

Summary

Complete Account of the Countries of the World

Complete Account of the Countries of the World (*Sekai kunizukushi*) was written in 1869 by Fukuzawa Yukichi, a leading thinker and educator of Meiji period (1868–1912) Japan. It is also one of the key publications that shaped the worldview of many Japanese in the early years of this period after the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate. Fukuzawa was one of the first few Japanese that had the opportunity to travel abroad at that time, as he was a translator for early diplomatic missions to the USA and Europe. Not only did he gather knowledge through his experiences during those missions, but he actively gathered resources that he then translated, read and used after returning to Japan. One of the results of his early activities was the *Complete Account of the Countries of the World*, a geographic text meant for uneducated Japanese – mainly children and women. In five volumes, Fukuzawa gives an account of each continent, while the supplement volume at the end contains theoretical information on astronomy and geography. From the contemporary point of view, the contents of Fukuzawa's book may seem mostly obsolete. Nevertheless, at the time of its publication, the information about the outside world and enlightenment-inspired views of the author were influential in Japan. It became one of the biggest bestsellers of the period, and for a time it was widely used as a school textbook during the early years after the introduction of a national system of education in Japan.

This translation of *Complete Account of the Countries of the World* contains two separate introductions. Professor Matsuka Jin from Otaru University of Commerce and a graduate of Keiō University established by Fukuzawa, starts with an introduction of Fukuzawa's biography. The second introduction, written by Przemysław Sztafiej, the author of the translation, explains the role of geography in Fukuzawa's thought and places *Complete Account of the Countries of the World* in the context of history of this discipline in Japan.