

literature on family change in Japan, as it goes beyond covering the more common themes—the attitudes of single women toward marriage and family—and addresses equally significant groups, including salarymen and elderly people, as well as the growing number of single, unmarried and divorced men and women whose experiences are of increasing importance for our understanding of family dynamics in contemporary Japan.

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EDUCATION POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN JAPAN. *Asia Pacific Studies, v. 4.* By Akito Okada. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012. xvi, 197 pp. (Tables, figures) US\$75.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-85745-267-2.

In this work, Akito Okada examines the historical transformation of the concept of equal opportunity while revealing the great difficulties the implementation of this concept has brought upon politics in post-war Japan. With this highly significant work the author allows all non-Japanese researchers to finally be able to get a deep insight into Japanese educational policy processes regarding one of the main concerns of education policy in modern societies: inequalities in educational opportunities. Okada took the current debates about social inequalities as an opportunity to analyze the emergence of different understandings about equality of opportunity while highlighting the great turning points in modern Japanese education.

The clear chronological structure is without a doubt a virtue of the book. Okada has subdivided his examinations into five logically comprehensible historical shifts. Starting his analyses in *Meiji* Japan, special emphasis is given to the period between American occupation and present reforms. Although chapters 3 to 5 may seem a little protracted, more experienced readers will acknowledge the great details Okada's analyses offer, as he has examined many documents of historical significance to verify his conclusions.

The first chapter provides a short introduction for all starters, allowing them to get a first insight into Japanese education policy until World War II. The most radical changes, creating the conditions for all following disputes, took place during the American occupation of Japan, as described in chapter 2. The new Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education (FLE) have legally drawn equal opportunities in terms of egalitarianism and practically implemented them in the education system in the form of the well-known 6-3-3-4 education structure. Through the stronger focus of his analyses on the debates about equality of opportunity in education in Japanese governmental circles, Okada has succeeded in distancing his work from the great variety of existing publications about the American era. The vast majority of those studies focused on the American staff and cooperating Japanese experts. The end of the American occupation did not put an end to the debates about

how equal opportunities in education should be interpreted, and how they should be best put into practice. Japanese politicians have been constantly concerned with the problem of equality of educational opportunities, as chapters 3 to 6 illustrate.

Using various explanatory models to show different viewpoints of political parties and organizations, Okada shows the possibilities as well as the limits political leeway offered politicians in the course of history regarding the question of how educational equality of opportunities should be implemented. Special emphasis is given to the involved political forces, which Okada identifies as the two major groups always struggling over the implementation of their interpretations regarding the concept of equality of opportunity in education: conservatives and progressives. For Okada, these two political parties share comparable characteristics and tendencies that can be found among all industrialized countries. Therefore, his explanations become interesting for a wider international audience. In addition, this comparison becomes beneficial for researchers, showing whether the process of the historical transformation of such a concept is typical or anomalous. Some readers will be disappointed, though, as Okada mainly uses the case of England to compare with Japan.

In summary, the different concepts of equality of educational opportunities as pursued by conservatives and progressives were defined as meritocracy and egalitarianism. While conservatives considered national efficiency or economical needs as most important, progressives found that social justice had to take first place. Especially Article III of the FLE was targeted as it guaranteed all children equal opportunities in education “according to their ability.” The wording of this article was open to both points of view. Okada argues that conservatives used these words to strengthen their demand for a more diversified meritocratic educational structure through *Nōryokushugi* (ability first principle). The conservatives aimed to reverse the single-track education system in order to build a national elite. Even the revision of the FLE was targeted. After modern problems in education, such as *ijime* (bullying), *shiken jigoku* (examination hell), school refusal and dropping out occurred, conservatives even intensified their efforts to establish a more diversified education system. They introduced a highly elitist six-year secondary school even against the background of growing costs for education, especially through the increased use of out-of-school lessons at *juku* and *Yobikō*. On the other hand, progressive elements in Japan tried to preserve the egalitarian concept of equality of educational opportunity as it was originally envisaged by the FLE writers, insisting on equalities of outcome.

Consequently, Okada interprets the growing inequality in life chances in present-day Japan as a direct consequence of the conservatives’ success over the egalitarian concept, because *Nōryokushugi* and parents’ freedom of choice contribute to social class inequalities. Referring to several influential works by researchers such as Kariya Takehiko, Tachibanaki Toshiaki and Miura Atsushi,

the author also includes discussions about *Gakurekishugi* (degreeocracy) or *Kakusa Shakai* (gap-society) in Japan. Here Okada refers to one important point: despite the increasing awareness of social inequalities in Japan, a national debate about equal opportunities in education is still missing.

In conclusion, it has to be stated that Okada's remarks touch on an important and highly politically charged issue of modern societies in general: how education in a highly industrialized nation is influenced by pedagogical ideals on one side and economic demands on the other. I recommend that Okada's work be recognized not just in social sciences but in politics as well. Even though researchers may not be particularly interested in Japanese educational reform processes, the findings of this work might also be relevant if one thinks of the bandwidth of the included perspectives. One disadvantage has to be mentioned, though. The development of the highly influential private education sector and its influence on inequalities in education in Japan is merely recognized. All in all, this book offers a great contribution to social studies providing one explanation for the current state of Japanese education.

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BORDERLINE JAPAN: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era. By Tessa Morris-Suzuki. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xi, 272 pp. (Figures, maps, illus.) US\$96.95, cloth. ISBN 978-0-521-86460-2.

Unlike much academic writing, Tessa Morris-Suzuki's work is almost always clearly written and jargon-free, impeccably researched and, above all, original. From the idea that area studies is an obstacle to international understanding ("Anti-Area Studies," *Communal/Plural*, 2000) to untying the post-structuralist Gordian knot that sees all representations of the past as untrue (*The Past Within Us*, London and New York: Verso, 2005); from coining the term "cosmetic multiculturalism" to describe Japanese-style multiculturalism ("Immigration and Citizenship in Contemporary Japan," in *Japan—Continuity and Change*, edited by Javed Maswood et al., London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002) to rethinking the contours of Japan itself (*Re-Inventing Japan*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), Morris-Suzuki's writing is consistently innovative and thought-provoking. Her new work, *Borderline Japan*, is no exception.

One topic which has captured Morris-Suzuki's attention in recent years is the history of Japanese border controls, particularly in relation to undocumented Korean migrants in early postwar Japan. The present volume is perhaps best seen as the culmination of many years of research in this area. As she takes pains to repeatedly point out, this is a largely neglected and under-researched field: for most scholars postwar migration in Japan