

EARLY EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTER

Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901) is arguably the greatest Japanese social thinker of the last three centuries, yet he is little known outside his native country, except to experts. Contemporaries, on the other hand, recognized his eminence and influence.

The American zoologist Edward Morse wrote that 'I received an invitation to lecture before Mr. Fukuzawa's famous school. Among the many distinguished men I have met in Japan, Mr. Fukuzawa impressed me as one of the sturdiest in activity and intellect.'¹ William Griffis, another perceptive visitor, described him as 'A student first of Dutch in the early fifties, and one of the first to cross oceans and see America and Europe, he wrote a book on the "Manners and Customs in the Western World", which was eagerly read by millions of his hermit countrymen and served powerfully to sway Japan in the path of Western civilization.'² Griffis 'knew Fukuzawa well, and was, with him, a member of the Mei-Roku Sha, a club which, as its name imports, was founded in the sixth year of Meiji (1873).'³ He described how 'As a pioneer and champion of Western civilization, and the writer of books which had reached the total sale of four million copies, he was described by the natives as "the greatest motive force of Japanese civilization," and by Professor Chamberlain as "the intellectual father of half the young men who fill the middle and lower posts in the government of Japan."⁴

As Basil Hall Chamberlain wrote, 'In our own day, a new light arose in the person of Fukuzawa Yukichi, the "Sage of Mita" thus called from the district of Tokyo in which he latterly resided. So wide-spread is the influence exercised by this remarkable man that no account of Japan, however brief, would be complete without some reference to his life and opinions.'⁵ He likened him to Benjamin Franklin and noted that 'Like the French encyclopaedists, he laboured for universal enlightenment and social reform.'⁶ At about the same time Alice Bacon wrote that 'In the whole list of publications on the

¹Morse, *Day*, ii, 205; Edward Morse was one of the most acute and intelligent of the foreign visitors to Japan during the Meiji period.

²Griffis, *Mikado*, ii, 660

³Griffis, *Mikado*, ii, 661

⁴Griffis, *Mikado*, ii, 660

⁵Chamberlain, *Things*, 365

⁶Chamberlain, *Things*, 366-7

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woman question, nothing has ever come out in Japan that compares for outspokenness and radical sentiments with a book published within a year or two by Mr. Fukuzawa, the most influential teacher that Japan has seen in this era of enlightenment.⁷

As a recent historian has written, 'Whereas other Japanese became caught up in the small facets of Western civilization, Fukuzawa sought to integrate these facets and observe the overall organization that made this civilization function...In short, he tried to grasp not only the technology but also the social aspects of Western civilization.'⁸ His published works fill 22 volumes and 'cover a variety of subjects ranging from philosophy to women's rights.'⁹ As well as this he founded Keio University, a national newspaper and introduced the art of public speaking and debate in Japan.

Of course he is not the only important Japanese thinker, writer and reformer during the second half of the nineteenth century. Blacker has described some of the other 'Japanese Enlightenment' thinkers with whom he worked and argued.¹⁰ Beasley has surveyed some of the other well-known Japanese who went on voyages to America and England and brought back information about the west.¹¹ Sukehiro presents a general account of a whole set of reformers and thinkers working to understand how Japan and the West could be integrated.¹² In the next generation there were notable writers and thinkers such as Mori Ogai.¹³ A sense of the lively debates, in which Fukuzawa was the most famous and distinguished, but only one among many, is given by the 'Journal of the Japanese Enlightenment', **Meiroke Zasshi**, the first 43 issues of which (1874-5) have been published and which discuss many of the topics to which Fukuzawa addressed himself.¹⁴ Like all great thinkers, it is false to isolate Fukuzawa.

⁷Bacon, **Japanese Girls**, 307

⁸Hirakawa Sukehiro in Jansen (ed.), **Cambridge**, v, 460-1

⁹Kodansha, **Illustrated Encyclopedia**, 429

¹⁰ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, esp. ch.4 on 'The New Learning'

¹¹ Beasley, **Japan**, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

¹² Sukehiro in Jansen (ed.), **History of Japan**, ch.7

¹³ See for example Bowring, **Ogai**.

¹⁴ Braisted (trans.), **Meiroke Zasshi**

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He was part of a network. Yet by general consent he is the greatest of them all and as long as we bear in mind that many of his ideas were matters of widespread discussion and excitement, it seems reasonable to focus on his work. If we do so we can learn a great deal.

Fukuzawa pursued Bacon's **New Atlantis**, encouraging learning, debate, controversy and investigation. His influence was immense and we can now read his work as a revealing mirror of capitalist civilization as it penetrated into Eastern Asia and was reflected back by a part of the world which has now taken many of its lessons to heart. When he died in 1901 his funeral reflected the austerity and dedication of his life. The **Japan Weekly Mail** wrote that 'No style of funeral could have been better suited to the unostentatious simplicity that marked the life of the great philosopher.'¹⁵ His greatest successor, Maruyama Masao, in the black days of 1943, began an essay on him "'Fukuzawa Yukichi was a Meiji thinker, but at the same time he is a thinker of the present day.'¹⁶ Like Montesquieu, Smith and Tocqueville he has become immortal.

The dialogue with Fukuzawa has a somewhat different purpose from that with earlier thinkers of the western Enlightenment treated in my previous work. The work of Montesquieu, Smith and Tocqueville, when combined, set out a set of conjectures as to how mankind could and perhaps did 'escape' from the normal tendencies of agrarian civilization. Since Fukuzawa (1835-1901) was writing later, and at a great distance from the original 'escape', it is unlikely that he will be able to contribute much that is original to the analysis of this problem. For that we have already considered Maitland's impressive solution. On the other hand, Fukuzawa provides an interesting test case for the utility of their theories. If their model is plausible and seems to have explanatory power, it should be attractive to a thinker whose aim, as we shall see, is to grasp the essence of the first transition from agrarian to industrial civilization so that he can help his own Japanese civilization achieve a similar break-through. If he selects and approves the same central essence as Montesquieu, Smith, Tocqueville and Maitland, their insights would appear to have cross-cultural validity.

An even more stringent test is the degree of success in the material world. In other words, did the recipe work? If an outsider to Europe not only repeated the central theories of those who addressed the riddle of the origins of the modern world, but then applied these to a distant civilization and helped to effect a similar 'escape' in entirely different circumstances, this would be as good a confirmation of the validity of the theory as one could hope for.

The task is made more worthwhile because, despite his eminence and interest, there has only been one book about him in English, and that was also about other thinkers in the Japanese Enlightenment.¹⁷

¹⁵ Quoted in Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 13

¹⁶ Quoted in Craig, 148

¹⁷ Blacker, **Fukuzawa**.

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There have been one or two articles also, but there is no recent intellectual biography of a man who had an enormous impact on Japanese civilization and whose ideas are such a wonderful mirror of western thought and colonial expansion.

Early Life.

Yukichi Fukuzawa's life and writing are more intimately linked than almost any of the four thinkers I have previously discussed. He underwent in his life from 1835 to 1901 a greater social and personal transformation than any of them. And he travelled more widely than any other of our subjects. It is therefore particularly fortunate that he was also keenly interested in documenting his own experiences from very early on so that we can watch, in an unusually intimate way, the evolution of his thought and life. As he wrote in the **Autobiography**, which he dictated two years before his death, 'Any person is interested in knowing, later on in life, something of the facts and nature of his early existence. I am not sure if everybody is as curious as I am, but since this is my feeling, I have been keeping a record of my children - the manner of their births and the exact time to the minute; the condition of their health in infancy; their nature and habits in childhood.'¹⁸ He likewise applied this curiosity, in so far as he was able, to his own life.

Fukuzawa was born in January 1835 in Osaka, in the same year that Tocqueville's **Democracy in America** (volume one) was published. He wrote that, 'My father, Fukuzawa Hyakusuke, was a samurai belonging to the Okudaira Clan of Nakatsu on the island of Kyushu. My mother, called O-Jun as her given name, was the eldest daughter of Hashimoto Hamaemon, another samurai of the same clan.'¹⁹ One of the shaping events of his life occurred when 'A year and a half later, in June, my father died. At that time, my brother was only eleven, and I was a mere infant, so the only course for our mother to follow was to take her children back with her to her original feudal province of Nakatsu, which she did.'²⁰ Thus Fukuzawa 'never knew my own father and there is preserved no likeness of his features.'²¹ All that he really seems to have known of him was that he was a scholarly man and that he was unusually sympathetic to those of an inferior rank to himself. Both were characteristics which Fukuzawa tried to live up to.

The scholarly and educational side of his father's interests and then his sudden death at the age

¹⁸Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 303

¹⁹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 1

²⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 12

²¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 303

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of forty-four had a double effect. On the one hand he was aware of his 'father's large collection of books...There were over fifteen hundred volumes in the collection, among them some very rare ones. For instance, there were Chinese law books of the Ming dynasty...'²² He heard that his father had expressed an interest in his becoming trained to be a monk and this seems to have given Fukuzawa impetus to study.²³ On the other hand the normal Chinese, neo-Confucian education which he would have been subjected to, in all probability, if his father had lived was denied him. 'There were no funds to send him to school until he was 14, almost ten years after the usual age for starting school.'²⁴ Fukuzawa himself noted one of the consequences. 'First of all, I lacked someone to look after my education and I grew up without learning calligraphy very well. I might have studied it later in life, but then I had already gone into Western sciences, and was regarding all Chinese culture as a mortal enemy.'²⁵ He lamented the loss of the artistic skill. 'This peculiar whim of mine was a great mistake. Indeed, my father and my brother were both cultured men. Especially my brother was a fine calligrapher, and something of a painter and sealcutter, too. But I fear I have none of those qualities. When it comes to antiques, curios, and other branches of the fine arts, I am hopelessly out of it.'²⁶ Yet it is perhaps not too speculative to suggest that it was the absence of a formal education of the old style which partly set him on an original course for life.

When Fukuzawa's mother moved back from Osaka to the remote Kyushu domain of her husband's clan she kept the memory of her dead husband alive, in particular because of her isolation with her children. 'My father's ideas survived him in his family. All five of us children lived with few friends to visit us, and since we had no one to influence us but our mother who lived only in her memory of her husband, it was as if father himself were living with us. So in Nakatsu, with our strange habits and apparel, we unconsciously formed a group apart, and although we never revealed it in words, we looked upon the neighbors around us as less refined than ourselves.'²⁷ The isolation and independence of the returned family with their city ways and costumes early created several key features of Fukuzawa's personality and is perceptively described by him as follows. 'Moreover, my mother,

²²Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 44

²³ Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 5-6

²⁴ Nishikawa, 'Fukuzawa',3

²⁵Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 296

²⁶Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 296

²⁷Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 3

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although she was a native of Nakatsu, had accustomed herself to the life of Osaka, then the most prosperous city in Japan, and so the way she dressed us and arranged our hair made us seem queer in the eyes of these people in a secluded town on the coast of Kyushu. And having nothing else to wear but what we had brought from Osaka, we naturally felt more comfortable to stay at home and play among ourselves.²⁸

The effects of isolation gave Fukuzawa's mother especial power and it is clear that not only was she an out of the ordinary woman, but that many of Fukuzawa's central interests in life, including the position of women in society, stemmed from her personality and attitudes. He described how 'My mother was an unusual woman who thought individually on certain matters. In religion she did not seem to have a belief like that of other old women of the time. Her family belonged to the Shin sect of Buddhism, yet she would never go to hear a sermon as was expected of everyone in that sect.'²⁹ Equally important was her egalitarian attitude, a continuation of that of her late husband. 'My mother was fond of doing kindnesses to all people, especially of making friends among the classes beneath her own, the merchants and farmers. She had no objection even to admitting beggars, or even the outcast *eta* (the slaughterers of cattle and dealers in leather who were a separate class by themselves). My mother never showed any sign of slighting them and her way of speaking to them was very respectful. Here is an instance of my mother's charity, which I remember with both affection and distaste.'³⁰ Fukuzawa claimed that he early learnt to treat those who were theoretically inferior with respect. 'So I believe my feeling of respect for all people was bred in me by the custom of my parents. In Nakatsu I never made a show of my rank in my mingling with any persons, even with the merchants of the town or the farmers outside.'³¹ Thus he lived as a happy, but somewhat isolated little boy, playing with his four siblings but cut off from others. 'I still remember that I was always a lively happy child, fond of talk and romping about, but I was never good at climbing trees and I never learned to swim. This was perhaps because I did not play with the neighbourhood children.'³²

Life in the clan.

Much of Fukuzawa's work can only be understood when we realize the clan background into which

²⁸Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 2

²⁹Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 14

³⁰Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 15

³¹Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 180

³²Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 4

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he moved, and from which he sought to escape. The world of rigid social hierarchy which he so vividly describes, and which provided the shock of contrast with the West and the emerging new world of Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, fixed him initially as a member of an **Ancien Regime**. It was an hierarchical civilization which he partially rejected and which crumbled away around him in a revolution as dramatic, if less bloody, than that through which France went after 1789.

In his work on **Civilization** Fukuzawa gave a brief autobiographical account of the world of his youth. 'I was born into a family of minor retainers in the service of a weak **fudai** [hereditary house] daimyo during the time of the Tokugawa shogunate. When within the **han** [domain] I met some illustrious high retainer or samurai, I was always treated with contempt; even as a child I could not help but feel resentment...Again, when I travelled outside the **han** confines I would run into Court nobles, officials of the Bakufu, or retainers of the three branch families of the Tokugawa house. At post towns they would monopolize the palanquins, at river crossings they would be ferried over first; since high and low were not permitted to stay at the same time in the same lodging house, there were times when I was suddenly turned out in the middle of the night.³³ Now, writing in the 1870's, 'the circumstances of those days seem ridiculous', but 'it is still possible to imagine the rage felt at the time those things happened.'³⁴ In a fascinating autobiographical article he fills in some of the details of those early status-dominated days.

He first described the structure of his clan. 'The samurai of the old Okudaira clan of Nakatsu, from the Chief Minister down to the very lowest of those who were permitted to wear a sword, numbered about 1500 persons. They were divided broadly into two classes, though in all there were as many as a hundred different minute distinctions between their social positions and official duties. The upper of the two broad classes comprised all samurai from the Chief Minister down to the Confucian scholars, physicians and the members of the **koshogumi**, while the lower class included all those from the calligraphers, **nakakosho**, **tomokosho** and **koyakunin**, down to the **ashigaru** [foot soldier]. The upper class was about one third the size of the lower.³⁵ Fukuzawa's father was a member of the lower two-thirds and a 'lower samurai, whatever his merit or talents, could never rise above an upper samurai.'³⁶ Thus, 'A lower samurai might therefore aspire to promotion within his own class, but he

³³Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 185

³⁴Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 185

³⁵ **koshogumi** were daimyo attendants, consisting especially of boys who had not yet come of age; **nakakosho**, 'often acted as grooms and stablmenen, though their studies were not necessarily fixed'; **tomokosho** 'often acted as close attendants on the daimyo, walking behind him carrying his sword' etc.; **koyakunin** were 'low ranking samurai with various light duties such as guarding the gate'; **ashigaru** were the 'lowest rank of samurai, sometimes hardly considered to have samurai status', Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 309;

³⁶Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 309

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would no more hope to enter the ranks of the upper samurai than would a four-legged beast hope to fly like a bird.³⁷ There was an absolute bar between lower and upper and a rule forbidding marriage. 'Under no circumstances was marriage permitted between those of the rank of **kyunin** and those of the rank of **kachi**. Such alliances were forbidden both by clan law and by custom. Even in cases of adultery, both parties nearly always came from the same class. It was extremely rare to find men and women from different classes forming illicit unions.'³⁸

The status difference between upper and lower samurai was fixed by birth and marriage and affected every aspect of life. The lowest rank of lower samurai, the **ashigaru**, 'always had to prostrate himself on the ground in the presence of an upper samurai. If he should encounter an upper samurai on the road in the rain, he had to take off his **geta** [shoes] and prostrate himself by the roadside.'³⁹ Upper samurai rode on horseback; lower samurai went on foot. Upper samurai possessed the privileges of hunting wild boar and fishing; lower samurai had no such privileges. Sometimes it even happened that a lower samurai was refused formal permission to go to another province to study, on the score that learning was not considered proper to his station.⁴⁰ The upper samurai always showed their status by their dress and attendants. 'When they went out of doors they always wore **hakama** [formal trousers] and two swords, and whenever they went out at night they were always accompanied by lanterns. Some even went so far as to have lanterns on bright moonlight nights.'⁴¹ Written and spoken language reflected the differences. 'In letters too there were various rigid and strictly differentiated modes of address, the character **sama** being written differently according to the rank of the person to whom the letter was addressed. In spoken forms of address all upper samurai, regardless of age, addressed lower samurai as "Kisama", while lower samurai addressed upper samurai as "Anata".'⁴² Indeed, 'There were innumerable other differences in speech besides these ... Thus if one heard a conversation the other side of a wall, one would know immediately if those talking were upper samurai, lower samurai, merchants

³⁷Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 310

³⁸Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 311; the use of the terms **kyunin** for upper samurai, and **kachi** for lower samurai, we are told is 'unusual, and may have been peculiar to the Nakatsu clan'.

³⁹Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 310

⁴⁰Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 311

⁴¹Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 317

⁴²Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 310-1

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or farmers.⁴³

There were many other differences; 'the upper samurai differed from the lower in rights, kinship, income, education, household economy, manners and customs. It was therefore only natural that their standards of honour and fields of interest should also differ.'⁴⁴ There were equal differences between the lower samurai and the other orders of peasants, artisans, merchants and 'outcastes'. The feeling of sullen resentment this created, certainly in Fukuzawa's memory, is palpable. 'The spirit of the times, however, insisted on a strict observance of one's station in life and on preserving a fixed and immovable order in everything, and this spirit forbade the lower samurai to express outwardly the doubt and anger which they constantly harboured.'⁴⁵

All of this was part of the structure which had evolved in the form of 'centralized feudalism' which had already existed for over two hundred years of unprecedented peace under the Tokugawa Shogunate by Fukuzawa's birth. Officially the role of the samurai was to provide the middle level of the military and civilian bureaucracy. Hence each clan was given a corporate existence and corporate estate with a fixed rice rent of a certain amount in order to perform its functions. In theory, the samurai, upper and lower, were meant to be a military and literate elite, who kept themselves away from all mundane tasks such as business, trade, manufacturing and so on. In practice, however, for some time past, the lower samurai had been experiencing an economic crisis which made it impossible for them to avoid becoming engaged in practical activities. Fukuzawa gives a fascinating account of their predicament.

'The lower samurai ... received stipends of fifteen **koku** plus rations for three, thirteen **koku** plus rations for two, or ten **koku** plus rations for one. Some received a money stipend of even less than this. Those of middle rank and above received a net income no higher than from seven to ten **koku**. At this rate a man and his wife living alone might manage without hardship, but if there were four or five children or old people in the family, this income was not sufficient to cover even the necessities of life such as food and clothing.'⁴⁶ The situation forced the lower samurai into a calculative and entrepreneurial mode unknown by the upper strata. 'The lower samurai had to work with both income and expenditure in mind, and hence had to plan their household economy with a minuteness never dreamt of by the upper samurai.'⁴⁷

⁴³Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 318

⁴⁴Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 318

⁴⁵Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 318

⁴⁶Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 312-3; a **koku** is a measure of rice, the average annual consumption of one person.

⁴⁷Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 314

The only solution was to abandon the principle that samurai did not work with their hands. Thus 'everyone in the family capable of work, both men and women alike, eked out a poor livelihood by odd jobs such as spinning and handicrafts. These jobs might in theory be mere sidework, but in fact the samurai came to regard them as their main occupation, relegating their official clan duties to the position of sidework. These men were therefore not true samurai. It would be more correct to say that they were a kind of workmen. Thus harassed by the task of making a mere living for themselves, they had no time in which to give a thought to their children's education. The lower samurai were thus very ill versed in literature and other high forms of learning, and not unnaturally came to have the bearing and deportment of humble workmen.⁴⁸

Fukuzawa further described that this had been a growing tendency since 'for twenty or thirty years the sidework of the lower samurai had been steadily increasing. At first they did little more than joinery work in wood, making boxes and low tables, or twisting paper cords for binding hair. Gradually however their jobs increased in variety. Some made wooden clogs and umbrellas; some covered paper lanterns; some would do carpentry work in plain wood and then add to its quality by painting it with lacquer; some were so skillful in making doors and sliding screens that they could even vie with professional carpenters. Recently some began to combine handicrafts with commerce. They would build boats, lay in stock and ship it to Osaka, some travelling in the boats themselves.⁴⁹

One consequence was that they had to neglect their official military and literary training. 'Many of them practised the military arts in such little time as they could spare from their sidework, but in literature they would get no further than the Four Books and the Five Classics, and, at a little more advanced stage, one or two books of Meng Ch'iu and the **Tso Chuan**.⁵⁰ Another was that they had to forgo the supposed taboos on becoming involved in handling money, or carrying objects. 'Just as it was considered low and vulgar to go out and to make purchases, so it was thought shameful to carry things. Hence apart from fishing rods and the appurtenances of swordsmanship, no upper samurai ever carried anything in his hands, even the smallest **furoshiki** bundle. The lower samurai did not employ servants unless they happened to hold a good post or have a particularly large family. Few of them would go into the towns in daylight to make purchases, but at night it was quite customary for both men and women to go.⁵¹

⁴⁸Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 313

⁴⁹Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 320

⁵⁰Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 313

⁵¹Fukuzawa, **Kyuhanjo**, 317; a **furoshiki** is a cloth for wrapping books or other objects.

Fukuzawa provides glimpses of his own upbringing in this ambivalent world and his family's struggle with relative poverty. 'Originally I was a country samurai, living on wheat meal and pumpkin soup, wearing out-grown homespun clothes.'⁵² He recalled that 'Ever since early childhood, my brother and sisters and I had known all the hardships of poverty. And none of us could ever forget what struggles our mother had been obliged to make in the meagre household. Despite this constant hardship there were many instances of the quiet influence that mother's sincere spirit had upon us.'⁵³ In fact he came to relish the physical, not to say spartan, side of life. 'I was born in a poor family and I had to do much bodily work whether I liked it or not. This became my habit and I have been exercising my body a great deal ever since. In winter time, working out of doors constantly, I often had badly chapped hands. Sometimes they cracked open and bled. Then I would take needle and thread, and sew the edges of the opening together and apply a few drops of hot oil. This was our homely way of curing chapped skin back in Nakatsu.'⁶⁴

The absence of freedom and equality in the clan.

Much of Fukuzawa's greatest work would be devoted to examining how it would be possible to change Japan from this group-based and hierarchical society, to an individualistic and egalitarian one. In this work he relived his own experiences and used them to explain how he had himself escaped from such a world and how others could do so.

The clan had the right to take an individual and place him in another family, with another set of relatives, through the process of adoption. Of course this has happened to a certain extent to countless women through arranged marriage, but usually they remain part of their original family as well. In Japan it was much more extreme, and the adopted person severed links and took on the new family as his or her own. This happened twice to Fukuzawa and he even found that at one point 'I had legally become a son to my brother'.⁵⁵ It is indeed a wise son who knows his own father in such a situation and it is not surprising that individuals might feel subordinate to the group.

The lack of personal identity was mirrored in the naming system. In most western civilizations a person

⁵²Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 331

⁵³Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 261

⁵⁴Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 329

⁵⁵ The arrangements were very complicated and only partly described in Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 42. I am grateful to Professor Nishikawa for advice on this point.

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had one name at birth and kept it - though women often lost it at marriage. In Japan, a name was attached to a position, so if a person moved into another role, his name would change. One part of this is noted by Fukuzawa in relation to the absence of the notion of the individual: '...there is another point in which we can see the warriors of Japan lacked this individualistic spirit. That is the matter of names. Essentially, a man's name is something given him by his parents.⁵⁶ If they wished to change his name, they could do so - as could the clan.

Of course, the degree of freedom depended on one's place in the clan system. Thus 'While my brother was living, I could go anywhere at any time with only his sanction, but now that I had become the head of the family with certain duties to the lord, I had to obtain a permit for going "abroad"'.⁵⁷ Thus one had elements of that autocratic Confucian system found in China. The senior male was relatively powerful, sons, younger brothers and all women were largely without individual rights, subservient to the clan or household head.

Absence of individuality was symbolized and carried to its furthest extreme in the avoidance of the use of personal pronouns in Japanese. As Fukuzawa noted, 'Another problem which requires explanation is the fact that the personal pronouns, "I", "you", "we", and "us" appear frequently in my translation; whereas, in most cases, the corresponding words are omitted in the original text.⁵⁸ In such a situation, individual opinions and rights, and independent thought do indeed meet a barrier.

The second general feature of Fukuzawa's early situation was the basic assumption of inequality. Fukuzawa was later to describe what he perceived to be the rigid and hierarchical social system of Tokugawa Japan, where men were born unequal. He described how 'In relations between men and women, the man has preponderance of power over the woman. In relations between parents and children the parent has preponderance of power over the child. In relations between elder and younger brother, and between young and old in general, the same principle holds good. Outside the family circle we find exactly the same thing.⁵⁹ He described how 'Back in those childhood days, I lived under the iron-bound feudal system. Everywhere people clung to the ancient custom by which the rank of every member of a clan was inalterably fixed by his birth. So from father to son and grandson the samurai of high rank would retain their rank. In the same way those of lower rank would forever remain in their low

⁵⁶Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 156

⁵⁷Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 49

⁵⁸Fukuzawa, **Speeches**, 74.

⁵⁹Blacker, **Fukuzawa**, 71

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position. Neither intelligence nor ability could prevent the scorn of their superiors.⁶⁰

Thus what was to be found in the family and clan was to be found everywhere. 'Wherever there are social relationships there you will find this imbalance of power. Even within the government itself the imbalance can be extremely great, depending on the position and grade of the officials. When we see a minor official brandishing his authority over one commoner we might think he is a very powerful person. But let this same official meet someone higher in the bureaucracy and he will be subjected to even worse oppression from his superior than he dealt out to the commoner.'⁶¹

It was a system of innate inequalities, which afflicted every relationship. 'Now let me discuss this imbalance as it exists in reality. You will find this imbalance in all relations between man and woman, between parents and children, between brothers, and between young and old. Turn from the family circle to society, and relations there will be no different. Teacher and student, lord and retainer, rich and poor, noble and base-born, newcomers and oldtimers, main family and branch families - between all of these there exists an imbalance of power.'⁶² The whole social structure seemed fixed, almost caste-like, and was transmitted over the generations: '...sons of high officials following their father in office, sons of foot-soldiers always becoming foot-soldiers, and those of the families in between having the same lot for centuries without change. For my father, there had been no hope of rising in society whatever effort he might make.'⁶³

All this was, of course, bound up with the innate premise of superior and inferior in all relations built into Confucian thought. 'In China and Japan the ruler-subject relationship was considered inherent in human nature, so that the relationship between ruler and subject was conceived as analogous to the relationships between husband and wife and parent and child. The respective roles of ruler and subject were even thought of as predestined from a previous life. Even a man like Confucius was unable to free himself from this obsession.'⁶⁴ Oppression and servility were built deep into the system. 'Thus, even in the period of violent warfare between the samurai, this principle of social relationships could not be broken. At the head of one family was a general, and under him household elders; then came the knights, the foot-soldiers, and lastly the **ashigaru** and **chugen**. The duties of upper and lower were

⁶⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 179

⁶¹Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 136

⁶²Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 136

⁶³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 6

⁶⁴Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 39

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clearcut, and equally clear were the rights that went with these duties. Every man submitted to overbearance from those above and required subservience from those below. Every man was both unreasonably oppressed and unreasonably oppressive.⁶⁵

Fukuzawa's rejection of this premise of basic inequality, of subservience to those above and arrogance to those below, seems to have partly stemmed from his parents. He described how "This respect for people of lower rank was not original with me. It had been handed down from both my parents."⁶⁶ He described a specific example of their more open attitude. "Nakamura was an able scholar, but he was the son of a dyer who had lived in Nakatsu. Therefore nobody in our clan would befriend this "mere merchant's son". My father, however, admired his personality and, disregarding all social precedents, took him into our house in Osaka and, having introduced him to many people, brought it about finally that Nakamura was made a household scholar in the Minakuchi clan."⁶⁷ More generally, the attitude was that 'the farmers and merchants - the ruled - were totally separated from the rulers, forming an entirely different world. Their attitudes and customs differed.'⁶⁸ All of this made Fukuzawa increasingly uncomfortable. He described how in his early days "The thing that made me most unhappy in Nakatsu was the restriction of rank and position. Not only on official occasions, but in private intercourse, and even among children, the distinctions between high and low were clearly defined."⁶⁹ His growing unease was brought to a head with the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868 at the Meiji Restoration.

There must have been many boys in Fukuzawa's position, yet only one of them turned into a man who shaped the destiny of his country. Two principal factors were important in selecting him rather than others. One was a particularly stubborn and determined character, the other was chance. Let us look at his personality first.

The character of the growing boy

Fukuzawa's early life as a poor Samurai developed his character in various ways. Not only did he take unusual physical exercise, pounding rice and wood chopping, but he developed a keen interest in practical, do-it-yourself activities of a humble kind. He described how 'As I grew older, I began to do

⁶⁵Fukuzawa, *Civilization*, 155

⁶⁶Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 179

⁶⁷Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 180

⁶⁸Fukuzawa, *Civilization*, 168

⁶⁹Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 18

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a greater variety of things, such as mending the wooden clogs and sandals - I mended them for all my family - and fixing broken doors and leaks in the roof.¹⁷⁰ Poverty and pride combined to make him a practical and versatile workman, a Japanese Benjamin Franklin, which later stood him in great stead when he came to study western technology and science. 'When something fell in the well, I contrived some means to fish it out. When the lock of a drawer failed to open, I bent a nail in many ways, and poking into the mechanism, somehow opened it. These were my proud moments. I was good at pasting new paper on the inner doors of the house, which are called **shoji**. Every so often when the old lining of the **shoji** turned gray with dust, it had to be taken off and new white paper pasted on the frame.'¹⁷¹

He recalled that he early learnt that 'knowledge' consisted not only of reading books but of doing things - and not just sword play and the calligraphy he had missed. He wrote that 'My own particular talent seems to be in doing all kinds of humble work. While I was in Yamamoto's house, I did all kinds of work in his household. I do not recall ever saying, "I cannot do this", or "I don't want to do that."¹⁷² He loved tinkering with his hands. 'Thus ever since my childhood, besides my love of books, I have been accustomed to working with my hands. And even yet, in my old age, I find myself handling planes and chisels, and making and mending things.'¹⁷³ All this helped to remind him that it was not enough merely to learn, to understand, but vital also to put that learning to use. 'It is not necessary to reiterate here that learning does not consist only in the reading of books. The essence of learning lies rather in its practical application, without which learning is still ignorance.'¹⁷⁴

Above all, he seems to have developed a huge, practical, curiosity and an openness of mind and scepticism about received wisdom which marks him out as unusual for his own time and again indicates his 'Enlightenment' status. One aspect of this can be seen in his attitude to the supernatural. He was brought up in a world where Shinto, Buddhist and folk superstitions mingled to fill the environment with prohibitions and danger, yet his mother's rationalism and his own curiosity led him to doubt whether there was really truth in them. He decided therefore to carry out some experiments. Two of these are worth recounting. In the first, when he was twelve or thirteen he accidentally stepped on a document naming his clan lord. His brother told him off, and though he apologised he felt angry and 'Then I went on, reasoning in my childish mind that if it was so wicked to step on a man's name, it would be very

⁷⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 9

⁷¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 9

⁷²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 35

⁷³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 10

⁷⁴Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 75

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much more wicked to step on a god's name; and I determined to test the truth. So I stole one of the charms, the thin paper slips, bearing sacred names, which are kept in many households for avoiding bad luck. And I deliberately trampled on it when nobody was looking. But no heavenly vengeance came. "Very well," I thought to myself. "I will go a step further and try it in the worst place." I took it to the **chozu-ba** (the privy) and put it in the filth. This time I was a little afraid, thinking I was going a little too far. But nothing happened. "It is just as I thought!" I said to myself. "What right did my brother have to scold me?" I felt that I had made a great discovery! But this I could not tell anybody, not even my mother or sisters.⁷⁵

His scepticism grew until he tried a further test which put paid to all his supernatural fears. 'When I grew older by a few years, I became more reckless, and decided that all the talk about divine punishment which old men use in scolding children was a lie. Then I conceived the idea of finding out what the god of Inari really was. There was an Inari shrine in the corner of my uncle's garden, as in many other households. I opened the shrine and found only a stone there. I threw it away and put in another stone which I picked up on the road. Then I went on to explore the Inari shrine of our neighbor, Shimomura. Here the token of the god was a wooden tablet. I threw it away too and waited for what might happen. When the season of the Inari festival came, many people gathered to put up flags, beat drums, and make offerings of the sacred rice-wine. During all the round of festival services I was chuckling to myself: "There they are - worshipping my stones, the fools!" Thus from my childhood I have never had any fear of gods or Buddha. Nor have I ever had any faith in augury and magic, or in the fox and badger which, people say, have power to deceive men. I was a happy child, and my mind was never clouded by unreasonable fears.'⁷⁶ From then on he sought for explanations in this-worldly forces, and moved along the paths which Montesquieu, Smith and Tocqueville had all trod.

One major consequence of this was that he applied the method of doubt and scepticism to all things. Later he was to proclaim the ideology which has been enshrined from Francis Bacon to Karl Popper. 'Even today the reason that the great persons of the West lead people on the path to higher civilization is that their purpose is entirely to refute the once firm and irrefutable theories of the ancients, and to entertain doubts concerning practices about which common sense had never doubted before.'⁷⁷ It was the application of curiosity and methodical doubt to the world which had created modern science and technology he believed. 'If we seek the essence of Western civilization, it lies in the fact that they scrutinize whatever they experience with the five senses, in order to discover its essence and its functions. They go on to seek the causes of its functions, and anything they find beneficial they make use of, while whatever they find harmful they discard. The range of power of modern man is endless. He

⁷⁵Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 16-7

⁷⁶Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 17

⁷⁷Fukuzawa, *Learning*, 94

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controls the energies in water and fire to power the steam engines by which he crosses the vast Pacific.⁷⁸ His own childhood world had been different for 'the spirit of learning differs between East and West. The countries of the West stress the idea of experiment; we in Japan dote on the theories of Confucius and Mencius.⁷⁹ Yet he had increasingly come to challenge that world, both at the social and the cosmological level.

There were disadvantages to his agnosticism. For instance, he found it more or less impossible to understand the obvious force and nature of religion in western civilization. Like Tocqueville, for example, he could see from his visits to America and Europe that Christianity played an enormously important part as a social glue and as a system of meaning. Indeed, like Tocqueville, he believed that whatever his own scepticism, it was necessary, perhaps essential, for religion to be encouraged, in a modest way. Summarizing his wishes for the future at the end of his life he wrote that 'I should like to encourage a religion - Buddhism or Christianity - to give peaceful influence on a large number of our people.'⁸⁰ He developed this idea more fully, while expressing forcefully his own agnosticism, when he stated that 'it goes without saying that the maintenance of peace and security in society requires a religion. For this purpose any religion will do. I lack a religious nature, and have never believed in any religion. I am thus open to the charge that I am advising others to be religious, when I am not so. Yet my conscience does not permit me to clothe myself with religion, when I have it not at heart. Of religions, there are several kinds. Buddhism, Christianity and what not. Yet, from my standpoint, there is no more difference between these than between green tea and black tea. It makes little difference whether you drink one or the other.'⁸¹ Basically, like Rousseau, Hume and others, he saw religion as perhaps a marginal social necessity, but often a superstitious nonsense that was used as a prop by the powerful: a very Enlightened and rationalist view. Yet the rationalism also made it difficult for him to understand some of the difference of East and West, 'But still I am not sure I have grasped the real causes of the great differences between the religions of the East and West.'⁸²

His admission of bafflement as to causes, is, in fact, one of the reasons for our continuing interest in him. What we admire him for most of all, is his unflagging curiosity and open-mindedness. Considering the pressures upon him from his youth, he had an amazingly rational and independent mind.

⁷⁸Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 111-2

⁷⁹Fukuzawa, **Civilization**, 149

⁸⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 336

⁸¹Chamberlain, **Things**, 408

⁸²Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 98

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In his **Autobiography** he wrote of the 'irresistible fascination of our new knowledge.'⁸³ In his characteristically entitled **Encouragement of Learning** he stressed the need for doubt and questioning. He described to his audience how 'The progress of civilization lies in seeking the truth both in the area of physical facts and in the spiritual affairs of man. The reason for the West's present high level of civilization is that in every instance they proceeded from some point of doubt.'⁸⁴ His book had a heading, 'Methodic doubt and selective judgment' and explained that 'There is much that is false in the world of belief, and much that is true in the world of doubt.'⁸⁵ He cited famous, perhaps apocryphal, instances. 'Watt (1736-1819) entertained doubts concerning the properties of steam when he was experimenting with a boiling kettle. In all these cases they attained to the truth by following the road of doubt.'⁸⁶ All he could note was that 'In the countries of the West religion flourishes not only among monks in monasteries but also in secular society...and this attracts men's hearts and preserves virtuous ways. But in our Japan religion lacks this efficacy in society at large: it is solely a matter of sermons in temples.'⁸⁷

What else can we learn about the character of the young man growing up in the remote province of a southern Japanese island in the early 1830s? One obvious characteristic was his loneliness and inner strength. Using the heading 'No-one is admitted to my inner thoughts', he described how 'From my early days in Nakatsu I have not been able to achieve what I might call a heart-to-heart fellowship with any of my friends, nor even with a relative. It was not that I was peculiar and people did not care to associate with me. Indeed, I was very talkative and quite congenial with both men and women. But my sociability did not go to the extent of opening myself completely to the confidence of others, or sharing with them the inner thoughts of my heart. I was never envious of anyone, never wished to become like someone else; never afraid of blame, nor anxious for praise. I was simply independent.'⁸⁸ That is not to say that he did not have friends; but he kept his own counsel. 'I am of a very sociable nature; I have numerous acquaintances, and among them I count a number of trusted friends. But even in these

⁸³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 85

⁸⁴Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 93

⁸⁵Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 93

⁸⁶Fukuzawa, **Learning**, 93

⁸⁷Quoted in Craig, 'Fukuzawa', 134

⁸⁸Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 290

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relations I do not forget my doctrine of preparing for the extreme - for a friend can change his mind.⁸⁹

The reserve, iron will and self reliance, obviously related to his samurai **bushido** ethic and the traditions of **zen** was consciously cultivated. 'One day while reading a Chinese book, I came upon these ancient words: "Never show joy or anger in the face." These words brought a thrill of relief as if I had learned a new philosophy of life.⁹⁰ He became a working model of Kipling's **If**, treating the 'impostors' of praise and blame in the same way. 'Since then I have always remembered these golden words, and have trained myself to receive both applause and disparagement politely, but never to allow myself to be moved by either. As a result, I have never been truly angry in my life, nor have my hands ever touched a person in anger, nor has a man touched me in a quarrel, ever since my youth to this old age.⁹¹

He always expected the worst. 'It has been a habit of mine to be prepared for the extreme in all situations; that is, to anticipate the worst possible result of any event so that I should not be confounded when the worst did come.⁹² He combined activity and acceptance of fate in a way that reminds one forcefully of Weber's puritan ethic. 'I have worked with energy, planned my life, made friends, endeavored to treat all men alike, encouraged friends in their need, and sought the cooperation of others as most men do. But believing as I do that the final outcome of all human affairs is in the hands of Heaven, whenever my endeavors failed, I refrained from imploring sympathy and resigned myself to necessity. In short, my basic principle is never to depend upon the whims of other people.⁹³ He gave all he could to whatever activity he was engaged in, but accepted the outcome, in the end, was largely determined by forces outside his control. Speaking later of his attempts to set up the first Japanese university of Keio, he wrote 'Although I give the best of my ability to the management of the institution and put all my heart into it for its future and its improvement, yet I never forget that all my personal worries and immediate concerns are but a part of the "games" of this "floating world", our entire lives but an aspect of some higher consciousness.⁹⁴

⁸⁹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 325

⁹⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 19

⁹¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 19

⁹²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 324

⁹³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 286

⁹⁴Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 325

Two other features may be noticed. One was his immensely hard work, physical and intellectual. As a student, in particular, he worked prodigiously hard to learn Dutch and then English. He described how as a student 'I had been studying without regard to day or night. I would be reading all day and when night came I did not think of going to bed. When tired, I would lean over on my little desk, or stretch out on the floor resting my head on the raised alcove (**tokonoma**) of the room. I had gone through the year without ever spreading my pallet and covers and sleeping on the pillow.'⁹⁵ We shall see his prodigious energy and hard work manifested in an extraordinarily productive life.

A second feature was his desire to be independent of others. This manifested itself in his refusal to be sucked into any political job, as would have been natural. He later wrote that 'To speak very honestly, the first reason for my avoiding a government post is my dislike of the arrogance of all officials. It might be argued that they need to put on dignity in their office. But in reality they enjoy the bullying.'⁹⁶ But added to this was his desire to remain independent. 'All in all, I am determined to live independent of man or thing. I cannot think of government office while I hold this principle.'⁹⁷ He thought of himself as an independent spirit. 'As long as I remain in private life, I can watch and laugh. But joining the government would draw me into the practice of those ridiculous pretensions which I cannot allow myself to do.'⁹⁸ He saw himself as an analyst of politics, but not a politician or bureaucrat. 'All in all, my activities with politics have been that of a "diagnostician". I have no idea of curing the nation's "disease" with my own hands nor have I ever thought of politics in connection with my personal interest.'⁹⁹ This was not through lack of interest, but a desire to keep at arm's length. 'Not that I am wholly uninterested in that field, for I frequently discuss the subject and have written upon it, but for the daily wear and tear of its practice I have no taste. I am like the diagnostician in the medical field who can judge a disease but cannot care for a sick man. So people are not to take my diagnosis of politics as any evidence of personal ambition.'¹⁰⁰

His independence also showed itself in a terror of being financially involved, or at the mercy of

⁹⁵Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 79

⁹⁶Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 309

⁹⁷Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 315

⁹⁸Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 309

⁹⁹Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 321

¹⁰⁰Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 315

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others. Later in his life 'as if for the first time, I came to realize that I had never borrowed any money in my life. That had always seemed natural to me, but it appears it was rather unusual in other people's eyes.'¹⁰¹ At the end of his life, aged sixty-five, he noted that 'since I left home in Nakatsu at twenty-one, I have been managing my own affairs; and since my brother's death when I was twenty-three, I have assumed the care of my mother and niece. At twenty-eight I was married, had children, and took all the responsibilities of a family on myself.'¹⁰²

Fukuzawa clearly took pleasure in 'going against the grain', however difficult it was. 'In anything, large or small, it is difficult to be the pioneer. It requires an unusual recklessness. But on the other hand, when the innovation becomes generally accepted, its originator gets the utmost pleasure as if it were the attainment of his inner desires.'¹⁰³ Thus when he made his studies of Dutch and then English language, with its enormous difficulties, when he made the enormous effort to visit and document America and European civilization, he was finding a model for himself, a world where individual freedom was taken for granted as the premise of life, rather than being seen as largely selfish and de-stabilizing. He believed passionately that both for himself and for Japan, this was the only way to go. He himself had discovered this in relation to his clan. At the wider level 'The independence of a nation springs from the independent spirit of its citizens. Our nation cannot hold its own if the old slavish spirit is so manifest among the people.'¹⁰⁴

Much of the tension and interest in Fukuzawa's work comes out of his rebellious nature. He describes himself as a stubborn and individualistic person by character. 'I was always concerned with the way of society, and it was my inborn nature to act always in my own way.'¹⁰⁵ He speaks of 'my principle of independence and self-help'¹⁰⁶ and of 'My general determination was to be independent, to earn my own way and not to beg, borrow or covet other men's property.'¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 284

¹⁰²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 286

¹⁰³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 209

¹⁰⁴Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 314

¹⁰⁵Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 11

¹⁰⁶Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 287

¹⁰⁷Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 265

All this hard work, financial and political independence, planning and ambition makes Fukuzawa sound a dry, two-dimensional person. Indeed he realized himself that his **Autobiography** tended to give this impression. 'It may thus appear that I am a queer bigoted person, but in reality I am quite sociable with all people. Rich or poor, noble or commoner, scholar or illiterate - all are my friends. I have no particular feeling in meeting a **geisha** or any other woman.'¹⁰⁸ Yet even here another vice, philandering lust, is dismissed. Was he perfect, then?

To round out the picture we can note three weaknesses. A small one was a certain absent-mindedness which reminds us of Adam Smith. Fukuzawa related that 'One day when I was suddenly called out on business, I thought of changing my dress. My wife being out at the moment, I opened the chest of drawers and took out a garment that happened to be lying on top. When I returned, my wife looked curiously at me and said I was wearing an undergarment. She had one more cause for laughing at me. In this case, of course, my unconcern for dress went a little too near the limit.'¹⁰⁹ The implication is that he was also oblivious to social conventions - a sort of Japanese eccentric.

Nor can we strongly condemn what he himself found an ambivalent attitude to money. While he was full of probity in general, he found that when it came to the assets of his clan, he felt no moral necessity to be strictly honest. 'In the narrative so far I may appear to be a highly upright person in matters of money. But I must admit here that I was not always so. I was quite otherwise when it came to money belonging to my clan.'¹¹⁰ He proceeded to give a few examples of a different attitude to the joint property of an institution which he already resented strongly.

It was in his leisure activities that we find the one real chink in his puritan character. This was not his fondness for Japanese music, which was not taken to excess. He wrote that 'I have always been fond of music, so much so that I am having all my daughters and granddaughters learn both **koto** and **shamisen** and also, partly for exercise, dancing. To sit and listen to them at their lessons is the chief pleasure of my old age.'¹¹¹ His chief weakness, and one which he finally successfully overcame, was drink.

Quite early in his **Autobiography** he wrote as follows. 'To begin with the shortcomings, my greatest

¹⁰⁸Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 292

¹⁰⁹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 296

¹¹⁰Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 271

¹¹¹Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 295

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weakness lay in drinking, even from my childhood. And by the time I was grown enough to realize its dangers, the habit had become a part of my own self and I could not restrain it. I shall not hold back anything, for however disagreeable it may be to bring out my old faults, I must tell the truth to make a true story. So I shall give, in passing, a history of my drinking from its very beginning.¹¹² Towards the end of the same book he returned to the same subject, where he wrote that 'I must admit I have had a very bad and shameful habit of drinking. Moreover, my drinking was something out of the ordinary. There is a kind of drinker who does not really like the wine, and does not think of drinking until he sees the wine brought before him. But I was of the kind who liked it, and wanted much of it, and moreover wanted good, expensive wine. At one time when it cost seven or eight **yen** a barrel, my expert taste could tell the better wine from the less expensive if there was a difference of even fifty **sen**. I used to drink a lot of this good wine, eat plenty of nice food with it and continue devouring bowl after bowl of rice, leaving nothing on the table. Indeed, I was "drinking like a cow and eating like a horse."¹¹³

At about the age of thirty-three he began to realize that this heavy drinking would shorten his life. He remembered an earlier attempt suddenly to give up all drinking and decided to wean himself slowly. It was as hard a struggle as a Chinaman giving up his opium. First I gave up my morning wine, then my noon wine. But I always excused myself to take a few cups when there was a guest. Gradually I was able to offer the cup to the guest only and keep myself from touching it. So far I managed somehow, but the next step of giving up the evening wine was the hardest of all my efforts.¹¹⁴ It took him about three years to give up the habit entirely, but in this, as in other things, we notice the force of his will and reason.

Yet his ability to curb his body and his emotions does not mean that he was a dry or emotionless man. Again and again in his writing his strong feelings flash out, and we see a man driven by anger, shame or admiration. For instance, when describing the sexual behaviour of many of his countrymen he wrote 'For a man, especially one who has been abroad, to fall into such loose behaviour is too much for me to bear.'¹¹⁵ Or again, the treatment of women, and the way this treatment was viewed by westerners, made him deeply upset. 'I am stunned beyond words at the brazen shamelessness of our people.'¹¹⁶ It was not that he did not feel, it was more that he channelled this

¹¹²Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 52

¹¹³Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 326

¹¹⁴Fukuzawa, **Autobiography**, 328

¹¹⁵Fukuzawa, **Women**, 85

¹¹⁶Fukuzawa, **Women**, 200

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feeling through his writing and practical activities. As he put it, 'the human body and mind are like an iron kettle. If they are not used, they rust.'¹¹⁷

With a preliminary impression of Fukuzawa's character, let us now take up again the story of his life and see how his already unusually independent and inquisitive nature developed under the impact of the most shattering changes that had ever occurred in the long history of Japan.

¹¹⁷Fukuzawa, **Women**, 134