

Japanese Studies Series

directed by Yone Sugita

This series deals with various aspects of Japanese studies, including history, politics, diplomacy, security, economics, literature, cultural studies, comparative studies, and other fields. There are many concepts, ways of thinking, lifestyles, traditions, and ideas widely accepted in Japan that are not familiar to people outside Japan. The major purpose of this series is to introduce diverse viewpoints on Japan and to precipitate constructive discussion to have better understanding this country.

This series is unique because it includes research monographs not only by scholars and researchers in the academic community, but also by professionals (such as doctors, lawyers, business executives, etc.) and practitioners (such as NGO representatives, volunteer groups organizers, etc.). The common thread among the series authors is that they are all respected individuals who offer new perspectives on Japanese studies.

Other books of the Japanese Studies Series

Timothy Iles, *Abe Kôbô: an Exploration of his Prose, Drama, and Theatre*

Ryuji Mukae, *Japan's Refugee Policy: To be of the World.*

Jane Robbins, *Tokyo Calling: Japanese Overseas Radio Broadcasting 1937-1945*

Since its economic bubble burst in the early 1990s, Japan has been in the clutches of a long economic recession. In order to recover from this "lost decade," the Japanese government has gone ahead with the deregulation and decentralization policies that were already being called for in the 1980s. At the same time, since the end of the 1990s it has been attempting to reshape the whole structure of government by means of far-reaching administrative and political reforms.

Today's financial and fiscal crises and recession are all the more serious in view of what came before them. Japan's high economic growth in the 1960s, its quick recovery from the two oil crises of the 1970s, and its rescue in the 1980s of the United States, which had become the world's largest creditor nation: all these prompted Chalmers Johnson and others to talk of the "Japanese economic miracle" (C. Johnson, 1982). Behind the sudden fall lie structural problems in the Japanese political economic system itself, both "failures of government" and "failures of private enterprise". The system that produced the world's second largest economy has now caused fiscal bankruptcy on a scale nobody could have predicted. As a result, Japan is no longer looking for ways to repeat its miraculous performances of the past, but simply fighting to survive. This dramatic change forces us to reexamine the Japanese system from the standpoints of both theory and praxis.



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