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BOOK REVIEW

Exposing the Limits of Japanese Multiculturalism

Yu-Jose, L.N. & Zulueta, J.O. (Eds.). (2014). *Japan: Migration and a multicultural society*. Quezon City: Japan Studies Program, Ateneo de Manila University. 150pp. Php 320.

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Japan: Migration and a Multicultural Society is an edited volume published by the Japan Studies Program of Ateneo de Manila University and was edited by the late Dr. Lydia N. Yu-Jose and Dr. Johanna O. Zulueta from the Ateneo de Manila University and Soka University, Japan respectively. This volume is a compilation of selected paper presentations from the January 2012 Japan Studies Conference on "Migration and the Creation of a Multi-cultural Society of Japan: Workers, Women and the Next Generation".

From the title alone, the book already shows the reader that contrary to popular belief, Japan has always been a society that has opened its doors to the world and in turn has a heterogeneous society composed of various minorities and migrant groups. This popular belief of Japan as an exotic land with a unique people and society is based on the myth of Japanese homogeneity and the prevalence of *Nihonjinron*, that is, published literary and academic works that highlight and essentializes Japaneseness, which implies that this uniqueness is the source of their post-war economic success. The book also expains how even as Japan encourages internationalization to better integrate in our globalized world, it merely highlights their ambivalence to foreigners and other ethnic groups. As such, this edited volume aims to show how migrants in Japan challenge this myth of homogeneity by focusing on important issues related to Japan, migration, and multiculturalism.

The book has seven chapters and is divided in three sections based on a specific time frame to highlight the evolution of Japan's contemporary society. The first section entitled "Migration and Empire" shows Japanese migration as part of its modernization and how it was linked to imperialism and process of nation building. The second section, "Migration to Japan and the Birth of the Second Generation" discusses topics on female migration to Japan and children born of mixed marriages. The book ends with "Japaneseness and Multiculturalism" which highlights through personal narratives the experience of being a foreigner in Japan.

The first two chapters included in the section on migration and empire sets the larger historical context of Japanese migration towards Asia and the creation of Korean minorities in Japan. Seeing this period as part of the larger movement towards Japanese nation building and imperialism, Teow's chapter provides a historical analysis of Japanese migrant communities in Southeast Asia from 1900-1941. He presented a comprehensive

survey of how Japanese migrant communities in agricultural and fishery sectors in Southeast Asia were largely shaped by the national, regional, and global context of the period. Although Teow's chapter lacks a theoretical discussion of these migrant flows, it nevertheless shows how Japanese migrants had a sojourners mindset that led to low assimilation to their host countries, except in Davao, Philippines. Lee's chapter meanwhile focuses on the creation of the Korean minority community as a product of Japanese imperialism and their connections to the two Korean nation-states. While most literature on Korean minorities in Japan (*Zainichi* Koreans – long term residents) has mostly focused on their being in the forefront for minority and migrant rights, Lee's study gives us a more detailed look on the *Zainichi* Korean by highlighting how their community is heterogeneous and differ in their citizenship, ideology, educational, and socio-economic outcomes. While this section often lacks theoretical analysis in discussing the themes of migration, nation building and empire, it nevertheless sets the larger context that shaped Japanese views on migration from the post-war period onwards.

After the previous section establish the larger historical context of Japanese migration and migration to Japan, the section on "Migration to Japan and the Birth of the 2nd Generation" discusses contemporary issues faced by Japanese society as it becomes more multicultural. The chapters by Duaqui and Celero are quite interrelated in that they focus on how the Filipinos in Japan challenge the negative images attached to them, while the chapters of De Dios and Yamoto meanwhile examined the pressing issues surrounding Japanese-Filipino Youths (JFYs or children from international marriages between Japanese and Filipinos).

In her chapter "Success Portrayals of Filipina Migrants", Duaqui showed how Filipinos in Japan attempt to challenge the negative stereotype ascribed to them as victims or trafficked women, by working on improving the self-image of Filipino community. By employing a content analysis of the Jeepney Press, a Filipino community newspaper in Japan, Duaqui showed how its writers aim to uplift the image of the Filipino community in Japan not by directly reaching out to the Japanese reader, rather, by showing the larger Filipino community that they can transcend images of victimhood by highlighting the accomplishments of Filipina role-models who are successful in their respective fields. Indeed, while these role models are not at all representative of the vast majority of Filipina who are mostly former entertainers and spouses of Japanese nationals, the Jeepney Press nevertheless highlight their commonalities, that these role models became successful due to the Filipino traits of hard work and perseverance. Other than highlighting her findings through substantive data, Duaqui engaged theoretical discussions on the role of collective subjectivity among the Filipino community in Japan. As a counterpoint to Duaqui's chapter that focus on non-entertainer role models, Celero also challenged the negative images assigned to Filipinos by specifically focusing on the self-perceptions of Filipina mothers and its role to their parenting strategies. In "Bi/Multicultural Parenting", Celero gave a more nuanced take on the problems faced by mothers/wives and their common sites of agency. By using Murad's approach on the "politics of mothering" Celero explored how Filipina mothers' perceptions of their social roles, personality, and ethnicity shapes their practice of parenting. By compiling various narratives through in-depth interviews, the chapter not only presents convincing substantive data but also provides a theoretical discussion for her arguments. A good example is her case study of Linda, a Filipina mother who balances between downplaying and highlighting her difference. In a particular narrative, Linda explained that she downplays her foreignness by showing her competence in school through her

mastery of Nihongo, being a responsible parent and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) member. At the same time, she also asserts her foreignness by articulating her multicultural competence. By juggling these two elements of her parenting, this translates to her son's pride of having a multicultural mother. This chapter contributes to literature on Japanese multiculturalism by showing the need for parenting adequacy, power sharing, and freedom of identity.

After focusing on Filipino self-identification, the next two chapters focus on Japanese-Filipino Youths. De Dios in her chapter "Constructing Identities" provided a timely study on the shifting identities of JFYs since they are already increasing in number and are seen to play a larger role in building Japanese multiculturalism in the future. By collecting various case studies through in-depth interviews, De Dios argued that JFY identities in Japan are negotiated and conditional, shifting in between using both their Filipino and Japanese identity in periods of privilege or insecurity. While De Dios focused on the JFYs, Yamoto in "Problems in Primary and Secondary Education" meanwhile focused on education supporters, or the people who are tasked to help JFYs in their integration to Japanese society. By focusing on the children of newcomer migrants and JFYs in particular, Yamotodifferentiated the challenges faced by JFYs compared to old comer*Zainichi* children. Through extensive surveys of supporters, this chapter highlights the problems of JFYs, the problems faced by supporters in helping JFYS, and the inadequacies of multicultural policies in schools. Yamoto argued that even as the JFYs engage with their roots and routes in self-identification, even their parents need to engage with supporters on the common problems faced by JFYs.

The book ends with a chapter by Murphy-Shigematsu on his experiences of multiculturality in Japan. While the chapter shows a more personal reflection on his experiences as a cosmopolitan academic straddling both his Japanese and American ethnic identities, this chapter employs a more autobiographical method. While some could argue that his experience is far from being representative, the chapter nonetheless show how his reflections may finds resonance with other foreigners and minorities living in a Japan that is coming to grips with multiculturalism. This chapter argues that the basis of Japanese identity should shift from one that is ethnic-based to a more citizenship (civic) model. Indeed, his personal narratives highlight how the whole concept of *kyousei* or living together which is the key concept for Japanese multiculturalism policies, are largely based on the us vs. them dichotomy that emphasize differences. As such, even multiculturalism policies and education campaigns should be based on a more inclusive definition of Japaneseness.

Throughout the book, one gets the sense that although each section focuses on different aspects of Japanese migration and multiculturalism, it has a clear central argument that advocates for the creation of a diverse and inclusive community, one that is not something to be aspired without actively working to achieve it. This book tasks the various minority and multi-ethnic groups in Japan to contribute actively in the evolution of Japan as multicultural society. This is seen in the limitations discussed in the first section when the Japanese immigrants to Southeast Asia did not have the mindset to settle in their lands of sojourn while the Korean minorities also had diverging contexts, histories, and ideologies to grapple with. The second section is perhaps the strongest section of the book. Not only does it provide well researched substantive data through extensive case studies, all four chapters are shaped by their own theoretical approaches and show how Filipina wives/mothers, Filipino parents of JFYs, JFYs, and the larger Filipino community as a whole create their own stake in a more multicultural Japan and should play an active role in shaping it. While the previous chapters have focused on macro sociological issues, the last

chapter closes the book by showing how personal reflections can also contribute in the literature on Japanese multiculturalism by relating personal experiences as narratives of acceptance, narrative of empowerment, and narratives of synergy.

More than just a compilation of similarly themed articles on Japanese multiculturalism, the book by Yu-Jose and Zulueta shows a more human and approachable perspective in understanding multiculturalism in the Japanese context. While some chapters might lack in their theoretical engagement, the editors have clearly reached its goal of showing the various facets of Japanese multiculturalism that challenge the myths of homogeneity and show how current policies/approaches are still based on older models of assimilation.