

## Higher Education Reform in Japan: Amano Ikuo<sup>1</sup> on 'The University in Crisis'

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*Japanese education has been a focus of comparative studies for the past 20 years. Many scholars have attributed the economic success of this industrialized society to a highly literate and well-educated population. Recent studies, however, have tended to be more critical of, in particular, Japanese higher education. Indeed, most universities in Japan are acutely aware of the need for change and a considerable effort at institutional change is sweeping the nation. Unfortunately most of the constructive criticism of Japanese higher education has not yet been published in English. One of the most vocal of the reformists, Professor Ikuo Amano, has published widely on various aspects of higher education in Japan. In the following paper I have translated a chapter from his book Challenges to Japanese Universities. This translation is prefaced by both an introduction to Amano and his work, as well as an explication of the socio-cultural context of higher education in Japan today.*

Education, Japan, reform, translation, ethnography

### INTRODUCTION

#### Preface

Japanese education has been a focus of comparative studies for the past 20 years (e.g., Goodman & Phillips, 2003; Benjamin, 1997; Cummings, 1986; Hendry, 1986; Rohlen, 1983; White, 1987). Many of these scholars have attributed the economic success of this industrialized society to a highly literate and well-educated population. Recent studies, however, have tended to be more critical of the Japanese educational machinery, often concluding that without major reform the system of schooling in Japan will continue to be a disservice to societal needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Arguably the least regulated area of education, and therefore simultaneously both a potential starting point and the place most resistant to change, tertiary education in Japan has been targeted as lagging far behind western societies, an embarrassment to the world's second largest economy and a potential Achilles heel in the fine-tuned engine that is the Japanese state and economy (Hall, 1995; 1998). Most universities in Japan are acutely aware of the need for change and a considerable effort at institutional change is sweeping the nation. Unfortunately most of the constructive criticism of Japanese higher education (HE) has not yet been published in English.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the title of this paper I have written the author's name in Japanese fashion, surname first, following exactly the title page of the Japanese original. Throughout the rest of this project, however, I have decided to write Japanese names in Western form, given name first followed by surname.

<sup>2</sup> Brian McVeigh's recent volume (2002) notwithstanding.

The following translation will hopefully add a comparative perspective to the discussion of higher education reform that is sweeping the educational world. In particular, colleges and universities in Britain and Asia are undergoing a period of upheaval. This is especially noteworthy if the intrinsic conservative nature of such institutions is considered. These 'discourses of reform' are unique in the academic world of debate if only because the subject being discussed directly affects the careers of the discussants. Whether an academic is an expert in the field of education or not, all teachers at universities seem to have an opinion on this subject.<sup>3</sup> As Roger Goodman (2001) pointed out in the introduction to a recent seminar series at the University of Oxford, these 'lay' opinions are not often taken seriously, or even considered, by those implementing the reforms, a point that others have made as well (see, e.g., Wisniewski, 2000). Because of Ikuo Amano's unique viewpoint as both education researcher and university educator, in *Challenges to Japanese Universities* we have a volume that begins to bridge this gap between the 'armchair reformers' and 'teachers in the trenches.' Amano speaks to both audiences.

In this introductory section, I will set the stage for the translation that follows. First I offer brief biographical notes to give the reader a sense of Professor Amano's background. In this part I also discuss in some detail the book itself, *Challenges to Japanese Universities*, to give context to the translated essay. The realities of Japanese higher education must be grasped in order to understand the topics that Amano discusses in both the book generally as well as in this translated essay in particular. Although I have tried to explain with footnotes certain points as they arise in the translation itself, in this introduction I have also included a general description of the Japanese university. Though I risk patronizing readers with expertise and experience in Japanese universities, for those with less background in the area this description will hopefully further elucidate Amano's points on the crisis that higher education is now facing in Japan.

### Ikuo Amano

One of the most vocal of the reformists, Professor Ikuo Amano, has published widely on various aspects of HE in Japan. Although one of the leading researchers on Japanese HE, to date only one of his innumerable books has been translated into English.<sup>4</sup> To better disseminate his ideas, I have translated a chapter from his book, *Daigaku: choosen no jidai* (1999, Tokyo University Press).<sup>5</sup> The text, "Daigaku no kiki", is the first chapter in the book and comprises approximately 16 pages.

Professor Amano holds a degree in Economics from Hitotsubashi University, a prestigious

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<sup>3</sup> A parallel, but different, example can be found in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In countries where English is widely taught as a foreign or second language, most teachers (and even the average person on the street, for that matter) no matter what their subject area have an opinion on how English should or should not be taught simply because of their own personal experience in learning the language themselves.

<sup>4</sup> *Education and Examination in Modern Japan*, translated by William and Fumiko Cummings, 1990, University of Tokyo Press.

<sup>5</sup> Japanese is transcribed throughout this paper according to the Hepburn system of romanization, with two important modifications:

① Instances when the same vowel phoneme occurs consecutively (i.e., cases of the so-called 'long vowels') are not marked with a macron, but rather the letter is repeated (e.g., *choosen* and *gakusee*). But this "double letter" has been omitted in commonly known place names (e.g., the capital of Japan is written as *Tokyo* not *Tookyoo*). The rationale for this method of transcribing long vowels follows Horvat's (2000) argument on phonetic grounds (cf. also Mizutani, 1981).

② The syllabic nasal (the sound indicated with the hiragana "ん") is always written *-n*, the regular change in pronunciation to [m] before labials is not indicated (e.g. *Monbushoo*, not *Mombushoo*) (cf. Miller, 1967; Mizutani, 1981).

national university in Tokyo, and a doctorate in Education from the University of Tokyo. He was formerly on the staff of the National Institute of Educational Research and an associate professor of Comparative Education at Nagoya University. Presently he is professor emeritus in the Faculty of Education at the University of Tokyo, honorary visiting professor at Tamagawa University and professor at the Center for National University Finance.<sup>6</sup>

Amano's prolific career has been spent researching the sociology and history of Japanese education. The number of articles he has published and papers that he has presented are too numerous to mention. As for books, at last count he has written 25, co-authored and edited another 12, and translated eight into Japanese. His research spans numerous educational issues ranging from the entrance examination system (Amano, 1982, 1983, 1986; Amano, 1990), the 'credentialization' of Japanese society (Amano, 1986, 1992a), job placement after university, and specialized tertiary institutions (Amano, 1978, 1993), to more general explanations of the Japanese education system (Amano, 1984, 1989, 1992b, 1997a, 1997b). Most of his recent research, including *Challenges to Japanese Universities*, focuses on higher education and university reform (Amano, 1980, 1985, 1988a, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001). Though at times his writing could be characterized as critical, this is always a constructive and objective criticism. Although he himself has been a university professor for over thirty years, he has the unique ability to step back from this role when analyzing the issues surrounding university reform in Japan today. By outlining below the points he covers in this text, one of his most recent works, Amano's position *vis à vis* HE reform becomes apparent.

### ***Challenges to Japanese Universities***

Amano's book entitled *Challenges to Japanese Universities* is a collection of 18 different essays. "The Japanese University in Crisis" is the first of these essays.

The first part of the book is a collection of papers that deal with macro-level problems at universities, including the changes in higher education policy. Amano purports that the greatest challenge to universities in the past ten to twenty years has been 'marketization.' As 'deregulation' efforts in Japan started in the 1980's and 1990's, for the world of higher education as well, under the simultaneous control and protection of the government, 'liberalization,' 'diversity,' and 'individualization' became the slogans of university reform. Amano has pointed out elsewhere that behind such catchwords— *koseika* (individualization), *tayooka* (diversification), and *ikiru chikara* ('zest for living')— is this central ideology of *kisei kanwa* ('deregulation'). This reform was designed to "get rid of controls or weaken [the Japanese Ministry of Education]", liberalization that, of course, the Ministry initially opposed (Hood, 2001b, p. 106).

Included in this problem— university reform accelerated by the low position of (Japanese) higher education in the eyes of the world— was an assertion previously voiced since the 1970s, that in order to activate research into education as well as to measure the rise in standards, regulations must be relaxed and a principle of competition should be adopted for the allocation of resources. A crisis in the universities and a structural change in higher education was brought about not only by the development of a mass education symbolized by tremendous increase in the number of university-bound students, but this sudden start of politicization was a result of Japanese society and the economy itself facing difficult times. Amano points out that the severity of the challenge facing universities bespeaks just how high the expectation is for these institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> The Center (or *Kokuritsu Gakkoo Zaimu Sentaa* in the vernacular) is a government research institute cum think tank established in 1992 to advise national universities on issues of financial and management restructuring.

Amano feels that the educational research activities and administration *modus operandi* of universities are distinct from for-profit enterprises and they cannot be expected to completely adopt competition and market principles. That being said he also asserts that universities are not immune from marketization forces. As for the national universities, Amano suggests that these institutions have begun to be regarded as a sort of Orwellian 'Big Brother Japan.' Voices calling for their independent administration and privatization are getting louder. After all, the trend towards adopting market and competition principles and the demand for the self-government of the university's management bodies is a worldwide one, observes Amano. "It can be said that the 'contemporary' universities that were founded at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are now being confronted with an era of deep-rooted reform and change" (Amano, 1999, p. ii).

Universities in Japan, however, are not merely standing by passively. One after another, four-year institutions have appeared that are boldly challenging themselves to keep abreast of the changing times. In Part Two of Amano's volume he presents case studies of such examples of university 'experimentation'. As with most audacious experiments, reforms, and innovations, changes start not with the traditional established part of a system but rather with the periphery. The case of higher education in Japan is no exception. Specifically, within an environment of both intensified competition from a relaxation of regulations and a steady long-term decrease in the population of 18 year-olds, newly established universities looking to add a fresh approach to 'the system' can not survive and prosper without challenging the established universities and offering a noticeable difference.

The six 'experiments' that Amano describes in this book are examples of such challenge and differentiation: Tohoku University of Art and Design, Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, University of Aizu, Miyazaki International College, Hokkaido Information University, and Aomori Public College. These universities engage in unique approaches to higher education not commonly found in Japan such as American-style liberal arts courses in English, education focused on strictly graduate-level education, greater accountability in teaching, innovatively designed campuses, and faculty-student collaborative research.

Interestingly though, the author rightly points out that new players on the field of higher education are not alone in setting out on this course of experimentation and reform. Even in the more 'Ivied' universities new faculties and research departments are being established, in addition to the restructuring, change and various other efforts at reforms that are taking place. Since the changes that are taking place at such pillars of tradition as Tokyo and Keio Universities are widely publicized in the national media, Amano chooses to describe the six universities listed above, smaller in scale and less well known, to exemplify the diversity of university and tertiary education.

In the third part of *Challenges to Japanese Universities*, Amano presents the specific issues that presently challenge universities in Japan. The university reforms now underway have as their impetus the revision of the standards for university facilities as put forth in the 1991 report of the *Daigaku Shingikai*.<sup>7</sup> However Amano claims that "the revision most aspired toward in this report was no less than an innovation of 'education' itself" (Amano, 1999, p. iii). He believes in particular that the liberalization of the content of the education curriculum has achieved a considerable change in the make up of the four-year university education. The removal of the division between the 'General' education and 'Specialized' education courses has resulted in the disappearance of liberal arts and 'General' education curricula at many universities.

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<sup>7</sup> Often translated as the "Ad Hoc University Council".

The question remains, however, to what degree such reforms have succeeded in changing the quality of a university education. Although he admits that to assess the results at this stage may be premature, Amano questions whether by international standards the quality of education that students are receiving has actually improved. The relaxation in entrance examination competition due to the decline in the population of eighteen-year olds,<sup>8</sup> the diversification in the selection process of applicants, and a curriculum reform that has lowered the standards of elementary and junior high school have all raised new issues about the content of education at universities. Furthermore, Amano feels that a university attendance rate of 50 per cent (approaching the level of 'universal'<sup>9</sup>) combined with the development of the 'information age' means that new issues, such as the admission of adult learners and more involvement in the global community, are forcing universities to confront very new and challenging issues. The issues discussed in this section are only a very few of such reform problems that challenge universities.

Amano admits that because of the timing of its publication, he was forced to compromise the discussion in the book. In particular, while editing the collection of papers, in October of 1998 the *Daigaku Shingikai* issued a report entitled "On the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Image of Universities and the Future Direction of Reform." This report, while indicating the importance and necessity of the topics dealt with so far, discussed many of the reform issues that had not yet been addressed and presented a detailed plan regarding these problems. The report was filled with reform issues that must be addressed at universities across the country—the overhaul of university management, the establishment of vocational graduate schools, the formation of a system for outside assessment, the institution of module credit-hour courses, and the creation of stricter standards of grading. Amano feels that the way in which university and tertiary education in Japan tackle these issues are of great concern to both the observers of and actors in universities across the country.

Amano warns that from the standpoint of both university practitioners and education researchers these problems are more than ever before issues of such a new character that the heretofore accumulated experience, information, and research is inadequate. In the last chapter of Part 3, the author explains that with the recent establishment of an official organization, researchers into higher education have only just taken the first step to legitimize their findings. He doubts that amongst researchers such as himself there is enough competence to theoretically, practically, and accurately answer the new challenges and in this way it is not only the universities that are in a conundrum. Academics working on research into higher education are finding that they have few answers.

### University in Japan

As an academic researcher on HE reform in Japan, Amano focuses on some of the key players and issues in this translated essay. He describes the state of affairs, 'the crisis', and the challenges that are confronting universities across Japan, indeed not without similarity to the challenges HE education is faced with in other Asian, European, and North American countries. Most of his discussion is from a political, historical, and bureaucratic viewpoint as he explicates the intricacies of the many "Challenges to Japanese Universities". In both this introductory section as well as in the footnotes, I hope to add a bit of detail to this picture that Amano paints. Against this backdrop, hopefully the translated essay can be seen in a clearer light.

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<sup>8</sup> In an interview conducted by Christopher Hood (2001b, p. 163), he even goes so far as to support "a change to certification or graduation examinations, such as those in many Western countries" to further help to alleviate the problems caused by the entrance examination system.

<sup>9</sup> Amano believes that there are places for most students that apply to HE institutions (Hood, 2001b, p.166).

Japan has one of the highest rates of post-secondary school attendance among all industrialized nations, with nearly 50 per cent of all 18-22 year-olds (almost 1% of the entire population) enrolled as undergraduates at over 600 national, public, and private four-year universities (Hirowatari, 2000).<sup>10</sup> Well over half of all Japanese teenagers, then, apply to take a university entrance examination for admission into a tertiary institution. This transformation of HE from an elite to a 'massified' system in Japan, along with various other post-War societal changes, has contributed to a commonly held belief in "the educationally credentialized society," or *gakureki shakai*, a phenomenon that in his essay Amano describes within the context of university reform.<sup>11</sup> In many cases, the extraordinary emphasis on ranking colleges and universities has led to a brand-name sensitivity that may affect a person for their entire life. One effect of a *gakureki shakai* is the resulting hierarchical university and college entrance system in Japan, a phenomenon that has been described as 'examination hell' by more than one critic (see, e.g., Cutts, 1997; Yoneyama, 1999). The pressure of this phenomenon is felt by many young adults in Japan (as well as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and other Asian countries for that matter<sup>12</sup>), even when they apply to second or third-rate schools (McVeigh, 2001, p. 31). Most teenagers are expected to prove their intellectual mettle (or exam-taking talent) on these fact-oriented examinations, even though they are rarely pushed to excel once they have matriculated at a college or university (see McVeigh, 2002). Entrance into a university is often equated with passing the test, and in actuality this is often the case. Though admissions procedures are becoming more creative in recent years, the majority of universities have resisted any change in a system that has been in place, arguably, since the Meiji Era in the late 1800s (Amano, 1990). Indeed the university entrance, and overall education, system itself is inherently immobile (Frost, 1991; Schoppa, 1990), and has been described as a societal filtering mechanism to create a class structure where otherwise none purportedly exists (see Cutts, 1997; McVeigh, 1997, 1998, 2002).

Students are strictly ranked according to *hensachi*, the "abstract notion of a national norm-referenced person-indexed score" (Brown, 1995, p.25). Using this score, high school and cram school teachers advise their students about which university entrance examinations they should take based on their probability of acceptance (a high school teacher's reputation is on the line if their students shoot too high and miss their mark— conservatism that is a necessity). In fact, the largest cram school syndicates in the Tokyo and Osaka area publish *hensachi* ranking lists of two and four-year colleges and universities which students and teachers use to make application decisions.

Families invest enormous resources, both in time and money, to cram for the tests. In nearly one-third of these cases, students even devote a year or two after high school to prepare further to sit the examination yet again, often receiving intense instruction at *yobikoo*, schools designed to help them prepare. To what extent this so-called 'hell' affects the entire university-bound student population is open to debate. Hood points out that the predominant assumption that almost all Japanese students have to endure an 'examination hell' is both "over-hyped" (Hood, 2001a, p. 7) and "was probably never correct and certainly does not apply now" (Hood, 2001b, p. 166).

Nonetheless, in a competitive atmosphere these tests for entrance into universities are held with great import by students, parents, institutions, and the general public. Considering the authority

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<sup>10</sup> In Britain the rate of HE attendance is only 13 per cent (Smith, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> *Gakureki shakai* is a society that places utmost importance on a person's educational background, particularly where they studied rather than what they studied (adapted from Hood, 2001b, p. 186).

<sup>12</sup> At least one expert on Japanese education believes that some sort of 'examination hell' is felt by those taking exams in most countries around the world (Hood, 2001, personal communication).

these university examinations hold in Japanese society, a commensurate assessment of the quality of the tests themselves seems lacking; the entrance test developers themselves, as well as the institutions where they are employed, are especially hesitant to offer public data that would objectively evaluate these numerous admissions examinations.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, the same societal pressures that have helped direct the development of such a *gakureki shakai* and ‘examination hell’ in Japan have forced a normally conservative sector of society to move in relatively innovative ways in an attempt to counteract their growing inability to attract students. Japanese society is now faced with two demographic challenges that sociologists have termed *shooshika* (low birthrate syndrome) and *kooreika* (aging syndrome). These changes, of course, have repercussions throughout society, and schools are already witnessing the effects. Most universities in Japan have seen, first, a slowing in the rate of applicants, and, now, an overall decrease in the number of students sitting the yearly examinations. Even top name schools in the higher echelons of the rankings have had to consider the ramifications of fewer and fewer applicants each year. Not least of their concerns is financial, of course, since entrance examination fees are a substantial source of revenue (in the ¥100s of millions<sup>14</sup>) even for the prestigious, but inexpensive, national universities (roughly ¥20,000 per application). No school in Japan can afford to sit on the laurels of past achievement and national prestige, least of all the universities occupying the lower rankings. In recent years university prep and cram schools have instituted a new ‘F’ rank, designating those universities where the entrance examination is a mere formality since any student that applies is automatically accepted, given a ‘free pass.’

Even with the changes that are taking place in recent years, observers still note that the paradox of Japanese HE is the commonly held view that students are subjected to an examination hell to enter university, but then the actual university experience of ‘higher learning’ is no more than a four-year ‘leisure land’ (Doyon, 2001). Indeed, former US ambassador Edward Reischauer, at times infamous for his uncritical praise of Japan, once lamented that often classroom realities do not result in a commendable university education environment: “The squandering of four years at college level on poor teaching and very little study seems an incredible waste of time from a nation so passionately devoted to efficiency” (Reischauer, 1977, p. 178). Of the many popular explanations for this paradox, the two most recurrent ‘excuses’ are that university life is a reward for high school hell and that university life is a break before the hell of working. There are more complex explanations however.

Brian McVeigh (2001; 2002) offers a functionalist interpretation of what he terms the ‘myth’ of higher education in Japan. In a Parsonian sense, he argues convincingly that Japan’s exam-centered schooling socializes students to think that studying means examination prep, classroom participation means teacher inspection, test-taking is a sort of multiple-choice ‘catechism’, academics is merely credentialism, and learning is nothing more than rote memorization. The education and examination system in Japan encourages in students an apathy toward learning and an ‘over-conformity’ that manifests itself in shyness in the classroom.

Many (e.g., Cutts, 1997; Hall, 1995, 1998; McVeigh, 1997, 2001, 2002) have discussed the

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<sup>13</sup> Most such admissions examinations include a compulsory English proficiency sub-test although English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is not a state-required subject, per se, at primary, secondary, or tertiary schools in Japan. Partly because of this university entrance examination focus on English, while only a handful of students are exposed to language classes in primary school, over 10 million 12 to 18 year olds, and another million or so university students, study English, numbers estimated from Japanese Ministry of Education (MOE) statistics on enrolment nationwide.

<sup>14</sup> 100 Japanese yen was equivalent to roughly 0.5 GBP and 0.8 USD in June 2003.

problem of HE in Japan with explanations that point out the many faults of the system. They point out that there is no quality control—a lack of private accrediting associations, university assessments, course evaluations, departmental reviews, interuniversity evaluations, inspection committees, and peer review. These observers often place the blame of HE failing on over-bureaucratization. The MOE centrally monitors HE which discourages innovation. They also have pointed to the lack of competition among academics since there does not exist the same probationary period in the tenure system in Japan as exists in the United States. There has also been the explanation that because of the lack of semester system and uninspiring poorly attended lectures, students receive what amounts to superficial schooling (McVeigh, 2001).

There is not universal agreement on these issues, however. Some anthropologists have pointed out that the so-called audit culture of HE in Britain may not be the proper remedy (Goodman, 2001; Shore & Wright, 1999; Strathern, 2000). Other social scientists with cross-cultural experience in HE point out that European and North American scholars may do well to learn lessons from the relaxed and relatively prolific nature of academic enquiry in Japanese universities (e.g., Eades, 2000).

Whatever the explanation and no matter the best remedy, there is general agreement among the public, academics, the government, and industry that something is amiss with the university system and reform must be undertaken soon if universities are to thrive as viable educational institutions. This is the crisis that Amano so clearly describes in his book, and especially, in the following chapter.

#### **TRANSLATION: THE JAPANESE UNIVERSITY IN CRISIS**

(AMANO, 1999, pp. 3-19)

I would like to think about the problem of university reform by focusing on university crisis. This is because I feel that for an organization as fundamentally conservative as a university,<sup>15</sup> without having to confront a grave crisis there would be no hope for the advancement of reforms. To put it the other way round, an opportunity for university reform lies within this crisis. Since they are facing a period of turmoil, universities have arrived simultaneously at an era of reform.

Unfortunately it is uncommon for this perception—of universities on the brink of crisis—to be born from among the university professors<sup>16</sup> themselves. University professors are educators and at the same time they are researchers. It is a profession in which one is expected to be loyal to both one's own specialization as well as one's university affiliation. However, professors normally feel a stronger loyalty toward their field of research. I suppose that this is only natural if we consider that society's evaluation of university professors is made, above all, on the basis of their academic achievements within their field of specialty. But this suggests that university professors, while responsive to a crisis in their own specialized field, are not necessarily sensitive to a crisis in universities or education.

University professors feel a great sense of crisis when, as a result of the expansion of other fields or the formation of new interdisciplinary areas, their own academic field is threatened or it becomes clear that their own area of specialization is markedly behind the international standard. However, it is usually the case that Japanese professors are not aware of a crisis of the university

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<sup>15</sup> Observers have often noted the conservatism of Japanese education in general (e.g. McVeigh, 1998; Schoppa, 1990) and Japanese tertiary institutions in particular (e.g. Marshall, 1994; McVeigh, 1997; Nagai, 1971, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> The word "professor" is used here in the American generic sense of adjunct, assistant, associate, or full "professor." In Japan, like the United States, regardless of their rank, university teachers are normally referred to as simply "professor".

itself, especially of education, until acrimonious criticism has been made from outside the university, or from non-professorial university personnel within. Only when the voices of criticism are raised from inside and outside the university and the pressure demanding reform mounts inescapably do university professors, and in turn the university, embark on reform. In the history of Japanese universities this has always been the case, and I think it is fair to say that is also the case now.

So, then, who are the critics of the university and what is being criticized? Furthermore, how is this criticism being perceived by the university and the university professors? What kinds of reform measures are being brought about? Let us look at these questions first of all from the perspective of the ultimate 'insider critics'—the students.

### The Student as Critic

Students first raised their voices in criticism of the university and university professors in the late 1960s—a period of campus dispute and student unrest.<sup>17</sup> This also symbolized the end of the Japanese university as an 'elite escalator', and the beginning of the 'mass staircase'.<sup>18</sup> Students had concerns for the total research orientation of professors and made strong demands that their request for an 'education focus' be granted. However, the university made no effort to address in an appropriate way this 'voice of the student masses.' During the period of campus disputes and student unrest a great many proposals for reform were drafted. However, for the most part they dealt with organizational or institutional issues and, moreover, once the student rebellions quietened down nearly all of these plans were filed away, never again to see the light of day.

Entering the 1970s students stopped their efforts to forcefully push through their demands but instead continued their criticisms and resistance in a more underground fashion. There was the spread of a passive resistance among students, namely, they poured their energies into the extracurricular activities of the so-called 'clubs or circles'<sup>19</sup> rather than attending classes, or else

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<sup>17</sup> In the late 1960s and early 1970s a rash of campus disputes were triggered by protests against the Vietnam War and the United States-Japan Security Treaty, as well as more mundane issues such as tuition hikes at Waseda University. The student unrest swept across campuses nationwide and most major universities were forced to shut down at one time or another during this period. Surveys by the Japan Association of Private Colleges and Universities show that the number of disputes went from 20 in 1965 to 115 in 1968. Students protested a diverse set of issues that, along with anti-War sentiments, included complaints ranging from the mass-production of education to the relocation of campuses outside the large metropolis areas (JAPCU, 1987, p. 36; Marshall, 1994, p. 194). The duration of these disturbances was a distinctive characteristic. For example, the pinnacle of Japanese higher education, the University of Tokyo, was not able to hold proper classes for 17 months (Nagai, 1971, pp. 246).

<sup>18</sup> Traditionally, a very few universities provided the escalators to the most important positions in Japanese society. In the pre-war, less than one in 200 of every graduating school child could be expected to attend one of the prestigious imperial universities (Pempel, 1978). Only a small minority ever received a university education. In 1946, during the post-War reorganization of the education system, less than six per cent of young adults attended university (Kitamura, 1979, p. 68). In recent years, higher education has become a mass phenomenon, with around two million students enrolled—nearly 40 per cent of all 18 year olds attending school at the more than 1000 junior colleges and universities in Japan (MOE, 1989, p. xiii).

<sup>20</sup> Clubs and circles at Japanese high schools and universities are a major part of school life, more so than in the United States (cf. Rohlen, 1983, p. 274-275). Since at Japanese universities there are no dormitories, fraternities, or sororities, these clubs serve the important role of facilitating the campus social life of students. Larger schools can have hundreds of these officially registered clubs, and scores more of unofficial circles. They are often formal organizations with a hierarchical structure (see, e.g., McVeigh, 1997). There are many different kinds of clubs, which centre on academic, athletic, arts, and hobby interests. The membership of a single club can span several institutions, partly because of the large number of women's colleges (about 20% of all colleges and universities) that still exist in Japan; membership in the clubs at large coeducational universities gives students at women's colleges a chance to socialize with male students. It also gives students a wider range of activities from which to choose than they would

they went but did not listen to the lectures, chatting<sup>20</sup> in the classroom with friends instead.

At about the start of the 1980s university professors finally started to realize the seriousness of this change in students' attitude. They realized that simply berating students who are indifferent toward their studies will not change anything and questioned themselves— "In order to avoid 'education empty of content,' is it not necessary for us to change our way of thinking and search for a method that will answer students' voiceless criticism?" In this way, near the end of the 1980s, the educational reform movement began to spread, among private universities in particular.

With regard to the idea of the 'student as critic', I must raise one more point at this juncture— the appearance and increase in non-traditional students. These are the mature students and the international students. In Japan, mature students who come to university after already having gained considerable life experiences both in the workplace and at home are called '*shakaijin gakusee*'<sup>21</sup>— students who are also members of society. Though the number of these students has yet to reach 10,000 a year, from about the start of the 1980s they began to grow steadily. Also, foreign international students predominately from China, Taiwan, Korea, and SE Asian countries began to increase from the latter half of the 1970s and have now reached roughly 60,000 in number. Compared with regular, traditional students who enter university straight after high school graduation, these students, obviously, have distinct learning needs and volition, and it is these points that make them intrinsically critical of the traditional way of university education. The increase in numbers of non-traditional students means that there is one more potent critic emerging within the university. Now, indeed, a number of universities have started to take steps toward reform in an attempt to meet the requirements of these non-traditional students.

### **Examination Competition and *Gakureki Shakai***<sup>22</sup>

Among the critics from outside the university, by far the largest in number are the parents who send their children to university, and their extension, the citizens. Their critical opinions have taken on the blurry epithet of 'public opinion', an opinion that is reported over and over by newspapers, television and other mass media. Their criticism has been directed at, more than anything else, the intense competition of entrance examinations and the *gakureki shakai* that is at the root of this competition. In the 1970s and 1980s this became the ultimate social and political issue surrounding universities. The need for reform to ease the pressure of examination hell<sup>23</sup> received the support of a public influenced by the loud cries of the journalists and politicians alike.

The university and university professors have been apathetic for the most part towards reform of

normally have at their own institutions (cf., Amano, 1988b).

<sup>20</sup> The problem of 'chatting in class' afflicts nearly every lecture course offered at Japanese university. The issue is raised in entrance ceremony speeches and teachers' lounges across the country, but for the most part professors are left on their own to come up with a solution.

<sup>21</sup> *Shakaijin*, literally a "person of society" is a common Japanese term that refers to working adults. Even if in fact employed, university students (*gakusee*) are not considered part of the working world in Japan, and so are not normally referred to as "*shakaijin*". "*Shakaijin gakusee*", then, if not exactly an oxymoron, certainly has a "non-traditional" ring to the Japanese ear—how could one be a member of society whilst being a student?

<sup>22</sup> See note #11 above.

<sup>23</sup> Because entrance to one of a few elite universities has historically been the ticket to prestigious jobs and upward social mobility (see note #18 above), and because entrance to Japanese universities has traditionally been a one-dimensional affair based solely on the results of a battery of test, students must study long and hard to ensure successful entry to their school of choice. The resulting environment of fierce competition and intense pressure has been labelled "examination hell."

the entrance examination system. This is because a stringent and difficult examination is by far the most effective and convenient insurance that students will be of high ability, and hence easier to educate. In addition, from the standpoint of the professors, any change in the entrance examination system would mean added responsibilities beyond teaching and research. Nevertheless, the government, supported strongly by public opinion, started with examination reforms of the national universities and faculties, a majority of which are known to be highly selective. This reform was inaugurated in 1979 and called the ‘National Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test’.<sup>24</sup> This test (the name of which was changed to ‘The Center’<sup>25</sup> Examination for University Entrance’ in 1990) has developed into a national system, with private universities also quick to utilize the exam.<sup>26</sup> On top of this, in order to alleviate the pressure of examination hell, the government has continued to promote actively among universities a policy of ‘diversification’— selecting applicants using an assortment of methods beyond the examination. One method representative of this policy is the recommendation pathway to enter university, which places great importance on high school grades and activity reports.<sup>27</sup> More recently, the number of universities that use a myriad of assessment tools— interviews, short essays, sport, cultural, and community involvement— is increasing. In terms of the entrance examinations as well, the number of universities that test for numerous subjects has declined, and the number of private universities that set only one or two subjects on the entrance examination has grown considerably.

Nevertheless, the critical public is far from being satisfied with these series of reforms. The reason is that at the schools that are most difficult to enter, the so-called ‘first tier universities’, the nucleus of an examination based on numerous subjects<sup>28</sup>— the selection process of old— remains fundamentally unchanged. The now nearly 590 universities in Japan are starting to be neatly separated into three groups: a) universities that are highly selective, b) universities that are mildly competitive, and c) universities that are non-competitive.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, in a society that places more importance on the name of the school from which one graduates referred to as ‘labelization’ or ‘branding’ (*gakkooreki*)<sup>30</sup>— than simply possessing a university qualification—

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<sup>24</sup> Although similar in function to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in the United States, the content of the Japanese college board examinations is closer in design to the American Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, designed to test academic achievement in numerous different subjects rather than general mathematical and verbal aptitude. This test is preliminary because it is designed to screen students for the second step of the university entrance system— further examination papers designed and administered independently by individual university faculties.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Center’ refers to the actual examination center where the test is designed by representative professors from numerous universities. The examination is often abbreviated as simply the Center Test.

<sup>26</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, the practice in Japan of each university administering a separate examination can be an important source of revenue for the schools. Private universities charge each applicant thousands of yen to sit the examination, a multi-million yen business if one considers that thousands and thousands of high school students sit the examinations for the more prestigious schools. Obviously in these difficult financial times private schools are reluctant to forgo completely this independent testing system. For this reason, even though the Center Test is now used by many private universities as another of many entrance pathways, it will probably never become a standard entrance examination as the SAT is in the United States.

<sup>27</sup> The recommendation system is considered sub-par because it is associated with junior colleges (see Hood, 2001b, p.165).

<sup>28</sup> See note #24 above.

<sup>29</sup> This third category has been recently named the “F-rank” by Kawai Juku and other college preparatory and cram schools. “F” stands for “free pass”— every student that sits the school’s examination is almost “guaranteed” a “free pass” to admission, no matter how poor their test results.

<sup>30</sup> The Japanese propensity for branded, quality goods is common knowledge (for an extensive analysis of Japanese consumerism see McVeigh, 2000). In a society that places such import on educational qualifications it is no wonder

‘credentialization’ (*gakureki*)<sup>31</sup>— no matter how much the selection process of university applicants is reformed, students will continue to strive to enter a small number of so-called ‘top-tier’ or ‘brand-name’ universities, and the severe entrance examination war will not disappear. In this sense university entrance reform is a permanent issue for Japanese universities, and it does not seem hopeful that condemnation of the problem will subside easily.

### Industry and Government

Japanese industry as well has always been critical of universities, and has claimed for some time that university is ‘good for nothing.’ I should say this is natural if we consider the difference in the nature of the two institutions—the goal of a firm is the pursuit of profit, and the *raison d’être* of a university is the study of truth. Moreover, there was already an antagonistic relationship with industry since the era when the majority of university professors took an anti-Establishment stance<sup>32</sup> and the university opposed a cozy, cooperative teaching and research relationship with industry— *Sangaku Kyoodo*. During the university strife at the end of the 1960s, this anti-industry attitude on the part of the university grew stronger still. For its part, industry also despaired at the lack of self-governing and self-managing capabilities displayed by universities and university professors, consequently further aggravating relations.

After this, it also meant that the expectations industry held for the university were lowered. Japanese industry had in the first place never expected from universities training and supply of a fully skilled and talented workforce that is highly specialized. After hiring fresh graduates, industry made it a policy to train a highly skilled and specialized workforce and management through its own efforts. This trend was further reinforced after the period of university strife. With the rapidly expanding economy,<sup>33</sup> highly profitable firms built their own new research facilities, expanded and strengthened existing ones further, and thus even on the research front their expectations of universities were lowered.

Where there is no expectation, there is no criticism either. For the university’s crippled relationship with industry could not escape the weakening process, both in terms of research and human resource development. Particularly in the field of natural sciences, not only did the growth of research budgets stagnate, but also the best talent was snatched up by corporate research centers. Basic research promptly went the way of impoverishment. The university was, in a word, abandoned by industry.

From the latter half of the 1980s, industry renewed its hopes for the university. Facing the end of steep economic growth, international economic competition, and concomitant rivalry in cutting-edge technologies, industry began to feel apprehensive about the future. Once again it could not ignore the importance of universities’ roles in terms of developing human resources and basic research. Also, with the Cold War structure of the East-West divide broken, universities started to experience a new freedom from previous ideological divisions and changed their, until now,

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that university education has become another commodity to be judged and compared according to the ‘label’.

<sup>31</sup> See note #11 above.

<sup>32</sup> During the post-War period there emerged a political conflict, spilling over into educational issues, that has been described by one historian as “warfare waged between the entrenched” (Marshall, 1994, pp. 167-205)—the conservative Establishment versus the progressive Opposition. For support the Progressive camp counted on the Japan Teachers’ Union (*Nikkyooso*) as well as intellectuals both within and outside of universities. The battle over a history textbook that one professor, Ienaga Saburoo, has waged against the conservative government for over 30 years is one example of this anti-establishment stance.

<sup>33</sup> The post-war Japanese economic miracle has been well documented as one of the greatest growth spurts in the history of nations (see, e.g., Vogel, 1979). Perhaps the fastest growth was experienced in the 1960s and 1970s.

disapproving stance toward industry. Universities began to adopt more flexible policies with regard to exchange with industry and the acceptance of research monies for both teaching and research.

As industry raised anew its hopes for universities, criticism and sternness intensified. In the beginning of the 1990s, representative organizations of industry such as the Japan Federation of Employers' Association, the Japan Committee for Economic Development, and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, one after another began to present proposals and written reports demanding university reform. What these had in common were, first, in order to better invigorate the industry-university exchange in research and teaching, the call for more openness and transparency in both the institution and academics and, secondly, the hope for the training of highly specialized talent, rich in originality and creativity. Once again, there was criticism levelled at a university system that was not meeting these expectations.

For the university, the government— namely the Ministry of Education (MOE or *Monbushoo*)<sup>34</sup>— is also an important, and principal, critic. It goes without saying that the university is recognized as a self-governing institution, and under the Japanese Constitution private universities are guaranteed an even larger freedom than national universities. That being said, at the same time all universities in Japan are under the control and surveillance of the Ministry. National universities, especially, exist under strict regulation by the government concerning personnel and finance. This means that when the government is dissatisfied with the way a university is handling its affairs, it not only expresses its criticism, but also has the power to sway the university toward reform. This dissatisfaction and criticism was expressed with no mincing of words in the report by the deliberative body *Rinkyoooshin*,<sup>35</sup> set up by the Nakasone cabinet in 1984 and advising directly to the Prime Minister. The report of the *Rinkyoooshin*, released in 1985, expressed strong dissatisfaction with the state of universities and demanded the formation by the government of a new body, the *Daigaku Shingikai*,<sup>36</sup> and the commencement of a deliberate and concentrated examination of university reform. Then to begin with, in 1987, this *Daigaku Shingikai* started with sweeping revisions of the *Standards for the Establishment of Universities* (SEU).<sup>37</sup>

The SEU is legislation that lays down various stipulations universities must satisfy when seeking official MOE approval for establishing or expanding universities. Turned around, this legislation specifies the authority of MOE to control and direct the university. A revision in the SEU suggests the possibility of promoting or restricting university reform depending on the way the legislation is modified and applied.<sup>38</sup> The *Daigaku Shingikai* began a revision of the SEU aimed at stimulating an autonomous effort toward reform on the part of the university.

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<sup>34</sup> Although referred to almost universally as simply *Monbushoo*, or the Ministry of Education (MOE), the official title was the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science, and Culture (MESSC) at the time of the book's publication. In 2001 the Ministry merged with the Science and Technology Agency to form *Monbukagakushoo* (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)). "MOE" is used throughout the translation of this essay to avoid confusion.

<sup>35</sup> The name *Rinkyoooshin* is a Japanese abbreviation for the official title, *Rinji Kyooiku Shingikai*. The translator has chosen to use this term in place of the numerous English translations (such as Ad Hoc Council on Education and National Council for Educational Reform) to avoid confusion (cf., Hood, 2001b, p. xii).

<sup>36</sup> See note #7 above.

<sup>37</sup> This is a ministerial ordinance stipulating the basic framework of the university system.

<sup>38</sup> Perhaps it should be pointed out here that while the MOE as a whole was hampered by conservatism before Nakasone's *Rinkyoooshin*, some feel that it is now a relatively liberal institution (Hood, 2001b, p. 169).

The SEU stipulates in detail the so-called 'hardware' of the university—the square measure of the school grounds and buildings per student, the student-teacher ratio, the library holdings per student—as well as the 'software'—the naming of schools and departments, the way the educational curriculum is organized, the courses that should be offered. From early on criticisms that these standards were obstructing the free development of the university and restricting any independent effort toward reform were heard from both within and outside the university. In other words, the SEU has been regarded as one of the key causes of the crisis of the university. In 1991 especially, the software aspects of the SEU—the educational part focusing on curriculum development—were largely revised and this fact became an important force thrusting the university toward reform effort.

### **The Critics within the University**

Finally, in order to give proper credit to the university and university professors, I must point out that in the 1980s, from within the university powerful critics of the *status quo* began to make themselves known. I mentioned previously that it was, if anyone, the private universities that first gave ear to the students' voices. For private universities, where the tuition that students pay is in effect the only source of revenue, the student is both the customer and the consumer of educational services. Everything is fine as long as the number of prospective applicants is increasing every year, the demand for educational opportunities is far higher than supply, and a severe competition in examination is materializing. However, once the increase in prospective applicants stops, and they even begin to decline in number, private universities might be immediately stricken with financial difficulty. The population of 18 year olds, the source of prospective applicants, continued to rise throughout the 1980s. But after peaking in 1992, the population of teenagers has been in a long-term decline and is predicted to halve by 2010.

While this sense of management crisis is common to many universities, it is felt most strongly by the newly established universities who have just recently entered the market. The reform movement to consider seriously the content of an educational service for students began with these recently established private universities. This first started with the establishment of the so-called 'Faculties with New Labels' (departments of International, Information, Cultural, Environmental, and Policy Studies) and continued with curriculum reform, syllabus-based teaching, innovation in teaching methods, and class evaluations by students. This was the first time in the history of the university in Japan that true reform in university teaching and learning had begun. Before long, this reform spread among other private universities who anticipated an intensified competition or survival of the fittest. We could say that the bold decision in 1990 by the oldest private university in Japan, Keio, to establish two new schools—the Faculty of Policy Management and the Faculty of Environmental Information<sup>39</sup>—symbolizes such change.

The university trustees, with sharp business acumen, as well as a number of university professors feeling there was a crisis in 'the emptiness of education' were those that carried the reforms.

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<sup>39</sup> Keio University is the oldest private institution of higher education in Japan, founded in 1858 by an intellectual leader of the time, Yukichi Fukuzawa (whose portrait adorns the Japanese ¥10,000 note), who established a private school for Dutch studies in Teppozu, Edo (present-day Tokyo). Along with Waseda University (founded 25 years later as the Tokyo Senmon Gakko by Shigenobu Okuma, a scholar and government leader), Keio University is one of the two most prestigious private universities in Japan. These new faculties are located on a purpose-built 80-acre site an hour and half outside downtown Tokyo—the Shonan-Fujisawa Campus (SFC). SFC opened in 1990, in 1992 a high school was added, and in 1994 the new campus became the site of yet another so-called 'school with a new label'—the Graduate School of Media and Governance.

However, the fact that reform was progressing above all with the establishment of new universities and new departments plainly shows that these reformers were limited to a minority group within the university. I think it is safe to say that real progress in reform involving existing universities and departments is yet to be seen.

Critics from within the university have also come forth because of an awareness of crisis in research as well. Many of these critics, the main force of which are professors in the fields of science and engineering, began to feel there was a crisis in Japan after having been students or researchers in Western countries, particularly at American universities. They argue that Japan will continuously fall behind in the international science and technology race because of such poor research and teaching conditions and, on top of this, such a rigid and closed organizational structure at the Japanese university. According to one American researcher (Rosovsky, 1990), of all schools boasting cutting-edge research capabilities—the so-called ‘research universities’—three-quarters are concentrated in the United States, with Japan having only a handful of such institutions, all of which are at the bottom of the global ranking. Within the leading research universities in Japan—Tokyo University and other national universities—this strong feeling of crisis triggered another wave of both criticism against the present state of affairs and subsequent reform movements.

### **Deregulations and Educational Reform**

In this way, from the 1970s to the 1980s, responding to the strengthening voices of criticism from both inside and outside the university, small reform experiments in diverse forms were advancing in the conservative world of universities and university professors. What immediately accelerated these reforms and functioned to spread them throughout the university was the previously mentioned revision of the SEU.

With regard to this revision to the SEU, I should point out that it was part of what by the mid 1980s had become a widely discussed issue of deregulation centered around economic issues, removing regulations on public corporations, provincial self-governing bodies, and all sorts of groups and organizations. For a long time Japanese education, universities and schools alike have existed under the strict supervision and control of the MOE. Without a relaxation in and removal of restrictions, one could not expect a break in the crisis of education, research, universities, or schools, a press for reform, or stimulation for dynamic development. This was the basic concept of the *Rinkyoooshin's* scheme for educational reform. The banner of ‘liberalization, individualization, and diversification’ that the *Rinkyoooshin* displayed and the fundamental principles of ‘autonomy and independence’ they demanded of schools, universities, teachers, and school boards, these were nothing less than symbols of this concept of reform.

This revision of the SEU is merely one part of the deregulation that affects the entire Japanese education system. However, in its function to propel university reform, it is extremely important. The reason is because it had the power to shock severely, to loosen from its roots the organizational structure of Japanese universities and force the conservative university professors to engage in a discussion of reform. If we think about what kind of basic structure existed at the level of university departments previously, we can easily understand why the previously mentioned software aspects of the revision of the SEU held such a powerful shock value.

According to the SEU before the revisions, the four years of undergraduate education were divided into two years each of a Specialized Education (SE) phase and a General Education (GE)

phase.<sup>40</sup> The core curriculum in the first two GE years required students to take foreign language and health and physical education subjects as well as a certain number of elective course credits distributed across the humanities, social, and natural sciences. Furthermore, the name and educational curriculum of a SE department was restricted to the traditional academic fields while the GE existed, if necessary, as an independent organization of professors and thus had to be referred to with a rubric such as 'Liberal Arts Department.' In other words, the university in reality did not have the freedom to either organize the four-year undergraduate education as it saw fit or even to decide the name of the course. The 1991 SEU revision removed most of these regulations and sanctioned the complete freedom for each university to organize their own curriculum. What was feared with respect to this liberalization process was the danger of a lowering in the quality of education.<sup>41</sup> It was with this concern in mind that the *Daigaku Shingikai*, as collateral conditions for liberalization, demanded universities to provide syllabuses, improve teaching methods, introduce class evaluations, and the like. On top of this they specified clearly in the revised SEU that continual vigilance in the form of self-inspection and self-evaluation was the responsibility of the individual universities.

This liberalization actually only belatedly approved various experiments at reform that were already underway as either responses to the critics or having been implemented in anticipation of such a coming period of change. However the shock that this formal approval of freedom to organize undergraduate education gave to the university was huge and far exceeded the expectations of those involved. Universities and university professors, always criticized for their conservatism and apathy toward change, scrambled to begin the race of reform efforts almost as if they were responding to a starter's gun. The basis for this response was, needless to say, in the harsh criticisms made from in and outside the university. Although the degree of these criticisms differed, at every university a mood of crisis enveloped the university trustees and professors. In addition, there was also intensification in the struggle for survival among the universities, in particular private universities, faced with the premonition of the decrease in the population of 18 year olds after the peak in 1992. Under such a state of emergency, Japanese universities entered a so-called 'season of reform' in the 1990s.

More than anything else the focus of the university reforms underway was on teaching. One would not be exaggerating to call these changes 'revolutionary' for Japanese universities. This is because by international standards Japanese university professors have been known for their apathy towards teaching and enthusiasm for research. For example, according to an international survey conducted a few years back, in answer to the question "Which do you feel is more important, teaching or research?", almost 70 per cent of Japanese professors answered "research" while just over 30 per cent of the American professors felt so, numbers that show a striking contrast.

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<sup>40</sup> The division between a General Education (GE) and Specialized Education (SE) curriculum can be traced back to 1947 when the United States converted the curricula of the state run high schools, the *kotoogakkoo*, along with the independent, post-secondary prep or cram schools, the *yoka*, into the first and second GE curricula at public and private undergraduate schools nationwide. These *kotoogakkoo* and *yoka* were literally transferred in their entirety into the universities—materials, methods, and faculty—with little effort at integration with the SE subjects of the university faculties. In fact, the *yoka* curriculum of the 1920s is strikingly similar to the GE curricula at most universities today, 80 years later (Terauchi, 2001). Little attempt was made to incorporate a system of majors and minors that might have better harmonized the disparity. Instead, a legacy of dichotomy between GE teachers and SE faculty has evolved at many of the older, more conservative universities. In fact, many in Japan could not accept the lack of differentiation and specialist training that was imposed by the Occupation. These were clearly inferior institutions labelled 'universities' (Schoppa, 1990, p. 36).

<sup>41</sup> This is similar to the debate of 'dumbing-down' in the context of the 'massification' of higher education in the United Kingdom. The bureaucratic response in Britain has been the Quality Assurance Agency.

Of course this does not mean that university professors in Japan are shirking their teaching responsibilities and instead devoting themselves entirely to research. In the reality of university mass education, at every school teaching is the most important role played by university professors. Nevertheless, the more they face such teaching demands, the more they would put greater importance on research.<sup>42</sup> And this feeling amongst professors has tended to create an attitude of indifference toward teaching, beginning with curriculum and instructional methods, as well as a general apathy about changing their stance with respect to teaching students. Reform that radically and forcefully altered the research-education balance in favour of education started rapidly advancing. This surely could be called ‘revolutionary’.

After 1991, most universities set about to reorganize the four-year undergraduate education with the removal of the GE curriculum and independent Liberal Arts Departments and the merger of these classes with SE. The names of faculties were greatly diversified and increasingly, even amongst established faculties, labels were changed. In addition, there was also the steady progress in such areas as syllabus provisions, improvement in teaching methods (especially focusing on foreign language and computer instruction), and the adoption of class evaluations by students. We could regard this as on the track to a so-called ‘teaching revolution’. But, obviously, if reform is to be radical enough to warrant the label ‘revolution’, resistance and opposition to it will grow. No matter how strong the pressure from criticism both inside and outside the university, no matter how strong the feeling of crisis, it is difficult to imagine that professors immediately become reformists in their hearts and aggressive in the drive for reform. It will be a long time before the values and consciousness of the majority of professors, and students for that matter, change fundamentally. I have to say that the stronger the pressure for reform and the higher the innovation banner is flown, the deeper the university crisis will become.

### **Innovation in Research**

I am afraid that I have over-emphasized the education side of university reform in my discussion. Finally, let me touch upon the reform of research at universities. I have stated previously that a sense of crisis among university researchers in scientific fields began to match the feeling among industrialists, who became increasingly aware that the crisis at universities was a crisis of basic research as well as even cutting-edge science. The result was that universities began to receive stronger material and human resource support for basic research, in forms such as corporate sponsorship of professorships, involvement of industry researchers at universities, and a more active exchange of manpower. The cooperation and exchange between industry and university had finally begun to get more serious.

The MOE seized this opportunity to begin to take constructive measures to build up the previously neglected research function of the university— specifically the expansion of graduate programs, the nurturing and ample supply of young researchers, the augmentation of research monies, and the renewal of equipment and facilities. In a time of austerity in public finances and continued economic sluggishness, the fact that the government had begun serious efforts to improve basic research at the university proves how strong the feeling is that the ground beneath Japanese university research is caving in to fierce international competition.

The fostering and strengthening of the research university, as it is called, surfaced as the focal point of these policies to promote the facility for research. For a long while, particularly during

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<sup>42</sup> This reaction to teaching responsibilities can be interpreted in two ways. First, many professors subscribe to the notion that research supports and enhances teaching. Secondly, because so much time and energy is spent in the classroom, teachers feel the need to place more importance on research as a balance.

the 1970s and 1980s, the MOE had maintained an egalitarian policy<sup>43</sup> with respect to each university's role in research. The latter half of the 1980s marked the period when this policy toward research began to be critiqued and reconsidered. This meant that an aggressive policy effort was begun to restore and improve the standards of Japanese representative research universities like the University of Tokyo and the University of Kyoto.<sup>44</sup> Various and sundry plans for strengthening these research universities were hammered out of this overall series of policies referred to as the 'Prioritization of the Graduate School'. Specifically these included the shift of teaching and research from the level of the undergraduate departments to that of the graduate school, the addition in numbers of both faculty and students, the increase in operating expenses, the increase in research monies allocated competitively and preponderantly, the introduction of financial resources from other government ministries and private firms, and the institution of priority research units called 'Centers of Excellence' (COE).<sup>45</sup>

Reform did not stop with this series of policies but extended to the internal organization of the university as well. It became a mainstream practice for universities to change a system that had existed ever since before the War of organizing sections within departments with one professor, called a *sho koza sei* (micro-chair system),<sup>46</sup> to a *dai koza sei* (macro-chair system) with multiple professorships. Other trials that began to be undertaken at many universities included an increased openness and fluidity in the organization in order to stimulate research activity, as well as implementation of changes in the tenure system for faculty called the 'term system'.<sup>47</sup> I think it is fair to say that setting up a system of teaching and research that is better able to produce more original and creative researchers and research results is, alongside teaching innovations, one of the pillars of university reform.

I know I am repeating myself when I say that the root of the crisis that universities are faced with is deep. This is to suggest that the imminent reform of universities must be radical enough to be called a revolution. It is hard to exaggerate the immensity of the fundamental switch in consciousness and values that is pressuring the university and university professors.

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<sup>43</sup> Historically, the government ideal for education has been one of "equality", the "right to equal education" which is guaranteed by the Constitution (in Passin, 1982, p.287). This ideology of equal opportunity has necessitated a policy of 'mass education' in which students are not streamed according to abilities (Rohlen, 1983, p. 66). (Notably, recently, in the summer of 2001, the MOE has just announced that they will be distributing a gifted and talented manual to public school teachers in Japan to help them better educate the, until now neglected high achievers — a group of students that has always received an almost disproportionate amount of attention in the United States and United Kingdom). This egalitarian ideal was also held by the MOE with respect to universities.

<sup>44</sup> *Toodai* (University of Tokyo) and *Kyoodai* (University of Kyoto) are the "Oxbridge" of Japan.

<sup>45</sup> In 1995 the Japanese MOE began a funding program for cutting-edge Center of Excellence research projects at various national and private research universities in Japan. These include a ¥50 million grant to the University of Kyoto and a ¥120 million grant to the University of Tokyo for research in microbiology, a ¥300 million grant to Waseda University for material science research, ¥100 million to the University of Hiroshima for a physics research program, ¥85 million to the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages for a corpus linguistics project, and another ¥85 million to the University of Nagoya for research in medicine.

<sup>46</sup> At larger graduate school universities in Japan, the basic unit around which departments are organized is the professorship—chairs (*koza*). Each department has several of these *koza*, which consist of one professor, one associate professor, one or two assistant professors, and several junior research assistants. Since each *koza* has control of its own budget and, hence, research and teaching activities, the professors have traditionally had considerable autonomy from the department, and university (Tomoda & Ehara, 1979, p. 188). By changing to a *dai koza sei* universities hope that the multiple professorships will help to break down the sectional walls within a department.

<sup>47</sup> Many public and private universities have begun to institute semi-permanent contract positions, limited to only a few years, as a separate track from the normal tenured professorships and the ubiquitous part-time adjunct lecturer positions. One of the MOE reform measures in the 1990s was the policy of allowing individual universities to decide with greater flexibility their own individual tenure contracts with full-time faculty.

So when the revolution is progressing with fierceness appropriate to such a name, it is inevitable that various types of opposition will be born and confusion will spread. However, at the same time, I do not think we will be able to see the image of the new university until such a period of disorder, confusion, and groping has passed. The important thing is not to fear the profundity of the crisis, but rather to have the gumption to seize the day and change this so-called 'crisis' into an 'opportunity.' This is what is now asked of Japanese universities and university professors.

## APPENDIX: ORIGINAL JAPANESE TEXT

### 大学の危機

(Amano, 1999, pp. 3-19)

大学改革の問題を、大学の危機という視点から考えてみたい。それは基本的に保守的な大学のような組織体にとって、深刻な危機に直面することなしに、改革が進展するのは望みがたいことと思われるからである。逆にいえば大学改革の機会、大学の危機のなかにこそあることになる。大学はいま危機の時代をむかえているが、それは同時に大学が改革の時代をむかえたことを意味している。

残念ながら大学が危機に瀕しているという認識が、大学教員自身のなかから生まれることは稀である。大学教員は教育者であると同時に研究者であり、自分の専門とする学問と自分の所属する大学の双方に忠誠心をもつことを期待された職業である。しかし、その忠誠心は一般に専門学問に対するそれの方が強い。大学教員の社会的評価がなによりも学問上の業績によって決まることを考えれば、それは当然のことだろうが、このことは大学の教員が、自分自身の学問の危機については敏感だが、大学や教育の危機については必ずしもそうではないことを示唆している。

大学教員たちは他分野の発展や学際的な領域の生成によって、自分の学問がおびやかされたり、また自分の専門領域の学問が国際的な水準に著しく遅れていることが明らかになると、強い危機感をもつ。しかし大学それ自身の危機、とくに教育の危機については外部から、あるいは自分たち以外の大学の構成員からきびしい批判をむけられるまで、それに気づかないのが普通である。大学の内外に批判の声が高まり、改革を求める圧力が有無をいわず強まってはじめて、大学の教員、ひいては大学は改革にのり出す。それが少なくとも日本の大学のこれまでの歴史であったし、また現状でもあるといつてよいだろう。

それでは誰が大学の批判者であり、なにが批判されているのか。またその批判は大学と大学教員によってどう受けとめられ、どのような改革の動きをひき起こしているのか。それをまず最大の「内部批判者」である学生たちからみることにしよう。

### 批判者としての学生

学生たちが大学と大学教員にはじめて強い批判の声をあげたのは、一九六〇年代後半、大学紛争・学生反乱の時代である。それは日本の大学の「エリート」段階が終わり、「マス」段階が始まったことを象徴するものでもあった。学生たちは「研究」の方ばかり向いた教員たちに、「教育」の方を向くことを、自分たちに関心を持ち、自分たちの要求に応えることを強く求めたが、大学はこうした学生「大衆」の声に適切に答える努力をしなかった。大学紛争中、おびただしい数の改革案がつくられたが、その大部分は制度や組織にかかわるものであり、しかも学生反乱が収まると、ほとんどがファイルの中にしまい込まれ、再び陽の目を見ることはなかった。

一九七〇年代に入ると学生たちは、暴力的に要求を通そうと努力することはやめたが、その代わりに隠れた形で批判や反抗を続けることになった。すなわち、かれらは授業に出るよりもクラブやサークル活動とよばれる課外活動にエネルギーを注ぐか、あるいは授業に出席してる講義を身を入れて聴かず、教室内で仲間同士で「私語」という、消極的な抵抗運動を展開するようになったのである。

一九八〇年代に入る頃、大学の教員たちはようやくこうした変化の深刻さに気づきはじめる。勉強に不熱心な学生たちを批判しているだけでは、なにも変わらない。教育の「空洞化」をさけるには自分たち自身が考え方を換え、学生たちの声なき批判の声に答える方法をさぐる必要があるのではないのか。こうして一九八〇年代の後半になると次第に「教育改革」の動きが、とりわけ私立大学の間に広がっていくことになる。

批判者としての学生についてはもうひとつ、「非伝統型」の学生の出現と増加をあげておかなければならない。成人学生や外国人学生がそれである。職業生活や家庭生活など人生経験をつんだあとに大学にやってくる成人学生は、日本では「社会人学生」と呼ばれている。その数はまだ年間数千人程度にすぎないが、一九八〇年代に入る頃から着実に増加しはじめた。また外国人留学生も、中国・台湾・韓国など、東アジア諸国を中心に一九七〇年代の後半から増加しはじめ、現在では六万人弱に達している。高等学校卒業と同時に進学してくる正規の、「伝統型」の学生にくらべて、これらの学生は当然のことながら、学習の条件や意欲の点で異なっており、その点で本質的に大学教育の伝統的なあり方に批判的である。こうして「非伝統型」の学生数の増加は、大学が内部に、もうひとつの有力な「批判者」をもちはじめたことを意味する。そして実際に一部の大学は、かれらの要求に応えることをめざして改革へと動き出すことになった。

## 受験競争と学歴社会

大学外部の批判者として最大の規模をもつのは、大学に子どもを送る親たち、ひいては国民である。かれらの批判的な意見は「世論」というあいまいな形をとり、しばしば新聞やTVなどのマスコミによって代弁されている。かれらの批判はなによりも大学進学をめぐるはげしい受験競争と、その基底にあるとされる学歴社会に向けられてきた。それは一九七〇年代から八〇年代にかけて、大学にかかわる最大の社会問題・政治問題となり、「試験地獄」を緩和するための改革の必要が、マスコミや政治家たちによって声を大に叫ばれ、世論の支持をうけた。

大学や大学教員たちは、その入試制度の改革についても基本的に消極的であった。なぜなら、きびしい学力試験は学力の高い、ということは教育しやすい学生を確保するもっとも有効で簡便な方法であり、また入試方法を改善することは教員たちにとって、教育と研究以外の負担の増加を意味したからである。しかし政府は世論の強い支持のもとに、まず、選抜のきびしい大学・学部が多数をしめる国立大学の入試改革に着手した。一九七九年に発足した「共通第一次学力試験」制度がそれである。一九九〇年に「大学入試センター試験」と名称をかえたこの共通テストは、やがて私立大学も利用する全大学的な制度へと発展することになった。「試験地獄」の緩和のために政府はさらに、学力試験以外のさまざまな方法で入学者を選抜することを奨励する「多様化」政策を、積極的におし進めてきた。高校在学中の学業成績や活動記録を重視する「推薦入学」は、その代表的なものであり、この他にも面接、小論文、それにスポーツや文化・社会活動など、さまざまな評価方法で入学者を選抜する大学が増えている。学力試験についても多数の科目を課す大学は少なくなっており、一〜二科目の学力試験しか課さない私立大学もかなりの数に達している。

しかし、批判的な世論は、こうした一連の改革に十分満足するに至ってはいない。なぜなら、もっとも入学のむずかしいいわゆる「一流大学」は、依然として多数の試験科目による学力試験主体の入学者選抜方法を、基本的に変えていないからである。現在五九〇校近い日本の大学は、①選抜のきびしい大学、②入学の際にある程度の競争を伴う大学、③事実上だれでも入れる大学の、三つのグループに、次第に分かれはじめている。そして大学卒業の「学歴」以上に、どの大学を出たかという「学校歴」の重視される社会では、入学者の選抜方法がどれほど改革されようと、一部の「一流大学」ないし「銘柄大学」をめざす、はげしい受験戦争が姿を消すことはない。大学入試改革はその意味で、日本の大学にとって永遠の課題であり、それに対する批判も容易に弱まることは望みがたい。

## 産業界と政府

日本の産業界もまた大学に対してつねに批判的であり、大学を「役に立たない」と批判し続けてきた。それは富利の追求を目的とする企業と、真理の探究を目的とする大学という、二つの組織体の性格の基本的な違いを考えれば、当然のことというべきだろう。しかも反体制的な立場をとる大学教員が多数をしめ

た時代、大学は研究教育面での「産学協同」に反対するなど、つねに産業界と対立的な関係にあった。一九六〇年代末の大学紛争のなかで、こうした反企業的な態度はますます強まり、産業界もまた、大学と大学教員たちの問題解決に必要な自治能力や当事者能力のなさに失望し、その結果として両者の関係はますます悪化することになった。

このことは、産業界の大学に対する期待の低下を意味するものでもあった。日本の企業はもともと大学に、高度の専門的能力を身につけた人材の育成・供給を期待せず、新規大学卒業者を採用したあと、企業自身の努力で高度の専門的人材や専門経営者に育成する方策をとってきた。その傾向は大学紛争以後ますます強まり、また経済の高度成長により利益をあげた企業は自ら研究所を設立し拡充強化して、研究面でも大学への期待を低めていった。

期待がないところには批判もない。産業界との関係の稀薄化した大学は、人材養成面でも研究面でも弱体化を免れず、とくに自然科学の分野では、大学に投入される研究費の伸びが停滞しただけでなく、優秀な人材を企業の研究所に奪われ、基礎研究が急速に貧困化していった。大学はいわば、産業界に「見はなされた」のである。

産業界の大学に対する期待が復活するのは、一九八〇年代の後半になってからである。高度成長期の終わりをむかえ、国際的な経済競争、ひいては先端科学技術競争の前途に不安を抱きはじめた産業界は、あらためて大学のもつ人材養成と基礎研究の重要性に目を向けざるをえなくなった。また東西対立の冷戦構造がくずれ、イデオロギー対立から自由になりはじめた大学も、産業界に対するこれまでの拒否的な態度を捨て、研究・教育面での交流や研究費の受入れに弾力的な方策をとるようになった。

こうして産業界の大学に対する期待が高まるなかで、批判もまたきびしさを増し、一九九〇年代に入ると日本経営者団体連盟、経済同友会、日本商工会議所など、産業界を代表する団体が次々に、大学の改革を求める提言や報告書を発表するようになった。それらに共通しているのは、ひとつには教育研究面での「産学交流」をますます活発化させるための、大学の組織や学問の開放化であり、またひとつには独創性・創造性に富んだ高度の専門的人材の育成への期待であり、さらにはその期待に十分応えていない大学に対する批判である。

大学にとって、政府＝文部省もまた、重要な批判者である。いうまでもなく大学は自治を認められた組織体であり、私立大学はさらに憲法によって国立大学以上に大きな自由を保障されている。しかし同時に日本の大学はすべて、政府＝文部省の管理・監督下にある。とくに国立大学は人事・財政面で、政府の強い規制の下におかれている。このことは政府が大学のあり方に不満をもつ場合、その不満や批判を表明し、改革の方向にゆり動かす力をもっていることを意味している。その不満と批判は、一九八四年に当時の中曽根康弘内閣が設立した。首相直属の審議機関である「臨時教育審議会」の答申のなかに、率直に表明されることになった。一九八五年に出された「臨教審」の答申は、大学の現状に強い不満を表明し、政府に新たに「大学審議会」を設置して、大学の改革に向けて積極的・集中的な検討を開始することを求めた。そして一九八七年に設置されたその大学審議会がまず取り上げたのは、「大学設置基準」の大幅な改訂であった。

大学設置基準は、大学が文部省の設置認可をうける際に備えているべき諸条件を定めた法規である。裏返せばそれは、文部省が大学に対してのもつ管理監督の権限をあらわすものであり、その変更や運用の仕方によって大学改革を促進したり制約したりする可能性をもつことを意味している。大学審議会はまずはその設置基準を改訂し、改革に向けて大学に自主的な努力を喚起することをめざしたのである。

大学設置基準は学生一人当りの校地・校舎面積、教員・学生比率、学生一人当りの図書冊数など、大学のいわば「ハード」面、それに学部や名称や、教育課程の編成の仕方、開設されるべき授業科目などの「ソフト」面について、細かく規定している。それが大学の自由な発展を妨げ、改革への自主的な努力を制約しているとする批判は、早くから大学の内外にあった。つまり大学設置基準は、大学危機の重要な原因のひとつとみなされてきたのである。一九九一年、その設置基準が、とくにソフト面、カリキュラム編成を中心とした教育の面で大幅に改訂されたことは、大学を改革に向けて突き動かす大きな動因となった。

## 大学内部の批判者

大学と大学教員たちの名誉のために、最後に、一九八〇年代に入ると彼らの間からも、現状への強力な批判者があらわれ始めたことを指摘しておくべきだろう。学生たちの声に耳を傾け始めたのが、なによりも私立大学であったことはすでにのべた。学生の納入する授業料を事実上唯一の収入源とする私立大学にとって、学生は「顧客」であり教育サービスの「消費者」である。進学希望者が年々増加し、教育機会への需要が供給を大きく上まわり、はげしい受験競争が展開されているうちはいいが、進学希望者の伸びが止まり、さらには減少に向かえば、たちまち経営危機におそわれかねない。そして進学希望者の供給源である一八歳人口は、一九八〇年代を通じて上昇を続けたあと、一九九二年をピークに長期的な減少の局面をむかえ、一一〇一〇年には半分近くにまで激減することが予測されている。

こうした経営面での危機感は当然のことながら、新たに市場に参入する新設大学ほど強い。学生に対する教育サービスの内容を重視する改革の動きは、これら新設の私立大学から始まった。それは、国際、情報、文化、環境、政策などの名称のついた、いわゆる「新名称学部」の開設に始まり、教育課程の改革、シラバス（講義要綱）の作成、教授法の革新、学生による授業評価の導入などに及んでいった。日本の大学の歴史のなかで初めて、本格的な大学の「教育」改革が始まったのである。この改革はやがて、「生き残り」競争の激化を予想した他の私立大学にも広がっていった。もっとも長い歴史をもつ私立大学・慶應義塾が、一九九〇年に総合政策と環境情報の二学部の新設にふみ切ったのは、そうした変化を象徴するものといえよう。

改革の担い手となったのは経営感覚の鋭い大学の理事者、それに教育の「空洞化」に危機感をもった一部の大学教員たちである。しかしかれらがまだ大学の内部で「少数派」にとどまっていることは、改革がなによりも大学の開設や学部の新設という形で進行していることに、端的に示されている。既存の大学や学部までまきこんだ改革の本格的な進行は、まだこれからといってよいだろう。

大学内部の批判者はまた、研究面での危機意識からも現れはじめた。理工系分野の大学教員を主力とするこれら批判者の多くは、欧米諸国、とくにアメリカの大学での学生や研究者としての体験から、危機感をもつようになった。日本の大学の貧弱な教育研究条件、それに硬直的で閉鎖的な組織構造では、国際的な科学技術競争に立ち遅れるばかりではないかというのである。あるアメリカの学者によれば（ヘンリ・ロソフスキー『大学の未来へ』佐藤隆三訳、TBSブリタニカ、一九九二年）、先端的な研究能力を誇る、いわゆる「研究大学」(research university)の四分之三がアメリカ一国に集中しており、日本の大学はわずか数校が、しかもその下位に入るにすぎない。この強い危機感もまた、東京大学をはじめとする日本の主要な、「研究大学」型の国立大学のなかに、現状への批判と改革の動きをひき起こしていった。

## 「規制緩和」と教育改革

このように、一九七〇年代から八〇年代にかけて、大学の内外で強まった批判の声に応じて、保守的な大学と大学教員たちの間に改革の小さな試みが、さまざまな形で進みつつあった。それを一挙に加速し、大学全体に広げる役割を果たしたのは、先にふれた一九九一年の大学設置基準の改正である。

この設置基準の改正については、それが一九八〇年の中頃から経済の領域を中心に広く議論されるようになった、中央政府の企業や地方自治体など、各種の団体・組織体に対する規制の撤廃、いわゆる「規制緩和」(deregulation)の一環であることを指摘しておく必要があるだろう。

日本の教育も、大学・学校も長い間、政府＝文部省のきびしい管理・統制の下におかれてきた。規制を緩和し撤廃することなしには、教育と研究の危機、大学や学校の危機を打開し改革を促し、活性化を図ることはできない。それが、「臨時教育審議会」の教育改革構想の基本的な理念であった。臨教審が掲げた教育の「自由化・個性化・多様化」というキャッチフレーズ、それに学校・大学、教員、教育委員会等に求められた「自主・自立」の原則は、そうした改革の理念を象徴するものに他ならない。

このことは、設置基準の改訂が、日本の教育システム全体にかかわる「規制緩和」の一部にすぎないことを意味している。しかし、それが大学改革の推進にはたした役割には、きわめて大きなものがある。な

げならそれは、日本の大学の組織体としての構造を根底からゆさぶり、保守的な大学教員たちをも改革論議にまきこまずにはおかないような、強い衝撃力をもっていただけである。

先に述べた設置基準の「ソフト面」の改正が、なぜそのような強い衝撃力をもちえたのかを理解するには、それ以前の大学の学部段階の教育がどのような基本的な構造をもっていただかを考えてみればよくわかる。

改正以前の大学設置基準によれば四年間の学部教育は、専門教育・一般教育それぞれ二年の二段階に分かれ、前半二年間の一般教育は外国語、保健体育を必修とし、また人文・社会・自然の三領域にわたって一定数の授業科目を開設し、これも学生の必修とすることを定めていた。また専門学部の名称や教育課程は伝統的な学問領域に応じて定められ、一般教育については、必要に応じて「教養部」等と呼ばれる独立の教員組織をおくことになっていた。つまり、どのような名称の学部をおき、四年間の学部教育の課程をどう編成するかについて、大学の自由は事実上認められていなかったのである。

一九九一年の設置基準の改正は、こうした規制の大部分を廃止し、それぞれの大学に教育課程編成の完全な自由を認めるものであった。こうした「自由化」の進展について懸念されるのは、教育の質の低下の危険性である。そこで大学審議会は「自由化」の付帯条件として、大学にシラバス（講義要綱）の作成、教授法の改善、授業評価の導入などを求め、さらにたえまない「自己点検・評価」の努力をすることが、それぞれの大学の義務であることを設置基準に明記した。

この「自由化」は一部の大学が批判に答え、また時代の変化を先取りする形で進めていたさまざまな改革の試みを、追認したものにすぎない。しかし学部教育の編成の自由が正式に認められたことが大学に与えた衝撃には、関係者の予想をはるかにこえて大きなものがあった。これまで保守的で改革には不熱心と批判されてきた大学と大学教員たちが、一斉にといってよいほどに、競って改革に動きはじめたのである。その基底にはいうまでもなく、これまでみてきた大学内外からの高まる批判があり、それが程度の差はあれ、大学の理事者や教員たちに抱かせるようになった危機感がある。さらにもうひとつ、一九九二年をピークに一致して進行する一八歳人口の減少が予感させる大学、とりわけ私立大学間の「生き残り」をかけた競争の激化がある。こうして危機のなかの日本の大学は、一九九〇年代に入って改革の季節をむかえることになった。

進行しはじめた大学改革の中心は、なによりも大学の「教育」改革にある。それは日本の大学にとって、「革命」といってもいいほどではないほどの変化である。なぜなら日本の大学教員たちは国際的に見て、もっとも教育不熱心、研究熱心な教員たちとして知られてきたからである。たとえば数年前に行われた国際調査の結果によれば、「教育と研究のどちらが重要だと思うか」という質問に「研究」と答えた教員が七〇%近くにのぼり、アメリカの教員の三〇%強という数字と、著しい対照を示している。

もちろんこのことは、大学教員たちが教育の責任を免れ、研究に専念していることを意味しない。「マスカ化」した現代の大学ではどの大学であれ、教育は大学教員の果たしているもっとも重要な役割である。にもかかわらず、いやそうであればこそ、教員たちは研究の方を大切にしたいと考える。そしてそのことが、カリキュラムや教授法をはじめとする、学生に対する教育面での改革に、大学教員たちに消極的な態度をとらせてきた。そうした研究と教育の、研究に傾いたバランスを、教育の方に大きく変えることを強いるような改革が、急速に進行しはじめたのである。それはまさに「革命」的な変化といってよいだろう。

一九九一年以降、多くの大学が一般教育の課程や教養部を廃止し、専門教育とあわせて四年間の学部教育の再編成にのり出した。学部の名称も著しく多様化し、既存の学部の中にも名称を変更するものが増えた。またシラバスの作成や、とくに外国語教育と情報教育を中心とした教授法の改善、それに学生による授業評価の導入なども着実に進んでいる。「教育革命」はほぼ軌道にのったとみてよい。ただ改革が「革命」と呼べるほどに根底的なものであらうとすれば、それに対する批判や抵抗もまた、当然のことながら大きなものにならざるをえない。教育軽視のこれまでの体制に慣れた保守的な大学教員たちが、どれほど内外の批判が強く、危機感が高まったからといって、直ちに心の底から「革新的」になり、改革の推進に積極的になるとは考えにくい。大多数の教員、それに学生たちの意識や価値観が根底から変わるまでには、長い時間が必要とされる。改革への圧力が強く、「革命」の理念が高く掲げられるほど、大学の危機もまた

深くなるといわねばならないだろう。

## 研究の革新

大学の教育改革の側面に偏りすぎたかも知れない。最後に研究面での改革にもふれておこう。大学の危機が基礎研究の、ひいては先端科学技術の危機でもあるという認識がようやく産業界にも広がり、大学における理工系の研究者たちの危機感と、産業界のそれとが一致しはじめたことはすでにのべた。その結果として、大学は企業からの研究員の受入れや人的交流に積極的になり、企業もまた「寄付講座」などの形で、大学の基礎研究に、物的・人的な支援を強めはじめている。産学協同・産学交流が、ようやく本格化しはじめたのである。

そして政府＝文部省は、この機をとらえて、これまで軽視されてきた大学の研究機能の強化、具体的には大学院の拡充、若手研究者の育成・確保、研究費の増額、施設設備の更新などに積極的な施策をとりはじめた。財政状況がきびしく、また経済の低迷が続くなかで、政府が基礎研究のレベルアップに向けて本格的な努力を開始したことは、それだけ激しい国際競争のなかでの、大学における研究の地盤沈下に対する危機感の強さを物語っている。

こうした研究機能の振興策の焦点に浮かび上がってきたのは、いわゆる「研究大学」(research university)の育成・強化である。これまで長い間、とくに一九七〇年代から八〇年代にかけて、政府＝文部省は大学の研究機能について平等主義的な政策をとり続けてきた。一九八〇年代の後半は、そうした研究政策への批判と反省が始まった時期であり、それは東京大学や京都大学等に代表される日本の研究大学の、積極的な整備・充実のための政策的努力の開始を意味するものであった。

具体的には「大学院重点化」とよばれる一連の政策のなかで、これら研究大学の中心は学部段階から大学院での教育研究に移され、教員数、入学者数の増加、経常費の増額、競争的・重点的に配分される研究費の増額、他官庁や民間企業からの資金導入、若手研究者に対する奨学金制度の拡充、C O Eとよばれる重点的研究ユニットの設置など、さまざまな強化策がうち出されている。

改革はそれだけでなく、大学の内部組織にまで及び、戦前期以来の一講座一教授の小講座制にかわって、複数の教授から組織される大講座制が主流になり始めたほか、研究活動の活性化をはかるための組織の開放化、流動化の試みが、多くの大学で進められるようになってきている。導入の決まった教員の任期制も、そのひとつである。独創的・創造的な研究者と研究成果をより多くみ出すことのできる教育研究体制づくりは、「教育改革」とならぶ大学改革のもうひとつの柱になっているといつてよいだろう。

くり返しになるが、大学が直面している危機の根は深い。それは、大学の迫られている改革が、「革命」とよべるほどに根本的なものでなければならないことを示唆している。それが大学と大学教員たちにとって、どれほど大きな意識や価値観の根底的な転換を迫るものであるかは、あらためていうまでもあるまい。

そして「革命」が、その名にふさわしい激しさで進行するとき、そこからさまざまな抵抗が生じ、混乱がひろがることはさげがたい。しかし同時に、新しい大学の像は、そうした混乱と混迷、模索の過程を終わることなしに、見えてくることはないだろう。必要なのは危機の深さをおそれることではなく、その「危機」を変革への「好機」ととらえる積極性であり、日本の大学と大学教員たちは、いまそれを問われているのである。

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