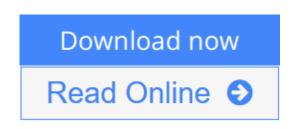


Marriage in Contemporary Japan (Routledge Contemporary Japan Series)

By Yoko Tokuhiro



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The phenomenon of *bankonka* - 'postponement of marriage' - is increasingly reported in contemporary Japanese media, clearly illustrating the changing patterns of modern lifestyles and attitudes towards marriage, personal obligation and ambition. This is the first book in recent years to explore the contemporary state of marriage in Japanese society. Setting out the different perceptions and expectations of marriage in today's Japan, the book discusses how economic issues and the family impact on marital behaviour. Contrary to the views of some feminists that young women have no interest in improving their status and position, this book argues that, by delaying marriage and childrearing, young women can be seen as 'rebels' challenging Japanese patriarchal society. Unlike many other studies, it gives equal attention to male gender roles and masculinity, exploring what constitutes being a 'real man' in Japan – through the analysis of mainstream and non-mainstream conceptions of masculinity that co-exist in contemporary Japan, and considers the implications of such different roles for the institution of marriage. It investigates the roles of wife and mother, articulating why the strict division of labour defining men as breadwinners and women as homemakers became popular. Moreover, it describes the changing character of courtship relationships, explaining why the norm has shifted from arranged marriages pre-1945 to love marriages after that period. Finally, it puts the Japanese experience into cross-cultural, international context with a series of comparisons with marriage elsewhere both in Asia - including in Korea and Hong Kong - and in western countries such as France, Sweden, Italy and the United States.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A carefully developed book that explicitly sets out its questions, theoretical influences, and methodology. Not only is the writing clear and precise, but the book's conclusions are also supported with data from various sources... For those interested in the topics of marriage and feminist movements, and especially for those studying gender in Japan, *Marriage in Contemporary Japan* offers an interesting glimpse into the Japanese institution of matrimony." - *Evan Koike, University of Kansas; Anthropological Quarterly Winter 2013.*

About the Author

Yoko Tokuhiro is a Lecturer at The Center for Liberal Arts, Meiji Gakuin University, Japan. Her research interests include the anthropology of Japan, marriage, family, and gender.

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