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978-0-521-81571-0 - Family and Social Policy in Japan: Anthropological Approaches

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Family and Social Policy in Japan Anthropological Approaches

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

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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

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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.

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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.