Higher Education in Japan
– Incorporation of national universities and the development of private universities -

Research Institute for Higher Education

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

Seminar on higher education at Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, on 3rd February 2005
Contents

I  Education system in Japan

II  Higher education in Japan

III  Incorporation of national universities

IV  The development of private universities

V  Where are national universities going?

VI  What is the future of Japanese higher education?
I  Education system in Japan

• Introduction of a modern education system after the Meiji Restoration (1868) - Education System Order (Gakusei) in 1872

• Generalisation of elementary education for boys and girls at the beginning of the 20th century
Percentage of children in full time elementary education between 1875 and 1925

The graph shows the percentage of boys (blue line) and girls (red line) in full-time elementary education from 1875 to 1925. The percentage of boys increases steadily from around 20% in 1875 to nearly 100% by 1925. Similarly, the percentage of girls in full-time education increases from about 10% in 1875 to nearly 100% by 1925, indicating a significant increase in the enrollment of girls in elementary education over this period.
Organisation of the school system in 1944
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, except the junior colleges as an interim system
Organisation of the present school system

- **Kindergarten**: 3-4 years
- **Elementary school**: 5-12 years
  - **Primary education**: 1-4 years
  - **Secondary education school**: 5-10 years
- **Lower secondary school**: 11-16 years
- **Upper secondary school**: 17-21 years
  - **Junior college**: 17-20 years
  - **College of Technology**: 18-21 years
  - **College**: 19-21 years
  - **Advanced courses**: 21-23 years
- **University**: 18-26 years
  - **Master**: 18-22 years
  - **Doctor**: 21-26 years

**School year** and **normal age** are indicated on the diagram.
Number of schools, students and teachers as of 1\textsuperscript{st} May 2004

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

* full-time only
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Number of schools (private)</th>
<th>Number of students (private)</th>
<th>Number of teachers* (private)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of technology</td>
<td>63 (3)</td>
<td>58,681 (2,296)</td>
<td>4,474 (158)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior college</td>
<td>508 (451)</td>
<td>233,749 (214,264)</td>
<td>12,740 (11,082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>709 (542)</td>
<td>2,809,323 (2,062,065)</td>
<td>158,756 (86,683)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special training school</td>
<td>3,443 (3,228)</td>
<td>791,540 (761,735)</td>
<td>40,675 (37,902)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* full-time only
Cost of education

• Free compulsory education
  – very few private institutions
• Upper secondary education
  – cheap public education
  – expensive private education
• Higher education
  – 3/4 students enrolled in private institutions
  – expensive (public institutions as well to less degree)
Curriculum

- Primary and secondary schools
  - Curriculum determined by the Government
  - Textbooks edited by private publishers based on the national curriculum, then authorised by the Government

- Universities
  - At their discretion
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Finland</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Canada</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 New Zealand</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Australia</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ireland</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 South Korea</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 UK</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Japan</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Sweden</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Austria</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PISA 2003: Top 10 and Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Problem-solving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Finland</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 South Korea</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Canada</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Australia</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Lichtenstein</td>
<td>Lichtenstein</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 New Zealand</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Macao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ireland</td>
<td>Macao</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sweden</td>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>Lichtenstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Holland</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Hong Kong</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 Japan
II Higher education in Japan

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
• Characteristics of these institutions
  – Governmental institutions
  – Organised on the German model
  – Bureaucratic system with quasi-autonomous academic units (faculties)
• Integration of the German model and the Japanese system
  – faculties of engineering and agriculture, generally classed in a polytechnic system in Europe
• cf. In the 1990s in the world
  – integration of polytechnics into university system (UK, Australia, etc.)
• 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
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>275</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
- 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)
University education after the war

- Introduction of the American model
- Two layers of undergraduate education
  - general education
  - two-year specialised education
- School of liberal arts
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
Trends in 18-year-old population and access to higher education
III  Incorporation of national universities

1. The University Council and deregulation in higher education

- Towards the universal phase (M. Trow)
  - Over 50% in 1987 (non-university sector included)
- Decade plan was over in 1986
- Establishment of the University Council in 1987
  - academic and non-academic members
  - comprehensive study on higher education
• Abolition of subject areas in 1991
  – 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)

- 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.
2. 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
National University Corporation

President selection committee

President

Executives

Auditors

External experts only

Internal representatives designated by the president

External experts

Administrative council

Board of directors

Internal representatives concerning education and research

Education and research council
After incorporation - what has happened and problems

- Finance
- Governance
- Evaluation
(1) Financial stability of national universities

- Operational grant to be diminished from FY2005
- Rise of standards of fees set by the MEXT
  - revision of fees up to each university
- Difficulty in finding other sources
• Cost of the increased autonomy
  – Confrontation with student and staff unions
  – Pressure from the community
• Different fees among national universities?
• Very precarious situation of national universities
(2) Improvement of the university governance

- Efforts for dissolution of the "dual structure"
- Construction of an administrative structure centring on the president
• Leadership of the president
• Wide (and positive) participation of constituent members
• Development of non-academic staff
• Danger of an excessive concentration of powers
• Shared governance (R. Birnbaum)
(3) The evaluation

- Underdeveloped evaluation methods
- Time consuming
IV The development of private universities

1. Public financing to private institutions

• Private School Promotion Subsidy Law in 1975
Current expenditures of private HE institutions and Government subsidies

Total cost (100 million yen)
Subsidies (100 million yen)
subsidies/total cost (%)

[Graph showing changes in total cost and subsidies from 1970 to 2001]
General subsidies & Special subsidies to private institutions for the current expenditures (100 million yen)
2. Public and private universities in direct competition

- Governmental funds to HE institutions in the FY2003
  - 97 national institutions and others: 1,525,606 million yen
  - 989 private universities and junior colleges: 321,750 million yen
The first year tuition fees (entrance fees included) by sector and the ratio of tuition fees of private universities to those of national universities
Poor public expenditure on higher education

• Questioning by the private sector against the public sector

• Administrative reform

• Pressure towards the reduction of public expenditure on HE
  – decrease in subsidies to private universities
  – increase in tuition fees of national universities
Public expenditure on higher education (2000) in OECD countries

[Bar chart showing percentages of total public expenditure and GDP for various countries.]

- **Austria**: 4.7%
- **Austria**: 4.6%
- **Belgium**: 2.6%
- **Canada**: 1.8%
- **Czech Rep.**: 3.6%
- **Denmark**: 4.2%
- **Finland**: 2.5%
- **France**: 2.0%
- **Germany**: 4.2%
- **Greece**: 3.4%
- **Hungary**: 4.0%
- **Iceland**: 4.1%
- **Ireland**: 3.0%
- **Italy**: 1.8%
- **Japan**: 1.6%
- **Korea**: 4.3%
- **Mexico**: 1.1%
- **Netherlands**: 1.1%
- **Norway**: 2.9%
- **Poland**: 0.8%
- **Portugal**: 2.3%
- **Spain**: 2.5%
- **Sweden**: 1.7%
- **Switzerland**: 1.0%
- **UK**: 1.0%
- **USA**: 1.3%
- **OECD Total**: 3.5%
Increase in competitive funds open to public and private institutions

- Competitive funds open indifferently to public and private institutions
Number of COE projects adopted by the MEXT, by sector
Top 15 universities ranked by the amount of competitive research funds awarded by the Government (million yen)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Competitive Funds (million yen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>37,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>18,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>15,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohoku</td>
<td>11,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoya</td>
<td>8,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>8,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>7,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITech</td>
<td>5,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keio (private)</td>
<td>4,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsukuba</td>
<td>4,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiroshima</td>
<td>3,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiba</td>
<td>2,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseda (private)</td>
<td>2,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMDU</td>
<td>2,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobe</td>
<td>2,517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For-profit universities

- For-profit universities in *Special Zones for Structural Reform* on experimental basis from 2004
V Where are national universities going?

- Continuous discussions on the privatisation of national universities
  - Prime Minister Koizumi at the Diet
  - Opposition party's policy
  - Newspapers' questionnaire etc.

- Where are national universities going?
State Facility Model
State Management Model
State Trust Model
Corporate Model

Based on the model presented by M. Kaneko
• Increasingly blurred distinction between the public and private sectors
  – increased autonomy for national universities
  – declining governmental support for national universities
  – competitive funds open to every sector
  – institutional evaluation (accreditation) for all universities every seven years
VI What is the future of Japanese higher education?

- Closing distance between the public and private sectors
- National universities will survive, at least for the time being.
  - political
  - administrative
  - social
• Functional differentiation being more important.
• Difficult institutional evaluation.
• The Government should be more supportive.
  – rather than controls or evaluations
  – *paraeducational activities or services*
Summery

- Increased presence of private higher education
- Public and private sectors in direct competition for increasingly scarce resources
- Privatisation of national universities is unlikely, for the time being at least. It will remain mainly a political affair.
- Difficult institutional evaluation
- Increasingly important functional differentiation
- Redefinition of the Government's roles is necessary.