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## Date of Award

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## Abstract

This dissertation argues that Tokyo Imperial University (T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai), the top school in Japan promoted the rise of a middle-class society in modern Japan. This dissertation clarifies how the university served as a transnational platform where Japanese educators accepted the idea of the middle class as the "core" of a new Japan, and eventually produced a mass middle-class society, that is, a society with a widely shared middle-class identity. In so doing, the study historicizes the enrichment of the middle-class idea and shows that the contemporary sense of the middle class, i.e. people with incomes within a certain range, is a product of history. In understanding the members of the middle class as modern selves seeking distinction from the old aristocracy and manual laborers through meritocratic endeavors, the study shows how T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai institutionalized the formation of middle-class citizens and their culture, and how this process mediated a transformation in the nature of the middle class from wealthy elites to the struggling masses in pursuit of elite status whose class formation was statistically gauged and institutionally managed.

This dissertation conceptualizes T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai collegiate society, which previous scholarship explored as an academic community, as a critical locus for the birth of middle-class discourses, citizens, and the social dissemination of middle-class cultural practices. I look at the university as a social community where professors, alumni and students, developed middle-class values and institutions, inspired by the global flowering of modern education, consumer culture, welfare programs, amateur sports, health culture, and employment practices. This dissertation highlights a range of middle-class practices promoted by numerous T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai institutions--the Red Gate Student Consumer Cooperative, Student Office welfare programs, the T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai Athletic Association, the T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai Student Medical Center, and career services programs. Also the study examines how middle-class values and practices at T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai enveloped the entire society by looking at the controlled economy, student welfare, sports popularization, labor service programs and health administration in wartime Japan.

This dissertation portrays the middle-class experience as a life-long pursuit of the individual and situates education at T $\ddot{A}$ 'dai as a critical phase of life fashioning a middle-class way of life. While previous research has explored specific aspects of middle-class life, this dissertation examines a nexus of middle-class practices pursued by individual students at a particular institution. In so doing, the study shows how the vision of the people and their lifestyle were co-constituted in the space of higher education, embedding higher education in the middle-class experience in Japan.

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Facilitating the creation of print-mediated public opinion, liberal intellectuals attempted to enlist the new middle class as a social ally in circulating liberal ideas and practices within Japan and throughout the empire. There, a public debate between Yoshino Sakuzō, a professor in the Faculty of Law at Tokyo Imperial University, and the members of the Rōninkai,<sup>1</sup> a highly publicized right-wing organization, was soon to begin. World War I created an extraordinary economic boom in Japan. A huge increase in exports, the result of the disappearance of European and American products on the world market, combined with rising overseas prices for its exports, brought new wealth to Japan. Many middle class families lived in detached houses located on the outskirts of the city or in emerging suburbs, where land for new construction was more affordable. In the 1920s, Japan's major dailies joined magazines such as *Fujin no tomo* in lavishing praise on what was being dubbed the *bunka jūtaku*, or "culture house." Mom, dad, and the kids also used modern public transportation to explore the pleasures of the city together. By the Taishō years, more than 100,000 passengers a day boarded Tokyo's electric trolleys; taxi cabs cruised city streets from 1912: and Asia's first subway (part of today's Ginza Line in central Tokyo) began operations in 1929. Participation in trendy sports also became a middle-class affectation. In the 1920s, middle-class housewives joined tennis clubs. Japanese society, largely illiterate at the beginning of the Edo period (1603-1867) had become one of the most literate societies in the world by the end of the Edo period.<sup>7</sup> Local feudal lords established fief schools for samurai, "Japanese warriors" and thus every samurai was literate. Ordinary farmers, craftsmen, and merchants sent their children to the *terakoya*, "temple schools" for basic knowledge, writing, reading, and counting. Only a small portion of elementary school graduates from the upper and middle class continued on to five-year academic secondary schools for boys or five-year secondary schools for girls; the majority entered the labor force or to two-year higher elementary schools.