

THE MAKING OF A NEW JAPAN

For five years after his return from his travels, Fukuzawa mainly worked as a teacher and translator in Edo. This was a time of growing tension and threat to the old order. For instance on one occasion he moved out of the city fearing a British attack. Because of anti-western sentiments, he avoided certain contacts. But his family grew and he settled into writing. In 1866 he published the first volume of **Seiyo Jijo, Things Western**, which sold, in the end, over a quarter of a million copies. He was made a retainer of the Shogun and continued to work as a teacher. Then in January 1867 he went on his third and last overseas expedition, again to America, and returned six months later. Although he comments less on what he learnt from direct observation, he came back with other treasures. 'On my second journey to America, I had received a much larger allowance than on the previous one. With all my expenses being paid by the government, I was able to purchase a good number of books. I bought many dictionaries of different kinds, texts in geography, history, law, economics, mathematics, and every sort I could secure. They were for the most part the first copies to be brought to Japan, and now with this large library I was able to let each of my students use the originals to study. This was certainly an unheard-of convenience - that all students could have the actual books instead of manuscript copies for their use.'¹ This set the trend, he wrote, for the use of American books in Japan over the next ten years.

His innovation here was supplemented by others. In particular he introduced the concept of tuition fees from students, which he had no doubt seen in the West, and this helped him to set up a school, which, when it moved to a new site in April 1868, was the foundation of the first Japanese university, Keio. He continued his teaching and lecturing as the fate of Japan was decided around him, for in 1868 the Tokugawa Shogunate, which had lasted for two and a half centuries, was overthrown by the revived Imperial power, and the Meiji Restoration was effected through a series of pitched battles.

The Emperor partly won because of superior weaponry, and here again Fukuzawa recognized an opportunity. He obtained a copy of a foreign work on rifles which he hoped to translate, but wondered 'Was I not too brazen to think of translating a book on rifles without knowing anything of it?'² So with the aid of the book he dismantled and put together a gun, and 'with this experience, I gained much understanding of the rifle and at once took up the translation of the book and published it.' It came out in 1866 and sold many thousands of copies and he later learnt that his translation had helped one of the greatest of Japanese generals, General Murata, who was later to become a world expert on ordnance.

¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 199-200

²Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 44

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The restoration of the Meiji Emperor in 1868 did not, at first sight, look likely to change Japan or Fukuzawa's life very much. The Emperor's supporters had been, if anything, more xenophobic and traditionalist than those of the Shogun. As far as Fukuzawa could see at first, the new government looked like 'a collection of fools from the various clans got together to form another archaic anti-foreign government which would probably drive the country to ruin through its blunders.'³ Yet there was a swift change and he and others discovered that they were in fact 'a collection of energetic, ambitious young men prepared to build up a new Japan on thoroughly western lines...'⁴ Fukuzawa and his friends began to feel 'as though they were seeing enacted on the stage a play which they themselves had written.'⁵ There was now scope for new work and for the widespread dissemination of the old.

There was also a chance to break finally with his clan. For a while in the 1860's Fukuzawa remained, officially, a member of his clan and drew a stipend and obeyed certain orders. His relations with the clan became more strained over time and he started to question the political views of some of his elders. 'Having taken such an attitude, I could hardly enter the politics of the clan, nor seek a career in it. Consequently I lost all thoughts of depending on the favours of other men. Indeed I attached little value on any man or clan.'⁶ After the Meiji Restoration he increasingly followed his own inclinations and finally made a stand. 'If this is disagreeable to them, let them dismiss me. I shall obey the order and get out.'⁷

Looking back on the events, he remembered how difficult it had been at the time. 'This lack of attachment to the clan may seem quite creditable now, but in the eyes of my fellow-clansmen it was taken as a lack of loyalty and human sympathy.'⁸ He was adamant, however: 'I did not consider the right or wrong of the conflict; I simply said it was not the kind of activity that students should take part in.'⁹

³ Quoted in Blacker, 27.

⁴ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 28

⁵ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 28

⁶Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 182

⁷Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 183

⁸Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 183

⁹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 185

Finally 'This argument seemed to dumbfound the officials. My salary was given up, and all official relations between the clan and myself were broken off as I had proposed.'¹⁰ Thus, Fukuzawa was in the odd situation of having created an independent and individual space within a 'small group' society. He used this space to maximum advantage as he launched more fully on his career of writing and teaching.

It is possible to argue that up to about 1870 Fukuzawa had confined his writing mainly to the explanation of technical matters, non-contentious technological and institutional features of the west. For example, the information he collected on his voyages formed the basis of his three volume work titled **Seiyo Jijo** or **Conditions in the West**, published in 1866, 1868 and 1870. The first volume describes in detail a 'number of Western institutions: schools, newspapers, libraries, government bodies, orphanages, museums, steamships, telegraphs'. It then 'gives capsule sketches of the history, government, military systems, and finances of the United States, the Netherlands and Britain.' The second volume contains 'translations from a popular British series, **Chambers' Educational Course**'. This had been written by John Hill Burton and published by Robert and William Chambers of Edinburgh. 'In this volume, entitled the **Outside Volume** ... the "corner-stones and main pillars", the intangible social network constituting civilized society, was discussed.'¹¹ The third volume 'presents general material by Blackstone on human rights and by Wayland on taxes and then supplies historical and other data on Russia and France.'¹²

This technical work was enormously influential, coming just at the moment when Japan was opening to the West. We are told that 'The work exerted a powerful influence on the Japanese public of the time.' The first volume alone sold 150,000 copies, plus over one hundred thousand pirated copies. One of the drafters of the CHARTER OATH and the new proto-constitution for the Meiji restoration wrote that he and his colleagues relied almost exclusively on this work.¹³ Fukuzawa was thus not boasting when he gave an account of its impact on his contemporaries. 'At that moment, they came across a new publication called **Seiyo Jijo**. When one person read it and recognized it as interesting and appropriate guide to the new civilization, then a thousand others followed. Among the officials and among the private citizens, whoever discussed Western civilization, obtained a copy of **Seiyo Jijo** for daily reference. This book became the sole authority in its field exactly as the proverb says even a bat can dominate the air where no birds live. Indeed, my book became a general guide to the contemporary

¹⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 273

¹¹ From the preface, quoted in Nishikawa, 'Fukuzawa', 6

¹² **Kodansha Encyclopedia**, s.v. **Seiyo jijo**, 54

¹³ **Kodansha Encyclopedia**, s.v. 'Seiyo Jijo' 54

society of ignorant men, and some of the decrees issued by the new government seem to have had their origins in this book.¹⁴ It was the right book at the right time. 'Then, how did it happen that this book became a great power and dominated the whole society of Japan? I reason that this book came upon the right time after the opening of the country when the people, high and low, were feeling lost in the new world.'¹⁵ He had started the work before the Meiji Restoration and the three volumes were completed before the outcome was clear. 'Even if they were to win some attention, I had no idea that the contents of the books would ever be applied to our own social conditions. In short, I was writing my books simply as stories of the West or as curious tales of a dreamland.'¹⁶ Yet the 'dreamland' became the avid focus of Japanese attention and Fukuzawa's ambition increased.

He continued to supply popular and useful works for a westernizing Japan. For example he decided that a rational accounting system was essential for Japan, but first the principles of economics needed to be explained. 'I sat back and thought over the situation, and came upon the idea that the merchants and the men in industry should have been acquainted with the principles of the Western economics before they took up the Western method of business practices. To jump to the reform of their books without this basic knowledge was against the natural order of things. What one should do now would be to teach a wide circle of young men the general and basic principle of Western economics and wait till they grow up and take over the business. After that, the practical value of the new bookkeeping will be realized. With this idea in my mind what I produced in a textbook style was this **Minkan Keizairoku**.'¹⁷ He then produced the follow-up, the book on accounting, admitting, as he had done with his book on rifles, that it was one thing to explain the principles, another to be able to use them. 'In the early years of the Restoration I translated a book on the methods of bookkeeping, and I know that all the correct texts follow the example of my book. So I should know something of the practice, if not enough to be an expert. But apparently the brains of a writer of books and those of a business man are different; I cannot put my bookkeeping into use. I even have great difficulty in understanding the files which other people make.'¹⁸

The early 1870s saw a rapid shift in the level of his work as he recognized that his mission was

¹⁴Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 41

¹⁵Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 41

¹⁶Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 334

¹⁷Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 90

¹⁸Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 282-3

not merely to explain and help introduce science, technology and institutional structures (for instance he helped to lay the foundations of a western-style police force)¹⁹, but, much more difficult, to change culture and ideology. He set about trying to introduce the 'spirit' of the West, that is the concepts of liberty, equality and democracy. Thus the 1870s saw the publication of his major philosophical works heavily influenced by Guizot, Mill and Buckle, and hence stemming from the French and Scottish Enlightenment.

In 1872 he started modestly with **A Junior Book of Morals** and then over the next four years wrote the pieces which would constitute one of his major works, the **Encouragement of Learning**. This constituted seventeen pamphlets which came out over the period 1872 to 1876 which, because of their simplicity of style and stringent criticisms of the Tokugawa world, sold enormously well, reaching over 3,400,000 copies.²⁰ In 1875 he synthesized much of his speculation into an **Outline of Civilization** and the following year published a book close to one of Tocqueville's main themes, **On Decentralization of Power**. Three years later he wrote a **Popular Discourse on People's Rights** and also **A Popular Discourse on National Rights**. These two last books are at the turning point when, for reasons to be discussed below, Fukuzawa's growing distrust of the imperial ambitions of the West led him into a mood of aggressive nationalism which lasted until the defeat of China in 1895. After 1878, he contributed little more that has been widely influential, apart from his **Autobiography**, written in 1899.

Fukuzawa described his writing (with a brush, Japanese fashion) as only one of his two major weapons. 'Consequently I renewed activities with "tongue and brush", my two cherished instruments. On one side I was teaching in my school and making occasional public speeches, while on the other I was constantly writing on all subjects. And these comprise my books subsequent to Seiyo Jijo. It was a pretty busy life but no more than doing my bit, or "doing the ten thousandth part" as we put it.'²¹

He was also involved in publishing. He founded the daily newspaper **Jiji Shimpō** in which many of his writings appeared after 1882, and from time to time published his own writings. So successful were all his writing and publishing efforts that 'at that time all works about the West came to be popularly known as **Fukuzawa-bon**.'²²

¹⁹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 219

²⁰ Blacker, 11.

²¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 335

²² Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 27

Yet the teaching and speech-making were equally important. Here also he was a pioneer and had to invent traditions which were taken for granted in the West. For example, the art of speech-making was something which he had witnessed in the West, but was totally absent in Japan. He gives a graphic account of the background that led up to the publication of his book **Kaigiben** (How to Hold a Conference) in 1873. His account again illustrates his problems and inventiveness when introducing new concepts.

He noted that "The actuality today is that people hold no wonder over the practice of a man speaking out his own thoughts and communicating them to a group of listeners. Even the technique of shorthand writing has been developed for everyday use. In such a world, some people are liable to feel that the public speaking is a customary art of many centuries. But the fact is that the public speaking was a new and a strange art only twenty odd years ago, and those who endeavoured at it for the first time experienced some untold trials."²³ Thus he decided to give the history of its introduction into Japan.

In 1873 a colleague 'came to my residence with a small book in English and said that in all the countries in the West, the "speech" was considered a necessary art in all departments of human life; there was no reason why it was not needed in the Japanese society; rather, it was urgently needed, and because we didn't have it, we were sorely deficient in communicating our thoughts from man to man in politics, in learning and in commerce and industry; there was no telling what our losses were from the inevitable lack of understanding between parties; this present book was on the art of speech; how would it be to make the content of this book known to all our countrymen?"²⁴ So Fukuzawa, who had already seen the practice at work in England and puzzled over confrontational politics, looked into the matter. 'I opened the book and I found it was indeed a book introducing an entirely new subject to us. "Then, without further ado, let us translate its general content", I said. I completed in a few days a summary translation, and it is this **Kaigiben**. In the translation, I was met with the problem of finding a proper Japanese word for "speech". Then an old recollection came to me that in my Nakatsu Clan, there was a custom of presenting a formal communication to the Clan government on one's personal matter or on one's work. It was not a report or a petition but an expression of one's thoughts, and this communication was called **enzetsu** letter. I have no knowledge as to the customs in other Clans. But as I remembered this word clearly from my Nakatsu days, I discussed it with my colleagues and decided on it as the translated word for "speech".²⁵

The word he invented became incorporated into national life and without word and concept

²³Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 80

²⁴Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 80-1

²⁵Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 81

modern democracy could not have developed in Japan. 'At present, the speech has become an important element in the National Diet and in all occasions of our lives even in small villages in the countryside. But this word, **enzetsu** traces its origin to a custom in Nakatsu Clan of Buzen Province, chosen by the members of Keio Gijuku, and then it spread to the rest of the country. Other words such as "debate" was translated **toron**, "approve" **kaketsu** and "reject" **hiketsu**.²⁶ Fukuzawa had once again thought things through, and a combination of his wide experience and independence of mind had led to a new conclusion. Although all his friends and colleagues said speech-making was impossible in the Japanese language, 'But when I stopped and thought about it, I came to think that there is no reason why it is not possible to make a speech in Japanese. The reason for the difficulty must be that we Japanese people have not been used to making speeches since olden times. But if you don't try it because of the difficulty, it will stay difficult forever.'²⁷ We are told that 'He himself demonstrated beautifully the art of public speaking in the presence of sceptics and built a public speaking hall at Keio where he, his fellows and students, held many gatherings and speaking contests'.²⁸ The hall is called the Enzetsukan, and survives in a re-built form.

Yet the change that needed to be effected was much deeper than a question of the art of public speaking. Speech itself was much more embedded and socially controlled in Japan than in the west. This made rational, impersonal, speeches very difficult. Speech, as well as gestures and postures, altered dramatically depending on whom one was speaking to. Fukuzawa carried out various experiments to show how strong was this absence of personal consistency and stability. For instance, 'it showed that they were merely following the lead of the person speaking to them.'²⁹ Much of his effort to teach the Japanese the art of public debate and public speech-making tried to deal with this problem. The desire for approval, to fit in, made it very difficult for people to state an absolute opinion as their own, to take a stand, to argue forcefully and consistently. Everything tended to slip towards the social context. The individual and his views did not matter: he or she must submit to group harmony, sacrifice all individual will to the group. This was built into the language, the bowing, the political and kinship system.

Another part of the problem was that people found it impossible to separate their words and their feelings. As we saw, during his travels he was amazed at the way in which politicians in England could

²⁶Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 81

²⁷Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 82

²⁸Nishikawa, 'Fukuzawa', 8

²⁹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 246

attack each other in the House for their ideas, without any personal animus. The art of debate seemed to be a kind of elaborate game, like a legal confrontation, but it made it possible to separate ideas from their social context and, in other words, allowed 'reason' to prevail.

More generally, the very concept of allowing political parties to express their dissent, or even exist, was alien to the Japanese tradition. Thus 'in political practices in Japan, a group of more than three to make agreements among themselves privately was called "conspiracy", and the **kosatsu** (the official bulletin board on the street for announcing government decrees) pronounced that conspiracy was an offence, and indeed it was one of the gravest of offences.³⁰ Yet he saw something very puzzlingly different on his visit to Europe. There 'in England I heard that there were what they called "political parties" and they openly and legally made games of fighting for the supremacy.' When he first encountered this he wondered 'Did that mean that in England, people were permitted to argue and to make attacks on the government decrees and they were not punished?' How could such a system not lead to anarchy? 'Under such untidy condition, it was a wonder that England preserved her internal peace and order.' But he persisted in his observations and questions until 'I felt I was grasping the basis of the English Parliament, the relation between the Royalty and the Parliament, the power of popular opinion and the customs of Cabinet changes - or, did I really grasp them? All the human affairs were baffling.'³¹ In his writings he worked through the system of democracy and explained it to himself and his Japanese audience.

Another part of the problem in Japan was that there were no rules of procedure for meetings. 'From the earliest times in Japan, whenever people have assembled to discuss some problem, nothing could be settled because of the lack of any set rules for discussion. This has always been true of disputes among scholars, of business conferences, and of municipal meetings.'³² All this has to be learnt from a civilization in western Europe which has developed on the basis of Greek philosophy and Western jurisprudence, a complex set of procedures to make decisions and sift out the best arguments.

Even if all these things could be changed, there were other practical problems. There were not even places in which conferences, speeches, or lectures could take place. So Fukuzawa set about physically building the first lecture hall in Japan. Speaking of what would become Keio University, he wrote 'I returned to my school and at once commenced on the plan for introducing the new art to the whole country. The first necessity, we decided, was an auditorium, and that became our first

³⁰ Collected Works, 38

³¹ Collected Works, 38

³² Fukuzawa, **Speeches**, 21

undertaking.¹³³ The experiment was a success. Here again he brought in an institution which had been absent in Japan for at least a thousand years. He recognized that western invention and success did not come out of the blue. Selecting the University of Glasgow in the later eighteenth century as his model, he reminded his audience that 'When Watt invented the steam engine and Adam Smith first formulated the laws of economics, they did not sit alone in the dark and experience an instantaneous enlightenment. It was because of long years of studying physical sciences that they were able to achieve their results.'¹³⁴ He himself had escaped from his Nakatsu background through the educational path and much of his later life was devoted to the Baconian project of the 'Advancement', or as Fukuzawa put it, the 'Encouragement' of Learning.

Indeed, it is clear that a part of Fukuzawa's enthusiasm for western-style education lay in his belief that it was a very powerful force in the fight against inequality. He shows this in particular in his account of the history of his Nakaktsu clan after the Meiji Restoration. He describes the fortuitous coming together of events as follows. 'It was owing to this entirely fortuitous stroke of good luck that the Nakatsu clan was able to escape the disasters which fell upon most of the other clans at the time of the Restoration. Later something happened to consolidate this stroke of fortune: namely the establishment of the Municipal School. About the time of the abolition of the clans in 1871 the men who had held official positions in the old clan conferred with the staff of Keiogijuku in Tokyo and decided to divide up the hereditary stipend of the old clan governor and amalgamate it with the savings of the old clan to form a capital fund for promoting Western studies. They then built a school in the old castle town which they called the Municipal School. The rules of the School stipulated that all pupils were to be treated alike, irrespective of their birth or rank - a policy which was not only proclaimed in theory but also carried out in practice. This principle held good from the very day the School was founded, so that it was just as if a new world of equal rights for all people had appeared in the midst of the fading dream of feudal privilege. Many of the staff of Keiogijuku had been samurai of the old Nakatsu clan but they had never interfered in any way with the clan administration, and through all the various disturbances which the clan had undergone had merely looked on with calm hostility.'¹³⁵

The school exercised a magical effect. 'As soon as they really put their hearts into the School they lost all their old notions of birth and rank.'¹³⁶ Thus future generations would avoid the bitter memories of his

¹³³Fukuzawa, **Collected Works**, 87

¹³⁴Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 91

¹³⁵Fukuzawa, 'Kyuhanjo', 323-4

¹³⁶Fukuzawa, 'Kyuhanjo', 324

own childhood. 'Whether it be due to mere luck or to a recognisable cause, it is certainly clear that today one sees no trace of resentment or ill-feeling between the clan samurai.³⁷ Independence of mind, curiosity, and the treating of all mankind (including women) as born equal, these were the values which Fukuzawa saw as the foundations of his educational work.

Combining western science and eastern spirit

Fukuzawa's work was centrally concerned with the question of how it would be possible to make Japan rapidly as wealthy and militarily strong as possible. His concern with wealth lay in the growing confrontation between Europe and America on the one hand and Asia on the other. The tiny island of England had humiliated the mighty Chinese Empire in the Opium Wars in 1839-42. Then in 1853 and 1854 the "black ships" of America had sailed into a Japanese harbour and shown up the hollow weakness of the Japanese Empire. He lamented the fact that 'In general, we Japanese seem to lack the kind of motivation that ought to be standard equipment in human nature. We have sunk to the depths of stagnation.'³⁸

Fukuzawa became increasingly aware of the menace of European expansion. He noted that 'In China, for instance, the land is so vast that the interior has as yet to be penetrated by the white man, and he has left his traces only along the coast. However, if future developments can be conjectured, China too will certainly become nothing but a garden for Europeans.'³⁹ This had already happened in the once mighty civilization of India, and Fukuzawa feared that if India and soon China became provinces of Europe, then Japan would go the same way. The effects would be disastrous. 'Wherever the Europeans touch, the land withers up, as it were; the plants and the trees stop growing. Sometimes even whole populations have been wiped out. As soon as one learns such things and realizes that Japan is also a country in the East, then though we have as yet not been seriously harmed by foreign relations we might well fear the worst is to come.'⁴⁰ As the century progressed he felt the increasing menace; if one succumbed, one became a slave; if one competed, one was an outcaste. He noted that 'the whole world is dominated by Western civilization today, and anyone who opposes it will be ostracized from the human society; a nation, too, will find itself outside the world circle of nations.'⁴¹

³⁷Fukuzawa, 'Kyuhanjo', 325

³⁸Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 160

³⁹Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 189

⁴⁰Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 189

⁴¹Fukuzawa, **Women**, 79

His aim was to help turn Japan into a country that was as wealthy as the new industrial nations of the West - and out of this wealth as militarily powerful. He wrote that "The final purpose of all my work was to create in Japan a civilized nation as well equipped in the arts of war and peace as those of the Western world. I acted as if I had become the sole functioning agent for the introduction of Western learning."⁴² Elsewhere Fukuzawa defined the purpose of his work as follows. 'After all, the purpose of my entire work has not only been to gather young men together and give them the benefit of foreign books but to open this "closed" country of ours and bring it wholly into the light of Western civilization. For only thus may Japan become strong in the arts of both war and peace and take a place in the forefront of the progress of the world.'⁴³

The essential point was to preserve political independence through economic wealth and military power. He believed that 'foreign relations in our country are a critical problem, from the standpoint both of economics and of power and rights', subservience to foreign powers 'is a deep-seated disease afflicting vital areas of the nation's life.'⁴⁴ At times he states that independence is the end, and 'civilization' the means. 'The only reason for making the people in our country today advance toward civilization is to preserve our country's independence. Therefore, our country's independence is the goal, and our people's civilization is the way to that goal.'⁴⁵ At other times he saw independence and civilization as synonymous; 'a country's independence equals civilization. Without civilization independence cannot be maintained.'⁴⁶

He realized that Japan and Asia had a long way to go in order to 'catch up'. He found that when he compared 'Occidental and Oriental civilizations' in a 'general way as to wealth, armament, and the greatest happiness for the greatest number, I have to put the Orient below the Occident'.⁴⁷ Yet he believed that 'it would not be impossible to form a great nation in this far Orient, which would stand

⁴²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 214

⁴³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 246-7

⁴⁴ Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 189

⁴⁵ Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 193

⁴⁶ Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 195

⁴⁷ Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 214-5

counter to Great Britain of the West, and take an active part in the progress of the whole world.' This was 'my second and greater ambition.'⁴⁸

In these ambitions Fukuzawa was a central figure in the wider Japanese 'Enlightenment', which sought to make Japan both more powerful and more content. Thus he was a founder member of the school of historiography which was 'known as **bunmeishiron** (history of civilisation) - so called because its chief purpose was to discover from the past the answers pertaining to the nature of civilisation: what exactly was civilisation and how did it come to be what it is?'⁴⁹ Part of his immense popularity and influence arose out of his realization that he was reflecting a national mood. The 'arrival of the Americans in the 1850s has, as it were, kindled a fire in our people's hearts. Now that it is ablaze, it can never be extinguished.' Combined with the later overthrow of the Shogunate and Meiji Restoration of 1868, events 'have become spurs prodding the people of the nation forward. They have caused dissatisfaction with our civilization and aroused enthusiasm for Western civilization. As a result, men's sights are now being reset on the goal of elevating Japanese civilization to parity with the West, or even of surpassing it.'⁵⁰

In order to do this, it was not enough to introduce isolated bits of western technology, to follow China in buying weapons from the West, for instance. It was essential that Japan learnt the principles or spirit behind the technology and created the appropriate institutional structures. 'The idea seems to be that, if England has one thousand warships, and we too have one thousand warships, then we can stand against them.' This was not enough. It was 'the thinking of men who are ignorant of the proportions of things.' Much more was needed. 'If there are one thousand warships, there have to be at least ten thousand merchant ships, which in turn require at least one hundred thousand navigators; and to create navigators there must be naval science.' Even more than this was required. 'Only when there are many professors and many merchants, when laws are in order and trade prospers, when social conditions are ripe - when, that is, you have all the prerequisites for a thousand warships - only then can there be a thousand warships.'⁵¹

Fukuzawa was particularly proud that the Japanese seemed to have the ability to assimilate amazingly quickly the art of making and using things, not just buying them: 'it was only in the second year of Ansei

⁴⁸ Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 334

⁴⁹ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 93

⁵⁰ Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 2

⁵¹ Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 192

(1855) that we began to study navigation from the Dutch in Nagasaki; by 1860, the science was sufficiently understood to enable us to sail a ship across the Pacific. This means that about seven years after the first sight of a steamship, after only about five years of practice, the Japanese people made a trans-Pacific crossing without help from foreign experts.⁵²

Yet even this was not enough. He wrote that the 'civilization of a country should not be evaluated in terms of its external forms. Schools, industry, army and navy, are merely external forms of civilization. It is not difficult to create these forms, which can all be purchased with money. But there is additionally a spiritual component, which cannot be seen or heard, bought or sold, lent or borrowed. Yet its influence on the nation is very great. Without it, the schools, industries, and military capabilities lose their meaning. It is indeed the all-important value, i.e. the spirit of civilization, which in turn is the spirit of independence of a people.'⁵³

It was essential to change institutions and ideology first, and then the material forms would follow. 'The cornerstone of modern civilization will be laid only when national sentiment has thus been revolutionized, and government institutions with it. When that is done, the foundations of civilization will be laid, and the outward forms of material civilization will follow in accord with a natural process without special effort on our part, will come without our asking, will be acquired without our seeking.'⁵⁴ This 'spirit' of civilization had to be understood and then transferred to Japan. This was an immensely difficult task, but one to which he devoted his life.

What he wanted to bring in were not just the **techniques** of the West, but the 'civilization' of the West. He defined this central concept as follows. 'What, then, does civilization mean? I say that it refers to the attainment of **both** material well-being **and** the elevation of the human spirit.'⁵⁵ As he began to learn more about the West, first through his book learning, then from his visits to America and Europe, he realized how very different the 'civilization' of Asia and the West were and it was this that puzzled and intrigued him. 'With regard to a nation as a whole, it may be called "a nation's ways" or "national opinion". These things are what is meant by the spirit of civilization. And it is this spirit of civilization that differentiates the manners and customs of Asia and Europe.'⁵⁶

⁵²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 110

⁵³ Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 30.

⁵⁴ Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 18.

⁵⁵Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 37

⁵⁶Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 17

Fukuzawa's writings were part of a general 'Enlightenment' movement known as **Keimo**, meaning literally 'enlightening the darkness of the masses'. It was based on a proposition which linked it directly to the European Enlightenment. This was that there was a strong and necessary association between three things, wealth, liberty and equality. We are told that there was agreement among Japanese scholars of the West in the nineteenth century that 'the spiritual secret of the strength and wealth of the western nations lay in the fact that their people were equal and therefore free. It was because the western peoples enjoyed freedom and equal rights and were hence imbued with the spirit of enterprise, initiative and responsibility that the western nations had succeeded in becoming strong, rich and united.'⁵⁷ For example, 'In the preface to his translation of Smiles' **Self-Help**, published in 1871, Nakamura Keiu stated boldly that the reason why the western nations were strong was not that they possessed armies, but that they possessed the spirit of liberty.'⁵⁸ What the Japanese nation needed to learn was the 'spirit of independence, initiative and responsibility such as characterised a people enjoying freedom and equal rights...'⁵⁹

Thus the key questions for Fukuzawa became those of liberty and equality and how they were to be encouraged. His own personal experience in pre-Meiji Japan gave him especial insights into the vast change required, and it is fascinating to see the way in which all of his work is in a sense an autobiography, an externalization of his own struggle to move from lack of freedom to liberty, and from hierarchy to equality.

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The shift towards a more nationalistic and chauvinistic attitude between about 1875 and 1895 is obvious. Carmen Blacker describes his shifting views in some detail. She quotes him as writing in 1878 that "'International law and treaties of friendship have high-sounding names, it is true, but they are nothing more than external, nominal forms. In fact international relations are based on nothing more than quarrels over power and profit...A few cannons are worth more than a hundred volumes of international law. A case of ammunition is of more use than innumerable treaties of friendship.'⁶⁰ There is much more to this effect and in the following year he wrote "'A nation does not come out on top because it is in the

⁵⁷Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 30

⁵⁸Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 30

⁵⁹Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 32

⁶⁰ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 129

right. It is right because it has come out on top."⁶¹ He saw the senselessness of it all, but what was one to do? "All this may be useless and stupid, but when others treat one stupidly one can only do the same back to them. When others use violence, we must be violent too. When others use deceitful trickery we must do likewise."⁶² He asked "Have the European countries really respected the rights and interests and integrity of the countries with which they have come into contact? What about Persia? And India? And Siam? And Luzon and Hawaii?...Wherever the Europeans come, the land ceases to be productive, and trees and plants cease to grow. Worse still, the human race sometimes dies out."⁶³ Japan should 'join' the West and behave as western countries did. In an article in 1885 he wrote that 'Our immediate policy, therefore, should be to lose no time in waiting for the enlightenment of our neighbouring countries (Korea and China) in order to join them in developing Asia, but rather to depart from their rank and cast our lot with the civilized countries of the West... We should deal with them exactly as the Westerners do.'⁶⁴

Fukuzawa also noted the arrogance of foreigners in Japan. "They eat and drink, and then leave without paying. They ride in **rikishas** without paying. They accept payment in advance for a contract, and then fail to deliver the goods...Not only are they grasping about money; they often break laws and offend against propriety."⁶⁵ Blacker notes that his earlier praise of democratic and balanced politics, and of individual rights, was almost abandoned for a few years as he became an autocratic nationalist and quasi-imperialist. She quotes him as writing in 1882 that the "one object of my life is to extend Japan's national power... Even if the government be autocratic in name and form, I shall be satisfied with it if it is strong enough to strengthen the country."⁶⁶ This, of course, ran right against many of his liberal statements, for instance that 'For true human beings to be treated like instruments is an insult, for the honour and dignity of human beings is disregarded and makes death preferable to life.'⁶⁷ Yet it is clear

⁶¹ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 130

⁶² Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 130

⁶³ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 131

⁶⁴ Nishikawa, 'Fukuzawa', 13.

⁶⁵ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 132

⁶⁶ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 134

⁶⁷ Fukuzawa, *Women*, 50

that he had indeed switched. 'If Fukuzawa's sudden neglect of people's rights in favour of national strength at this period might appear illiberal, the policy he recommended Japan to adopt towards the other Asiatic countries was frankly imperialistic.'⁶⁸ It was Japan's duty to become the leader of Eastern Asia and, if necessary, invasion of neighbouring states was justified. His 'nationalistic sentiments reached their climax during the Sino-Japanese War', which he vigorously supported.⁶⁹

Albert Craig argues even more strongly that Fukuzawa lost his faith in the law of nations and natural rights for a considerable period. Thus 'By 1881 Fukuzawa's disillusionment with the morality of natural law had become even more profound. He retained the ideal of civilization as a noble concept, but he denied it any real grounding in nature.'⁷⁰ Craig quotes extensively from some of his writings. "'Laws are made for evil men, as medicine is for the diseased. **Millions** of years hereafter, when disease has vanished and all men are good, laws and medicine may be abandoned. In the meantime it is useless to speak of popular rights based on nature (**tennen no minkenron**); they are not worth discussing.'⁷¹ He became increasingly cynical. In 1881 he asked "'Do nations... honour treaties? We can find not the slightest evidence that they do... When countries break treaties ... there are no courts to judge them. Therefore, whether a treaty is honoured or not... depends solely on the financial and military powers of the countries involved... **Money and soldiers are not for the protection of existing principles they are the instruments for the creation of principles where none exist.** ...in my opinion the Western nations ... are growing ever stronger in the skills of war. In recent years every country devises strange new weapons. Day by day they increase their standing armies. This is truly useless, truly stupid. Yet if others work at being stupid, then I must respond in kind. If others are violent, then I must become violent...Those of my persuasion follow the way of force.'⁷²

Like Blacker, Craig believes that in this period, 'much of the liberal content of his earlier thought slowly seeped away.'⁷³ He argues that in this period 'there was nothing other to turn to than the spiritual power

⁶⁸ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 135

⁶⁹ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 137

⁷⁰ Craig, 126

⁷¹ Quoted in Craig, 126

⁷² Quoted in Craig, 128-9, emphasis added by Craig.

⁷³ Craig, 129

of the emperor or the residues of irrational samurai morality.⁷⁴ Although Fukuzawa still 'favoured cultural diversity and political pluralism', for a time he felt that 'Japan, at its stage of civilization, could not handle these things without grave internal disturbances. Fukuzawa foresaw that instant constitutional government in a developing nation could lead to violent rifts in the national consensus, which in turn might destroy constitutional government and bring dictatorship.' Thus for a time 'he stressed the emperor, who alone could make Japan strong and united while advancing toward full constitutional government.' At this period 'Fukuzawa spoke more of duties and less of rights, more of science and less of freedom.'⁷⁵

It is not difficult to see how the world must have looked to someone on the edge of the rapid advance of western imperialism and capitalism as it swept across Asia. On his visit to Europe he had seen 'the miserable conditions of the native people living under western colonialism during stopovers in British Ceylon and Hong Kong. He realized that advanced western countries ruled the poor nations of Asia under the principal of "might is right".⁷⁶ For a while the ability of Japan to withstand colonialization hung in the balance. Proof that it could do so was afforded by the victory of the Japanese over the Chinese in 1895. As Fukuzawa wrote, "'The Sino-Japanese War is the victory of a united government and people. There are no words that can express my pleasure and thankfulness: to experience such an event is what life is for... In truth the Sino-Japanese War does not amount to much; it is but a prelude to Japan's future diplomacy, and is no occasion for such rejoicing. Yet I am so overcome by emotions that I enter a dreamlike state... The strength, wealth, and civilization of the new Japan are all due to the virtues of those who went before.'"⁷⁷ Craig comments that 'Victory in war removed the load of Japan from Fukuzawa's shoulders. No longer was it necessary for him to talk up the national spirit or warn the people of present perils... he began again to talk of the larger philosophical issues of ethics and cosmology that had occupied his attentions during the early 1870's.'⁷⁸

It is clear that 'civilization' and political independence were always inextricably linked in Fukuzawa's thought. If he became cynical about the motivations of the western powers and came to believe that all their preaching of natural rights and the dignity of man conflicted with their predatory behaviour, he had

⁷⁴ Craig, 147

⁷⁵ Craig, 135

⁷⁶ Yaskukawa, 'Fukuzawa Yukichi', 21-2. See also pp.29-36 for further evidence of his nationalist ideas.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Craig, 136; cf. the same passage in Autobiography, 335

⁷⁸ Craig, 136

good cause to be alarmed. It is indeed part of his interest that he reflected on those very issues of trying to combine democratic and liberal ideals with **realpolitik** which face many developing nations today.

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Fukuzawa's life spanned the period from the first great work of Tocqueville in 1835, to the middle of the career of Max Weber in 1901. He had witnessed two great discontinuities. Through his travels he had seen the huge gap that had developed between East and West by the 1850s. In the 1860s and 1870s he had seen a revolution from the **ancien regime** of the Tokugawa to the new Meiji world, a change greater even than that witnessed by Tocqueville. Developments which had taken over two hundred years in the West occurred in a decade in Japan. He recognized the central revolution which had taken place, and he realized that in many ways his task was to understand the implications of that change for Japan - namely the scientific, industrial, economic and political revolutions of early modern Europe. Thus he wrote, 'Take the history of any Western country and read about it from its beginning up to the 1600s. Then skip the next two hundred years, and pick up the story again from around 1800. So astonishing will have been the leap forward in that country's progress that we can hardly believe it is the official history of the same country.'⁷⁹ Yet he also stressed continuity. 'Inquiring further into the cause of its progress, we will find that it has been due to the legacy and gifts of those who went before them.'⁸⁰ This was vitally important for Japan. Not all that had existed in its great civilization of a thousand years or more was useless. The new world should also build on the legacy of the past, including the Imperial tradition and the ethic of his samurai antecedents.

So, at the end of his life, when Fukuzawa looked back, his far-off youth, and his travels to America and Europe, felt very distant. The changes had been immense. 'Sixty-odd years is the length of life I have now come through. It is often the part of an old man to say that life on looking back seems like a dream. But for me it has been a very merry dream, full of changes and surprises.'⁸¹ He felt he had 'nothing to complain of on looking backward, nothing but full satisfaction and delight.'⁸² We can share that satisfaction in another way by looking at the method and theories which he developed during his life.

⁷⁹Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 60

⁸⁰Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 60

⁸¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 333

⁸²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 335