Higher Education in East Asia
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Neoliberalism and the Professoriate

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2. THE JAPANESE PROFESSORIATE

As Clark Kerr has noted, of the institutions that had been established in the Western world by 1520, 85 still exist—the Roman Catholic Church, the British Parliament, several Swiss Cantons, and some seventy universities. Of these, perhaps the universities have experienced the least change (Altbach, 2003, 5).

This statement by Philip Altbach, the doyen of comparative higher education studies, is made in the context of the dramatic changes that have recently begun to take place among universities across the world. The statement suggests that European universities have been relatively immune to change and that they retain many of the characteristics with which they were founded. This, of course, is not true. All institutions often appear to be unchanging because of the manner in which they legitimatize their practices by reference to "tradition," but in reality they are continually in a state of flux. In order to understand how change has happened, though, it is necessary to place contemporary institutions in a historical perspective.

HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE PROFESSORIATE

Although some Japanese higher education institutions today claim links with institutions in the premodern period, Japan never had a university system in the premodern period to match that of medieval Europe, with its institutions in England, France, Italy and Spain. As Dore (1984) and Passin (1968) have extensively documented, there were high levels of literacy in Japan long before the Meiji Restoration in 1868, mainly due to a widespread and complex system of schools based in Buddhist temples (terakoya), but the study of subjects such as medicine, mathematics and applied sciences, which has long been taught in European institutions, were studied by individuals apprenticed to individual teachers. The development of higher education in Japan can therefore be legitimately taken as starting in the last third of the nineteenth century, when the Meiji oligarchs, recognizing that education was the key to preventing the country from being colonized, developed a system that would produce workers to drive the country's modernization. The emphasis of the oligarchs was on the primary level of education (by 1905, 90% of young Japanese were receiving at least five years of education), but at the top end, the system included the establishment of a small number of higher education institutions (daigaku) charged with producing the bureaucrats and officials who would work in government. At the pinnacle of—and
largely dominating—the system were the imperial universities, which were charged with training the teachers for lower-order institutions and whose graduates were preferentially employed by state institutions.

The first professors in Japanese universities were distinguished by their international nature and experience. In the early 1870s, around one-third of the total government educational budget was being spent on either supporting foreign staff in Japan or Japanese studying overseas. The former were known as oyatoi gairokokujin and included some of the best-known names in the development of the modern higher education system in Japan—William Griffith, William Clark, Henry Dyer and William Murray. The term oyatoi gairokokujin has been translated by Hazel Jones (1980) as “hired foreigners,” which demonstrates the idea that while they were paid handsomely for their services, they were hired to teach the Japanese population specific skills, after which their services would be dispensed with. A similar amount of money was invested in sending Japanese students overseas as ryūgakusei, a system that had existed in Japan from the ninth to thirteenth centuries, when students were sent to China, but had fallen into abeyance during the past half a millennium (see Bennett, Passin and McKnight, 1958). According to Kashioka (1982), a very large proportion of these ryūgakusei became professors in major imperial universities on their return and were listed in the Jinji kōshin roku (Japan’s Who’s Who); the list includes some of the best-known educators of the period: Fukuzawa Yukichi, Tsuda Umeko, Mori Arinori (see Duke, 1989).

Early professors in Japanese universities were also distinguished by the diversity of their activities, which involved everything from “writing popular articles and translating Western materials for popular audiences to giving public lectures, serving as consultants to the government, conducting basic research and teaching” (Cummins and Amano, 1977, 128). This range of activities indeed explains in part why some of these early professors became such famous figures, still remembered today. Gradually, though, many of the nonacademic activities were taken over by nonuniversity bureaucrats, and the work of professors was increasingly professionalized and became more narrowly focused.

The higher education system itself was characterized by having copied many of its core elements from Germany. The Imperial Ordinance of 1886, which transformed Tokyo University into Tokyo Imperial University, for example, defined the university’s purpose as “the teaching of, and fundamental research into, arts and sciences necessary for the state.” As with the rest of the education system that was developed during the Meiji period, the first priority of institutions was to the state, and this was reflected further by the fact that imperial university presidents were themselves appointed by means of an imperial order. Universities were also constructed around the German system of a “chair” in which professors served as civil servants, though it is important to point out that the German model of higher education, though dominant, was not imposed wholesale but was adapted to Japanese conditions. The new imperial universities, for example, included practical courses, such as agriculture and engineering, which were not found in German universities. But perhaps most significant of all for the prewar history of higher education, as Beauchamp and Rubinger (1989, 139) point out, “was the Japanese

failure to practice the vital principles of Lehrfreiheit (freedom to teach) and Lernfreiheit (freedom to learn), which gave the German university its inner strength, vitality and a measure of academic freedom.”

Unlike in Europe, where the private university system predated the state system, the private university system in Japan developed in large part in opposition to the state control over the imperial universities. Institutions such as Keï, Dôshisha and Waseda were founded in 1858, 1875 and 1882 respectively by the antigovernment liberal figures Fukuzawa Yukichi, Niijima Jo and Okuma Shigenobu, but were denied official recognition until the University Ordinance of 1918. The ordinance saw an impressive growth in higher education over the following twenty years, particularly in the private sector, which catered, by 1938, for around two-thirds of the total university and college population of students, a pattern that has remained more or less until today.

As Japan entered what has become known as the “dark valley” of the 1930s, private universities came as much under the control of the state as public ones. The state became increasingly involved in controlling what could be taught and by whom, a situation that was best captured in what became known as the Kyōdai jiken, a series of incidents concerning the defense of academic autonomy at Kyoto University, culminating in the Takikawa Incident of 1933, when the liberal law professor Takikawa Yukitori was accused in a right-wing pamphlet of favoring left-wing students while serving on the entrance committee for Justice Ministry officials and of writing books that were critical of existing social practices, such as only punishing wives in adultery cases, and was dismissed by Education Minister Hatoyama Ichirō (see Mitchell, 1983, 273ff.). This series of events explained the reforms introduced by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) authorities after the war, which were designed to protect the autonomy of institutions by relieving the Ministry of Education of some of its inspection roles and by giving national universities the right to select their own managers and staff, subject only to what was supposed to be pro forma government agreement. Private universities did not even need this pro forma. The issue of autonomy still looms large in the reform debates of Japanese universities.

As is well known, higher education in Japan expanded rapidly and continually throughout the postwar period. Over a forty-five-year period, it moved from being, to use the categories of Martin Trow (1974), an elite system through being a mass system to becoming a universal system. In 1960, only 10.1% of school leavers went to some form of higher or further full-time education; by 1980s this had risen to 49.9% and by 2005 to 76.2%, one of the highest rates in the world (Yo, 2007, 45).

As mentioned, the vast majority of this expansion has been in the private sector—over 80% of HE institutions are private—and resources remain, as at the beginning of the system, very unequally distributed across the public/private divide. This has not, however, always been in ways that external observers might have expected. On average, teachers in private universities teach more students and teach more classes than their counterparts in the national universities. In general, they have also had lower status. On the other hand, they have also often received higher
salaries and enjoyed better benefits. The relative attractions of the public/private divide have come into particularly sharp relief in recent years. This is a topic that will be addressed below.

THE JAPANESE PROFESSORATE IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

The rest of this chapter sets out to examine how the role of the professor in Japanese universities has changed during the postwar period and how that changing role relates to broader changes in Japanese politics, economy and society.

In 1977, two of the leading experts on Japanese higher education, William K. Cummings and Amano Ikuko published an article entitled “The Changing Role of the Japanese Professor.” They picked out the following features for particular note for understanding the development of the modern university system:

(a) The chair (kōza) system—which has an equal number of senior and junior positions—has virtually guaranteed promotion to all those employed by universities. The fact that almost all senior management positions, such as dean, were chosen from within the university also meant that many could aspire to such positions. The converse of these “benefits” (as the authors call them) is that institutions became excessively, in some cases almost completely, inbred, since it was believed that only those who had been fully educated within the institution could fully understand its distinctive features and character. This practice was exacerbated by the fact that each university operated its own entrance examination system.

(b) From the very early days, university professors enjoyed great respect and status, not only when teaching but more generally. Professors were influential in the lives of their students far beyond the classroom and long after they had left their institutions.

(c) Professors were rewarded for loyalty to their institution through a salary system that recognized length of service, known as the nenkō jōretsu sei (seniority promotion system). Tenure was secured from initial appointment, often at an early age by global standards. Those who took their services elsewhere would often suffer severe financial penalties as a result. All of this led to an immobile academic workforce.

(d) Even publication became focused internally. Academics were able (and indeed were sometimes financially encouraged) to publish their work, without peer or external review, in faculty journals known as daigaku kiyō. Very few professional journals developed outside individual universities, and very few scholars published in the journals of other institutions.

All of these features, as Cummings and Amano (1977, 131) point out, “tended to channel the energies of professors towards their universities.” Professors had little concept of themselves as part of wider groups of specialists in a particular arena, such as law, medicine, chemistry or economics. On the positive side, as the authors point out, this meant that Japan could develop a world-class and fully developed university like Tokyo Imperial University remarkably quickly. On the down side, while institutions were very keen on the idea of university autonomy, there was only a weakly developed sense of academic freedom, which explained how the state had been able to control the university sector relatively easily as Japan descended into war in the 1930s.

All of the features identified by Cummings and Amano above as key for understanding the formation of the higher education sector still pertain today to some degree. There were a number of postwar changes, however, which served to modify their effect on the self-perception of university professors in Japan. The most important of these was probably the development of a research orientation.

The renewed vigor in the immediate postwar period in research was in part related to the fact that many academics had been denied the chance of doing any research at all because of the war. Another reason was the abolition by the Occupation authorities of the division between elite, imperial, research-oriented institutions and the rest. Suddenly, all of those teaching at any higher education institution began to think of themselves as professors who could undertake research as well as having to teach. Perhaps most important, though, the vast majority of those becoming university professors were going through graduate school first and thereby coming to understand the nature of doing research; the proportion of academics with advanced degrees increased from 16.3% in 1953 to 46% in 1965 (Cummings and Amano, 1977, 135).

The Occupation forces encouraged the new interest in research and in particular the flourishing of academic and learned societies as a bulwark against the twin threats of nationalism and communism. Although the vast majority of the government’s contribution continued to be allocated on a historical basis to the small number of top, formerly imperial, universities, it also introduced for the first time competitive research funding. This system of allocating funding was important for encouraging academics to work outside their own institutions. The amount of money that individuals could be awarded was strictly limited, thereby forcing groups of researchers to submit joint applications for what became known as kyōdō kenkyū (joint research projects). These, in turn, led to the development of large numbers of kenkyūkai (study groups), which again crossed institutions and brought together academics with shared intellectual interests from different institutions. Increasingly, these kenkyūkai became the main sites for academics to present their work rather than in their departments, which in many cases were teaching units rather than intellectual communities where scholars shared their research with each other.

Surveys in 1967 and in 1973 both showed that nearly half of Japanese professors in that era viewed research as their most important activity (Cummings and Amano, 1977, 139). What was meant by research, of course, varied enormously and could extend from serious use of primary sources to the quick and easy production of popular articles. Cummings and Amano (1977, 147) suggested that the successful academic was likely to go through several stages, “from being a serious and committed researcher in his early years to becoming a quasipopular writer by his late thirties and a public speaker and consultant in his fifties.” In general, though, universities themselves were beginning to diversify into research-oriented and teaching-oriented, and the
activities of professors within them to some extent reflected the nature of their individual institutions. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, as Shimbori (1977, 153–156) demonstrated, that just over 50% of all Japanese university professors of education, for example, had not produced a single research publication over the entire decade before 1975; only 4.5% of professors in what he defined as “top league” institutions, however, were “silent” during this period, while almost 72% in the “bottom league” had not published.

Universities became increasingly politicized during the late 1960s and early 1970s in Japan. This impacted on Japanese professors in a number of ways. First of all, the very subjects they taught became subject to political criticism. In economics, this led for example to a radical split between Keynesian and Marxist economists, a split that can still be found in most economics departments in Japan today. At its most extreme, it led to academics being condemned as being agents of the state even when undertaking research that apparently had no state agenda. At the same time, the politicization of students changed their relationship with their professors, slightly reducing the social distance between the two, with, as Havens (1978, 331) put it, “a new reluctance to revere professors simply because they were professors.” Nevertheless, professors in Japan still commanded a high degree of respect even if they were not held in the sort of awe that had earlier persisted. Part of this “respect” was probably because of their continuing lack of relative visibility. While some professors in the 1970s began, in response to student demand, to operate systems such as office hours, the fact that most universities were located in Japan’s densest metropolises (Tokyo alone accounted for almost 44% of all students), meant that few professors lived less than an hour from their place of work and many much farther. As a result, most professors were generally on campus only the two or three days a week they had classes; otherwise, they stayed and worked at home or moonlit on other campuses. It was partly in response to this problem of a dispersed workforce that many universities developed new consolidated and much larger campuses outside the urban areas in the 1970s, the best-known example of which was the relocation of Tokyo University of Education to Tsukuba in Ibaraki prefecture in 1973 (see Cummings, 1978, for an account of the founding of Tsukuba University).

Drawing on the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s International Survey of the Academic Profession undertaken in 1992 to 1993, which included Japan among its 13 target countries and 20,000 participants, Ehara Takekazu (1998) has sought to characterize Japanese professors’ views of teaching and research. Japan fits centrally into what Ehara calls the “German model,” where the number of teaching-oriented faculty members is extremely low. While research is seen as more important than teaching, Japan is out-of-line with the other members of the “German” group in the extent to which academics think it is difficult to achieve tenure without research publications. This is due to the very secure position that Japanese academics enjoy once they are initially appointed. A very high proportion of Japanese academics perceive their research activity as exerting a positive influence on their teaching, while their teaching activity they see as negatively impinging on their research.

The very strong research orientation of academics in Japanese universities in the postwar period has not been reflected by investment, by either government or industry, in the university as a site for research. As is well known, not only most applied but also most blue-skies research in Japan takes place in nonacademic and corporate research institutions. Government research support for universities was particularly harshly curtailed in the 1980s; by the early 1990s, the amount of money available to purchase equipment per university scientist was roughly 20% of that available for peers in nonuniversity government research institutions and 25% of that available in corporate laboratories (Yamamoto, 1995, 27). The national proportion of R and D expenditure in universities slipped from 18.2% in 1970 to a mere 11.6% in 1990 (Yamamoto, 1995, 34). Perhaps not surprisingly, the number of Japanese graduate students in science and technology also decreased during the same period (many of them lured to the financial sector during the “bubble economy”), and their places were increasingly taken in Japanese laboratories by students from overseas, especially from neighboring Asian countries.

The lack of research funding in universities in the early 1990s highlighted a number of characteristics of the organization of Japanese universities at the time, which were increasingly challenged during the later half of that decade. These reflected the two main models for university governance and administration that existed in Japan at the time: the kyōjukai shihai model and the rikikai shihai model. The kyōjukai shihai model (control by professors’ councils) has persisted in all national, public and many private universities, while the rikikai shihai model (control by university board or president) has only been found in private institutions.

THE PROFESSORIATE IN KYŌJUKAI SHIHAI UNIVERSITIES

In national universities, until recently, there has been an almost complete separation between financial and academic decision making. In these institutions, the Ministry of Education controlled budgets and national policy, while the professors’ councils (kyōjukai) within the university kept tight control over admissions, curricula, examinations and student affairs. The two processes went along in parallel almost without interaction and, as Yamamoto (1995, 30) says, “Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that available resources, including research funds, [were] allocated equally despite the differential needs of researchers and faculties.” In 1992, 75% of government research funds were allocated without the need to write any research proposal.

It was largely to tackle the perceived malaise in research in the formerly elite national university sector that major reforms were introduced in April 2004 under what was known as the dokuritsu gōsei hōjinka process. While national universities only served 20% of students in higher education in Japan, they consumed over 80% of the national higher education budget. The reforms included strengthening the power of the heads of such institutions, including giving them the power to hire and fire, set their own budgets and pay, and review their own academic programs without
fifteen higher education institutions, out of a total of over a thousand four-year and two-year institutions, receive over half of all governmental research grants (Yamamoto, 2002, 111). In many ways, the new competitive funding system was put in place as a means of creating world-class, known in Japanese as “global standard,” institutions and legitimating the government investing a higher proportion of its funding in an even smaller set of institutions than historically had been the case. Here, again, the government’s motivation has been linked with the idea of making its top institutions more significant contributors to national wealth generation. But a compounding factor has been the effect of globalization and the relatively poor showing of Japan in university league tables, certainly in the context of it being the second-most-expensive system in the world. This poor showing has not only an effect on Japan reputationally, but also on its ability to attract high-quality students to study in its top institutions.

Table 1. Leading Recipients of Centre of Excellence Project Awards (2002–4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Project Numbers</th>
<th>Grants (¥ Billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.3 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoya</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohoku</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo Tech</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keio (P)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseda (P)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference to the Ministry of Education. The appointment of external members on to the university boards was also designed to reduce the power of the kyōdōkai to appoint as president one of their own.

National universities were increasingly encouraged to undertake joint research projects with industry in the 1990s (something that had only a few years earlier been severely restricted by law as constituting an abuse of government equipment; see Hatakenaka, 2004, 41–43). The idea was to enable such institutions to develop a greater level of entrepreneurial activities and to take on financial as well as academic responsibility. The reforms were modeled, to a large extent, on the reform process that had taken place in the U.K. in the late 1980s under Mrs. Thatcher. The response to these reforms, as indeed they were in the U.K., have been mixed.

The biggest fear for professors in national universities lay in the status of their tenure. Indeed, one of the main driving forces behind the reforms was to reassign the 125,000 employees in the national universities to the private sector as part of the government’s plan to slim down the number of public sector employees by a factor of 25 percent over a decade from the mid-1990s (see Mulvey, 2000). After April 1, 2004, national university professors no longer enjoyed either the employment status or the security that they had previously had as national civil servants, and this led some to question whether they should stay in the national university sector, which, in any case, since the 1970s had been less well remunerated than the private sector. Because professors in national universities could no longer rely on a second, more lucrative, career in the private sector, one response therefore was to pressurize their university councils to increase the mandatory retirement age in national universities, which in many cases had been set as low as 60 years old. In most national universities, retirement was pushed up to age 65.

Even with the increased retirement age, the new trends that began to develop in national universities were not to the liking of some of the staff. They disliked the new, government-introduced auditing culture that meant that universities had to put forward six-year plans, which could be assessed and judged by external bodies and would determine future funding. They disliked the new consumer culture, which meant that teachers needed to be responsive to student demands, and the new entrepreneurial culture, which meant that research funds needed to be competed for. Although it could not be called a mass exodus, in the two or three years following the 2004 reform there developed a noticeable trickle of senior academics below retirement age moving from some of the top national to private universities of supposedly lower academic status.

Other academics in the leading national universities, however, embraced the new culture and in particular the increased research funding available through open competition. Indeed, as anticipated and as happened with the U.K. experience (see Goodman, 2004), the new competitive funding model actually increased the gap between the research-intensive universities and the rest as can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, which outline the award of funding for Centers of Excellence and Scientific Grants in Aid respectively in the early 2000s.
Table 2. Scientific Grants in Aid (2005): Million Yen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Amount (M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>20,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>13,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohoku</td>
<td>9,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>8,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoya</td>
<td>6,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>5,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>5,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo Inst of Technology</td>
<td>4,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsukuba</td>
<td>3,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keio</td>
<td>2,486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE PROFESSORIATE IN RIJIKAI SHIHAI UNIVERSITIES

As Gregory Poole explains in his chapter in this volume, private universities have also come under severe pressures to reform their forms of management in the 1990s, but these pressures have emanated from a different direction from those in the national sector. Demographic decline has meant that there are no longer enough 18-year-olds in the population to provide the student intake that has been the staple and stable source of income for private universities over the past half-century. By 2006, around 40% of private universities were officially teien ware (taking below the quota of students set by the government for them to qualify for public subsidy), and many of these were presumed to be in severe financial difficulties. In the rijikai shihai model of management, professors had generally had very little say in the running of their institutions. Management has been undertaken by a small group of individuals, who were often related to each other, since many of these institutions were part of family-run educational conglomerates known as dozoku keiei gakkō hōjin (family-run school conglomerations). This relates closely to the history of the development of modern private higher education institutions in Japan.

Many private universities were set up in the 1960s when Japanese higher education was moving from the elite to the mass phase and the state was unwilling or unable to deal with the level of demand. As James and Benjamin (1988) and, more recently, Kinmonth (2004) graphically point out, in the expanding educational market that pertained from the 1960s through to the early 1990s, such institutions introduced a series of practices that brought in large sums of money, most of which were channeled towards the families that had established them, even though in theory they were nonprofit organizations. Management therefore had good reason for seeing their staff as employees rather than stakeholders, and staff in turn benefited from the expanding market conditions in which they operated. The increasingly difficult conditions in which private universities found themselves in the middle of the first decade of the current century, however, has begun to change the way in which such institutions are operating, as the following case study shows.

University A is a large university based in the Kansai (Greater Kyoto-Osaka) area teaching a wide range of humanities and social science courses to undergraduates plus a small postgraduate program. It was founded in the early 1960s, and by the mid-1980s had an annual intake of around 3,000 students and a total student body of 12,000 over the four-year course. It is a family-run institution and has an attached high school, junior college and vocational higher education institution (semmongakkō).

University A flourished throughout the last four decades of the twentieth century. As the number of 18-year-olds in the population increased, applications soared. Although it was of relatively low academic level, it had excellent facilities and a prime site within minutes of two mainline stations. As applications went up, so did fees, and by the 1990s it was one of the most expensive universities in the whole Kansai area, charging almost 30% more than the regional average. At the height of the school-leaver population size in 1992, over 42,000 applications were made to University A, a ratio of around 15 for each place. The university president, who was the son of the founder, was also head of the whole education conglomerate of which the university was a part, and many of his immediate and extended family were employed within the institution. Academic staff was employed through personal contacts rather than open advertisement, and a large number of relatives (especially pairs of father-daughter and husband-wife) were employed by the institution. There were also a large number of professors who had retired from the local large national university, Osaka University, and had been invited to join the staff by former colleagues who had already moved there.

Although each faculty had faculty meetings, these were short events (unlike the meetings in kyōiku shihai universities, which could last many hours) and were used simply to disseminate and pass on information from the rijikai (school council) and kyōmuka (school office). Few meetings lasted longer than 30 minutes, and there was no mechanism for questioning management decisions. The president had an office on the campus but was so cut off from most of his staff that the whole floor on which the office was based in the large and impressive administrative block (known by staff as The White House) was not even marked on the elevator buttons. Most staff at the university said that they had never had a meeting or even a conversation with the president, although many had been there for over twenty years.
While the president had a master's degree from the United States, he considered himself a businessman rather than an academic. His school board was made up of the maximum-allowed family members plus other personal contacts of the extended family, but it was not perceived to be closely involved in the management of the institution. He surrounded himself with a small clique of senior managers, none of whom were academics and few of whom questioned his decisions. He would select members of the university academic staff to advise on certain issues, but these could find themselves out of favor as quickly as they were in favor. He was generous in his hospitality to those with whom he did talk, but considered harsh about those who were not part of his circle. Many within the institution described the form of management as a "court culture" and worried about the lack of transparency and possibility for feedback. Since the high fees paid meant high salaries for those teaching at University A, however, there was little open dissent. Indeed, individuals often said they were afraid of expressing dissent with management on campus too loudly, since they did not know the relationship between their colleagues and the president's family and were worried about being reported for disloyalty. If there was not exactly a culture of fear on campus, then there was clearly a lack of engagement on the part of the vast majority of professors within the institution with issues of either financial or academic planning. Most professors simply turned up to undertake their teaching and then left the campus as soon as possible. The campus, in any case, was not open before 9 A.M. or after 5 P.M. or over the weekends, but even in the middle of the day during term time, the corridors with the professors' offices were generally deserted.

The 1990s saw a radical change in the conditions of University A. The number of applicants dropped dramatically. This first manifested itself in the attached junior college. In 1992, this school had had 5,871 applicants for 400 places; by 2005, it had only 76 and had begun to resemble a ghost town. In the university itself, with an approved quota of over 2,750, the number of applicants dropped rapidly from a peak in 1991 of 41,344 to only 600 in 2007. The academic staff, however, was kept in the dark both about these trends and about their implications. New courses were implemented and indeed a whole new law school was established in 2004 to provide teaching for the new law training program that had been instituted by the government in that year. The university facilities continued to be upgraded, and fees remained as high as ever. Not until 2005 did academic staff notice any change in their own conditions: these were the nonfilling of vacant posts and then a sudden cut in bonus payments of around ¥1,000,000.

The response to the changing conditions in University A by the professoriate was varied. Older staff, particularly those who had been recruited to the university after retiring from the national university system, often on very large incomes, were phlegmatic and generally unconcerned. They had little loyalty to University A. Indeed members of the university who had moved from Osaka University used to routinely describe themselves in their articles not as professors of University A but as former professors of Osaka University and they were known to hold Osaka University "Old Boy" (・yōkai) meetings on the campus. They saw University A as owing them gratitude for adding luster to its academic profile as well sometimes providing it with the level of qualifications and skills required for the ministry to approve new courses.

Middle-ranking staff often recognized the problems faced by the university—and as those with families to support were perhaps most financially concerned—but were reluctant or unable to change their practices. In particular, they were reluctant to give up the teaching they did, generally for one day a week, at another institution and change their timetables to suit student demand. They were especially unwilling to change what they were teaching. These two concerns were indirectly connected. Japanese professors have a strong sense of their professional identity and specialization and are reluctant to teach outside it. If teaching demands arise in their department outside their narrow specialization, they prefer to ask a colleague from another institution to come and teach it, perhaps in return for offering their specialization at the colleague's institution. This practice of kakemochi (which Zeugner, 1984, rather neatly translates as "sunlighting") has become very widespread across Japanese universities: according to a large-scale survey by Morgan (1999, 17–8), 69% of full professors and 49% of associate professors teach on a regular basis at other institutions as well as their own. This practice makes curriculum reform within institutions more difficult, however, and certainly attempts at such reform at University A, which were periodically mooted during the 1990s, were almost completely unsuccessful. Academics protected the autonomy of what they did in the classroom very closely, sometimes referring, as mentioned above, to the dangers of external interference in what was taught to their students. Academics were also very reluctant to participate in faculty development projects that were tested in the institution. Instead, most staff members prefer to complain about the drop in the academic quality of their students, particularly in those faculties (known as the zennin gakubu) that had been forced to take every single applicant.

For younger staff members, the main issue that prevented discussion about reform was the lack of opportunities to do so in an open environment. They were afraid that suggestions for change might be taken as criticism of the current system and of the management of the institution. At University A, there was a group of young academics that wanted to see reform from the late 1990s, but it operated in secret. Its membership was closed, and it would meet at predesignated places off campus. While its discussions were described by those who participated as sometimes being quite constructive, it never discovered a way of feeding this back into the system in a manner that might actually lead to change.

Given the internal constraints on reform from below, it is perhaps not surprising that top management had to change its practices before the decline in the number of students could be halted. In 2007, the university finally cut its fees dramatically and brought them back into line with those of other universities of a similar level in the region. Now the institution could offer better facilities and a better site than its competitors for the same price. It also developed a new policy of transparency. It gave, for the first time in three years, a full account of how many applications had been received the previous year and how many students had actually attended the university. It also empowered for the first time the heads of the faculties to instigate
Another major change that can be expected is in the proportion of academics whose highest degree (normally a doctorate) is earned overseas. A foreign degree has often been seen as a disadvantage when applying for posts in Japan. This was not because of the quality of the degree itself. Rather it was due to the fact that studying overseas often took individuals out of the system of personal contacts and the system of university factions and cliques on which appointments were often based. The different set of skills that a foreign degree confers on individuals, however, is likely to lead to this attitude changing. In particular, the fact that higher education training in the U.S. and Western Europe can mean both teaching and also grant application experience is likely to be increasingly highly valued in universities in Japan, which are beginning to place more importance on both of these areas. For exactly the same reasons, it is likely that the proportion of foreign staff will increases substantially from the current very low, by global standards, figure. Indeed the increase in over 50 percent in the number of foreign staff in Japanese universities between 1995 and 2003 despite the general budgetary stagnation during this same period implied that this trend may already be beginning (see Arimoto, 2006a, 190). Certainly, there has been a conspicuous trend of universities beginning to offer courses in English. Both International Christian University and the Faculty of Comparative Culture at Sophia University have offered programs in English for many years. More recently, Waseda University opened a faculty that taught in both English and Japanese and, most significantly because of its capacity to set the trend for the rest of the sector, Tokyo University has begun to offer courses in English, for example in its Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Studies. As the trend accelerates, there is little doubt some tensions will emerge between younger academics trained overseas and older academics trained in Japan. Whether those tensions will be managed constructively or not, of course, is much harder to predict.

The type of terms and conditions that new academics will be offered are likely to be very different from those of their predecessors. Particularly in medicine and the hard sciences, young academics are increasingly likely to be employed on short-term contracts, often linked to specific projects. At the leading research universities, it may not be long before the majority of staff is indeed on such contracts, as has happened, for example, in the U.K. and the U.S., though in the teaching-only universities it is likely that the majority of staff will continue to be employed on full-time contracts. Even with this latter group, however, change is afoot. Those staff members who believed that their jobs were secure may find that this is not the case. The Ministry of Education predicts that perhaps as much as 30% of Japan’s universities and colleges will be taken over, merge or go bankrupt during the coming decade. If this does indeed turn out to be the case, staff members of such institutions are likely to find their contracts open to renegotiation. Institutions themselves are likely to find that their staff is much more mobile: in a 1996 Carnegie International Survey, interinstitutional mobility in Japan was only higher than Russia and less than half that of the U.S. and U.K. and one-fifth of countries like the Netherlands (Yamanoi and Kuzuki, 2004, 56). There is no doubt that interinstitutional mobility rates have begun to increase and will continue to increase.

R. GOODMAN

THE FUTURE OF THE JAPANESE PROFESSORIATE

The Japanese university has always been in a state of flux, but the current confluence of demographic, political, and economic forces combined with the effects of globalization have meant that Japanese universities have been placed under a set of particularly severe constraints in recent years. One of the ironies of these pressures has been that, at a time when external pressures should have brought about changes in personnel, they have in fact resulted in a serious cutback in recruitment, which has led, in turn, to the ageing of the profession. This aging profession has become increasingly expensive (despite the cutbacks in bonuses in many universities and the demand that professors teach more), which has further limited recruitment. Exactly the same situation developed in the U.K. in the 1980s, and lessons from the U.K. suggest that it will be some time before Japan can break out of this vicious cycle and the job market in Japanese universities begins to open up. When the job market does open up again, however, some interesting changes from earlier recruitment practices can be anticipated. These changes are likely to be particularly conspicuous in areas of gender, ethnicity, qualifications and the types of contract offered.

The proportion of women teaching in higher education has almost doubled since structural reforms—in particular the abolition of the faculties of liberal arts and sciences in almost all universities and the relaxation of the University Accreditation Standard—were introduced into universities in Japan in 1991, but Japan still has the lowest female participation rates in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Its figure of 14.1% of staff being female is far below half of the OECD average of 35.9% (OECD, 2004). The figures also continue to disguise huge discrepancies about where changes have taken place. The proportion of women, especially those above junior ranks, teaching in the elite former imperial universities remains, for example, less than half of the average in Japan. Until very recently, the government had taken a totally laissez-faire attitude towards gender employment in higher education, even when the Ministry of Education had direct control over recruitment in national institutions. In 2006, however, the ministry introduced a ¥150 billion fund for gender equality in Japanese universities following the same competitive procedures as the 21st Century Center of Excellence (COE) Program for research and the Good Practice (GP) Program on Teaching. By June 2006, 36 universities had applied for support under the program (Yamanoi, 2006, 75, 78, 81). The logic behind introducing gender policies into Japanese universities is obvious; Japan cannot continue to ignore the potential amongst half of its population for reinvigorating its higher education system if it wishes to be competitive on a global stage. This economic reality alone will almost certainly see a major shift in the gender balance in Japanese universities.
Most accounts of the changing role of the professoriate worldwide project a negative perception (see, for example, the chapters in Welch, 2005) but, as the examples in this chapter suggest, change is always a mixture of a positive and negative features, and focus on negativity may sometimes be seen as political and reflecting the fears of an academic community analyzing itself. What is clear, however, is that, just as the staff of venerable Japanese companies and banks found in the mid-1990s, the professoriate in Japan’s universities is discovering in the mid-2000s that no one is immune to the combined effects of economic, political and demographic change in an increasingly globally competitive world.

REFERENCES


WILLIAM BRADLEY

3. ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AS REFORM IN JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This paper first explores in general terms how university faculty work in Japan has been changing, particularly in the past decade. These changes are connected to fundamental shifts in higher education that are occurring internationally, albeit with slightly different emphases depending on country-specific pressures and local traditions. The second part of the paper addresses focused issues of faculty administrative work in Japanese higher education. Much of this information is derived from a survey of twenty-two full-time university faculty throughout Japan that I conducted by telephone interviews in the winter of 2005. In particular, the focus is placed on administrative work as a vehicle of reform. Along with teaching and research, administration is an important part of university faculty labor, though often held in disdain by many professors unless they have chosen to specialize in this category of work. The ambivalence of faculty to administrative work is driven by multiple factors: its lack of direct and tangible rewards, its proliferation in the past decade, and, more fundamentally, its conflicted nature as work that is generally imposed from outside (since most faculty are reluctant to volunteer for more administrative work), though ideally its purpose is to make academic labor itself more rational and purposeful.

Faculty work at Japanese universities can be described as being composed of research, teaching and administration. Depending on context and conditions, the proportion of an individual faculty member’s expected commitment in each of these domains varies widely, both across institutions and within them. Problems both in structures and functions of Japanese higher education have been extensively detailed (e.g., Cutts, 1997; Eades, et al, 2005, Hall. 1997; McVeigh, 2002); both global developments and demographic factors specific to Japan have resulted in universities now trying to address issues resulting from the potentially overwhelming pressure to change. The pressures that are affecting systems of higher education globally have similarities across borders in that they are both economically driven and framed as oriented towards making higher education more useful to all of the individuals and institutions (students, their parents, and graduates in the first category, and high schools, employers, and the government in the second) who have interests in the value of universities. In the case of Japan, these pressures are particularly targeted towards the “immobility” identified with Japanese bureaucracy in general, and education specifically (Schoppa, 1991).