted so deep in national identity. Fukuzawa had also claimed that Japanese people, used to be completely dependent on the government, were not interested in public affairs. In his statement, he excluded the intellectual civilized people from the common populace and as he concerned, that even including some scholars, Japanese lived silent in his own house and the long force of habit created routines which made Japanese mute and accept things passively. He continued to point out that ”this lack of concern and courage is not a natural defect but something lost as the result of custom and methods to reactivate these attitudes must also rely on

32 Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan. 296-299.
33 Fukuzawa, An Outline of Theory of Civilization. 76.
custom.”34 By changing customs, Fukuzawa called for higher education under the guidance of independent spirit and humane concerns.

In Japan, a highly hierarchically ordered society at the time, social structures were split in two as mentioned above, the rulers and the ruled. Though classes of peasants, samurais, and businessman were officially legitimatized, Japanese people did not develop senses of belongingness toward their own class but to authority. As discussed in the analysis of Fukuzawa and his work, it was the norm that education produced elites for next ruling generation dominated the society. When the ruling class was always ideological united by absorbing intellectual elites from every stratum and among the ruled and distinguished individuals could not emerge and lead specific classes, Japan achieved its own successful revolution without massive bloody casualties in wars to restore the Emperor and to restore the state order. This peculiarity of Japan at the time formed out of complex causes, such as cultural traditions and religious influences, but education, as the most vital agent of shaping national identities and philosophies, must be considered in the core.

The development of a nation determines the content and direction of the education inside the country and it also functions reversely. Any issues and problems related could not be analyzed in investigating one without the other, which underlines how profound the influences of education could be. In Japan, public higher education takes over the burden of responding to government’s patronage to cultivate political figures while private higher education, is

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34 Fukuzawa, An Outline of Theory of Civilization. 75.
committed to produce competent individuals in various fields. Examining the history allows us to look for the original triggers for various phenomena, thus the close connections between education and politics in Japan at the time could not be simply judged blaming on individual educators or the government but to be evaluated in taking history context into consideration.
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