

HISTORY OF FAMILY AND OF ITS NURTURE
AND EDUCATION*:
JAPAN, FROM THE 17TH CENTURY
TO THE 20TH CENTURY

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In this article, I have attempted to describe the outline of history of family, and that of its nurture and education in Japan from the 17th century to the 20th century. The rationales of setting this research is as follows:

- a) The pioneer of the concept of 'education' was, historically, the modern family which had become independent of medieval communities. Therefore, the total history of education should include some historical processes of nurture and education carried out by families somehow.
- b) Japanese school system, now, maintains a high level academic achievement and educational population (the ratio of student who goes on to the universities and colleges, 37%). However, on the other hand, it has some weak points in it. One of them comes from the breaking up of the family-education. When the public school system started in the 19th century, the autonomy of Japanese families were gradually developing among almost all classes. Although, as with the lower classes, the birth, the death, schooling and other phases of life course of the children were yet, in many cases, considered and regulated under the control of the kinships or local communities, its tendency was gradually declining.

The policy of Meiji Government concerning family-education, which started in 1882, seems to have accelerated these historical processes formally. Thus, the rate of schooling risen drastically (it reached 98.92% by 1920). However, it does not necessarily mean the development of family-education. On the contrary, the Japanese families were losing its autonomy. Why? Because, what had really developed through these historical processes was the system of home-education, which was by no means the equivalent of family-education, but a school-education carried out by family at home. This tendency has remarkably increased since 1960's.

Now, it is necessary to reconstruct its new historical form as the basic ground for educational development of personality of children and the youth, especially their sensibility, morality, and nationality.

[A] It was in 1594 that Japanese *samurai* political power tried to enforce the principle of 'one household-one family.' However, for a long time, the actual daily life of Japanese

* Prepared for the International Standing Working Group for the History of Education, Barcelona, Spain, September, 1992. I would like to thank Miss Takako Ota, Mr. Yoji Hashimoto to their unfailing efforts in editing English.

peasants remained quite different. Most of them were peasants, who were bound to medieval closed communities.

For example, here is a document (1680–1700) about Shiojiri-*Gumi* (group). At Shiojiri-*Gumi*, every thing concerning children was controlled by the *Kumi*, or *Gumi* rather than by their parents. And so it happened from time to time that the management of the children would be passed back and forth between the grown-ups for the purpose of keeping the labor and the successor. One day, some trouble happened among pairs of parents. Then, it developed into a tumult that involved, not only their kin, but the boss of the *Kumi* too. Young girls also belonged to the *Kumi*. One day, a monk in that village had raped a girl. Then the person in charge of negotiations was not her parents, but the head of the *Waka-shū-Gumi* who was the spiritual ruler of the village community.

The midwife was called *Toriage-baba*. She had two roles in the village. One was a role as the assistant of delivery. The other was to kill unwanted children. And it also was the *Waka-shū's* role to guide *Toriage-baba* to the pregnant woman's house at the night of child born by hanging a lamp.

Things were similar with the case of 'Ie' (house) communities of the merchants. A document (1722) of the Mitsuis, an old merchant family, mentions that the head of the Mitsui controlled the total life of all the employees, for example, their marriage, child bearing, clothing, etc. And it also says that the Mitsuis' successor-son must be trained in the same manner as their employees. If not talented enough to be a head, he had to be disinherited.¹

The education carried out by families had appeared among the upper class, for example, landowners, and big merchants. The document (1789–1864) of a landowner, Buzaemon Nozaki, mentions that he was a man of taste. He had taught his son that he must learn refined culture rather than the technical ones as a landowner. He said that refined culture would add a feather in their cap. Here is an idea that one must learn in order to maintain the social prestige of the family among the community. The case of a big merchant Nakahara, lived in northern Kyūshū in early Meiji was similar to Buzaemon Nozaki. He was extremely concerned that all his children get good marks at the public school which was managed by the Meiji Government. Moreover, he sent his eldest son to Cambridge University to study western culture. But it was not the practical knowledge for their family business that he had wanted his son to learn.

[B] Under the Pre-Meiji period, there had appeared two types of families who had attempted to educate their children after new principles.

One was the manufacturers in villages or local towns. A big farmer, Suzuki in Kantō district, was a manufacturer besides being a landowner. According to his diaries (1837–1857), he sent his sons to merchants' shops, medical specialists, etc. Manufacturer Furuhashi (1813–93)² who lived in Aichi Prefecture was also the case. He said that they may well be ashamed of their ignorance about agricultural and industrial knowledge, but it shouldn't be the case with their ignorance about refined culture, such as tea ceremony, elegant Japanese verses and calligraphy, etc.

The other type appeared among the *shizoku* (former samurai class). The doctor³ (shi-

¹ H. Irie, "Education of the Mitsui Family," in *Review of Hokkaido Gakuhei University* (1-C, 19-2, 1968).

² See, N. Haga, *Study of A Big Farmer Furuhashi* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1979), H. Inui, *History of A Big Farmer* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1984), etc.

³ T. Kobayashi, *Family and Education in Modern Japan* (Tokyo: Sugiyamashoten, 1983), pp. 124–162.

zoku) who had lived in Kyoto had taught his son that neither 'honest-poverty' nor 'dirty-prosperity' were good as the art of living. He recommended the way of life of 'honest-prosperity' (his diaries for his sons, 1901-12, 1905-12). He says to his sons, "You must select your occupation by yourself." "Don't just be a great merchant, but be a great man!"

Let us see another case, a businessman⁴ (also *shizoku*) who had lived in Nagano Prefecture. According to his advice to his son by letters, the most useful and practical knowledge is foreign languages and business culture. He didn't send his son to Japanese public schools, but to a Canadian commercial firm as a trainee. In 1913, he sent to his son in Canada a paper entitled "Days of jolly struggle," written by *Mr. Zummoran*. Actually, the person being called '*Zummoran*' here is no one other than Demolins, J.-E., who was the first man to use the word 'Shinkyōiku' (l'éducation nouvelle, new education), and the founder of l'école Roches (1899). the new school in France.

[C] After the development of the industrial revolution and into the beginning of the 20th century, it was more firmly established that a wider strata of people in society sent their children to public schools. This situation appeared in both the villages and cities. Although the principle of attending school was a little different from landowners and *shizoku*, a large number of ordinary people went to public schools.

"*Zenji Nikki*" (1893-1934) is a diary written by a peasant, Zenji Gotō, of north-east Japan. His diary is filled with his admiration to the western civilization and his active speeches. He introduced chemical manures and use of machinery etc. into his farming, and tried to get new information on farming by participating in specialist's lectures. He cut down the expenses for marriages, Buddhist services which had been tying up the bonds of the pre-modern village community. We come across here the first example of modern closed family, among peasants, which had been independent of medieval communities. He touches on the behavior and speech of his wife forty-five times in his diary. We can find similar family-feeling between the Gotōs and their child. When their baby died one week after his birth, they performed a regular funeral ceremony, which was, usually, performed for the sake of the grown-ups, for him (this was unusual as peasants' custom at that time), built *Jizō* (Buddhist statue for lovely children). And his mother (Zenji's wife) had started for *Jun-rei* (travel for mourning). Schooling was a matter of Zenji's concern, too. When eight years have passed since his graduation, he attended arithmetic class at the primary school in his village. Moreover, he served freely on the extension work of the schoolhouse. And yet, he complained nothing about the curriculum and conducts of the teachers of that school.

Next is the case of a middle class merchant in a local town. Gisuke was the master of a draper's shop in north Akita Prefecture. He had twelve children. He was deeply concerned about their birth and rearings. For example, he, at times, bathed them, and sometimes brought them for a picnic and theater. He had great concern with their academic achievement at school, so had recorded it in his diary (1887-98). But, all these were meant for the maintenance of the social prestige in his region. On this point, he holds the same mentality with a big merchant mentioned above. Nevertheless, on the other hand, he, too, wanted his children to learn the business of his shop. His attitude toward child-rearing differed depending whether the child was a boy or a girl, and whether the eldest or not. Gisuke didn't make the eldest son and the daughters go to schools of high grade,

but gave the vocational training at home.

The other case had appeared as a new type. After World War I, a new manner of child-rearing had emerged among the old middle class in the cities. We can find an example in the document, "The diary of Motherhood" (1913–20), which was written by Sakiko Muroi, a hotel owner, at Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture. She had expressed her attachment to the idea that she wanted to develop her children's abilities regardless of whether the child was a boy or girl. She had made mention of the necessity of birth-control for 'education,' that is to say, it was the educational Malthusism which had carried out the demographic revolution in Japanese society of the 1920's. She had written that her belief of birth-control was not parental selfishness, but 'love' for the children. On the occasion of her daughter's schooling, she had suddenly changed her mind severly. She writes critically about the educational contents of the public girls' high school in her school district like this. "I can't send my daughter under the such idle teachers." "I'm afraid my lovely fine art will be destroyed by them." In the end, she sent her daughter to Jiyū-Gakuen (1921–), which was the one of the progressive 'new schools' at that time.

[D] The industrial revolution has given rise to the new class which is called the working class in Japan. Its early origin was the poverty peasant class. The writer of "Masuda Nikki" (diary, 1916–59) was the worker who was born in the peasant class in Chiba Prefecture. We will have admiration for Masuda's vigorous desire for reading, writing, and modern civilization. At last, Masuda tried to learn the foreign language, English by himself. In his daily world, the consciousness of a community, such as closed regional or blood relationship sociability has already diminished. And he has written repeatedly to express his eager desire to make 'soka' (create his own home), namely to form the modern nuclear family. Sometimes, he mentioned about his kinship, parents, brothers and sisters. But, he mentioned more about his wife, son, daughters, and his desire to make 'a happy home.'

As soon as his son began to go to school, he showed his interest in his son's academic achievement. He wrote "My son, grow first! Rouse yourself! Go ahead! Return thanks for the kindness of your teachers and your parents!"

When we retrace Masuda's life history, it seems that there had not been any particular culture of child rearing and schooling among Japanese working class similar to, for example, English working class which was described by J. Burnett and others.⁵ Thus, one might think that Japanese working class' families had been the 'home-educationalist' from its very beginning. However, on the other hand, Masuda had an aspect of 'family-educationalist.' In 1928, he sent his daughter to a public primary school. At the first day at school, there were many children crying for fears. But, his daughter didn't. He wrote it on his diary, "I had confidence in myself about my family-education." His 'family-education,' for example, was to tell his children at dinner time the experiences which had gained through his hard work to reclaim land in a bog. He also has required his children to help him with the housework. He did not deny the effectiveness of either 'school-education' nor the effectiveness of 'family-education.' In other words, his attitude toward child

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–55.

⁵ See, J. Burnett (ed. and intro.), *Destiny Obscure* (Allen Lane, 1982), D. Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* (Methuen: London, 1981).

rearing was ambivalent.

[E] The industrial revolution has given rise to a new class, called the new middle class, too. The demographic revolution of Japanese society in the 1920's was led by this class. The new middle class does not have the material productive goods like the old middle class, farmers, merchants, etc., but they try to get their incomes or social prestige by their own knowledge, qualification and academic career. Therefore, they were always interested in children's education and schooling, and were called 'child-centered family,' or 'educational family.'

"Education of My Children" (1919) was written by Madame Hatoyama who was the wife of a lawyer and the manager of a private girls' school. She insisted that every child has the right of the acquisition of great talents from their parents and this is the true meaning of 'child rights' which are talked about overseas. For response to this 'child rights,' woman should keep away herself from the marriage based on property or a feature. She must select the husband who can give a heritage of great talents to their children in the world of the survival of the fittest. And she must learn the scientific methods of child rearing and 'motherhood' in order to bring up her talented children more bountifully. We, here again, meet educational Malthusism similar to Madame Muroi, mentioned above.

Next is the case of the white-collar class, the Japanese National Railways. In 1917, one of the reports of their home life wrote as follows. "The madame who graduated from a girls' high school attached to Ochanozimu College of Education . . . now, she is a mother of six children. The eldest son (13 years old) are learning at a junior high school attached to Tokyo College of Education, and her daughter entered a kindergarten attached to Ochanomizu College of Education . . . her husband always takes pleasure to play with them." The other report has presented the daily life of a mother who enjoys herself with rearing children and the home life of being 'child-centered.' The schools, mentioned above are the elite schools of high grade. These cases are the perfect 'educational family.' These reports tells us that Japanese families reached the entirely different historical point from the situation in the 17th century on the methods or the attitude of child rearing. On the report July 7, 1918, I found one mother as follows. "I and my husband were wrapped up in the selection of school to send my son. At last, we selected Seikei private primary school . . . I think, a child's mind and a body should not restrain so rigidly."

Seikei private primary school, mentioned here is one of the child-centered schools at that time, like Jiyū-Gakuen where Madame Muroi sent her daughter.

In Japan, in 1910's, there appeared on the stage the new type of family which we call 'educational family' under the leadership of the new middle class. The progressive part of these families became the supporters of world wide child-centered school movement, which has tried to reform the old public school system developed under the control of the Japanese Imperial Government. But, their reformative behavior disappeared in a short period after World War I. The supporters changed their attitude toward child rearing and schooling, under the economic depression, and the Japanese militarism soon after appeared. In addition to the suppression policies of Japanese government, all reformative schools were closed. Since then, the new middle class became the one who competed with each other for the order of child's academic achievement at the existing schools, controlled by the government. The 'family education' disappeared, and only the 'home schooling' took a leading part in Japanese families. It was also an important point that the persons

who have charged of child rearing and schooling at home had shifted from the fathers to the mothers.

After the 1960's, these tendencies covered all the Japanese including the working class. '*Juku*' (crammer) to home-schooling appeared at all districts. And, it was just this period that the Japanese society had begun to dash forward and formed the way to the remarkable economic growth, the explosive increase of schools, and the expansion of the highly aging society.

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