

The reform process in British higher education and its implications for Japan

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Unlike most of the other speakers today, in talking about higher education reform in the UK and Japan, I cannot claim any special expertise, except for the fact that I have taught in both systems for some years: in the UK at the University of Kent, for 15 years, and at state universities in Japan for nine years.

Having myself experienced many changes being implemented in the UK, especially during the Thatcher period from 1979 to 1991, the first thing to say is that word 'reform' itself is both very wide in terms of its meanings, and is often contested: what is seen as a reform by one interest group may be seen as a disastrously backwards step by another. The word indeed has an ideological function. Usually any change being introduced by a government, for whatever reason, will be presented by them as a reform, but is also likely to be criticized by opposition parties as a step backwards. In looking at the reform process in the UK over the past 20 years or so, we have to try and see their results from the point of view of the various interest groups connected to the higher educational system, students, teachers, administrators, government, and employers. The opinions of these groups seldom coincide, and as a result 'reform' is always controversial.

In what follows therefore, rather than give a historical account of the reform process in the UK -which has been going on longer than that in Japan, I will try and break it down into its main components, describe some of the main reform measures relating to each, and look at the implications of the main ones of these for the process of reform in Japan currently underway.

When the Thatcher government started its process of rapid reform in the early 1980s, there were a number of separate aims – some of them apparently mutually contradictory. Some of them have since been followed up by further measures, either to correct problems which arose with earlier measures, or to move further along the same path. The main issues addressed included:

- (a) The cost of the higher education system, and the issue of accountability for public money.
- (b) The quality of research
- (c) Widening the student base and extending the system
- (d) Improving the quality of teaching
- (e) Changing the basis of staff recruitment and working conditions

I shall discuss each of these in turn.

(a) The cost of the higher education system, and the issue of accountability for public money.

Even though in theory the UK universities are independent foundations, they still rely on the government for most of the money that flows through them. With the ups and downs of the British economy during the postwar period, funding has been a matter of constant concern for the universities. During my time at the University of Kent, the university vice chancellor would address the teaching staff at the beginning of each year, and with a large number of charts and graphs, to explain how the latest government measures or thinking would affect the university for better or worse (usually worse – most of the news during this period was fairly bad). Until the Thatcher period university funding had been fairly stable, based on five year planning periods. The university administration would therefore know more or less for several years in advance what money would be available and could budget accordingly. With the British economic problems of the 1970s this system collapsed, and from then on the university budgets were announced on an annual basis. In about 1980 there was a major review of university funding. While a few universities received a modest increase in income, some of the more unlucky institutions had the budgets severely cut, by up to 40%, in the cases of Salford and Aston. The financial crisis which this precipitated was addressed

in three main ways.

The first was to get rid of staff. At the time, the university teachers still for the most part had tenure and could only be sacked for incompetence or morals offences, and not because there was no money to pay them or no students for them to teach. They therefore had to be paid to go. In my own university every single member of staff from the oldest to the youngest was personally interviewed by the vice chancellor and registrar who laid out the financial advantages of leaving (large cash sum) and asked if we were interested. A number of people did take the financial incentives on offer and retired early - including, unfortunately, some of the university's leading scholars! Ironically, the less active scholars, the 'dead wood', stayed, though some of them were finally pensioned off in another round of early retirements in the 1990s.

A second alternative was to look for alternative sources of funding and many universities quickly became much more innovative in looking for these. At Kent an alumni association was founded as a base for fund raising, rather like the universities in the US. Other universities did deals with industry to fund research, staff positions, new buildings and the like.

A third possibility for getting extra funds was of course to take more students, but there were problems with this, and it was subject to various changes in government policy. Overseas students were regarded as an important potential source of funding, though government insistence in the early 1980s that the universities should charge them what it regarded as the 'full fees' (in some cases higher than those at top American universities) actually led to a drastic decrease in the number of foreign students in some institutions. As for home students, at times the government restricted the numbers for much of the 1980s, but during the 1990s it has generally allowed them to increase. As will be seen, some universities with mediocre research records have therefore taken in more students as a way of increasing income to offset the reduced income from research.

Despite these measures, however, the funding problem still remains one of the most serious facing British higher education, and the most recent response has been the Dearing Report, which recommended the imposition for the first time of tuition fees

for home students. This has produced its own problems, in terms of what to do about the students who are unable or unwilling to pay, and the Times Higher Education Supplement this summer has carried a number of articles on the subject.

A final area of concern over funding by the government has been the question of postgraduate students on government grants and the time taken to complete their theses. In the early 1980s the research councils through which much of the government research money is funded decided to get tough with students which they thought were taking too long to complete, or in some cases not completing at all. They brought in a rule that unless over 50% of students in a department completed within five years, that department would be barred from accepting students with UK government funding. The paradoxical result is that some of the best departments with international reputations are still barred from taking government financed home students, and nearly all their postgraduate students are foreign as a result. This issue is in turn linked to that of the quality of research which is what I turn to next.

(b) The quality of research

One of the main concerns about higher education over the years has been maintaining the quality of research, particularly research which is seen as necessary for the performance of business and the economy. Much of the research in the UK is funded by the research councils, independent bodies established by the government and advised by leading academics which channel government money to both researchers and postgraduate students. In addition to the organization and reorganization of these research councils, a number of other measures have been introduced to by to raise and maintain the quality of research in British Universities.

Perhaps the most important of these, and indeed one of the most important measures affecting the universities in recent years, has been the Research Assessment Exercise, usually called the RAE. About every five years, committees of senior academics in each subject review the performance of nearly every department in the country, rating their research output on a scale of 1-5. The criteria for grading are extremely controversial, but they involve a complex formula including numbers of published books, published articles, research students, and income from research funding agencies. (In the 1995 exercise the grades included 5 * at the top, and 3a and 3b in the middle, making a

seven point scale. 5 * departments were those in which nearly all the members had international reputations.) But the most important aspect of the exercise is not the grading, but the funds which go with it. Part of the university budget from a government is seen as supporting research, and the amount received by each university is directly related to their research performance as measured by the RAE. The range of variation can be seen from the results of the 1992 and 1996 exercises which are freely available on the world wide web. The top universities like Oxbridge and the LSE scored 5 or 5 * for most of their departments. Most of the established universities scored 4 or 3a for most departments, while the new universities (the former city polytechnics) averaged around 2 or 3b.

The influence of this exercise is difficult to underestimate. Universities prepare for the RAE for years in advance. The next round is scheduled for 2001, and currently many departments are attempting to buy in research talent or make sure that existing departmental members publish sufficient to maintain or increase their ratings - and as academics in general publish more and more, this becomes harder and harder. The movement of staff between institutions has speeded up: this summer one of my former colleagues at Kent was complaining that four members of his department had moved to take up jobs with higher salaries at other universities in the last year, all the moves being related to the RAE.

Publication strategies have also changed. Scholars now publish shorter articles and shorter books so as to increase the number of publications overall. Long books are now very rare because they take longer than five years to research and publish - and also because most publishers now refuse to publish them on economic grounds. Paradoxically, therefore, in the humanities and social sciences many would argue that the RAE which was supposed to raise the quality of research has in some cases had the opposite effect: increasingly scholars produce short summaries of existing research rather than longer publications based on more original research. But it has certainly led to more publication, and it has also resulted in some of the staff who do little research and writing being eased out of the system with the various early retirement schemes. There have also been problems for universities which bought in scholars to increase their ratings, only to find that they stayed the same the same or went down. Staff being hired in before the RAE led to staff being laid off to save money after it.

A final problem with the RAE is that it has led to increasing polarization of the system, between a small group of leading universities which control much of the research money and a large group of poorer universities in which many departments do little or no research. The more successful universities with large sums of money coming in from the RAE do less teaching and have less undergraduate students, so that they have lower teaching loads and more time to research and write. This in turn results in a better performance in the next RAE. The result is a growing gap between mainly research and mainly teaching institutions. Over time, the younger and more active scholars in the teaching institutions try to get jobs in the research institutions, and this makes the polarization even worse.

(c) Widening the student base and extending the system

The historical problem with the British higher education system until the 1960s was that the teaching and research were often of a very high quality, but the number of graduates was actually very small. The universities consisted of older institutions like Oxford and Cambridge and a number of large 'red brick' city universities established at the end of the 19th or the start of the 20th centuries, often with capital from local business and wealthy entrepreneurs. In the 1960s, following a government enquiry, a cluster of new universities was founded, generally on out of town sites and with grandiose contemporary architecture. These were followed by a group of advanced technical colleges which were upgraded in the early 1970s. Finally at the start of the 1990s, the former city polytechnics which had long offered degree courses were upgraded to universities, doubling the size of the system. Some of the old teacher training colleges now call themselves 'university colleges' and also teach degree level courses. Now over 30% of the population of high school graduates proceed to university, compared with less than 15% at the start of the 1980s.

However, while the number of university places has been rapidly expanding, the population of high school graduates has been falling or static. Britain, like Japan, has seen a rapid fall in the birth rate in recent years, most notably in the 1970s, and so many of the universities are looking for new markets for their products, among mature students, and even overseas. The product itself has also been diversifying, with many new courses on offer, both of a more interdisciplinary nature aimed at the general

student (cultural studies, gender studies, ethnic studies) and more vocational courses aimed at the local labor market and local industries.

The traditional problem of university entrance was the high level of qualification required, three passes at Advanced Level in the General Certificate of Education. A level is a difficult exam, based on two years of specialized study in three or four subjects in the senior years at secondary school, and course content is similar to that in first or second year degree courses in many other countries. The first institution to break away from this qualification requirement was the Open University established by the Labour Government in the 1960s. This proved very popular with mature students lacking formal qualifications who wanted to study part time, and it was based on specially compiled textbooks backed up by television and radio broadcasts which students could record in the late evening or early morning and study. Other universities soon developed courses for this market, many of them held in the evening and recruiting students locally. Government still stresses that it would like to increase student enrolment even further but this is being questioned by some scholars. In a recent article, for instance, the professor of education at Newcastle University has argued that already the number of graduates is too high, that most of them are not using their skills in the jobs that they do, and that many of the courses are not true degree courses at all. There has in other words been an inflation in qualifications which is not really related to the requirements of the job market.

This may be true if higher education is seen only as a training for the job market, but if it is seen in wider terms, as meeting the aspirations of a large section of the population for personal intellectual development, then clearly the system could be expanded still further, as long as the demand is there and the students have the resources to pay for the courses.

However, the expansion of the system has also raised problems for the universities themselves which are to some extent victims of their own success. The number of students has increased dramatically in the 1990s in all of these institutions, both old and new. Once the restrictions on student numbers of the 1980s were lifted, many of the universities saw increasing student numbers as a way of increasing their income, in the absence of a high research rating. Economic restructuring led to a demand for new

course in business management and information technology in addition to the traditional curriculum, which the universities were quick to provide. So at a time when academics are being asked to produce more and more research, they have also generally had to teach more and more students.

(d) Improving the quality of teaching

One other indirect effect of the establishment of the Open University was a dramatic improvement in teaching in other universities as well. Before this little consideration was given to teaching techniques and course content at all in some places. In Cambridge, where I was a student in the 1960s for instance, it was taken for granted that the best students would seldom attend lectures preferring to spend the time in the library reading the standard texts. The only formal teaching was their weekly one hour tutorial with their college supervisor. The content of the exam papers varied little from year to year, and it was fairly easy to predict the kinds of questions and the topics they would include. In any case there was often a wide choice of essay questions in examinations. Lectures were therefore an optional extra, and often consisted of leading scholars talking about their latest work rather than anything directly related to the exams.

The Open University courses set new standards in presentation and packaging of course materials, detailed course syllabuses and team teaching. The use of radio and television allowed the use of multi-media materials, which the students could record, and the huge size of the Open University meant that major publishers were willing to publish their textbooks, which were widely used in other universities as well. Gradually students came to expect this kind of coherent and well-packaged course, rather than the dull lectures and simple reading lists which had been the norm before. The universities increasingly came to see their publicity materials as a contract with the students. They had to contain accurate information on the courses which would be presented during the next three or four years, and there were fears that students would be able to sue the universities if this content were changed. It thus became more and more difficult to put on new courses without very long notice, and the whole business of designing courses and the faculty curriculum became more and more centralized, and less dependent on the individual interests of the teachers. A final stage in this process has been the imposition of a government inspired teaching review similar to that earlier carried out for research. Previously the main method of monitoring teaching had been through the

external examiner system, though which senior members of other departments took part in examination marking in order to assure that degree class standards were comparable between universities. However, this was the first time that assessors were actually sent into class rooms to watch people teach. For most departments this involved long preparation and practice before the assessors arrived. Though the assessment has not resulted in extra money for departments, the results are widely used in university publicity materials, and like the RAE results they are openly available on the world wide web.

To some extent this marks a new departure – traditionally little emphasis was put on teaching in evaluation of performance either by the university or the people working there. The quickest way to get promoted was to publish and take on administrative chores and membership of key committees, so British academics used to spend more time on research and administration and less on teaching. The teaching review has to some extent redressed the balance, though it has also put more pressure still on academics who at the same time are being told to publish more for the next research review. In some cases there is actually a division of labor: some distinguished academics are being given research jobs where their main task is to publish and perhaps supervise a small number of graduate students. Teaching meanwhile is the task of teaching specialists, whose publications, if any, tend to be text books based on the courses that they teach.

Teaching is in turn linked to the whole problem of curriculum in education, not only in the universities, but in the educational system as a whole. The British system as a whole tended to stress high standards coupled with early specialization. Typically in high schools students would give up either arts or science subjects at A-level and concentrate on one or the other. By the 1960s people were talking about the 'two cultures' of arts and sciences, with their members increasingly unable to understand each other. Ways were sought to bridge the gap. In some of the new universities established in the 1960s, some courses were designed as interdisciplinary wholes in which students had to take both arts and science courses. In others changes to the curriculum made it easier to combine arts and sciences in a degree package.

But there were also changes taking place in the schools. The Thatcher government introduced a national curriculum in which a range of courses was specified together

with the levels to which they had to be studied. Changes also took place in the examination system in schools to increase the amount of course work and decrease the importance of the end of course examinations, and these changes began to be reflected in the universities as well with more emphasis on project work as opposed to traditional examinations in the assessment of final grades. In each year since the changes were introduced the number of A-level passes at high grades has gone up and some people claim that this is a result of better teaching, while others claim that it is the result of declining standards. Many academics now feel that their first year students lack the study skills to enter university at all, and that remedial courses are now necessary. The underlying problem is that a system initially designed for a small elite is now open to a large proportion of the population, who inevitably do not have the same educational skills or attainments.

One of the results of the new emphasis on teaching has been the attention now devoted to assessment and 'quality control' in classes on an industrial model. This goes beyond the end of course student questionnaires which have been standard in American and British higher education for many years, into a formal recording and monitoring by teachers of their own performances, and this has increased the administrative load upon them considerably. In the case of students failing examinations, one of the questions now asked, in addition to that of the competence of the student has become that of whether the advertised educational service was delivered correctly, following the formal course outlines and published syllabuses.

Another result of the increasing standardization and publication of courses and their content has been the possibility of course franchising and distance learning. To some extent this builds on earlier processes by which the established universities 'validated' or approved the degree level courses being taught in other institutions such as polytechnics and training colleges, or by which many of the universities in the former colonies were seen as outposts of the university of London for teaching, examination and degree granting purposes. The colonial enterprise has gone in its old form, though some universities are effectively franchising courses overseas, by setting up or validating courses taught by institutions abroad. Now that the polytechnics have mostly been turned into universities they validate their own courses. Some of the training colleges have also been absorbed into the university system, as satellite campuses of the established universities.

(e) Changing the basis of staff recruitment and working conditions

It is clear from what has been said above that many of these changes and reforms have had a considerable impact on the lives and work of the academics working and researching in British universities. One of the major formal changes was the abolition of tenure by the Thatcher government in 1987, on the grounds that the academics in the UK had a degree of job protection which it was felt was out of line with everyone else in the British economy. However, the government was advised by its lawyers that the legislation could not be applied retroactively –people with tenure already could not lose it, but all new appointments or changes in contract could be made without tenure. Being promoted was regarded as a change of contract, so that after November 1987 people being promoted to the grades of senior lecturer, reader or professor actually lost their tenure as they moved up. In my own university there were cases in which people actually refused to accept promotion for some time, on the grounds that they wanted to retain their tenure until they say how secure their jobs were going to be.

In fact they need not have worried, as many universities carried on behaving as if tenure still existed. The difference was that increasingly rather as in the American universities there were now two types of appointment. The number of people teaching on fixed term contracts of one, three or five years began to rise, and universities felt that they needed to have a group of people who could be got rid of when in financial difficulties to safeguard their budgets. On the other hand there were still a group of people being employed primarily as teachers with the expectation that they would stay permanently – even though there was now nothing to stop the universities from sacking them if their funding or the number of students declined. With the British economy reviving through much of the 1990s there has so far been no need to sack these kinds of appointees, though no doubt if an economic crisis as severe as those of the 1970s or 1980s were to happen again, universities would no doubt be forced to think about whether or not to exercise this option.

On the positive side for university teachers, the old rules which laid down that only a certain percentage of them could be senior lecturers and above have been relaxed, so that promotion has become easier. In my own university promotion had become extremely difficult in the 1980s as the 40% of people allowed to be promoted had been

filled up after the place had been established with a young staff in the 1960s. With a backlog of productive younger scholars building up, the situation often arose that the people looking for promotion had in many cases published more than the professors sitting on the Committee evaluating them.

Also gone are the rules controlling the maximum salaries of professors. With the mobility arising from the RAE, it is now possible for the ambitious to increase their salaries dramatically by moving from job to job, rather than staying in the same place. There are dramatic differences in salaries even within institutions and between scholars of comparable standing as a result. A few days ago I met a former colleague who through a couple of judicious moves between universities was now on a salary of 60,000 pounds a year, similar to that of professors in Japan. An equally distinguished colleague of similar age who had remained at the same university throughout had a salary of under 40,000. Presumably as in American universities market forces will lead to even greater inequalities in income in future, especially in subjects like law or medicine where practitioners outside universities generally earn high salaries.

On the other hand, the pressure on academics has also increased to the point where many of them are said to be miserable most of the time, despite the flourishing institutions in which they teach. There are many reasons for this, some of which will be obvious from what I have said above. The pressure to do research and publish is much greater than it used to be, even if the possibility of producing big books based on original research is probably less. This pressure now moves in five yearly cycles with the RAE, and with specific members of staff delegated the task of making sure that their colleagues produce enough to maintain or increase the department's rating. Much of the day to day administration in the universities has also been devolved to departments. In my own institution, the main administrative body used to be the faculty, and there were endless struggles for resources between the departments within it. The faculty has now been broken up into autonomous departments, with fixed budgets and resources in terms of rooms, computer facilities etc, and these are administered increasingly by academics rather than bureaucrats in the registry. Unlike Japanese universities the distinction between teachers who teach and bureaucrats employed by the ministry who administer is being increasingly eroded. The bureaucrats themselves have jobs which did not exist 30 years ago, including administering EU links and research

programs, overseas marketing, and servicing other administrative contracts which the universities have taken on as an additional source of income.

Teaching as has been seen has created additional pressures, as courses have become more complex, the requirements in terms of preparation and printing of materials has increased, and as the pressures of quality assurance and monitoring have been formalized.

As these pressures on time and effort have increased, however, there has been a sense in which academics have felt themselves increasingly powerless in the face of a managerial bureaucracy in the universities. In the old days university vice chancellors saw themselves as to some extent first among a group of equal colleagues, with the main task of chairing meetings and acting as a mouthpiece for the consensus among the other professors. Today's vice chancellors see themselves as CEO's of corporations with multi-million pound budgets and turnovers. Their salaries have increased accordingly. 'Managerialism' is the new ideology, and this is resented by academics who in many cases became academics to avoid being managed in other sectors of the economy. The numbers of meetings in which academics actually make decisions either in faculties or senate have decreased, while the number of meetings in which they respond to the demands of the government or the university administration for information and justification of their research or teaching activities have been increased. It is not surprising that so many have found the early retirement schemes so attractive as a way of getting out of this new kind of system, or have voted with their feet and moved to universities elsewhere in Europe, North America – or even Japan!

The reform process: a summary

The various reforms discussed above and the groups they favor in the higher education sector can thus be summarized as follows. In the following table I indicate with '+' or '-' cases in which a group seems to have clearly benefited or lost out because of a particular measure. '?' denotes cases where the outcome may be positive or negative for a group, depending on circumstances. Some of the changes clearly benefit some groups while being in most likely against the interests of others. The interest groups included in the table are the government, university administrations, teachers, students, industry and the general public.

Change / Reform	Govt.	Univ. Adm.	Teachers	Students	Industry	Public
Move away from five-year to annual funding	+	-	-			
Move to a more diversified funding base	+	+	?		+	
Early retirement schemes	+	+	?			
Development of an overseas market		+	?			
Widening of the student base		+	?	+		+
Student tuition fees	+	+		-		-
Monitoring PhD completion rates	+	-	-	-		
Strengthening of research councils	+	?	?			
Research assessment exercise	+	?	?			
Increased staff mobility and bargaining	?	-	+			
Research/teaching polarization	+	?	?			
Encouraging interdisciplinary/vocational studies		?	?	+	+	+
Multi-media education		?	?	+		
Quality assurance	+	-	-	+		
Teacher training in higher education	+	-	?	+		
Improved course materials		-	-	+		
Teaching assessment exercise	+	-	-	?		
National curriculum	+	?	?	?		
Franchising and distance learning		+	+			+
Abolition of tenure	+	+	-			
Short term contracts	+	+	-			
Higher salaries through negotiation	-	-	+			
Departmental devolution		+	?	+		
Managerialism	+		-			

Lessons for Japan?

As we have seen the processes of change and reform in the UK have been extremely complex and contested, with different initiatives favoring different groups in higher education and society at large. There is no simple distribution of benefits, the whole process is highly political, and whether some measures have produced any benefits at all is indeed hotly contested. Finally I turn to the question of whether any of this has any relevance to Japan. The Japanese system is different from that in the UK in terms of its four-year structure, its division between the state and private universities, its

size, and the degree of ministry control over the schools in the public sector. It does share some characteristics however: the division between an elite sector of universities which control much of the research; and the increasing level of state control in the UK which came to resemble that in Japan during the course of the Thatcher period. As a general point it can be said that some of the most interesting developments in British higher education have come from below rather than from above. In this respect the private universities in Japan which are less firmly under ministry control are probably in a better position to innovate than those in the state sector. Development initiatives in Japan tend to come from the top down, and at the local level in the state universities the caution, conservatism and regard for precedent by university officials often mean that initiatives are difficult to launch. Just to take one simple example, Japanese university professors in the state sector are civil servants and thus prevented from engaging in a wide range of professional activities which could enrich both their research and their teaching. Their British counterparts suffer from no such restrictions, and this has made some of the more fruitful collaborations between the universities and industry possible over the years, to the benefit of both. Even if the Mombusho were to relinquish direct control over many aspects of the day to day running of the universities, the British experience shows that indirect control can still be exerted effectively: through the Higher Education Funding Councils which are also responsible for the research review, and the research councils which are responsible for the distribution of research funds and the monitoring of research. This is clearly a debate which will continue in Japan, along those over other aspects of institutional and bureaucratic change.

As for the more specific points, they can also be briefly discussed in the same order as dealt with above. I will gloss briefly over those which do not apply to the Japanese situation.

(a) The cost of the higher education system, and the issue of accountability for public money.

Some of the points made under this heading are not relevant to the Japanese situation, because of the large number of private universities. In the private sector the kinds of diversified funding, which British universities have only recently started to move towards, have been in place for a long time. As noted above, because of the lower level of central government control, they are in a better position to innovate than the state

universities. They are also in a better position to exploit overseas markets. One problem for Japan here is that of language: because of the international importance of English, the UK and USA are able to soak up much of the international demand for education and training, and other European countries have followed suit by providing tuition in English. The widening of the student recruitment base is already happening in Japan through the life-long learning programs. Monitoring of PhD completion rates is not yet an issue because research funding arrangements are different, though the Mombusho might decide to look at these as part of a wider process of research evaluation and monitoring. This might also lead in turn to the use of early retirement schemes, as in the UK, as a means of eliminating the less active scholars from the system.

The main difference between the UK and Japan in terms of research is probably the balance between research conducted in the universities and private companies, the latter predominating in the case of Japan. However, within the university sector it is also clear that there is a continuing process of polarization and concentration of research funds in prestige institutions, just as in the UK. While scholars in lower ranking institutions may regret this, it does make sense from the point of view of the full use of facilities and economies of scale. The UK system of a research review linked to the distribution of funds in favor of the stronger institutions could be an attractive model for a Japanese government seeking to move further in this direction. Research councils headed by distinguished academics and functioning largely through peer review as a buffer between the state and the universities in the distribution of research funding could also prove an attractive model particularly if it encourages the development of interesting initiatives such as the establishment of small specialized research centers. At the moment pay in Japan is firmly linked to age, as it was in the UK before the Thatcher period. Some of the private universities are thinking in terms of linking pay to research output and productivity, and again the UK might provide some ideas as to how this might be implemented.

(c) Widening the student base and extending the system

As noted above, widening the recruitment base for students is already happening in Japan, with the life-long learning programs, and there is also a University of the Air, following along the lines of the Open University. No doubt both Japan and the UK will be experimenting with information technology and new teaching techniques in the next few years, with some international collaboration and exchanging of ideas,

particularly in the area of distance learning.

(d) Improving the quality of teaching

This is becoming a concern in Japan just as it has in the UK over the last few years, so the British experience with quality control and assurance, together with teaching reviews may well be of interest to Japanese planners. One difference between Japan and the UK is the existence in the latter of the external examiner system, which has maintained some degree of uniformity between examination grades and degree classes between universities, even if the better quality students still tend to cluster in places like Oxbridge, Imperial College, London School of Economics, and so on. There may well be lessons in this for Japan.

The other issue of interest here is that of the training of university teachers. Both the Japanese and UK systems have tended to assume up to now that people recruited on the basis of scholarly research can automatically teach, which we know from experience is often not the case. One of the main recommendations of the Dearing Report in the UK in 1997 was that more attention should be given to the training of teaching staff. This obviously has implications as well for the distribution of labor and funds between research and teaching, and it may be that some kind of dual career structure, where people get appropriate rewards and promotion by specializing in teaching rather than research, is one solution to the problem. Postgraduate teaching and supervision clearly presents different problems, and is more closely linked to research. Already it is largely concentrated in a few prestige institutions, and this trend is likely to continue in the future. The UK teaching assessment review may provide a model of interest to Japanese planners as well.

(e) Changing the basis of staff recruitment and working conditions

This heading contains some of the most contentious issues of all. As will be clear from the discussion of the UK above, the main directions of change in the last 20 years have been towards more managerial control, more administrative pressure, more monitoring, more accountability, and less job security. For the fortunate few the trade off has been higher salaries, lower teaching loads and greater access to research opportunities and resources. For many people however the results have been generally seen as negative. The situation in Japan is somewhat different, and more like that in the UK 20 years

ago, in that the teaching staff had more control over their working conditions, and salaries were calculated more or less according to age. There is still a fairly rigid division of labor in the state universities between control of money and resources by the university bureaucracy directly responsible to the Ministry, and academic appointments which are still largely controlled by the professors as a group. My guess is that almost any attempts at changing the Japanese system will involve greater managerialism as in the British case, with more centralized control over hiring and firing, reduced rights of tenure, and more fixed term contracts of the type on which many foreigners are currently employed.

The more productive researchers may have access to higher salaries as in the British and American cases, but this will be at the expense of more monitoring and control from either the Ministry or perhaps a strengthened central administration for each ministry. The rationale given for these changes, as in the British case, will probably be the need for research excellence, to keep up with international competition, coupled with accountability for the spending of tax-payer's money. But the broad results will include many of the kinds of changes described above for the British system. Britain in turn is seen by many people as moving towards a more American model of even greater job insecurity, coupled with constant demands for improved standards in teaching and research and with occasional payoffs available for those who cannot stand the pace to exit the system. In capitalist societies, all sectors of the economy must eventually fall in line with the logic of capitalism, The state universities both in the UK and Japan have been remarkably successful in remaining insulated from this logic much longer than most sectors of society, but in the UK the changes began with the economic restructuring which was fastest during the Thatcher period of the 1980s. In Japan they appear to be starting now, perhaps as a result of a similarly lengthy, if less serious, economic recession, and pressure on the government for restructuring and reform including higher education The next few years in Japanese universities should at the least be very interesting.