Although scholars in various academic fields have a keen interest in the social institutions that reproduce the university system, generally their gaze has been averted from a close analysis of the professors themselves. This volume aims to initiate a project of describing academic traditions at universities in East Asia. The present neoliberal discourses of university reform amplify the need for just such an ethnographic study of the professoriate. How does change toward institutional models resembling the Western university affect the traditional, local cultures of the professoriate in Asia? The ten authors first document changes to both the workplace and workers and then analyze how these reforms have affected the very nature of academic work and scholarship in East Asia. This volume is of special interest to scholars in the fields of comparative education, Asian Studies, and sociocultural anthropology as well as academic and administrative staff employed at universities in Asia.
Higher Education in East Asia
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Volume 19

Higher education worldwide is in a period of transition, affected by globalization, the advent of mass access, changing relationships between the university and the state, and the new technologies, among others. Global Perspectives on Higher Education provides cogent analysis and comparative perspectives on these and other central issues affecting postsecondary education worldwide.

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Higher Education in East Asia

Neoliberalism and the Professoriate

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ vii

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1  
   *Gregory S. Poole and Ya-chen Chen*

## PART I: JAPAN

2. The Japanese Professoriate ............................................................................. 15  
   *Roger Goodman*

3. Administrative Work as Reform in Japanese Higher Education ..................... 33  
   *William Bradley*

4. Faculty Members at a Japanese Private University: Professors as Conservative Actors in an Era of Reform ......................................................... 49  
   *Gregory S. Poole*

5. Ideologies and Practices of Naming in a Cross-Cultural Educational Context ........................................................................................................... 57  
   *Debra J. Occhi*

6. Retooling Japan for the 21st Century: Higher Education Reform and the Production of “International” Scholars ............................................................. 73  
   *Philip MacLellan*

## PART II: HONG KONG

7. Hong Kong Chinese Professors within the “Western” University Model ........ 99  
   *Gordon Mathews*

8. The Narrowing of Intellectual Space by Western Management Discourses: Higher Education in Hong Kong ................................................................. 107  
   *Angel Lin*

## PART III: CHINA AND TAIWAN

9. Toward a More Complete Understanding of Chinese Academic Feminism: Interviews with P.R.C. and Taiwanese Feminist Faculty Members .................. 125  
   *Ya-chen Chen*
TABLE OF CONTENTS

10. From “Instructors” to “Researchers”: Reimagining Faculty at a Chinese University .................................................. 141
    Hongli Li

PART IV: CONCLUSION

11. Local Thinking, Global Dreams: Aspirations and Realities in Higher Education in the Asia Pacific ............................................. 151
    J. S. Eades

About the Authors .............................................................................................................. 175

Index...................................................................................................................................... 177
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1. INTRODUCTION

A decade ago, Roger Goodman (personal communication, March 19, 1999) remarked that the major gap in qualitative research on education in Japan was the dearth of studies on higher education. Since then, there have been an increasing number of articles and books published both on higher education in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia (Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004; Goodman, Eades, & Hada, 2005; Lee-Cunin, 2004; McVeigh, 2004; Yang, 2002). However, although scholars in various academic fields have a keen interest in the kinds of social institutions that reproduce their own disciplines, the university system in particular, their gaze has been averted from a close analysis of the professors themselves. In East Asia the present neoliberal discourses of university reform amplify this need for closer ethnographic analysis of the traditions of the professoriate. In this volume we aim to begin a project of describing academic traditions at universities in East Asia. What is the affect of a general change toward institutional models resembling the “Western” university on the traditional, local cultures of the professoriate in Asia?

This book grew out of a Council of Anthropology and Education session at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Meeting in November 2006 in San Jose, California, where, addressing the topic of university reform in East Asia, six of the authors of this volume presented papers on their qualitative research into the field of higher education. The research focused mostly on academic work and university reform in Japan and China at “the chalkboard”—from the perspective of the professors. Inspired by the San Jose experience, contributors to this session rewrote their papers for publication in this book. Additionally, we solicited papers from four other authors who, though not part of the original session at the AAA meeting, were frequent interlocutors with us in this conversation about the professoriate in East Asia. The voices of ten highly qualified “insiders” to four of the five largest areas of higher education (HE) in East Asia are represented in this volume, with South Korea (ROK) unfortunately, and conspicuously, absent. The authors’ research approach is largely ethnographic in quality and interdisciplinary in nature.

Writing in an often reflexive fashion, the ten authors address recent changes at East Asian universities. While the focus of this volume is on the professoriate, much of the discussion also necessarily concerns the university workplace. The reforms addressed can be largely categorized as internationalization of: 1) higher education institutions (HEIs), a rationalization and “marketization” of university management practices; and 2) educators, an increased international context of
higher degrees, staff, and career structures of university faculty members. Together
the ten papers here first document these changes to both the workplace and workers
and then analyze how these reforms have affected the very nature of academic
work and scholarship in East Asia. The book is divided into four parts—five papers
focus on Japan, two on Hong Kong, two on the P.R.C. and R.O.C., and part four
is a concluding chapter that is comparative in nature and addresses East Asia as
well as “the West.”

Goodman

Roger Goodman begins by giving a detailed overview of the academic profession
in Japan, observing that though traditional institutional practices may mask change,
historically universities have always been changing. This situation is partly due to
the historic tension in Japan between state control and institutional autonomy. This
tension is mirrored by the state’s postwar push to encourage professors to earn
advanced degrees and become researchers, on the one hand, juxtaposed by
traditional practices such as seniority promotion and in-house publications that
cultivated devotion and inward direction of professors’ work energy to their
institution, on the other. Goodman also points out the important distinction between
two different HE management styles in Japan, the kyōjukai shihai (management by
the faculty) and r rijikai shihai (management by the board of trustees) and how these
approaches as well are changing, creating a diverse set of reactions amongst
professors. Regardless of the management style, institutions in Japan seem to be
moving toward business models that at least purport increased accountability and
responsiveness to students’ demands. This has resulted in responses by faculty
members that range from an acceptance of the increased competition for research
monies and increased teaching loads as a necessary change at institutions managed
by the faculty senate, to a sense of powerlessness amongst professors at board-run
institutions where academic staff are considered employees rather than stakeholders.

In this way Goodman sets the tone for the volume by emphasizing how
universities in Japan are not at all immune to change. In conclusion, he predicts
that the recruitment and management practices of higher educational institutions
(HEIs) will result in a change in the demographic composition and general
employment conditions of faculty members in Japan. A cutback in faculty
recruitment at most institutions means that the professoriate is aging. Once the job
market inevitably opens up in a few years, there will be changes in the proportion
of women, foreign-earned doctorate holders, and short-term contracts. This is
already happening—there has been a visible diversification of professors at
universities around the country and a trend at both public and private institutions to
hesitate employing new faculty members on a tenure-track basis.

Bradley

In the next chapter, William Bradley continues this discussion of change, or
“reform,” toward a market-driven, rationalized management of Japanese universities.
He adopts Gumport’s distinction to suggest that a “social institutional logic” in
which the university is the site of knowledge production is being replaced by an “industry logic” where a neoliberal business approach emphasizes the production of degrees—“credentialization.” Bradley’s qualitative data collected from interviews of professors in Japan indicate that this shift to a more corporate model of university governance has in many cases embedded administrative and managerial tasks as the primary function of academic work at universities. Reinforced by increasingly centralized administration control and inbred networks of institutional hierarchy, Bradley documents the administrative focus of professors’ work in Japan, an emphasis that Poole also notes in Chapter 3. This change has generated various responses amongst many academics, who express resentment of work they perceived as imposed from top down. Frustration with administrative work that has unclear goals and seems to expand without bounds is a core criticism of university governance as expressed by interviewees. The result is the appearance of a survival strategy amongst the professoriate, similar to the predicaments facing the academic staff at Roger Goodman’s “University A,” in which individual professors carefully manage this imposed administrative work so as to balance their image as a “good colleague” who is adequately involved in campus administration while at the same time taking care not to become overburdened and burned out with such tasks.

Bradley offers a typology of university governance as expressed by professors in Japan as a way of summarizing their diversity of administrative experiences. He describes the first type as “governance breakdown,” which appears in some institutions where a rijikai shihai (management by the board of trustees) has resulted in near total faculty disinvolvemnt in the decision-making process. The second type of institution is that which, largely because of an increasingly competitive HE market, seems to be in a perpetual state of decline—”struggling to govern.” “Just-in-time governance” appears where faculty members do play a large part in management of a university, but are therefore largely overburdened and distracted by administrative work. The last type of governance, “managed rationalization,” is found only at top-level institutions and purports a clarity of purpose executed through long-term planning. Indeed, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recently made the critique that universities in Japan generally suffer from a lack of strategic planning, a “paradox of over-regulation and under-planning” (in Aspinall, 2009).

Poole

Gregory Poole’s chapter is based on participant-observation and describes the changing cultural scene at a private university in Tokyo. Echoing both Goodman and Bradley, he notes that Japanese higher education has been undergoing rapid change in the last few years, in response to the imposition of the “audit culture” by the Ministry of Education (MEXT), long-term economic stagnation, and the long demographic decline in the Japanese population. However, the core of this chapter is the way in which the author uses the familiar Japanese categories of uchi and soto, inside and outside, to describe two ideal types of professor, the sotomuki professors concerned with their standing in the outside world and who focus on
teaching and research; and the uchimuki professors, who are concerned with their standing within the institution and for whom the most valued forms of work are building personal relations through committees and administrative work, even if these apparently achieve no real purpose. Within the context of the rapid reforms taking place in Japanese higher education, the assumption is that the sotomuki culture must prevail in the end in order for third-tier universities to compete for students effectively. However, with the present professoriate weighted heavily toward uchimuki types, reforms in many universities are likely to be piecemeal and slow, and the most effective reformers are those able to straddle both worlds.

Experience in Japanese universities suggests that the uchimuki model fits the lower-ranking private and national universities, where uchimuki professors reign supreme. As Bradley suggests with his description of a “managed rationalization” typology of governance, the top-ranking private and national universities are much more sotomuki in response to what they see as the pressures of the marketplace and the need to compete for research funds. However, in looking at such sotomuki universities, it may also be possible to differentiate between those that are trying to establish themselves in the global market through traditional measures such as research excellence (mainly the top-ranking national universities) and those that are trying to compete through branding, innovations in curriculum, cost reductions, and closer links with the world of business. With the declining population, the quest for “bums on seats” grows at Japanese universities, and it will be interesting to see which of these models is most effective in the long run.

Occhi

One response to this fierce competition in the HE market is the growing trend for Japanese and Korean universities to establish innovative English-based liberal arts programs (see Goodman in this volume and Poole, 2009) and, as Goodman hinted at in the conclusion of the second chapter, employing an increasing number of foreign-trained Ph.D.s. The fourth chapter is based on one such program and, though ostensibly about the use of names (the FAC or “faculty address code”), author Debra Occhi actually touches on a theme related to Poole’s uchi/soto distinction—the cultural differences between Japanese and foreign faculty in a small international university in provincial Japan. Modes of address are complicated, firstly because of the different conventions for the uses of personal given names in Japan and the West (they are much less frequently used in Japan), and secondly because of the use of the word “sensei” for teachers in Japan, which, unlike “professor” or “doctor” in Europe, covers up distinctions of rank and qualifications. At the university where Occhi works, two particular issues are of special concern. First is that the faculty address code, which requires the use of personal names plus sensei, is intended to create a friendly informal atmosphere for the students, which Occhi links with other cultural manifestations of friendliness and cuteness in Japanese popular culture. The second issue is that there is an inherent need to deemphasize rank and status, through faculty address codes and otherwise. This arises from another feature of Japanese universities, albeit one that is
changing—unlike the U.S. or Europe at present (but rather like the U.K. until the 1970s), most teachers at Japanese universities did not achieve the status of Ph.D. until the end of their careers, if at all. Professors in Japan usually had masters’ degrees or “All But Dissertation” (A.B.D.) status, which they maintained until middle age. In the 1990s there was a spurt to catch up with what was seen as international practice. For instance, when one author joined the staff at Shiga University in 1994, only 15 percent of the professors had Ph.D.s. Six years later, around 45 percent did. This includes recent arrivals, who tended to have doctorates already, and some of the older members of staff who acquired them through completion of their theses.

MacLellan

Of course this discussion of different interpretations of professorial titles and qualifications relates fundamentally to the question of career structures, which is dealt with in detail by Philip MacLellan in his chapter on the career of a Japanese woman academic he calls “Noriko.” We first meet Noriko when she has to publish a paper in English and lacks the skills to do so. Many non-Japanese academics, some of the authors in this volume included, have had very similar experiences helping colleagues in Japan, often leading to very rewarding research partnerships and lasting collegial relationships. In the supervision of undergraduate and, especially, graduate students enrolled in English-language programs such as at Occhi’s institution, faculty members have similar challenges helping non-native speakers to succeed.

MacLellan locates Noriko’s career within the context of the wider program of internationalization being attempted by the Japanese Ministry of Education and its research affiliate, the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science including the Center of Excellence (COE) and Global 30 projects. The author makes a valuable point in focusing on the demand these programs are creating for internationally minded younger scholars able to liaise with foreign universities and participate in international events in English. There certainly are many “Noriko-type” aspiring scholars in Japan, and yet the number who actually manage to embark on a successful international career is very small. Most tend to remain in Japan, get jobs in lower ranking institutions, and gradually become the next generation of Poole’s *uchimuki* professors. The argument could be made, as Goodman suggested in the conclusion of the first chapter, that one powerful effect in the long run of the government’s eclectic attempt at “internationalization” of HE in Japan is that these various programs implemented by MEXT encourage diversity in hiring so that younger scholars like Noriko draw not only themselves but their colleagues and institutions as well into the global mainstream.

As befits a former British colony, Hong Kong universities have encouraged their academic staff to “internationalize” and in doing so have embraced the audit culture of rationalized HE management. In evaluating faculty research, the tendency has been to place considerable emphasis on articles published in leading English-language refereed journals. Although this has arguably helped to raise
Hong Kong universities to the top tier internationally, it has also led to the paradoxical situation in which research publications written by Chinese authors for Chinese readers are largely ignored in evaluation, though few people actually read what these same academics are writing in English.

This is a dilemma that is also being faced in Japan, though to a much smaller degree and with slightly different results. It formed the theme of a recent volume coedited by Jerry Eades and to which Gordon Mathews also contributed (Yamashita, et al., 2004). One of its theoretical starting points was the assertion by the Japanese anthropologist Takami Kuwayama (2004) that Japan’s position within global anthropology was “semiperipheral”—in many ways subject to the hegemony of the West. As Mathews notes in Chapter 7 (also see Mathews, 2008), and Angel Lin reiterates in more detail in Chapter 6, Asian scholars tend to draw theory from the West, even if they draw field material from Asia. Traditionally in East Asia, scholars have often been able to pursue successful careers with little reference to English language material, since the local languages (especially Japanese and Mandarin) have a vast literature and since there are many translations of theoretical works from other languages. Additionally, their local audiences are usually much larger than their international audiences, as Lin also points out.

Lin

In Lin’s chapter, the author frames this discussion in terms of the historical colonial legacy of Hong Kong, showing how recent HE management practices embracing a “Western” audit culture has in effect stifled any consideration for the development of “local knowledge” (see Poole, 2008). The impact of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) on the culture of research and academic production in HK has been substantial, and Lin argues that the isolation and competition felt by HK “knowledge workers” has affected scholarly work negatively. Academics have been forced to draw nearly exclusively on Western frameworks of thought, driving a trend away from a more indigenous epistemology that in a practical or applied manifestation might engage local readerships. The governance of universities in HK is increasingly driven by global management discourses that force the professoriate to publish in journals located in Western countries that have little interest in publishing on topics of concern to local society. Lin concludes with a number of suggestions for the HK professoriate, including better communication amongst scholars so they might resist enforced competition and create a more supportive environment for locally centered scholarship. A recurrent theme, then, with respect to the Hong Kong professoriate as raised by both Mathews and Lin, is this issue of the audiences to whom academics address their work.

Writing and publishing for local audiences in the Chinese language has become more and more impractical for academic survival, as David Faure notes: “People who publish in Chinese scream foul play, and not without reason: where does one find the international journal which publishes in Chinese?... In Hong Kong, journals published in mainland China or Taiwan were both ruled out of the “international category” (Faure, 2001, 80). Angel Lin describes how publishing
outside the Science Citation Index (SCI) or Social Scientists Citation Index (SSCI) lists runs the risk of not merely wasting energy and time but also getting negative responses from promotion and tenure reviewers—a sort of academic suicide. Lin argues that this situation is one in which the state has clear control over knowledge production.

Mathews

In Chapter 7 Gordon Mathews echoes this issue with his description of the practice of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) at Hong Kong universities—a meticulous measurement of the quantity but not necessarily the quality of individuals’ and departments’ scholarly output, with careers hanging in the balance. Because refereed research is in practice deemed not to exist in the Chinese language, according to reformers’ arbitrary judgment, publication in English becomes essential. This has influenced their academic modes of production. Hong Kong Chinese professors often tend to do research on Hong Kong, their home, as well as on China; however they cannot publish that research in Chinese but only in English if it is to “count.” They are forced to publish within the academic center—the United Kingdom and the United States—if their work is to be deemed of value; but their work is likely to be of little interest in those places. Like Angel Lin, Gordon Mathews believes that Chinese professors in Hong Kong may feel forced, by the managerial strictures of universities, and more indirectly by the subtle and unwitting intellectual imperialism of the academic center, to become alienated from producing work that has direct impact on their own society.

Gordon Matthews’s chapter also records several strategies that Hong Kong Chinese academics use in adapting to recent academic reforms of Westernization, internationalization, and globalization. Some scholars publish their academic work in English, not for an audience in the West, but rather for an audience of fellow Asians in Japan, Korea, Singapore and elsewhere, with whom these scholars feel that they share common pan-Asian concerns. These publications are tolerated if not celebrated within Hong Kong’s Research Assessment regime. Other scholars adopt a kind of conceptual double vision, publishing academic work in the Anglo-American center for the sake of obtaining a high Research Assessment score, but putting their heart and soul into the popular books and articles they write in Chinese for a local audience. As one such scholar told him, “At the end of the day, if I don’t have any journal publications with high impact factor, so what? If people in Hong Kong still read and learn from my writings, I’ll happily close my eyes and go to heaven!” Still other Hong Kong scholars are attempting to create refereed academic journals in Chinese, to overcome the barriers that continue to prevent Chinese academic writing from being given import. Given the overwhelming emphasis on English-language publication in the Anglo-American center, all these strategies are fraught with a degree of professional peril. But they do show that Hong Kong academics who are sufficiently determined may indeed preserve for themselves the freedom to have an impact on their own society, through local readership, despite the strictures that Hong Kong universities place upon them.
Chen

Mathews’ and Lin’s concern with readership is also raised in Ya-chen Chen’s chapter on the career strategies used by feminist scholars in the PRC and ROC when she considers the difficulty of translating words like “feminism” into Asian languages without introducing negative political or cultural connotations. Japanese scholars simply tend to use the English word, and it appears that some Chinese scholars are doing the same. The negative connotation of “feminism” amongst many Chinese women academics and the role this plays in the career structures and pathways of East Asian professors forms the theme of Chen’s research, a different perspective from Lin and Maclellan on this same topic of an academic’s working life. Chen’s comments on the demography of academia are revealing—women are nearly as well represented as men at the lecturer level but appear to suffer increasing discrimination as they move up the ladder. It appears that patriarchy is still alive and well in the promotion system of universities in Taiwan and China. One question for a future study is how this discrimination varies between subjects, and whether, as in the West, women are predominantly concentrated in areas like history, literature, anthropology, social work, education and nursing? As Goodman predicts for HE in Japan, will many more women in East Asia be hired than have been before, and, with competitive interviewing, are they not often the best candidates? Whatever the answer to these questions, men are still overrepresented at the top of academia in East Asia.

That being said, Chen describes how feminism is becoming institutionalized in Taiwan at least, with the establishment of institutes of gender studies, even if the pace of change is slower on the mainland. Eades noted in 2006 at the AAA session in San Jose that one strategy Western feminists had success with in the UK in the 1970s was to start their own journals and specialist publishing houses, a major factor in legitimizing feminist perspectives in both the humanities and social sciences. Will just such a strategy, along with increasing popularity amongst women students for courses on feminism, help gender studies to be more rapidly accepted in China and Taiwan?

Li

Though not about feminist faculty members per se, Li Hongli returns to the theme of career structures and documents the experience of one woman academic at an institution in the PRC. Her story is a fascinating first-hand account of how the reorganization of HEIs in the PRC in the 1990s, and the resulting decision by the administration in her case study to internationalize into a “first-class internationalized research university” as part of these reform measures, affected the career paths of the professors employed at the institution. The adoption of quantitative assessment measures of faculty research activity challenged many professors who were originally teaching-oriented to quickly adopt the role of researchers with no institutional support. Furthermore, the unpredictability of arbitrary institutional policy brought additional hardship to the transition and left many faculty feeling disempowered and without control over their careers.
This account draws upon Li’s experience as a faculty member at a Chinese university from 2001 to 2005 to illustrate the challenges faced by young scholars during this sudden redefining of faculty from “instructors” to “researchers,” as exemplified by the point-based quantitative research assessment. In 2001, Li Hongli’s university was “upgraded” so as to be directly administered by the Ministry of Education, a symbol of a “first-class university” status in China, which precipitated subsequent institutional reform. One year later, with little information as to the implications, all faculty members were asked to choose one of three career paths: research, teaching, or a combination of the two. All but one of the faculty in her department chose a research plus teaching option, and the following year they were greeted with a loss of salary, promotion, and in-service training support due to “inadequate quantity of publications,” resulting in a renewed effort to produce publications in whatever ways available or to assess other career options. Even amongst the faculty members who were in the end “successful” in their navigation of these changes, the burning question for Li and her colleagues remained: does a research point system indicate the quality of a researcher? This question hits a nerve that runs throughout this volume.

Eades

In the concluding chapter, Jerry Eades partly responds to Li’s lament by offering an analysis of HE that begins with a summary of the state of affairs in the West and, in so doing, places the professoriate and universities in East Asia into a larger, more global framework. His review of recent discourses surrounding increased competitiveness of HE in the U.K. serves as a reminder that the issues at Western universities are not far removed from the ones facing those in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan: university independence, league table rankings, responsiveness to students’ demands for increased employability, and, most relevant to this volume, the effects of managerialism on the working conditions and career paths of academics.

One effect is the concern being voiced by professors in Britain, the U.S. and East Asia over the disastrous results from universities being taken over by administrators with political or commercial neoliberal agendas. Whatever the business justification for this trend toward “rationalizing” the university, from the perspective of the professoriate, teaching and research both suffer. Another more positive knock-on effect of this business approach to university governance in Asia, as both Goodman and Eades point out, is that the professoriate is increasingly “international”—many are now trained Ph.D.s, often with degrees from Western institutions. The Norikos of Asia are in high demand because of government initiatives to raise HEIs to “global standards.” Following this trend then, we would predict that in the not-too-distant future scholars of East Asia will have to be able to read at least three languages, English, Chinese and Japanese, to make sense of the research on the region. Also, as Hong Kong becomes integrated more fully into China and as more P.R.C. universities begin to feature in international rankings, the emphasis on English as the only international medium of scholarly communication may gradually be diluted (Eades, 2004).
But perhaps the most telling effect of this trend to rationalize in neoliberal fashion the governance of universities in East Asia will be the eventual implementation of a British strategic model that Eades describes—each institution deciding whether to pursue either an academic-research university model or a vocational-teaching one. The chapters in this volume tell a story of the internationalization of universities and university professors in East Asia. The result may well be the two-tiered model of HE like that which has evolved in the U.K.

NOTES

1 The authors would like to acknowledge the important contribution that Jerry Eades made to this chapter.

2 “East Asia” for our purposes includes the PRC, HK SAR, the ROC, the ROK, and Japan.

3 Sungho Lee (1997, 2004) at South Korea’s most prestigious private institution, Yonsei University in Seoul, has written on the professoriate in the R.O.K. making observations relevant to this volume. On university governance he observed that:

“Korean higher education is undergoing a paradigmatic shift, from government hegemony to university autonomy, and from autocratic external governance to democratic internal governance… On the whole, Korean professors perceive their institutional governance as relatively centralized. They do not believe that they have reasonable involvement in the decision-making process at the department level… Faculty activism appears to be the most important of the new intramural issues for the Korean colleges and universities. The professors in many institutions have begun to organize their own councils and to raise their voices against their governing boards… These trends suggest that administration in the future should involve faculty in institutional governance and decision making” (1997, 323–324).

And on the issue of increased competitiveness in the academic workplace he comments as follows:

“Brain Korea 21” is a ROK government policy “designed to elevate the quality level of Korean higher education in the twenty-first century to world-class standards, particularly in selected graduate schools and selected fields in the natural sciences… This policy has stimulated change at some elite public and private institutions, where admissions tend to be more competitive than before… Faculty have also been greatly affected because they have to conform fully to government reform guidelines. Thus, this new policy may pose another threat to academic freedom and institutional autonomy and may put heavy pressures on academic ethics… At present, most faculty at four-year colleges and universities are disgusted with the faculty evaluations that have been instituted in recent years. Some faculty members confess to a sense of malaise and apprehension, while others override and ignore the practice of evaluation. For a long time in Korea, faculty were completely free from being evaluated by others. Once a faculty member was first appointed, he or she was promoted and granted tenure based on the passage of time. That was the very reason why the profession of college or university professor has always been given the highest status” (2004, 168–170).

4 On the other hand, sometimes professional relationships can be strained, especially between authors and publishers. The pressure for Asian scholars to publish in English means that because of an inherent language handicap of non-native writers, more and more academic writing often needs heavy, and costly, editing. The question of authorship can be legitimately raised in certain cases of heavily edited texts.

5 See the Fall/Winter 2007 special issue of Journal of Studies in International Education for a full discussion of “internationalization” of higher education around the world, and the June 2009 issue of the same journal for six articles that describe recent “internationalization” projects in Japanese HE specifically.
INTRODUCTION

6 Jerry Eades (2006) made the interesting comment that when he attended his first general faculty meeting at the University of Tokyo in the early 1990s, he experienced the culture shock of seeing that in the room of approximately 300 professors he was only able to count four women!

7 Mayumi Ishikawa’s case study analysis of a Japanese research university tells a similar story of how an emerging academic hegemony dictated by the prevalence of university rankings alters internal hierarchies and transforms identities within institutions.

8 Stromquist points out that at the root of such rationalization are larger forces of globalization, especially “neoliberal economic policies that have restructured the labor market and reduced role of the state in social areas, bringing in their wake the emergence of private universities, the marketization of research, and the relentless search for ‘world class’ university status” (2007, 2).

REFERENCES


PART I: JAPAN
ROGER GOODMAN

2. THE JAPANESE PROFESSORIATE

As Clark Kerr has noted, of the institutions that had been established in the Western world by 1520, 85 still exist—the Roman Catholic Church, the British Parliament, several Swiss Cantons, and some seventy universities. Of these, perhaps the universities have experienced the least change (Altbach, 2003, 5).

This statement by Philip Altbach, the doyen of comparative higher education studies, is made in the context of the dramatic changes that have recently begun to take place among universities across the world. The statement suggests that European universities have been relatively immune to change and that they retain many of the characteristics with which they were founded. This, of course, is not true. All institutions often appear to be unchanging because of the manner in which they legitimize their practices by reference to “tradition,” but in reality they are continually in a state of flux. In order to understand how change has happened, though, it is necessary to place contemporary institutions in a historical perspective.

HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE PROFESSORIATE

Although some Japanese higher education institutions today claim links with institutions in the premodern period, Japan never had a university system in the premodern period to match that of medieval Europe, with its institutions in England, France, Italy and Spain. As Dore (1984) and Passin (1968) have extensively documented, there were high levels of literacy in Japan long before the Meiji Restoration in 1868, mainly due to a widespread and complex system of schools based in Buddhist temples (terakoya), but the study of subjects such as medicine, mathematics and applied sciences, which has long been taught in European institutions, were studied by individuals apprenticed to individual teachers. The development of higher education in Japan can therefore be legitimately taken as starting in the last third of the nineteenth century, when the Meiji oligarchs, recognizing that education was the key to preventing the country from being colonized, developed a system that would produce workers to drive the country’s modernization. The emphasis of the oligarchs was on the primary level of education (by 1905, 90% of young Japanese were receiving at least five years of education), but at the top end, the system included the establishment of a small number of higher education institutions (daigaku) charged with producing the bureaucrats and officials who would work in government. At the pinnacle of—and

G. Poole and Y. Chen (eds.), Higher Education in East Asia: Neoliberalism and the Professoriate, 15–32.
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largely dominating—the system were the imperial universities, which were charged with training the teachers for lower-order institutions and whose graduates were preferentially employed by state institutions.

The first professors in Japanese universities were distinguished by their international nature and experience. In the early 1870s, around one-third of the total government educational budget was being spent on either supporting foreign staff in Japan or Japanese studying overseas. The former were known as oyatoi gaikokujin and included some of the best-known names in the development of the modern higher education system in Japan—William Griffis, William Clark, Henry Dyer and William Murray. The term oyatoi gaikokujin has been translated by Hazel Jones (1980) as “hired foreigners,” which demonstrates the idea that while they were paid handsomely for their services, they were hired to teach the Japanese population specific skills, after which their services would be dispensed with.

A similar amount of money was invested in sending Japanese students overseas as ryūgakusei, a system that had existed in Japan from the ninth to thirteenth centuries, when students were sent to China, but had fallen into abeyance during the past half a millennium (see Bennett, Passin and McKnight, 1958). According to Kashioka (1982), a very large proportion of these ryūgakusei became professors in major imperial universities on their return and were listed in the Jinji kōshin roku (Japan’s Who’s Who); the list includes some of the best-known educators of the period: Fukuzawa Yukichi, Tsuda Umeko, Mori Arinori (see Duke, 1989).

Early professors in Japanese universities were also distinguished by the diversity of their activities, which involved everything from “writing popular articles and translating Western materials for popular audiences to giving public lectures, serving as consultants to the government, conducting basic research and teaching” (Cummings and Amano, 1977, 128). This range of activities indeed explains in part why some of these early professors became such famous figures, still remembered today. Gradually, though, many of the nonacademic activities were taken over by nonuniversity bureaucrats, and the work of professors was increasingly professionalized and became more narrowly focused.

The higher education system itself was characterized by having copied many of its core elements from Germany. The Imperial Ordinance of 1886, which transformed Tokyo University into Tokyo Imperial University, for example, defined the university’s purpose as “the teaching of, and fundamental research into, arts and sciences necessary for the state.” As with the rest of the education system that was developed during the Meiji period, the first priority of institutions was to the state, and this was reflected further by the fact that imperial university presidents were themselves appointed by means of an imperial order. Universities were also constructed around the German system of a “chair” in which professors served as civil servants, though it is important to point out that the German model of higher education, though dominant, was not imposed wholesale but was adapted to Japanese conditions. The new imperial universities, for example, included practical courses, such as agriculture and engineering, which were not found in German universities. But perhaps most significant of all for the prewar history of higher education, as Beauchamp and Rubinger (1989, 139) point out, “was the Japanese
failure to practice the vital principles of Lehrfreiheit (freedom to teach) and Lernfreiheit (freedom to learn), which gave the German university its inner strength, vitality and a measure of academic freedom.”

Unlike in Europe, where the private university system predated the state system, the private university system in Japan developed in large part in opposition to the state control over the imperial universities. Institutions such as Keio, Doshisha and Waseda were founded in 1858, 1875 and 1882 respectively by the antigovernment liberal figures Fukuzawa Keichi, Niijima Jo and Okuma Shigenobu, but were denied official recognition until the University Ordinance of 1918. The ordinance saw an impressive growth in higher education over the following twenty years, particularly in the private sector, which catered, by 1938, for around two-thirds of the total university and college population of students, a pattern that has remained more or less until today.

As Japan entered what has become known as the “dark valley” of the 1930s, private universities came as much under the control of the state as public ones. The state became increasingly involved in controlling what could be taught and by whom, a situation that was best captured in what became known as the Kyodai jiken, a series of incidents concerning the defense of academic autonomy at Kyoto University, culminating in the Takikawa Incident of 1933, when the liberal law professor Takikawa Yukitori was accused in a right-wing pamphlet of favoring left-wing students while serving on the entrance committee for Justice Ministry officials and of writing books that were critical of existing social practices, such as only punishing wives in adultery cases, and was dismissed by Education Minister Hatoyama Ichirou (see Mitchell, 1983, 273ff.). This series of events explained the reforms introduced by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) authorities after the war, which were designed to protect the autonomy of institutions by relieving the Ministry of Education of some of its inspection roles and by giving national universities the right to select their own managers and staff, subject only to what was supposed to be pro forma government agreement. Private universities did not even need this pro forma. The issue of autonomy still looms large in the reform debates of Japanese universities.

As is well known, higher education in Japan expanded rapidly and continually throughout the postwar period. Over a forty-five-year period, it moved from being, to use the categories of Martin Trow (1974), an elite system through being a mass system to becoming a universal system. In 1960, only 10.1% of school leavers went to some form of higher or further full-time education; by 1980s this had risen to 49.9% and by 2005 to 76.2%, one of the highest rates in the world (Yo, 2007, 45). As mentioned, the vast majority of this expansion has been in the private sector—over 80% of HE institutions are private—and resources remain, as at the beginning of the system, very unequally distributed across the public/private divide. This has not, however, always been in ways that external observers might have expected. On average, teachers in private universities teach more students and teach more classes than their counterparts in the national universities. In general, they have also had lower status. On the other hand, they have also often received higher
salaries and enjoyed better benefits. The relative attractions of the public/private divide have come into particularly sharp relief in recent years. This is a topic that will be addressed below.

THE JAPANESE PROFESSORATE IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

The rest of this chapter sets out to examine how the role of the professor in Japanese universities has changed during the postwar period and how that changing role relates to broader changes in Japanese politics, economy and society.

In 1977, two of the leading experts on Japanese higher education, William K. Cummings and Amano Ikuo published an article entitled “The Changing Role of the Japanese Professor.” They picked out the following features for particular note for understanding the development of the modern university system:

(a) The chair (kōza) system—which has an equal number of senior and junior positions—has virtually guaranteed promotion to all those employed by universities. The fact that almost all senior management positions, such as dean, were chosen from within the university also meant that many could aspire to such positions. The converse of these “benefits” (as the authors call them) is that institutions became excessively, in some cases almost completely, inbred, since it was believed that only those who had been fully educated within the institution could fully understand its distinctive features and character. This practice was exacerbated by the fact that each university operated its own entrance examination system.

(b) From the very early days, university professors enjoyed great respect and status, not only when teaching but more generally. Professors were influential in the lives of their students far beyond the classroom and long after they had left their institutions.

(c) Professors were rewarded for loyalty to their institution through a salary system that recognized length of service, known as the nenkō joretsu sei (seniority promotion system). Tenure was secured from initial appointment, often at an early age by global standards. Those who took their services elsewhere would often suffer severe financial penalties as a result. All of this led to an immobile academic workforce.

(d) Even publication became focused internally. Academics were able (and indeed were sometimes financially encouraged) to publish their work, without peer or external review, in faculty journals known as daigaku kiyō. Very few professional journals developed outside individual universities, and very few scholars published in the journals of other institutions.

All of these features, as Cummings and Amano (1977, 131) point out, “tended to channel the energies of professors towards their universities.” Professors had little concept of themselves as part of wider groups of specialists in a particular arena, such as law, medicine, chemistry or economics. On the positive side, as the authors point out, this meant that Japan could develop a world-class and fully developed university like Tokyo Imperial University remarkably quickly. On the down side, while institutions were very keen on the idea of university autonomy, there was
only a weakly developed sense of academic freedom, which explained how the state had been able to coopt the university sector relatively easily as Japan descended into war in the 1930s.

All of the features identified by Cumming and Amano above as key for understanding the formation of the higher education sector still pertain today to some degree. There were a number of postwar changes, however, which served to modify their effect on the self-perception of university professors in Japan. The most important of these was probably the development of a research orientation.

The renewed vigor in the immediate postwar period in research was in part related to the fact that many academics had been denied the chance of doing any research at all because of the war. Another reason was the abolition by the Occupation authorities of the division between elite, imperial, research-oriented institutions and the rest. Suddenly, all of those teaching at any higher education institution began to think of themselves as professors who could undertake research as well as having to teach. Perhaps most important, though, the vast majority of those becoming university professors were going through graduate school first and thereby coming to understand the nature of doing research; the proportion of academics with advanced degrees increased from 16.3% in 1953 to 46% in 1965 (Cummings and Amano, 1977, 135).

The Occupation forces encouraged the new interest in research and in particular the flourishing of academic and learned societies as a bulwark against the twin threats of nationalism and communism. Although the vast majority of the government’s contribution continued to be allocated on a historical basis to the small number of top, formerly imperial, universities, it also introduced for the first time competitive research funding. This system of allocating funding was important for encouraging academics to work outside their own institutions. The amount of money that individuals could be awarded was strictly limited, thereby forcing groups of researchers to submit joint applications for what became known as kyōdō kenkyū (joint research projects). These, in turn, led to the development of large numbers of kenkyūkai (study groups), which again crossed institutions and brought together academics with shared intellectual interests from different institutions. Increasingly, these kenkyūkai became the main sites for academics to present their work rather than in their departments, which in many cases were teaching units rather than intellectual communities where scholars shared their research with each other.

Surveys in 1967 and in 1973 both showed that nearly half of Japanese professors in that era viewed research as their most important activity (Cummings and Amano, 1977, 139). What was meant by research, of course, varied enormously and could extend from serious use of primary sources to the quick and easy production of popular articles. Cummings and Amano (1977, 147) suggested that the successful academic was likely to go through several stages, “from being a serious and committed researcher in his early years to becoming a quasipopular writer by his late thirties and a public speaker and consultant in his fifties.” In general, though, universities themselves were beginning to diversify into research-oriented and teaching-oriented, and the
activities of professors within them to some extent reflected the nature of their individual institutions. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, as Shimbori (1977, 153–156) demonstrated, that just over 50% of all Japanese university professors of education, for example, had not produced a single research publication over the entire decade before 1975; only 4.5% of professors in what he defined as “top league” institutions, however, were “silent” during this period, while almost 72% in the “bottom league” had not published.

Universities became increasingly politicized during the late 1960s and early 1970s in Japan. This impacted on Japanese professors in a number of ways. First of all, the very subjects they taught became subject to political criticism. In economics, this led for example to a radical split between Keynesian and Marxist economists, a split that can still be found in most economics departments in Japan today. At its most extreme, it led to academics being condemned as being agents of the state even when undertaking research that apparently had no state agenda. At the same time, the politicization of students changed their relationship with their professors, slightly reducing the social distance between the two, with, as Havens (1978, 331) put it, “a new reluctance to revere professors simply because they were professors.” Nevertheless, professors in Japan still commanded a high degree of respect even if they were not held in the sort of awe that had earlier pertained. Part of this “respect” was probably because of their continuing lack of relative visibility. While some professors in the 1970s began, in response to student demand, to operate systems such as office hours, the fact that most universities were located in Japan’s densest metropolises (Tokyo alone accounted for almost 44% of all students), meant that few professors lived less than an hour from their place of work and many much farther. As a result, most professors were generally on campus only the two or three days a week when they had classes; otherwise, they stayed and worked at home or moonlit on other campuses. It was partly in response to this problem of a dispersed workforce that many universities developed new consolidated and much larger campuses outside the urban areas in the 1970s, the best-known example of which was the relocation of Tokyo University of Education to Tsukuba in Ibaraki prefecture in 1973 (see Cummings, 1978, for an account of the founding of Tsukuba University).

Drawing on the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s International Survey of the Academic Profession undertaken in 1992 to 1993, which included Japan among its 13 target countries and 20,000 participants, Ehara Takekazu (1998) has sought to characterize Japanese professors’ views of teaching and research. Japan fits centrally into what Ehara calls the “German model,” where the number of teaching-oriented faculty members is extremely low. While research is seen as more important than teaching, Japan is out-of-line with the other members of the “German” group in the extent to which academics think it is difficult to achieve tenure without research publications. This is due to the very secure position that Japanese academics enjoy once they are initially appointed. A very high proportion of Japanese academics perceive their research activity as exerting a positive influence on their teaching, while their teaching activity they see as negatively impinging on their research.
The very strong research orientation of academics in Japanese universities in the postwar period has not been reflected by investment, by either government or industry, in the university as a site for research. As is well known, not only most applied but also most blue-skies research in Japan takes place in nonacademic and corporate research institutions. Government research support for universities was particularly harshly curtailed in the 1980s; by the early 1990s, the amount of money available to purchase equipment per university scientist was roughly 20% of that available for peers in nonuniversity government research institutions and 25% of that available in corporate laboratories (Yamamoto, 1995, 27). The national proportion of R and D expenditure in universities slipped from 18.2% in 1970 to a mere 11.6% in 1990 (Yamamoto, 1995, 34). Perhaps not surprisingly, the number of Japanese graduate students in science and technology also decreased during the same period (many of them lured to the financial sector during the “bubble economy”), and their places were increasingly taken in Japanese laboratories by students from overseas, especially from neighboring Asian countries.

The lack of research funding in universities in the early 1990s highlighted a number of characteristics of the organization of Japanese universities at the time, which were increasingly challenged during the later half of that decade. These reflected the two main models for university governance and administration that existed in Japan at the time: the kyōjukai shihai model and the rijikai shihai model. The kyōjukai shihai model (control by professors’ councils) has pertained in all national, public and many private universities, while the rijikai shihai model (control by university board or president) has only been found in private institutions.

THE PROFESSORIATE IN KYŌJUKAI SHIHAI UNIVERSITIES

In national universities, until recently, there has been an almost complete separation between financial and academic decision making. In these institutions, the Ministry of Education controlled budgets and national policy, while the professors’ councils (kyōjukai) within the university kept tight control over admissions, curricula, examinations and student affairs. The two processes went along in parallel almost without interaction and, as Yamamoto (1995, 30) says, “Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that available resources, including research funds, [were] allocated equally despite the differential needs of researchers and faculties.” In 1992, 75% of government research funds were allocated without the need to write any research proposal.

It was largely to tackle the perceived malaise in research in the formerly elite national university sector that major reforms were introduced in April 2004 under what was known as the dokuritsu gyōsei hōjin ka process. While national universities only served 20% of students in higher education in Japan, they consumed over 80% of the national higher education budget. The reforms included strengthening the power of the heads of such institutions, including giving them the power to hire and fire, set their own budgets and pay, and review their own academic programs without
reference to the Ministry of Education. The appointment of external members on to the university boards was also designed to reduce the power of the kyōjukai to appoint as president one of their own.

National universities were increasingly encouraged to undertake joint research projects with industry in the 1990s (something that had only a few years earlier been severely restricted by law as constituting an abuse of government equipment; see Hatakenaka, 2004, 41–43). The idea was to enable such institutions to develop a greater level of entrepreneurial activities and to take on financial as well as academic responsibility. The reforms were modeled, to a large extent, on the reform process that had taken place in the U.K. in the late 1980s under Mrs. Thatcher. The response to these reforms, as indeed they were in the U.K., have been mixed.

The biggest fear for professors in national universities lay in the status of their tenure. Indeed, one of the main driving forces behind the reforms was to reassign the 125,000 employees in the national universities to the private sector as part of the government’s plan to slim down the number of public sector employees by a factor of 25 percent over a decade from the mid-1990s (see Mulvey, 2000). After April 1, 2004, national university professors no longer enjoyed either the employment status or the security that they had previously had as national civil servants, and this led some to question whether they should stay in the national university sector, which, in any case, since the 1970s had been less well remunerated than the private sector. Because professors in national universities could no longer rely on a second, more lucrative, career in the private sector, one response therefore was to pressurize their university councils to increase the mandatory retirement age in national universities, which in many cases had been set as low as 60 years old. In most national universities, retirement was pushed up to age 65.

Even with the increased retirement age, the new trends that began to develop in national universities were not to the liking of some of the staff. They disliked the new, government-introduced auditing culture that meant that universities had to put forward six-year plans, which could be assessed and judged by external bodies and would determine future funding. They disliked the new consumer culture, which meant that teachers needed to be responsive to student demands, and the new entrepreneurial culture, which meant that research funds needed to be competed for. Although it could not be called a mass exodus, in the two or three years following the 2004 reform there developed a noticeable trickle of senior academics below retirement age moving from some of the top national to private universities of supposedly lower academic status.

Other academics in the leading national universities, however, embraced the new culture and in particular the increased research funding available through open competition. Indeed, as anticipated and as happened with the U.K. experience (see Goodman, 2004), the new competitive funding model actually increased the gap between the research-intensive universities and the rest as can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, which outline the award of funding for Centers of Excellence and Scientific Grants in Aid respectively in the early 2000s. The top
fifteen higher education institutions, out of a total of over a thousand four-year
and two-year institutions, receive over half of all governmental research grants
(Yamamoto, 2002, 111). In many ways, the new competitive funding system
was put in place as a means of creating world-class, known in Japanese as
“global standard,” institutions and legitimating the government investing a
higher proportion of its funding in an even smaller set of institutions than
historically had been the case. Here, again, the government’s motivation has
been linked with the idea of making its top institutions more significant
contributors to national wealth generation. But a compounding factor has been
the effect of globalization and the relatively poor showing of Japan in university
league tables, certainly in the context of it being the second-most expensive
system in the world. This poor showing has not only an effect on Japan
reputationally, but also on its ability to attract high-quality students to study in
its top institutions.

Table 1. Leading Recipients of Centre of Excellence Project Awards (2002–4)
P = Private University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Project Numbers</th>
<th>Grants (Y Billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.3 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoya</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohoku</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo Tech</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keio (P)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseda (P)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Scientific Grants in Aid (2005): Million Yen

\( P = \) Private University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>20,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td>13,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohoku</td>
<td>9,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>8,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoya</td>
<td>6,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyushu</td>
<td>5,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>5,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo Inst of Technology</td>
<td>4,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsukuba</td>
<td>3,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keio</td>
<td>2,486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE PROFESSORIATE IN RUIKAI SHIHAI UNIVERSITIES

As Gregory Poole explains in his chapter in this volume, private universities have also come under severe pressures to reform their forms of management in the 1990s, but these pressures have emanated from a different direction from those in the national sector. Demographic decline has meant that there are no longer enough 18-year-olds in the population to provide the student intake that has been the staple and stable source of income for private universities over the past half-century. By 2006, around 40% of private universities were officially teiin ware (taking below the quota of students set by the government for them to qualify for public subsidy), and many of these were presumed to be in severe financial difficulties. In the ruijikai shihai model of management, professors had generally had very little say in the running of their institutions. Management has been undertaken by a small group of individuals, who were often related to each other, since many of these institutions were part of family-run educational conglomerates known as dozoku keiei gakko hōjin (family-run school conglomerations). This relates closely to the history of the development of modern private higher education institutions in Japan.

Many private universities were set up in the 1960s when Japanese higher education was moving from the elite to the mass phase and the state was unwilling or unable to deal with the level of demand. As James and Benjamin
and, more recently, Kinmonth (2004) graphically point out, in the expanding educational market that pertained from the 1960s through to the early 1990s, such institutions introduced a series of practices that brought in large sums of money, most of which were channeled towards the families that had established them, even though in theory they were nonprofit organizations. Management therefore had good reason for seeing their staff as employees rather than stakeholders, and staff in turn benefited from the expanding market conditions in which they operated. The increasingly difficult conditions in which private universities found themselves in the middle of the first decade of the current century, however, has begun to change the way in which such institutions are operating, as the following case study shows.

University A is a large university based in the Kansai (Greater Kyoto-Osaka) area teaching a wide range of humanities and social science courses to undergraduates plus a small postgraduate program. It was founded in the early 1960s, and by the mid-1980s had an annual intake of around 3,000 students and a total student body of 12,000 over the four-year course. It is a family-run institution and has an attached high school, junior college and vocational higher education institution (senmongakkō).

University A flourished throughout the last four decades of the twentieth century. As the number of 18-year-olds in the population increased, applications soared. Although it was of relatively low academic level, it had excellent facilities and a prime site within minutes of two mainline stations. As applications went up, so did fees, and by the 1990s it was one of the most expensive universities in the whole Kansai area, charging almost 30% more than the regional average. At the height of the school-leaver population size in 1992, over 42,000 applications were made to University A, a ratio of around 15 for each place. The university president, who was the son of the founder, was also head of the whole education conglomerate of which the university was a part, and many of his immediate and extended family were employed within the institution. Academic staff was employed through personal contacts rather than open advertisement, and a large number of relatives (especially pairs of father-daughter and husband-wife) were employed by the institution. There were also a large number of professors who had retired from the large local national university, Osaka University, and had been invited to join the staff by former colleagues who had already moved there.

Although each faculty had faculty meetings, these were short events (unlike the meetings in kyōjukai shihai universities, which could last many hours) and were used simply to disseminate and pass on information from the rijikai (school council) and kyōmuka (school office). Few meetings lasted longer than 30 minutes, and there was no mechanism for questioning management decisions. The president had an office on the campus but was so cut off from most of his staff that the whole floor on which the office was based in the large and impressive administrative block (known by staff as The White House) was not even marked on the elevator buttons. Most staff at the university said that they had never had a meeting or even a conversation with the president, although many had been there for over twenty years.
While the president had a master’s degree from the United States, he considered himself a businessman rather than an academic. His school board was made up of the maximum-allowed family members plus other personal contacts of the extended family, but it was not perceived to be closely involved in the management of the institution. He surrounded himself with a small clique of senior managers, none of whom were academics and few of whom questioned his decisions. He would select members of the university academic staff to advise on certain issues, but these could find themselves out of favor as quickly as they were in favor. He was generous in his hospitality to those with whom he did talk, but considered harsh about those who were not part of his circle. Many within the institution described the form of management as a “court culture” and worried about the lack of transparency and possibility for feedback. Since the high fees paid meant high salaries for those teaching at University A, however, there was little open dissent. Indeed, individuals often said they were afraid of expressing dissent with management on campus too loudly, since they did not know the relationship between their colleagues and the president’s family and were worried about being reported for disloyalty. If there was not exactly a culture of fear on campus, then there was clearly a lack of engagement on the part of the vast majority of professors within the institution with issues of either financial or academic planning. Most professors simply turned up to undertake their teaching and then left the campus as soon as possible. The campus, in any case, was not open before 9 A.M. or after 5 P.M. or over the weekends, but even in the middle of the day during term time, the corridors with the professors’ offices were generally deserted.

The 1990s saw a radical change in the conditions of University A. The number of applicants dropped dramatically. This first manifested itself in the attached junior college. In 1992, this school had had 5,871 applicants for 400 places; by 2005, it had only 76 and had begun to resemble a ghost town. In the university itself, with an approved quota of over 2,750, the number of applicants dropped rapidly from a peak in 1991 of 41,344 to only 600 in 2007. The academic staff, however, was kept in the dark both about these trends and about their implications. New courses were implemented and indeed a whole new law school was established in 2004 to provide teaching for the new law training program that had been instituted by the government in that year. The university facilities continued to be upgraded, and fees remained as high as ever. Not until 2005 did academic staff notice any change in their own conditions: these were the nonfilling of vacant posts and then a sudden cut in bonus payments of around ¥1,000,000.

The response to the changing conditions in University A by the professoriate was varied. Older staff, particularly those who had been recruited to the university after retiring from the national university system, often on very large incomes, were phlegmatic and generally unconcerned. They had little loyalty to University A. Indeed members of the university who had moved from Osaka University used to routinely describe themselves in their articles not as professors of University A but as former professors of Osaka University and they were known to hold Osaka University “Old Boy” (dōsōkai) meetings on the campus. They saw University A
Middle-ranking staff often recognized the problems faced by the university—and as those with families to support were perhaps most financially concerned—but were reluctant or unable to change their practices. In particular, they were reluctant to give up the teaching they did, generally for one day a week, at another institution and change their timetables to suit student demand. They were especially unwilling to change what they were teaching. These two concerns were indirectly connected. Japanese professors have a strong sense of their professional identity and specialization and are reluctant to teach outside it. If teaching demands arise in their department outside their narrow specialization, they prefer to ask a colleague from another institution to come and teach it, perhaps in return for offering their specialization at the colleague’s institution. This practice of *kakemochi* (which Zeugner, 1984, rather neatly translates as “sunlighting”) has become very widespread across Japanese universities: according to a large-scale survey by Morgan (1999, 17–8), 69% of full professors and 49% of associate professors teach on a regular basis at other institutions as well as their own. This practice makes curriculum reform within institutions more difficult, however, and certainly attempts at such reform at University A, which were periodically mooted during the 1990s, were almost completely unsuccessful. Academics protected the autonomy of what they did in the classroom very closely, sometimes referring, as mentioned above, to the dangers of external interference in what was taught to their students. Academics were also very reluctant to participate in faculty development projects that were tested in the institution. Instead, most staff members prefer to complain about the drop in the academic quality of their students, particularly in those faculties (known as the *zennyū gakubu*) that had been forced to take every single applicant.

For younger staff members, the main issue that prevented discussion about reform was the lack of opportunities to do so in an open environment. They were afraid that suggestions for change might be taken as criticism of the current system and of the management of the institution. At University A, there was a group of young academics that wanted to see reform from the late 1990s, but it operated in secret. Its membership was closed, and it would meet at predesignated places off campus. While its discussions were described by those who participated as sometimes being quite constructive, it never discovered a way of feeding this back into the system in a manner that might actually lead to change.

Given the internal constraints on reform from below, it is perhaps not surprising that top management had to change its practices before the decline in the number of students could be halted. In 2007, the university finally cut its fees dramatically and brought them back into line with those of other universities of a similar level in the region. Now the institution could offer better facilities and a better site than its competitors for the same price. It also developed a new policy of transparency. It gave, for the first time in three years, a full account of how many applications had been received the previous year and how many students had actually attended the university. It also empowered for the first time the heads of the faculties to instigate
genuine change in the curricula of their programs, and it closed down courses that had proven particularly unpopular. Whether faculty would be able to adjust to a new culture of responsibility for their programs, however, had yet to be seen in 2007, though application numbers clearly responded positively to the cut in fees.

THE FUTURE OF THE JAPANESE PROFESSORIATE

The Japanese university has always been in a state of flux, but the current confluence of demographic, political, and economic forces combined with the effects of globalization have meant that Japanese universities have been placed under a set of particularly severe constraints in recent years. One of the ironies of these pressures has been that, at a time when external pressures should have brought about changes in personnel, they have in fact resulted in a serious cutback in recruitment, which has led, in turn, to the ageing of the profession. This aging profession has become increasingly expensive (despite the cutbacks in bonuses in many universities and the demand that professors teach more), which has further limited recruitment. Exactly the same situation developed in the U.K. in the 1980s, and lessons from the U.K. suggest that it will be some time before Japan can break out of this vicious cycle and the job market in Japanese universities begins to open up. When the job market does open up again, however, some interesting changes from earlier recruitment practices can be anticipated. These changes are likely to be particularly conspicuous in areas of gender, ethnicity, qualifications and the types of contract offered.

The proportion of women teaching in higher education has almost doubled since structural reforms—in particular the abolition of the faculties of liberal arts and sciences in almost all universities and the relaxation of the University Accreditation Standard—were introduced into universities in Japan in 1991, but Japan still has the lowest female participation rates in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Its figure of 14.1% of staff being female is far below half of the OECD average of 35.9% (OECD, 2004). The figures also continue to disguise huge discrepancies about where changes have taken place. The proportion of women, especially those above junior ranks, teaching in the elite former imperial universities remains, for example, less than half of the average in Japan. Until very recently, the government has taken a totally laissez-faire attitude towards gender employment in higher education, even when the Ministry of Education had direct control over recruitment in national institutions. In 2006, however, the ministry introduced a ¥150 billion fund for gender equality in Japanese universities following the same competitive procedures as the 21st Century Center of Excellence (COE) Program for research and the Good Practice (GP) Program on Teaching. By June 2006, 36 universities had applied for support under the program (Yamanoi, 2006, 75, 78, 81). The logic behind introducing gender policies into Japanese universities is obvious; Japan cannot continue to ignore the potential among half of its population for reinvigorating its higher education system if it wishes to be competitive on a global stage. This economic reality alone will almost certainly see a major shift in the gender balance in Japanese universities.
Another major change that can be expected is in the proportion of academics whose highest degree (normally a doctorate) is earned overseas. A foreign degree has often been seen as a disadvantage when applying for posts in Japan. This was not because of the quality of the degree itself. Rather it was due to the fact that studying overseas often took individuals out of the system of personal contacts and the system of university factions and cliques on which appointments were often based. The different set of skills that a foreign degree confers on individuals, however, is likely to lead to this attitude changing. In particular, the fact that higher education training in the U.S. and Western Europe can mean both teaching and also grant application experience is likely to be increasingly highly valued in universities in Japan, which are beginning to place more importance on both of these areas. For exactly the same reasons, it is likely that the proportion of foreign staff will increases substantially from the current very low, by global standards, figure. Indeed the increase in over 50 percent in the number of foreign staff in Japanese universities between 1995 and 2003 despite the general budgetary stagnation during this same period implied that this trend may already be beginning (see Arimoto, 2006a, 190). Certainly, there has been a conspicuous trend of universities beginning to offer courses in English. Both International Christian University and the Faculty of Comparative Culture at Sophia University have offered programs in English for many years. More recently, Waseda University opened a faculty that taught in both English and Japanese and, most significantly because of its capacity to set the trend for the rest of the sector, Tokyo University has begun to offer courses in English, for example in its Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Studies. As the trend accelerates, there is little doubt some tensions will emerge between younger academics trained overseas and older academics trained in Japan. Whether those tensions will be managed constructively or not, of course, is much harder to predict.

The type of terms and conditions that new academics will be offered are likely to be very different from those of their predecessors. Particularly in medicine and the hard sciences, young academics are increasingly likely to be employed on short-term contracts, often linked to specific projects. At the leading research universities, it may not be long before the majority of staff is indeed on such contracts, as has happened, for example, in the U.K. and the U.S., though in the teaching-only universities it is likely that the majority of staff will continue to be employed on full-time contracts. Even with this latter group, however, change is afoot. Those staff members who believed that their jobs were secure may find that this is not the case. The Ministry of Education predicts that perhaps as much as 30% of Japan’s universities and colleges will be taken over, merge or go bankrupt during the coming decade. If this does indeed turn out to be the case, staff members of such institutions are likely to find their contracts open to renegotiation. Institutions themselves are likely to find that their staff is much more mobile: in a 1996 Carnegie International Survey, interinstitutional mobility in Japan was only higher than Russia and less than half that of the U.S. and U.K. and one-fifth of countries like the Netherlands (Yamanoi and Kuzuki, 2004, 56). There is no doubt that interinstitutional mobility rates have begun to increase and will continue to increase.
Most accounts of the changing role of the professoriate worldwide project a negative perception (see, for example, the chapters in Welch, 2005) but, as the examples in this chapter suggest, change is always a mixture of a positive and negative features, and focus on negativity may sometimes be seen as political and reflecting the fears of an academic community analyzing itself. What is clear, however, is that, just as the staff of venerable Japanese companies and banks found in the mid-1990s, the professoriate in Japan’s universities is discovering in the mid-2000s that no one is immune to the combined effects of economic, political and demographic change in an increasingly globally competitive world.

REFERENCES


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