

Frank Jacob

Reaching Modernity through Western Education? Debates and Practices in Modern Japan, 1853 – 1894

Introduction

Japan's relations with the West are complicated, to say the least. Confronted with a forced opening of some Japanese ports for international trade under pressure from US warships, the so-called “black ships” in 1853,¹ during the tremendous economic, political, and social transformation process of the Meiji Restoration between 1868 and 1892,² Japanese society debated the possible paths to the future. While some argued on behalf of a wide-ranging imitation of the West, with English as the new national language, others detested the opening of Japan that supposedly resembled the country's weakness and demanded a strong anti-Western policy from the elites and the government.³ The struggle for the “soul of Japan” had

1 Japanese names are provided according to the rules of use in Japan, i.e., family name followed by first name. I would like to thank the editors for having organized the lecture series at the University of Münster in 2022/23, at which I could present a paper as well. This chapter is an extended version of that presentation. For the American report on the expedition see Francis L. Hawks, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas, Performed in the Years 1852, 1853, and 1854* (New York: Appleton, 1856).

2 Aoyama Tadamasa, *Meiji Ishin* (Tokyo: Bunkyo, 2012). Due to the tremendous changes, some works referred to the Meiji Restoration as a revolution. I would disagree to use this terminology though, as the events between 1853 and 1868 as well as their impact afterwards, are not revolutionary, although without any doubt a political and social transformation took place. On the debate see, among others, Eddy Dufourmont, “Japan, a Country without Revolution? Uses of *kakumei* and Historical Debates in the Meiji Era (1868–1912),” in *Historians of Asia on Political Violence*, ed. Anne Cheng and Sanchit Kumar (Paris: Collège de France, 2021), 105–118.

3 The Western pressure after the forced opening increased due to diplomatic missions from numerous countries, who demanded trade treaties from the Japanese government as well. The latter therefore had to navigate somehow between Western demands and internal pressure on the shogunate for allowing foreigners to enter the country and to make such demands. Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 11–33. On the Prussian diplomatic mission to Japan, whose participants in a way witnessed this dilemma of Japanese foreign policy see Frank Jacob, “Die Eulenburg-Expedition: Preußische Direktheit trifft japanische Zurückhaltung,” in *Fremdbilder – Selbstbilder: Paradigmen japanisch-deutscher Wahrnehmung (1861–2011)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 25–40.

begun, and many layers of considerations can be identified between these two extreme positions in the debate about Japan and the West.⁴ Regarding the development of education in Japan, the years between 1853 and the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 witnessed the establishment of an educational system that was influenced by this debate, and although many Western elements were formally implemented, particularly Japanese elements were also kept as part of the country's modern approach toward the education that was supposed to fit the needs and necessities of a new time.

This chapter aims to highlight some of the early developments of this debate about Japan's education system after its opening in 1853. Taking some of the agents and networks that favored a Westernization of Japanese education into account, a focus will be placed upon the role of Fukuzawa Yukichi, an influential intellectual who visited Western countries even before the Meiji Restoration and who, as German Japanologist Wolfgang Seifert recently argued, "was neither a social scientist nor a historian, but a journalist who developed his own social philosophy, and he was influential not only through his books and newspaper articles, but also as the founder of a private educational institution."⁵ In a second step, this contribution will focus on the Iwakura Mission, where large parts of the new Meiji government traveled abroad to find answers and solutions to the particular demands of a country that was not only searching for its own place within the world but also the most efficient way to close the gap between the world system's core and Japan's own possible position within the already globalized world from which it had secluded itself for around two and a half centuries during the Tokugawa period.⁶ The questions this chapter seeks to answer are as follows: What arguments were used to advocate for Western education as an example to follow? Who were agents for the import of Western education standards to Japan? And finally, which networks stimulated the decision to apply Western standards to the establishment of Japan's national education system following the Meiji Restoration?

4 Hirakawa Sukehiro and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "Japan's Turn to the West," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 432–498.

5 Wolfgang Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan: Fukuzawa Yukichi's 'Theory of Civilization', 1875," *Historická Sociologie* 2 (2021): 48. Also see Tamaki Norio, *Yukichi Fukuzawa 1835–1901: The Spirit of Enterprise in Modern Japan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

6 Japan had the ambition to become part of the imperialist core, instead of being suppressed to a peripheral or semi-peripheral status within the capitalist modern world system. On the role of this system as historical caesura and political instrument of rule see the chapters by the author in Frank Jacob, ed. *Wallerstein 2.0: Thinking and Applying World-Systems Theory in the 21st Century* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2023).

Fukuzawa Yukichi

Fukuzawa Yukichi, who ran a private school that would later become recognized as Keio University in Tokyo and who had quite a significant influence on the philosophical discourse about the West and Japan's role in the world, was one of the Japanese who participated in the first official mission to the United States in 1860.⁷ As a member of this mission, he participated in what he later referred to as “an epoch making adventure of our nation.”⁸ In San Francisco, he was able to witness the differences between Japan and the United States. As he was particularly interested “in matters of life and conventions of social custom and ways of thinking,”⁹ he found the US particularly interesting, as it was naturally very different from feudal Japan. One of the important things he imported into Japan from his first trip was a copy of Webster's dictionary, perhaps the first ever brought back to the East Asian country. Back in Japan, where anti-Western sentiments had gained momentum,¹⁰ Fukuzawa turned away from his Dutch studies (*rangaku*) toward learning English to translate important texts into Japanese.¹¹ At this time, he realized that a lot of work lay ahead: “[A]s yet my knowledge of English was not sufficient; I still had to have much recourse to my Dutch-English dictionary. Though I called myself a teacher, I was still a student along with those I was instructing.”¹²

In December 1861, he had another opportunity to sail to the West when he was assigned to a diplomatic delegation to Europe as a translator.¹³ He visited France,

7 On this first mission see Benita Stambler, “Ambassadors of Exchange: The 1860 Japanese Mission to the US,” *Education About Asia* 16, no. 2 (2011): 21–24. An older discussion of this mission is also provided in Chitoshi Yanaga, “The First Japanese Embassy to the United States,” *Pacific Historical Review* 9, no. 2 (1940): 113–138.

8 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*, trans. Eiichi Kiyooka (Tokyo: Hoku-seido Press, 1934), 113.

9 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 113.

10 Anti-Western sentiments had previously limited the opportunities for Japanese scholars to gain more critical insight into Western knowledge. See details in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-For-eignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan: The New Theses of 1825* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

11 Since the Tokugawa shogunate had only allowed trade relations with Dutch traders, the only import of Western knowledge was limited to books in Dutch. Consequently, scholars would study this language and publications imported from the Netherlands. Marius B. Jansen, “Rangaku and Westernization,” *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 541–553.

12 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 131.

13 On the so-called Takenouchi-Mission (in Japanese referred to as *Bunkyū ken-Ō shisetsu*) see Georg Kerst, “Die japanische Sondergesandtschaft nach Europa im Jahre 1862,” *Jahrbuch der Historischen Gesellschaft Bremen* 52 (1972): 195–233.

England, the Netherlands, Prussia, and St. Petersburg.¹⁴ Fukuzawa used this opportunity to improve his English skills and, at the same time, he was able to buy books he could later use in his private school:

I [...] had the convenience of some money at my disposal. As there were few ways of spending any money beyond the needs of my traveling clothes, which cost very little at a time when such things were cheap, I used the balance of my allowance to buy books in London. This was the beginning of the importation of English books into Japan; it is only since my first large purchase in London that our students have had free access to English in print.¹⁵

Alongside developing his own language skills – such as getting used to the “strange language written sideways” – Fukuzawa absorbed as much knowledge and information as he could, although not everything was easy to understand for the young Japanese scholar: “Of political situations of that time, I tried to learn as much as I could from various persons that I met in London and Paris, though it was often difficult to understand things clearly as I was yet so unfamiliar with the history of Europe.”¹⁶ As before on his travels to the United States, Fukuzawa was less concerned with hard sciences than he with the cultural aspects that sparked his interest:

During this mission in Europe I tried to learn some of the most commonplace details of foreign culture. I did not care to study scientific or technical subjects while on the journey, because I could study them as well from books after I had returned home. But I felt that I had to learn the more common matters of daily life directly from the people, because the Europeans would not describe them in books as being too obvious. Yet to us those common matters were the most difficult to comprehend.¹⁷

For a Japanese in his twenties, Fukuzawa had already experienced foreign countries and become quite familiar with Western culture, or rather, what he considered it to be. His travels through several European countries “provided Fukuzawa with a prolonged opportunity to observe western societies firsthand”¹⁸ and would

14 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 134. The Japanese government would also send another mission to France in 1865. See Marc D. Ericson, “The Bakufu Looks Abroad. The 1865 Mission to France,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, No. 4 (1979): 383–407.

15 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 135. On the history of the contact between the English and Japanese languages, see James Stanlaw, *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 45–82.

16 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 138.

17 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 142.

18 Benjamin Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872–1890* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 63.

have an impact on his further career as an author and intellectual authority on things Western. Of course, his understanding and interpretation of the West were closely related to his own experiences, which would be further developed after a second visit to the United States in 1867.¹⁹ His delegation met with US politicians in Washington, D.C., as well as other important representatives in New York City.²⁰

Considering that Fukuzawa had been on three missions to foreign countries before the Meiji Restoration actually began, he could naturally be considered an authority on the West. He used this status and thereby became what Mitani Ta'ichirō called “one of the forerunners of modern Japan,”²¹ who would have an important impact on many other intellectuals in the national context in the decades that followed.²² These intellectuals included, among others, the famous Japanese historian and political scientist Maruyama Masao, who also developed a strong interest in Fukuzawa and his works.²³

When Japan was forcefully opened to face the supposedly modern world in 1853, Fukuzawa realized how important education and language skills were.²⁴ When the “black ships” of Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Edo (Tokyo), the young Japanese was shocked by the lack of his own ability to communicate properly with the foreign representatives:

To my chagrin, when I tried to speak with them, no one seemed to understand me at all. Nor was I able to understand anything spoken by a single one of all the foreigners I met. Neither could I read anything on the signboards [...] There was not a single recognizable word in any of the inscriptions or in any speech [...] I realized that a man would have to be able to read and converse in English to be recognized as a scholar in Western subjects in the coming time

19 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The Autobiography*, 176–188.

20 In the same year, 1867, Tomita Tetsunosuke – who was later appointed as the first Vice-Consul of the Consulate General of Japan in New York – also came to the US and studied economics in Newark, NJ. The document of his appointment can be found online: <https://www.historyofjapane-seinny.org/blog/artifacts/tetsunosuke-tomita-appointed-first-vice-consul-of-the-consulate-general-of-japan-in-ny/>. For a more detailed description of his activities in New York, see Takahashi Shuetsu, “Tomita Tetsunosuke no nyūyōku fuku ryōji shūnin to kekkon to shōhō kōshū-sho,” *Tōhoku Gakuin Daigaku keizaigaku ronshū* 187 (2016): 15–92.

21 Mitani Ta'ichirō, “Bunmei-ka’ – ‘Seiyō-ka’ – ‘Kindai-ka’ o megutte: Fukuzawa Yukichi to Maruyama Masao: Nihon kindai no sendō-sha to hihan-sha,” *Nihongaku shiin kiyō* 72 (2018): 209.

22 Wolfgang Schwentker, *Geschichte Japans* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2022), 656–658.

23 Mitani, “Bunmei-ka’ – ‘Seiyō-ka’ – ‘Kindai-ka’ o megutte,” 209–211.

24 He expressed his thoughts about education in several of his writings. See *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Education: Selected Works*, trans. and ed. Eiichi Kiyooka (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1985).

[...] On the very next day after returning from Yokohama, I took up a new aim in life and determined to begin the study of English.²⁵

His experiences in countries in the West increased this sense of impotence, especially since “[t]he supremacy of the West in virtually all areas was overwhelming.”²⁶ For Fukuzawa, this situation presented a danger to Japan, which, to quote Benjamin Duke, could lose “its independence as western imperial powers gained control over backward nations throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Acutely aware of the dangerous international environment that confronted Japan in the 1860[s], Fukuzawa viewed the period as a crisis of national sovereignty that could only be met with drastic reforms to develop a prosperous country with a powerful military component.”²⁷

His school would therefore offer students a possibility to change this educational imbalance, and the fact that Fukuzawa relied on books he had imported from the US during his second trip paved the way for a stronger Japanese interest in America’s educational policies. In 1867, Fukuzawa “hastily made a huge purchase of English books for the [Japanese] government. Unprepared for the endeavor, they hastily requested the American State Department to make the selection. The final shipment weighing ten tons included, among others, 13,000 copies of elementary readers, grammars, and math books, 2,500 copies of *Webster’s Dictionary*, and 600 history books.”²⁸ While the Meiji government would reconsider which Western education model to follow during the Iwakura Mission (1871–1873), as an early authority on the West, Fukuzawa used his influence to advocate for a modernization according to Western standards in the following years.

In 1869, he published *Seiyō no jijō* (Things Western), which would become a bestseller and have a huge impact on the way Japanese readers would perceive the West. In it, Fukuzawa described the schools he had seen abroad in some detail:

In every western country there is not a town or village without a school. The schools are founded both by the government and by private citizens. All children, boys and girls, enter the elementary school at age six or seven. They first learn to read and write and then study such subjects as the history of their country, geography, arithmetic, fundamentals of science, art, and music.²⁹

25 Wayne Oxford, *The Speeches of Fukuzawa* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1973), 12, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 62.

26 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 63.

27 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 63.

28 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 64.

29 Fukuzawa Yukichi, “*Seiyō no jijō* (1869),” in *Fukuzawa zenshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Jiji Shimpōsha, 1926), 319–321, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 64.

Education had a practical purpose for Fukuzawa, who, in his second bestseller *Gakumon no susume* (The advancement of learning, 1872),³⁰ argued on behalf of a policy that would secure Japan's position within the modern world system through an intensive program of modernization that would be oriented toward the West.

This orientation was discussed in Fukuzawa's famous essay *Datsu-A ron* (On leaving Asia) in 1885 as well. In it, the Japanese intellectual argued that "[i]nternational communication has become so convenient these days that once the wind of Western civilization blows to the East, every blade of grass and every tree in the East follow what the Western wind brings."³¹ Fukuzawa advised that accepting and embracing Western knowledge would serve the national cause more than opposing modernization with an ultra-nationalist agenda:

For those of us who live in the Orient, unless we want to prevent the coming of Western civilization with a firm resolve, it is best that we cast our lot with them. If one observes carefully what is going on in today's world, one knows the futility of trying to prevent the onslaught of Western civilization. Why not float with them in the same ocean of civilization, sail the same waves, and enjoy the fruits and endeavors of civilization?³²

Although Fukuzawa might have first and foremost considered Japan as some kind of role model, Asian progress was achieved by casting aside "old conventions" to achieve a "spread of civilization and enlightenment (*bummei kaika*)."³³ In contrast to other Asian countries and realizing that their fate seemed to be exploitation by the West as colonial or semi-colonial spaces, Fukuzawa argued for Japan to leave Asia because "[w]e do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West."³⁴

30 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Encouragement of Learning*, trans. David A. Dilworth and Umeyo Hirano (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1969).

31 Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron 'On Leaving Asia' – from the Jiji shinpō newspaper, March 16, 1885," *Education about Asia* 21, no. 1 (2016): 66–67. Accessed November 1, 2022. <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/lesson-plan-on-leaving-asia-primary-source-document/>.

32 Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron."

33 Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron."

34 Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron." In this regard, Fukuzawa advertised a different position from other intellectuals, especially Pan-Asianists who demanded a closer cooperation with China in the future. For one of these Pan-Asianist writings see Miyazaki Tōten, *Sanjūsannen no yume* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1967 [1902]). On Pan-Asianism and its different positions, see Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman, eds. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, vol. 1: 1850–1920 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

With regard to Fukuzawa's demands, Wolfgang Seifert emphasized that

"Westernization" (or "Europeanization") did not mean a blind acceptance of models, with the aim of becoming "like the West." For him, the whole set of institutions, practices and ideas prevailing in Western Europe (often with the addition of the United States) represented "Western civilization." When he spoke of "elevating the level of civilization" in Japan, he meant that Japan should adopt and develop a modified version of this set.³⁵

His "motivating concrete goal" was consequently not a mere imitation of the West to achieve modernity but that "Japan should become an independent, sovereign, modern national state, with a population conscious of itself as a nation."³⁶ To achieve this, Japan should look toward the West, but it should not become Western *per se*. He expressed his arguments in more detail in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (An outline of a theory of civilization, 1875), in which he stated: "[O]utwardly adaptation of the Western way of life alone should not be the aim of the Japanese in the beginning time of transformation."³⁷ Fukuzawa consequently understood civilization as a process and not as a status, emphasizing "historical dynamics" according to the three stages of civilizational development: (1) the stage of primitive man; (2) the semi-developed stage; and (3) modern civilization.³⁸ The West was supposedly more developed; however, this did not mean that this was supposed to be the case forever:

When we are talking about civilization in the world today, the nations of Europe and the United States are the most civilized, while the Asian countries, such as Turkey, China and Japan, may be called semi-developed countries, and Africa and Australia are to be counted as still primitive lands [...] While the citizens of the nations of the West are the only ones to boast of civilization, the citizens of the semi-developed and primitive lands submit to being designated as such. They rest content with being branded semi-developed or primitive, and there is not one who would take pride in his own country or consider it on par with nations of the West. This attitude is bad enough.³⁹

Naturally, according to these considerations, Japan should look to the West as inspiration for how to achieve a state of modernization, that is, Westernization, yet

35 Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 49.

36 Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 49.

37 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, rev. trans. D. A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst III (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008 [1875]), cited in Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 51.

38 Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 17–18, cited in Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 51–52.

39 Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 17, cited in Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 51.

not solely with the aim of becoming Western but one of the nation states to be considered superior due to their level of civilization.

Fukuzawa's students and readers would adopt these thoughts, and many became officials in the (post-)Meiji Restoration circles of power; hence, to quote Duke once more, "writings of the central core of the Meiji leaders were sprinkled with ideas derived from Fukuzawa's writings,"⁴⁰ and it was especially those within the ranks of the Ministry of Education who would share his opinions. However, until the Iwakura Mission visited the United States, there were competing ideas about which country's education offered the best possible outcome for the Japanese government.

The Iwakura Mission

Before the Iwakura Mission,⁴¹ high officials in the Ministry of Education leaned toward France as a model for future Japanese education, but the journey of large parts of the Meiji government through the United States and Europe changed this inclination.⁴² The Iwakura Mission, led by and named after Iwakura Tomomi, a high-ranking politician, was a strange endeavor. The majority of the new government, including key cabinet members as well as high-ranking officials from different ministries, went on a long study trip to North America and Europe for almost two years, leaving the new nation state with a power vacuum. Their intention was simple: to study the world and to bring back the things that were considered the most valuable from all the "civilized" (modernized) nation states they visited.

One of the so-called *o-yatoi gaikokujin* (foreign advisors),⁴³ the Dutch missionary Guido Verbeck, who also served as head of what would become the Imperial University, advised senior government leaders that "there is something in the civilization of the West that must be seen and felt; in order to be fully appreciated, personal experience is necessary to understand the theory of [Western] civiliza-

⁴⁰ Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 65.

⁴¹ On the mission, especially in the German-speaking countries, see *Die Iwakura-Mission: Das Logbuch des Kume Kunitake über den Besuch der japanischen Sondergesandtschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz im Jahre 1873*, ed. and trans. Peter Pantzer with Matthias Eichhorn (Munich: Iudicium, 2002).

⁴² For a detailed discussion, see Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 67–76. Also see Jia Liu, "On the Education Reform of the Meiji Japan," *International Journal of New Developments in Engineering and Society* 3, no. 4 (2019): 22.

⁴³ Umetani Noboru, *O-yatoi gaikokujin: Meiji Nihon no wakiyakutachi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1965).

tion.”⁴⁴ The Iwakura Mission and its participants would ultimately follow this advice, and the emperor of Japan, in his address to them, made it clear what the delegation was supposed to accomplish on its journey:

After careful study and observation, I am deeply impressed with the belief that the most powerful and enlightened nations of the world are those who have made diligent effort to cultivate their minds, and sought to develop their country in the fullest and most perfect manner. [...] If we would profit by the useful arts and sciences and conditions of society prevailing among more enlightened nations, we must either study these at home as best we can, or send abroad an expedition of practical observers to foreign lands, competent to acquire for us those things our people lack, which are best calculated to benefit this nation.⁴⁵

Tanaka Fujimaro⁴⁶ was chosen to represent the Ministry of Education during the trip, although, as Duke emphasizes, he was a curious choice for the task since “he could not be classified as an authority on the West, nor was he able to use any of the western languages.”⁴⁷ Tanaka’s “unprecedented career as an international educator began with his arrival in San Francisco with the Iwakura Mission in January 1872, at the age of twenty-seven.”⁴⁸

Due to Tanaka’s lack of experience and language skills, his translator Nijima Jō would become an important agent of and advocate for the US education system.⁴⁹ The young man – who was a graduate of the Philips Academy in Andover, Amherst College, and Andover Theological Seminary, all in Massachusetts⁵⁰ – later became the founder of “the great Christian university Dōshisha in Kyoto”⁵¹ after leaving Tokugawa Japan to study Christianity in the United States, where he knew he could rely upon his experience and contacts to pave the way for the suc-

44 Albert Altman, “Guido Verbeck and the Iwakura Mission,” *Japan Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1966): 58, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 80.

45 Charles Lanman, *The Japanese in America* (New York: University Publishing, 1872), cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 80.

46 On his role with regard to the further development of Japan’s education system also see Yukawa Fumihiko, “Meiji shoki kyōiku jimu no seiritsu: Tanaka fujimaro to Meiji 12 nen kyōikuryō,” *Shigaku zasshi* 121, no. 6 (2012): 1045–1083.

47 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 82.

48 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 82.

49 Carmen Sterba, *Modest Nijima Jo: Samurai to Pastor to Chancellor* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2020), 67–72. Also see Arthur Sherburne Hard, ed. *Life and Letters of Joseph Hardy Neesima* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1891), 127–130.

50 Hard, ed. *Life and Letters*, 99–114.

51 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 84.

cessful adaptation of US education in Japan.⁵² His academic career in the US also stimulated special treatment from the “highest educational official in the United States government”⁵³ in Washington, D.C., namely Commissioner of Education John Eaton,⁵⁴ another graduate of Andover Theological Seminary. His personal contacts and his American hosts’ positive perception of him were responsible for Tanaka’s own positive perception of the United States in general and the educational system of Pennsylvania in particular, itself partly due to Nijijima’s role, who, “[t]aking advantage of his contacts in the area, [...] went far beyond the role of a translator.”⁵⁵

There was, however, another foreigner and soon-to-be *o-yatoi gaikokujin* in the service of the Japanese government who played an important role during the Iwakura Mission: the mathematics professor Dr. David Murray, who taught at Rutgers College (1863–1873).⁵⁶ The Japan–Rutgers connection also goes back to the influence of Verbeck, who had advised his students in Nagasaki to go there for their further education, such that “Rutgers College and a local preparatory school in New Brunswick became the primary institutions in America to receive Japanese students before the Meiji Restoration.”⁵⁷ Mori Arinori, the first Japanese ambassador to the United States (1871–1873) and later the Minister of Education (1886–1889),⁵⁸ had inquired at several colleges and universities about general questions in relation to education, and Murray’s answer, representing Rutgers College, made an impression on the Japanese politician and shall therefore be quoted at length here:

The problem of education is justly regarded by statesmen as the most important in all the circles of their duties. All other functions of government, such as of the repression and pun-

52 Motoi Yasuhiro, *Jo Nijijima and the Founding Spirit: A Textbook for the Lectures on Doshisha*, trans. Nobuyoshi Saito and David Chandler (Kyoto: Doshisha, 2011).

53 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 87.

54 A short survey of his life and achievements is presented in an obituary in *The Evening Star*, February 9, 1906: 6.

55 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 90.

56 Murray later also published a study based on his experiences with Japanese education: *Education in Japan: Circulars of Information of the Bureau of Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875). On his life and impact, see the extensive study Benjamin Duke, *Dr. David Murray: Superintendent of Education in the Empire of Japan, 1873–1879* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019). On the perception of Japanese education in American journals, see Hashimoto Miho, “Beikoku media ga tsutaeta bakumatsu Meiji shoki no kyōiku,” *Hikaku kyōiku-gaku kenkyū* 27 (2001): 120–138.

57 Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 91.

58 For more detail see *Mori Arinori’s Life and Resources in America*, ed. John E. Van Sant (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003).

ishment of crime, the encouragement of national industries, the development of commerce, the defense against enemies, all are inferior in importance to the training of the young which determines the character of the nation. [...] The nations which have in modern times exerted the greatest influence on the world's history, those which have made the most rapid progress and wealth and power, are those which have made education their special care and have furnished the most general and the most thorough culture to their citizens. The two nations which in the past century have advanced most in wealth, population, fame, and influence, are the United States and Germany. [...] In these nations, if there is any one feature in which their systems of government excel, it is in the variety and profusion with which the means of education have been provided. Differing widely in other circumstances, they still have shown this common aim in their efforts to render education universal, and to leave no human soul within their territory without the opportunity for development. [...] Every nation must create a system of education suited to its own wants. There are national characteristics which ought properly to modify the scheme of education which would be deemed the most suitable. The culture required in one nation is not precisely required in another. There are traditional customs which it would be unwise to subvert. There are institutions already founded which are revered for their local and national associations, which without material change may be made the best elements of a new system. Every successful school system must be a natural outgrowth from the wants of a nation. If, therefore, changes are to be made in the educational system of any country, wisdom would suggest the retention, so far as admissible, of those institutions already in existence. This is but a proper concession to national self respect, and will go far to make any new features acceptable.⁵⁹

In March 1872, Murray was offered the position of the “superintendent of education in the empire of Japan,”⁶⁰ and the “Westernization” of Japanese education would soon follow American ideas and standards.

Although Tanaka visited Europe afterward and was deeply impressed by German education – which, in contrast to his military colleagues, he “rejected [...] as a model for Japan as too developed and highly organized for a nation in transition from feudalism to modernism”⁶¹ – the decision to follow the American model was made, and this ultimately had a decisive impact on education in Japan for decades to come. However, the case of education also shows that “Westernization,” in fact, followed personal interests and networks instead of a systematic perception of what could have been understood as “the West.” Other examples within the educational system of Japan, such as the study of ancient philology or history, as advocated by the first Japanese ancient philologist Tanaka Hidenaka, very often fol-

⁵⁹ Mori Arinori *zenshū*, 3:357–358, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 94–95.

⁶⁰ Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 92.

⁶¹ Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 96.

lowed personal interests, the availability of relevant literature, and existent language capacities.⁶²

While initial ambitions for educational reforms were directed toward France, the interest and impact of Fukuzawa Yukichi and the members and translators of the Iwakura Mission turned the tide in favor of the US. However, “Westernization” cannot solely be understood as the “Americanization” of the education sector, especially since different ideas and thoughts were imported and led to a contest of opinions in Japan. In addition, Japan’s overall modernization process during the Meiji Restoration relied upon well-educated Japanese acting as translators, replicators, and innovative intellectuals who, in a way, shaped the course of the import of Western ideas.⁶³ It also relied upon international developments and trends within an already globalized world. The access to and comparability of existing education systems allowed Japanese officials to gather all kinds of knowledge and expertise and would often give them the possibility to hire experts in their fields from all over the world. The *o-yatoi gaikokujin* were consequently as valuable assets as the experienced Japanese citizens abroad, who helped and advised the Japanese government’s officials with regard to the choices to be made and paths to be taken.

Regardless of the eventual and overall success of Japan’s modernization, which unfortunately was only internationally accepted once the country had won wars against another Asian power (China) in 1895 and a Western great power (Russia) in 1905, the import of foreign knowledge and standards also led to severe discussions about the future and soul of Japan, stimulating anti-foreign sentiments that eventually led to violent protests against the new government or those who seemed to represent the danger of “Westernization.” Some intellectuals tried to find philosophical answers to the dilemma that would be expressed through the concept of *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit, Western technology).⁶⁴ Considering Japan’s further historical development, the implementation of Western education was a formal act that tried to incorporate Japanese cultural specifics in some kind of hybrid, a cultural amalgamation of Western ideas and Japanese values.

62 Frank Jacob, “Western Classics in Modern Japan (2016),” *CUNY Academic Works*. Accessed June 15, 2023. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=qb_pubs.

63 Missionaries, like Katayama Sen, would also bring political ideas back to Japan and become the “backbone” of the socialist Left in the country. See Frank Jacob, “The Continuities and Discontinuities of Anti-Communist State Violence in Modern Japan,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anti-Communist Persecutions*, ed. Christian Gerlach and Clemens Six (London: Palgrave, 2020), 51–75.

64 Hirakawa Sukehiro, *Wakon yōsai no keifu: uchi to soto kara no Meiji Nihon* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1971); Peter Lutum, *Das Denken von Minakata Kumagusu und Yanagita Kunio: Zwei Pioniere der japanischen Volkskunde im Spiegel der Leitmotive wakon-yōsai* (Münster: LIT, 2005).

Conclusion

Returning to the questions initially posed: First, the arguments that were used to advocate for Western education as an example to follow were the experiences and individual capacities of young Japanese intellectuals who visited foreign countries after the opening of Japan in 1853, paving the way for Western education to be adopted in Japan. Very often, individual interests and experiences also stimulated decisions about “Western role models” that seemed to fit the Japanese needs and necessities. The writings of Fukuzawa, which would later be considered part of the Japanese Enlightenment,⁶⁵ created a public perception of “the West” that very much depended on the intellectual’s own perception. “Westernization” therefore relied on the personal image of “the West” among those who could persuade Japanese readers and government officials alike that the Western civilization they depicted was suitable and worth importing. With regard to education, the role of the US as a suitable role model would soon be unchallenged and thus quite important for the development of Japanese education during and after the years of the Meiji Restoration.

Second, there were numerous agents who were responsible for the import of Western education standards to Japan. Along with the already-mentioned Japanese intellectuals who visited Western countries, there were translators like Niiijima, whose experience and contacts played an important role. Furthermore, the personal experiences and positive or negative perceptions of “the West” of government officials like Tanaka and Mori played important roles in deciding what would be considered suitable for Japan, especially with regard to Western education in Japan, as both of them had prominent and powerful positions that helped them to forge the latter according to their own ideas. Besides Japanese individuals, foreign advisors also played an important role, although their selection might have been rather related to the experiences of the former group, who recommended them as suitable appointments to the Japanese government. Nevertheless, from 1853, the *o-yatoi gaikokujin* played important roles in the educational sector in the “Westernization” of Japanese education.

Finally, the networks that stimulated the decision to apply Western standards to the national education system existed both within and outside of Japan. The circle of former students of Fukuzawa’s school later represented the intellectual’s ideas within governmental circles as well, such that the link between teacher and student, a particularly powerful one in the Japanese context, was without

⁶⁵ Carmen Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

any doubt responsible for the creation, multiplication, and synergetic implementations of ideas about “the West” and ideas related to the necessity to study “Western” systems of education and to transform Japanese education standards accordingly. In addition, the networks in Western countries that were studied by members of the Iwakura Mission played an important role in the eventual selection of Western elements that were supposed to be important and adopted within the new and transforming Japanese state. The Rutgers connection, represented by Dr. Murray, was therefore as important as the Andover Theological Seminary connection between Nijima and Eaton.

One can consequently argue that the “Westernization” of Japan, or at least of its educational sector, relied upon numerous and diverse processes and connections that involved a multitude of motifs, actors, and networks. All in all, these factors built up to a process of modernization, which, with regard to the history of education in Japan, was very much linked to the United States, although other sectors or segments of this process were also related to other countries or regions of the world.⁶⁶ Ultimately, the “Westernization” of Japan did not mark a complete end to Japaneseness; rather, it was an amalgamation of Western imports with Japanese needs. The Japanese nation was thus based on a modernity that kept old traditions alive while adopting new things from abroad, creating something that is still and will probably remain modern, as long as the categories for the latter term stay the same.

References

- Altman, Albert. “Guido Verbeck and the Iwakura Mission.” *Japan Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1966): 54–62.
- Aoyama, Tadamasa. *Meiji Ishin*. Tokyo: Bunkyo-ku, 2012.
- Auslin, Michael R. *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Blacker, Carmen. *The Japanese Enlightenment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964.
- Dufourmont, Eddy. “Japan, a Country without Revolution? Uses of *kakumei* and Historical Debates in the Meiji Era (1868–1912).” In *Historians of Asia on Political Violence*, edited by Anne Cheng and Sanchit Kumar, 105–118. Paris: Collège de France, 2021.
- Duke, Benjamin. *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872–1890*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

⁶⁶ See for example Frank Jacob, “Die deutsche Rolle bei der Modernisierung des japanischen Kaiserreiches: zur deutschen Kolonialerfahrung in Japan seit der Eulenburg-Expedition,” *Revue d’Allemagne* 48, no. 1 (2016): 57–73.

- Duke, Benjamin. *Dr. David Murray: Superintendent of Education in the Empire of Japan, 1873–1879*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019.
- Ericson, Marc D. “The Bakufu Looks Abroad. The 1865 Mission to France.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, no. 4 (1979): 383–407.
- Fukuzawa, Yukichi. *Fukuzawa zenshū*, vol. 1. Tokyo: Jiji Shimpōsha, 1926.
- Fukuzawa, Yukichi. *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*. Translated by Eiichi Kiyooka. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1934.
- Fukuzawa, Yukichi. *An Encouragement of Learning*. Translated by David A. Dilworth and Umeyo Hirano. Tokyo: Sophia University, 1969.
- Fukuzawa, Yukichi. *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*. Revised translation by D. A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst III. Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008 [1875].
- Fukuzawa, Yukichi. “Datsu-A Ron ‘On Leaving Asia’ – from the Jiji shinpō newspaper, March 16, 1885.” *Education about Asia* 21, no. 1 (2016): 66–67. Accessed November 1, 2022. <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/lesson-plan-on-leaving-asia-primary-source-document/>.
- Hard, Arthur Sherburne ed. *Life and Letters of Joseph Hardy Neesima*. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1891.
- Hawks, Francis L. *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas, Performed in the Years 1852, 1853, and 1854*. New York: Appleton, 1856.
- Hirakawa, Sukehiro. *Wakon yōsai no keifu: uchi to soto kara no Meiji Nihon*. Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1971.
- Hirakawa, Sukehiro, and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi. “Japan’s Turn to the West.” In *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5: *The Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marius B. Jansen, 432–498. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Jacob, Frank. “Die Eulenburg-Expedition: Preußische Direktheit trifft japanische Zurückhaltung.” In *Fremdbilder – Selbstbilder: Paradigmen japanisch-deutscher Wahrnehmung (1861–2011)*, 25–40. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014).
- Jacob, Frank. “Die deutsche Rolle bei der Modernisierung des japanischen Kaiserreiches: zur deutschen Kolonialerfahrung in Japan seit der Eulenburg-Expedition.” *Revue d’Allemagne* 48, no. 1 (2016): 57–73.
- Jacob, Frank. “Western Classics in Modern Japan (2016).” *CUNY Academic Works*. Accessed June 15, 2023. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=qd_pubs.
- Jacob, Frank. “The Continuities and Discontinuities of Anti-Communist State Violence in Modern Japan.” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Anti-Communist Persecutions*, edited by Christian Gerlach and Clemens Six, 51–75. London: Palgrave, 2020.
- Jacob, Frank, ed. *Wallerstein 2.0: Thinking and Applying World-Systems Theory in the 21st Century*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2023.
- Jansen, Marius B. “Rangaku and Westernization.” *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 541–553.
- Kerst, Georg. “Die japanische Sondergesandtschaft nach Europa im Jahre 1862.” *Jahrbuch der Historischen Gesellschaft Bremen* 52 (1972): 195–233.
- Kiyooka, Eiichi, ed. and trans. *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Education: Selected Works*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1985.
- Lanman, Charles. *The Japanese in America*. New York: University Publishing, 1872.
- Liu, Jia. “On the Education Reform of the Meiji Japan.” *International Journal of New Developments in Engineering and Society* 3, no. 4 (2019): 21–27.

- Lutum, Peter. *Das Denken von Minakata Kumagusu und Yanagita Kunio: Zwei Pioniere der japanischen Volkskunde im Spiegel der Leitmotive wakon-yōsai*. Münster: LIT, 2005.
- Miho, Hashimoto. "Beikoku media ga tsutaeta bakumatsu Meiji shoki no kyōiku." *Hikaku kyōiku-gaku kenkyū* 27 (2001): 120–138.
- Mitani, Ta'ichirō. "'Bunmei-ka' – 'Seiyō-ka' – 'Kindai-ka' o megutte: Fukuzawa Yukichi to Maruyama Masao: Nihon kindai no sendō-sha to hihan-sha." *Nihongaku shiin kiyō* 72 (2018): 209–227.
- Miyazaki, Tōten. *Sanjūsannen no yume*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1967 [1902].
- Motoi, Yasuhiro. *Jo Nijima and the Founding Spirit: A Textbook for the Lectures on Doshisha*. Translated by Nobuyoshi Saito and David Chandler. Kyoto: Doshisha, 2011.
- Oxford, Wayne. *The Speeches of Fukuzawa*. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1973.
- Pantzer, Peter, with Matthias Eichhorn, eds. *Die Iwakura-Mission: Das Logbuch des Kume Kunitake über den Besuch der japanischen Sondergesandtschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz im Jahre 1873*. Munich: Iudicium, 2002.
- Saaler, Sven, and Christopher W. A. Szpilman, eds. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, vol. 1: 1850–1920. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.
- Schwentker, Wolfgang. *Geschichte Japans*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2022.
- Seifert, Wolfgang. "A Perspective for Japan: Fukuzawa Yukichi's 'Theory of Civilization', 1875." *Historická Sociologie* 2 (2021): 47–66.
- Stambler, Benita. "Ambassadors of Exchange: The 1860 Japanese Mission to the US." *Education About Asia* 16, no. 2 (2011): 21–24.
- Stanlaw, James. *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004.
- Sterba, Carmen. *Modest Nijima Jo: Samurai to Pastor to Chancellor*. Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2020.
- Shuetsu, Takahashi. "Tomita Tetsunosuke no nyūyōku fuku ryōji shūnin to kekkon to shōhō kōshū-sho." *Tōhoku Gakuin Daigaku keizaigaku ronshū* 187 (2016): 15–92.
- Tamaki, Norio. *Yukichi Fukuzawa 1835–1901: The Spirit of Enterprise in Modern Japan*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.
- Umetani, Noboru. *O-yatoi gaikokujin: Meiji Nihon no wakiyakutachi*. Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1965.
- Van Sant, John E., ed. *Mori Arinori's Life and Resources in America*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003.
- Wakabayashi, Bob Tadashi. *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan: The New Theses of 1825*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Yanaga, Chitoshi. "The First Japanese Embassy to the United States." *Pacific Historical Review* 9, no. 2 (1940): 113–138.
- Yukawa, Fumihiko. "Meiji shoki kyōiku jimu no seiritsu: Tanaka fujimaro to Meiji 12 nen kyōikuryō." *Shigaku zasshi* 121, no. 6 (2012): 1045–1083.

