

Leading English Educators in Early Meiji Era Japan

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明治期における英語教育の指導者たち

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Abstract

It has been over 100 years since English education began in Meiji era Japan.

There have been huge social changes during the past 100 years, i.e. post WWI and WWII, etc. and English education has been undergoing many transformations even up to this day. As English has become widely accepted as the international language, Japan's English education has had to face up to new difficulties and problems. Under the circumstances, it would be quite meaningful to look back at some of the leading Meiji era English language educators and revisit their ideals and visions.

Keywords : William Adams, The Phaeton Incident, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Kanda Naibu, Saito Hidesaburo

要旨

明治の黎明期に初めて英語に対する関心が高まり、当時の所謂「英学」が台頭して以来100年以上が経つ。この間に現在に至るまで日本は第一次世界大戦、第二次世界大戦等の大きな社会的試練を経、英語教育も様々な紆余曲折を経ながら今日に至っている。しかしながら、今日の英語の世界的普及に伴い、日本の英語教育は新たな局面を迎え、困難な時期とも言える様相を呈している。このような時期に、日本という国の大転換期であった明治時代の英学先駆者たちが何を考え、何を理想とし、どのような英語教育を行おうとしたかを改めて考えてみることは大いに有意義と考えられる。本論においては、明治の著名な英語教育者たちの辿った道を振り返ってみる。

キーワード：ウィリアム・アダムス (三浦按針)、フェートン号事件、福沢諭吉、神田乃武、齋藤秀三郎

Introduction

Among many presentations, speeches and workshops programmed at the JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers) 44th Annual

Convention which was held on September 8-10, 2005 in Tokyo, one of the Plenary Addresses was particularly interesting and at the same time, perplexing.

The address was by Professor Morizumi Mamoru, President of JACET, Obirin University, titled "Issues and Perspectives in English Education in Japan - with Special Reference to Three Facets in TEFL".

In his address, Prof. Morizumi cites three aspects of TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language), namely language education, intercultural understanding education, and human education. He states, "By the term 'human education' we mean that the teaching of foreign languages should contribute to individual character building and thus contribute to an everlasting world peace.....English teachers are very likely to do something quite contrary to that which we consider as contributing to human education."

Prof. Morizumi's statement is quite fundamental and at the same time serious. However, in almost all English-teaching related conventions held in recent days, most topics of the presentations are focused on detailed data, theories, teaching methods, etc. and hardly any teacher brings up the issue of "human education" and English language teaching. Is this issue too outdated? Or are English language teachers simply forgetting it? Do they already know what real "human education" is and thus not have to bring it up in particular? What is true human education and true English education? After more than 100 years since formal English studies in Japan began, English language teachers perhaps should give some serious thought to this issue of "human education" by means of English teaching, now that the English education in schools is faced with new facets with the focus on cross-cultural understanding and communicative abilities.

In this paper, an attempt is made briefly to depict some of the leading English educators in Meiji era Japan and their students who contributed a great deal to English education in Japan, with the hope of shedding some light on today's struggling Japanese teachers of English. The ideas and visions these educators had are still strikingly new and inspiring to us modern day English teachers.

I . English before Meiji Era Japan

1. William Adams (1564-1620)

The very first person who spoke English in Japan was William Adams (1564-1620). Adams landed in Japan in 1600 when his ship was hit by a typhoon and drifted ashore on a beach in Oita, Kyushu. The Shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Government (1603 - 1867), invited Adams to Edo (present-day Tokyo) and gave him the Japanese name of Miura Anjin. "Anjin" means navigator in Japanese. Ieyasu treated Anjin well because Anjin was knowledgeable about world affairs and sciences such as mathematics and astronomy. Ieyasu appointed Anjin his diplomatic advisor, and Anjin served Ieyasu and his son, the second Shogun, Hidetada, for twenty years until he died. When an English ship came to Japan bringing King James I's letter asking the Shogun for trade, Anjin translated the King's letter to Ieyasu and Ieyasu's reply to the King. This was the first English to Japanese and Japanese to English translation ever done in Japan.

Trade between England and Japan began. However, the Dutch overpowered the English in trade eventually resulting in the English withdrawal from Nagasaki where the English were living. Ever since then "Rangaku", the study of Holland and the Dutch language, became the center of the Western study in Japan.

Anjin never returned to England, his homeland.

2. The Phaeton Incident (1808)

In 1808, the Phaeton, a British ship, came to Nagasaki, Kyushu, where exclusively the Dutch were living engaged in trade, etc. Until then the only gateway to the Western world for Japan was Holland. Rangaku was about the only foreign language study in Japan for almost 200 years except for very minor studies of German and French. The Phaeton attacked the Dutch and made various demands of the Japanese Government. However, officials in Kyushu hardly had

the means to negotiate with the British. As a result, the British found themselves unable to satisfy their demands. After this so-called Anglo-Japanese Trade Negotiation failed, and after the Phaeton left Nagasaki, one Japanese high-ranking official took responsibility and committed *seppuku*, samurai suicide.

The Tokugawa Government attributed the failure of the negotiations with the Phaeton to lack of communication with the British and the absence of English-speaking interpreters. They decided to train English-Japanese interpreters immediately and ordered their interpreters to learn English.

A Dutchman named Jan Cock Bloomhoff came to Japan in 1809. He had a good knowledge of English and became the first English teacher in Japan, though he was not a native speaker of English. In only two years, those who were interpreters for the Dutch in Nagasaki and who studied English under Jan Cock Bloomhoff were able to write an introductory English textbook titled "Angeria Kogaku Shosen"(1811) and in five years, an English-Japanese dictionary titled "Angeria Gorin Taisei".

II. English Educators in the Meiji, Taisho, and Early Showa Eras

In 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) came to Uraga, Japan demanding that the Tokugawa Government establish diplomatic relations with the U.S.A. Fifteen years later, in 1868, the Tokugawa Government fell and the Meiji era began. The world changed for all the Japanese. Many aspiring young Japanese men, realizing the necessity of learning from the West, had high hopes and looked towards Europe and America. Fukuzawa Yukichi, who founded Keio University, one of the most prestigious private universities, was one of them.

1. Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901)

As much has been researched and written about Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901), this paper will only attempt to outline him briefly as an advocate and a

teacher of English.

In 1834, he was born the second son of a low-ranking samurai family in Kyushu. Due to the influence of his elder brother, Yukichi began to study Rangaku at the age of 21. In 1855, he went to Osaka and entered the famed Tekijuku run by Ogata Koan (1810-1863), the well-known Rangaku scholar and medical doctor.

In 1858, when he was twenty-five years old, he left Osaka and headed for Tokyo, where he was to teach at a Rangaku juku, a small school to study Rangaku. This juku was developed into Keio University later. The following year, in 1859, he went to Yokohama and found out that the foreign words he saw there were not Dutch and he could not understand a word of them. Fukuzawa was quite disappointed realizing that all of the time he had spent and every effort he had made to master Dutch were mostly in vain. Believing that the Japan's future lay with English, Fukuzawa decided to learn English.

Fukuzawa wanted to have a friend who would study English with him and talked to Kanda Kohei, but Kanda declined to study English with Fukuzawa although he understood that English study would be essential for the future of Japan. It is quite interesting that later Kanda Kohei sent his adopted son, Kanda Nobu, to the U.S.A. Nobu (later changed to Naibu), studied at Amherst College and ultimately became the leading figure of English education in Meiji era Japan.

In 1860 (Man-en 1), Fukuzawa became one of the members of the first diplomatic mission of the Japanese Government and visited San Francisco on the famous Kanrin-maru. During his approximately fifty days' stay in San Francisco, he bought a Webster's Dictionary, actually an abridged version, and brought it back to Japan. Nakahama John Manjiro, who was also a member of the mission, bought the same dictionary. These two Webster's dictionaries were the first dictionaries to be imported into Japan.

From 1861 to 1862, the Tokugawa Government sent Fukuzawa to European countries. Fukuzawa, on his

second trip abroad, purchased many English books which later became important reference books for Fukuzawa when he wrote his publications.

Fukuzawa's third experience going abroad was to the U.S.A. again. During his five months' stay in San Francisco, New York, and Washington D.C., Fukuzawa purchased a large number of dictionaries, textbooks, and reference books on law, economics, mathematics, geography, history, etc. After he came back to Japan, he was able to give each one of his students an English book for study. The fact that Fukuzawa brought back many English books from England and the U.S.A for students of English actually made real formal English education in Japan possible. Fukuzawa's contribution to English education in Japan from the Meiji era to present is enormous.

Fukuzawa was also a practical man. Realizing the necessity of importing English books, Fukuzawa persuaded Yuteki Hayashi, one of his students, to give up practicing medicine and to start a bookstore. This store was developed into Maruzen Bookstores later.

In 1868, Fukuzawa founded Keio University. The rest is history. He was the founder of the Western studies and the father of English language education in Japan. His ideas and passion toward English together with his resolution to master it, still reveal something important and valuable that we should not forget.

2. Kanda Naibu (1857-1923)

After Fukuzawa Yukichi laid the foundations of formal English education in Japan around the time of the Meiji Restoration, many young men began to study English. Among them, Kanda Naibu who was educated at Amherst College from 1872 to 1875. was perhaps the most notable English educator of his days. Amherst College is a prestigious liberal arts college located in Massachusetts, U.S.A. In the 1800s, Amherst accepted three aspiring young Japanese men, namely Nijjima Jyo (Joseph Hardy Neesima) who founded Doshisha University, Kanda Naibu who became the first president of the present Tokyo Foreign Language

University, and Uchimura Kanzo who was an advocate of "Non-Church" Christianity. The influence and inspiration Amherst gave to Meiji era Japan through these three distinguished men were immense.

Here is a brief personal history Kanda himself wrote:

"I was born in Tokyo in Feb. 1857. After studying for a year or two in the Kaiseijo, I went to America with the Viscount Mori in 1871. I entered Amherst High School in 1872 and graduated in 1875; entered Amherst College the same year and graduated in 1879, taking the degree of B.A.

After studying for a term in Westfield Normal School, I returned to Japan in the winter of 1879.

I was at first engaged to teach Physical Geography in the Daigaku Yobimon in place of a foreign instructor who was then leaving.

That was in those good old days when such subjects were taught in English.

I was in the same year appointed to teach Latin in the Imperial University, which I continued to do till 1900, when I went abroad.

I was connected with the Daigaku Yobimon and the Dai Ichi Koto Chugakko as teacher of English till 1888.

Received the degree of M.A. from Amherst College in 1887.

Have taught English in the Higher Commercial School from 1892 up to the present.

Have served on the Middle School Teachers' Examination Committee since 1886.

I was connected with the School of Foreign Languages first as "shuji" when it was attached to the Higher Commercial School, and latterly as Director, when it became independent.

I was ordered in 1900 to go to England and Germany to study Methods of Teaching English, and returned in 1901, after making a tour of the world." (Takanashi & Omura, 1975)

The fact that Kanda became the adopted son of

Kanda Kohei in 1868 changed his entire life. As Kanda Kohei, his adoptive father, was a close friend of Fukuzawa Yukichi, Kohei received a great deal of influence from Fukuzawa and his passion for English. For Kohei, Fukuzawa's influence was the very reason to send his son Naibu to America when he was only fourteen years old.

Amherst was and still is a fairly small-size college that put the emphasis on the study of liberal arts and human education. During nine years in Amherst, Kanda studied earnestly. In his diary, he wrote; "Never worked harder in my life"; "But I am a prisoner to my work. I cannot have any rest"; "No rest for us poor mortals here. Worked the usual nine hours today." (Takanashi & Omura, 1975)

The reason Mori Arinori (1847-1889), who became the first Minister of Education in 1885, put Kanda into Amherst was due to the influence of Nijima, who was already an Amherst graduate. While in Amherst, Nijima was given the opportunity to study English as well as Western culture and was treated kindly. Nijima had a deep respect and affection for Amherst.

After studying at Amherst for nine years, Kanda came back to Japan and instantly received admiration not only from the students of English but from Japanese society for his refined Western manners which he acquired in Amherst and his good and simple, yet eloquent English. He soon became the top English educator and was appointed the first president of today's Tokyo Foreign Language University in 1899.

The following year, in 1900, Kanda was relieved of the presidency of the university. He was by no means disappointed and took the opportunity of going to England and Germany to conduct research into the English teaching methods. After returning to Japan, Kanda invited Howard Swan, who translated the book about the Gouin Method, a kind of natural method, to have him introduce a new teaching method into Japan's English education system.

As a teacher, he taught Natsume Soseki Latin.

Okakura Yoshisaburo, Okakura Tenshin's brother, was also Kanda's student. Okakura Yoshisaburo later became one of the leading English teachers of the era. Natsume later went to England to study English literature and after coming back, became one of the greatest novelists in the history of Japanese literature. In his diary, Natsume wrote that he met Kanda in London in 1901 when Kanda was visiting England.

Kanda's contribution to Meiji era Japan was probably the inspiration he gave to young learners of English. He was the author of "Kanda's English Readers" (1898, Sanseido), the first English textbook written by a Japanese. In his life he wrote many other textbooks and dictionaries.

3. Saito Hidesaburo (1866-1929)

Saito Hidesaburo was born the first son of a samurai family in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, in 1866. As a small child, Hidesaburo learned the English alphabet from his father. When he was eight years old, he entered Miyagi Foreign Language School and began formal English study. Later, he entered the present Tokyo University and studied under James Main Dixon (1857-1933).

Dixon was the first English teacher of the present Tokyo University. He was born in Scotland, and in 1879 when he was twenty-three years old, he came to Japan to become an English teacher. After twelve years of teaching English, he left Japan and spent the rest of his life in the U.S.A. While teaching in Japan, Dixon had students like Natsume Soseki, Okakura Yoshisaburo and Saito Hidesaburo. It is well known that after Dixon left Japan fulfilling his term, Augustus Hood (1857-1912), an American, took his position for four years, and after Hood departed, Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo) (1850-1904) succeeded him. Natsume Soseki became an English teacher at Tokyo University after Hearn left.

Dixon was an ardent teacher of English idioms and he had his students, Natsume, Okakura, Saito, and so on, collect English idioms from English literature.

The efforts and hard work of Dixon and his students bore fruit as a publication titled "A Dictionary of Idiomatic English Phrases" (1888). Dixon also wrote a reference book titled "English Lessons for Japanese Students" (1886) and "English Composition" (1889).

Saito was only fifteen years old when he studied under Dixon, and what Dixon taught Saito had a great influence on him in his later career as an English teacher and scholar of "idiomology", a word Saito created.

After quitting the university for an unknown reason, Saito returned to his hometown, Sendai, and there he established a private English school in 1885. From 1885 to 1893 until he became a teacher at Daiichi Koto Gakko (present-day Tokyo University), he taught at various schools. In October, 1893, Saito's first English grammar book "English Conversation-Grammar" and in 1898 and 1899, the four-volume "Practical English Grammar" were published. Saito's fame as an English teacher and grammarian became solid and his "Saito's Grammar" formed the base for so-called "school grammar" until now.

In 1896, Saito established his own English school named Seisoku English School in Kanda, Tokyo. Now, it has a history of over one hundred years and though renamed as Seisoku Gakuen High School, it still exists in the same location. At one time, the school had around three thousand students with teachers such as Ueda Bin, the famous poet of "Kaicho On", Togawa Shukotsu, a well-known translator of English literature. It also produced many leaders in various fields of modern Japan. Some of them were Ishibashi Tanzan who became prime minister, Ichikawa Sanki, a leading English scholar, Ishikawa Takuboku, a poet, Hiratsuka Raicho, a social activist, Saijyo Yaso, a composer and a lyricist, Saito Mokichi, a poet, Yamamoto Yuzo, a novelist, Yamamoto Shugoro, a novelist, and many others.

Saito was a man with an overwhelming energy. During his life, he wrote over two hundred publications. "Saito's Idiomatic English-Japanese

Dictionary", a pioneering work of the study of English collocation, was published in 1915 and it became Saito's monumental work. Its reprinted edition is still on the market.

In 1915, he wrote a very interesting speech at the Second English Education Convention. In the speech, though read by someone else, he told English teachers of his ideals and vision for English education:

A man, who has no sympathy with the hard-working students, and is unable to enter into the difficulties attending the mastery of a foreign tongue, can hardly be expected to make a good language teacher.....

He (Dixon)* gave us what is the one thing needful in the whole field of education --- interest.....

This English tongue, so simple and so sweet and so grand, which lends itself alike to inspired poetry, and to the exact diction of science and philosophy, and to the precise transaction of business.....

A Japanese teacher of English must be at once philosopher, a poet, and a sage --- and sometimes a businessman....

The "impregnable" fortress fell to science and method; neither can the English tongue be impregnable to a scientific method and a resolute will.

Language is a great rolling ocean current, which here deposits a rock and there an island; and these rocks and islands, being collected together, form a literature.

(Takanashi & Omura, 1975)

* Added by the writer.

Throughout his life, Saito never had the opportunity to go abroad. However, from the time he first began to study English at the age of eight, all of his teachers such as his first English teacher Guredoru (spelling unknown), Dixon, Hood were native English speakers, and he never studied English under Japanese teachers. This no doubt nurtured his excellent command of English which helped him a great deal when he wrote dictionaries. The examples Saito used in his dictionaries, which were taken from the Japanese and English novels, songs, and poems, were so ingenious that Akutagawa Ryunosuke commented that reading Saito's dictionary was more interesting than reading novels. Even Harvard University is said to have used his dictionary at one time.

This writer might add that Hidesaburo's first son Hideo (1902-1974), a music teacher and a famed cellist who studied the cello in Germany in his youth, taught Ozawa Seiji, a world-famous orchestra conductor, at Toho Gakuen. Ozawa's respect for Saito Hideo has been unchanged since then and Ozawa holds an annual concert in Matsumoto City, Japan in memory of Saito Hideo. Saito Hidesaburo's spirit perhaps is still alive through his son Hideo and Ozawa Seiji in today's Japan in the form of music.

Conclusion

As the world is becoming smaller and smaller, and as English is being accepted as the "international language", the demand for communicative ability of English is also becoming stronger and stronger.

In the Meiji era, English was especially for the leaders of the new Japanese society a necessary tool to absorb and digest, that is to say, to "take in" overall Western culture in order to modernize Japan, but not so much for ordinary people. However, in present-day Japan, English for "everyone" is necessitated to enable communication with people from all over the world. At the same time, today's Japan, contrary to Meiji era Japan, needs to "send out" current information about Japan to the world.

In order to promote communication ability so that all the Japanese would become able to speak English, the Japanese Government introduced Oral Communication into English classes of junior and senior high schools, inviting several thousand native speakers of English each year to Japan to work as assistant teachers. However, positive results are yet to be seen. Many Japanese teachers of English are frustrated about what and how to teach. The answer may lie with the teachers of Meiji era Japan. They may not offer any new scientific methodologies that would solve all problems, however, their determination and ideals for English education will certainly give renewed energy and inspiration to today's English teachers.

In conclusion, this writer would like to touch upon Uchimura Kanzo who was a spiritual leader and an outstanding English writer. His idea of English education should be a new inspiration to many Japanese teachers of English.

Uchimura Kanzo (1861-1930), who was educated at Sapporo Agricultural College and later studied at Amherst College from 1885 to 1887 on the advice of Nijima, once called himself a "scholar of English" and later wrote the famous "Research on Foreign Languages" (Gaikokugo no Kenkyu)(1899). Uchimura, who advocated "Non-Church" Christianity, was a spiritual leader, a philosopher and a teacher. He once said about English study that "the language and thoughts are inseparable.....it is vitally important to learn foreign languages if one wishes to understand the thoughts of foreign people deeply and truly." For Uchimura, the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language was to help build world peace.

Uchimura's idea of English learning for world peace resonates with Prof. Morizumi's three aspects of TEFL mentioned in the introduction of this paper. Today's English language teachers, regardless of the professional difficulties they may face in everyday teaching, should never forget what Fukuzawa, Kanda, Saito and other great English teachers of the Meiji and Taisho eras teach us: their enthusiasm, resolution,

vision, persistency, and the sense of mission for human education and human understanding, and ultimately their contribution to world peace.

(End)

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