

YUKICHI FUKUZAWA

— His Concept of Civilization and View of Asia —

SANNOSUKE MATSUMOTO

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There can hardly be any doubt that Yukichi Fukuzawa is one of the greatest thinkers modern Japan has ever produced. Perhaps, any list of the ten most important figures in modern Japanese intellectual history would include this leader of the early Meiji Enlightenment. Yet, it is also true that Fukuzawa's ideas have been evaluated in highly diversified, often conflicting, ways by Japanese, including both his contemporaries and members of subsequent generations. Many of his contemporaries usually classified him with the utilitarian school of thought. Some even went so far as to call him a 'money worshipper,' because he frequently emphasized the importance of money-making by referring to it as, for example, 'what all civilized men aim at.' Many Japanese of his time were still obsessed with the old, feudalistic notion that the pursuit of profit is something most immoral and contemptible, the very notion that Fukuzawa so much wanted his fellow-countrymen to do away with.

Long after his death in 1901, during the militarist era, Fukuzawa was being treated as a major exponent of Japanese nationalism. This treatment was not completely without reason, however. When it comes to matters of national security and international relations, Fukuzawa was a professed realist who held in highest regard the strengthening of military and other forms of national power. The following passage taken from his *Tsūzoku kok-ken ron* (1878), is quite symbolic of this aspect of Fukuzawa's thinking: "A few cannons are worth more than a hundred volumes of international law. A case of ammunition is of more use than innumerable treaties of friendship."

Then, following Japan's defeat in the last world war, Fukuzawa came to be honoured as *the* pioneer philosopher of modern democracy in this country, who had levelled penetrating criticism against the feudalistic ideas and customs even before the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Most frequently quoted by Japanese in the immediate post-war period was the famous opening

sentence of his *Gakumon no susume*—seventeen pamphlets first published during the five-year period between 1872 and 1876—which reads, “Heaven made no man higher than another and no man lower than another.” This does not mean, however, that Fukuzawa has never been criticized in the post-war period. Some Japanese scholars today categorize him as one of those pre-war thinkers who had intellectually paved the way for Japan’s imperialistic advances into the Asian continent. Particularly unpopular among them is his thesis that a civilized Japan, rather than bothering herself with the futile idea of Asian unity, should once and for all extricate herself from the rest of Asia so that she would not again become contaminated with its barbarism and backwardness, a sensational thesis Fukuzawa expounded in 1885.

We have seen in the above how varied and complicated the Japanese view of Fukuzawa as a thinker has been over the last one hundred years. Like all great thinkers, Fukuzawa was a man of deep insight and broad perspective; the rich reservoir of his thought does contain many diverse aspects, some of which may even seem contradictory to one another. However, if we are to single out just one aspect of his thinking and interpret it simply in terms of the established ideological categories, we are never likely to arrive at a true understanding of his ideas. Rather than hastily trying to identify his thought with this or that ism, we must first probe into the thought context of these varying aspects and then into the basic frame of reference within which his individual ideas evolved.

One of the key concepts which run through Fukuzawa’s thinking and serve to integrate his diversified ideas is that of ‘civilization.’ As it is frequently pointed out, Fukuzawa considered ‘civilization’ to constitute “the ultimate goal towards which man strives.” (*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 1875.) For Fukuzawa, civilization was *the* yardstick by which to measure the relative value of man’s activities in all fields, whether political, economic, institutional, or literary. I feel that this key concept will serve as an important clue to our understanding of Fukuzawa’s unique view of Asia and its historical significance, with which we are ultimately concerned here.

1. ‘Civilization’ as a Spirit

As pointed out earlier, Fukuzawa was generally thought of as a utilitarian by his contemporaries, though he himself never reduced civilization to something merely material. There is some evidence that he regarded man’s physical comfort and material abundance as equally important as man’s spiritual and ethical qualities. For example, in his *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, he defines civilization as “enhancement of man’s bodily comfort as well as of his ethical value; enrichment of man’s life in both material and spiritual spheres.” In spite of all this, however, we should not fail to recognize that Fukuzawa conceived of civilization ultimately as a spiritual entity. From his point of view, all forms of material advancement known as civilization were essentially the outward manifestations of that spiritual entity. In his

preface to *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, he thus states, "To discourse on civilization is to discuss man's spiritual development." It was precisely because of this emphasis on the spirit of civilization that Fukuzawa consistently assumed a critical attitude towards the preoccupation of his contemporaries with the outward forms of civilization.

Fukuzawa conceived of civilization essentially as a matter of developing "a knowledgeable and ethical mind" (*chitoku*). By the term *chitoku*, however, he did not intend to imply any specific body of scientific knowledge or of moral precepts and dogmas. He spoke of *chitoku* primarily as a free and rational mind or mode of mental activity which would reject any blind reliance upon, and obsession with, the established norms and customs of society. In Fukuzawa's mind at least, *chitoku* was equated with another Japanese term *chiryoku*, which means intellect or intelligence. This is clear from the fact that he contrasted the spirit of civilization with that of the traditional ways. He considered the latter spirit or mental attitude to be the first major obstacle that must be eliminated if the Japanese people were ever to gain any degree of *chiryoku* and to become thereby civilized. He felt, in other words, that instead of behaving just according to the dictates of the established norms and customs, the people must learn to set forth their own objectives and to seek persistently and determine freely what means and what courses of action would be best suited to the attainment of these objectives. Fukuzawa believed that *chiryoku* was the faculty that enables man to conduct thorough thinking and to make decisions with conviction and resoluteness. He also believed that *chiryoku* constituted the very core of the spirit of civilization.

The following quotation from his *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* amply demonstrates how much Fukuzawa emphasized the importance of free and rational thinking or the spirit, without which modern civilization could not have produced any of its material manifestations:

"Whether or not a thing is useful cannot be decided unless we know exactly what practical purpose it is to serve. A house is certainly useful because it serves as a shelter from the rain and dew. Likewise, clothing is useful because it protects us from the cold and wind. Everything is a means designed to serve certain ends. This simple fact is frequently forgotten when a thing is in use or in existence for a long time. People tend to forget what practical purpose that thing was originally created for and think that it is valuable for its own sake. They tend to treasure, patronize, and sanctify it without regard to its usefulness. At times, people go so far as to do everything in order to preserve a thing which has become utterly useless or inconvenient. This is what I call obsessions with, and indulgence in, the traditional ways. It is this [mental attitude] that causes so many meaningless things to flourish in this world."

Whether or not one should consider the above passage an expression of utilitarian thinking is not our concern here. A more important thing is to understand the author's true intent in writing this passage and to relate it to his concept of civilization. Obviously, Fukuzawa here is speaking of civilization as a mode of mental activity which enables man to free himself

from the traditional ways and seek to rationalize his way of life. To be sure, the progress of civilization will enhance man's living standard and improve his mode of life. But, it does not follow that the progress of civilization is achieved simply by man's passive acceptance and enjoyment of better material life. Fukuzawa tells us that the progress of civilization means nothing but the functioning of men's free and rational minds capable of making discriminate use and continuous improvement of various means of life. Naturally, free and rational minds cannot so function in a society where its members' behaviour patterns and value systems are undiversified and stereotyped. In contrast, a society which is characterized by the complexity of interests and a high degree of social differentiation does offer a far more favourable operating ground for free and rational minds. It was, therefore, only logical for Fukuzawa to have declared that civilization could flourish only in "a world of many activities" (*taji no sekai*), but not in "a world of no activity" (*buji no sekai*). He further elaborated on this point by saying as follows:

"Essential to the progress of civilization is making society as busy and demanding as possible and having people try more and more new things, however small or unimportant it may seem, so that men will put their intellectual faculties to maximum use." (*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*)

Thus, for Fukuzawa the spirit of civilization was not only free and rational, but also busy and active. It was also inseparably related to what he called "the spirit of self-reliance and self-respect." It was in terms of the same conception of the spirit of civilization that Fukuzawa violently opposed the scholasticism of Confucian learning as well as the emptiness of classical Japanese literature and advocated the spread of *jitsugaku*, or "practical learning which is close to men's everyday lives." (*Gakumon no susume*) Fukuzawa's emphasis on the importance of *jitsugaku* has often been interpreted as a mere application of his utilitarian thinking, but when analysed in connexion with his concept of civilization, it becomes clear that such an interpretation is too shallow. By "practical learning" Fukuzawa did not simply stress the practicability of learning or the necessity of combining academic theories with practice. He was concerned with the more basic problem of what spirit should govern the intellectual process of combining learning and practice. He felt that only a free and tough mind could seek a meaningful combination of the two things. In effect, what underlies his concept of *jitsugaku* is identical with the spirit of civilization, i. e., a free and rational mind capable of measuring the "usefulness" of things in terms of their respective practical purposes and of improving them as better means of life.

2. 'Civilization' as a Way of Thinking

We have noted that for Fukuzawa civilization was, above all else, the function of a free and rational mind. But, in order for this mind to function effectively as an intellectual power, or intellect (*chiryoku*), it must be provided

with an appropriate methodology. It was for this reason that Fukuzawa conceived of civilization not only as a spirit but also as an intellectual way of thinking. More specifically, Fukuzawa believed what he called 'physics' or 'mathematics' represented just such a methodology of civilization. Neither 'physics' nor 'mathematics' here refers to any specific, narrowly-defined field of science, but rather to the rationalistic way of thinking which constitutes the very foundation of all modern natural sciences. In his autobiography (*Fukuō jiden*, 1899), Fukuzawa states, "In the education of the East, so often saturated with Confucian teaching, I find two points lacking; that is to say, the lack of studies in 'number and reason' (*Sūrigaku*) in material culture, and the lack of the idea of independence in the spiritual culture." "Studies in 'number and reason'" here obviously refers to the whole of scientific methodology developed in the West.

In an essay entitled "Kyokugai kiken" (A View of the Outside) and published in *Jiji shimpō* in July, 1882, Fukuzawa gives his own account of what a scientific way of thinking is like. Fukuzawa writes that water remains no different from what we normally see as water in so far as we try to perceive it directly by our own senses. However, if we know how to analyse it into its components, then we will see that water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen. Once a scientific cognition of water is gained, it becomes possible even to produce water for our disposal. It also becomes possible to formulate scientific laws concerning the nature of water.

Fukuzawa's understanding of a scientific way of thinking is surprisingly similar to that displayed by Ernst Cassirer in his book entitled *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Beacon Paperback edition, fourth printing, 1961, p. 10). Cassirer states, "The method of formulation of scientific concepts is both analytical and synthetic. It is only by splitting an apparently simple event into its elements and by reconstructing it from these that we can arrive at an understanding of it." Cassirer explains the same idea also by contrasting "the work of dissolution" and "the work of construction," which corresponds to 'analytical' and 'synthetic.' As a classic example of scientific concepts formulated on the basis of this method, Cassirer cites Galileo Galilei's discovery of the trajectory curve. Cassirer contends that Galileo could not have made this discovery if he had been content with merely making a direct observation of the parabolic motion of an object. Galileo did go one step further and analysed the causal factors of the motion to discover that it was a complex event contingent upon two separate forces, i.e., the initial impact and gravity.

Fukuzawa believed that Western learning was basically governed by scientific thinking, as typically exemplified by the method of conceptual formulation in modern physics. It was this way of thinking that Fukuzawa was so eager to transplant into Meiji Japan. He hoped that the Japanese people would adopt this way of thinking in order to gain a scientific understanding of social and political, as well as natural, phenomena. He repeatedly stressed the importance of "indirectly assessing the advantages and disad-

vantages of things." By this he meant that the Japanese people must transcend their extremely narrow frame of reference, overcome their unquestioning reliance on their own senses and direct experience, and view things in a much broadened perspective.

In an attempt to explain to his readers why it was so important to assess 'indirectly' all social phenomena, Fukuzawa used the following concrete example. According to Fukuzawa, Japan's military techniques had been modernized within a relatively short span of time, simply because it was apparent to anyone which would be more advantageous in fighting, guns or bows, and arrows. Whereas, he deplored, the transportation system, which he considered "the essence of modern civilization," was still left undeveloped because the people had not understood that its long-run usefulness would easily offset the huge cost of building and maintaining roads and bridges. If the people had been able to think rationally from a long-term point of view or assess 'indirectly' the advantages and disadvantages of things, then they would have easily seen the tremendous benefit and economy of a modern transportation system. Fukuzawa regarded the transportation system as "the essence of modern civilization" for two reasons: one, its development would help the people gain a broader perspective and the ability to think rationally; and two, its development was one important consequence of rational thinking, or the spirit of civilization.

We have seen that Fukuzawa conceived of civilization essentially as the question of "man's spiritual development" or "the progress of man's intellectual and ethical qualities." We have also noted that a free mind and a rational way of thinking constituted the core of his concept of civilization. All this should not imply, however, that Fukuzawa was content with just treating the spirit of civilization as an object of his analysis. True that the spirit originated in the West and that Fukuzawa had a great deal to learn from the European model. But, for Fukuzawa who believed that the spirit of civilization must become the spirit of the new era in his country and also govern the intellectual thinking of Japanese, it was above all something he himself had to practise. He felt that as one of the Meiji intellectuals he must be the first person to adopt the spirit of civilization and its methodology and apply them in a concrete manner to his discourses on Japanese civilization.

It should be clear from the above paragraph that when Fukuzawa equated the progress of civilization with "man's spiritual development," he was not referring at all to mental or character development in individual persons, but rather to the level of more general intellectual development in a society as a whole. In his preface to *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, Fukuzawa himself clarifies this point as follows: "To discourse on civilization is to discuss man's spiritual development. By this I do not mean that it is to discuss the spiritual development of a given individual, but that it is to discuss the over-all spiritual development of a society's members collectively." In this connexion, he recommends 'statistics' as a method of dealing scientifi-

ically with such a collective phenomenon. His macroscopic approach to social phenomena as used here is an ample proof that he himself put into practice his own idea of "indirectly assessing the advantages and disadvantages of things." We can even go so far as to say that Fukuzawa's discourses on civilization were in themselves products of a rational way of thinking, or scientific cognition of phenomena, which, needless to say, constitutes the very core of the spirit of civilization.

I have so far treated Fukuzawa's concept of civilization primarily in terms of its spirit and methodology. This should in no way imply, however, that he was concerned only with spiritual culture. His concept of civilization was broad and comprehensive, as evidenced by his statement in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* to the effect that civilization was the ultimate goal of all human activity. While he conceived of civilization as a general problem of "man's spiritual development," he was also concerned with the development of material culture. He laid a particular emphasis on the development of the steam engine, telecommunications, postal service, and printing, calling them "the elements (*genso*) of modern civilization."

In Fukuzawa's mind, these "elements" and other "convenient tools of civilization (*bunmei no riki*) were inseparably related to the basic spirit of civilization on the following two counts: first, these were in themselves the inventions of free and rational minds; and second, these inventions could be employed as "the means of communication," capable of disseminating and fostering the spirit of civilization among the populace. Fukuzawa explained this reciprocal relationship between the spirit and the means of civilization in the following terms: "The progress of civilization is in a way like geometrical progression; the more advanced civilization is, the faster it advances." (*Bunmei shintairon* [The Progress of Civilization], "*Jiji shimpō*, April, 1883.)

Fukuzawa's recognition of this reciprocal relationship is ample proof that his concept of civilization was functional in nature. A functional nature of his concept of civilization can also be seen in the very fact that he defined the spirit of civilization essentially as the 'functioning' of free and rational minds, or as man's intellectual faculty. Just as "the convenient tools of civilization" are devoid of any value orientation, Fukuzawa's concept of civilization does not encompass any specific end values or value orientation within itself. It was a value-free, neutral concept, though it could in fact tie itself to any end values and orient itself towards any direction. It was also precisely because of its functional nature that his concept of civilization, when expressed in concrete terms, encompassed so many different things and took on such a comprehensive character.

From Fukuzawa's point of view, civilization was in itself neither good nor bad. Whether it will be good or bad is entirely up to the man who uses it, his purpose and the way in which he uses it. In his *Minjō isshin*, published in 1879, he states as follows:

"Steam [engines] and telecommunications determine not only whether one will lose or gain in his business, but whether a country will win or lose a war, whether one

will gain or lose his personal contacts, and whether the government will become more efficient or inefficient. In short, they determine success or failure of everything that man does. When used wisely, they can even turn a poor man today into a rich man tomorrow. On the other hand, one's ignorance of their proper usage can easily rob him of all his property; he will have no one but his own ignorance to blame for it. Indeed, steam and telecommunications can either impoverish or enrich a man, make him either wise or foolish, keep him either alive or dead, and, above all, they can either prosper or ruin a country."

From his functional view of civilization, he opposed those of his contemporaries who thought that the progress of civilization would automatically bring about a social order controlled by justice and reason. Fukuzawa opposed this view because it simply identified civilization with a universally valid reason or rationality (*dōri*) of man. Again in his *Minjō isshin* he elaborates on this point as follows:

"Scholars often claim that with the progress of civilization and enlightenment (*Bunmei kaika*) will the people increasingly think and behave according to reason and thereby will our society return to normalcy. This claim is totally without any verifiable ground; therefore, it is nothing but an illusion. Even if we are to identify civilization and enlightenment as that which is developing today in our society, their progress will only result in increased social mobility and unrest."

The above quotation goes perfectly with his thinking that a free spirit can find its place only in a busy world full of events and disputes, an idea which he expressed in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*. It was also along this line of thinking that Fukuzawa was opposed to the contention of the conservative Confucianists at the time of the Liberty and Popular Rights Movement that a deficiency in the ethical education of the nation's youth in the post-Restoration years had caused so many young Japanese to get involved in political discussions and movements that were directed against the established authorities. Fukuzawa countered this moralistic contention with the argument that the people's enthusiasm for the progress of civilization was the precise cause of the intensity of popular interest in politics and that if one wished to suppress that interest, he would have to attempt an elimination and destruction of civilization as a whole.

3. Civilization and Nationalism

The characteristics of Fukuzawa's concept of civilization, which I have analysed above, seem to give us an important clue to our understanding of his views on international society, in general, and on Asia, in particular. More specifically, I feel that Fukuzawa's heavy inclination towards national power on matters relating to Japan's foreign relations is closely tied to the basic nature of his concept of civilization.

Although Fukuzawa derived his concept of civilization from the advanced countries of the West, he did not thereby idealize countries. What he did was essentially to formulate an 'ideal type,' in Max Weber's sense, of modern

civilization on the basis of the European models. To put it more simply, to praise the 'spirit' of civilization was one thing, but to praise the civilized 'foreign lands' was quite another. Fukuzawa, however, would not have been able to distinguish these two things, if he had not understood civilization as a functional concept.

One logical conclusion obtained from his concept of civilization was that civilization had to become "a Japanese civilization" if it was to have any meaning. For Fukuzawa, the civilizations of foreign countries were nothing but the sources of threat to Japan's security. The development of steam, telecommunications, and transportation in the 19th century changed the countries of Europe and North America that had once been as weak as infants into powerful adults, into monsters like the "tigers that can fly." Fukuzawa was willing to admit that any country at any time in history could be as avaricious and greedy in its disposition as a wolf. The point of his concern was not that, but the fact that the Western countries had been so quick to seize 'the chance to get moving' as a result of their advancement in civilization that the rest of the world was exposed to their unlimited exploitation and aggression. Thus, he declared, "Foreigners of today are no longer what they were in the Ashikaga period. Even if we are to fight with all our strength against these foreigners, I am seriously afraid we are not going to succeed." (*Jiji shōgen*, 1881.)

Fukuzawa's position as a devout disciple of the spirit of civilization was not at all incompatible with the general tendency of his time in Japan to view the reality of international society in terms of "the law of the jungle." Far from being incompatible, he himself was one of the first Japanese to alarm the nation about this formidable aspect of international politics, as the following passages in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* will clearly indicate:

"Relations between nations are on an entirely different footing from relations between individuals. In relations between individuals, it is possible that one treats a foreigner just as he treats his old friends. When it comes to relations between nations, however, there are essentially two things that govern those relations: one, in times of peace nations compete for profits from trade; and two, in times of war they resort to weapons to destroy one another."

Fukuzawa, as a young Japanese intellectual, had witnessed how this small eastern country was forced to open its doors to foreign intercourse under the pressure of the advanced powers of the West. Moreover, as a leading intellectual of the period Fukuzawa fully shared the sufferings and agony of his country under the heavy burdens imposed upon it by the unequal treaties with those Western powers. It was through these painful experiences that Fukuzawa became firmly convinced of the righteousness of his understanding about the nature of international relations. It was this firm conviction that conditioned deeply from within his whole way of thinking. For instance, Fukuzawa was fully aware that the progress of civilization was a dynamic process of infinite expansion, but, in view of what he conceived of as the

stark reality of international politics and the highly precarious nature of Japan's international position in those days, he subjected his theory to a "narrower frame of reference," and declared that national independence was the goal of civilization and that a nation's civilization was but a means of achieving this goal. Fukuzawa here is of course speaking about Japanese civilization and Japan's national independence. Thus, for Fukuzawa Japan's independence was at once the goal of her civilization and the precondition for its development.

Thus, in Fukuzawa's mind, the nation and civilization were two inseparably related concepts, each serving the other as both the end and the means. The following statement he made in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* is symbolic of this theoretical harmony between his concept of civilization and Japanese nationalism aiming at the independence, wealth, and strength of the nation: "Even if we manage to establish a highly advanced civilization in our land, it will be of little use to our country without the spirit of independence among the Japanese people. It will hardly deserve the brand of a Japanese civilization." Fukuzawa succeeded in making the spirit of civilization, which by nature is apt to remain a mere cosmopolitan concept, into a source of national energy by cementing that spirit with the spirit of national independence. By so doing, he was also able to avoid degenerating himself into a mere admirer of Western civilization, even despite the fact that he had formulated his concept of civilization on the basis of the Western models and that he was, as he declared himself to be, "an exclusive dealer and special agent of Western ways."

4. *Japan and Unity of Asia*

Fukuzawa developed his unique view of Asia in close connexion with his concept of civilization. As I have pointed out in the foregoing paragraphs, his concept of civilization was inseparably tied to the question of Japan's national independence through his concern with the development of "Japanese civilization." Likewise, his view of Asia was also formulated on the basis of his keen awareness of this urgent national problem.

It is the common, basic characteristic of all views of Asia developed in modern Japan that they were formulated in the context of a political postulate, i. e., the preservation of Japan's national independence. Fukuzawa's was no exception in this regard. This characteristic originally stemmed from the special historical circumstances of the late Tokugawa period. The Western encroachment on the Far East during the last years of the Shogunate, as was typically exemplified by the Opium War (1840-42) in China, quickly engendered a strong sense of national crisis among at least the informed Japanese. It was through this growing sense of national crises that those Japanese began to harbour an Asian consciousness, or a sense of Asian unity. In other words, what was instrumental in tying the fate of Japan to that of the rest of Asia in the minds of these Japanese was *not* any of the principles

and sentiments inherent in, or attributable to, Asia itself, but the external impact of the Western encroachment. Their Asian consciousness basically stemmed from their fear of the Western powers as well as their desire to preserve Japan's national independence. Fukuzawa's view of Asia was also formulated along the same line; it took on the same historical character and orientation. The following quotation should suffice to illustrate this point:

"The pace at which the Westerners are advancing eastward reminds us of the way a fire spreads. There is no reason why we shouldn't be afraid of the fire reaching our next doors. By the same logic, we concern ourselves over the situation in China and we intervene in the domestic affairs of Korea. We must be well aware that we do all this, not because we like to cause troubles, but because we want to prevent the fire from reaching our own country." ["Chōsen no kōsai wo ronzu (My Views on Our Relations with Korea)," *Jiji shimpō*, March 11, 1882.]

Fukuzawa's attitude expressed in these passages is obviously too egocentric to form the basis of a meaningful concept of Asian solidarity. Not only that, but we find totally lacking here the basic principle required of any idea of international solidarity, i. e., mutual respect for the equality and autonomy of the countries concerned. These deficiencies in Fukuzawa's view of Asia were also the products of the special historical way in which modern Japanese views of Asia had evolved.

As previously mentioned, modern Japanese views of Asia had evolved out of a critical awareness that Japan's independence was being menaced in face of the Western encroachment. One thing we must remember in this connexion is that in 1840 this critical awareness itself could not have been engendered without a drastic transformation of the traditional value consciousness, or the Confucian view of the world, which dominated Japanese thinking at that time. This traditional view held that foreign countries (i. e., European countries) were "barbarians" and morally inferior to Japan, whose Eastern morality was supreme in the world.

However, China's defeat in the Opium War, which came as a real shock to many Japanese, provided this country with an opportunity to reconsider its traditional view of the outside world. Japan quickly began to search for a more accurate picture of the international situation and gained a keen awareness of how weak and backward she was, compared with the advanced countries of the West. It was as a result of these developments that Japan, far ahead of her Asian neighbours, was able to prepare herself for the national crises brought about by the eastward advances of the Western powers. Japan vigorously imported modern science and technical know-how from the countries of the West, from the very countries she had previously despised as "barbarians." With the imported knowledge and techniques, she launched her ambitious programme of building up "the wealth and military strength of the nation." It was a programme ultimately aiming at preserving the unity and independence of the country.

Japan was the first Asian country to become sufficiently aware of its backwardness and perhaps the only country to cope successfully with the

impact of the Western encroachment. These facts gave birth to the superiority complex of the modern Japanese vis-à-vis the rest of Asia, as well as to a deep feeling of contempt for the "narrow-mindedness" of her neighbours. Paradoxical as it may sound, this feeling of contempt for Asia combined with the aforementioned sense of solidarity came to form the basic nature of modern Japanese views of Asia. Fukuzawa's view of Asia also took on this basic nature, as evidenced by the following statement:

"It is a plain fact that the Western civilization has by now advanced to the point where it is ready to make final inroads into the eastern part of Asia. At this critical moment, Asian countries must make a united stand in order to prevent Western aggression. But the question is which of them should take the lead. I do not mean to brag about my own country, but in all fairness to my unprejudiced judgement, I must conclude that Japan is the only country capable of assuming leadership in East Asia." (*Chōsen no kōsai wo ronzu*)

Fukuzawa was not, of course, the only Japanese who claimed that Japan should take the lead among Asian countries to counter the threat of Western aggression. In fact, this same idea was repeatedly expressed by many other Japanese throughout the modern period; it, in effect, became the keynote of Japanese thinking concerning Asia. As an idea, this popular claim to Japanese leadership in Asia was a complex of two contradictory feelings of Japanese towards Asia, that is, solidarity and superiority. When carried too far, therefore, this claim was bound to produce an unreasonably self-centred idea of Japan's mission in Asia, an idea which is also characteristic of modern Japanese views of Asia. For example, Fukuzawa defined Japan's mission in East Asia (China and Korea) in the following vein:

"Our country must not fail to protect them militarily, guide them culturally, and show them the way to arrive at the stage of modern civilization. If unavoidable, our country may even threaten them by force to ensure their progress." (*Jiji shōgen*)

It should be clear from the above discussions that the Japanese sense of identity with Asia, that is, China and Korea, lacked any solid base. It was expressed largely in terms of Japan's own national interest, or the preservation of her national integrity and independence. Other than this egocentric factor, there was only the geographical factor that those countries of East Asia are relatively closer in distance than, for instance, Europe is to Japan.

However, many of the late Tokugawa intellectuals had had a reasonable ground on which to claim their identity with Asia. For instance, Shōzan Sakuma claimed that the West had nothing to offer in the field of virtue and advocated a combination of "Eastern ethics and Western techniques." Sanai Hashimoto was another of such intellectuals, who was convinced that the West could offer machines and techniques, but the virtues such as benevolence, justice, loyalty, and filial piety, had to come from within. A similar view on the superiority of Eastern morality was expressed also by Shōnan Yokoi in the following terms: "We study the Way of the Sages and master Western techniques, not merely for the purposes of enriching and strengthen-

ing the nation, but more significantly for the purpose of establishing the cause of justice and humanity all over the world." All of these men were firmly convinced the East was the exponent of a universal morality, and because of this conviction they were able to maintain an attitude of self-confidence and self-assertion vis-à-vis the West.

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, however, a belief in the supremacy of Western civilization dominated Japan's intellectual scene, and the Japanese confidence in Eastern ethics fast disappeared. The term 'East' (*Tōyō*) was no longer used with the air of respectability it used to create and became a mere synonym of "traditional narrow-mindedness." The Japanese thinker who most vigorously and thoroughly condemned the Eastern Way and traditional learning was none other than Fukuzawa himself. Asking what had been the greatest obstacle to the development of science and the progress of man, Fukuzawa decided that "...if we take the last sixteen years since the Restoration as a most recent example, nothing has been more disturbing and detrimental than the ways of thinking based on the Chinese and Japanese classical studies." (*Bunmei shintairon*)

Fukuzawa's refusal to attribute to the East any universal principle or common *idée* had left him with no positive reason why he had to insist on Japan's identity with Asia. Of course, there was the geographical reason which he considered important from the point of view of Japan's security. But, he could not logically pursue his argument very far just on the basis of this reason, because his emphasis on the development of communications and transportation would ultimately contradict any argument based so heavily on geographical considerations. It was only logical, then, that Fukuzawa soon found it necessary to reconsider his earlier theses on Japan's relations with the rest of Asia.

By 1884, we find that Fukuzawa had arrived at a modified view of Asia. In the September 4, 1884, issue of *Jiji shimpō*, he published an article entitled "Hosha-shinshi no kogen tanomu ni tarazu" (The Old Proverb about Two Things Being Bound to Stand and Fall Together no longer Applies to Our Relationship with China). In that article, he had the following to say: "Geographically speaking, Japan is no doubt an Eastern country, right next to China. Because of this, we tend to think that Japan and China must maintain a close mutual relationship, but in this 19th century world we should not base our argument so much on geographical considerations." In the same article he went on to argue that Japan had been able to maintain her national independence since the opening of her doors, not because of her solidarity with Asian countries, but because Japan had adopted all available tools of modern civilization and tried to put them to maximum use.

It is perhaps safe to conclude that in the above-mentioned article of 1884 Fukuzawa finally arrived at a view of Asia which was in perfect harmony with his concept of civilization. But Fukuzawa himself did not stop there and carried his point further in a famous essay entitled "Datsu-A ron" (Japan Should Detach Herself from Asia), published in the March 16, 1885,

issue of *Jiji shimpō*. There he stated as follows :

“ We cannot wait for our neighbour countries to become so civilized that all may combine together to make Asian progress. We must rather break out of formation and behave in the same way as the civilized countries of the West are doing. We need not be especially cordial to China and Korea just because they are our immediate neighbours. We would do better to treat them in the same way as do the Western nations. Those who keep bad company can never escape a bad reputation.”

Fukuzawa's 1885 thesis was indeed an overt justification of Japan's unrestrained pursuit of her own national interest. It is crystal-clear that this thesis and its condemnation of the East essentially derived from his concept of civilization. It is also undeniable that this thesis served to justify and encourage Japan's imperialistic advances into the Asian continent in the subsequent decades. Fukuzawa should be squarely criticized for the role his 1885 thesis played in leading his country to the catastrophe of the Greater East Asian War. This criticism notwithstanding, we must fully recognize that his 1885 thesis offers one logical alternative to all the other views of Asia developed in modern Japan that are so plagued with fallacy and self-conceit-edness. No view of Asia, which is based on both an identity with and contempt for Asia, will be able to effectively invalidate Fukuzawa's contention that although Japan is located on the eastern edge of Asia, her people no longer identify themselves with Asiatic backwardness, but their identity is now with Western civilization. If Fukuzawa's negative view of Asia is ever to be overcome, there will have to be developed in Japan a completely new concept of Asian solidarity, which is not only immune to the fallacies and self-conceit-edness of the past, but also premised on the principles of equality and autonomy of sovereign nations.

A Short Life History

- 1833 Born on January 10 (or December 12 of the 5th year of Tempō, by the lunar calendar) in a *kurayashiki* of the Nakatsu Clan, which was located at Kitazume, Tamaebashi, Ōsaka (presently in the school grounds of the University of Ōsaka). He was born the fifth child of Hyakusuke Fukuzawa, a retainer of the Nakatsu Clan.
- 1836 His father, Hyakusuke, died of apoplexy. At the age of 13 or 14 set his heart on learning Chinese classics, and learned under Tsuneto Shiraishi, among others.
- 1854 Went to Nagasaki with the intention to learn the Dutch language.
- 1855 Left Nagasaki to become a pupil of Kōan Ogata who taught Dutch in Ōsaka.
- 1856 With the death of his elder brother, Sannosuke, went home in Nakatsu, Kyūshū, to succeed to the house of Fukuzawa. Went back to Ōsaka to become a resident pupil of Kōan Ogata.
- 1858 Opened a Dutch language school within a retainers' quarters of the house of Okudaira (the lord of the Nakatsu Clan), which was located at Tsukiji, Edo (presently Tokyo), this school being the origin of the present Keiō University.
- 1859 Had a chance to visit Yokohama, where he met some foreigners and found that the Dutch language had far less practical use than English, and was resolved to learn English. Began learning the language by himself with the help of an English-

- Dutch dictionary.
- 1860 As the *Bakufu* dispatched a mission to the United States in order to exchange ratifications of the US-Japan Treaty of Commerce, was added to the membership of the mission in the capacity of an attendant on *Settsunokami Kimura*, Commander-in-Chief of the Shogunate's Warships, and went to San Francisco aboard the *Kairinmaru*. There he and Manjirō Nakahama purchased a Webster's dictionary, which was to become the first Webster's ever bought by the Japanese. After coming back to Japan, published *Zōtei Ka-Ei tsūgo* (Chinese-English Dictionary: A New Edition), which was his first published work. Was employed by the *Bakufu* as a translator whose main job was to translate diplomatic documents.
- 1861 Was married to Nishiki, the second daughter of Tarohachi Toki, a retainer of the Nakatsu Clan, and served as the Clan's *Jōfu* in Edo. Went to Europe as a member of the *Bakufu's* diplomatic mission, and came back to Japan in the following year.
- 1864 Was placed on the regular staff of the Foreign Department of the *Bakufu*, his main job being to translate diplomatic documents.
- 1867 Went to the United States for the second time, this time as a member of a warship purchasing mission headed by Tomogorō Ono. Bought while in America many books on history, geography, law, mathematics, etc., which he brought back home.
- 1868 Named his school "Keiō gijuku." After the Restoration, was repeatedly asked to serve the new Government but would never accede to the request.
- 1870 Suffered from typhus which put him in a critical condition at one time, but recovered after three months.
- 1873 As an organization called Meirokusha was formed by Arinori Mori and others, became a member of it.
- 1874 Founded a journal, *Minkan zasshi*. Started a Mita enzetsu kai (Mita Lecturer Series). Various scholars' criticisms of Fukuzawa's "On Duties of Scholars" (*Gakumon no susume*, Part IV) were carried in the *Meiroku zasshi* (Journal of the Meirokusha). A section in Part IV of *Gakumon no susume*, where Fukuzawa compared the historically famous death of Masashige Kusunoki, a loyalist warlord of the 14th century, to a suicide by hanging of Gonsuke (another name of mediocre man on the street), was made a focus of criticism in various newspapers and magazines.
- 1875 The Mita Lecture Hall was opened.
- 1876 Founded a journal *Katei sōdan*.
- 1878 An editorial in the journal *Minkan zasshi* offended the authorities and the journal was forced to discontinue. Was elected as a member of the Tokyo Prefectural Council. (Was elected to the Vice-Chairmanship of the Council in the following year.)
- 1879 With the foundation of the Tokyo Academy, was elected to be its first president.
- 1880 With the foundation of the Kōjunsha, was elected to be the Chairman of the Standing Committee.
- 1881 Met Kaoru Inoue, Hirobumi Itō, and others to discuss the founding of a Government newspaper.
- 1882 Expressed his will to found a non-partisan newspaper, and started the *Jiji shimpō* shortly afterwards. The newspaper was ordered by the Government to discontinue on account of his editorial entitled "A Clan Government with Few Men of Ability."
- 1884 Leaders of the Korean Independence Party, Kim Ok-kyun, Pak Yong-hyo, and others sought refuge in Japan and came under the patronage of Fukuzawa.
- 1886 As the first step of his plan to tour the country, toured the Tōkaidō (the Pacific coastal area of central Japan).

- 1889 Was elected to be a member of the Tokyo City Council, but declined with thanks.
- 1892 Exerted himself in helping Shibasaburō Kitazato establish an infectious diseases institute.
- 1894 With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, made an appeal for war funds and started a funds campaign.
- 1898 Completed *Fukuō jiden*. Had a fit of apoplexy and fell into a critical condition, but recovered shortly.
- 1901 Wrote "Remarks of a 'Sour Grapes'" as an editorial of the *Jiji shimpō*, which provoked a controversy with Sohō Tokutomi. Fell again by a stroke of apoplexy in January, and died on 3rd February.

A List of Works*

(Listed in Alphabetical Order)

- Bunkenron* (On Decentralization of Power), 1877. IV.
- Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (A General Inquiry into the Nature of Civilization), 1875. IV.
- Chōai no hō* (How to Keep Accounts), 1873-74. III.
- Danjo kōsai ron* (On Social Intercourse between Men and Women), 1886. V.
- Dōmō oshiegun* (A Children's Guide to Enlightenment), 1872. III.
- Eikoku gijiin dan* (The British Parliament Discussed), 1869. II.
- Fukuō hyakuwa* (Fukuō Talks), 1897. VI.
- Fukuō Hyaku-yowa* (Fukuō Talks More), 1901. VI.
- Fukuō jiden* (Autobiography), 1899. VII.
- Fukuzawa bunshū* (Fukuzawa's Works), 1878-79. IV.
- Fukuzawa sensei ukiyo dan* (Mr. Fukuzawa Talks on the World), 1898. VI.
- Fukuzawa zenshū chogen* (Preface to the Complete Works of Fukuzawa), 1897. I.
- Jiji shōgen* (A Critique of the Trends of the Times), 1881. V.
- Jiji taisei ron* (On the General Trend of the Times), 1882. V.
- Jitsugyō ron* (On Business), 1893. VI.
- Jōyaku jū-ichi koku ki* (The Eleven Treaty Powers Observed), 1867. II.
- Gakumon no dokuritsu* (Independence of Learning), 1883. V.
- Gakumon no susume* (Exhortation to Learning), 1872-76. III.
- Gakusha anshin ron* (Scholars Can Rest Assured), 1876. IV.
- Hei ron* (On Military Affairs), 1882. V.
- Heishi kaichū binran* (Pocket Manual for Soldiers), 1868. II.
- Hinkō ron* (On One's Conduct), 1885. V.
- Kaigi ben* (Conference Discussed), 1873. III.
- Kaireki ben* (Revision of Calendar Discussed), 1873. III.
- Katawa musume* (Those Morally Deformed Girls), 1872. III.
- Keimō tenarai no bun* (A New Textbook for Penmanship), III.

* This list was compiled from the "Life History of Yukichi Fukuzawa" in Volume XXI of *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshū* (The Complete Works of Yukichi Fukuzawa), 21 volumes, Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten, 1958-1964. Each date given in the list shows the year of publication and the Roman numerals show the number of the volume of the *Complete Works* in which each essay is contained. Besides the *Complete Works*, there is also a *Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshū* (Selected Works of Yukichi Fukuzawa), 8 volumes, Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten, 1951-1952.

- Kokkai ron* (On the National Diet), 1879. V.
- Kunmō kyūri zukai* (Illustrated Explanations of Common Scientific Principles), 1868. II.
- Meiji jū nen teichū kōron: Yasegaman no setsu* (A Critique of the 1887 Incident), 1901. VI.
- Minjō isshin* (A Reorientation of the People's Lives), 1879. V.
- Minkan keizai roku* (Essays on Private Business), 1877-80. IV.
- Moji no oshie* (A New Guide to Japanese Characters), 1873. III.
- Nippon chizu zōshi* (A Geographical Description of Japan), 1873. III.
- Nippon danshi ron* (On Japanese Men), 1888. V.
- Nippon fujin ron* (On Japanese Women), 1885. V.
- Onna daigaku hyōron: Shin onna daigaku* (Critical Essays on the Position of Women), 1899. VI.
- Raijū sōhō* (How to Handle a Rifle), 1866-70. II.
- Seiyō I-shoku-jū* (Western Diet, Clothings, and Housing), 1867. II.
- Seiyō jijō* (Occidental Affairs), 1866-70. I.
- Seiyō tabi annai* (A Travel Guide to the West), 1867. II.
- Sekai kuni zukushi* (Facts about the Countries of the World), 1869. II.
- Shijin shosai ron* (On the Art of Living), 1885. V.
- Shin-Ei kōsai shimatsu* (An Account of British-Chinese Relations), 1869. II.
- Shōchū bankoku ichiran* (Pocket Handbook on the World), 1869. II.
- Sonnō ron* (On Royalism), 1888. VI.
- Teishitsu ron* (On the Imperial Family), 1882. V.
- Tokuiku ikan* (On the Moral Education), 1882. V.
- Tsūka ron* (On Currency), 1878. IV.
- Tsūzoku gaikō ron* (A Popularized Essay on Diplomacy), 1884. V.
- Tsūzoku kokken ron* (A Popularized Essay on National Power), 1878-79. IV.
- Tsūzoku minken ron* (A Popularized Essay on People's Rights), 1878. IV.
- Yōhei meikan* (Directory for Western Military Affairs), 1869. II.
- Zenkoku chōhei ron* (For Universal Conscription), 1884. V.
- Zōtei Ka-Ei tsūgo* (Chinese-English Dictionary: A New Edition), 1860. I.