

# Higher Education in Japan

## - The past, the present and the future -



Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE)

Jun Oba  
Research Institute for Higher Education  
Hiroshima University, Japan  
oba@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

1

## Contents

- I Education system in Japan
- II Higher education in Japan - History
- III Higher education reform in Japan – Towards the future
  - 1. The University Council and the deregulation in higher education
  - 2. Diversification of higher education institutions and their programmes
  - 3. Development of human resources in knowledge society
  - 4. Internationalisation of higher education

2

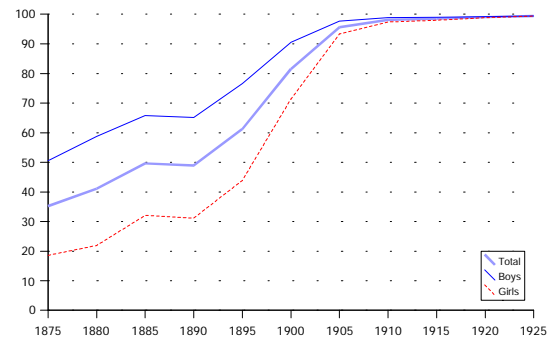
## I Education system in Japan

### 1. Development of the modern education system

- Development of *Terakoya* in the Edo period
- Introduction of a modern education system after the Meiji Restoration (1868) - Education System Order (*Gakusei*)
- Generalisation of elementary education for boys and girls at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

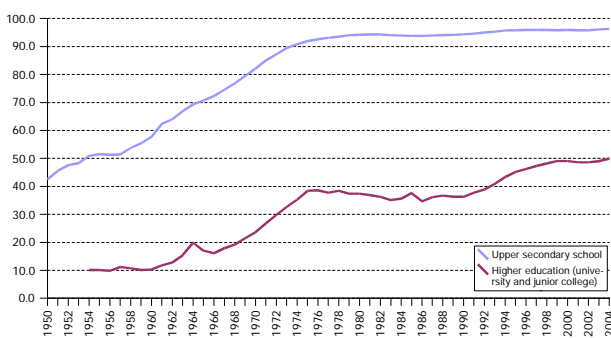
3

### Percentage of children in full time elementary education between 1875 and 1925



4

### Percentage of students enrolling in upper secondary schools and higher education institutions (universities and junior colleges)

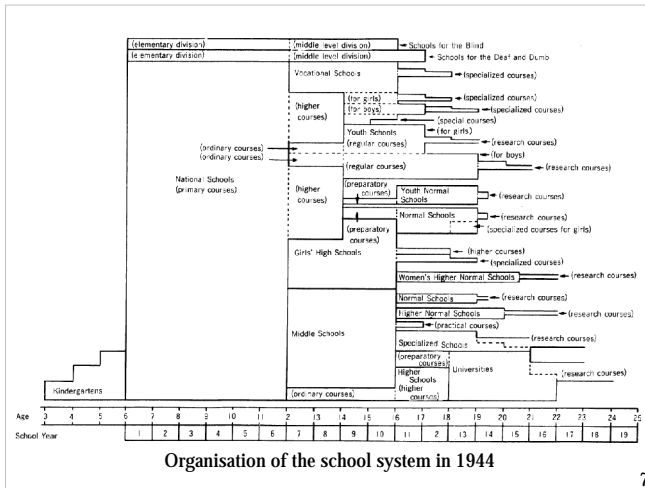


5

### 2. Organisation of the school system

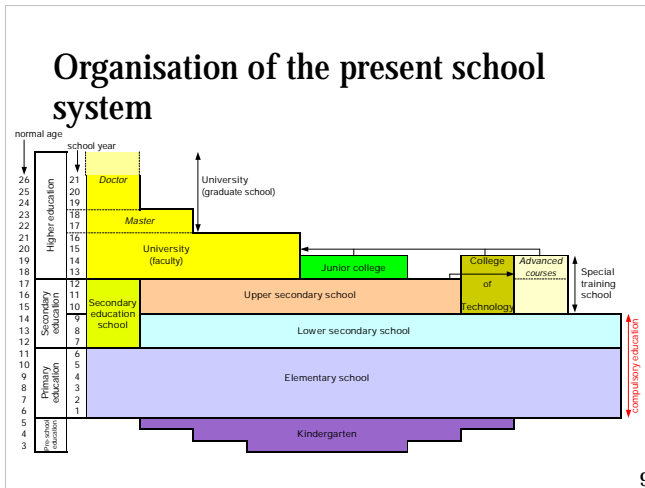
- A number of amendments and revisions to the system under the *Gakusei* (School System Order)
- Characteristics of the pre-war school system:
  - a relatively short period of compulsory education, common to all;
  - a multiple track system after that period

6



## After World War II

- Entire revision under the occupation
- Nine-year compulsory education
- Unified into a single track system
  - universities being open to every graduate of an upper-secondary school
  - abolition of distinction among higher education institutions



## Number of schools, students and teachers as of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004

	Number of schools (private)	Number of students (private)	Number of teachers* (private)
Kindergarten	14,061 (8,363)	1,753,396 (1,390,001)	109,853 (83,789)
Elementary school	23,420 (187)	7,200,929 (69,300)	414,887 (3,480)
Lower secondary school	11,102 (709)	3,663,512 (236,006)	249,801 (12,840)
Upper secondary school	5,429 (1,329)	3,719,048 (569,454)	255,629 (60,107)
Secondary education school	18 (9)	6,051 (3,355)	470 (247)
Special education schools (for handicapped children)	999 (12)	98,796 (815)	62,255 (259)

\* full-time only

	Number of schools (private)	Number of students (private)	Number of teachers* (private)
College of technology	63 (3)	58,681 (2,296)	4,474 (158)
Junior college	508 (451)	233,749 (214,264)	12,740 (11,082)
University	709 (542)	2,809,323 (2,062,065)	158,756 (86,683)
Special training school	3,443 (3,228)	791,540 (761,735)	40,675 (37,902)

\* full-time only

## A very good performance in primary and secondary education

- Ranking in the OECD's PISA 2000
  - first group for mathematics and science
  - second group for reading
- PISA 2003
  - still in the same groups as the PISA 2000
  - Japan slightly lowered its ranking by country.

## PISA 2000: Top 10

	Reading	Mathematics	Science
1	Finland	Japan	South Korea
2	Canada	South Korea	Japan
3	New Zealand	New Zealand	Finland
4	Australia	Finland	UK
5	Ireland	Australia	Canada
6	South Korea	Canada	New Zealand
7	UK	Switzerland	Australia
8	Japan	UK	Austria
9	Sweden	Belgium	Ireland
10	Austria	France	Sweden

13

## PISA 2003 : Top 10 and Japan

	Reading	Mathematics	Problem-solving
1	Finland	Finland	South Korea
2	South Korea	Japan	Hong Kong
3	Canada	Hong Kong	Finland
4	Australia	South Korea	Japan
5	Lichtenstein	Lichtenstein	New Zealand
6	New Zealand	Australia	Macao
7	Ireland	Macao	Australia
8	Sweden	Holland	Lichtenstein
9	Holland	Czech Republic	Canada
10	Hong Kong	New Zealand	Belgium
-----			
14	Japan		

14

## II Higher education in Japan - History

### 1. Foundation of modern higher education institutions

- Establishment of the University of Tokyo (later Imperial University, then Tokyo Imperial University) by the government in 1887
- Other imperial universities in major cities

15

#### • Characteristics of these institutions

- Governmental institutions
- Organised on the continental European model (especially Germanic)
- Bureaucratic system with quasi-autonomous academic units (faculties)

16

#### • Other institutions

- Governmental institutions other than imperial universities
- Local public institutions
- Private institutions
- Specialised School Order in 1903
- University Order in 1918
  - acknowledgement of the university status to non-governmental institutions

17

## Number of higher education institutions as of 1943

	<i>Universities</i> [imperial universities]	<i>Specialised Schools</i>	<i>Total</i>
Governmental (national)	19 [7]	58	77
Local public	2	24	26
Private	28	134	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>49 [7]</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>275</b>

18

## Characteristics of pre-war higher education

- Well-organised bureaucratic administration system in governmental institutions
- Coexistence of the three sectors of higher education institutions – governmental (national), local public and private
- Absolute priority to the national institutions, especially the imperial universities

19

## After the war (as of 1949)

- 70 national universities without difference in legal status among them
- 17 local public universities
- 81 private universities
- Junior colleges (regarded as provisional)

20

## 2. The expansion of higher education and its decline

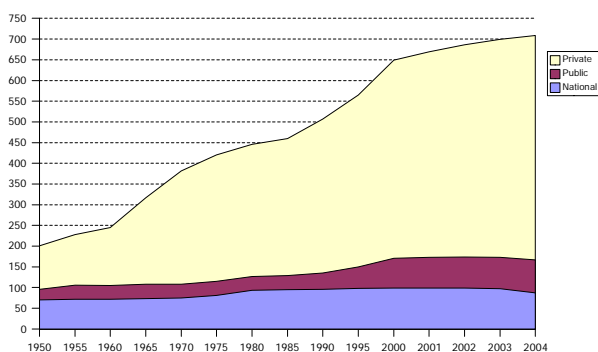
- Rapid growth of higher education in the 1960s and early 1970s
- Number of institutions
  - 1960 : 245 universities and 280 junior colleges
  - 1975 : 420 universities and 513 junior colleges
- Multiplication of students from 1960 to 1975
  - Universities : 2.77 times
  - Junior colleges : 4.28 times

21

- Enrolment ratio (of the age cohort)
  - 10.3% in 1960
  - 38.4% in 1975

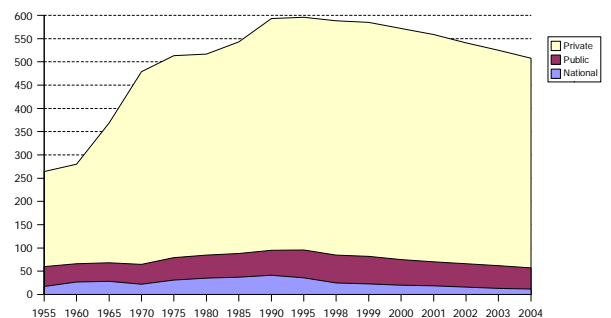
22

## Number of universities by sector



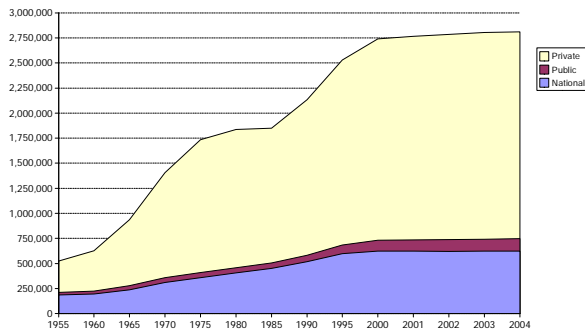
23

## Number of junior colleges by sector



24

## Students enrolment in universities



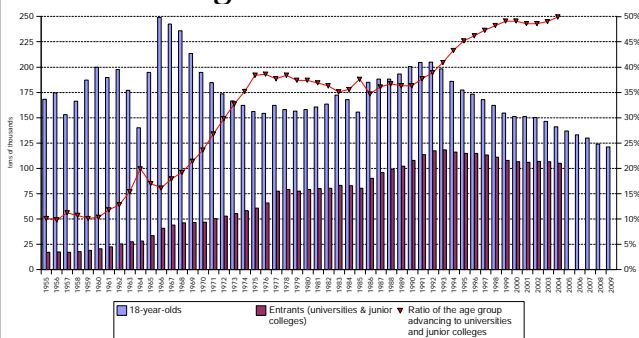
25

## Second expansion in the 1980s and early 1990s

- Number of universities
  - 1980 : **446 universities** (93 national, 34 public and 319 private)
  - 1995 : **565 universities** (98 national, 52 public and 415 private)
  - 2004 : **709 universities** (87 national, 80 public and 542 private)

26

## Trends in 18-year-old population and access to higher education



27

## III Higher education reform in Japan – Towards the future

### 1. The University Council and the de-regulation in higher education

- Discussion at the National Council on Educational Reform (*Rinjikyoikushingikai*)
- Establishment of the University Council in 1987

28

- Progress in scientific research and changes in human resources;
- Rise in the percentage of students continuing to higher education and diversification of students;
- Growing need for lifelong learning and rising social expectations of universities.

29

- Abolition of subject areas
  - structure curricula reflecting their own educational ideals and objectives
  - no definition of subject areas, such as general education and specialised education
  - no requirement on obtaining a certain number of credits in each subject area (acquisition of a minimum total number of credits only)

30

**1998 Report "A Vision for the University of the 21st Century and Future Reform Measures : Distinctive Universities in a Competitive Environment"**

- Improve the quality of education and research with the purpose of nurturing the ability to investigate issues;
- Secure university autonomy by making the educational and research system structure more flexible;
- Establish university administration and management with responsible decision-making and implementation; and
- Individualise universities and continuously improve their education and research by establishing multiple evaluation systems.

**2002 revision of the School Education Law**

- More flexibility for a reorganisation of faculties and departments
- Introduction of a continual third-party evaluation system

**2. Diversification of higher education institutions and their programmes**

- Universal phase
  - Enrolment ratio : 49.1% in 1999
  - Over 50% in 1987, if non-university sector included

cf. Three phases of higher education system defined by M. Trow

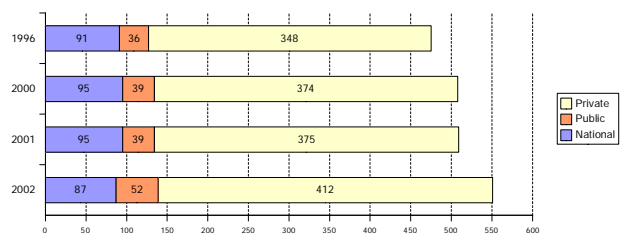
	<i>Elite</i>	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Universal</i>
<i>Enrolment ratio</i>	Under 15%	Between 15 and 50%	Over 50%
<i>Attitude towards access</i>	Privilege	Right	Obligation

- Definite abandonment of the planned higher education policy
- Acceleration of diversification of higher education institutions

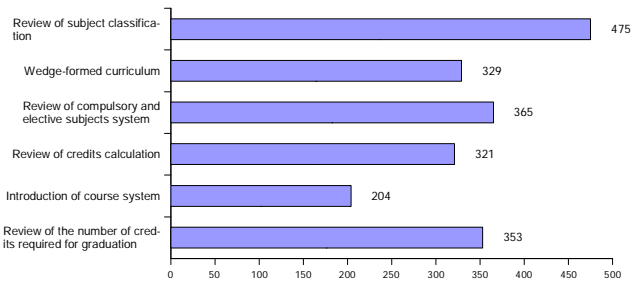
**Incorporation of national universities in 2004**

- Change in the status of the governmental institutions
- Legal personality and more autonomy
- Non-public servant status for staff
- Participation of external people in university administration

**Number of universities that implemented curriculum reform**

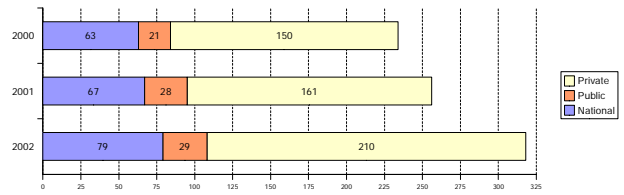


## Implementation of curriculum reform in universities (2001)



37

## Number of universities that open classes taught in foreign language



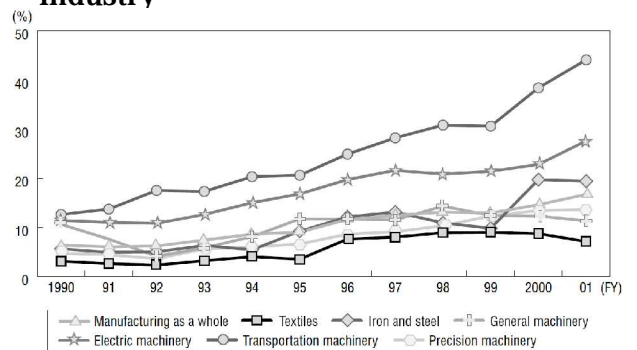
38

## 3. Development of human resources in knowledge society

- Knowledge : key to the development
- Lifelong learning
- Adult students

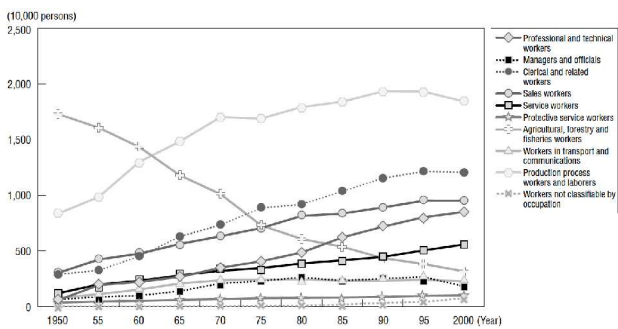
39

## Japan's foreign production ratio by industry



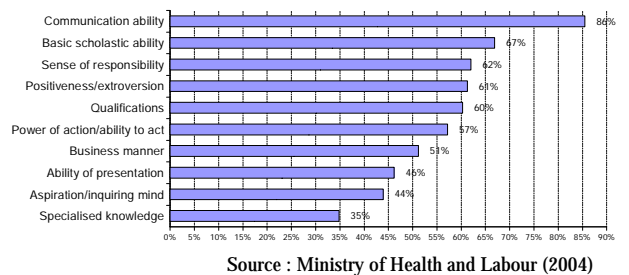
40

## Number of employees by occupational classification



41

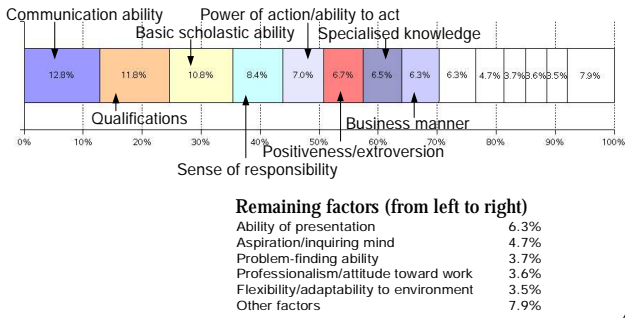
## Factors regarded as most important by employers for recruitment



Source : Ministry of Health and Labour (2004)

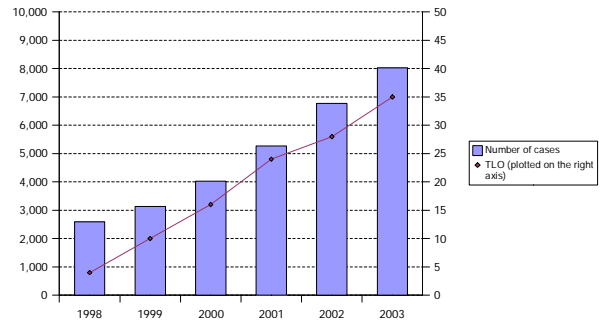
42

## Factors contributing to employment as percentage



43

## Number of cases of co-operative research implemented between national universities and the industry / Number of the TLO recognised by the Government



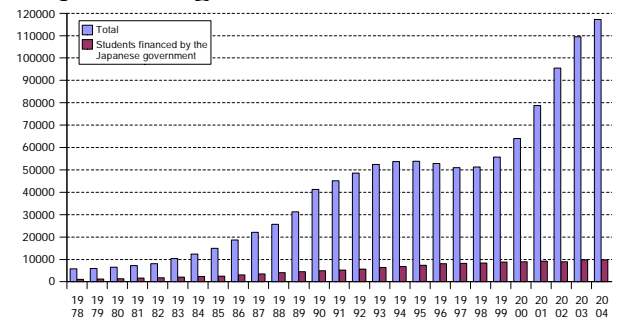
44

## 4. Internationalisation of higher education

- Nakasone Plan in 1987
  - More than 100,000 international students in Japan before 21<sup>st</sup> century

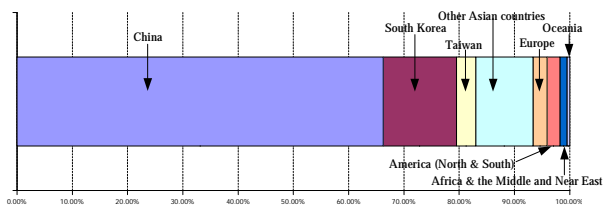
45

## Number of international students in Japanese higher education institutions



46

## Breakdown of the international students by their region of origin (2004)



47

- Revision of the legislation concerning the foreign universities in Japan
  - Temple University Japan (USA)

48



## Closing remarks

- Three major factors for HE reform
  - diversification in students
  - changes in the demand for human resources
  - increased reliance of industry on academic research activities
- Deregulation of higher education
  - diversification of institution
  - increased autonomy
  - more responsiveness to society

49

- Differentiation of HE institutions
- Continual university reform by academics

50