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Fukuzawa Yukichi and Shinmon Berihente

Albert Craig

Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) was Japan's most important and influential thinker during the nineteenth century. His writings played an instrumental role in the transition from Tokugawa to modern Japan. Two notions central to his thought were "civilization" and a model of the workings of British government. One of Fukuzawa's earliest exposures to these ideas, it has been suggested, was at a lecture by a Dutch doctor in London in 1862.

The Lecture

It was spring. After three weeks in Paris, the 36 members of the 1862 bakufu mission to Europe departed for England, arriving in London on the evening of April 30 (or 4/02 by the Japanese calendar). Nine days after their arrival, in a letter to a senior figure in his domain, Fukuzawa described his participation in the mission as a "wonderful opportunity" for "the investigation (*tansaku*) of conditions and customs in the several European nations."

In England and France I have sought acquaintances on all sides and have inquired into the national laws, military regulations,

taxes, and so on. Although I cannot say that everything became clear at a glance, in contrast to my previous book studies, it is a case of 'one look being better than one hundred words.' I am profiting greatly.¹

In London members of the mission visited a variety of institutions—hospitals, factories, railroads, poorhouses, and telegraph offices. They took copious notes and wrote them up in the evening at their hotel. On the return of the mission to Japan, their accounts were combined and revised to form the official report of the mission, the *Fukuda Sakutarō hikki* (hereafter, the *Mission Report*). The key members of the mission responsible both for the gathering of information and the compilation of the final report were, it appears, Fukuzawa, then a translator at the Gaikokugata, the bakufu office of foreign affairs, Matsuki Kōan (later Terashima Munenori), and Mitsukuri Shūhei. The latter two were doctors knowledgeable in Dutch. They were among the handful of the mission's members who had studied the language. Fukuda Sakutarō, the junior inspector (*kachi metsuke*) nominally responsible for the report, knew only Japanese.

To judge by the number of pages in the *Mission Report*, the six weeks in England were the most important segment of the mission's six-nation European tour. The pages covered forty topics. The first three dealt with British government; the rest were usually narrower and more concrete—topics such as military pensions, aid to the poor, rifles, locomotives, horse carriages, the telegraph, prices of goods, ser-

¹ *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshū*, Volume 17, p. 7 (hereafter, *FZS* 17, 7)

vant's pay, the tax on commerce, and roads.

Of the three topics on government, the most important and most interpretative was the third: "An Outline of Government in England and the Relative Merits and Demerits of England and France—a Lecture by Shinmon Berihente, a Dutch Doctor Sojourning in England." The lecture was given to members of the mission, most likely to one or more of the interpreters who knew Dutch, sometime between the 9th and 30th of the 4th month, Bunkiyū 2 (1862).² The lecture began with a list of the five conditions necessary for a country to be recognized by the world as civilized. This was followed by a fairly detailed description of English government; the lecture included two comparative references to France.

Previous Research

The pioneering research on Berihente's lecture was done by Professor Matsuzawa Hiroaki. In 1974, he edited and annotated the England portion of the *Mission Report*, which he titled "*Eikoku tansaku*" or "The Investigation of England", and wrote a commentary on it.³ His publication made this important source available to scholars for the first time. In 1993, Matsuzawa wrote *Kindai Nihon no keisei to seiyō keiken* (The Formation of Modern Japan and Its Experience of the West), a work of broader scope in which he extended his penetrat-

² Numata Jirō and Matsuzawa Hiroaki, eds., *Seiyō kenbunshū*, Volume 66 in the series *Nihon shisō taikei* (Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 588.

³ The above volume contains three accounts by Japanese who traveled abroad during the pre-Restoration era. One of the three is "*Eikoku tansaku*" (pp. 477-544); Matsuzawa's commentary is titled "*Eikoku tanken shimatsu*" (pp. 579-598).

ing analysis of Berihente's lecture.⁴

In both works, Professor Matsuzawa emphasized the critical importance of the information that Berinhente had conveyed to members of the mission. The lecture, Matsuzawa suggested, supplemented their first-hand observations of England and shaped their overall view of English government, finances, and military affairs.⁵ If Fukuzawa Yukichi attended the lecture, and Matsuzawa argued that he did, it may have played an important role in the development of his early thought. Matsuzawa detailed the respects in which the opening pages of Fukuzawa's first volume of *Conditions in the West* bore the imprint of the lecture.

Professor Matsuzawa also made several interesting conjectures about Berinhente. First, that he may have lived in France before coming to England. A prior residence in France, would explain his ability to compare the two countries. Second, that while in France, he may have absorbed the radicalism that characterized the era of reform politics before the rise of Louis Napoleon, and that this radicalism may have been the basis for his trenchant criticisms of England. Third, that Berinhente may have been "one of those blown to England in the great whirlwind of expulsions and flights that followed Louis Napoleon's 1851 *coup d'état*."⁶ These conjectures were based, necessarily, on the contents of the lecture, since, as Professor Matsuzawa noted, all attempts to identify Berihente had failed.

⁴ Also published by Iwanami Shoten.

⁵ Some of the information conveyed by Berinhente, Matsuzawa points out, is found under other topic headings than that of the lecture proper.

⁶ *Seiyō kenbunshū*, 589.

Two other scholars have also worked on this topic. Professor Nagao Masanori, in his *Kinsei no yōgaku to kaigai kōshō* (Dutch Studies and Foreign Relations in Early Modern Japan), translated into Japanese the Dutch entries in Fukuzawa's *Seikō techō* (Notebook of Travel to the West) (hereafter *Notebook*) and provided a commentary on them.⁷ Nagao's interpretation of Berinhente and his significance to Fukuzawa closely follows Matsuzawa's argument. Professor Tomita Masafumi, the editor of the *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshū* (The Collected Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi), also wrote about Berinhente and his impact on Fukuzawa in the first volume of his *Kōshō Fukuzawa Yukichi*.⁸ He, too, follows Matsuzawa's interpretation.

In this article I will identify Shinmon Berihente and give a short account of his life. I will demonstrate that, while Dutch by nationality, he was an English doctor. I will argue that he is unlikely to have lived in France and was not a radical thinker cast out of France by the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. Berihente held some liberal opinions but his principal criticisms of England derived more from "conservative" doctrines than from any species of radicalism. Finally, I will add my own conjectures on the relevance of these findings to Fukuzawa.

On The Trail

I had tried to identify Shinmon Berihente several times using libraries in the United States but without success. Then, in 1995, while at Oxford's Pembroke College, I decided to search again, to do my own lit-

⁷ Published in 1979 by Gannando Shoten.

⁸ Published in 1992 by Iwanami Shoten.

the *Eikoku tansaku*. As it turned out, my search involved a fair amount of London *kenbutsu*.

Shinmon was almost certainly Simon. I assumed that Berihente was a Dutch name, possibly a Dutch variant of a German name such as Behrend. But I found no likely candidates in Dutch biographical works in Oxford libraries. Stumped, I sent a query to Professor W. J. Boot, an acquaintance and Japanese scholar at Leiden University. He replied as follows:

As regards your Dutch doctor, the name did not ring any bells with me, so I consulted a colleague of mine, Prof. Dr. H. Beukers, whose speciality is medical history and who has done quite a bit of research in connection with Dutch doctors who went to Japan in the *bakumatsu* and early Meiji periods. He did come up with a very convincing reading of the name Berihente, namely Belinfante—an old established family of intellectuals. Proceeding on the assumption that, since the man had fled France in 1850, he must have received his medical doctorate sometime in the 1830's or 40's, Beukers was so kind as to consult the alba studiosorum of the three universities where in those years doctorates in medicine were given (Leiden, Utrecht, and Groningen. N. B. Promotion was a requirement for being allowed to practise!) Unfortunately, no likely candidates emerged. This may mean that the man was not a medical doctor and had received his medical education at another institution than one of the universities, or that he was educated and took his doctorate abroad.⁹

⁹ Letter to author dated "Leiden, 14-9-1995."

This gave me the name Belinfante.¹⁰ But why, I wondered, was there no record of a Dutch medical degree.

I looked next in the Bodleian Library at *Kelly's Street Directory of London*—street directories in that era being what telephone books are today. I looked first at 1861 and 1862 and then at earlier and later editions. They all contained addresses for a Simon Belinfante. The 1859 directory also listed him as MRCS, a member of the Royal College of Surgeons.

The library of the Royal College, in turn, provided a wealth of new information: when Belinfante was admitted to membership in the College, what degrees he held, more addresses, and several other leads. The key fact was that he had received his medical training at the University of London.

I then went to the Paleography Library in the Senate House of London University, where I found entries for Belinfante in both the *First Register of Candidates for Matriculation* and the *General Register*. These contained his place of birth, his age, some information on his earlier education, his current address, and the fact that he had attended University College, one of the colleges within the university.

I then visited the Records office of University College, where I examined the *University College London Register of Students, 1853-1857* and *The University College, London, Calendar for the Session 1856-57*. These contained detailed information about the courses he took, the fees he paid, and the fact that he passed the First Examination in Med-

¹⁰ In his commentary on the *Eikoku tansaku* Matsuzawa had suggested “Belinfante” as a reading for Berinhente in 1974; I missed it on first reading his work.

icine in 1858.

The information gathered at the Royal College of Surgeons and London University led to further inquiries and new sources. One of the most important was an article published in Australia by the Australian Jewish Historical Society. Neither the article nor any of the other sources mentioned the lecture Belinfante gave to the visiting Japanese in 1862. But there was enough data for a chronicle of his life, though considerable gaps still remained.

Simon Belinfante, a Life

The Belinfantes were Portuguese Jews who had fled Portugal to escape persecutions in the early sixteenth century. They first sought refuge in Turkey, and later several members of the family moved to the Netherlands. The Dutch Belinfantes became well established in Amsterdam. Zadik Belinfante (1675–1750), for example, became the chief rabbi of Portuguese Jews in the city. Others became poets, philosophers, and linguists. By the early nineteenth century, the family had become prominent in education, journalism, and publishing.

Simon Belinfante was born in Amsterdam in 1831 to Abraham and Elizabeth Belinfante, the second of nine children. Of his early life, we know only that his father was a “*dronkaard*” and that Simon, presumably sometime during his teens, rebelled against Judaism, or against his family, or both, and joined the Dutch Reformed Church.¹¹

In his 1862 lecture, Belinfante stated that he “came to England from France twelve years earlier,” that is to say, in 1850. But we

¹¹ Morris Z. Forbes, “Simon Belinfante in Australia, 1863–1874,” *The Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 41 (July 1991) 278–279

know nothing of his life in England prior to 1853. Presumably he was learning English, but there is no information on how or where. In 1853 he entered St Edmund's College in Ware.¹² The college was then and is now a school preparing students for university study. I wrote to Mr. D. J. J. McEwan, the headmaster, asking about Belinfante's record and life at the college. He responded:

I can confirm that Simon Belinfante was a pupil here registered from 1853-1856.

I am afraid that we have no other record that we can rely upon.

Much was destroyed in a fire in 1906!

Sorry not to be able to help further.¹³

Early in 1856, Simon matriculated at the University of London. A document in the Paleography Library of the Senate House states that he was in the first division, which is to say that he did very well on the Pass Examination required for entry. At London University, Simon became a student at University College. He is listed in the 1856-57 calendar of that college as a matriculated student in the "Faculty of Arts and Sciences."¹⁴ The courses he took in that Faculty—chemistry, natural and experimental philosophy—suggest that he had already decided on a career in medicine.¹⁵

¹² See at Paleography Library: *First Register of Candidates for Matriculation*, Vol. D 1 (1838-56), Folio 1 of entries for 1856, entry # 21, "College: St Edmund's College, Ware."

¹³ Letter dated 8 December 1995.

¹⁴ See *The University College, London, Calendar for The Session 1856-57*, 240.

¹⁵ Information on courses and fees are contained in *University College, Lon-*

In the three subsequent calendars, for 1857-58, 1858-59, and 1859-60, Simon is listed as a student in the Faculty of Medicine. After transferring from Arts and Sciences to Medicine, he took courses in botany, *materia medica*, surgery, anatomy, practical chemistry, bandaging, pathology, and medical jurisprudence. Then, on the first Monday in August, 1859, he took the "First Examination in Medicine." He passed in the second division without honors, though he would later claim to have won a gold medal.¹⁶ He left the university without graduating. Passing the First Examination was the minimal requirement to practice as a doctor in England. Some students went on to take a Second Examination and then a M.D.

In thinking of Belinfante's student years, an absolutely critical area about which we have no information is his finances. Who paid for his travel from Amsterdam to London, for his study of English, for his years at St. Edmund's, a luxury few English families could afford, and for his fees and living expenses at the University of London? We can only speculate. One possibility is that an affluent Amsterdam relative, recognizing Simon's potential, arranged to send him to England for study. Another is that he was cared for and supported by other Belinfantes in London. In *Kelly's Street Directory*, in addition to Simon, there are listings for a Mrs. Belinfante and a Philip Belinfante.¹⁷ For a time during the early 1860s they lived in the same neigh-

don, Register of Students, Sessions 1853-1857.

¹⁶ This information is contained in the *General Register* of the university in the Paleology Library and in the University College *Calendar for the Session 1858-59*, 246. Regarding the gold medal, see Forbes, 279.

¹⁷ Between 1856 and 1858, Mrs. Belinfante lived at 165 Albany Street in Regents Park, and in 1860 at 8 Sunderland, Westbourne Park W. In 1861

borhood as Simon, though at different addresses. Simon's middle initial was P.¹⁸ Was Philip, possibly, an uncle? Did Simon live with the other London Belinfantes prior to entering St. Edmund's? Did he stay with them during vacations? Did they provide for his incidental expenses during his student years? Were they unable or unwilling to provide funds for a more complete medical education beyond the First Examination? All that can be said with certainty is that he must have had some source of funds.

The period between 1859, when he left the university, and 1862, when he gave the lecture, is also largely blank. He no doubt worked as a doctor, but medical directories make no mention of his place of employment. He was admitted to membership in the Royal College of Surgeons in 1859.¹⁹ He also married and had a child during that year; the marriage did not last and the child died in the United States eleven years later.²⁰

Belinfante eventually became an M.D. Several medical directories list after his name, "St. And. M.D. 1861." This was puzzling. How could he have obtained an advanced medical degree from St. Andrews University in Scotland when, according to *Kelly's Street Direc-*

Philip Belinfante lived at 1 Westbourne Park, Quadrant W, and in 1862 at 33 Westbourne Park, Quadrant W. See *Kelly's Directories* for these years.

¹⁸ He was listed as Simon P. Belinfante in the *Register of Students, Sessions 1853-1857* cited above.

¹⁹ This information appears in several medical directories at the library of the Royal College of Surgeons; for example, in *The Medical Directory* of 1861 on p. 988 in the category "A List of Registered Non-Residents;" in the *London Medical Directory* of 1862; or in the 1863 volume of the *London and Provincial Medical Directory* in the category "Registered Non-Residents."

²⁰ Forbes, 278.

tory, he was continuously resident in London?

- 1855-6 40 Gower St., New Road
- 1858 30 Egremont Place, New Road
- 1860 2 Upper Terrace, Islington
- 1861 14 Golden Square W
- 1862 8 Golden St.
- 1864-7 57 Great Portland St.

Furthermore, *The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews* lists no Belinfante, and in 1861, the university had only a tiny medical faculty.

A solution to the puzzle was offered in *The Healers: A History of Medicine in Scotland* by David Hamilton. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before medical schools had been established in Scotland, Scottish universities regularly awarded the M.D. degree to those “returning from a continental medical education,” often to Scots who had studied in Paris. St. Andrews was a leader in this practice, awarding 1885 such degrees between 1836 and 1862. All that was required was a payment of 36 pounds and one or two testimonials from colleagues.²¹

This so-called “postal M. D” early came under criticism. The chancellor of Edinburgh University once asked his old tutor, Adam Smith, for advice on the matter. Smith defended the practice, saying that it worked against university monopolies. Smith also noted that

²¹ David Hamilton, *The Healers: A History of Medicine in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1981). 142, 147.

the “greater part” applying for “degrees in the irregular manner complained of are surgeons or apothecaries who are in the custom of practicing as physicians, but who being only surgeons or apothecaries are not fee’d as physicians. It is not so much to extend their practice as to increase their fees that they are desirous of being made doctors....”²² No less a figure than Edward Jenner, surgeon and discoverer of smallpox vaccination, purchased the degree.

By mid-nineteenth century, Hamilton notes, “Scotch degrees” had become the “butt of satirists” in London. An illiterate brushmaker bought one and applied, though unsuccessfully, for a post at a London hospital. Legislation enacted in 1858 “disciplined St. Andrews by limiting its awards of the M.D. degree to ten each year and only to practitioners over the age of forty.”²³ In 1861 Belinfante was ten years shy of forty. Did he just slip in under the wire and become one of the last recipients of the infamous postal degree? I later learned that the 1858 legislation had partially taken effect: Belinfante spent five days at St. Andrews taking examinations with 48 other candidates, of whom 11 failed. He was awarded the degree on May 10, 1861 without ever having matriculated at St. Andrews.²⁴

Belinfante gave the lecture to members of the visiting Japanese mission the year after he received his degree. Professor Matsuzawa suggests three possibilities as to how the lecture may have been arranged: through an English doctor at a London hospital that the Japanese doctors had visited, through the good offices of a certain Profes-

²² Hamilton, 144-45.

²³ Hamilton, 44, 157.

²⁴ Forbes, 279.

sor Hoffman, a specialist in Japanese studies at Leiden University, or by the staff of the Dutch legations in Paris or London, which the mission had visited. Of these, the first explanation seems the most likely. Neither Hoffman nor the staff of the Dutch legations were likely to have known of Belinfante's existence. The mission's interpreters visited London hospitals as a part of their study of the West. Fukuzawa, we know, visited several. With the exception of Fukuzawa, who had begun learning English three years earlier, the interpreters knew only Dutch and, then, primarily the written language. They must have had a terrible time communicating in English with doctors at the hospitals and probably apologized, saying they knew only Dutch. Taking them at their word, a doctor, possibly a colleague or former classmate of Belinfante, may have arranged for them to hear a lecture in Dutch. We do not know who among the Japanese delegation attended the lecture. The interpreters are the most likely candidates since only they would have been able to understand it, however imperfectly.

Another item requiring clarification was a listing "RMSP Co." after Belinfante's name and in place of an address in several medical directories.²⁵ The initials, I discovered, stood for "Royal Mail Steam Packet Company."²⁶ The listing began in 1862 and continued through 1866. It appears that, shortly after giving the lecture to members of

²⁵ In the July 10, 1862 *List of the Fellows, Members, etc. of Royal College of Surgeons of England* or in the 1866 and subsequent *Calendars of the Royal Society of Surgeons of England*.

²⁶ This was cited in the 14th edition of the *Acronyms, Initialisms, and Abbreviations Dictionary*, published in 1990.

the Japanese mission, Belinfante became a ship's doctor on the steamship line and returned to London only intermittently during the years that followed. But this judgement, too, required further revision.

The archivist at the library of the Royal College of Surgeons showed me a 1984 letter from Mr. Morris Z. Forbes, then president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and editor of its journal. Mr. Forbes explained his interest:

We are currently preparing a paper on the subject of a Dr. Simon Belinfante who came to Australia in the sixties of the last century and practised for a short period as a doctor and barrister-at-law at Gulgong, an important goldfields town.²⁷

After reading the letter, I wrote to Forbes in 1995, describing my interest in Belinfante and asking about his paper. He sent me the title of his 1991 article on Belinfante's years in Australia, which I subsequently acquired. Since RMSP began appearing after Belinfante's name in 1862, he may have made a trip to Australia and back to England in the second half of that year, shortly after giving the lecture to the Japanese. Australian records definitely attest that he sailed from England on March 23, 1863 as ship's surgeon on the Beejapore and arrived at Moreton Bay in Australia on July 17.²⁸ Such ships car-

²⁷ Letter addressed to The Archivist, Royal College of Surgeons, dated 19 August 1984.

²⁸ Forbes article, 280-281. Australian sources say the Beejapore was "referred to as being of the Black Bull Line." It is possible that he was with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company in 1862 and moved to the other com-

rying immigrants played an important role in the peopling of Australia. He left the ship and never returned to England. The London listings in *Kelly's Street Directory of London* and the several medical directories were simply mail addresses.

Belinfante's life in Australia has no relevance to his 1862 lecture except in one regard. Sources for his Australian years provide information about his character and abilities available nowhere else.

The 1860s were the era of the Australian gold rush. Belinfante lived for four years at Grafton as a "medical officer for the aborigines," and then moved to the rough mining towns of Gulgong and Mudgee. In 1866 he married Janet Underwood. In 1867 he was admitted by the Supreme Court of New South Wales as a barrister-at-law. For a time he lived in Sydney. Forbes wrote, "For a foreigner to be admitted here to both the legal and medical professions is extraordinary."²⁹ In the Australian goldfields of that era lawyers and doctors were in short supply and standards were low, but even then, it was no small achievement to parlay some self-study and a single university course in "medical jurisprudence" into the practice of law

Belinfante's legal practice "was very largely confined to the goldfields of Gulgong." Among his cases, he defended the claims of miners, a man on trial for beating his wife, and also "the fair ones of Gulgong." At the ladies' trial, the local paper, the *Guardian*, reported that the court had never before seen "such a distribution of silks and flowers."³⁰

pany in 1863.

²⁹ Letter to me dated 1995.

³⁰ Forbes, 283-4.

Contemporary descriptions of Belinfante are not especially flattering. Sources cited in Forbes' article variously describe him as unstable in temperament, highly intellectual, restless, ambitious, unpredictable, lacking in discretion, urbane, redoubtable, impetuous, impatient, bitter in defeat, unable to compromise, and of a crotchety nature. In 1872 Belinfante hoped to become a "Member to the Parliament for the Western Goldfields" but obtained only 144 signatures in support of his candidacy from the 2500 voters in his district. The newspaper attacked him as "the great Bellowflimsey," "this amalgamated professional gentleman," "this pretentious aspirant," "this professional immigrant," "this impudent mendicancy," and as "a pure-bred Ishmaelite"—the last despite Belinfante's having joined the Church of England sometime after his arrival in Australia.³¹ In the election campaign, when a storekeeper, one Benjamin Benjamin, supported a rival candidate, Belinfante, despite his own origins, ridiculed him as a "Jewish old clothes seller." Benjamin subsequently obtained "the satisfaction of a gentleman" by whipping Belinfante outside a Gulgong hotel. Belinfante took him to court. The newspaper continued its attack: "The little doctor... sticks up posters, distributes handbills. He addresses moonlight gatherings as 'Christian Protestant friends.'" When the election results were known, Belinfante had received the smallest number of votes of any candidate.³²

On July 14, 1874, while hurrying to appear in court on a mining claim, Belinfante, accompanied by his wife, attempted to cross the Cudgegong River in a buggy. The buggy was swept away, and

³¹ Forbes, 285-6.

³² Forbes, 286.

though his wife was rescued, Belinfante drowned. The tale arose that he had been bound on an errand of mercy. A nearby Junction Hotel was renamed the Belinfante Hotel. A bridge built over the river was named the Belinfante Bridge. Obituaries praised him as talented, energetic, liberal, and kind.

In 1955, an Australian poet, C.D. Mills, wrote a ballad about the bridge. Curiously, in the poem Belinfante became Doctor Belin, and his patients, a mother and her “babe,” became the Fantes. The brave doctor faced the “surging flood,” knowing that his patients’ “need was great.” But smashed by the “flood’s wrath” and thrown on “the sharp toothed rocks below,” he never arrived. The poem ended:

As the early shafts of sunlight
Touched the pine clad mountains side
Their souls were called to heaven
And the babe and mother died.

The bush-birds sang requiem
From the river oaks close by,
A small breeze stirred the needles
In a muted soft reply,
So the woman and the baby
And the man who never came,
When coupled all together,
Gave Belinfante Bridge its name.³³

³³ Forbes, 296-7

Conclusions about Belinfante

Shinmon Berihente is Simon P. Belinfante. There were not two persons of that name in the medical profession in England in 1862. Though Dutch by birth and nationality, he was an English doctor. His higher education, including his medical training and certification, were all English, or if St. Andrews is included, British.

The biographical data suggest a new view of the lecture given to members of the Japanese mission. The word "lecture" usually suggests a university-like setting with a senior figure of authority speaking somewhat didactically to young, unformed students. But Belinfante was no graybeard. At thirty-one, he was of an age with the mission's Japanese translators, one or more of whom probably attended the lecture. Fukuzawa was twenty-seven, Matsuki Kōan, twenty-nine, and Mitsukuri Shūhei, thirty-seven. The lecture, Professor Matsuzawa points out, was well-organized, and Belinfante spoke, according to the Japanese transcription, using the first person singular. It was a prepared talk and not simply a conversation. Even then, for Japanese accustomed primarily to the written language, the lecture must have been difficult to understand. The interpreters probably interrupted Belinfante almost continuously, asking for clarifications of this word or that phrase. He doubtless responded by writing down key words and phrases. Since both lecturer and audience were young men at the height of their powers, the give and take between them must have been vigorous and uninhibited.

What impression, we wonder, did the young Belinfante make on his audience? Did they simply appreciate the information he con-

veyed? What did those who heard the lecture make of his language? Belinfante left Amsterdam at age nineteen or earlier; he probably spoke teenage Dutch and even that may have been rusty after twelve years in England. If Belinfante used English words during the lecture, they, too, must have been heavily accented, for even in Australia, a country of immigrants, he was spoken of as a “foreigner.” Did he tell his audience that he was about to abandon all hope for a career in England and sail for Australia? The *Mission Report* on the lecture is straightforward and gives no clue about the perceptions of the Japanese attendees.

We also wonder how Belinfante prepared for the lecture. After leaving St Edmund’s in 1856, he studied only science and medicine. His account of the British government went beyond what he might have learned at St. Edmund’s and beyond the level of general knowledge offered in newspapers. To obtain such information and present it in the proper Dutch terminology, he probably consulted a reference work in that language. I will return to this issue in a moment.

The biographical data also compel us to reconsider the earlier interpretation of the lecture. The likelihood that Belinfante was a radical thinker who fled France in the aftermath of Louis Napoleon’s *coup d’état* in December 1851 now seems slight. For one thing, the timing is off. In 1862, Belinfante said that he had come to England twelve years earlier. That would be the spring of 1850. Twelve is an exact figure. Had he come in the spring of 1852 after the coup, he would have said ten, an easier number.

Also, since he came to England at age nineteen, he was too young to have spent much time in France, or for that matter to have lived

in France at all. He doubtless spent his childhood with his family in Amsterdam. When he abandoned Judaism and embraced Dutch Reformed Christianity, he was probably in his teens. A younger child, even if circumstances inclined him to such an act, would be incapable of standing up against the vigorous opposition of family and community. The prominence of the Belinfantes in the Jewish community of Amsterdam almost guarantees that there was such an opposition. Nor is it likely that he would have joined the Dutch Reformed Church while living in France. In the *Mission Report*, Belinfante is recorded as using the words, "when I first came (*mairi sōrō*) to England from France." In the context, the verb might well have been used in the sense of "crossed over." Most probably, he traveled overland from Amsterdam to Calais and then took a ferry to England with only a passage through coastal France. Unfortunately, this portion of his life remains a blank.

The lecture itself offers scant evidence that Belinfante had lived in France. In listing the five conditions that a nation must fulfill to be considered civilized, he mentions no country by name. His long and positive assessment of the institutions and freedoms that give Britain "first place among nations of the world" makes no reference to comparable French institutions. He mentions France only twice. The first mention is a very British anecdote about the French emperor keeping his personal funds in British banks in order to provide for his old age should his position be abolished. The anecdote points up the greater security offered by British banks. The second mention is the bald and questionable assertion that the French enjoy an untrammelled freedom of religion whereas the British do not.³⁴ But while giv-

ing a detailed description of the shortcomings of religious freedom in Britain, Belinfante provides no parallel details about the state of religion in France. In short, apart from one ambiguous statement about coming to England from France, there is little support for the assumption that he had lived in France.

If French radicalism imbibed at the source was not the basis for his criticism of religious freedom in Britain, what was? My view is that Belinfante criticized the Protestant bias of British government from the perspective of English Catholicism.

Belinfante attended St. Edmund's, then and today a Catholic institution. Its mission, while preparing students to enter a university, was to give a Catholic education to children of Catholic families in a country that was predominantly Protestant. The school was staffed by diocesan priests. It is likely that Belinfante, still at an impressionable age, became Catholic to enter the school or converted to that religion while a student. I asked Mr. D.J.J. McEwen, the headmaster of St. Edmund's, about this. He wrote: "Looking at the questions that you post, I think it would be a reasonable assumption to assume that he [Belinfante] was a Catholic when he came to St. Edmund's."³⁵

Another straw in the wind was his proof of age when he entered

³⁴ France, enacting the Falloux Law in 1850, favored Catholicism as much as Britain favored Protestantism but in different ways. Schoolmasters were to be supervised by mayors and *curés*; the Church could open schools freely; bishops were to sit on the Conseil Supérieure de l'Instruction Publique. In 1851, there were 3100 priests and 34,200 nuns in France; by 1861 the law had taken hold and the numbers had risen to 17,700 and 89,200.

³⁵ Letter dated 5 December 2001.

London University. The university required a birth certificate. Belinfante might have written to his family in Amsterdam for the document. Instead, he obtained a certificate attesting to his age from the French Chapel, also known as the Catholic Chapel, in London. The chapel was close to his London residence; he may have been a member of its congregation.³⁶ Later in Australia, Belinfante became a member of the Church of England, possibly in contemplation of a political career. His third “conversion,” it may well reflect a certain suppleness in matters of religious faith. But he may also have felt that Anglican rituals and beliefs were much the same as those of the Catholic Church.

It is the lecture itself, however, that provides the strongest evidence. Belinfante is recorded as follows in the mission report:

I have already sojourned in England for twelve years. When I first came [or crossed over] to England from France, I admired the British system and my sole thought was that it was truly good government. But little by little, after living here for years and upon more mature consideration, I perceived that the British system often betrays the trust of its people. To give one or two examples...since the revival of Britain under William [of Orange], the government has championed Protestantism, though many of

³⁶ See at Paleography Library: *First Register of Candidates for Matriculation*, Vol. D1 (1838-56), Folio 1 of entries for 1856, entry # 21, “Certificate: French Chapel 21 King St Portman Sq.” In the hope that the chapel might furnish further evidence, I visited its site on King Street, but found only a block of apartments.

its population are Catholic. This has produced a difference of belief between those above and below. Despite government ordinances proclaiming the freedom of religion, the government remains Protestant and earnestly promotes Protestantism. The Irish are predominantly Catholic and uphold the teachings of Rome, but the British government wastes huge sums building Protestant churches in Ireland against the wishes of the people. The British proclamations of religious freedom are mere words. In reality, the government shuns those who are not Protestant. The bad consequences have spread in Britain to the point that non-Protestants may not become prime ministers or members of Parliament.³⁷

This passage was followed by a long description of British governmental institutions, and concluded with a criticism of the power of money in Parliament. In upholding the interests of Protestantism and wealth, he asserted, the government is at odds with its people.

If we assume that Belinfante became Catholic while still a student in England, then all of these criticisms of Protestant bias fall into place. He must have heard such charges over and over from the priests at St. Edmund's. The dubious claim that Catholic France was freer in matters of religion also would have been regularly voiced in such a milieu. In sum, Belinfante's criticisms were those of an English Catholic, and are not likely to have derived from any species of

³⁷ *Seiyō kenbunshū*, 492-493. Japanese accounts of this era use the word "Eikoku", or England to refer to either England or Britain. I have translated according to context.

French radicalism.³⁸

Conclusions about Belinfante and Fukuzawa

Does this new information about Belinfante help us in any way to better understand Fukuzawa? Does it throw new light on his stay in London or on his writings? My sense is that while it contains no new information about Fukuzawa, it suggests the possibility that Belinfante's influence was less important than has been hitherto assumed.

One critical question is whether Fukuzawa attended Belinfante's lecture. I conclude that he probably did not, and that it was other interpreters who attended the lecture, took notes, and wrote the account of the lecture for the *Mission Report*. One reason for this conclusion is the discrepancy between the five conditions for civilization listed in Fukuzawa's *Notebook* and those in the lecture. In the *Notebook* the five conditions are tightly grouped as if they had been copied from some source:

Beschaving	(Civilization)
1. Vrijheid	(Freedom or liberty)
2. Zekerheid	(Security)
3. Geloof	(Belief)

³⁸ This is not to imply that Belinfante was illiberal. Disadvantaged minorities, even doctrinally "conservative" minorities, are usually liberal on questions of human rights. Belinfante's fulminations against the power of money in Parliament may have reflected his impecunious personal plight.

4. Opvoeding (Education)
5. Kunst & Wetenschap (Art and Learning)

Compare the above to the conditions given in the *Mission Report* account of Belinfante's lecture:

1. That the people (*kokumin*) be free (*jiyū*) in all matters of their daily lives.
2. That all of the people (*zenkokuchū no jinmin*) trust the government's laws.
3. That the government protect the people and make them secure.
4. That the government not despise farmers and the poor but nurture and protect them.
5. That those innocent of crimes need not fear government confiscation of their property.

The two lists agree only on the need for freedom and security. Belinfante's conditions do not include freedom of religious belief, education, or art and learning. If Fukuzawa's list is seen as a digest of the lecture and not something copied down on the spot, then freedom of religious belief could be added as a third point of agreement. But that still leaves two that are different. If Fukuzawa attended the lecture, all of the conditions should agree. (Even if he was not at the lecture and copied down the conditions from the notes of others, they should still agree.) Comparing the two lists overall, Belinfante's conditions are more concerned with government actions, and Fukuzawa's, with social institutions. Art, learning, and education are not simply functions of government.³⁹

A second reason to doubt Fukuzawa's presence at the lecture was

pointed out by Professor Matsuzawa. While abroad, Fukuzawa made a point of meeting people who might add to his fund of knowledge. In his 1862 letter to a senior figure in his domain, cited earlier, he wrote of having “sought acquaintances on all sides.”⁴⁰ In his 1899 autobiography, too, he wrote that while in Europe he had made it a habit to inquire “about those things that were too obvious to Westerners to put into books.... With that intent, whenever I met a person of some consequence (*soto na hito*), I would make every effort to question him and put down what he said in my *Notebook*.”⁴¹ Whenever he met such a person, he wrote down his name in his *Notebook* or had the person write down his name. The *Notebook* contains many such names. But the name Belinfante does not appear there or anywhere else in Fukuzawa’s writings. If Belinfante was the person who introduced Fukuzawa to the concept of civilization and the workings of the British government, it is unimaginable that Fukuzawa would not have written down his name. Belinfante may not have been a “person of consequence” in a larger sense, but he certainly would have been such a person to the young samurai scholar.

A second critical question is whether Fukuzawa had access to an account of the lecture written by a fellow translator. There are several reasons to assume that he did. First, he was involved in writing

³⁹ In contrast to the disagreement here, there is substantial agreement between the lists in the *Notebook* and the lists in the draft and final versions of *Conditions in the West*. In the final version, Fukuzawa introduces his list by saying it represented the view (*setsu*) of European political thinkers (*seigakka*). Would he have regarded Belinfante, I wonder, as such a person?

⁴⁰ FZS 17, 7. Letter to Shimazu Suketarō.

⁴¹ FZS 7, 107.

the *Mission Report*. Even if someone else wrote the lecture portion, Fukuzawa is likely to have read it. Second, while there is no mention of the lecture in his *Notebook*, both the draft (1864) and final version (1866) of Section I of Volume I of *Conditions in the West* appear to incorporate data given in the lecture. In writing of 'security' as a condition of civilization, he recounts the anecdote of the English bank account of the French king. Under the heading of "religious freedom," he details the treatment of Catholics in Protestant Britain.

From the time of the House of Hanover, Britain was chiefly Protestant and for a time prohibited other sects, but the Irish, traditionally Catholic, did not submit. Accordingly, the law was changed and religious affiliation was left to the individual. But the government continued to uphold Protestantism. It built churches, expelled the clergy of other sects, and gave benefices to Protestant divines. This often went against the hearts of the people. The government also promulgated a law that non-Protestants may not become ministers of state, whatever their merits. Because of this, it is said, some Catholics left Britain for other countries.⁴²

The main thrust of his argument is similar to that of Belinfante. The differences, however, are also significant. Belinfante spoke of William, Fukuzawa, of the House of Hanover which began its reign twelve years after William's death. Fukuzawa mentioned, and Belinfante did not, the expulsion of clergy, the grant of benefices, and emi-

⁴² FZS 1, 290.

gration from Britain. My sense is that Fukuzawa read the *Mission Report* and then obtained corroboration and additional information from printed sources. When lecture and printed sources disagreed, he followed the printed sources in which he placed a greater trust.

A third and vital question concerns the source of a long passage in Dutch in Fukuzawa's *Notebook* entries for his weeks in London. In addition to the five conditions for civilization, it includes a chronology of dates and events in modern French history (1789-1852), lists of figures for the national debts of European nations, and an account of Russian government and society.⁴³ Professor Matsuzawa calls this section a "*matome*," or summing up, because the information it contains is organized and coherent, whereas the rest of the entries are scattered jottings in Japanese or English. Most previous research has seen the passage as an otherwise unrecorded part of Belinfante's lecture. After all, it is in Dutch and so was the lecture.

I am doubtful. For one thing, if the data came from Belinfante, why did the *Mission Report* not mention these topics in its account of the lecture? For another, I find it hard to imagine Belinfante standing in front of his Japanese audience and presenting list after list, date after date, and statistic after statistic. It is just the sort of dry, dull, factual material that would bore an audience to tears and

⁴³ The short account on Russia criticizes it on six counts: it lacks of freedom, religious freedom, education, representative institutions, and physical comfort, and it is backward in the arts and learning. (Nagao, 359; *FZS* 19, p. 126.) These criteria, though negatively applied, are fairly close to Fukuzawa's conditions for civilization. Closer than Belinfante's list of conditions. This suggests to me that his conditions for civilization may also come from the Dutch source.

would be difficult to convey accurately even to an audience with a perfect grasp of spoken Dutch.

Also, this is just the sort of data that was routinely included in gazetteers, geographies, almanacs, and political handbooks during that era. Consequently, I find it easier to assume that Fukuzawa copied down the data from a Dutch book of that sort. Fukuzawa frequented bookstores and bought hundreds of books while in London. His energy and curiosity were phenomenal. We know the titles of some of his English-language acquisitions, but it would not be surprising if he bought a few Dutch books as well—if only for friends who had studied *rangaku* for most of their lives. Another possibility, mentioned earlier, is that Belinfante bought such a book to prepare for his lecture and afterwards gave it to one of the interpreters—who then shared it with Fukuzawa.

If such a work exists, it should not be too difficult to find. The search requires a scholar fluent in both Dutch and Japanese and knowledgeable about libraries in the Netherlands. There is always a lag-time between the content of a book and its date of publication. The last event in the French chronology was in 1852.⁴⁴ The scholar, consequently, might focus on books published between 1854 and 1862. A library with a special collection of nineteenth century textbooks would be a good place to start. If the search were limited to

⁴⁴ In Professor Nagao's translation of the Dutch passages in the *Notebook*, on page 358, the chronology gives 1854 as the year in which the republic became an empire. Actually, as Nagao notes, it was in 1852 that Louis Napoleon restored the empire. There is one later date, 1860, given in connection with the British military. This may have been taken from the source or may be based on a later newspaper article.

gazetteers, almanacs, geography texts, and political handbooks, the number of books to peruse would be finite. Probably not more than four or five in each category were published during those years. It is not necessary to read entire books. A quick check will determine whether a book has a chronology of French history that agrees with that in the *Notebook*, whether it has figures for the national debts of European nations that agree with those in the *Notebook*, whether it has a definition of civilization, and so on. Dates and numerical figures are easy to spot and compare and, surprisingly, they often differ from book to book.

Long before astronomers ascertained the location of Pluto, they reasoned, based on perturbations in the orbits of other bodies, that it must exist. The data in the Dutch section of Fukuzawa's *Notebook* are too numerous, too varied, and too detailed to have come from a single lecture. It seems reasonable to posit a Dutch source, though its location is still unknown. If such a source exists, it may be the last Dutch source Fukuzawa ever used. From 1863, after his return to Japan, he used only English language works.