

Impact Objectives

- Undertake international comparative research on the public nature of education and gender barriers in Japan
- Investigate gender structure and educational systems, in particular the influence of French politics and governance on Asian civilisation

French thought, government policy and gender structures

Professor Atsuko Kawata is investigating the history of gender and education in Japan with a view to raise awareness to the mechanisms and origins of human social structures



What inspired you to study education and gender history?

My research theme is the structure of 'Oyake' vs.

'Watakushi' in Japan; 'Oyake' can be thought of as public, while 'Watakushi' can be considered 'private'. However, the structure and the relation of these is very different from each other. 'Oyake' does not mean a kind of territory, but rather a subject like 'emperor' or 'man'. The status of women in Japan has been inferior to that of Japanese men, not only socially but also mentally as a 'Watakushi' (private) being. As a result, there are still few female political leaders and the status of Japanese women remains low compared to other countries. How did these women survive in such harsh conditions? How did they overcome the difficulties of living? Since then, I have become very interested in researching human life history with a view to answering some of these questions. In addition, I would like to clarify how the public nature of education in Modern Japan was formed.

Can you talk about your current research?

I gained the research funding from Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research on the topic

of 'The effect of Guizot's thought on Japan in the end of Edo period - how his essay on civilization had come to Japan globally' from 2019 to 2023. Guizot says "The progress of society consists pre-eminently in substituting, on one hand, public authority for private will, and, on the other, legal resistance for individual resistance. This is the great end, the chief perfection, of social order." On the other hand he says about 'private' that "With regard to human thought, to the human conscience, to the intellectual powers of man; with regard to individual opinions, to private morals - with these they do not interfere: this would be to invade the domain of liberty." This is why I chose Guizot's book and studied how his essay on civilization had come to Japan 'globally'.

How do you hope your research can help raise awareness of educational history and educational administration and systems?

People start being educated so early that they see the systems and administration as natural, without realising what they mean. At the very least, I hope that my research will inform adults who can gain a wider consideration for what good education is and then educate their own children accordingly – only by doing such things will positive change be enacted.

What type of challenges have you faced in your research?

When considering history as an academic field, researchers often have their own areas of expertise which stem from their own circumstances. In general, it is difficult to cross boundaries such as countries, regions and eras, so I hope to manage to do this. To study 'Civilization' is to study the potential to cross or breakthrough the border, I suppose. There are obvious challenges with the different languages I encounter through my research, but I have used a range of methods to overcome this in various ways.

In what ways will you focus your research efforts in the future?

Today, progress by 'Civilization' is thought to cause pollution, environmental disruption, wars and the world has changed the approach on sustainable development since 1987. It is important to consider why the idea of civilization was able to transcend national borders in such a short period of 200 years or so, and I believe we should utilise the potential for the sustainability of the Earth by politics and education. ►

Developing understanding of educational systems

A researcher based within the Faculty of Contemporary Life Sciences at Tokyo Kasei Gakuin University is investigating various strands of gender structure and educational systems, and the external influences on Japanese life

Professor Atsuko Kawata based within the Faculty of Contemporary Life Sciences at Tokyo Kasei Gakuin University in Japan has a particular interest in investigating the impacts and effects of various individuals on a country's citizens, including societal structures and gender roles. After securing her PhD, Kawata became involved in a joint research project that encouraged participants to study the writings of various people across Japan in the early period of Meiji which began in 1868. This culminated in her discovery of a woman named Naito Masu, who was a pioneer of women's education in Yamanashi Prefecture.

NAITO MASU, EDUCATION PIONEER
'It was unusual for a woman to take a leading role in education in the early Meiji period and I became fascinated with studying Masu,' says Kawata. 'One of the main things I learned from this research was that in the past it was said that Japanese women do not require knowledge or education, but Masu obviously knew this was not true and challenged the beliefs of her time and tried to change society.'

In addition to uncovering details of Masu and her life, Kawata also learned that in the early Meiji period, there was a belief that neither state nor religious power should subordinate the inner self of human beings. Kawata became interested in understanding the history of this belief, of how it entered Japan shortly after it opened to the world and how it related to the thoughts on civilisation that the French political figure and historian, François Guizot, put forward in his essay on civilisation, entitled *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe*, 1828. From there, it was a short step to her present research, which seeks to understand more about the gender structure that has come about since the Meiji period in modern Japan and the influence of French politics and governance.

FRENCH LAW AND JAPANESE WOMEN
To begin, Kawata looked at the introduction of French law at the beginning of the Meiji period. After France was defeated by Prussia, the Meiji government changed the policy and imitated Prussian laws. After changing the policy, the Meiji government followed the path of enriching the country

and strengthening its military through Prussia-like autocracy. 'In 1873, the Meiji government invited Boissonade from France and ordered him to formulate a civil code. Boissonade completed the creation of the civil code – which is said to be democratic and based on the principle of gender equality – in 1889,' explains Kawata. 'Then, in 1890, the civil code debate had begun and continued until 1892, but in the end, they decided not to use it. Boissonade came back to France disappointed. The Meiji government then enacted a different civil code which deprived wives of rights.' Ultimately, Japanese women were excluded from public and political spheres and were unable to receive any form of higher education other than the Women's Higher Normal School. This essentially meant that women were expected to accept the systems within which they lived without saying a word or being able to have any influence on them.

THE MAIN GOALS OF THE WORK
Here it is important to highlight that the thoughts Guizot had expressed in his work

on civilisation had seeped into Japan and were strongly influencing the intellectuals and statesmen such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, Katsu Kaishu, Saigo Takamori, etc. This piqued Kawata's interest which led to her current investigation into the influence of French Minister of Public Education François Guizot – and his desire to

this theme, including in: 'Sir Ernest Mason Satow and the People of Kai Province', *Journal of Tokyo Kasei Gakuin University* vol.62, 2022; Guizot's *Histoire Générale de la Civilisation en Europe: Its Influence and Propagation Prior to Being Translated into English by C. S. Henry*, *Journal of Tokyo Kasei Gakuin University*, vol.63, 2023; 'Katsu

ideas fed into Japanese society, Kawata hopes to elucidate that 'glocal' educational network (which was open to the world) existed and was formed by the local people who needed and desired it eagerly. 'One of the translators of Guizot's book, Nagamine Hideki, was able to do this after only around three years of English study at Numazu Military School, thereby demonstrating the enormous potential of ordinary people at that time,' she comments. ●

In the past it was said that Japanese women do not require knowledge or education, but Naito Masu obviously knew this was not true and challenged the beliefs

civilise Asia – on Japan. The main goals of Kawata's work are: clarify the process by which Guizot's book spread to Japan; investigate the interactions between people that existed during that process; recognise the educational power of this process from both a global and local perspective; demonstrate Guizot's active involvement in the dissemination of Asian aspiration; and examine if Guizot's ideas of civilisation, which includes the belief that neither state nor religious power should subordinate the inner self of human beings, influenced the Japanese idea of 'Watakushi'.

THE CONCEPT OF 'GLOCAL'

Kawata explains that in her research the word 'glocal' means the mixture of global and local. 'What I would like to point out through my research is that although public education in the Meiji period is said to be state-led without any national revolution, there were many people, not just politicians but also local people, who hoped for change and civilization,' she highlights. Kawata has already written about or presented on

Kaishu and the Theory of Civilization: On the Preface to Guizot's Japanese Translation of the History of European Civilization', Toshihiko Yoneda and Kazuyo Torii, Keiko Saito, Masae Otawa, Noriko Matsushima edited, *Open up the History of Postwar Education in Japan*, 2024, Rikka Press; and 'Networks that Fostered Internationality in the Late of Edo Period to the Early Meiji Period in Japan- The Case of Kiyama Seiichi' presented at the 68th Meeting of *The Japan Society for Historical Studies of Education* in September 2024.

It is Kawata's hope that by studying this 'glocal' educational network and its impact on Japan at the end of the Edo period, she will be able to clarify the potential of ordinary people in Japan during this period. This elucidation of potential is something that is at the centre of Kawata's studies; for her, education not only takes place at school, it also exists within local networks and in the relationships between people. By developing our understanding of the period in question and of how Guizot's



Guizot's ideas of civilisation were transmitted to Japan via America at that time (map created in 1876)

Project Insights

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BIO

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