

National Education Policy and the Masses in Modern Japan: The Origins of a State-Oriented Mentality and the Long Detour to a New Form of Citizenship Education

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The enlightened segment of the leaders of the Meiji State perceived the essential connection between modern education for the masses and modern methods of warfare. In 1872 and 1873 they introduced two new systems, the modern school system and conscription. These initial designs by the enlightened bureaucrats who eventually won the political leadership inside the central government met with a strong resistance from peasants. The government managed to mobilise the masses into its centralised system of education and politics by around the time of the Russo-Japanese War. The successful mobilisation of the whole nation was completed by the early 1930s together with permeation into the masses of a mind-set based on modern western science that was carried by enlightened bureaucrats and urban intellectuals. The plurality-oriented values of pre-modern Japan in education and politics thus ceased to exist. Today a new concept of citizenship is needed in Japan to foster community and plurality-oriented values with the concept of individuality.

Japan, modernisation, citizenship, history, education

THE MEIJI STATE AND THE MASSES

Meiji Japan is a rare case which tells us what happened when a feudal state, which had been almost completely isolated from other areas of the world for as long as 250 years, suddenly encountered full-scale, highly industrialised bourgeois states such as England, France and the United States of America.

Noteworthy is the Meiji state's rapid concentration of political power, such as *haihan chiken* (Abolishment of Feudal Domains and Establishment of Prefectures). Domestically, this rapid concentration of political power was made easier by the relatively centralised Tokugawa (Shogunate) feudal system. Internationally, the Meiji government did not face any full-scale war with European powers and could preserve its energies for domestic political affairs. The centralised political power that was rapidly achieved in turn made it possible for the Government to discard various systems that hampered economic and national unity. Enforcement of universal mass education, universal conscription and a unified tax system in the early 1870's became possible in this situation.¹

¹ Shimoyama Saburo, *Meiji Ishin Kenkyu-shi Ron* (A Discussion on the History of Studies of the Meiji Restoration) chapter 3, section 2. It should be noted that Japan changed its calendar system from the lunar calendar

The political elite, rather than the elites in business or other aspects of national life, dominated the national scene in the early Meiji State, and most of this political elite came from one social class, that is to say, lower-ranking *samurai* (warrior class) or its equivalent. At the time of government reform in July of 1869, after *hanseki hokan* (Return of the Land and People to the Emperor), the nobility and the lower-ranking *samurai* took most Ministers' and Vice-Ministers' positions in the central government and the feudal lords slipped away. With the reform of July 1871, after *haihan chiken* (Abolishment of Feudal Domains and Establishment of Prefectures), the lower-ranking *samurai* established their superior political position. Nearly all of these elite politicians came from selected feudal domains such as Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa, and Hizen that had contributed the most in the civil war against the Shogunate forces. The nobility and *samurai* class attended institutions of higher education during the early Meiji period almost exclusively. Tokyo University, which provided any social class with a systematic route to elitist positions in the national government, was built in 1877, yet the superiority of the *samurai* in gaining admission did not disappear for some time. Commoners were permitted to enter the Tokyo University Preparatory School one year later, but nearly eight out of ten students in Tokyo University were still of *samurai* origin; 73.9% of the students were of *samurai* origin in 1878.²

When we discuss foreign influence upon domestic affairs, we have to see if any political or social group effectively transforms such international influence into domestic policy. As for Meiji Japan, we should look into the historical significance of the introduction of modern methods of warfare on the domestic political struggles that gave birth to the group of absolute bureaucrats who wanted to have universal mass education despite unfavourable political and social conditions. Each competing social group had its own idea about education that was related to its political ideas and social position. The political elite during the Meiji Restoration was greatly exposed to European civilization and quickly saw the great advantages of its importation, not only to preserve national independence, but also to strengthen their own political leadership in the domestic arena. With this growth, these absolutist politicians heavily relied upon military force as a political instrument. They recognised the importance of mass participation in the armed forces, which had become competent in the modern methods of warfare. Universal mass education would be required to create soldiers with a certain standard of intelligence for modern military tactics.

From the beginning, the Meiji government never hesitated to crush violently any anti-Government rebellions, whether conservative *samurai* rebellions or peasants' uprisings. Facing increasing social instability, it made every effort to save the core of the feudal ruling class and succeeded in transforming the class of feudal lords into one of its most important political and social supporters. On the other hand, the early Meiji government could not disregard the political significance of winning the masses' support. Indeed, the military and political success of the Meiji oligarchy at the time of the Meiji Restoration owed significantly to the negative attitudes of the masses toward the incompetent feudal system. The new government, which was often viewed as a liberator from the old social system,³ gradually removed feudal social and

to the solar calendar on December 3, 1872, which turned into January 11, 1873. This paper uses dates of the lunar calendar before the change of the calendar system.

² Passin, Herbert, "Japan," Coleman, James S. ed., *Education and Political Development*, p.229.

³ Kano Masanao, *Shihon-shugii Keisei-ki no Chitsujo-ishiki* (Ideas on the World Order during the Formation Period of Capitalism in Japan), p.214f.

economic regulations. With these moves, popular expectations and demands on the government went hand-in-hand with its own desire to prescribe a new system of control over the nation (a highly centralised nation-state). This trend toward policy-making began a torrent of introducing completely new policies even against the will of the masses after *haihan chiken* (Abolishment of Feudal Domains and Establishment of Prefectures) when the new government felt confident in their governing ability for the first time. *Gakusei*,⁴ an unfamiliar school system for the masses, was introduced by the central government as something necessary for mobilising the masses.

MASS EDUCATION AND ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the early years of the Meiji Period there existed a variety of thoughts and practices concerning mass education. *Terakoya* education (village or town schools, often in local temples) was still the major organ for mass education, though this system began to ebb during this period. But *terakoya* education was virtually inaccessible to tenant peasants without any land. Well-off peasants did nothing to aid poor peasants in obtaining an education. Whether a peasant family sent their children to *terakoya* depended on their social and economic standing as much as their own decision. Further, *terakoya* education was not a significant concern of feudal lords.

Gogaku (semi-official schools for the masses) took a different approach to mass education. They were established by government officials and groups of upper-class peasants and merchants to educate the commoners' adults or children within a community. The government even helped poor peasants send their children to attend *gogaku* by providing financial aid. This new approach was related to the impulse of village leaders to restore the village community in the wake of the mounting economic and political crisis in village communities toward the end of the Edo period. An analysis of subjects and textbooks reveals that *gogaku* put much more emphasis on the instruction of Confucian ethics than did *terakoya* education.⁵ Moreover, there were cases in which *terakoya* were transformed to more closely resemble *gogaku*. The number of *gogaku* rapidly increased in the first few years of the Meiji period.

Attitudes of the Meiji government towards these two types of mass education inherited from the Edo period were clearly expressed in *Gakusei*. Many *gogaku* were raised to the status of regular public elementary schools while *terakoya* became *kajuku* (house schools), which were classified as irregular elementary schools opened at private houses and taught by unlicensed teachers. The Meiji government became interested in the public nature of *gogaku*, an approach

⁴ *Gakusei* (The Fundamental Code of Education) was Japan's first national scheme of mass education. Issued in August 3, 1872 this grand design for a national school system was a product of the Meiji government almost five years after it proclaimed *osei fukko* (Restoration of Imperial Sovereignty) on December 9, 1867, and one year after Monbusho (Ministry of Education) was established in July 18, 1871. *Gakusei* was composed of 109 chapters, and with another 105 chapter added in March and April of 1873. Its goal was to establish a university in each of eight university districts, 256 secondary schools, and 53,760 elementary schools throughout the nation. The design called for every 600 Japanese to be assigned to one elementary school and every 130,000 people to one secondary school. *Gakusei* covered the whole range of education, including various kinds of school (elementary and secondary schools, universities, special colleges like medical schools, law schools, business schools, industrial schools, etc.), curriculum, examinations, diplomas, qualifications and the role of teachers and school administrators, regulations of study abroad, school fees, and educational loans. *Meiji-iko Kyoiku-seido Hattatsu-shi* (The History of Educational Systems Since the Meiji Era), vol.1, pp.276-333.

⁵ *Nihon Kyoiku-shi Shiryo* (Historical Documents of Education in Japan), ser.7, p.799.

that aimed to educate the whole community and that was under the guidance or the control of domain authorities.

However, the Meiji government modified considerably the form and the content of *gogaku*. It broke down the local nature of *gogaku* by establishing a highly centralised educational system. The *Gakusei* curriculum was heavily weighted with Westernised subjects, especially in the natural sciences such as Western arithmetic, geography and physics. Though a majority of elementary schools during the early years of *Gakusei* were hardly different from *terakoya* and *gogaku* in their physical conditions, the intention of central and local governments was not ambiguous: to establish Westernised public elementary schools.

In the development of traditional mass education from *terakoya* to *gogaku*, the emergence of such Westernised mass education as *Gakusei* was strongly related to the rise of a group of bureaucrats within the central government. They brought with them an imminent sense of crisis about Japan's international relationships, and thought it profitable to let the masses know more about Western civilization and the world situation, in order to encourage them to strive toward the political goals that the bureaucrats set. This group of bureaucrats in particular felt that a centralised state system was necessary to establish a national armed force and a unified system of national finance.

Many leaders of that time had become aware of the tremendous gap in military strength between feudal Japan and the capitalistic Western powers. This was keenly seen as a direct military threat to the feudal ruling class as well as to the general national interest. However, the absolutist bureaucrats in the early Meiji years came to believe first that Westernised mass education was a necessity for the successful transplantation of the modern methods of warfare that had been highly developed by European nations. At the same time, they did not forget to centralise the new mass education system and to appeal to the rising interest in learning, especially among wealthy commoners, by phrasing this education in terms of traditional concepts of learning.

As a latecomer to the competitive market of world capitalism, the Meiji absolutist state was thus forced to assume the role of a bourgeois state for its survival. The society which allowed this absolute government to exist as a polity was naturally in deep contradiction with many of the hasty and enforced bourgeois-type reforms. Conscription at the beginning of 1873 was one of the most incompatible innovations for the existing society.⁶ Universal mass education was considered a necessary social measure to fill the gap leading up to the successful introduction of modern methods of warfare. The Meiji oligarchy could neither wait for nor allow the spontaneous growth of local-oriented school systems that were connected with local peculiarities of peoples' lives and were rather independent of the central government's

⁶ A military system and military techniques are basically determined by the characteristics of a nation's political and social system and the degree of its economic development. In early Meiji Japan, on the contrary, military demands played a leading role in causing social and economic change. In the early Meiji era the emergence of an absolute governing body was connected with successive military reforms. However, the Meiji absolutist state did not create a force of mercenary-and voluntary-enlistments, as European absolute states did. Instead, it aimed at constructing a national conscription system and made a tremendous effort to introduce the modern methods of warfare that were first designed by Napoleon Bonaparte at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. But there were wide gaps between the requirements demanded by such and the still-feudal Japanese social system. The central government was forced to fill these gaps with various anti-feudal policies. The Introduction of *Gakusei* must be understood in this military-political context.

intention. The Meiji oligarchy thus devised and enforced bourgeois type policies to establish its political leadership in the nation. Its military force was surely one of the keys to sustaining its political power, which rested precariously on the social and economic cracks produced by its policies.

However, the tradition of *gogaku* education never ceased to exist. It surfaced again in a new form when the Imperial Rescript of Education was proclaimed in 1890. The Imperial Rescript of Education lauded Confucian ethics. It asserted that loyalty and filial piety were the fundamental characteristics of the Japanese Empire and the roots of national education. The utmost objective was to “guard and maintain the prosperity of our imperial throne coeval with heaven and earth.”

But the Imperial Rescript of Education was not a simple return to *gogaku* education. Although the rate of school attendance did not rise remarkably at that time, the Meiji government with Mori Arinori as Minister of Education had already established a grand school system encompassing Tokyo Imperial University as well as primary schools, after successive adjustments of the *Gakusei*. The tradition of a local-oriented school system was never to be revived again, however, although the ideological function of *gogaku* education was preserved and developed.

The Meiji powers-that-be realised that a certain standard of intelligence of the masses was required in a modern state, and that a nation-state could not satisfy its imperialistic drives if the people remained ignorant and passive to the goals of the state. The Imperial Rescript of Education demanded the nation to develop its intellectual faculties and to perfect its moral powers. Thus the school system was burdened with the incessant pressure to synthesise a modern curriculum and a feudalistic ideology.

In the midst of economic depression and an intensification of the *jiyu minken-undo* (movement of democratic rights) which aimed to destroy the despotic government and to establish the National Diet and the Constitution,⁷ a group of prefectural governors started an educational movement that opposed Westernisation and advocated a strong moral education. This movement was greatly encouraged by Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo, who finally produced the Imperial Rescript of Education.

A full-scale reform in every aspect of the military system had been progressing since the arrival in 1885 of Major Mocker, a military advisor from Prussia. Around 1890 the comprehensive modernisation of the military system was almost completed. This modernisation included the abolition of garrisons, creation of divisions, expansion of strategic studies in the University of Army, establishment of an Army Inspection Department (which was to be in charge of military orders and military training), reform of the conscription law, and self-support of arms. This military system established a foundation for an armed force that could be used for wars against foreign countries.

It is interesting to note that Yamagata Aritomo, who favoured Westernised mass education (*Gakusei*) for the successful introduction of modern methods of warfare, became the strongest

⁷ In preparing a national constitution that was strongly demanded by a nationwide movement of anti-despotic government, the central government succeeded in preserving its absolute power by promulgating a Prussian-style constitution in February, 1889 and by breaking up a movement that favored a British-style constitution.

supporter of the Imperial Rescript of Education. His change in educational policies can be explained because he had almost achieved his initial goal, that is to say, establishment of a modern military system. A new form of national education was required to supply spiritual and material resources for the advanced military system.⁸

The Imperial Rescript of Education was successfully established as the most important national ideology until World War II. Most people regarded successive victories in foreign wars as proof of the “imperial throne coeval with heaven and earth” and became enthusiastic supporters of the imperial state. The wars against Ch’ing China of 1894 and Czarist Russia of 1904 made up the imperialistic sentiment among the masses. The rate of enrolment in primary schools rose to almost 95% at the time of the war against the Russians.⁹ This enrolment rate at primary schools is amazing when compared with the masses’ strong antipathy toward *Gakusei* for many years after it had been introduced.¹⁰

However, this is not the end of the story for the central government. The following case demonstrates to us that the public school system, backed up by the government, still met with

⁸ The relationship between the modern methods of warfare and the degree of soldiers' intelligence became an important matter for discussion in the Japanese armed forces. In Okinawa Prefecture, where the Conscription Act was not applied for a long time, a tremendous effort was made to give universal elementary education to the islanders before the conscription was executed for the first time in 1898. The rate of attendance was raised from 16.95% to 92.81% between 1892 and 1907. It is indicated that the rate of attendance of boys was over 50% in 1898. The emphasis on cherishing national sentiment was consciously increased after the Imperial Rescript of Education of 1890 was proclaimed. Because of this, there was an emphasis on ethical training rather than practical, military training after the Japanese-Russo War. Oe Shinobu, *Kokumin-kyoiku to Guntai: Nihon Gunkoku-seisaku no Seiritsu to Tenkai* (National Education and Military Force: Formation and Development of the Militaristic Education Policy in Japan), pp.45-46, 306f.

⁹ The rate of attendance did not rise sharply. In 1876 Monbusho (The Ministry of Education) could officially announce for the first time the school attendance rate among children of school age (6 to 13 years old). It was recorded as 38.31%. In 1877 it was 39.9%. In 1878 it rose to 41.3%. The annual rate of daily attendance of those children at school from 1875 to 1878 was 73.21%, 74.85%, 70.77% and 70.26%. It was rather declining. See Kurasawa Takashi, *Shogakko no Rekishi* (A History of Elementary Schools in Japan), vol. 1, p.375.

¹⁰ Such antipathy toward *Gakusei* was most directly expressed in peasant rebellions. The number of peasant rebellions in the early years of Meiji peaked in 1873. A remarkable aspect of the rebellions was that 12 of the 37 rebellions were against the conscription that was instituted at the end of 1872. Conscription, which would naturally deprive the peasant families of their major source of labor, ignited accumulated dissatisfaction among the masses. Elementary school buildings and teachers' houses became targets of attacks during the rebellions and many of them were destroyed or burnt. In Hojo Prefecture (the present-day Okayama Prefecture) the number of rebels reached several thousand. They destroyed 15 elementary school buildings and burnt three others; one teacher's house was destroyed. In Nato Prefecture (present-day Kagawa Prefecture), 48 elementary school buildings were burnt. In Fukuoka Prefecture, which had as many as three hundred thousand rebels, 27 school buildings were destroyed and two burnt. Ten thousand peasants in Tottori prefecture assaulted two new school teachers who were taken for conscription officers, destroyed a school building and demanded the abolishment of elementary schools and the permission to open *kajuku* (house school) at their will. The people's antipathy toward *Gakusei* arose mainly from quite practical aspects of their lives. It was felt that to attend school under *Gakusei* was to degrade further their economic life in several ways, such as having to pay an immediate increase of various fees, and deprivation of the household labor force. Parents had to buy textbooks, slates and slate pencils. New elementary schools were almost ten times as expensive as *terakoya*. See the following resources: Kidota Shiro, "Ishin-ki no Nomin Ikki (Peasant Uprisings at the Time of Meiji Restoration)." *Iwanami Koza Nihon Rekishi* (Iwanami Seminars on the History of Japan), Modern Era 2 (1962), p.187; Tsuchiya Tokao and Ono Michio, *Meiji-shonen Nomin Sojo-roku* (Historical Records on Peasant Disturbances In the Early Meiji Years), pp.342-343, p.482, p.523, pp.466-467; and *Meiji-iko Kyoiku-seido Hattatsu-shi* (A History of Education Systems Since the Meiji Era), vol. 1, p.464.

strong resistance in the impoverished countryside in the 1920s. The next section focuses on a typical joint movement of landless peasants and urban intellectuals that took place in the wave of Taisho (1912-1925) liberal movements of the 1920s.

PEASANT COMMUNITY, URBAN INTELLECTUALS AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN CONFLICTS OVER A PEASANT SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY OF EBBING SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNITY-ORIENTED MENTALITY

The central government tried to govern local districts through three pipelines: schools, Shinto shrines and associations of veterans, carrying on this policy called the “Local Improvement Movement” after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 to 1905. The policy aimed to disseminate the idea of cooperation between economy and morality.¹¹ In 1922 a peasant uprising took place beginning in Kisaki village in Niigata Prefecture which demanded reduction by 20% of rents paid in rice. As the struggle intensified, the peasant union started its own school for the children of the union farmers who boycotted public elementary schools in the region.

Local districts were strongly expected to support the emerging “Imperial Japan,” confine local disputes within local districts and to not count on help from the central government to solve problems. The Kisaki dispute being publicised through newspapers was most disadvantageous to the Local Improvement Movement because it would hint to the whole nation that the government’s policy did not work effectively.¹² The central government was thus driven to step in to this dispute when the situation got worse. In 1929, three years after the most critical moment of the Kisaki uprising, the Prefectural Association for Education made a report titled “Research on How to Prevent Dangerous Thoughts and to Guide Toward Healthy Ones.”¹³ Its first item was on “Prevention of Unhealthy Thoughts Caused by Poor Economic Life.” Local politico-social leaders were most concerned with this poverty question. The Local Improvement Movement tried to preach that poverty was a “sin” because it was caused by an individual’s unprincipled behaviour, not by the “society.” The Kisaki uprising showed that the Movement had not successfully achieved its aim. A newspaper in Tokyo said, “The Peasants’ School casts an important question to the society. This is a gigantic cannonball shot at the national education of Japan. This Farmers’ School disclosed to us that primary schools and their teachers were neither devoted to nor competent in their teaching methods and moral instruction.”¹⁴

The educational ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Ellen Kay and John Dewey had been introduced to Japan from the 1890s and had inspired liberal education movements of the Taisho Era. The awareness gradually spread that the “child-centered” teaching method and curriculum carried not only an educational criticism against the authoritarian “teacher-centered” national system of education, but also a political criticism against the political-economic structure which was seen as supporting this authoritarian teaching style. Intellectuals and university students,

¹¹ See Okada Norio, “Nichiro Sengo no Kyoka Seisaku to Minkan” (The Government Policy of Enlightenment and People after the Russo-Japanese War), *Nihon Kindai Kyoiku-shi Saiko* (Reconsideration on the History of Japan’s Education) ed. by Ito Yahiko.

¹² “Shibata Shinbun” (The Shibata Newspaper), Kawase Shinzo, *Kisaki-mura Nomin Undo-shi* (A History of Kisaki Peasants’ Movement), p.98.

¹³ *Niigata-ken Kyoiku Hyaku-nen shi* (The 100-year History of Education in Niigata Prefecture), vol.2, p.1235.

¹⁴ *Manchoho* (The Manchoho Newspaper) Editorial of August 29, 1926.

mainly from Tokyo, came to Kisaki to help the uprising and worked as union leaders or teachers for children and young farmers. They criticised the political and educational policies of the Government.

The enlightened and absolute bureaucrats of the Meiji and Taisho State had worked hard to boost capitalistic development, solidifying the autocratic structure of the government and at the same time immersing themselves in Western “science” in order to operate the state machine through rational (scientific) management. Even when they devoted time and energies for the Local Improvement Movement with its Confucian philosophical underpinnings as seen through Ninomiya Sontoku,¹⁵ they never forgot their primary professional purpose of conducting a rational management of the state. When they tried to find a solution for the Kisaki dispute, it was easier for them to find a common ground for communicating with individuals or social groups who had already dressed themselves up with Western “science.”

Majima, a leading landlord against the peasant uprising, became the vice-chairperson of the Prefectural Association of Education and the chair for the County Association in 1926 when the Kisaki dispute was at its most intense. These Associations and the normal schools in the prefecture played an important role in introducing Taisho liberal education movements.¹⁶ In 1923 the Naka-kanbara County Association invited Oikawa Heiji, a leading figure of Taisho liberal education, who held a lecture with the title “My 16 Year-Experience in Self-Reliant Education.” The County was adjacent to the one where Kisaki village belonged, and the Kisaki dispute was escalating that year. In 1927 the Prefectural Association and County Associations invited Ohara Kuniyoshi of Tamagawa Gakuen School in Tokyo, another leading figure of Taisho liberal education movements, to give them a lecture. The Prefecture subsidised and publicised Sato Heihachi’s “Practical Methods to Lead Children to Independent Studies,” evaluated as an educational research paper of high quality.¹⁷ This attitude of the Prefecture and Associations of Education concerned with Taisho liberal education indicates that they were not necessarily antithetic to it. They probably shared the same cognitive framework of space/time with intellectuals and teachers who supported the movements of Taisho liberal education.

Majima intended to settle the Kisaki dispute by legal procedures in the courts. He rejected the idea of “Master’s mercy” that peasants begged him to follow¹⁸ and chose a “modern” action. He was not “feudalistic” in handling the dispute. He was severely condemned by peasants for his “inhuman action,” one even a feudal lord would not commit, that is, for his violation of a basic feudal human relationship. They blamed Majima for crushing the “Heaven’s Road.” Peasants were frequently criticised by their opponents as ignorant, irrational, superstitious and hardheaded. Intellectuals who came to help peasants often held such images of peasants. The terminology of Taisho liberal education and socialism demanded that the landlord-tenant relationship to be humanely “modernised.”

The progressive ideas of education from Europe and USA had a strong influence upon intellectuals who were ready to accept these ideas. Through this knowledge the modern

¹⁵ Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856), a most-efficient farming producer in the late Edo period.

¹⁶ *Niigata-ken Kyoiku Hyaku-nen shi* (The 100-year History of Education in Niigata Prefecture), vol.2, chapter 1-1, chapter 2-1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.415, 431.

¹⁸ Goda Shinsuke, *Kisaki Nomin Shogakko no Hitobito* (People at Kisaki Farmers' School), p.275.

(Cartesian) cognitive structure of space/time became something intimate to them. The Taisho liberal education movements, built upon such progressive ideas of education, thus came to Kisaki village together with an intellectual disposition or alignment to Western science. However, this cognitive structure could not easily transform the peasants who felt much more familiar with the world of "Jimbei the Martyr."¹⁹ The cognitive differences hidden within the Kisaki uprising group was therefore quite difficult to be consciously seen by people. "Enlightened" landlords, government bureaucrats, liberalists and socialists already shared a common cognitive framework. Political and social struggles among them were fought on a common ground. The "pre-modern" Kisaki peasants fought their struggle on their own ground, on the other hand, although this ground was then gradually eroded and in its place came the new mind-set. This difference produced different perceptions regarding the peasant school and a critical split developed toward the end of the Kisaki uprising. The Kisaki peasants could not, in the end, win the dispute.

The youth leaders of the uprising asserted that,

We want to build the peasant school on the foundation of traditional customs of children's company (*kodomo-gumi*) and youth company (*wakamono-gumi*). They are the spiritual community that peasants in Japan have made for themselves when they educate their children in a village community and fulfil their wishes in it. The landlords are not members of the village community. Peasant children have been forced to go to school by the Government. We find nothing but enforcement there. We want to have a new spiritual community of peasants to make it the spiritual foundation for the peasant school. The educational ideas of Noguchi and others are for city dwellers, but not for peasants. We must acquire knowledge in our daily labour and utilise the knowledge for it.²⁰

Such a declaration as the above suggests that peasants still looked for a possibility of creating a community-oriented education in the late 1920s. Their perception was directed to the tradition of the past feudal system that might have given them a possibility to return to the status of landholding farmers. However, their social power was quite limited as compared to that of landlords such as Majima who had gained "personal independence founded on material dependence"²¹ in this new era of capitalistic development backed up by the central government.

¹⁹ Kikuchi Kan's "Gimin Jinbei (Jinbei the Martyr)" was very popular among peasants. The time was 1829 (the Edo Shogunate Period). Jinbei was physically handicapped in his legs and was cruelly treated by his stepmother and her three children. He hated them. At a critical moment of a peasant uprising he surrendered himself to the authority pretending that he was the killer of the county magistrate. When he saw his family members being executed altogether according to the law of the Edo period, he said to the villagers who worshipped him as the martyr "... Rejoice, everybody. I have never felt such a good feeling in my life, ha, ha, ha" and was executed. Kikuchi in "Jinbei the Martyr" wrote of a world of concrete space, of blood relationships. He described a unique space in which Jinbei took his revenge on his family by making use of a vicious law of his age. This novel was criticized by writers who supported the movement of proletariat literature. They condemned it as "individualistic," but the peasants liked it very much. The popularity of this novel among peasants suggests that they lived in a differently perceived world from the world of intellectuals such as those in the movement of proletarian literature.

²⁰ Goda, *op.cit.*, pp.208-211.

²¹ Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, translated by David McClellan, p.67.

"Relationships of personal dependence (which were at first quite spontaneous) are the first forms of society in which human productivity develops, though only to a slight extent and at isolated points. Personal independence founded on material dependence is the second great form: in it there developed for the first time a system of general social interchange, resulting in universal relations, varied requirements and universal capacities. Free individuality, which is founded on the universal development of individuals and the domination of their communal and social productivity, which has become their social power, is the third stage."

INDIVIDUALS AND THE STATE: A LONG DETOUR TO CREATE A COMMUNITY-CONSCIOUS MENTALITY IN JAPAN TODAY

This social and mental centralising trend became stronger along with the modernisation process after the Meiji Restoration. The central government wanted mental boundaries between the State and an individual to be as transparent as possible. Any intermediate social sectors such as families, villages, and cities, counties and prefectures were organised only to be subsidiary organs for the centralised system of the State. Individuals came to face the State directly in their mentality. The initial gears to move the masses toward this centralised mentality were the school system and the conscription that were implemented one after another within half a year around 1872, less than five years after the Meiji Restoration.

Social sentiment in Japan today realises that an active community life is indispensable for an effective citizenship education for children and that school (formal) education alone cannot handle this matter. A grave question is what social element can work as a catalyst to recreate a mentality for an active community life. The rapid economic development after the World War II worked in Japan rather to pull people out of their community life and push them toward universal economic activity. This situation, which has been frequently observed in many countries in the midst of rapid economic development, worked in Japan to maintain or aggrandise the centralised and hierarchical mentality. On the other hand, however, economic universalism has also been creating new social factors that will help recreate a community-oriented mentality. A noticeable factor among these changes is women's changing social status in Japanese society today.

One social studies subject in the high school curriculum today is called "Public Person-ship" (*Komin*). This word was made up for this subject to teach youngsters various social relationships. The word "Citizenship" (*Shimin*) is not used because it merely carries an administrative connotation, one literally meaning to what city people belong as a legal resident. When the word "Public Person-ship" is used at school, it is very likely for Japanese kids to imagine and set aside their "private" space here as the opposite to the public sphere. The "public" sphere may be anywhere outside a family sector or his/her own realm. But it is hardly conceivable for the Japanese that there is another sphere in human relationships, that is, the sphere of individuality. The sphere of individuality stands in many places and is located in both public and private ones.

This topic may be more meaningful when discussed together with the issue of women's social status in Japan today. Women's social status has been a major social issue, especially since the 1980's in Japan. Women realise better than anyone else the necessity to become an "individual" person to gain a fair social status. Gaining individuality means to Japanese women that they stand on a different plane from being simply a private or public person. Being an "individual" person means they overcome the situation both in the private sphere where they have been traditionally regarded as subordinate members to male householders and in the public sphere where they have been traditionally regarded as again a subordinate part of the work force.

As women gain socio-economic or material power today, they are also gaining personal independence. They may be contributing to Japanese society as a rare case in Japanese history of actually materialising the concept of individuality. This materialisation of individuality is made possible by the economic development of Japan today. The Japanese may now be able to

perceive a new sphere of human relationships and construct the mentality of individuality that counterbalances the state-oriented hierarchical mind-set which has been historically consolidated until now. The material foundation women have been obtaining becomes their social power, something the peasants could never capture in the 1920s. Advantageous is also women's closer position to child rearing and the school community in society. Japanese women's struggles for their fair status in the community may be an effective social tool that produces the indispensable foundation for an educational reform that will create a new form of community-oriented citizenship in Japan.

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