

Welcome Speech@Entrance Ceremony
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Welcome to the Incubator of Triculture
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On the afternoon of May 14th, 2022 (JST May 15th, 2022), Keio Academy of New York participated in the Japan Day's parade, which was to celebrate the sesquicentennial of Iwakura Embassy's visit to the United States. In 1872 Iwakura Embassy, a delegate of major figures of the Meiji government led by distinguished Japanese statesman Iwakura Tomomi (1825-83) who represented the Meiji emperor, visited major cities such as San Francisco, Chicago and Washington, D.C., from January through February, imbibing the western tradition of culture and civilization. It is highly plausible that their voyage partially inspired Jules Verne to describe the Japanese circus in Yokohama in the novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* published in December 1872. Without Iwakura's diplomatic voyage Meiji Japan could not have been modernized enough.

By the same token, we cannot forget that this year is also the sesquicentennial of the founder of Keio Gijuku, Fukuzawa Yukichi sensei's million seller *An Encouragement of Learning*, the first volume of which was published in February, 1872. Etymologically speaking, "Keio" refers to the period of the late Edo Era, while "Gijuku" refers to the Anglo-Dutch style public school. Fukuzawa started Keio Gijuku as a private school in 1858 and established its integrated educational system by the end of the nineteenth century. Being private signifies not only ensuring privacy but also resisting bureaucratic interventions.

Historically speaking, "private" in Japan should be taken to mean that the school was not controlled by official sources such as bakufu or han or even by local groups of village elders. Therefore, reflecting his own idea of "独立自尊" (moral independence and self-reliance) Fukuzawa sensei was so critical of bureaucratic interventions as to make his school independent and autonomic.

Thus, now in the 21st century Keio Gijuku consists of two elementary schools, three junior high schools, five high schools including Keio Academy of New York and ten university level faculties on five campuses. Each school maintaining its independence and autonomy, the whole integrated system boasts of the unity just like American Federation system whose motto is "e pluribus unam," that is, one out of many. I think this summer most of you must have been

deeply impressed with the victory of Keio Gijuku high school's baseball team at Koshien Stadium, in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture. Some commentators considered the baseball team as a branch of Keio University. However, it is this integrated educational system of Keio Gijuku that helped support the very baseball team. Of course, we have rarely found in the United States this kind of the integrated educational system ranging from elementary school through university. Nonetheless, it is evident that while he was so proud of the traditional feudalistic Samurai spirit, our founder Fukuzawa sensei was keenly aware of American democratic ideology in constructing Keio Gijuku.

Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the Keio spirit as represented by Fukuzawa Yukichi has, since its beginning, championed the Transpacific imagination. The transnational context in the 21st century makes the transpacific imperative more realistic. We should not only imbibe western ideas but also digest them and create our own "voice" in the tri-cultural milieu consisting of American, Japanese and Keio cultures.

Given that back in the 1980s Professor Tadao Ishikawa, the fifteenth president of Keio University, originally conceived Keio Academy of New York to be not only a bilingual and bicultural high school but also as an international research center, we account it high time to implant in the curriculum the germ of Transpacific Studies, which will enable us to empower the new idea of "Tri-culture" by developing transpacific, transcultural and transdisciplinary studies in a variety of ways.

In its initial stage, current headmaster and his office, with the help of assistant headmaster Mr. Tomio Yamamoto and Dean of Academic Programs Mr. Chad Combs, are responsible for organizing the special program of Transpacific Studies: an Omnibus "Tri-Cultural" Lecture Series. For the time being, from the fall 2022 semester we plan to coordinate the series by inviting to Purchase distinguished scholar-critics, writers and artists (at least a guest speaker per month), keenly aware of the transpacific intersection between American Studies and Japanology. This opportunity will undoubtedly give our students the sense of what North American University life is like.

Of course, in order to further sophisticate the concept of triculture the series of lectures is not enough. Last year we inaugurated the first-ever academic journal of our school entitled *Keio Research Review* publishing transnational, transcultural and transdisciplinary articles in a variety of fields ranging from the humanities down to science and technology, which is available in print and digital editions. What is more, it is also indispensable to re-activate and reorganize our

library as a library leaning commons and create a database useful for developing this new discipline. This fall Hayakawa Publishers, one of the leading publishers in today's Japan, promised us to donate to our library more than 341 books they have published in the past decades. Thus, with this new project as a tri-cultural engine Keio Academy of New York will contribute much to the education of genuinely transpacific intellectuals.