The Japanese Education System
Edo Era （江戸時代）

- 1603-1868
- Tokugawa shogunate (Tokugawa Ieyasu)
- Unified Japan
  - All land to 300 daimyo (feudal lord)
    - Families live in Edo, daimyo in Edo every other year
- “Christian Problem”
  - Persecution of Amakusa Christians
    - Amakusa-Shimabara rebellion 1637-38
- Literacy jumped
  - Several kinds of schools:
    - Fief schools （藩校、はんこう）
    - Country schools （語学、ごがく）
    - Schools for commoners （寺子屋、てらこや）
    - Private Academies （私塾、しじゅく）
Fief Schools (藩校)

- Established by daimyo
- Help daimyo maintain control
- For elite samurai
- Graduates serve in government
- Confucian
- 270 schools
- Shoheizaka Gakumonjo (昌平坂学問所)
  - Shogunate’s top school
  - Model for all fief schools
  - Graduates employed as scholars for fief schools
Country Schools (語学)

- Established by daimyo or high-ranking retainers
- Extension of fief schools
- Some for samurai, some for commoners, some for both
- Confucian curriculum like fief school
Schools for Commoners (寺子屋)

- Common by the end of Edo, even in rural areas
- Focus on practical matters, education important to daily life
- Mainly reading and writing
  - Start with calligraphy, copying copybooks from the Heian period (794-1192)
  - Content: treatise on household precepts, suggestions for daily conversation
  - Also textbooks for geography, commercial pursuits, and moral precepts for commoners
  - Some offered training in abacus
- Teachers: Buddhist and Shinto priests, doctors, samurai, masterless samurai, wealthy retired farmers, some women
Private Academies (私塾)

- Founded by individuals with their own philosophy or scientific theories
- “unofficial” schools, less orthodox
- Range from elementary level to instruction targeting graduates of top universities
- Students from elite as well as sons of priests, farmers, merchants
- Western learning schools (洋学塾、ようがくじゅく)
- Chinese studies schools (漢学塾、かんがくじゅく)
- National Learning schools (国学塾、こくがくじゅく)
National Learning（国学）

- 古道、こどう（the ancient way）
- 古学、こがく（ancient learning）
- 本学、ほんがく（true learning）
- 和学、わがく（Japanese learning）
- 腹腔神道、ふっこうしんとう（Restoration Shinto）

- Intellectual movement in response to Chinese learning and Confucianism
National Learning (国学)

- Motoori Norinaga (宣長本居)
- wrote Commentaries on the Kojiki (古事記伝)
- Through Kojiki, can recover authentic (and superior) ancient Japanese language
- social relations and government for Japanese people.
- Connected with “Restore the Emperor” ideology that brought downfall of Tokugawa shogunate
- Seen as intellectual origin for fascist and militaristic views in 1930s, 40s
Girls’ Education

- Considered not necessary
- Society based on Confucian relationships (lord-retainer, parent-child, husband-wife)
- Education for better wives and mothers
- Trained in household matters and etiquette
- Sometimes sent to other homes as maids for experience
- Elite sometimes studied classical literature, arts, calligraphy, reading
- End of Edo saw more girls in schools for commoners, private academies for girls (tea ceremony, flower arrangement, etiquette)
Okay... "How do you do. My name is Tarzan, and I believe you are known as Jane."

"Allow me to introduce myself... I am Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle... And you?"

"You must be Jane... I am Tarzan. It's a pleasure to meet you."

"There she is."

"Me Tarzan! You Jane!"

"Damn."
Meiji Era (明治時代)

- 1868-1912
- Led by scholars of National Learning
- State religion: Shinto
- Beginning of modern education
  - Modernization of education through Western civilization
  - Prefectures (305), not fiefs (Higo)
  - Department of Education established
  - Regulations for elementary (8-15) and junior high (16-22)
  - Government education not just for elite
  - More schools for commoners, attendance rates shot up
  - Students sent abroad to study
  - Foreign teachers and textbooks brought to Japan
  - Prestigious school for Western Learning in Kumamoto
  - Shift away from Confucianism to individualism and practical value of education and research
Imperial Rescript on Education of the Emperor Meiji

“Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.”

October 30, 1890
Post WWII

- **Japanese Constitution (May 3, 1947)**
  - Guarantees academic freedom
  - Ensures right to equal education
  - Establishes free, compulsory education

- **School Education Law (March 29, 1947)**
  - 6-3-3-4 school ladder
  - Compulsory education from elementary to Junior high

- **Fundamental Law of Education 1947**
  - Revised most recently in 2006 to reflect societal changes
Fundamental Law of Education

“Education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of a peaceful state and society.”

1945
Monbusho

- Monbukagakusho (文部科学省)
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology
- Oversees education in Japan
- Issues detailed Courses of Study
- Recent changes:
  - 2002 – no school on Saturday
  - 2009 – require teachers to renew educational certificates
  - 2006 – new Course of Study for Kindergarten through high school
## 2006 Revised Course of Study

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*Although the CS is to be applied fully for the students who enter high school in 2013, the content relating to Math and Science is to be applied in advance for the students who enter in 2012.*
Elementary


- 2006 Course of Study:
  - 5, 6 grade Foreign Language Activities
  - Increase Japanese, Social Studies, Arithmetic, Science, and P.E. by 10%
  - Less Integrated Study
### 移行期間中の小学校の標準授業時数について

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※ 黄色は現在と異なる部分
※水色は移行期間と異なる部分
注：（ ）内は担当分の学習数
The glass is half full!  
The glass is half empty.  
Half full... No! Wait! Half empty!... No half... what was the question?  
Hey! I ordered a cheeseburger!  

The four basic personality types
Junior High School

- English mandatory in 2002
- Electives and integrated study
- 2006 Course of Study:
  - Increase Japanese, Social Studies, Arithmetic, Science, Foreign Language, P.E./Health by 10%
  - Most time devoted to foreign language
  - # of words to be taught increase from 900 to 1200.
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<td>70~130</td>
<td>190~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>合計</td>
<td>980(28)</td>
<td>980(28)</td>
<td>980(28)</td>
<td>2940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

※黄緑色は削減した、黄色は増加した部分

注：（ ）内は適度にカバー数
Senior High School

* Not compulsory, but most attend
* Tons of schools
* University feeder schools tend to be more competitive
* 3rd yr JHS students stop participating in club activities after 1st trimester to study
* Juku

Public
- Free!
- Ranked according to academic status

Private
- Costly
- Often 6 yr. JHS-HS schools, difficult to gain entrance
Getting in

Two ways to get into high school

- Regular entrance exam
  - Private schools
    - Test on English, math, and Japanese
    - More than 1 exam day
  - Public schools test on English, math, Japanese, Science, and Social Studies. 40 min. each, all weighted equally
    - Prefectural test vs. national test
    - Exams on same day, so can only choose 1 (2 if you do suisen)

- Suisen, or recommended entrance
  - Tangan suisen
    - Need good grades and school/teacher recommendations to do tangan suisen
    - If accepted, must go
  - Heigan suisen
    - Like fall-back option
    - Regular entrance exam, but don’t have to pay entrance fees until after public school entrance exam results are out
    - Teacher recommendation required
  - Spootsu suisen, Sports recommendation
    - For outstanding athletes who are scouted
Timeline

October-November
- Narrow choice of schools down
- Decisions made on sports *suisen*

December
- Final grades for 2\textsuperscript{nd} semester; GPA determines which schools you can attempt
- Deadlines for papers to be filled out by school

January
- Students bring applications to school on designated day
- Tangan *suisen* tests for private schools
- Tangan *suisen* tests for public schools

February
- Regular entrance exams for private schools
- Heigan *suisen* for private schools
- Regular entrance exams for public schools

March
- Results for public school regular entrance exams

There are also schools with 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} tests for students who don’t have a high school at the beginning of March

Transferring? Start from 1\textsuperscript{st} year
"Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full."
University

- **Educational credentialism** (学歴主義)
  “Educational credentialism” implies that educational credentials are a major determinant of socioeconomic success, and that the quality or rank of college affects the attainment of socioeconomic rewards… Furthermore…the effect of college quality is expected to persist over the employee’s entire work career…Those who came from highly ranked schools were likely to be rewarded with promotions and income, independent of their job performance.”

- **Juku**（塾）
- **Yobiko** （予備校）, **ronin**（浪人）
- In extreme cases, competition starts in kindergarten

Ojukken
(お受験)

- Competition to get into elementary
- Keio Gujuku Tochisha elementary school
  - 2,468 applicants for 144 spots (2008)
- Exams in November-December
- Children attend cram school for 2 yrs, $22,000
- If accepted, less stress later

National Center Test for University Admissions
(大学入試センター試験)

- “center test”
- For entrance to public institutions, though private universities also utilize the test
- 5 subjects:
  - Japanese
  - social studies (Japanese history, world history, geography, civics)
  - foreign language (English, French, German, Chinese, Korean)
  - science (biology, physics and chemistry)
  - mathematics
- Multiple choice (English has listening)
- January 15, 16
- ¥12,000 for two or fewer subjects, ¥18,000 yen for three or more
- Answers posted on National Center for University Entrance Examinations website at 9pm on test day
Applying

- **Public institutions**
  - Submit center test scores and high school records
  - Take the university test
    - Late February and early March
    - Often not just multiple choice
    - ¥17,000 yen
    - Can take up to two

- **Private institutions**
  - ~70% of all Japanese college students
  - Use their own test
  - Some use center test
  - Cost:
    - ¥30,000-¥35,000 for each department student applies to
    - Total exam-related expenses: ¥231,900 (May 2007)

- **Early decision**
  - For recommended students only
  - Take special exam
“Examination Hell”

1960s-80s
- High economic growth
- Lifetime employment at companies
- Hire graduates from top schools

1990s
- Increase in number of universities
- Population of 18-yr-olds peak in 1992
- Private schools suffering shortages
- 47% of private universities polled (2008)
Monster Parents
(モンスターペアレンツ)

- Aka “claimers”
- “a super-aggressive army of complainers”
- Impossible demands
- Relatively new phenomenon
- “Privileged customer” attitude

Examples

- 25 Snow Whites
- Secret recording devices
- Rigged sports events
- Physically mobbing and verbally abusing teacher until signs letter of resignation on the spot
- Visiting teachers or principals at private residences
- Hints of connections to organized crime
- Calling teachers endlessly
- Requesting more less homework for child
- Threatening to sue
- Calling the BOE
Why now?

- Good question.
- Educational Credentialism
- Changing familial roles
- Economy
- Declining birthrate
- Politics
Resources


Questions?