Reform of Higher Education in Japan - Fostering responsiveness to society -

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I Education system in Japan

The present school system
- 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

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.

II Higher education in Japan

1. Foundation of modern higher education institutions
- Imperial universities
  - University of Tokyo (later Imperial University, then Tokyo Imperial University) in 1887
  - Other imperial universities in major cities
  - Based on the German model
- Other types of institutions of higher learning (public and private)
Number of higher education institutions as of 1943

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Universities [imperial universities]</th>
<th>Specialised Schools</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governmental (national)</td>
<td>19 [7]</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local public</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49 [7]</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
- Limited number of governmental institutions and a larger number of private institutions
- Absolute priority to the national institutions, especially the imperial universities

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)

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

Student movements in the late 1960s and university reform
- Incapable of coping with the growth in the 1960s
- Student movements from 1966
- Central Council for Education's 1971 Report
  - diversification of higher education;
  - curriculum reform;
  - improvements in teaching methods;
  - opening of higher education to the general public

The planned expansion of higher education after 1975
- A decade plan for higher education from 1976 to 1986
- Creation of special training schools (advanced courses) as non-university institutions in 1975

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)
  - junior colleges have been decreasing however

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

Higher education and societal needs – How can universities be more responsive to society?
1. The transition to universal higher education
- M. Trow’s Model
  - elite phase
  - mass phase
  - universal phase
Characteristics of the three phases of higher education system defined by M. Trow (1974)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elite</th>
<th>Mass</th>
<th>Universal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment ratio</td>
<td>Under 15%</td>
<td>Between 15 and 50%</td>
<td>Over 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards access</td>
<td>Privilege</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary functions of higher ed.</td>
<td>Shape the mind and character of the ruling class; Prepare students for broad elite roles</td>
<td>Prepare a much broader range of elites; Transmission of skills</td>
<td>Prepare large numbers of people for life; Maximize their adaptability to society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Highly structured; Highly specialised and governed by the professor's notion</td>
<td>More modular, marked by semi-structured sequences of courses; Credit system; Movement between fields</td>
<td>Less structured and boundaries between courses being broken down; Rejection of academic forms and standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Diversification of universities and their programmes

- Towards the universal phase
  - Over 50% in 1987 (non-university sector included)
- Decade plan was over in 1986.
- Acceleration of diversification of higher education institutions
- Establishment of the University Council in 1987
  - academic and non-academic members
  - comprehensive study on higher education

Implementation of curriculum reform in universities (2001)


- 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
  - A reorganisation without change in the kinds and fields of degrees does not need ministerial authorisation.
- Introduction of a continual third-party evaluation system
  - accreditation every 7 years by a accrediting organisation authorised by the MEXT (Ministry of Education)
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

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 to have universities more responsive to society

- Differentiation of institutions
- Increased autonomy
  - institutional structure
  - curricula

For universities

- Continual reform
- Improvement of the management
  - Rationalisation of the administration
  - Development of non-academic staff

Government's role

- Definition of the grand design of higher education
- Maintaining an appropriate competitive environment
- Quality assurance
- Investment for the future (development of human resources)