



An Encouragement of Learning

By Yukichi Fukuzawa

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The intellectual and social theorist Yukichi Fukuzawa wrote *An Encouragement of Learning* (1872--1876) as a series of pamphlets as he completed his critical masterpiece, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1875). Closely linked, the two texts illustrate the core tenets of Fukuzawa's theoretical outlook: freedom and equality as inherent to human nature, independence as the goal of any individual and nation, and the transformation of the Japanese mind as key to moving forward in a rapidly evolving political and cultural landscape. Fukuzawa called for the adoption of Western modes of education to help Japan emerge as a modern nation. He believed human beings' treatment of one another extended to a government's behavior, echoing the work of John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and other Western thinkers in a classically structured Eastern text.

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Editorial Review

Review

In An Encouragement of Learning, Yukichi Fukuzawa wrote that freedom and equality are inherent in man's nature, and presented ideas that John Locke or Thomas Jefferson would immediately have recognized. His logic justified the move from a highly stratified, four-class society to one in which any person could aspire to any occupation. He deliberated on the obligations between humans in society and generalized from these to relations between nations. Reading his book, you can just imagine life in a society that has suddenly become free, in which all of the trammels of caste and class have been dissolved. How might have Fukuzawa's words of encouragement helped late nineteenth-century Japanese as they faced their future? (Albert M. Craig, Harvard-Yenching Professor of Japanese History, Emeritus, Harvard University)

About the Author

Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835–1901) founded Keio University, the first private university in modern Japan, and was an engaged speaker and controversial journalist. His books include *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, and *Conditions in the West*.

Shunsaku Nishikawa is professor emeritus at Keio University, where he also served as the director of the Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies at the Keio Institute of East Asian Studies. His books include *The Labor Market in Japan: Select Readings*.

David A. Dilworth is professor of philosophy at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He is also the translator, with G. Cameron Hurst III, of *Yukichi Fukuzawa's An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*.

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