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

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1 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

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3 Characteristics of these institutions
- Governmental institutions
- Organised on the German model
- Bureaucratic system with quasi-autonomous academic units (faculties)

4 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.)

5 Other institutions
- Governmental institutions other than imperial universities
- Local public institutions
- Private institutions
- University Order in 1918
- Acknowledgement of the university status to non-governmental institutions

6 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

II 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

2. Incorporation of national universities in 2004
   - 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.

2004 Report "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
After incorporation - what has happened and problems

- Finance
- Governance
- Evaluation

Financial stability of national universities

- Operational grant to be diminished from FY2005
- Rise of the standards of fees set by the MEXT
  - revision of tuition 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

III The development of private universities

1. Public financing to private institutions

- Expansion of private institutions instead of public institutions
- Private School Promotion Subsidy Law in 1975

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

Current expenditures of private HE institutions and Government subsidies
IV 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

- Functional differentiation being more important.
- Difficult institutional evaluation.

- The Government should be more supportive.
  - rather than controls or evaluations
  - paraeducational activities or services

For your information

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