Education in Japan and England: A Personal View*

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Abstract

Japan and England tend to approach education in quite different ways and often for different ends. Japan tends to see the direct economic benefit that accrues from an educated population and therefore places a great deal of emphasis on schooling. Successive English governments have not been so keen to provide a nationwide system of schooling for several reasons: the fear of an educated working class and the feeling that it should be a private or clerical responsibility, for example. This does not mean that Japan devotes a particularly large slice of her resources to education but perhaps that she has more clearly defined aims.

Keywords: Education, Japan, England, schooling, population, economic benefits.

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Introduction

Japan and England tend to approach education in quite different ways and, often, for different ends. Japan tends to see the direct economic benefit that accrues from an educated population and therefore places a great deal of emphasis on schooling. Successive English governments have not been so keen to provide a nationwide system of schooling for several reasons: the fear of an educated working class and the feeling that it should be a private or clerical responsibility for example. This does not mean that Japan devotes a particularly large slice of her resources to education but perhaps the she has more clearly defined aims.

As a general rule, Japan's modern (i.e. post-Meiji) education system has been created by the government in response to specific perceived social and economic needs. There is of course a thriving private education sector in Japan but it is mainly a reflection of the public system and the high level of demand for education. In England, however, the government was reluctant to become involved in providing a general system of education but was increasingly driven into taking action, however piecemeal and expenditure conscious. For example whereas the Japanese made an extravagant plan for a national network of schools in 1872, disregarding the lack of resources for their grand scheme, the English Act of 1870 was only designed to plug the gaps left by voluntary school organisations.

The Japanese recognized the importance of education in their quest for rapid modernization and industrialization. They lacked technical experts and had to spend vast sums on salaries for foreign advisors and teachers in the early Meiji period; the sooner these could be replaced by Japanese the better. In order to catch up as rapidly as possible Japanese students were also sent to Western Europe and the United States to study, adapt and adopt techniques of production, management, training and government.
The approach was strictly pragmatic, though not necessarily systematic and seems to have paid dividends in terms of economic growth, in so far as the two may be strictly correlated.

The English approach education on a more individualistic basis: the Church provided schools in the hope that they would foster Christian morality and social conformity in the individual. Education lacked statist overtones, at least until the present decade. There has been a noticeable lack of central direction in comparison with other industrialized nations, teachers have enjoyed considerable professional freedom and the academic has not been gravely hampered by an emphasis on the vocational.

The development of a system of compulsory education in Japan and England may be split into three major stages using the passing of the 1872 and 1947 Education Acts in the case of Japan and of 1870 and 1944 in the case of England (and Wales) as the division markers. Conveniently for us these termini are almost contemporaneous though the catalysts for change were not necessarily so similar.

In order to understand the causes and aspirations of the Meiji government which led to the 1872 Gakusei (Fundamental Code of Education) one must survey the pre-existing situation. Furthermore, one must examine the outside influences on Japan - directly in the form of foreign educational systems and indirectly in the form of greater industrial development for example. The English system was not as regularised as those of her European neighbours and therefore was not seen as so much of a model by the Japanese. It does, however, serve as a standard for comparison particularly in the light of the differing fundamental attitudes shown towards education by the first industrialized nation and the first oriental nation to catch up, and indeed eventually to surpass her economically. Thus first we shall explore education and schooling in Tokugawa Japan using the mid-nineteenth century English situation for comparison and contrast.

The social organization of each country meant that education was not a concept that could be applied equally to all, quantitatively or qualitatively. Within each society there developed a dual system - one for the offspring of the ruling elite and one, much less formalized, for the children of everyone else in varying degrees.

The Tokugawa Heritage

During the Tokugawa period (1603 - 1868) formal education became

increasingly widespread and secularised. Buddhist priests were no longer the sole transmitters of literacy and classical learning: their role was usurped by Confucian scholars who had the support of the government.(Dore 1965 p14). This secularization did not occur in England where the established Anglican Church claimed that education was its prerogative and had, for the most part, the sympathy of parliament. However, the numerous non-conformist church organisations disapproved of this hegemony and so they set up rival schools. The conflict between the churches and between secularists and ecclesiastics remains, the strong influence of the latter being demonstrated by the fact that religious instruction, albeit non-denominational in theory, is the only compulsory subject in English schools today.

As Buddhism held decreasing sway over the Tokugawas, state ideology accorded with educational ideology and thus, when the time came, the state felt able to take the initiative without having to defer to the clerics. Education, at least for the samurai, was officially encouraged for a number of reasons. Confucianism itself places great emphasis on wisdom, albeit largely restricted to a knowledge of the Chinese classics. Education was also a response to the fact the samurai were enjoying a long period - two and a half centuries - of enforced leisure and it was felt that they ought to spend their time profitably. Education would render the samurai more able to administer their fiefs and the Tokugawa regime. Gradually individual daimyo established schools in their own fiefs, the first being opened in 1636 by Morioka. The government also participated, helping Hayashi Razan to establish a school in Edo (present day Tokyo) in 1630. (Dore 1965 p73). The greatest period of growth, however, was from the late 18th century with the establishment of 55 fief schools in twenty years. (Dore 1965 p 25). The government may also have hoped that if the samurai regained their moral standards and sense of duty they would cease squandering their stipends and thereby put an end to the daimyos' financial plight.

Where the samurai studied the Four Books and Five Classics in Chinese his English counterpart read Greek and Latin. No-one could persuade teachers that students should first learn Chinese as a language and then approach the Classics rather than learning to read the Chinese off in stilted Japanese. Being able to compose verse in Latin or Greek was of equally little practical application to the average English public school boy, but it was seen as an "education" in itself and certainly marked a distinction

between rulers and ruled. The English classical curriculum included a study of the Bible and the catechism; these religious elements lack a direct counterpart in Japan but their moral exhortations could be matched in spirit at least by those of Confucius.

Samurai sons would attend their fief school from the age of 8 to 10 until 15 paying attention both to bun and bu ,the arts of literature and of war. A strict hierarchy operated within the school - from one's relationship towards the master and fellow pupils to the number of attendants who could accompany one to the classroom. In this respect life in a fief school prepared the young samurai for their position in the social hierarchy. Rules were to be unquestioningly accepted and obeyed for the better maintenance of the status quo - a fact which seems to make the events of 1868 and 1872 all the more surprising and radical.

The English public school played much the same role for the sons of the aristocracy and gentry. These schools often had medieval foundations as grammar schools intended for girls and boys of a particular town. Gradually they became more socially exclusive, taking pupils from outside the immediate vicinity who became boarders and paid fees. By the nineteenth century these schools were the preserve of the male social elite.

Samurai daughters did not have the same educational opportunities as their brothers, a situation paralleled in England. Daughters of ruling elites were expected to become accomplished in order to make themselves marriageable but too much learning was seen as unfeminine. Thus Japanese girls were more likely to be taught to read Japanese literature than Chinese; English girls might read French rather than Greek. Both were probably taught at home by private tutors and might be encouraged to keep their learning "a profound secret, especially from the men who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts or a cultivated understanding" in the words of a Dr Gregory in 1774. (Dore 1965 p 66). His Japanese contemporary Matsudaira Sadanobu predicted even greater dangers should women become too learned:"when women are learned and clever in their speech it is a sign that civil disturbance is not far off". (Dore 1965 p 66).

Further down the social scale greater educational equality between siblings was a possibility. In Japan, village terakoya were the main disseminators

of education. There the curriculum was somewhat more practical - though within a traditional framework - consisting of the three Rs, (reading, writing and arithmetic), heavily laced with moral injunctions. These schools were originally established according to local demand in the grounds of Buddhist temples and thus the teacher was often a priest, though their qualifications for teaching were not always all that they might have been. (Dore 1965 p 252 et seq).

The schools varied enormously in size and scope - some took samurai children, others only commoners, some were supported by the village headman or a well-to-do farmer, others by cooperative endeavour. Schools might develop from a farmer teaching his own children and then taking on a few more or they might be established by scribes or ronin (masterless samurai) as a means of earning a supplementary income. In Edo samurai teachers taught samurai children though there was no prohibition on them teaching commoner children as well, so long as those with merchant parents did not want to introduce the abacus into the classroom. The abacus was looked down upon by the samurai and the intellectuals but this should not be interpreted as a lack of interest in mathematics as in fact wasan or Japanese mathematics was a well developed science. However it was considered as an intellectual plaything rather than something to be used for developing technology. (Morishima 1984 p 65)

Teaching was a respected profession undertaken by samurai of limited means as well as commoners, either on a full or part-time basis. It was also thought to be a suitable profession for the disabled or, occasionally, those lacking any other abilities. English school masters tended not to enjoy a high status possibly because so many of them were quite unfit for the task with which they were charged. Low pay made it hard to attract good teachers then as now. In Japan, schools tended to be more commonplace in urban areas as there there would be demand from merchants for basic literacy and numeracy. The expansion of book publication from around 1800 fuelled this demand as did increasing knowledge of the West even when all information still had to be funnelled through the Dutch merchants at Deshima off Nagasaki.

It is hard to know exactly how many children had some sort of education outside the home or achieved a basic level of literacy. According to some estimates there may have been over half a million children attending terakoya in the mid-nineteenth century, with a further 100,000 attending

fief schools and private academies. (Passin 1965 p 44). This is to be contrasted with more than two million English children attending day schools in 1851 plus a further two million who only went to Sunday schools. (Census 1851 pcxxii Table A). Bearing in mind that the population of Japan was nearly twice as large as England's it can be seen that education, even at its very most basic, was considerably more widespread in England prior to the establishment of a national system. The Industrial Revolution in England had led to the employment of children as factory operatives working in particularly harsh conditions. The situation was sufficiently grave for the government to seek to restrict the number of hours that could be worked by children and, furthermore, to insist that these children spend part of their time at school. Peel's Apprentices Act of 1802 led to schooling becoming compulsory for some juvenile industrial workers but not for their agricultural or more leisured peers. Gradually, despite considerable opposition, other Factory Acts stipulated further groups of young workers who should receive at least a modicum of education. Providing schools, however, was another matter.

Japanese children were not to be found as factory operatives until the late 19th century but they might have been expected to help plant and harvest the family's rice crop or participate to some degree in home-based economic activities. Such employment might well interfere with schooling but it was often of a seasonal nature. Possibly more of a barrier was formed by the need to pay for whatever form of schooling was available and deemed useful by parents. In this respect, the picture in mid-nineteenth century Japan might be likened to that of England on the eve of the Industrial Revolution.

Thus, in Japan the basis for a widespread diffusion of elementary education had been established by the end of the Tokugawa regime. The notion that self-improvement could be achieved through education was accepted by many and thus it followed that national progress could also be so achieved. In Tokugawa society education was a means of social ascent within a rigidly structured hierarchy. Catching up with the West was not a desire fostered by the Meiji Restoration alone but had become an obvious, if not openly acknowledged, aim after Commodore Perry's Black Ships had called in 1853. Japan needed to acquire new skills and knowledge if she were to maintain her national pride. Knowledge, especially practical know-how, was at a premium.

The education of samurai and commoner alike stressed the acceptance of the existing order and was not therefore seen as a dangerous weapon in the hands of the masses as was the case in England. The Meiji leaders had no reason to fear that subversion would follow from universal education; the ideology of the state and society was, to all intents and purposes, monolithic. Thus the formulators of the 1872 Gakusei could see only benefits accruing from the provision of compulsory education for all children regardless of sex or social status. The universal provision of elementary schooling would make for the widest possible mobilization of talent and the hierarchy of institutions topped by Tokyo University would provide a method of sifting and sorting that talent: a function which the Japanese education system still performs today, although the summit is no longer so narrow and exclusive. The samurai's Confucian education had also instilled a sense of benevolence and responsibility towards the community as a whole; obligation in Japanese society was a two-way process.

The Traditional English Education System

The pre-1870 system of education in England and Wales was hardly worthy of being labelled a system at all. Undoubtedly schools of many forms and qualities did exist and they may be credited with achieving a measure of basic literacy for up to 80% of the population in the late Victorian era but there was not an organised structure. (Sanderson 1983 p 59). A variety of educational establishments could be found in Victorian England: to start at the apex, Oxford and Cambridge Universities had medieval origins, Durham and London were established by the time Queen Victoria ascended the throne. The "public schools" for the male offspring of the social elite had been jolted from their narrow classical basis by the likes of Arnold at Rugby and Thring at Uppingham. There were even a few public schools for girls providing a high standard of education such as Cheltenham Ladies College. The opportunities open to the vast majority of children were not so enlightened and over dependent upon voluntary provision, mainly the munificence of the Established Church. The provision of mass education was a topic of national debate and enquiry; a debate which the government was reluctant to participate in for several reasons: fear of possible unrest caused by an educated working class, a disinclination to spend tax revenues on schooling and the consequences of dealing with the churches' educational organisations. Nevertheless piecemeal progress was made in nationwide provision with the state drawn inextricably into an ever increasing

commitment, financial and otherwise, to the development of an elementary school system. By 1851 it seems that a minimum of 44% of boys and 38% of girls were receiving some formal schooling. (Great Britain, Census 1854 facing page cxx). The Church of England prefered to expend considerable resources on voluntary school building rather than allow the state to fulfill the role of provider. However, the sizeable body of non-conformists were far from happy about the Anglican position and so a network of rival denominational schools was gradually built up, relying again on private contributions. Voluntary provision did not necesssarily mean that schools were built where they were most needed - in the burgeoning industrial cities for example. Furthermore, the fact that mass education was largely in clerical hands meant that the curriculum was largely devoted to basic literacy and memorization of the catechism. The church hoped that the schools would be important agents of social control inculcating civilised behaviour and respectful deference to the established order. It also feared that schooling might make the poor unfit to render menial tasks and susceptible to subversive literature.

The idea that a higher general level of education might have beneficial effects on the economy did not really gain much support until after the 1867 Paris Exhibition which clearly demonstrated how Britain had lost her competitive edge since the 1851 Great Exhibition. Also the military victories of Prussia and the Unionists suggested that education could lead to greater military efficiency. Literacy became an ever more necessary skill - if only so that one could read instructions or safety notices.

Until 1870 the government's control of schools was limited to ensuring certain standards of hygiene, providing an inspectorate for denominational schools which received state aid for buildings and running some 610 schools - 5/6ths of which were within workhouses, the rest being attached to prisons or the armed forces - out of a total of some 45,000 schools in the country as a whole. As late as in 1861 the Newcastle Commission reported : "In a country situated politically and socially as England is, Government has, ordinarily speaking, no educational duties, except towards those whom destitution, vagrancy or crime casts upon its hands". (Newcastle Commission Report 1861 p298).

The state, however, did assume responsibilities with regard to the more selective educational institutions, setting up commissions of inquiry into the running of Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the allocation of

school endowments. The exigencies of the times meant that reform in these elite institutions was long overdue. The Endowed Schools Commission of 1864 had particularly fortuitous effects on the education of girls as it managed to divert ancient endowments in their direction, as had been the donors original intention. Thus by 1870 there was a considerable variety of educational establishments in England, catering for all social classes and for all levels of scholarship.

The Establishment of Nationwide Elementary Education

Turning to the more immediate causes of the major educational reforms made by the Japanese and English governments in 1872 and 1870 respectively one sees that they were not altogether dissimilar. In many ways the Japanese Gakusei was the more radical and thoroughgoing, though it was also rather overambitious. In its favour, however, was the guiding principle that elementary education should be available and compulsory for every boy and girl in Japan. In practice, provision was not so easy - there was a lack of suitable buildings to house the 54,760 elementary schools envisioned by the Code as well as teaching materials, teachers and parents willing and able to send their progeny to school.(Lehmann 1982 p260). In contrast the English saw no reason to make schooling compulsory nor to provide a national network of elementary schools. The 1870 Act merely allowed for the creation of School Boards empowered to open schools in areas where there was insufficient voluntary provision. A local bye-law was necessary for the enforcement of attendence and these tended to be enacted only in urban areas. The farmers sitting on rural School Boards had no wish to see their supply of cheap seasonal labour reduced by the need to attend school.

The Meiji government was not prepared to rely on local or voluntary school provision and was determined to establish a national hierarchy of schools under centralised control. However, the costs of such an ambitious scheme were to be largely borne by the consumers with minimal government aid and this in itself was a major cause of the scheme's only partial implementation. A peasant with scarce resources did not see paying for four years of tuition for each of his children as a priority ; if the government thought that education was of such importance why did it not see fit to allocate more resources to it?

Successive decades were to witness government experimentation with various imported philosophies and systems of schooling until an acceptable and workable blend of indigenous and foreign methods was achieved. The French model was the first to be adopted: its appeal lay in its centralised organisation but it was a very grand scheme which was too expensive to implement and paid insufficient regard to the existing educational heritage. The peasantry who formed 80% of the population did not find it easy to understand the wholesale restructuring of the educational system, coming as it did, in tandem with other changes in society. Disillusionment with the public system led to the establishment of many private schools, often run on overtly Confucian lines.

1879 saw the publication of an Education Ordinance which was heavily influenced by American laissez-faire as promoted by Professor David Murray of Rutgers University who had so impressed a Meiji mission to the United States that he was invited back to Tokyo to advise.(Passin 1965 pp70-71). Fortunately Murray was a realist and recognized the importance of Japanese traditions at a time when the government was prepared to accept and adopt Western ideas wholesale. The centralized system was largely dismantled and greater responsibility given to local elected school boards; this was widely interpreted to mean that government enthusiasm for education was on the wane and thereby led to a decline in public interest fuelled by the fear of higher local taxation. In 1880 the Ordinance was once more revised and much control reverted to the centre: the experiment with Western models was drawing increasing criticism, from the Imperial household down to the peasant. Nativism was a reaction, to some extent spearheaded by the problems faced by the new educational system. American influence was replaced by a combination of German and Confucian philosophies which seemed more in tune with Japanese traditional moral values.

The educational confusion of the early Meiji era was brought to a conclusion by Mori Arinori who became head of the Ministry of Education in 1885.(Hall 1973 p409). Four Ordinances issued in 1886 were to set the basic framework of the educational system for the next six decades - no mean feat. From then on the purpose of education was equivocally stated as being "not for the sake of the pupils, but for the sake of the country".(Passin 1965 p88). The aim was to make Japan modern and powerful and thus resources were diverted to further this aim, for example applied sciences were developed at the expense of the more abstract disciplines, a situation which is largely unchanged today. It was a blatently elitist

model after the initial years of compulsory schooling but it served the nation well in leading her to industrial competitiveness, albeit that its pupils also led Japan into the ignominy of the Pacific War.

Mori Arinori's Four Ordinances of 1886 led to an expansion of secondary education along lines of strictly determined priorities given the limited resources available. The system which developed was multi-tracked, elitist and successful in its aims of promoting an increasingly high general level of educational attainment for the many and an even higher degree of achievement for the few. The latter was distilled from the former by a rigorous sequence of competitive examinations thus creating a channel for upward social mobility in an ultimately more meritocratic society. Education had always been revered in Confucian society and this tradition was perpetuated and used to support a rigidly hierarchical system of educational opportunity. Although conservatives recognised the centrality of education in the development of Japan they were not prepared to countenance unfettered adoption of Western attitudes for fear that this would lead to the erosion of quintessentially Japanese qualities. The desire to foster suitably Japanese sentiments in school children led to the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890. This document was treated with the utmost reverence until 1945, instilling the traditional values of loyalty and filial piety.(Tsunoda et al 1971 pp646-7).

The same attitude did not prevail in England, either in theory or in practice. Education was not seen as a force for egalitarianism or equal opportunities, if only because the traditional ruling classes felt they could only lose by such a development.

The early 20th century saw an ever increasing demand for and consumption of education in Japan. In 1890 just half school age children were attending school, by 1900 the figure had risen to just over 80% and a further decade was to see over 98% of children at school.(Japan,Monbushō 1980 pp464-465). With the benefit of hindsight, this might be seen as a crucial factor in the development of an industrial society. The schools became a medium for inculcating patriotic sentiments - aikoku (love of the country). fukoku-kyohei (rich country, strong army) - for transmitting moral values and social discipline. Japanese schools were to become instruments of official and efficient indoctrination in a way the English schools never

have been. Pre-war Normal Schools for teacher training were characterised by their militaristic atmosphere and organization: military drill had been established in 1886 by Mori and henceforth the bugle ruled.(Hall 1973 p474 et seq). Originality was repressed, and submission to authority was essential. There emerged the easily recognized "normal school types" who were to run Japan's inter-war schools. After such training it was not surprising that teachers readily toed the government line throughout. In contrast to this, English teachers enjoyed a great deal of freedom with regard to both method and content. In 1918 an official Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers describes the teacher's role - to "think for himself and work out for himself such methods of teaching as may use his powers to the best advantage and be best suited to the particular needs and conditions of the School. Uniformity in detail of practice is not desirable, even if it were attainable".(Gosden 1983 p52). This position is only now being questioned by the government which seeks greater control over school teachers. Thus two fundamentally different attitudes towards teachers may be seen; perhaps this very distinction is symptomatic of the two nations' views on education, among other things.

Turning to Japan and leaving the ethical content of the curriculum aside, one should ask what children were being taught and how this investment in human capital correlates with industrialization. The 1881 Primary School Regulations show that lessons for the first grades of elementary school were divided roughly equally between five subjects - moral education, reading, composition, calligraphy and arithmetic.(Japanese National Commission for UNESCO 1966 p 57). Those who remained beyond the compulsory years might spend a few hours on geography, history, elementary science and, for girls, sewing and home economics. Subsequent regulations altered the balance between the basic subjects offered but the same core courses remained. Thus, in a sense, the lessons were not strictly "vocational" but they led to subsequent generations being literate and numerate, skills invaluable in the march towards industrialization.[1]

In order to modernize rapidly Japan had to rely on improving knowledge and the acquisition and assimilation of such know-how depended upon a significant proportion of the population (or at least the male half of it) being functionally literate and numerate. A smaller, but growing number had to be capable of assessing the value of overseas knowledge and able to make the most productive use of it. At first the Meiji government expended huge amounts on bringing foreign experts to Japan and also sending Japanese

abroad, notably to the United States, Great Britain and Germany. The government set up professional training institutes for engineers, doctors, lawyers and agriculturalists, many of which were to be absorbed into the nascent universities. Thus routes of entry into various professions became formalised at an early stage in Japan's industrialization. Qualifications mattered and were to be the major avenue to success; this situation led inexorably to the development of "the diploma disease" which Ronald Dore sees as having inflicted Japan from the inter-war years.(Dore 1976). The Japanese civil service first set an entrance examination in 1887 and recruited the cream of the university graduates.(Spaulding 1967). Only in 1918 did the number of graduates entering the business world exceed the number going into the government. Of the 15,470 graduates from Tokyo Imperial University during the first thirty years of its existence some 45% went into some form of government service as executives, technologists or members of the judiciary for example whereas 17% went into private firms.(Ward and Rustow 1964 p29). Increasingly, however, major companies began to seek graduate recruits so that higher education became a prerequisite for many occupations in Japan long before that became the case in England. It should be noted that this is another case in which differences between large and small enterprises persist, the latter being much less likely than the former to recruit university graduates.

The Japanese inter-war school system consisted of five separate tracks or ladders which, once embarked upon determined one's length of formal education, social prestige and employment prospects. Under this system just 8% of pupils finished their schooling after six years of compulsory elementary education. Just over half the pupils went on to a Higher Elementary School for 2 years, followed , for the boys, during the war years by part-time attendance at a Youth School for a further 2 years. The other third of the school age population was destined for higher things - 20% went on to Vocational Schools for up to 4 years qualifying them for semi-skilled occupations. For girls the highest readily available level of schooling was provided by the Girls' High School which was of an equivalent standard to the boys' middle school. The latter formed the fast track for semi-professsional and, for the 3% who obtained firstly a place at a boys' high school and then entered university, professional employment. (SCAP 1948).

The English Education Act of 1870 was far from a terminus ad quem; rather it was the beginning of a formal recognition that the secular state might

have a role to play in the education of her subjects. The framework established in 1870 was subject to considerable modification and extension as new demands were placed upon it and its deficiencies became more apparent. The Act left the question of compulsory attendance to be decided locally: bye-laws were passed in some areas, notably urban ones, enforcing attendance. The anomaly of this situation was recognized by the government in 1880 when five years' schooling between the ages of five and ten was made compulsory for all children. As in Japan, once elementary education had become universal the demand for secondary and then higher education increased leading to a series of rather ad hoc measures. As government grants were paid on the basis of achievement tests teachers concentrated on a very narrow band of subjects - basic English, arithmetic and religious instruction - to the detriment of general education.

Education remained a matter for debate during the early twentieth century both within and without parliament which continued to appoint Royal Commissions to investigate the changing situation. Individual School Boards were taking the initiative and some were running higher elementary schools which some MPs thought should not be given grant aid. Others wanted these first moves towards universal secondary education to be recognised and encouraged. The muddle continued but progress was made in some areas such as technical and higher education as industrial benefactors endowed universities particularly in the industrial heartlands of England - Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham for example.

The multifarious system was reorganised in 1902 when the School Boards were abolished and replaced by municipally based local education authorities which remain the basic unit of educational organisation today. In 1904 the government made the aims of the state school system explicit: the purpose of elementary schools was "to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it, and to make the best use of the school years available in assisting both boys and girls, according to their different needs, to fit themselves, practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life".(Barnard 1969 p217). No mention was made of the needs of the state in contrast to Japan where Mori Arinori pronounced in 1889 that "the goal of our educational system is ...purely and simply the service of the state ".(Hall 1973 p397). Also to be noted is the assumption that each child has different needs and thus the government felt able to justify the non-comprehensive nature of the school system. This assumption still prevails as may be seen in the need to have

multi-level school leaving examinations. This is not the case in Japan where prefectures set the same papers for all 15 year olds and expect a rather narrow spread of results, an expectation which is fulfilled.

Post-war Developments

Not for the first time was war to be a major catalyst for change. However, in this case the two agents of reform were radically different. Japan had reform imposed upon her by the victorious allies - in practice, the Americans - whereas in England the 1944 Education Act was a product of the consensus brought about by the war and the hope that a better society would ensue.

Just five weeks after the Japanese surrender in 1945 the Allied Occupation established the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) to advise the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) on matters of public information, religion, culture and education. The education division of the CIE had two major goals - "the removal of all militarism and ultra-nationalism from the school system" and the "gradual introduction of new educational patterns to ensure the development of schools and the training of young people and teachers for a democratic Japan".(SCAP 1948 p136).

As with other areas of SCAP policy, reforms were to be carried out by the Japanese themselves under the supervision of the General Headquarters (GHQ). SCAP directed that all schools be opened by mid-September 1945 except for military and naval establishments; where facilities were limited due to war damage then elementary education and teacher training were to be given preference. Unsuitable textbooks were not removed wholesale but deletions were made in them so that they would suffice until new books were available. Ultra-nationalist and militarist teachers were purged and no demobilized personnel were to be employed in the education system. Furthermore, as State Shinto was separated from the state it was no longer to be propagated in schools where it had hitherto held a powerful position. Such reforms paved the way for a thoroughgoing restructuring of the whole education system; the fruits of CIE's labour were encompassed in the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education which sought to ensure the maintenance of democracy in Japan by emphasizing a love of truth and justice, a sense of responsibility and an independent spirit. Henceforth education would be available to each according to his or her ability; the first nine years of

schooling were to be compulsory, free and co-educational.(SCAP 1948 pp109-111). Similar sentiments may be seen behind the 1872 Act but during the seventy years prior to the Pacific War the educational system had become multi-tracked, selective and sexist.

Such a system laid the foundations for what is termed today the shiken jigoku (examination hell); competitive selection at an ever earlier stage in schooling which largely determines one's life chances. SCAP recognised the iniquities of this situation and decided to introduce a single track, 6-3-3-4 system on the American model whereby all children followed the same route; this did not, however, mean the end of competitive examinations for those wishing to enter the most prestigious universities, high schools or even, today, the kindergartens thought most likely to set a child on the road to high achievement. However, the formal institutional disabilities faced by girls were demolished and since 1947 an ever increasing proportion have gone on to higher and further education. Single sex institutions remain at the post-compulsory level and in fact most of the females in higher education attend two year colleges which concentrate on the arts and domestic skills rather than the multi-faculty four year universities which are still male dominated.

The American ideal of equal opportunities led to mixed ability classes for all pupils and a uniform examination system. A duality did persist, however, with respect to school ownership - publicly owned institutions dominate the compulsory education sector but further up the system an increasing number of privately funded establishments may be found. The terms public and private do not necessarily correlate with levels of standard or reputation. On the whole it is the public national universities and high schools which command the greatest respect and their fees are considerably lower than those of their counterparts in the private sector. In 1984 parents of public high school pupils had to pay an average of Y267,000, ($1157 at 1984 exchange rate of Y230.66) whereas the fees for private schools averaged Y551,000, ($2388) (Bureau of Statistics 1986 p668). Wealth does not necessarily lead to a privileged education but it certainly helps in that it gives pupils a greater degree of choice and allows them to purchase more time at cram schools for example. There are of course some private schools and universities with exceptional reputations notably Keio and Waseda Universities (both of which were founded in the Meiji period) and Nada High School in Kobe which provides a remarkable number of successful entrants to Tokyo University every

year.(Rohlen 1983).

Under the 1947 Law compulsory education was extended from 6 to 9 years. Such a process is always difficult to put into effect, no more so than when there is an acute shortage of teachers, classrooms and teaching materials. However, the Japanese were eager to surmount such obstacles and set themselves on the road to recovery . The attendance rate of school age children remained at well over 99% for both sexes and classes were held under the most adverse conditions until new buildings became available.

Major revisions of the curriculum were, of course, vital. The pre-war years had seen an intensive propaganda campaign waged through the media of teachers and textbooks to justify the Imperial war machine and promote ultra-nationalism. As early as 1929 the Monbushō (Department of Education and Culture) had established an organ of thought supervision; any students who seemed to diverge from the approved line could be imprisoned or placed under surveillance until such time as they had convinced the authorities that they no longer harboured dangerous designs.

The Monbushō had enjoyed complete control over textbooks since 1903 and this meant that the increasing militarism and nationalism of the government could swiftly be reflected in school texts.(Wray 1973). Books emphasized Japanese superiority and, in contrast, the abject position of the Chinese. "There is no neccesity any more to treat the Chinese people as human beings" or, "The Chinese people are all extreme misers". No longer were the Japanese to look up to China as the fount of much of their civilization. The only thing that Japan now had to learn from China was not to make her mistakes.(Association for the Study of Japanese Affairs pp26-27). Nationalism was not a new facet of history teaching: in 1900 the Monbushō regulations concerning history had stated that "the essential aim of teaching Japanese history is to make children comprehend the fundamental character of the Empire" and to foster in them the "national spirit".(ibid p29).

Since the 1880s in Japan moral education had formed a core part of the curriculum and unquestioning obedience was drilled into several generations of school children. The values imparted during these lessons stressed the tenets of State Shinto and it was these that the Occupation forces rigorously sought to remove from the classroom. Henceforth, religious and political education was to be non-sectarian as befitted a democratic

society.

Wholesale removal of unsuitable textbooks would have left schools bereft of teaching materials so the authorities had to make do with deletion whilst temporary texts and then fully revised versions were devised. The Monbushō retained control over school textbooks - a power which some feel is open to abuse. For example, controversy still surrounds history texts which discuss the events of the first twenty years of the present Emperor's reign, 1926 - 1945. A national curriculum is a very powerful means of communicating; such a system has proved remarkably successful in providing school pupils with a high level of general education and imparting a strong sense of national identity and purpose. On the other hand, teaching methods tend not to encourage discussion or criticism. Teachers stick to the set text even though they may realize its deficiencies for it is upon such a base that examination questions are set.

In many ways examinations have come to dominate schooling and they begin at a very early age: a few select kindergartens even set tests as a means of controlling admission. Entrance examinations taken at the ages of 12, 15 and 18 determine how far up the scholastic hierarchy one will progress. The lack of a unified external examinations system in Japan is a considerable shortcoming as it means that children have to sit an exam for each institution which they hope to enter, often having to actually attend the institution to do so and to prepare for varying subject combinations. To enter an elite university, notably the former Imperial Universities, one needs ideally to have attended a prestigious high school, entry to which is smoothed if one has been at a highly regarded junior high school. Thus examination pressures begin at elementary school and have led to an ever increasing proportion of pupils attending juku cram schools several evenings a week. These juku are all privately run with varying degrees of sophistication. Mathematics, Japanese language and English form the core of most children's extra lessons and intensive testing is a feature of these schools

Even if only regular school hours are taken into account, Japanese children spend much longer in the classroom than their Western counterparts. Using an American five day school week as standard, Japanese pupils get an extra three months schooling per year and therefore over the 12 years that some 90% now spend at school they are actually receiving the equivalent of an extra four years tuition in our terms.(Rohlen 1983 p160). Perhaps this

fact in itself may go some way to explaining the high standard of results achieved by Japanese pupils in international test surveys.

The post war years witnessed a great expansion in secondary and higher education. In 1945 Japan had 48 universities with about 100,000 students, by 1950 there were already four times the number of universities and more than double the number of students; in 1983 there were as many as 457 universities with 1,834,000 students. Of this number, 95 were run by the national government, 34 by prefectures and the remaining 328 by private bodies.(Keizai Koho Center 1984 p93). The quality of these establishments and their social prestige varies enormously. The national and multi-faculty universities tend to enjoy the highest reputation, recruit the brightest students and provide the government and major companies with their high-fliers. Tokyo University enjoys a pre-eminent position in this respect.

In theory every high school student has an equal chance of obtaining a place at a prestigious university; the democratic society that both the Occupiers and the occupied hoped to see arise from the ashes of the war was to be meritocratic. However, it is becoming more apparent that those with privileged backgrounds have a much higher chance of receiving a privileged education, or at least a place in an elite institution, than those with less favourable family circumstances. SCAP had hoped that educational reform would lead to egalitarian social transformation which was a necessary condition for democratic government. However, with the exception of 1947-48, conservative government has prevailed since 1945 and this has meant that successive governments have sought to erode some of the more progressive and alien aspects of the 1947 reforms. Any such change has been fiercely resisted by the traditionally left-wing Japan Teachers' Union (JTU).

The JTU's establishment was encouraged by SCAP in line with the pro-union stance taken in the early years of the Occupation. The union seemed to embody the ideals of democracy and progressive education, encouraging women to participate in its activities. It has always been led by the left and thus counter-balances the Monbushō's conservatism. Whereas Japan's teachers are united in an "industry-wide" union, their English counterparts' loyalties are split between several unions of varying degrees of radicalism. This makes negotiations with their employers relatively intractable as has been seen over the past couple of years when schooling

has probably been more disrupted than ever before by the teachers' pay dispute. The English unions also form a pro-education bastion in the face of government attack though there is an inherent weakness in trying to "bite the hand that feeds".

The institutional barriers faced by girls and women in Japan were largely removed during the Occupation - universal franchise for all over the age of 20, coeducation and equal access to national universities, equal rights of participation in local government, equal property rights, freedom of marriage and equal grounds for divorce, equal inheritance rights for all children and the right of a married woman to conduct business on her own account. However, the actual position of women was to change more slowly but it is notable that girls have zealously taken up equal educational opportunities.

In 1946-47 when the number of elementary school pupils was split almost equally between the sexes just 0.5% of university students were female.(SCAP 1948 p390). Since 1980 90% of both boys and girls have continued their schooling until at least 18 and of these, 30% carry on into further education.(Japan, Bureau of Statistics 1986 p640). However, there the equality ends as girls tend not to go to four year universities but to two year colleges and womens' universities. In 1980 just 7% of successful applicants to Tokyo University were female but some 90% of junior college students are female.(Rohlen 1983 p85). The proportion of women in four year universities as a whole has risen from 8% in 1960 to 18% in 1980 ; in England, 40% of university undergraduates are female.(Japan, Bureau of Statistics 1986 p656). Girls' education in Japan is still regarded, to a considerable extent, as a means of producing "good wives and wise mothers". The highly educated woman in Japan is still a rara avis , as indeed are prominent career women though this situation is changing slowly. As more people become more educated it may become harder for the economy to absorb or utilise their skills to the full; this might be even more the case were women to seek to enter the professions in large numbers for example.

Parental attitudes are apparently very important in determining girls' educational adttainments. Women are not expected to have a career and therefore it is not worth investing in a four year degree, let alone the years of intense preparation necessary. In 1974 a poll revealed that although 99% of parents planned for their sons to go to university, only 56% thought similarly with regard to their daughters.(Rohlen 1983 p86),

After all, graduation from a prestigious university is perceived as being a distinct disadvantage with regard to marriage prospects and few women are prepared to put themselves at such a disadvantage in a society where single life is not considered to be a realistic option.

To turn to post-war England, the main achievement of the 1944 Education Act was the opening up of free secondary education to all children until the age of eighteen. The period of compulsory education was to extend until 15, with the expressed intention that the school leaving age be further raised to 16 as soon as practicable; in fact this was not done until 1973 after several setbacks largely due to the cost involved. The ensuing forty or so years have been taken up with a debate over what sort of education should be provided, in what type of school, and how pupils were to be selected and examined. The idealism fostered during the war which had been a major catalyst for the Act was not to last for very long.

The system remains in many ways multitracked. Firstly there is a major schism between the free maintained schools run by the local education authorities and the 2,599 fee paying schools of the independent sector which catered for 6% of pupils in 1984-5. A second method of looking at the variety of schools available is to divide them according whether they admit on a selective basis or not. The 1960s and 1970s saw considerable confusion and reorgandisation fuelled by changes in government policies but comprehensive schools are now the norm for 85% of secondary school pupils. However, the system is a far cry from that envisaged by parliamentarians and educationalists in the closing months of the Second World War. Education became, perhaps more than ever, a political pawn.

Another major focus of discussion has been the system of external examinations. In 1951 the School Certificate which hitherto had been taken by school leavers was abolished and replaced by the General Certificate of Education: this, however, was only intended to be taken by the top 20% of school leavers at 16 and 18 - ordinary and advanced level respectively. The thinking behind this was that most children attending secondary schools should not be fettered by a system of academic examinations, the negative effects of which were well recognised. The consumers felt otherwise. Schools were pressurised into entering more children for examinations but GCEs were not suitable for pupils of all abilities nor were they designed as school leaving certificates per se. This situation was in part resolved in 1965 with the introduction of the

Certificate of Secondary Education which, like the GCE, could be taken in any number of subjects and is awarded in several grades. Such a dual system has its critics and the present government is introducing a common 16-plus examination to replace GCE 'O' levels and CSE. However, it is not set as a single paper for each subject and in fact it is still only intended as a qualification suitable for the top 60% of the ability range.(Great Britain, Department of Education and Science 1982). Thus whereas in Japan the crucial examinations are those taken to enter a particular institution, graduation from which is assumed and virtually assured, in England the emphasis is laid upon examinations taken at the end of each stage, notably at 16, 18 and 21 for the minority who go on into higher education.

What advantages does a higher level of education automatically convey? Occupational prestige hierarchies are remarkably similar in the Western world both within national boundaries and across them. Surveys taken in Japan and Britain accord approximately the same level of prestige to those with similar degrees of education: university professors are very highly ranked, teachers less so.(Treiman 1977 pp244,383-4,406). However, as per capita income rises, the salary differential between teachers and manual workers narrows which tends to mean that teaching is less likely to be regarded as a means of upward social mobility. Might expectations of higher incomes also play a role in the increasing demand for education? The fact that a leaked university entrance paper could sell for $40,000 in 1979 to a prospective student at Waseda University suggests, to Westerners at least, the expected financial rewards obtainable upon graduation from an elite institution. (Rohlen 1983 p87). Also to be borne in mind is the social prestige that entry alone confers in Japan.

Research in the 1960s on Japan suggested that investment in education had a substantial pay off: the rate of return was high in comparison with other potential investments of national and private resources. However, by the 1970s the situation was beginning to change as the number of graduates multiplied, leading to intense competition for the best jobs. The lifetime income advantage of having a degree as oppposed to entering employment immediately after high school is decreasing but this seems to be offset by the social prestige of higher education as there are no signs of a fall in the number of university and junior college entrants.(Japan, Economic Planning Agency 1986 p15). In Japan, seniority as measured by years of service to a company also plays a major role in determining income, but not

enough to offset the increment paid to those with higher levels of education. Using model wage data it can be seen that although the salary of a high school graduate is 95% of a university graduate's when the latter enters the company at 22, it has dropped to 77% of his salary by the time the pair retire at 55.(Japan, Bureau of Statistics 1986 p103). It is particularly difficult to make comparisons between men and women's salaries as they rarely perform the same job. The Japanese firm's expectations of employees differs radically according to sex and such attitudes are unlikely to change despite the 1986 Sex Discrimination Act, particularly since it lacks penalties for those who contravene its provisions. Also to be considered are the strong social and cultural attitudes commonly held with regard to women's work. A Japanese graduate's expectations of employment and salary are conditioned by his or her sex; breaking out of this mould is no easy task. In England there is greater equality of earnings the higher the level of educational attainment: graduate women earn 79% of their male counterparts but those who lack qualifications earn just 65% of the equivalent man's pay.(Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys 1985 p149).

Conclusion

How far have the aims of SCAP and the British government been achieved? In Japan's case the 1947 Law has resulted in a particularly high average level of education for both sexes, not simply in terms of years of attendance but also in levels of literacy and numeracy. Education is perceived as the main avenue to advancement and its central direction leads to uniformity of content and thus, in theory at least, all have an equal opportunity to progress. In practice other factors play a role too, for example, parental background, income and area of residence - about 40% of Tokyo University students come from the Tokyo metropolitan area for example - but diligence and perseverance are highly rated qualities. The Americans hoped that their reforms would succeed in transmitting values of democracy, peace and individuality. The latter aim has received particular attention recently as the Japanese have been criticised for their lack of creativity and their ready acceptance of authority. The reverse side of the coin has also to be noted; a genuine sense of national purpose and broad consensus enabled Japan to make a remarkable post-war recovery and to become the second largest economy in the world. Lack of creativity has not meant a lack of ingenuity or marketing skills. Ideas formulated at the centre - by those who have had the most elitist education - percolate through society with

relative ease though it must be added that the policy makers must take prior account of possible areas of conflict and thus take pragmatic decisions. This may be seen in the relationship which has developed between the Monbushō and the JTU.

SCAP explicitly wanted to end the ultra-nationalism and moralism that pervaded the pre-war system and thus specific religious or political teaching was forbidden in schools. However, such subjects could not simply be ignored and so they are treated in a rather matter of fact and unemotional manner, in the style of an encyclopedia; discussion is not commonplace in Japan's schools, nor is it of any help in achieving high marks in multiple choice examinations. Tentatively one might suggest that the very detachment now seen in the treatment of these subjects is to some extent responsible for the political apathy of the young. Schools do not encourage dissent, conflict or disruption, either in theory or reality but recently there has been an increasing incidence of bullying in schools leading occasionally to suicide. The pressure on Japanese children to conform and succeed in terms of examinations imposes a heavy cost and one which must be borne in mind by those who seek to learn from Japan's outwardly successful school system. Schools are not seen as spawning grounds for political awareness or activity in the way that perhaps the Americans envisioned.

With regard to England it is perhaps more difficult to trace specific successes and failures as a consequence of the 1944 Act as it was not intended to overturn the previous system but rather to extend it and make schooling freely available to all. This has indeed happened though it must be added that it is widely believed that money can still buy a superior education. However, the post-war years have seen further education being far more widely available both to women and to those without independent means of support. The latter situation is not to be taken for granted any longer due to the present government's financial exactions. Currently all full time undergraduates are entitled to a grant to pay their tuition feees and a means tested maintenance grant for living costs. Postgraduate grants are also available but discretionary and hence there is intense competition for them. There is no tradition of students taking out loans to finance their studies nor of students living with their parents. In Japan, by contrast, the vast majority of students are self-financing: parents are willing to use their savings to further their offspring's schooling and the students themselves take part-time jobs, often tutoring high school pupils.

Many students live at home or with relatives in order to save money. Competition to enter the national universities is all the higher due to the fact that their fees are significantly lower than their private counterparts.

Four decades after the publication of these two Education Acts, the subject is again one of intense discussion in both Japan and England. The reasons for concern differ as do the sugestions made by the government and non-government agencies involved. Without delving into all the complex issues currently under discussion in both countries it must be noted that there is considerable mutual interest in learning from each others' experiences. The English link Japan's economic success with her educational system and therefore seek the causal features which may be suitable for adoption. The Japanese recognize the lack of creativity that is fostered in their children which may affect their ability to make technological innovations now that the catching up period is over. Such a situation was commented upon in 1891 by Alice Bacon when she published her impressions of Japanese women: "The fault that one finds with the Japanese system...is that while it cultivates the memory and powers of observation to a remarkable extent,...it affords little opportunity for the development of the reasoning powers".(Bacon 1891 p39).

In Japan social conformity as well as respect for education have led to over 90% of contemporary school children remaining at school until 18, despite the fact that fees are payable for post-compulsory schooling. In England, however, even before the major financial cuts in the education budget and despite the fact that free schooling is available to all until 18, just 17.5% stay on into the 6th form and a further 11.4% attend other places of further education. Just 16.9% of the 19-24 age group has any full-time higher education.(DES 1986 p28). As such a small proportion of the population has any contact with post-compulsory education the values which are embodied in it may appear incomprehensible and so irrelevant to a large segment of society. Thus, in England, when the government began to make swingeing cuts in the grants it paid to the universities there was a noticeable lack of public protest. In contrast higher education is of general concern in Japan; it is a valued commodity and not seen as a middle class preserve although one's social background does seem increasingly to influence one's educational chances.

The educational systems of both countries are now in a state of flux,

probably more so in England than in Japan for financial and political as well as pedagogical reasons. Both governments, by looking for ways of changing the national system of education at a time when their respective economies are undergoing periods of change, are thereby acknowledging the central role that education enjoys in society. Japan may perhaps be credited with coming to this realisation well before England with the result that her children finish their education with a higher average level of attainment than their English peers. Though we may envy this achievement we may feel that the cost in terms of mechanical learning, the examination "hell" and the long hours devoted to schooling is too great. The challenge is to find a way of producing a high average level of competence without all the rigours schooling entails in Japan.

[1] In 1872 over 80% of the population was engaged in agriculture, by 1913 the proportion had dropped to 58% and by the beginning of the Manchurian Incident less than half the population was employed in agriculture. It should be noted, however, that the actual number of persons so employed was the same in 1930 as it had been in 1872 though the total population had grown from 34 to 63 million.(Allen 1981 p250).

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