

JAPANESE PROFESSORS RESIST UNIVERSITY REFORMS DURING THE U.S. OCCUPATION

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Introduction

In April 2004, Japanese national universities underwent a drastic transformation, which consisted of a conversion from so-called ivory towers to “national university corporations” (*Hōjin-ka*). The reformed universities are supposed to become more accountable to taxpayers and more responsive to the needs of society. Non-academic advisors and consultants have been brought in to achieve this goal.¹ However, before 2004, university autonomy (e.g., governance solely by the faculty, thereby excluding any external influence) had been guarded jealously.

Sixty years earlier, when the United States occupied Japan from 1945 to 1952, Dr. Walter C. Eells, an American educator who served as advisor on higher education in the CIE (Civil Information and Education Section) at occupation headquarters, criticized Japanese national universities for their lack of accountability and advocated a new system of governance: the board of trustees.

Japanese professors vehemently rejected his plan, which contained ideas that were alien and dangerous to them. The reason for their opposition was that such a system would destroy their long-cherished university autonomy, over which they had a virtual monopoly. In 1948, Shigeru Nanbara, the president of Tokyo University at the time, made the following statement to an occupation officer on behalf of his and six other national universities: “University people themselves, more than anyone else, must guard...the mission of the university.”² His statement epitomized the belief

¹ Shinichi Yamamoto, “Universities and Government in Post-War Japan,” *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 34/3 (2004): pp. 119–120; Shinichi Yamamoto, “National Universities Before and After Incorporation,” *Daigaku kenkyū* 35 (2007): pp. 22–23; and Akira Arimoto, “Market and Higher Education in Japan,” *Higher Education Policy* 10/3-4 (1997): p. 207.

² Shigeru Nanbara and the other six presidents of national universities to Orr, Education Division, the CIE, “On the Proposal to Establish Boards of

held by Japanese academics as to how national universities should be governed.

Most, if not all, studies on educational reform during the U.S. occupation accuse Dr. Eells of being the instigator of the Red Purge in universities.³ His association with the anti-communist movement eclipses his other important actions, such as his conspicuous role in the controversy over the introduction of a board of trustees as a system of governance for national universities.

This paper discusses Eells' proposal for university governance and the reason for its rejection by Japanese academics. The analysis reveals the vast difference between the views held by Japanese professors and an American educator with regard to "the mission of the university." Historical developments in higher education in Japan nurtured a distinct sense of autonomy at national universities, which hindered reforms from within. Indeed, this study will show that self-perpetuating isolationism among Japan's academia had and still may have implications for the reform of higher education.⁴

Trustees in National Universities" (July 15, 1948) p. 1; box 29, Joseph C. Trainor Papers, the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

³ Hideo Takemura, "The Role of the National Government in Japanese Higher Education, 1868–1980" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1982), p. 162; T. John Pempel, *Patterns of Japanese Policymaking: Experiences from Higher Education* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), p. 51; and Toshio Nishi, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), p. 258.

⁴ In Japan, there are three categories of universities: national (*kokuritsu*), public [municipal] (*kōritsu*), and private (*shiritsu*). In this paper, I have focused on the national universities, and used national and publicly funded universities interchangeably. As of April 2004, there were 88 national, 77 public and 545 private four-year higher educational institutions. See Roger Goodman, "W(h)ither the Japanese University? An Introduction to the 2004 Higher Education Reforms in Japan," in J.S. Eads, Roger Goodman and Yumiko Hada, eds., *The "Big Bang" in Japanese Higher Education: The 2004 Reforms and the Dynamics of Change* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2005), p. 5.

Universities for the State in Prewar Japan

Modern higher education in Japan began in 1886 with the establishment of Tokyo Imperial University. In prewar Japan, imperial universities were at the top of a higher education pyramid, with Tokyo Imperial and Kyoto Imperial Universities being the most dominant.⁵ In particular, Tokyo Imperial reigned at the pinnacle of the education system and became the center of academic research and a site for training high-ranking government officials to meet the requirements of Imperial Japan.

Meanwhile, a number of individuals founded private higher education institutions. However, the government did not provide any financial support to these private schools because it considered them to be “breeding grounds of anti-establishment thought,” nor did it bestow the legal status of university (*daigaku*) upon them until the early twentieth century.⁶ For the oligarchic leaders of the Meiji period (1868–1912), the purpose of higher education was not to pursue knowledge for its own sake but to support the progress of the empire. In fact, Article I of the 1886 Imperial University Ordinance (*Teikoku daigakurei*) states explicitly that “the mission of an imperial university is to serve the state.” The Ordinance of 1881 described faculty members of imperial universities as “civil servants.”⁷

In the still-fragile stage of a fledgling modern nation-state, Japanese leaders, fearing public censure, excluded a clause pertaining to

⁵ A decade later, the Japanese government founded Kyoto Imperial University (1897). Another five universities, Tōhoku (1907), Kyūshū (1910), Hokkaidō (1918), Ōsaka (1931), and Nagoya (1940) were founded during the prewar period.

⁶ Takashi Tachibana, *Tennō to tōdai* [Emperor and Tokyo University] (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2005), 1: 156; Akito Okada, “A History of the Japanese University,” in J.S. Eads, Roger Goodman and Yumiko Hada, eds., *The “Big Bang” in Japanese Higher Education*, (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2005), p. 32.

⁷ Tetsuya Kobayashi, *Society, Schools, and Progress in Japan* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1976), p. 29; Michio Nagai, *Higher Education in Japan: Its Takeoff and Crash* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1971), p. 21; and Byron K. Marshall, *Academic Freedom and the Japanese Imperial University, 1868–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 60.

academic freedom from the Meiji Imperial Constitution. Against this political and cultural backdrop, in a country where there was no guarantee of academic freedom, professors at imperial universities fought for the right of free inquiry.⁸

University Autonomy in Prewar Japan

Originally, the governance of national universities had a hierarchical chain of command with the Education Minister at the top. The education ministry possessed comprehensive powers for regulating imperial universities. On behalf of the emperor, an education minister appointed the university presidents as well as the university council (*Hyōgikai*), which was the highest organ of university governance and was obligated to report all proceedings to the minister. The concept of university autonomy, an essential prerequisite for academic freedom, emerged as a result of a number of critical events at Tokyo Imperial and Kyoto Imperial Universities.⁹

The Tomizu Incident of 1905 helped establish the concept of university independence and freedom from undue government control. During 1903 to 1905, as Japan and Russia prepared for a violent showdown, seven professors from Tokyo Imperial, headed by Professor Hirono Tomizu, harshly criticized the Japanese government's policy towards Russia. The Education Minister, breaking the tradition of first consulting with the university president, suspended Professor Tomizu. Other faculty members, sensing an imminent threat to their own freedom of inquiry, demanded that Tomizu be reinstated. The ensuing fight between the Education Ministry and the faculty worsened steadily over a period of

⁸ Teruhisa Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology in Modern Japan: State Authority and Intellectual Freedom*, trans. Steven Platzer (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1988), p. 72.

⁹ For studies on the development of university autonomy in prewar Japan, see Byron K. Marshall, *Academic Freedom and the Japanese Imperial University, 1868–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Masao Terasaki, *Nihon ni okeru daigaku jichi seido no seiritsu*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 2000); Doo Soo Suh, "The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Japanese Universities Before 1945" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1953); and Akio Ikazaki, *Daigaku jichi no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shin nihon shuppansha, 1965; Rpt. 1968).

nearly two years. Eventually, the Prime Minister intervened by dismissing the education minister and reinstating Tomizu.¹⁰

In 1913, the Sawayanagi Incident at Kyoto Imperial University set the precedent that the faculty members of each department, rather than the university president, should have control over matters concerning personnel. The newly appointed president at Kyoto Imperial, Seitarō Sawayanagi, forced the early retirement of seven professors citing incompetence. Other professors protested and declared that the competency of a scholar could be judged only by other scholars in the same field. Because of Sawayanagi's refusal to yield to the faculty's demand, the faculty representatives appealed directly to the education minister, who agreed with their argument. Humiliated, Sawayanagi resigned. Encouraged by this victory, the faculty members demanded that they also be allowed to elect a president from among themselves, a new, if not revolutionary, practice that the minister also approved. Thereafter, the faculty members of each department exercised autonomous power over personnel matters and other internal governance issues.¹¹

By 1920, all the imperial universities followed a system of *de facto* university self-governance. The faculty chose a president from among themselves and accounted for two-thirds of the university's council members, with the remaining third consisting of departmental chairmen sitting *ex officio*.¹²

This autonomy, which was virtually a monopoly of power in the hands of the professors, protected them even during the long year of war, albeit with one exception. This was the "Takigawa Incident" of 1930, the only case in which the independence of an imperial university was breached. When the ultranationalist groups pressured the education ministry to ban two books written by Yukitoki Takigawa, a law professor at Kyoto Imperial University, the president of the university advised the education

¹⁰ Doo Soo Suh, "The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Japanese Universities Before 1945," p. 320.

¹¹ Akio Ikazaki, *Daigaku jichi no rekishi*, p. 37; Suh, "The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Japanese Universities Before 1945," pp. 321–326.

¹² Byron K. Marshall, "Growth and Conflict in Japanese Higher Education, 1905–1930," in Tetsuo Najita and J. Victor Koschmann, eds., *Conflict in Modern Japanese History: The Neglected Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 282–283.

minister to consider the scholarly opinions of other competent professors. However, under intense pressure from the Justice Ministry and the Home Ministry, the Education Minister fired Takigawa. As a show of protest, the president of Kyoto Imperial and all other law professors resigned. However, their action did not result in a retraction of the education minister's decision.¹³ Because of their long struggle for their independence of thought before and during the war, Japanese academics developed an aversion to any external interventions in the governance of their universities.

The Allied Occupation and Educational Reform

Imperial Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers on August 15, 1945. The Allied forces, under the leadership of the United States, occupied Japan from September 1945 to April 1952. President Harry S Truman designated U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). The ultimate aim of the occupation was what is now called a “regime change” – an ideological transformation of Japan's authoritarian system to democracy. The Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of the General Headquarters (GHQ) was in charge of the educational reforms.¹⁴ Within the first three months of the occupation, the CIE abolished all restrictive laws and established freedom of thought. In addition, the CIE expected that Japanese educators and scholars to initiate further reforms.

¹³ Ikazaki, *Daigaku jichi no rekishi*, pp. 60–61; and Suh, “The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Japanese Universities before 1945.”

¹⁴ Department of State, Office of Intelligence Coordination and Liaison, “Progress in the Field of Education in Japan since the Surrender” (December 9, 1946) Intelligence Research Report OCL-4119.097.3 Z1092 No. 4119S, p. 1 and p. 57, in *O.S.S./State Department Intelligence and Research Reports, Part II Postwar Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia*. Microfilm (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1977), on reel 3 of six microfilm reels; and Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), SCAP, CIE, Education Division, *Education in the New Japan* (Tokyo: General Headquarters, SCAP, CIE, Education Division, May 1948), 2: 58. For a well-documented study on educational reforms, see Toshio Nishi, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945–1952* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982).

In early March of 1946, MacArthur invited 27 education specialists from the United States to visit Tokyo. Headed by Dr. George D. Stoddard, they formed the U.S. Education Mission, which was tasked with investigating the entire education system in Japan and presenting recommendations for reforms. To facilitate the work of the Mission, MacArthur ordered the education ministry to establish the Japanese Education Committee. This committee consisted of 29 educators, most of whom were prominent professors at either national or private universities. The ministry appointed 56-year-old Dr. Shigeru Nanbara (1889–1974), President of Tokyo Imperial University, as the Chairman of the Committee.¹⁵

The Japanese Committee provided information about Japan's prewar and wartime education to the U.S. Education Mission. The American educators, in turn, suggested ways to encourage elementary and secondary education to move toward teaching democracy. Regarding higher education, both the American and Japanese parties agreed that academic freedom should be guaranteed and that universities needed to participate more actively in society. According to Nanbara, the American educators praised the governance system within Japanese imperial universities as democratic because faculty members' votes determined the outcome of personnel and policy decisions.¹⁶

At the end of its three-week stint, the U.S. Mission presented its report to MacArthur. The Mission made detailed recommendations for primary and middle schools, but it said hardly anything about higher education except regarding academic freedom. The American educators

¹⁵ "Japanese Educational Reform Committee" (September 17, 1946) p. 1; box 33, Joseph C. Trainor Papers, 1933–1980, the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. For a detailed study on the discussion between the Mission and Japanese educators, see Gary H. Tsuchimochi, *Shinsei Daigaku no tanjō: sengo shiritsu daigaku seisaku no tenkai* (Tokyo: Tamagawa daigaku shuppanbu, 1996).

¹⁶ "Japanese Educational Reform Committee" (September 17, 1946) p. 1; Shigeru Nanbara, "Shin daigakusei no mondai [Problems in the New University System]" (Remarks at conference of the university administrators, February 14, 1949) in Masao Terasaki, ed., *Nanbara Shigeru kyōiku kaikaku: daigaku kaikaku ronshū* [Nanbara Shigeru's Essays on University Reforms] (Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 2001), p. 353.

did, however, say that higher education must not be “the privilege of a few,” as was the norm in Japan.¹⁷

These American specialists emphasized the importance of the decentralization of administration as a means to restore and fortify academic freedom and university autonomy, because, for them, democratization implied that administration was supposed to be as responsive to the ordinary people as possible. They insisted that the education ministry’s control be limited to examining “the qualifications of a proposed institution of higher education.” They recommended that faculty members should govern “academic affairs” and establish “national associations of teachers, professors, and of universities.”¹⁸

In response, the Japanese Association of University Professors (JAUP), modeled after the Association of American University Professors (AAUP), was established on December 1, 1946 and chaired by Nanbara. Moreover, Article 23 of the New Constitution included the phrase, “Academic freedom is guaranteed.” This short sentence has been interpreted as a solid guarantee of “university autonomy and the right of academic professionals to academic investigation and expression,” and as legal protection against undue control by the state.¹⁹

Japanese Initiatives in Education Reform

The U.S. Education Mission’s recommendations served as a blueprint for postwar educational reform. However, Donald R. Nugent, then

¹⁷ United States, Department of State, *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan*, Department of State Publication 2579, Far Eastern Series 11 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 47–56, 61; Gary H. Tsuchimochi, *Beikoku kyōiku shisetsudan no kenkyū* (Machida-shi: Tamagawa daigaku shuppanbu, 1991), p. 217; and Tokiomi Kaigo and Masao Terasaki, *Daigaku kyōiku* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1969), p. 569.

¹⁸ United States, Department of State, *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan*, pp. 25, 50, 61–62.

¹⁹ Tatsunosuke Ueda, “Beikoku daigaku kyōju rengō to ‘daigaku no jiyū’” [The Association of American University Professors and the Freedom of the University], *Kaihō* 5 (1950): p. 62; Lawrence Ward Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan: A Study in Comparative Law, Politics, and Society*, 1st ed. (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984), p. 253.

the acting Chief of the CIE, gave assurances that “the Japanese will take the initiative in adopting the reforms proposed by the American Mission, and [the] CIE will act merely in an advisory capacity.” To that end, the CIE requested that the Japanese Committee, which had worked with the U.S. Mission, be elevated to a more “authoritative” position that would be “autonomous and independent” of the education ministry.²⁰ The CIE established a fundamental policy that was to reduce the education ministry’s power.

Nugent became the Chief of the CIE in May of 1946 when the first chief, Brigadier General Ken R. Dyke, returned to the United States. In contrast to Dyke, who had a limited knowledge of Japan, Nugent knew Japanese education very well. He had earned a B.A. and an M.A. in Education, and a Ph.D. in Far Eastern History from Stanford University. From 1937 to 1941, he taught in Japanese schools and colleges. During the war, he joined the Marines and underwent intensive training in Japanese and psychological warfare. He was the key person who upheld the policy within the CIE of respecting Japanese initiatives.²¹

In August of 1946, the Japanese Education Reform Committee (JERC) was established as “a cabinet level group” that would operate autonomously and would be free from the control of either SCAP or the

²⁰ Department of State, Office of Research and Intelligence, Division of Far East Intelligence, “Situation Report – Japan, Comments on Current Intelligence” (May 24, 1946), p. 5, File 097.3 Z1092 No 3479.10. Microfilm. (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1977), on reel 4 of six microfilm reels; “Japanese Educational Reform Committee” (September 17, 1946), p. 2; box 33, Joseph C. Trainor Papers; and SCAP, CIE, Education Division, *Education in the New Japan* 1: 144–145.

²¹ Donald R. Nugent, interviewed by Harry Wray, *Harry Wray Oral History Collection: Interviews & Correspondences*, Meisei daigaku sengo kyōikushi kenkyū sentā [Meisei University, Center of Study on History of Postwar Japan Education Reform], Hino-shi, Tokyo (February 1980); and Eiji Takemae, *Inside GHQ: Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 181. Long after the Occupation ended, Nanbara commented that Nugent kept his word until the end of the Occupation and it was fortunate for Japan that Nugent was the Chief of the CIE. See Terasaki, ed., *Nanbara Shigeru kyōiku kaikaku: daigaku kaikaku ronshū*, pp. 187–188.

education ministry.²² At the first JERC meeting, Nugent said, “We give you complete freedom. Since this educational problem is yours alone, feel free to discuss matters openly and arrive at your own decisions. We will never interfere with you.”²³ Although he made sure that the JERC took the U.S. Mission’s recommendations into account, especially with regard to the decentralization of educational administration, Nugent wanted the JERC to be in charge.²⁴

Reforms proceeded smoothly. In March of 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education, which provided a legal basis for equal opportunity in education, was enacted. Based on this egalitarian principle, the School Education Law, in the same month replaced “the old discriminatory educational ladder” in the dual-track (“the brightest vs. the not so bright”) system with a single-track system of six years of primary education, three years of middle school, three years of high school, and four years of university.²⁵ In theory, universities were transformed from elite institutions into egalitarian ones to serve the needs of all the people. This shift to a new system required that drastic changes be made in the existing institutions of higher education.

During this restructuring, conflicts emerged between the JERC and the CIE with regard to the governance system in national universities. It

²² SCAP, CIE, Education Division, *Education in the New Japan* 1: 145; Department of State, Office of Intelligence Coordination and Liaison, “Progress in the Field of Education in Japan Since the Surrender” (December 9, 1946) 097.3 Z1092 no. 4119S, p. 47 in *O.S.S./State Department Intelligence and Research Report: II, Postwar Japan, Korea, and South Asia*. Microfilm. (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1977), on reel 3 of six microfilm reels; and SCAP, CIE, Education 3 Division, *Education in the New Japan* 1: 144–145.

²³ Masao Terasaki, ed., *Nanbara shigeru kyōiku kaikaku: daigaku kaikaku ronshū* (Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 2001), pp. 187–188.

²⁴ Joseph C. Trainor, *Education Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor’s Memoir* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1983), p. 222.

²⁵ “Fundamental Law of Education,” in *Education in the New Japan* 2: 109; SCAP, CIE, “Mission and Accomplishments of the Occupation in the Civil Information and Education Fields” (Tokyo: Civil Information and Education Section, 1949), p. 11; and Takemura, “The Role of the National Government in Japanese Higher Education, 1868–1980,” pp. 148–149.

was the newly appointed advisor on higher education, Dr. Walter C. Eells (1886–1962), who triggered the conflict. The CIE hired Eells, then 61 years old, in March of 1947, when the new education laws had just been passed.²⁶ After obtaining a Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University, Eells had taught at Whitworth College, the U.S. Naval Academy, Whitman College, and his alma mater. At Stanford, he earned a national reputation as a scholar in the field of junior college education. In 1938, he became the first full-time executive secretary of the American Association of Junior Colleges, in Washington, D.C. In 1945, he assumed a government position as chief of the Foreign Education Division of the Veterans Administration.²⁷ Two of his colleagues recalled that Eells had the ability to “press for his point of view in the face of stiff opposition because it was unthinkable [for] him to accept second best.”²⁸ Eells demonstrated such persistence in Tokyo.

The CIE and the Japanese education leaders agreed on one thing: the power of the education ministry should be diminished, preferably eliminated. However, there was little consensus about where the current powers of the ministry should be redistributed.²⁹ The CIE’s insistence on decentralizing governance originated from its conviction that the central power should be transferred to local boards of education. Decentralizing the elementary and middle school levels of the education system was not difficult:³⁰ in December of 1947, the JERC prepared the Board of Education Bill, whereby an education committee would be established in each prefecture and manned by locally elected people.

²⁶ Walter C. Eells, “Preface” (May 15, 1954) Walter C. Eells Papers, Whitman College Manuscript Collection, Penrose Library, Whitman College, WA.

²⁷ *Who Was Who in America with World Notables*, vol. 4, 1961–1968 (Chicago: Marquis-Who’s Who, 1968), s.v. “Eells, Walter Crosby.”

²⁸ Curtis Bishop, “Walter C. Eells,” *Junior College Journal* 33/6 (1963): p. 3; and Ernest V. Hollis, “Walter Crosby Eells, 1886–1962,” *School and Society* 91 (1963): p. 242.

²⁹ Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor’s Memoir*, p. 238.

³⁰ Masako Shibata, *Japan and Germany Under the U.S. Occupation: A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Education Reform* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), p. 85.

However, the JERC had a different idea for universities. Most of the JERC members were university professors who whole-heartedly agreed with the CIE that the universities should be independent of the education ministry. This consensus had resulted in the School Education Law of March of 1947, Article 59, which reads, “the university shall have a faculty meeting to discuss and deliberate over important matters.”³¹ This law did not specify the role of the ministry in the administration of national universities. The JERC was of the view that publicly funded universities should be absolutely free of governmental control except in cases wherein funds had to be allocated.³²

Since the departure of the U.S. Education Mission, the Education Ministry had been making desperate efforts to retain its enormous power. In November of 1946, the Ministry had established a less public but ultimately just as powerful special committee to deliberate on the standards for the new university system. But the CIE, ever vigilant, instructed that this new committee should be totally disassociated from the ministry. In July of 1947, this new group evolved to become the University Accrediting Association (UAA) (*Daigaku kijun kyōkai*). The UAA was independent of both the education ministry and the JERC.³³

Members of the CIE’s Higher Education Section, especially Eells, was pleased with this CIE-initiated development. Although Eells’ superior, Education Section Chief Mark T. Orr, like Nugent, respected the Japanese autonomy and urged that there be less instruction from GHQ, Orr’s staff were concerned that their own suggestions were always being ignored. They wanted a Japanese committee that would follow their advice. Given a new opportunity to exert influence over an “independent UAA,” Eells and the other discontented staff members attended every session of the UAA.³⁴

³¹ SCAP, CIE, Education Division, *Education in the New Japan 2*: p. 122.

³² Saburō Ienaga, *Daigaku no jiyū no rekishi*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1962; Rpt., 1965), p. 104.

³³ Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor’s Memoir* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1983), p. 229; Takemura, “The Role of the National Government in Japanese Higher Education, 1868–1980,” p. 140.

³⁴ Hitoshi Ōsaki, *Daigaku kaikaku, 1945–1999* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1999), pp. 67, 71–72; and Takashi Hata, *Sengo daigaku kaikaku* (Machida-shi: Tamagawa daigaku shuppanbu, 1999), p. 82.

The UAA was, in fact, operating under the direct supervision of the American advisors.

Eells stated at one meeting that the UAA should review the CIE's new plan for there to be local boards of education for public universities. To Eells' acute disappointment, the UAA members opposed the plan, arguing that (1) Japanese public universities had been established for national and not local needs; (2) local boards of education would not have the ability to understand the mission of universities, thereby lowering the quality of the universities; (3) the plan would expose the universities to political and economic manipulation, i.e., intrusions in faculty autonomy; and (4) local governments did not have sufficient funds to support universities. The JERC also opposed the plan, citing similar reasons.³⁵

Eells rejected these arguments put forward by Japanese academia. According to Eells, the education ministry's power had to be decentralized thoroughly.³⁶ In fact, the SCAP (GHQ) tried to give each prefecture more power, in much the same way as the federal system operated in the United States. Eells believed that each prefecture should have its own public university, and that Japan's public universities should be like America's state universities. In reality, Japan is smaller than California and Japan's prefectures are instead similar in size to the small counties in California. Nevertheless, Eells still believed that giving autonomy to local people was the true beginning of democratization.

In early January of 1948, Eells handed Orr a document entitled, "Suggested Plan for Publicly Controlled Universities in Japan Higher Education Unit," in which it was proposed that each publicly funded university should have its own local board of trustees. Eells prescribed that "some intermediary administrative advisory organ between the ministry and

³⁵ John T. Pempel, *Patterns of Japanese Policymaking: Experiences from Higher Education* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), p. 49; Takashi Hata, *Sengo daigaku kaikaku*, pp. 76–78; Shibata, *Japan and Germany Under the U.S. Occupation*, pp. 89–90; and Kaigo and Terasaki, *Daigaku kyōiku*, p. 587.

³⁶ Harry Wray, "Senryōki ni okeru kyōiku kaikaku [Trilateral Relationship: SCAP, the Ministry of Education and the Japan Education Reform Committee]" in *Tennō ga baiburu o yonda hi* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982), p. 67.

the faculty councils” was necessary to supervise the overall administration of the university.³⁷

In publicly supported universities in the United States, the trustees’ most important function is to appoint a president or chancellor. Although faculty members have independent jurisdiction over the curriculum within their own departments, their power over budgetary and personnel matters is limited to only offering recommendations.³⁸ Eells believed that this American system would be a perfect model for Japan because it would restrict the control exercised by the education ministry and make each university more accountable to taxpayers. However, elitist Japanese professors found it difficult to understand the rationale underlying Eells’ proposal.

Structural changes in Japan’s school system did not correspondingly alter the mentality of these Japanese educators, whose uniform conviction about the mission of the university was set in the prewar era: universities were for a select few who would become leaders of industry, science, commerce, and politics in Japan, and only the professors themselves could make decisions with regard to academic standards, the content of courses, and the selection of personnel. Leaders in the Japanese education system had no trust in lay people who were less educated and who, until recently, had followed the military government’s orders. The academic elite believed that a “philosopher king” should govern the university. To the professors, governance by lay people was the equivalent of anarchy by the ignorant.

Eells, at the March of 1948 meeting of the UAA, informally solicited members’ opinions regarding introducing a board of trustees into the system of governance. Their reaction was “most emphatically negative.”³⁹ When the JERC learned about Eells’ proposal, they, too, opposed it strongly.

³⁷ Hata, *Sengo daigaku kaikaku*, pp. 79–80; Ōsaki, *Daigaku kaikaku*, pp. 139–140; and Pempel, *Patterns of Japanese Policymaking*, p. 48.

³⁸ Burton R. Clark, “United States,” in John H. Van de Graaff, ed., *Academic Power: Pattern of Authority in Seven National Systems of Higher Education* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), pp. 111–112.

³⁹ Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan*, p. 238; and Hata, *Sengo daigaku kaikaku*, pp. 82–84.

Eells vs. Nanbara

The Board of Education Bill was passed on July 15, 1948, and the education ministry lost its control over public elementary and secondary schools. The ministry, however, did retain control over publicly funded universities. Despite strong opposition from Japanese academics, Eells continued to advocate the implementation of boards of trustees in national universities. His next proposal was a more comprehensive reform package called the "Eells' plan."⁴⁰ According to his recommendation, each prefecture would have one national university, which would consist of liberal arts and education departments so as to offer "both cultural and vocational education." These universities would be governed by boards of trustees. Eells argued that because universities should meet the needs of society, private citizens representing the public should decide policies, personnel, and curricula. From his perspective, the absence of such representation was absolutely undemocratic.⁴¹

When Eells proposed to Chief Orr that the CIE recommend his new plan to the JERC for adoption, other CIE officers opposed such a move, arguing that the proposal went against the CIE's policy of encouraging Japanese initiatives. Thus, tension arose within the CIE between those who were encouraging the Japanese to make their own decisions and those like Eells who wanted to effect a change in Japanese higher education. Eells believed that unless the occupation authorities exerted pressure, the Japanese would not change anything.⁴²

⁴⁰ Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan*, p. 238; Shibata, *Japan and Germany Under the U.S. Occupation*, p. 85; Kaigo and Terasaki, *Daigaku kyōiku*, p. 594.

⁴¹ Department of State, Division of Research for Far East, Office of Intelligence Research (OIR) "Political Activities in Japanese Universities and Colleges" (September 21, 1949) p. 3, File 097.3A1092. No. 5003C. Microfilm. (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1977), on reel 5 of six microfilm reels; Shigeru Nanbara, "Storm Over the University Law: Reasons Given Opposing Education Ministry Plan," *Nippon Times* (July 20, 1949); Genichi Ōyama, "No More Eells' Tōsōki" *Chūō Kōron* (November 1968): p. 175; and Terukitsu Tanakadate, "Daigaku no jichi to gakusei no hōteki mondai 8," *Kōsei hodō* 185 (1981): p. 52; Ōsaki, *Daigaku kaikaku*, p. 152.

⁴² Hata, *Sengo daigaku kaikaku*, p. 81.

CIE Chief Nugent had to reiterate the CIE policies to Eells. Eells would not compromise on his beliefs. The Eells' plan was eventually approved by Nugent and then presented by Eells to the education ministry as an official policy of the CIE.⁴³ The education ministry divulged Eells' plan to certain JERC members, including the President of Tokyo University, Nanbara. Representing the other six presidents of Japan's former imperial universities, Nanbara expressed his vigorous objections in a letter to Orr dated July 15, 1948.

Nanbara argued that a university was supposed to be "a special, social organization" whose mission was to search for the truth and provide liberal education and specialized training to create professionals. Under the Eells' plan, Nanbara wrote, vocational training would become the major objective of university education, thereby reducing the value of pure research and scholarship and lowering academic standards. Moreover, he continued, academic independence would be gravely compromised by the intrusion of a board of trustees who would have their own non-academic agenda. Nanbara insisted that a university must be an organization that was protected from political interference.⁴⁴

By referring to the prewar Tomizu Incident and the Sawayanagi Incident, Nanbara explained how university autonomy had developed "as a result of long years of effort by university elders and professors and lived to this day as a priceless heritage." He emphasized that, unlike the United States, Japan was still an unstable democracy, and hence the radical backlash of reactionary forces would certainly arise again and try to destroy it. He posed a rhetorical question, "What would happen if universities loosened their guard and allowed people who do not understand the sacred mission of universities to manage them?" He repeated his belief that

⁴³ Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan*, p. 238.

⁴⁴ Shigeru Nanbara and the other six presidents of national universities to Orr, Education Division, the CIE, "On the Proposal to Establish Boards of Trustees in National Universities" (July 15, 1948), p. 1 (Original in English); box 29, Joseph C. Trainor Papers, the Hoover Institution Archives; "Storm Over the University Law: Reasons Given Opposing Education Ministry Plan," by Shigeru Nanbara, *Nippon Times* (July 10, 1949); and Department of State, Division of Research for Far East, Office of Intelligence Research (OIR), "Political Activities in Japanese Universities and Colleges" (September 21, 1949), p. 3.

“university people themselves – more than anyone else – must guard...the mission of the university.” The Eells’ plan, in which “only four of thirteen board members” would be selected from among university personnel, was meant to disempower faculty members. Nanbara maintained that, even in the United States, the board of trustees system had its critics. If such a system were introduced in Japan, he continued, “it would stultify the tradition and strong points of Japanese universities cultivated by years of indefatigable efforts...and would...give rise to fresh dangers and evils.”⁴⁵

Orr forwarded Nanbara’s letter to Eells, who immediately responded in a memorandum to Orr. “Such a narrow and restricted concept of a university,” Eells wrote, was unacceptable and Japanese universities tended to remain “highly monopolistic and bureaucratic” and therefore “quite unresponsive to broad social needs.” He believed that Nanbara’s view limited a university to an elite group of individuals who were isolated in an ivory tower. He stressed that national universities, supported by “public funds,” “belong to the people” and were supposed to be accountable to the public, and, therefore, should not be exclusive.⁴⁶

Eells did concur that universities must be protected against unwarranted interference and reassured Nanbara that academic freedom and tenure, as set out by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), would be put into practice.⁴⁷ He also admitted that the board of

⁴⁵ Shigeru Nanbara and the other six presidents of national universities to Orr, Education Division, the CIE, “On the Proposal to Establish Boards of Trustees in National Universities” (July 15, 1948), p. 1; Shigeru Nanbara, *Nihon to Amerika* (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1950), p. 36; OIR, “Political Activities in Japanese Universities and Colleges” (September 21, 1949), p. 3; Pempel, *Patterns of Japanese Policymaking*, p. 51; and Shigeru Nanbara, “Storm over the University Law: Reasons Given Opposing Education Ministry Plan,” *Nippon Times* (July 20, 1949).

⁴⁶ Advisor on Higher Education to Chief, Education Division, “Comments on Statement by Seven University Presidents Regarding Boards of Trustees for National Universities” (July 24, 1948), p. 1; box 29, Joseph C. Trainor Papers; “Daigaku kanrihō no shōten [Focal Point of the University Governance Law],” *Asahi shimbun* (August 13, 1949).

⁴⁷ Advisor on Higher Education to Chief, Education Division, “Comments on Statement by Seven University Presidents regarding Boards of Trustees for National Universities” (1948), pp. 1–2.

trustees system was “not foolproof,” but believed that it would “minimize the dangers” that Nanbara foresaw. In his letter to Orr, Nanbara had presented an alternative, the so-called “Nanbara’s plan,” in which a National Education Committee in Tokyo, comprised of educators, experts in education, and Diet members, would replace the education ministry. Nanbara wrote that this committee would approve the presidents and deans selected from among faculty members at each national university and oversee the budgets and administration of the national universities.⁴⁸

Nanbara’s plan exposed the unspoken fact that he still favored a centralized, top-down administration. Nevertheless, he demonstrated his respect for lay people by suggesting that each university should form an *advisory* committee composed of an equal number of both university professors and lay members. Eells argued that Nanbara’s plan had “the probability of being more bureaucratic and dictatorial” than the education ministry itself and would ignore public interests. In addition, he argued that financial matters and the selection of personnel should be assigned to the local board of trustees for each university instead of a centralized national council in Tokyo. He concluded that many of Nanbara’s objections to the plan to introduce boards of trustees were “not necessarily valid” and that his (Eells’) plan “quite adequately” addressed Nanbara’s concerns.⁴⁹

The education ministry had, in fact, received Eells’ plan from the CIE in July of 1948, but had kept it on hold for three months because it was known that Nanbara and other Japanese education leaders opposed it strongly. In mid-October of 1948, the ministry publicized the Eells’ plan as its own, entitling it “The Outline of the Proposed Law Governing Japanese Universities” (*Daigakuhō shian yōkō*) or commonly the “University Law.” University professors and students rejected it vehemently.⁵⁰ Nanbara now

⁴⁸ Shigeru Nanbara and the other six presidents of national universities written to Orr, Education Division, the CIE, “On the Proposal to Establish Boards of Trustees in National Universities” (1948), pp. 5–6.

⁴⁹ Advisor on Higher Education to Chief, Education Division, “Comments on Statement by Seven University Presidents Regarding Boards of Trustees for National Universities,” p. 3.

⁵⁰ Hata, *Sengo daigaku kaikaku*, p. 117; Kaigo and Terasaki, *Daigaku kyōiku*, p. 593; Ōsaki, *Daigaku kaikaku*, p. 141; Takemura, “The Role of the National Government,” pp. 149, 68; “Daigaku kanrihō o kisō [Formulating a Draft University Law],” *Asahi shimbun* (August 6, 1949);

publicly expressed his objections to Eells' plan and presented his alternative idea as the JERC's plan. Debates over Nanbara's and Eells' plans were widely publicized in major newspapers. Other Japanese academic associations drew up their own proposals, most of which gave no decision-making power to outsiders.

Japanese academics were determined to thwart the proposed University Law, while Eells was equally determined to push it through. In "Plans for Higher Education in 1949," a CIE document, Eells stated that "no project is more important for 1949" than the proposed University Law because "it involves one of the basic purposes of the Occupation...namely the decentralization of control of all education."⁵¹ While Eells was working hard to implement his version of "decentralization," the JERC had been developing its own scheme to gain greater autonomy from the education ministry.

The enactment of the Special Law on Public Servants in Education (*Kyōiku kōmuin tokureihō*) in January of 1949 was a major victory for the professors of national universities because (1) the education ministry lost its power of veto, e.g., the ministry had to issue appointments solely on the basis of recommendation of the university president, and (2) the faculty meeting had the power to appoint and dismiss professors and administrators. This law affirmed the traditional practice of university autonomy that had originated in the prewar imperial universities.⁵²

However, this was seen as only a temporary arrangement because the upcoming controversial University Law was expected to specify the governing system of national universities in greater detail. Nevertheless, encouraged by their recent victory, Japanese academics in unison with students opposed the University Law.

At this critical juncture, the Red Purge stormed through university campuses, threatening to take away the precious privileges of autonomy that academia had fought so hard to acquire. In July of 1949, Eells

and Pempel, *Patterns of Japanese Policymaking: Experiences from Higher Education*, p. 54.

⁵¹ Walter C. Eells, "Plans for Higher Education in 1949," in "Preface and CIE documents," *Walter C. Eells Papers, n.d.*, pp. 18–19.

⁵² Shinichi Yamamoto, "National Universities Before and After Incorporation," *Daigaku kenkyū* 35 (2007): p. 21; Ienaga, *Daigaku no jiyū no rekishi*, p. 105.

addressed Niigata University at its opening ceremony and advocated that, to protect academic freedom, universities must oust communist professors who were slaves to the Communist Party.⁵³ From November of 1949 to May of 1950, Eells visited 30 universities nationwide to advise faculties and administrators to fire communist professors. The CIE was under the impression that universities were dealing ineffectively with the ever-mounting student activism and the potential threat of communist professors. The CIE, and particularly Eells, believed that, although the Japanese people were strongly anti-communist, the universities did not reflect such public sentiment because of the “university autonomy” that protected even dangerous hardcore communist professors “from any external influence.” Eells continued to insist on the implementation of the board of trustees to remedy this flaw.

Although the CIE inundated the Japanese education leaders with suggestions, the CIE left the details of the reforms to the Japanese universities. The CIE’s attitude allowed Japanese leaders to reject Eells’ recommendation and maintain the status quo. In the midst of the heated debate among the Japanese over Eells’ anti-communist statement, the education ministry shelved the proposed University Law in August 1949, and instead formed the so-called “Draft Committee” to discuss a new National University Administration Bill.⁵⁴ With the successful rejection of the proposed University Law, Japanese professors continued to enjoy traditional autonomy throughout the duration of the Red Purge. Yet the universities now faced enormous pressure to participate in the Red Purge. Some universities did fire communist professors, but Japanese academics still believed that their autonomy minimized the damage caused by the Red Purge.

The Red Purge convinced Japanese academics that the political situation in Japan was unstable and that universities needed to remain vigilant against detrimental external influences. Not surprisingly, the Draft Committee, established in August of 1949, adopted a modified version of Nanbara’s plan, which was sent to the Diet in March of 1951. However,

⁵³ Walter C. Eells, Advisor on Higher Education, “Convocation Address: Opening of Niigata University” (July 19, 1949), in “Niigata University,” Walter C. Eells Papers.

⁵⁴ “Daigaku kanrihō o kisō [Drawing up a Draft University Governing Law],” *Asahi Shimbun* (August 6, 1949).

because this new university bill was attacked so strongly by various opponents, it was abandoned during the Diet session in October of 1951, thereby maintaining the status quo of the university governance system.⁵⁵

Despite the tremendous pressure to undertake reform under the American Occupation, Japanese universities retained their autonomy, which excluded any external influence. Yet establishing a means by which national universities could be made accountable to the public remained an unresolved issue. A heated debate on university reform continued throughout the ensuing decades.

Eells was well aware of the difficulty of achieving reform. In early 1951, before his departure from Tokyo, Eells wrote a report that contained 32 recommendations for reform in Japanese higher education. He was aware that Japanese academics would not heed his recommendations because their understanding of the “general concepts of university freedom and autonomy” differed vastly from his. For his recommendations to be implemented, he wrote that, “both reeducation of the present educational leaders and the development of new ones” would be necessary.⁵⁶ Even though the system did change, there were still prominent Japanese academic leaders who retained an old elitist attitude and resisted reform. True reform still had a long way to go.

Conclusion

The Eells vs. Nanbara debate reveals stark differences of understanding between Japanese academia and U.S. educators about the mission of a university and its system of governance. Eells introduced a concept of the public university that was derived from the U.S. context and the idea that taxpayers should have a major say in university governance. He believed that U.S. democracy was an ideal model for a new Japan. Eells wanted the people to participate in the administration of public institutions. He was convinced that was the best and only way to nurture democracy in the Japanese people. Eells trusted the ordinary people.

⁵⁵ Kaigo and Terasaki, *Daigaku kyōiku*, pp. 610–612; and Hans Martin Krämer, “Reforms of Their Own: The Japanese Resistance to Changes in Higher Education Administration under the U.S. American Occupation, 1945-1952,” *Paedagogica Historica* 43/3 (2007): 343.

⁵⁶ Walter C. Eells, “Improvement of Higher Education in Japan,” *Higher Education* 8/11 (1951), p. 129.

Nanbara, representing the nation's academic elite, emphasized that a national university was a sacrosanct organization that had a mission to search for the truth and to educate a select few. To him, a university was an elevated institution, which had a position equivalent to that of the church in the West. He believed that such churches should be above the masses and separate from secular political entanglement. Moreover, their special mission could be accomplished only by highly educated "clergy" such as Nanbara himself. Common people were not "bright enough" to understand the university. He had no trust in the people. Therefore, the elite, the professors themselves, should govern and protect the university from lay people.

With such an elitist attitude, Japanese university autonomy had developed into a Japanese "tradition." Prewar Japan's regimented and intolerant ideological environment had created an exclusive and isolated sphere in which professors had struggled for independence and freedom. In achieving their goals, they succeeded in building an ivory tower. In the name of university autonomy, Japanese professors isolated themselves from the outside world and imparted their expertise to a select group of students. There was no room in that tradition for accountability to taxpayers.

During the American Occupation, the once almighty authority of the Education Ministry was reduced. Eells advocated the introduction of boards of trustees to govern universities. Of course, Japanese academia refused to accept this proposal: they would not change their tradition because of external influences or from within.

After the occupation ended, the Education Ministry reversed the course from one of decentralization to one of recentralization and regained everything it had lost and more. The ministry's control was strengthened in the name of accountability to the public. In Japan, public interest was equated not with that of local people but with that of central government.

The 2004 reform, the so-called "Big Bang" in Japanese higher education, aimed to reduce national expenditure and make national universities more accountable to the public. The reform has made a huge difference: national universities have become "corporations."⁵⁷ The "Bang" was initiated and driven by the government in Tokyo.

⁵⁷ The "Big Bang" theory in education reform is discussed in Kazuyuki Kitamura and William K. Cummings, "The 'Big Bang' Theory and

The reform has led to the loss of some of the privileges that the universities had hitherto enjoyed. The authority of the university president, who is still selected from among professors, has been elevated. The newly created board of directors (*yakuinkai*) is designed to work as a top management team comprised of board members (*riji*), who are appointed by the president and one external member. Yet there are no university governors to whom the president is required to report. The Management Council (*Keiei kyōgikai*) is composed mostly of members from outside the university, as in a board of trustees, but the Council plays only an advisory role to the president. The “faculty meeting,” as the ultimate decision-making organ, has been stripped of its power and now only acts in an advisory capacity to the president.⁵⁸

Surprisingly, there was no particular opposition from the universities to these reforms. This was because the national universities, faced with serious population decline and financial difficulties, had to become more efficient and responsive to the public in order to survive.⁵⁹ Another explanation for the lack of resistance is the generational change in the personnel who make up the university administration. There were no longer professors with firsthand experience of the trauma of the prewar and wartime period. The so-called “argumentative generation,” who had championed university autonomy as the primary issue affecting higher education, was now in the process of retiring.⁶⁰

The current generation of professors, who have no experience of serious conflict with the government, do not appear to have inherited a sense of university “tradition” from their mentors. They therefore tend to

Japanese University Reform,” *Comparative Education Review* 16/2 (1972): 303–324.

⁵⁸ Sachi Hatakenaka, “The Incorporation of National Universities: The Role of Missing Hybrids,” in J.S. Eads, Roger Goodman and Yumiko Hada, eds., *The “Big Bang” in Japanese Higher Education: The 2004 Reforms and the Dynamics of Change* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2005), pp. 71–72.

⁵⁹ Goodman, “W(h)ither the Japanese University?,” p. 18.

⁶⁰ Shinichi Yamamoto, “Government and the National Universities,” in Jeremy S. Eades, Roger Goodman, and Yumiko Hada, eds., *The “Big Bang” in Japanese Higher Education* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2005), p. 101.

obey the government's guidance and do not dwell on the meaning of protection of the "mission of university." Eells predicted that Japanese professors might need to be reeducated if change was to be affected. It appears that he was right. Current Japanese professors, highly educated in the culture of pacifism and peace at any cost, do not seem to appreciate "academic freedom" because it appears to be ubiquitous. The government in Tokyo will never cease to try to reaccumulate every piece of power that it has lost over 50 years ago. However, it may only take one governmental act of violation against academic freedom for the new academia suddenly to wake up and launch anew a life-and-death battle to preserve freedom of inquiry. This new fight is likely to resemble the old. However, perhaps our struggle for academic freedom is not one that is either "old" or "new," but part of the timeless quest for the dignity of humanity.