

Yukichi Fukuzawa's ideas on family and the history of civilization

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1. Historical background

Yukichi Fukuzawa(1835-1901) is one of the greatest men of Japan. He is usually thought to have committed himself to westernize Japan in almost every social field, which included the subject of women and family. But his argument about women and family is very rich and related to his ideas about man and society in civilization. In this article, I would like to show his theory on the history of civilization and how he thought about man and society, which relates to his ideas on family and women.

Fukuzawa was born in 1835, when the Tokugawa government ruled Japan. The Tokugawa era lasted from 1603 to 1868. Its regime was based on the feudal system. Japan was divided into many local districts governed by samurai lords. At the top, there was the Shogun who was the top samurai lord. Social relations were based on hierarchy. Samurai was the top, then peasant, artisan and merchant. The Tokugawa government adopted Confucianism as the official ideology because it was thought to be the idea which justified the social hierarchy.

Fukuzawa's family belonged to the lower samurai class. His father was dead when he was three. The children of a samurai family usually started learning Chinese classics (including Confucian text books) from around seven, but he could not do so until fourteen. However, he especially liked books on history and mastered them very well. So we will see the influence of the Confucian classics in the later stage of his life.

The Tokugawa government took the policy of national seclusion from the mid 17th



century for more than 200 years. But in 1853, Commodore Perry with his U.S. squadron came to Japan and demanded the country be opened. The Japanese Tokugawa government descended into confusion, and social hierarchy was shaken. Many men of the samurai class started to think about changing Japan. Fukuzawa was one of them. Some people thought it would be better to go back to the ancient way, and others thought it would be good to modernize Japan like the western countries. Fukuzawa hated the hierarchical social system and Confucianism as Tokugawa ideology. So he started to learn Dutch, because at that time Netherlands was the only western country allowed to trade with Japan, while English became widespread after Japan opened the country. He went to U.S.A. twice and Europe once as a member of the mission of Tokugawa government, and brought back many western books which he was going to translate into Japanese.

Japanese political turmoil ended with regime change in 1868. The Shogun (the highest samurai lord) returned his power to the emperor, which was called the Meiji restoration. So Fukuzawa lived his life in two different societies. The first half in feudal, and the second half modern. After Meiji restoration he tried to make Japan a liberal and democratic country. Most leaders of the samurai class became ministers of Meiji government, but Fukuzawa remained to be independent and tried hard to modernize Japan. He founded a university, set up a publisher, a newspaper, and helped to set up an insurance company, he taught about the commercial and political activities of the west and tried to practice them. So he had a great influence in every social field in Japan. Also, he wrote a lot about women's rights and family relations which was (and still is) exceptional as a leading man. As his ideas on family and women is very much related to his argument on the history of civilization, I have to start from his ideas on civilization.

2. Fukuzawa's ideas on civilization

The history of civilization

Though Fukuzawa wrote a lot of articles during his life time, most important among them



is 'An Outline of a Theory of Civilization'. In 1874 he decided to stop translating western books and concentrated on studying the theory of civilization. He read the books of western scholars such as Guizot, Buckle and J. S. Mill and wrote some plans and drafts. He discussed them with friends and students before publishing the work in 1875. So we can see that he tried very hard to write this book.

In 'An Outline', he wrote about the history of civilization which human societies would go through as they developed. He divided the history into three stages, which were 'savage', 'half civilized', and 'civilized'. Every society must go along the path until they reach the final stage of civilization. Surely he adopted this idea from western books he had read.

Then what does Fukuzawa think are the elements which make the development of civilization possible? He thinks there must be two elements. One is the advancement of 'intellectual ability (chi)' and 'virtue (toku)' of man which enables him to get material comfort in life and have dignity as a human. Another is the improvement of 'human social relations (jinnkan-kousai)'. Together they make our society develop towards the final stage of civilization. Then how is it possible? His explanation is as follows.

In the savage stage, people have no 'intellectual abilities' to understand the rules of nature. So they don't know how to deal with nature or control it. If they experience a natural calamity or good fortune, they tend to think that some evil or good Kami (god) which is beyond their control is the cause. The same can be said about their social relations. In this stage of civilization, there must be oppressive rules in society. But people never understand the reason or background of the oppressive rules. They only fear the oppressions thinking they are just like natural calamities. They have no 'intellectual abilities' to understand them and oppose them. Everything is decided by the ruler's orders. So is their moral code. People are forced to obey the ideological moral code ordered by the ruler.

The process of civilization begins when 'the intellectual ability' of man develops first. Then man starts to doubt everything around him. He wants to know the reason or the



cause of natural calamities and tries to avoid them by doing something. So he can control nature by his 'intellectual ability'. What comes next?

He also starts to doubt and think about the situation of his own being too. He doubts the Confucian ideological teachings and the stories of loyal Samurai which tell him how to behave. He starts thinking by his own reason what kind of person he should be. So he 'gets his freedom of spirit, why not his freedom of body'. In other words he gets control of himself and becomes independent. He decides what kind of person he wants to be and what and how to manage to do on his own. His moral code is decided by himself **from within**, not by the ruler's orders **from outside** himself. Fukuzawa thought if man got autonomy and had his own moral code by himself, man could be called 'virtuous'. Fukuzawa named such a kind of moral code 'private virtue', because it related only to man's own being. He thought it important, because if man was independent, he must not rely on anything but himself especially in relation to what kind of person he was to be.

Once man becomes independent and gains autonomy, then he starts to think about his social relations. Now he is able to use his 'intellectual ability' and knows what kind of person he wants to be. Then he thinks and decides by his own reason what and how to deal with other people. He knows what is wrong and what is right to do to other people. So he must be virtuous in social relations. Fukuzawa called this kind of moral code 'public virtue'. If man becomes virtuous and behaves accordingly, the human relation around him would be improved. This is the second element of the development of civilization.

The more man gets his 'intellectual ability' and becomes able to decide his moral code not by ideology **from outside** but **from within** himself, the more he will be able to behave 'virtuously' towards other people. This process improves the social relations around him.

Fukuzawa imagined that the social relations of man could be drawn as concentric circles. The first circle of social relation is family and it should be improved first. Then next would be the relations in the nation. People go through this process one by one and



civilization develops until it reaches the highest stage of civilization where everyone is intellectual as Newton and virtuous as Confucius. The whole world is in peace and like one family. So there will be no robbery or dispute, and people need not lock their doors or make contractual documents for proof. Fukuzawa called it 'the peaceful world of civilization (bunmei-no-taihei)'. But he knew it would be realized many thousands years away in the future.

The Confucian framework of civilization and society

As I already mentioned, Fukuzawa read a lot of western books and learned the theory of the history of civilization from them. We can see their influence on his argument about the historical process of civilization. We also know he tried hard to modernize Japan. So we tend to think that Fukuzawa tried to imitate western civilization abandoning the old ideas. But, if we read his argument carefully, we can see that he did not only absorb the ideas of western scholars but he tried to do so having his own framework of thinking about man and society. He learned Chinese classics when he was young and liked especially classics on history. He read them many times and mastered them very well. Though he attacked Confucian ideology in the Tokugawa feudal system in his articles, it was just the ideological function of Confucianism. His basic frame of thinking was Confucian. He understood the western theory of the history of civilization through the Confucian framework and thought they were compatible and fit together well.

It is well recognized when we see Fukuzawa's ideas of man. We saw that Fukuzawa insisted that man had to have a spirit of independence and autonomy to develop civilization. It meant man developed his 'intellectual ability' and 'virtue' and became independent. We may find similar ideas on man and society in western books. However, he always referred the man as a 'Head of ten thousand things (banbutsu-no-rei)' which was the basic Confucian idea of man. In Neo Confucian philosophy, man has a 'true nature' which must come out as he trains himself to be a virtuous man. Fukuzawa also thought man had a 'true heart (honshin)' as his core, and it could emerge only by working hard to



develop his 'intellectual ability' and 'virtue'. (This is the background idea of his famous popular book, 'An Encouragement of Learning'). Fukuzawa's aim is not becoming good and virtuous as in the Confucian ideal but becoming a man of 'independence and self respect (dokuritsu-jison)'. This idea seems to coincide with the western idea of independent man. But we can find out a similar phrase already in the books of Confucian scholars in the Tokugawa period. So perhaps it was not Fukuzawa's original idea but there were such ideas among Confucian scholars in Tokugawa period. Fukuzawa expected people of the samurai class to become such a kind of men who would lead the process of civilization in Japan and he believed they could be so.

Fukuzawa also wrote that if a man became 'intellectual' and 'virtuous', i.e. the 'Head of ten thousand things', then the social relations around him would be improved. He thought this improvement proceeded from the inner to the outer concentric circles around man. So from family to nation and finally to the whole world. He wrote many times that only 'after man became independent, then his household would become independent, after that his nation would become independent and the whole world would be independent'. His famous phrase came from a Neo Confucian text book.

The theme of Confucian philosophy is how to become a virtuous man and govern the country by virtue. The way to do it through Neo-Confucian philosophy is as follows. First a man must know the reason (ri) of the world (ten) (kakubusu-chichi). Then he tries to follow reason from his heart and behave accordingly (sei-seishin). By doing so, he will govern himself and become a virtuous man (shushin). This process which made man virtuous was thought to be very important in Neo Confucian philosophy. Then he can administer his household (seika), and then govern his country (chikoku) and finally make peace in the whole world (heitenka).

We can understand Fukuzawa's explanation about the process of civilization well if we use this framework. In Neo Confucian ideas, the reason of the world which man must know meant the Chinese classical idea of the rule of the world based on yin-yan theory. But



Fukuzawa changed this meaning to the rules of nature based on modern science. His idea of 'intellect' meant the ability to think in a rational way and he insisted that man must be 'intellectual' to understand and conquer nature. Then in the Confucian precept, man must try to behave himself in order to follow the reason of the world based on yin-yan theory. Fukuzawa changed this to mean that man must behave himself by following his reason and become 'virtuous'. Then he will be independent and govern himself (isshin-dokuritsu). After that, his social relation will improve and his household and his nation will be independent accordingly (ikka-dokuritsu, ikkoku-dokuritsu). So his idea of the history of civilization had the same structure with Neo Confucian ideas of man and the world. Perhaps Fukuzawa read and understood the western books about the history of civilization through this Neo Confucian framework of thinking in order to see the world and modernize it to include the knowledge of modern natural science.

Fukuzawa argued that as the history of civilization developed, it would reach the highest stage of civilization i.e. 'peaceful world of civilization'. The idea that history had a goal to reach was surely from the western books. But when we read his explanation about 'the peaceful world', we can see it very much looks like the descriptions of 'the world of everyone's peace (daido-no-yo)' in a Chinese classic book (raiki). In Confucian philosophy the ideal world was at the beginning of the history. But Fukuzawa put it at the end of history followed to the western ideas, maintaining the same description of the ideal world.

3. Family relation in the history of civilization

Man-woman relation

In the explanation of Fukuzawa's ideas on the history of civilization, I showed that he mentioned all the social relations including family relation as public and used the word 'private' only for himself (see his argument about 'private virtue and public virtue'). Also his argument about social relations started from family relations. Again, he described the ideal 'peaceful world of civilization' as a 'family'. So 'family' is a basic and important social relation in his idea of society. This is the characteristic of Fukuzawa's ideas of society which



is very much different from the western social theory.

In Fukuzawa's ideas of society, family was the first sphere to be affected by the improvement of social relations in the history of civilization. He thought the relationship between man and woman was most basic and important because all the virtuous relations between people began here. He explained the man-woman relation would also change according to the development of civilization i.e. the development of 'intellectual ability' and 'virtue' of man. At the 'savage stage' where man (and of course woman) had no 'intellectual ability' or 'virtue', men and women wanted to have relationships with each other from natural instinct. Fukuzawa argued the feeling of 'love' at that stage was instinctive sexual passion just like animals. They felt love because their physical forms were different. So their relation would be mainly a physical one. He named it as 'physically communicated relation (niku-kou)'.

As history advances, man acquires his 'intellectual ability' and 'virtue', and becomes independent. Fukuzawa thought that the most important feature of this development relating to social relations was the ability to use language based on reason. So the development of 'intellectual ability' is the key to change the situation. Man and woman try to communicate with each other by language, not by direct physical action. Using language, they can get to know and understand each other's feelings very well. So, Fukuzawa called this type of relation a 'relation communicated by feeling (jou-kou)'. Then they love each other from their hearts. To know other's feeling is important because it means one can understand other's **inside**. As I mentioned in relation to the independence of man, Fukuzawa thought man's relationship with others must be **from the inside**, not forced **from the outside**. So the ideal relationship between people had to be from heart to heart.

Once people become able to understand each other, then a man must start to think about a woman as a 'Head of ten thousand things' like himself (or vice versa). He understands she is as independent as he . Then the way to show his 'love' is to 'respect' her and be gentle and kind to her (the same is said about woman). So their behavior becomes very



virtuous and they have mutual 'love and respect (kei-ai)' after all. 'Respect (kei)' is the very basic and important idea to become virtuous in Confucian philosophy. So we can see the influence of Confucianism here too in the relationship between man and woman. Fukuzawa thought even though man and woman understood and loved each other deeply, they were separate entities. Their relation was not like 'the better half' in the west. They could not act totally in the same way. So he emphasized the importance of 'jo' between man and woman which meant 'Do not do to others what you don't want to be done to you'. It looks just the same as western liberal thought. But he said he could find such an idea in old Confucian thought, and it was not necessary to introduce a new idea from the west.

Fukuzawa thought a woman was the same 'Head of ten thousand things' as man as far as she was 'intellectual' and 'virtuous'. The only difference between them was that they have different sexual organs. Other than that, they were completely the same, and there must be no difference or no different evaluation in their social activities. So almost a hundred years before modern feminism introduced the idea of 'gender' against 'sex' in 1970's, Fukuzawa had argued about the same kind of differentiation based on the Confucian idea of the 'Head of ten thousand things'. He even mentioned the possibility of 'free love' in 'the peaceful world of civilization'. (This idea may have come from 'the Modern Times movement' in America in the second half of the nineteenth century.) If man and woman develop their abilities as he thinks along with the civilization, their relation in 'the peaceful world' will depend totally on their free will and from the hearts. Then they set up their relations solely dependent on their 'love'. They are free to tie or dissolve their relations. But after mentioning these ideas, Fukuzawa reminded the readers that it was not yet the time to do that. The monogamous and lasting relation was the best choice at that time of civilization, he said.

Parent-child relation

Next comes parent-child relations. This relation is different from the man-woman relation, because a child can never be equal to parent as a 'Head of ten thousand things'



as his 'intellectual ability' is always underdeveloped in any stage of the history. Still the relation changes as history progresses. At the first savage stage, the parent loves his child as animals love their offspring. It is as it were animal love. But since parent is to be a 'Head of ten thousand things', his attitude must change as civilization develops. He starts to think about the child's welfare as he becomes intellectual himself and tries to help and guide his child and show the child the way to be a 'Head' (which means parent is 'virtuous' to his child). The child is always underdeveloped, so there must always be the imbalance of power between the parent and child. But if there is the imbalance of power between two people, the one who has power must try to fill the gap by using his power to help the disadvantaged one, not to oppress him.

This idea is just opposite to 'the preponderance of power (kenryoku-no-henchou)' of Confucian ideology in the Tokugawa regime which allowed people in power to use it to oppress the disadvantaged. Fukuzawa hated any kind of oppression. This is the reason why he attacked the Confucian ideology of the Tokugawa regime very fiercely. The Confucian ideology demanded there must be 'the preponderance of power' in every social relation (lord-vassal, man-woman, and parent-child etc.) and the lower person should always serve the upper person. Fukuzawa strongly opposed this idea and wanted people in power to become virtuous and use it to help the disadvantaged. (He categorized disadvantaged persons as 'the elderly, the infant, the small and the weak').

The most important role of parent was to educate child to be a 'Head'. For Fukuzawa the educational role of adults was a kind of social duty for human beings. He always emphasized the influence of the parents' behavior and insisted that parents must behave virtuously to show the good examples to children. These were the ideal family relations based on the development of civilization. He thought such kind of family relations existed at that time in Japan in some samurai class families. He took it as a model of the ideal relations in the state of civilization in his argument.

4. The meaning of 'An Outline of a Theory of Civilization'



Though Fukuzawa wrote about 'An Outline of a Theory of Civilization' rather optimistically as mentioned above, he clearly knew that the situation surrounding Japan was not so hopeful. At the beginning of the last chapter of 'An Outline', he wrote 'if you compare the civilization of the west and Japan, you must say that Japan is far behind the west. If there is a gap between them, naturally the forerunner will conquer the latecomer. So we must be vigilant and try to keep the independence of our nation.'

His analysis of the situation is as follows. The people of Japan are in a rather easy mood because they succeeded in the Meiji restoration and the following political changes went well. But, he warns, it is not the time to rest after finishing the political changes successfully. Japan has another problem. It is the relation with foreign countries. They deprive Japanese of their wealth by trade. Also they behave oppressively even though they permit equal rights for Japanese. Look at India. Look at China. So, the most important matter for Japan in the current situation is to keep independence. Independence means not merely the territory of the nation exists but people themselves protect their nation and keep their rights and dignity. So he declared to stand up to keep the independence of Japan. Even though he imagined 'the peaceful world of civilization', it was not the time to realize it. When every other nation competes to have the share of the world, Japan must also become eligible to compete with them or defend itself at least. He knew well that such nationalism was a bit narrow and biased from the view point of 'the peaceful world' but it was the reality at that time. So in the last part of 'An Outline' he wrote, 'Now, our goal is to keep the independence of our nation, and the civilization we aim **now** is the means to keep it.' In the last chapter he drew readers' attention many times to the fact that he was talking about the 'current situation' and commented that he used the word 'current' or 'now' especially to think about problems of Japan **at that time**. So he warned people that they must not mix it up with the general theory of civilization.

So, in 'An Outline' Fukuzawa wrote about the general theory of civilization which was an ideal way to the goal, and in the last chapter the realistic analysis about the situation of



Japan. He was not the kind of man who thought only the ideal theory or real politik. He always assessed the real situation along with the theory of ideal world. He explained his aim to write the book in the first two chapters of 'An Outline'. He emphasized the importance of deciding the aim of an argument and said his aim to write the book was to catch up with western civilization. So he mentioned about the general theory first, and then decided it was necessary to aim at the western civilization to keep the independence of Japan at that time.

By having these dual ways of the reality and the theory in mind, he could show two important points to Japanese people. One is that the gap between Japanese and western civilization did exist. However, another point is, Japan could catch up, because the gap was never very great on the long course of the history of civilization. If he did not think of the history of civilization which had the ideal world far beyond the western stage, it would have been difficult to believe that Japan could catch up with the west. The long history of civilization put the western civilization in a relative position, (it was not **the** civilization), and made people think the gap between Japan and the west was relatively small in the process of a long history. So this argument could have given a warning to Japanese people in one way, and encouraged them to catch up with the western civilization in another. Then what should Japanese people do to catch up with the west?

Fukuzawa thought that to copy the outer form of civilization was pretty easy. But he understood that the essence of western civilization was the independent spirit of people which he thought western people had, but was very difficult to create in Japan. However, there was some way to do it. It would be difficult if you think of creating it from nothing, but what if you use some things that already exist in Japan and change them? Fukuzawa thought it was possible. So in the end of 'An Outline', he wrote, 'moral ties of feudal system of the Tokugawa could be used as "the expedient means" of civilization to make man virtuous, if you understand the purpose of national independence correctly.' So he was determined to keep the independence of Japan and very flexible. He tried to use everything possible as 'expedient means' for the purpose. As I mentioned already, he expected the



samurai class to become independent men and the samurai family was a kind of model of the family in civilization. He regarded people of samurai class as the candidates for leadership in the process of civilization in Japan, just like the middle class in England.

5. The different principles in family and nation

In his analysis of the history of civilization, Fukuzawa showed us that human relation improved from the nearest relationship. It means that from family relation to nation, and in the whole world. Man is the center of the concentric circles of human relations and his social relation begins in the family sphere which is the nearest circle to man. Even though we set boundaries to divide each circle, they are not fixed. The boundaries will be blurred and fade away as the history of civilization progresses, because the social relations around man will improve from near to far over the boundaries of family and nation which we set to divide them now. He thought that Japanese civilization at that time had already developed as far as people had ideal relations in the family circle. So it was time to concentrate on the independence of the nation. It means that in the 'current' situation of civilization we have to have such boundaries of spheres as family and nation around us.

Fukuzawa thought there were different kinds of social relations based on different principles in different circles in society at that time. He explained that family relations were based on 'the sentimental bond (jou)' and 'virtue'. But relations in western society were based on rules, contracts, laws and international treaties 'now'. 'All of them are the means only to prevent bad behavior. There is no spirit of virtue.' He was critical of such society but it was necessary to follow them to catch up. So he set off to lead Japan to catch up with western countries by modernizing Japanese society. Usually the family is not included in the 'social relation' in the west, but Fukuzawa included it and chose to keep it as it was based on different principle from the western social relations.

We know from historical studies that real family relations in the Tokugawa period was not so oppressive as had been thought judging by texts of Confucian teaching. We can see



a lot of examples of intimate and caring relations inside families if we read diaries, letters and chronicles of that time. Women were independent and they went anywhere on their own. (Such a situation was very different from China, as many Chinese travelers noticed in their chronicles just after the Meiji restoration.) Man and woman had different roles, but they respected each other's role and helped each other. Wives had a strong power for management of the household and they could leave husbands when they wanted divorce. Fathers looked after their children more than today. (Of course, it was a part of the training of succession of their jobs.) Some fathers even took children to their working places when their mothers were ill. So perhaps Fukuzawa wrote his articles bearing such family relations in his mind. He thought it would be all right to leave family relations as they were and focused on the changes of social fields.

6. The problems of man-woman relation in the context of modernization

As we saw already, Fukuzawa thought the independence of the nation was most important at that time in Japan. So he devoted himself to modernizing Japan as a nation. As far as families were concerned, he thought it would be all right to leave them as they were. This was his analysis when he wrote 'An Outline' in 1875. But the real situation did not go as he had expected. In the 1880s the Meiji government turned its policy to be very conservative and tried to reintroduce the Confucian ideas as the basic ideology of their policy. So Fukuzawa was inevitably forced to fight against it, and wrote a few articles to oppose strongly the revival of Confucian ideology. It was rather a tricky and difficult task for him, because his strategy for civilization was to use every possible element of Tokugawa period as the expedient means to civilization. It might easily be mixed up with the conservative ideology of Confucianism. So he had to attack the Confucian ideology all the more fiercely. When we read his articles during this period we have to be very careful and think about these political situations.

This is also said about Fukuzawa's articles on family and women. He wrote them mainly from 1885 to 1888, when the revision of treaties with western countries which forced Japan



in an unequal position was on the political table, and in 1899 just after the promulgation of the civil code of Japan. Those articles were written mainly to argue about the 'current' problems concerning man-woman relation in the context of modernization, with a fierce attack on Confucian ideology. Then what was the problem about men at that time?

It was the immoral behavior of men. Fukuzawa argued that men started to behave immorally after the Meiji restoration. They were 'like horses freed without bits in the spring field'. In Tokugawa period the situation was different. Even though men were permitted to have concubines, it was under strict rules. But Fukuzawa said it had all changed. 'Nowadays men behave immorally without any restrictions. Men refuse to listen to their parents' opinion about marriage and even abandon their wives to marry with another'. Especially the leaders' behavior was awful. They bought prostitutes without hesitation. Some even married them. This was not the way of behavior of civilized people. He even said the Confucian moral code forced by Tokugawa government had been good to keep the moral behavior of men.

Fukuzawa worried about the situation just because it might affect the revision of treaties. The western marriage system was monogamy. So what did western people think of Japan if they knew the situation? They would not recognize Japan as a civilized nation, which meant the revision of treaties would not be successful. Fukuzawa expected men to behave morally, or at least to hide immoral behavior behind the scenes. He knew well even in western countries people did not always behave morally, but they tried to conceal those acts. So he advised Japanese men to do the same as western people. It might not be an ideal way but a necessary 'expedient way' to be a member of modern civilized nations.

Fukuzawa thought women were virtuous enough even by the standard of western civilization. Their problems would be some lack of social and political rights and responsibilities compared with western women. He advocated that women must be equally educated as men from the start, and they must have their own properties. He thought women would be able to carry their responsibilities by having those rights and exercising



them. Fukuzawa mentioned that western women take the jobs in various fields, but it was a bit early to talk about it, he said. Japanese women had to change gradually with the change of their circumstances. So his articles were written to bring the social status of Japanese women up to the same level as western women. He expected Japanese women to take the role of management of their household as before in the mean time of modernization.

In 1894 Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese war. Fukuzawa was very delighted and perhaps relieved by the victory. It was a victory of Japanese civilization, because China once had been a great civilization but then half colonized by western countries.

Fukuzawa wrote his last major works on family and women in 1899. Japan succeeded in revision of the unequal treaties with the western countries by then and promulgated the Civil Code previous year. For Fukuzawa the promulgation of the Civil Code was 'a very great change', and 'the revolution of people's mind'. The newspaper he edited printed the articles of the Civil Code, and explained them to the readers. He might have thought that the equality between man and women has its solid ground in the Civil Code. Fukuzawa accepted it as the development of civilization. The time had come to be based on the concrete law, not the moral code by the ruler, to set up the relations between people as in western countries. That was his understanding. He was pleased that Japan had reached the same stage of civilization as western nations, which were based on rules, at the very last period of his life.

7. Conclusion

When we look back at our history, we know there have been many great changes in our society. The Meiji restoration is one of them. But people's life always continues despite those big changes of social structure. It would be impossible to change all the aspects of life, abandoning everything old. Fukuzawa knew this well or thought it was impossible and not necessary to do so. He applied a similar kind of attitude when he studied western social theories. He understood the western theory of history of civilization through the old



Confucian frame of thinking. He had the ideal way of civilization in mind and always assessed the reality of Japan in the context of the ideal civilization. He tried hard to find the way to apply the essence of western civilization, keeping the existing Japanese way of life. Fukuzawa went back and forth between these dual ways, and so he could be very realistic when necessary.

Even though western civilization was not the ideal way, Fukuzawa tried hard to catch up with the western civilization once he decided to keep Japanese independence. In Fukuzawa's thinking, Japanese family relations had to be kept being. But outside the family circle, i.e. in economic and political fields, Japan had to become as capitalistic and liberal as the west. Japanese people tried to imitate those social systems since Meiji without changing much of these close human relations. So we have always this double layer social structure. The outer structure of society is western, but the inner Japanese. We can see this double layers structure, in various combinations, in every aspect of social life in Japan. Perhaps this is what makes foreigners rather confusing when they try to understand Japanese people and society. But this was the way how Japan accepted western influences from outside.

Fukuzawa's ideas are as it were the mixture of three civilizations. Japanese, Chinese and western. They contain many suggestions which we who live in the westernized modern world have forgotten and can rediscover again. As far as the ideas on family is concerned, I can point out two important arguments. Firstly, we have alternative man-woman relation to the west. Fukuzawa showed us co-operative relation in which man and woman respected each other as independent individuals i.e.as the 'Head of thousand things' and was united by 'love and respect'. As Fukuzawa thought the family relation was the first **social** relation, people had to be independent and set up relations between individuals even in the family. It was different from the the western idea of the 'better half' in which man and woman become one by 'romantic love'. The second important point is that his argument includes the relation with the disadvantaged. If we presuppose only an individual who is rational and independent, it would be difficult to think of society including the people who are not rational



or independent. He thought the relation with the disadvantaged was different from the relation between independent individuals. This is also very suggestive for us to reconstruct the society including every kind of people who have some disadvantages.

Lastly and especially, we can see his struggle as an example of how to import the fruits of other civilization and apply them to the existing civilization. We are now living in the world of so called 'clash of civilizations'. So I think it is all the more important to know that there was a way to accept and implant the fruits of other civilizations and how it was done in Japan.

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