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Moorehead, Robert. 2009. Review of *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within*, edited by Nelson H.H. Graburn, John Ertl, and R. Kenji Tierney. *Pacific Affairs* 82(1):137-139.

Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within, edited by Nelson H. H.

Graburn, John Ertl, and R. Kenji Tierney. New York and Oxford: Berghen Books, 2008. ix, 252 pp.

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Reflecting the growing ethnic diversity of Japan's population, *Multiculturalism in the New Japan* offers a wide range of perspectives. This volume is divided into 13 chapters, each exploring an element of Japanese society. From the corporate boardroom to the factory floor, from the public school to the home, from local government offices to overseas settlements, this volume shatters any remaining notion that Japan is a homogeneous, monoethnic society. After Japan's previous periods of Meiji- and postwar-era transformations, editors Graburn and Ertl argue that a "new Japan" is entering a "third era of renewal" (1). This book effectively captures the breadth and the limits of this change.

As the editors note, the perspectives in this volume fall along a continuum of optimism and pessimism, from hopes for Durkheimian organic solidarity, in which groups share power, to "boutique internationalism" (19), in which non-Japanese are proudly displayed like foreign objects. While some authors in this volume find hopeful signs of local change, the authors who are far less sanguine more convincingly connect ethnographic fieldwork with broad social forces to highlight the barriers to Japan becoming a multicultural utopia.

The chapters by Tsuda (Chapter 6) and Yamanaka (Chapter 8) effectively show that new migrants to Japan face varying receptions, from rejection and discrimination, to local efforts at assistance. Okubo (Chapter 9) eloquently notes how structures established by previous

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generations of ethnic minorities, in this case Buraku and Koreans, mediate efforts to integrate recent Chinese and Vietnamese, with the effect of marginalizing the newcomers as ethnic others.

Given these constraints, the broader impact of changes in individual attitudes is unclear. Burgess (Chapter 3) and Ertl (Chapter 4) note the positive influence of the growing presence of non-Japanese on the attitudes of the individual Japanese these foreigners meet, but it is unclear how that victory translates into changed Japanese attitudes towards foreigners in general. That is, liking your foreign daughter-in-law or neighbor does not necessarily translate into positive attitudes towards that individual's ethnic group in general. In my own neighborhood in Japan, the presence of law-abiding Chinese residents did little to stem the flow of Chinese-language crime watch signs in front of nearly every home.

In a volume covering the integration of multiple ethnic groups, issues of language and terminology will almost inevitably arise. In analyzing the varied discourses surrounding Korean identity in Japan, and the relationship between sumo and Japanese identity, Hester (Chapter 7) and Tierney (Chapter 12), respectively, highlight how convenient labels often mask underlying diversity and the potential for social change.

Translating between Japanese and English poses similar problems. Carter and Hunter (Chapter 10) critique John Russell's (1998) analysis of media depictions of blacks in Japan, particularly his translation of *kurombo* as "the notorious 'N' word" (196). Carter and Hunter argue that *kurombo* fails to capture the particular history of centuries of racial violence embedded in the English term. Carter and Hunter's point is well-taken, however they offer no alternative translations for either *kurombo* or the N-word.

Similarly, Graburn (Chapter 13) examines the impact of a groundbreaking exhibit on ethnic diversity in Japan at the National Museum of Ethnology, or Minpaku, but unfortunately does not comment on the discrepancy in Minpaku's multilingual translation of the title of the

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exhibit, beyond noting it was “not an exact translation” (222). The Japanese version of the title referred to “foreign residents in Japan” (*zainichi gaikokujin*) while the English version referred to them as “immigrants.” To what extent does this discrepancy reflect different conceptualizations of the relationship between non-Japanese and the nation-state? Is this more than an inexact translation? A deeper analysis of the linguistic, cultural, political, and historic chasms that separate “residents” from “immigrants,” and Japanese from American racial images, would have been welcome.

Since the title of this book refers to multiculturalism, a more significant shortcoming is the elusiveness of the meaning of the term. The authors rarely explain their definitions of the term, and their usages of it vary. In some instances, multiculturalism refers to a political stance advocating a multicultural society, while in other instances it refers merely to the presence of cultural diversity. Emblematic of the taken-for-granted usage of the term, Hamada (Chapter 2) provides readers with a definition of capitalism but not multiculturalism. As Graburn and Ertl note, multiculturalism is “a value-laden prescription rather than a descriptive condition” (1), which raises the question of just what the term means.

In the end, this volume’s focus on a wide range of settings is both its strength and its Achilles’ heel, as less breadth may have led to greater depth. The collection of chapters on newcomers in Japan provide the strongest analytical focus for the book, inevitably marginalizing the chapters that review other aspects of Japanese social life.

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