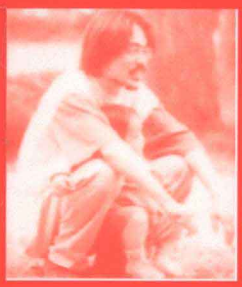
Family and Social Policy in Japan

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES



Edited by Roger Goodman

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Anthropological Approaches

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University of Oxford

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Family and Social Policy in Japan
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Social policies reflect and construct important ideas in societies about the relationship between the state and the individual. *Family and Social Policy in Japan* examines this relationship in a number of hitherto unexplored areas in Japanese society including policies relating to fertility, peri-natal care, child care, child abuse, sexuality, care for the aged and death. The conclusion is that great change has taken place in all these areas through the 1990s as a consequence of Japan's changing economy, demography and the development of civil society. The case studies, based on intensive anthropological fieldwork, not only demonstrate how and why family and social policies have evolved in the world's second largest economy, but in the process provide a challenge to many of the assumptions of western policymakers. The empirical material contained in this volume will be of interest to anthropologists and to students and practitioners.

Roger Goodman is lecturer in the social anthropology of Japan at the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies and the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford. His publications include *Children of the Japanese State: The Changing Role of Child Protection Institutions in Contemporary Japan* (2000) and (with Gordon White and Huck-Ju Kwon) *The East Asian Welfare Model: Welfare Orientalism and the State* (1998).

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For Sam, Joe and Abbie, the only children whose lives are directly affected by my interests in Japanese education and socialisation.

RJG

Acknowledgements

The papers in this volume were first presented at the 12th Meeting of the Japan Anthropology Workshop, which was held at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka in March 1999. The Japan Anthropology Workshop (more affectionately known as JAWS) was set up in 1984 to bring together a disparate group of anthropologists working on Japan; to raise the profile of the study of Japan in the field of anthropology; and to introduce the discipline of anthropology to scholars of Japan more generally. The Workshop has grown enormously from modest beginnings and by the time of the conference had almost 250 members, of whom over half attended what was its first meeting in Japan. In order to maintain the workshop atmosphere of the meeting, a total of seven self-contained panels were arranged, each with its own theme, one of which was an anthropological analysis of social policy in contemporary Japanese society.

I am delighted to have the chance to thank the very large number of people and institutions who supported the conference in Osaka in 1999 and who directly or indirectly have helped to bring this volume into being. In particular, I would like to thank my conference co-organiser, Professor Nakamaki Hirochika of the National Museum of Ethnography, who first had the idea of holding a JAWS Conference in Osaka and then did more than anyone else to make it a possibility. I would also like to thank the Director of the Museum, Professor Ishige Naomichi, and its founding director, Professor Umesao Tadao, for their unstinting and invaluable support of the Conference throughout. As well as generous financial support from the National Museum of Ethnology itself, the Conference received substantial funding from the Wenner Gren Foundation, Nisshō Iwai Foundation, ITOH Scholarship Foundation and the Kashima Foundation, which I am glad to be able to acknowledge here.

The all-day session on the anthropology of social policy in Japan was greatly enlivened by the presentations of three individuals whose contributions it has not been possible to include here. Seung-mi Han presented an excellent paper on the making of a foreigners' assembly in Kanagawa prefecture and two discussants, Ishida Hiroshi, a sociologist, and Ito Peng, a social policy specialist, gave a series of thoughtful and provocative

comments on the significance of each paper from the viewpoint of their own disciplines which not only enlivened the debate that followed each presentation but which have clearly influenced the way each paper has been re-written subsequently.

The process of turning conference presentations into published manuscript has been unusually smooth due to the help of many people. Professor Yoshio Sugimoto was supportive of the idea of including the papers in the CUP Series on Contemporary Japanese Society. Two anonymous readers provided a series of extremely constructive – if at times mildly contradictory – comments and suggestions on which each author drew while rewriting their chapters. Successive editors at CUP, Phillipa McGuinness and Marigold Acland, have shown real interest in, as well as professional commitment to, the project. Others who I am keen to thank for their help in turning the manuscript into published form include Jane Baker, Paul Watt and Valina Rainer.

As editor, though, I would especially like to take this opportunity of thanking all the contributors to the volume who have borne this project from start to finish with such good humour.

Roger Goodman

Contributors

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Roger Goodman is lecturer in the Social Anthropology of Japan at the University of Oxford, specialising in the study of Japanese education and social welfare. He is the author of *Japan's 'International Youth': The Emergence of a New Class of Schoolchildren* (Oxford University Press, 1990) and *Children of the Japanese State: The Changing Role of Child Protection Institutions in Contemporary Japan* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

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Glenda S. Roberts is a professor at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University in Tokyo, where she specializes in gender, work, and migration issues. Among her publications are *Staying on the Line: Blue-Collar Women in Contemporary Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994), and, co-edited with Mike Douglass, *Japan and Global Migration* (Routledge, 2000).

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Yohko Tsuji is a Japanese anthropologist trained in the United States. She is currently a Visiting Scholar at the Department of Anthropology at Cornell University. Her research primarily covers Japan and the United States and focuses on the family, aging, death, and social change.

A note to the reader

All Japanese names are given in the Japanese fashion with the family names first unless the author has lived a long time in the West and prefers to follow the Western fashion.

Macrons have been used to mark long vowels in Japanese, except in the case of well-known places, such as Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo, and certain names where the individual prefers to romanise them using a different system, such as Yohko Tsuji. All monetary values are expressed in yen when discussing financial issues in Japan since translations into pounds or dollars are rendered almost meaningless by the rapidly changing exchange rates between the countries. For the purposes of comparison, however, in early 2000 £1 was around ¥165 and US$1 was around ¥105.

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Roger Goodman

While most people probably associate the study of social policy with disciplines such as economics, politics and sociology, it is in fact an area with which anthropology has been involved, if not always happily, for almost a hundred years. Cambridge University in 1906 used the term 'practical anthropology' in describing a programme it ran for training colonial administrators and, in 1929, Bronislaw Malinowski (1929: 36) called for a 'practical anthropology' which would be 'an anthropology of the changing Native' and 'would obviously be of the highest importance to the practical man in the colonies.'While, according to Ferguson (1996: 156), Malinowski used this claim mainly as a means of raising research funding, in general, anthropologists maintained what can only be described as an uneasy cooperation with colonial authorities in many parts of the world.

Anthropology and policy: a long yet uneasy relationship

Although the effect on policy of the work of the anthropologists varied greatly from region to region (see the papers in Asad 1973), most subsequent commentators, such as Said (1978) and Foucault (1972), have not perceived the role of anthropologists in the colonial context favourably. Ben-Ari (1999: 387) summarises succinctly this view of the relationship when he writes that: 'Even if there was no direct correspondence between anthropological theories and systems of colonial government, anthropology did, it could be argued, participate in producing the assumptions upon which colonialism was based'. On the other hand, as Goody (1995), Kuper (1997, Chapter 4) and various of the authors in van Bremen and Shimizu (1999) point out, many pre-war and war-time anthropologists (in the UK, Holland and Japan) were actively involved in anti-colonial activities and were sometimes vocal advocates for the rights of the peoples they were studying.

In the immediate post-war period, however, the relationship between administrative authorities and anthropologists, especially in the United States, became officially much closer. This in part came about through

the development of policy for the new regimes that were being established in the nations that had lost the war: Japan and Germany. Ruth Benedict's (1946) classic, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, for example, was originally an anthropological analysis of Japanese society that was commissioned by the US government as background to how the country might be most efficiently occupied and democratised (see Hendry 1996). The main energies of those in applied anthropology, though, were in the third world where they worked alongside development agencies. Here, as indeed in Germany and Japan, the anthropologists set out to deal with issues of cultural interpretation and the generation of a more positive relationship between the 'undeveloped' and the 'developers.'

As in the pre-war period, so in the post-war era, the work of applied (as they largely became known) anthropologists often became mired in controversy. While they tried to stick to the principles of ethnographic description without becoming involved either in what they described or in the implementation of policy, this turned out to be far from an easy position to maintain and, on several widely publicised occasions, applied anthropologists found themselves dragged into a political fracas. In one case, the well-known Vicos project in Peru undertaken from Cornell University in the 1950s, the anthropologists actually ended up in the role of 'patron' on a large estate and helped to implement a reform plan that meant devolution of power to the producers (see Holmberg 1960). British functionalist anthropologists also, as Grillo (1985) points out, bought into this American-led obsession with modernisation and convergence theory (with its many similarities to Victorian evolutionism) and increasingly worked on colonial modernisation projects, particularly in Africa. The study of Japan was not immune to these trends as could be seen in the 1960s Princeton series entitled 'The Modernization of Japan,' even if some of the chapters in some of these volumes, such as Ronald Dore's work on Tokugawa education (1965), actually did much to undermine the view of Feudal Japan having been a 'backward' society.

As a consequence, in the following decades, and particularly by the new brand of neo-Marxist anthropologists of the 1970s, applied anthropologists were severely attacked for reinforcing (or at least not critiquing) the political and social inequalities that already existed between the more and the less developed nations (see Robertson 1984). In the infamous Project Camelot case, anthropologists were actually accused of undertaking research which was used to gauge the level of anti-Communist feeling in Chile in the 1970s and similar accusations were thrown at anthropologists who worked on Thai and Cambodian societies during the Vietnam war, at which point the status of applied anthropology hit an all-time low.