From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS

As we have seen, Fukuzawa was born into a system which made strenuous efforts to inhibit individual 'selfishness'. The basic element of Japanese social structure at Fukuzawa's level was not the individual, but the clan, the 'house'. He described how 'The Japanese people suffered for many years under the yoke of despotism. Lineage was the basis of power. Even intelligent men were entirely dependent upon houses of high lineage. The whole age was, as it were, under the thumb of lineage. Throughout the land there was no room for human initiative; everything was in a condition of stagnation.'[1] Putting it another way, he described how 'The millions of Japanese at that time were closed up inside millions of individual boxes. They were separated from one another by walls with little room to move around.'[2] In Japan when 'we deal with a person, be he rich or poor, strong or weak, wise or ignorant, capable or incompetent, we either fear him or look down upon him, entirely on the basis of his social position. A spirit of independence has never existed in even the slightest degree.' This feature came out especially when set against what he had seen in America and Europe. 'If we compare the Western attitude of independence with that of us insulated Japanese, we can see how enormous the difference is.'[3]

His reading of Guizot, J. S. Mill and others made him conclude that the differences were of long standing. The individuality and freedom in the west seemed to be rooted in the period of turmoil after the fall of Rome when 'the German barbarians left behind a legacy of autonomy and freedom'.[4] If this were the case one might have expected that 'the Japanese warrior class would also produce its own spirit of independence and autonomy'.[5] Yet, as a member of that class, he knew that this was not so. For 'although the samurai of this time seemed fiercely independent, their spirit sprang neither from a personal, chauvinistic attitude nor from a strong individuality that exulted in the self's freedom from all outside influences. It was always motivated by something outside the person, or at least aided by it.[6] Thus he argued that 'human relations in Asia have evolved into definite patterns of discrimination and prejudice, and social feelings are lukewarm. As if this were not bad enough, despotic government has also made possible the enactment of laws that prohibit political factions and public discussions.'[7] Much of Fukuzawa's work was concerned with liberating himself and the Japanese people from these fetters,

[1] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 65
[2] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 160
[3] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 161
[4] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 153
[5] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 153
[6] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 153
[7] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 73

From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

for he believed that 'There are no innate bonds around men. They are born free and unrestricted, and become free adult men and women.'[8]

As a disciple of Mill, and hence in the tradition of Montesquieu and Tocqueville, Fukuzawa advocated private liberty, that right to be free from external pressures which is central to western thought. He argued that 'each man deserves his private liberty. It is not proper, and society does not permit prying into the privacy of an independent man.'[9] And when he said 'man', he was speaking of mankind and not the male gender. He set out his views of the meaning of freedom, directly following Mill, in the following words. A person 'can conduct himself in freedom, as long as he does not infringe upon the rights of others. He can go as he pleases, work or play, engage in some business, study hard or, if that does not agree with him, loaf around the whole day long. Provided these actions do not affect others, there is no reason for men to censure them from the sidelines.'[10]

Like all those who have thought deeply about the matter, Fukuzawa realized that the other side of the coin of liberty was equality; one was not possible without a certain amount of the other. The link between the two can be seen, for example, in the contextual instability of language and behaviour which he noted. In an interesting passage he compared the fixity of the western social structure to the contextual situation in Japan, which was dependent on the power relationship. 'Comparing these social patterns to material objects, power in the West is like iron; it does not readily expand or contract. On the other hand, the power of the Japanese warriors was as flexible as rubber, adapting itself to whatever it came in contact with. In contact with inferiors, it swelled up immensely; in contact with those above, it shrivelled up and shrank. The sum total of this hierarchy of power constituted that whole known as the prestige of the military houses...'[11]

He had found a very different world in America and Europe. He found that 'even in the West not everyone is equal in terms of wealth or prestige. The strong and wealthy often control the weak and poor in a cruel and arrogant manner. The weak and poor, in turn, may fawn on and deceive others. The ugly aspects of human life are certainly no different from what we find among Japanese. Sometimes they are even worse.'[12] Yet the situation, though on the surface just as bad, was different. For 'even with

[8] Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 3

[9] Fukuzawa, **Women**, 101

[10] Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 50

[11] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 155

[12] Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 160-1

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such social injustice there is still a pervading spirit of individuality and nothing hinders the expansion of the human spirit. Cruelty and arrogance are merely by-products of wealth and power; flattery and deception are merely by-products of poverty and weakness. Neither might nor weakness is innate; they can be dealt with by means of human intelligence.'[13]

His distinction between the **de jure** and the **de facto** helped him to explain that changing the laws was only part of the solution. He noted optimistically that 'In one powerful stroke the great upheaval of the Imperial Restoration abolished the class system. Since then, we have enjoyed a society of equality for all peoples: the daimyo, courtiers, samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants - all became of equal rank and marriages became possible among them. And so, a great man is now able to openly marry the daughter of a petty merchant or a soil-tilling farmer.'[14] Yet the spirit of subservience, the actual attitudes, were slower to change. 'Since the Meiji Restoration, the equality of all peoples has been declared. Farmers and merchants are supposed to be enjoying this privilege, but they are still as subservient as ever, so difficult is it to break away from old ways.'[15]

Thus Fukuzawa explicitly set out in his writing and in his life to challenge the premise of the basic inequality of man. In order to test the inherited system of deference and how much of it was built into the symbolism of gestures and speech, he carried out an experiment as he walked down a high road. 'So I proceeded, accosting everyone who came along. Without any allowance for their appearance, I spoke alternately, now in samurai fashion, now merchant like. In every instance, for about seven miles on my way, I saw that people would respond according to the manner in which they were addressed - with awe or with indifference.'[16] But even Fukuzawa found limits to his egalitarian spirit. 'I have always used the honorific form of address in my speech generally - not of course to the lowly workmen or grooms or petty merchants in the really casual order of life, but to all other persons including the young students and the children in my household.'[17]

His attack on the premise of inequality, we are told, 'contradicted one of the most fundamental assumptions of the traditional political philosophy. Hitherto it had been commonly believed, not that men

[13]Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 161

[14] Fukuzawa, **Women**, 81-2

[15] Fukuzawa, **Women**, 30

[16]Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 245

[17]Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 193

From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

were naturally equal, but that society was naturally hierarchical.'[18] Fukuzawa proclaimed the opposite.

Although a poor peasant and a high daimyo 'differ like the clouds above and the mud below, still from the point of view of inherent human rights all men are equal without the least distinction between superior and inferior human beings.'[19] In the very first sentence of his **Advancement of Learning** he made the revolutionary proclamation, like Rousseau, of the natural equality of men. 'It is said that heaven does not create one man above or below another man. This means that when men are born from heaven they are all equal.'[20] He then explained how 'At the beginning of the first section I said that all men are equal, and that they can live in freedom and independence without hereditary status distinctions. I want to develop that idea further here.'[21] He did this by explaining the difference between inherent, **de jure** equality, and achieved, **de facto**, inequality. 'Therefore, if we inquire into the balance of human relations, we must say that all men are equal. They may not be equal in outward appearances. Equality means equality in essential human rights.'[22] It was really only relative wealth that gave temporary advantage, not birth or occupation. '"Since we are poor we obey the rich, but only as long as we are poor must we submit to them. Our submission will disappear along with our poverty, while their control over us will vanish along with their riches."'[23]

The ideas here were so revolutionary that there was no word for them in Japanese. 'For example, the one principle which was basic to Fukuzawa's entire philosophy was **dokuritsu-jison**, a compound word which he coined. Though other English translations have been made of this, perhaps the best translation is "'independence and self-respect."'[24] We are told that 'To a nineteenth-century Japanese, on the other hand, **dokuritsu-jison** was a shockingly revolutionary Western concept designed to undermine the entire Confucian social order which for many centuries had welded Japanese society into

[18]Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 101

[19]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 10

[20] Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 1

[21]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 10

[22]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 10

[23]Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 161

[24]Fukuzawa, **Speeches**, 72

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a rigidly-stratified yet cohesive unit.'[25]

Human relations in the modern world

Fukuzawa's ideas were particularly revolutionary when they were applied to the Japanese family and especially the relations between men and women. One of Fukuzawa's central interests throughout his life was in the practical effects of equality on the relations of men and women. Like Tocqueville, he realized that gender relations both mirrored and contributed to other forms of social relations. He may have developed both his interest in the subject and his advanced view partly from his own unusual mother, whose independence of mind and egalitarian outlook we encountered in an earlier chapter. That influence may help to explain how he developed such an early interest in the subject, and why it continued literally until his death-bed. We are told that 'Fukuzawa's thoughts on women date back to the days when he first came to Tokyo at the age of twenty-five and was already jotting his critical comments in the margins of his copy of **The Greater Learning for Women** Toward his end, when he slipped into a coma following a stroke that was to eventually take his life, he was heard mumbling about women's rights.'[26]

This early interest was greatly reinforced by his three visits to the West. To his surprise he found that 'It appears that in the civilized countries of the West, much of the social intercourse is managed by women, and even though they do not run society, they work in harmony among men, and help smooth the situation.'[27] In particular, in America, he thought 'women are high, men are humble.'[28] By Asian standards, indeed, they seemed too free and equal. 'For instance, from the standards of Chinese ethics, the behaviour of Western ladies and gentlemen is barbarous, with no sense of etiquette or propriety, because they talk together, laugh together, and, though they do not go so far as to bathe together, they sit and eat together, and they pass things to each other directly from hand to hand; not only that, they hold hands - and among themselves that is considered good manners.'[29] Indeed even Fukuzawa was a little shocked by the extremes. 'In the West, women's behaviour sometimes goes beyond control; they

[25]Fukuzawa, **Speeches**, 72

[26]Fukuzawa, **Women**, x

[27]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 117

[28]Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 114

[29]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 177; the reference to bathing together was obviously an allusion to the widespread custom of men and women bathing in the same public bath or hot spring in Japan.

make light of men; their minds are sharp, but their thoughts may be tarnished and their personal behaviour unchaste; they may neglect their own homes and flutter about society like butterflies. Such behaviour is no model for Japanese women.'[30]

As well as personal observation, Fukuzawa learnt about the dynamics of egalitarian family life from his reading, including the work of J.S. Mill. For example his reading of works on domestic relations in Chambers' **Educational Course** suggests a model of the companionate, affectionate, western family. This he described for his Japanese readers thus. 'Husband and wife, parents and children in one household constitute a family. Family relationships are bound by feeling. There is no fixed ownership of things, no rules for giving and taking. Things lost are not cried over; things gained are no special cause for jubilation. Informality is not upbraided, ineptitude does not cause embarrassment. The contentment of the wife or children becomes the joy of the husband or the parents, and the suffering of the husband and parents pains the wife and children too.'[31] He described how he tried to put this into practice. 'Above all, I believe in love and love only for the relation between parents and children. Even after children are grown, I see no reason for any formality in the relationship. In this my wife and I are perfectly of the same opinion.'[32] Thus he had a strong model of what 'civilized' family life was like and he worked hard to fulfil his wish, which was 'to let the women of Japan grow to be like the women of the West as a first step in their progress.'[33]

In essence, he believed in the innate equality of the genders. 'It is an irrefutable fact that men and women do not differ in their body structures and in the workings of their minds, and that they are equal beings.'[34] This led him to advocate the equal treatment of boy and girl children. 'When a baby girl is born, love her and care for her as much as one would a baby boy; never slacken in vigilance over her because she is a girl. When she grows up, see to her healthy development, first in body and then in mind. In her schooling and other education never discriminate because of her sex.'[35] It also led him to advocate equality in the marriage relationship. 'Not only should women be allowed to share the

[30]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 35

[31]Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 116

[32]Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 304

[33]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 14

[34]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 39

[35]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 61

management of material property, but the affairs of the heart too, whether they are private or public. If a couple always talks things over thoroughly and seriously, then even at the misfortune of the husband's dying early, the household management will not fall entirely into darkness.'[36]

These views were truly revolutionary in late nineteenth century Japan. How unusual they were and how hard Fukuzawa felt he had to work, as well as an impression of his righteous indignation, comes out when we consider his description of the actual position of many Japanese women in his society, set against the ideal model of his hopes and experiences in the West.

Japanese women were without independence. 'They are given no responsibility at all. As in the saying "Women have no home of their own anywhere in the world," when she is born, she is brought up in the house which is her father's; when she is grown and married, she lives in a house which is her husband's; when she is old and is being cared for by her son, the house will be her sons's. All the family property is her husband's property; women are only allowed to share in the benefits of that property.'[37] In summary, 'Women of our country have no responsibility either inside or outside their homes and their position is very low.'[38] They existed for men. 'In other words, women exist at the mercy of men and their security and their fate are in the hands of men.'[39] Their life was a continuous waiting on men. 'Women's lives are nothing but series of services, first to parents when young, then to husbands and parents-in-law when married, and when children come, they are busy caring for them and supervising the food and kitchen work.'[40] They were trapped. 'This is the actual condition of our society, and women are being forced into a narrower and narrower confinement, their sphere of social intercourse made smaller and smaller until they are like birds in a cage.'[41]

Fukuzawa quoted the criticism which outsiders, and particularly American women, made of the situation. Quoting one such visitor, he wrote '"The Japanese women are miserable, their lives are truly

[36]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 60

[37]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 9

[38]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 11

[39]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 11

[40]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 18

[41]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 157

not worth living, I am sorry for them. I pity them. We Americans would not tolerate such a situation for even a moment. We would fight even at the risk of our lives. Japan and America are separate countries, but the women of both are sisters of the same human species. We American women must do something to destroy this evil custom." She said this with tears falling and she gritted her teeth."[42] He clearly felt sympathy for such criticism, noting that 'when the truth becomes known and the ladies of the West see the actual conditions with their own eyes, they are liable to condemn Japan as a hell and inferno for women.'[43]

Given the huge gap between the actual situation as he perceived it, and the ideal 'civilized' state of equality which he hoped to achieve, how was Fukuzawa to proceed? The first thing he did was to put forward an explanation for the low and subservient position of women.

He put forward two major theories to account for the situation. One placed the blame in the medieval period or earlier, where a combination of the feudal political order and the powerful lineage system built up the structural inequality of women. In relation to politics, he wrote that 'In the feudal ages of the past, the whole social system from the government to every aspect of human life was constructed on the idea of authority and compulsion. The relation between men and women naturally also followed this general trend, and men acted like lords and women like vassals.'[44] This political system, Fukuzawa argued, was linked closely to the presence of powerful kinship groups or lineages, which traced descent through the male line and kept property in the hands of men. 'The old custom of the feudal days which valued lineage of a family above all other things and forced the maintenance of the line on the male members of the family, pushing women into a position of virtual nonexistence - that custom, from now on, must be discontinued completely.'[45] The idea of male descent must be rejected. Although 'the strange fact is that since very old times in our society, there has been what is called a family, which has been carried on by male descendants.'[46]

In particular, the exclusive rights of men to lineage property must be surrendered. The present situation, he thought, was that 'No women in Japan possess any property. As the saying goes, a woman

[42]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 199-200

[43]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 57

[44]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 218

[45]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 53-4

[46]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 51

has no house of her own anywhere in this world; thus it is a natural consequence that there is no woman with her own property.'[47] Indeed, the absence of 'property', or rights in assets, extended far beyond physical things like a house. 'At home, she owns no property of her own, and in society she cannot hope for a position of any consequence. The house she lives in is a man's house and the children she brings up are her husband's children.'[48] All this must be changed by completely abandoning the lineage system which had existed for hundreds of years, and moving towards the European and American conjugal family model.

Fukuzawa added a second argument, not entirely consistent with his first, which placed most of the blame on Chinese, and particularly neo-Confucianist ideology. In this theory, he played down the feudal and lineage arguments and stressed that Japanese women's position had declined dramatically during the period from the seventeenth century. 'In my own thoughts, I suspect that the restrictions on women's behaviour is something that began in the prolonged peace of the Tokugawa period. When all the armed conflicts in the country ended and the society became settled in the years of Genna [1615-23], Confucianism gradually rose to advocate what it called the great doctrine to clarify the social ranks of high and low, noble and mean.'[49] Or again, he wrote that 'Since the years of Genna [1615-19], when the peace began, most of the samurai youth were brought up under the influence of this Confucianism and its teachings of benevolence, loyalty, etiquette, wisdom, filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty to the master and faithfulness to friends.'[50]

Much of Fukuzawa's work on women is therefore devoted to undoing what he considers to be the harmful effects of neo-Confucian thought, and particularly that work **The Greater Learning for Women** on which he started scribbling critical comments from the age of twenty-five. He described how 'Confucianism characterizes men as **yang** (positive) and women **yin** (negative); that is, men are like the heavens and the sun, and women like the earth and the moon. In other words, one is high and the other is humble, and there are many men who take this idea as the absolute rule of nature. But this **yin-yang** theory is the fantasy of the Confucianists and has no proof or logic.'[51] He wrote with sarcasm how 'In a book called **Onna daigaku** there is enunciated a principle of "triple obedience" for women: a)

[47]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 10

[48]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 12

[49]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 26

[50]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 75

[51]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 39

to obey her parents when young, b) to obey her husband when married, and c) to obey her children when old. It may be natural for a girl to obey her parents when she is young, but in what way is she to obey her husband after marriage?'[52] The book further stated that 'even if the husband is a drunkard or is addicted to sensual pleasures, or abuses and scolds her, and thus goes to the extreme of dissipation and lechery, the wife must still be obedient. She must respect her dissolute husband like heaven, and only protest to him with kind words and soft countenance.'[53]

He was particularly outraged by the last chapter of **The Greater Learning of Women** whose 'attack on women is so severe that it may as well be called a spiteful work of literature full of curses and abuses heaped on women. The author pronounces that most women, seven or eight out of ten, have the five faults of women - indocility and disobedience, discontent and spitefulness, slander, jealousy, and shallow intellect - and, therefore, women are inferior to men.'[54] Yet it was not just neo-Confucianist texts which were to blame. Similarly 'A Buddhist scripture says that "Women are full of sins". Indeed, from this point of view, women are from birth no other than criminals who have committed great crimes.'[55] He gave a number of examples of 'harm done to women and children through the concept of the moral subordination of inferiors to superiors...'[56]

Fukuzawa was not content merely to diagnose some possible pressures on women, but went on to examine each part of the sexual and marital relationship and to advocate changes which would bring Japanese women closer to their emancipated western counterparts.

Starting with childhood and adolescence, he noted that 'The family customs are usually Confucian, which dictates that boys and girls after reaching the age of seven must not be seen together or share anything together.'[57] Consequently all relations between the sexes were discouraged before marriage. Speaking of the relations between young men and women, he suggested that 'there is

[52]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 52

[53]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 52

[54]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 211

[55]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 52

[56]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 69

[57]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 128

practically none at all. If by chance there is such contact between the sexes, it is looked on with suspicion and it certainly will become a target of reprimand from elders.'[58] Consequently there was no chance for the prolonged courtship which was a necessary prelude for companionate marriage in the West. 'When they grow up to be of marriageable age, the rules of social oppression dictate that it is necessary to separate them further and further. Even to exchange words out of necessity is forbidden to them and the suspecting gazes around them make them hesitate. A glimpse of one another from a distance makes them uncomfortable. The result is their complete separation into entirely different worlds.'[59]

One consequence is that the marriage has to be arranged by others. 'Being brought up in such a restricted environment, when the time comes for the boy to marry, he does not know any girls. He will have to depend on the go-between's recommendation and meet a girl for the first time. This is called **miai**, a trial meeting.[60] All that happens at this 'trial meeting' is that 'the boy and girl manage to steal a glance at each other once, and they are married soon after.'[61] This is very different from the courtship which is essential for forming an equal relationship in the West, for '...according to the Western custom the man and the woman should look for and choose each other on their own, get to know each other, and when they have made up their minds to marry, tell their parents, and, with their consent, hold a marriage ceremony.'[62]

Despite this difference, Fukuzawa did notice that Japanese children did seem to have more power than in many 'arranged marriage' societies. He noted that 'On the surface, it will appear as if marriages are arranged by the parents and the young folks only accept the final decision, but the truth is not so. The parents are only the ones to suggest and not the ones to decide.'[63] He elaborates what happens as follows. 'When the suggestion is made to the young people and if they are not happy with it, the issue cannot be forced. In such a case, the parents abandon their first choice and begin anew on a

[58]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 103

[59]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 118

[60]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 128-9

[61]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 129

[62]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 226

[63]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 226

second search. Foreigners think that the Japanese marriage is arranged by the parents, but this is a false image constructed by ignorant people.'[64] In this one respect, the situation is not as bad as it might be. 'Therefore, aside from extreme cases, women today in general should not have much to complain about in the actual marriage process.'[65]

Although not at the extreme of arranged marriage, the lack of courtship, and other pressures, meant that there was little companionship in most Japanese marriages, Fukuzawa thought. He noted that 'Even after marriage, it is rare that the woman knows anything about her husband's reputation in society or how his colleagues regard him or what his accomplishments are.'[66] Thus, 'For ordinary people, when the husband comes home tired after a day's work, his wife is entirely insensitive to his labors, and she cannot offer proper concern when they talk together.'[67] The woman's main role, and the main purpose of the marriage is not companionship but procreation. 'In our society, the most humiliating expression for women is that a man's purpose in taking a wife is to ensure his posterity. The tone of this expression resembles "The purpose of buying a rice cooker is to cook rice."' [68] Again the kinship system biases the system against the woman. 'From this attitude stems the saying so often heard that the womb is a "borrowed" thing. The meaning of this saying is that a child which is born into this world is its father's child and not its mother's - the rice that grew this year is born from the seed that was sown last year and the soil has no relation to it.'[69]

A particular way in which any companionship of husband and wife was stifled was through the pressure of the husband's parents. Ideally the eldest son, at least, would live with his parents and his strongest tie would be to them and particularly his mother. The new wife would compete with her mother-in-law and traditionally came a poor second. Fukuzawa rightly gives a good deal of attention to this important structural tension in the Japanese family.

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[64]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 226

[65]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 227

[66]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 129

[67]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 130

[68]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 48

[69]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 48-9

He noted the inhibiting effects of the parents. While 'The in-laws who live with the couple...will pray for the happy relations between their son and his wife...at the same time they pray that the couple will not become too intimate. If a tender sentiment seems to appear between them, the older folks become alarmed.'[70] As just one example, he noted that 'when the husband sets off on a long journey and the wife shows emotion at the parting or when the wife is ill and the husband tries to nurse her, the parents-in-law regard it as unsightly and warn them against it.'[71] The pressures against any show of affection extended outwards to the neighbours as well. Thus when husband and wife set off for a journey 'the present practice for them is to walk apart for a while and when they reach a predesignated spot, they meet and begin to walk side by side. The reason for this devious device is that they have many acquaintances around their house and it is embarrassing for the couple to be seen together.'[72] Yet the greatest pressure was always the co-resident, or nearby presence, of the parents in law.

Fukuzawa realized that this was a structural contradiction, not a matter of individual personalities. 'The mothers-in-law are not all wicked women, nor are the new wives. Without regard to being good or bad in character, the relations between the two are almost always at odds. The reason cannot be in the characters of the parties; it must be in the general atmosphere.'[73] Almost always there was a huge tension. 'Only one out of a hundred households made up of several young and old couples living together under the same roof will truly preserve peace and harmony among them. I do not exaggerate in saying that the remaining ninety-nine are what you would call paradise outside and purgatory inside with inmates made up of fake saints and false noble wives.'[74] At other times he put the odds against a harmonious mother and daughter-in-law relationship much higher. 'Thus, the relations between in-laws, regardless of the characters of each member of the household, will not be like that of true parents and child, except for a very rare case of one in a thousand or even ten thousand.'[75]

There was only one solution, which was for the generations to live entirely separately, as in the

[70]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 120

[71]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 120

[72]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 120

[73]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 229

[74]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 123

[75]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 229

West. He noted that 'There are some families in which the newly married couple live apart from the parents. This I consider a very wise step, most appropriate to human nature.'[76] He believed that 'the ideal way is to have the young couple, as soon as they are married, settle in a new home of their own apart from their parents.'[77] Indeed it was not just a matter of living apart, but of having as little to do with each other as possible. 'In short, it is important to let the two families have as few points of contact as possible.'[78]

Fukuzawa also believed that the subordination of women was both reflected in and caused by other institutions. One of these was the plurality of marital and sexual relations in Japan. He noted that 'The West is made up of countries, in all of which monogamy - one wife to one husband - is the law, while Japan is a country where one husband may have many wives simultaneously. Could there be any contrast greater and more serious than this?'[79] He noted that 'A man of high rank and of wealth had many concubines, with the result that both the wife and the concubines suffered from small shares in the man's attention. This is a well-known fact.'[80] On the other hand, middling and poorer people resorted to prostitutes. Nor, given the lack of emotion within marriage and the tensions with the in-law relations, could he blame them. 'When one realizes that men are cut off entirely from establishing normal and friendly associations with women, and that they are confined to dull and lifeless relationships, it becomes natural that once they evade the restrictions, they will seek the extremes of freedom, or licentiousness...'[81] Whereas in the West, the home was the place to relax and to feel warmth, often in Japan it was necessary to escape from it. 'The fact is that the houses of concubines and the gay quarters are a separate world free from social rules and customs, the only havens where one may escape from social oppression.'[82] All of this was a very old and understandable pattern in Japan, but it must be changed. 'It is true that this Japanese practice of polygamy has a history of some unknown thousands of

[76]Fukuzaawa, **Women**, 188

[77]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 230

[78]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 230

[79]Fukuzaawa, **Women**, 139

[80]Fukuzaawa, **Women**, 19

[81]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 124

[82]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 124

years. But now that the whole country has advanced into the modern civilization, I had thought that some scholars would turn their attention to this question and endeavour to devise some corrective measures.'[83]

The structural tensions in the family and the very weak position of women was also reflected in the ending of marriage. 'Divorce, which is very common and frequent in this country, must be caused by many factors, but the most important one is the nonexistence of social intercourse between men and women.'[84] There were seven grounds for divorce, according to neo-Confucian thought, the first two which Fukuzawa gave are particularly revealing. 'i) A woman shall be divorced for disobedience to her father-in-law or mother-in-law. ii) A woman shall be divorced if she fail to bear children, the reason for this rule being that women are sought in marriage for the purpose of giving men posterity.'[85] The latter, Fukuzawa commented 'indeed is a preposterous statement without reason or human sentiment behind it.'[86] If the husband died, the widow was left in a very difficult position for there was a great deal of pressure against re-marriage. 'My consistent advice for such a person has been remarriage, but Japanese society is still very unreceptive to such a concept, and even among educated people, there are very few who support it. The general attitude is to recognize widowhood as a beautiful virtue in a woman. Some even say this is an extension of the saying about a virtuous woman never taking two husbands. It is sad to see such advocates placing obstacles in the way of remarriage.'[87]

Fukuzawa's extensive writing on women and family relations partly reflected his desire to introduce selected aspects of the marriage pattern which he had seen and read about in the West to Japan, in particular monogamy. Yet he also wanted to change the emphasis on various features of the western system. We can see this when he wrote that 'the relation between husband and wife should not depend on love alone. Besides love and intimacy, there should be an element of mutual respect.'[88] Mutual support, intimacy and sharing was the perfect form. 'The true meaning of marriage should be for

[83]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 139

[84]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 128

[85]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 179-80

[86]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 181

[87]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 239-40

[88]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 33

a husband and a wife to share a house, helping and being helped, enjoying the greatest happiness in life.'[89]

Thus the pattern that he advocated was neither the 'traditional' Japanese one, nor the western. Toshiko Nakamura compared his treatment of marriage and the family with my own model of the English marriage system and found significant differences. In England, romantic love was the ideal basis for marriage. Fukuzawa, however, 'expected the feelings based on morality between men and women rather than romantic love' to be the basis of marriage, that is to say 'Respect'. 'Love and Affection' were specifically confined to the parent-child relationship. Secondly, while Christianity and directly religious symbolism and ritual was a central context of western marriage, religion, as such, was much less important in Japanese marriage. Finally, the western family system was based on strong individualism. Apart from husband and wife, all relationships were based on contracts or rules. In Japan the whole family of parents and children was a moral zone, based on mutual respect and affection and excluding contract. Contractual relations started outside the nuclear family.[90]

Fukuzawa also had a wider aim, for he realized that the inequality of the genders was both a cause and consequence of the wider inequalities which ran through Japanese society. What he really objected to was the link between political and family relations which was explicit in neo-Confucian thought. Above all, Fukuzawa attacked the Confucian assumption of a direct parallel between all the five relations, the ruler-ruled, husband-wife, parent-child, brother-brother, master-servant. He attacked the assertion that the family was a mirror of the polity, and hence any objection to male or parental power was also treason, and he attacked on the other side the assertion that the state relations mirrored the family, and hence to attack a superior was also unfilial, impious, unnatural. On the latter he argued that 'if we consider the facts more deeply, the relation between government and people is not that of flesh and blood. It is in essence an association of strangers.'[91] If this were so, then 'Personal feelings cannot be the guiding principle in an association between strangers. It is necessarily based on the creation of a social contract.'[92] In other words, he was driving a wedge between kinship and politics.

This was truly revolutionary. Most absolutist states, whether China or Louis XIV's France, tried to combine these. Filmer in seventeenth century England in his **Patriarcha** had tried to do the same. But

[89]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 48

[90] Nakamura, 'Fukuzawa'.

[91]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 70-1

[92]Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 71

From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

Fukuzawa echoes John Locke almost word for word in arguing that only mutual affection and mutual contract could be the basis for both the relations in the State and the Family. Blind obedience, uncritical submissiveness were wrong whether in the State or the Family. All people, including women, had natural and inalienable rights. This was an enormous change, but Fukuzawa was confident that it was happening. 'Recently we Japanese have undergone a great transformation. The theory of human rights has flooded the land and has been universally accepted.'[93]

He realized that the implications of changing one part of the social system, gender relations, would change everything. 'People may say that the foregoing argument is all logical, but from a practical point of view, the extension of women's rights today means disturbing the social order and it cannot be approved without reservation. However, it is inevitable that rectifying social evils will entail some readjustments. If one wants to avoid that disturbance, one will have to sit in silence and forbearance.'[94] And indeed, he showed in his own life the immense difficulties of changing the whole family system in one generation. In relation to his own family he found himself caught in contradictions. He noted the difficulty in his **Autobiography**. 'Some moralists are advocating love for all men in the whole world. I would be a beast not to give my own children equal love and privilege. However, I have to remember the position of my eldest son who will take my place and become the center of the family after my death. So I must give him some privileges.'[95] This was privileging the oldest child. He made less explicit his failure to live up to his preaching on the equal education of women. While he wrote that 'Among my family of nine children, we make no distinction at all in affection and position between boys and girls'[96], this is not how one daughter remembers her childhood.

Carmen Blacker describes the following 'personal communication' from Mrs Shidachi, Fukuzawa's only surviving daughter, whose testimony shows that 'Fukuzawa failed entirely to put his precepts into practice in the upbringing of his own daughters.' He left their education entirely to the mother who was "very conservative" and convinced of the innate inferiority of women.' Consequently 'Mrs Shidachi was never allowed out alone, never allowed to express her opinion in the presence of her elders, and never allowed to speak to guests when they came to the house...she was allowed next to no contact with men until her marriage at the age of eighteen, and even then her opinion was not consulted. Her education was, in fact, very little different from other girls 'except in so far as she learned English.'[97]

[93]Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 182; Fukuzawa was speaking of the early 1870's.

[94]Fukuzawa, **Women**, 195

[95]Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 300

[96]Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 299

[97]Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 157-8

From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

A slightly different interpretation is given by Keiko Fujiwara who describes Fukuzawa's various attempts to educate his daughters, trying schools and then private tutors and commenting that 'Perhaps he was disappointed in school education, for he never did send his two youngest daughters to school. They were taught entirely by tutors at home. In these irregular attempts to educate his daughters, we can see the figure of a father struggling to provide the best education for his daughters.'[98]

This is a reminder that there is a considerable gap between the autobiographical reminiscences of Fukuzawa, dictated in his mid-sixties year, and his actual behaviour. Just as Craig shows that he selectively re-arranged his political activities in the **Autobiography** to present himself as detached and a-political[99], so his self-portrait needs to be treated with caution as an indication of his actual behaviour in other respects.

Yet rather than taking this gap between precept and practice as an indication of hypocrisy or weakness, it is better to see it as evidence of one of the many enormously strong pressures upon Fukuzawa. He tried to change almost everything in Japan, the political, economic, legal, moral, technological and social systems. All this was to be effected within twenty or thirty years in an old and complex civilization. It is hardly surprising that not everything was achieved and much has, in fact, remained unchanged below the surface. For our purposes here, what is interesting is to see how he perceived the essence of western family systems and their difference from the Japanese tradition.

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In the account above I have largely followed the conventional interpretation of Fukuzawa by Masao Maruyama and others. This suggests that Fukuzawa renounced his Confucian heritage and absorbed a thoroughly western model of civilization. But it is worth ending by pointing out that future research may well come to challenge this interpretation. It may well turn out that just as in his personal life, where Fukuzawa stressed the traditional costume and food and educational values, so in his thought, his ideas contain much more of his traditional upbringing than even he himself realized. Indeed, his thought, on deeper inspection, may provide clues to the way in which Japan has become a nation which blended a long tradition of neo-Confucian thought and institutions with the new ideas and institutions of the west. This new interpretation is largely based on the work of Professor Toshiko Nakamura.[100]

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[98]Fukuzaawa, **Women**, xiv

[99]Craig, 'Fukuzawa', 103, n.7

[100] In particular Toshiko Nakamura, 'Fukuzawa Yukichi's Ideas on Family in Civilization', **The Hokkaido Law Review,** vol.XLIV, nos. 3,4,6 (1993) and a number of conversations I have had with Professor Nakamura where she has explained her ideas to me.

From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

Fukuzawa had been brought up as a child and young man within the traditional clan and family structure of Tokugawa Japan. He had spent thirty-seven years as a Confucian scholar and although he may have consciously believed that he rejected this period, in fact, it probably continued to influence him deeply for the rest of his life. A close inspection of his works, Professor Nakamura points out, shows many references to Confucian works. Confucian though this was, it is important to remember that the Japanese neo-Confucian version developed during the Tokugawa period was very different from the Chinese version of Confucianism. Furthermore, Fukuzawa took this implicit model and altered it fundamentally.

One example of the fusion of the neo-Confucian heritage and western models into something different from both has already been alluded to in the discussion of his ideas on the family and women's role in society. Although he advocated greater equality between the sexes, he maintained the importance of respect for parents, the primarily arranged marriage, and marriage based not on romantic love but mutual respect. It was not the western conjugal marriage system I have described elsewhere.[101] The 'fusing' of husband and wife which was supposed to occur when man and wife became 'one flesh and one blood' in the marriage service was not to become a feature of Japanese marriage. Husband and wife would remain mutually respectful separate individuals. Yet nor was the system he advocated just a continuation of what had existed previously in Japan. Something new, yet traditional, was created out of the blend, neither 'western' nor 'Tokugawa'.

This was related to a basic tension in Fukuzawa's treatment of the individual. It could be argued that his ideas on the individual are basically neo-Confucian. He uses the Confucian word 'Head of ten thousand things' to describe the individual. The idea is that the individual must become this 'Head' by 'polishing' his reason and virtue and thus deserving the title. There is little of the idea of a bounded, separate, individual which is the key idea in western philosophy. His concepts seem to have been based on his early experience and on reading, that is to say samurai and neo-Confucian. It is true that at certain points he thought it would be necessary to change Japan entirely and to imitate the West. Thus in the 1870's he read Guizot, Buckle, Mill and Tocqueville and wrote his **Theory of Civilization** as a way of coming to terms with their very different concepts of the relation between individual and society. Yet he only partially absorbed their ideas.

For Fukuzawa the individual was not the separate entity, only fused with one other person during life, namely in marriage. This western model, which placed the individual in the centre of his or her world, with one deep relationship to a spouse, and then with widening rings of contractual relations, did not appeal to Fukuzawa. Instead, he argued that the whole family of parents and children formed one unit

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[101] Macfarlane, **Marriage**.

based on respect between husband and wife, and love and affection between parents and children. This was the basic emotional and moral unit. Only outside this, in society, did contractual relations begin. Morality in society more generally was created by an extension of family ethics and trust to the whole society. This is not Chinese Confucianism, where the respect for all ancestors is stressed and the husband-wife relationship is diminished. But nor was it the atomistic system, based on the individual or the dyadic husband-wife relation, when he had seen in England and America and read about in western books.

Another area where there is a fusion of two streams of ideas in order to create something which is neither western nor Tokugawa was in his philosophy of history, which also encompassed his theory of morality. He altered the neo-Confucian theory of time and history in various ways. One change was in moving the focus of the utopia or goal of life. Classic Confucianism placed the golden age in the past. The aim was to live in a way which would return one to the great ways and days of the past. Hence it was a conservative, authoritarian and quite rigid system. It looked down on the present as a deterioration from the past. Fukuzawa held on to the idea of a golden age, but through his reading of Guizot, Buckle and others, he mixed in a sort of 'Whig' or progressivist view of history. This was forward looking. So the golden age was moved to the future. The idea of Enlightenment progress could be absorbed within his vision. The present was part of a forward movement, better than a barbarous past, but still only some steps along the way to a final, glorious, future. To this extent he accepted the western, nineteenth century, view of progressive evolution. But the nature of the final golden age was not the Whig one of equality, individualism, wealth, democracy and science. It was much closer to the Confucian dream of harmony, right relations, loving care of the weak, virtue, respect, even if it was all tinged with western rationality. It contained a contractual and individual element, but also had many features, particularly in relation to family sentiments and affection, missing in the Whig story. In the golden age ahead human beings would combine the rationality and knowledge of Newton and the morality of Confucius. Thus the historical dynamic is Whig and the goal Confucian.

As Professor Nakamura explains with the help of diagrams, the history of civilization saw the true nature of man gradually expanding from the barbarian state, where it was crushed by the wider society, to its development through the expansion of the family, so that one would end up with a peaceful world civilization based on reason and morality. All relations would have the respectful, affectionate and non-contractual nature of family relations and all disorder, violence and conflict would be eliminated.

Such a fusion of two paradigms had several consequences for Fukuzawa. It turned a conservative programme into a progressive, revolutionary and forward-looking one. It valued the present and gave the Japanese a sense of achievement and success. It set standards by which even the West was lacking and inadequate in terms of morality and order. The west was further along this path than Japan in terms of knowledge and technology, but Japan was heading more accurately in the right direction. And it eliminated the need for any further philosophy of history, whether that of Hegel, Marx, modernization theory or whatever. In the end the dynamism (Whig) and goals (Utopian) were adequately represented in the theory. Yet curiously enough, it also paved the way for the late acceptance of Marxism in Japan,

From: Copy of chapter 15 of Alan Macfarlane, *The Making of the Modern World: Visions from East and West* (Palgrave, London, 2002)

for in many ways all that was needed was a substitution of the Marxist Utopia for the Confucian one. And to a large extent they overlapped, seeing the goal of life in an universal human brotherhood based on respect, love and harmony.

Thus Fukuzawa may well be seen in the future as an intellectual in the old Japanese tradition, filtering western ideas, re-constructing them and fitting them into a pre-existing pattern. He did not just abandon the framework within which he was brought up. Instead he used that set of ideas as a kind of grid into which he placed the new knowledge. Thus the pieces of his picture were mainly taken from the new knowledge derived from the west. The content or vocabulary was western. But the structure or grammar remained heavily influenced by a modified neo-Confucian framework. This blend of two traditions makes him much more appropriately a fore-runner of Japan with its curious blending of apparently contradictory forces.

In many respects his attempt to combine the Japanese and western ways reminds one of Tocqueville's attempt to blend the **ancien regime** with the 'modern' world. In many ways Tocqueville's ambivalence about the new values of equality, individualism and so on remind one of Fukuzawa. Though the gap between French and Anglo-American thought systems was not nearly as great as that between neo-Confucian and Western ideas, it was still large. So Tocqueville wrestled with the contradictions and used each to criticize the other, as did Fukuzawa. A difference was that Tocqueville had less of a confidence in progress, though he did at times see a 'spirit of history' in the steady progress of the spirit of equality.

Professor Nakamura's tentative new interpretation of Fukuzawa as a largely implicit neo-Confucianist adds a certain richness to the interpretation. It fits with much recent anthropological study of non-western societies where indigenous peoples have been found to have re-interpreted and fought back against the externally imposed models of the west. If the theory comes to be accepted it puts into question Fukuzawa's own representation of himself as a whole hearted westerniser. It makes him an even more interesting example of a great man trying to overcome some very deep contradictions between his heart and head, his early experience and his later findings. He stands caught between two civilizations, Japan and the West, which were locked into an increasingly close embrace.

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In terms of his life and experiences Fukuzawa embodied great contradictions. He moved in one lifetime from one type of world into its almost complete opposite. Furthermore this forced upon him deeper and wider comparisons than any of them. Although he spent less effort on working out a sophisticated methodology than his European counterparts, he concentrated with intense concern on the riddle of the nature of the modern world, and how it could be achieved in Japan.

We shall see that his picture was very much like that of his western counterparts. Equality, individualism, liberty and the separation of spheres were the essential underpinnings for wealth and

technological success. But there were other things which they took for granted but which he specified, for example the art of public speaking and discussion, confrontational politics, the relative equality of men and women, individual rights and modern accounting. All these Fukuzawa had to explain and teach to his fellow countrymen. But in essence, for most of his life, he proclaimed the Enlightenment message; wealth and power would follow a rise in equality, liberty and individualism. Technological imports without these changes would be worthless.

What makes Fukuzawa special is that his message coincided with the Meiji Restoration when his ideas suddenly became absorbed into the official policy of Japan. A relatively backward society, caught in many of the traps of the agrarian world - hierarchy, a certain degree of absolutism, technological stagnation - suddenly attempted to 'join the west'. No other Asian country had every attempted to do this, let alone succeeded in making the massive transformation in just two generations.

The amazing fact is that, partly on the basis of the blueprint, a simplified replica of the best of the Enlightenment, Japan performed the miracle, effected the exit from the agrarian world. Within fifty years it had developed from an isolated and relatively weak Asian polity into one of the great world powers which had defeated China and Russia. The growth of its industrial production, of its exports and of its agriculture was astounding. It had found the secret bridge from the agrarian world. The importation of western science and technology, though an essential part of this transformation, was only a part. The cultural, social and political changes were equally important. The fact that the same technology and science were available to China, South-East Asia and India, yet had little dramatic effect there for some eighty years after the Japanese transformation, shows how much more was involved.

Of course there were many other necessary pre-conditions in Japan; the craft skills, ingenuity, hard work, self-discipline, co-operativeness and flexibility of the work force. Yet all of these had been present for two hundred and fifty years of peace and increasingly easy taxation and had led nowhere in particular. It could be argued that it was the opening of Japan, and particularly the adoption of the Enlightenment message which tipped the balance from internal predation to internal production. Fukuzawa added little to the theoretical subtlety of the earlier analysis, but he was a highly intelligent thinker who sought to relay its central message, an enormously energetic man who sought to propagate these new views as widely as possible, and a man who was lucky enough to find that the tide was flowing with him.

Thus the miracle of the exit from agraria had been reproduced in a civilization what was in many respects different from its earlier home. Fukuzawa was in the end wiser than Marx, whose blueprint, with its closure of the separations between spheres by merging ideology and polity, taking equality far beyond its productive bounds, and creating the greatest despotisms the world has ever known, was a disaster. That a modern system of industry with some of its underpinning happened in Japan some two generations earlier than anywhere else in Asia is not unconnected to the work of Japan's greatest modernizer and analyst of modernity, Yukichi Fukuzawa. He deserves his place on the highest denomination Japanese bank-note.