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Masako Shibata. *Japan and Germany under the U.S. Occupation: A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Education Reform.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005. 232 pp. $26.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7391-2810-7.

Reviewed by Trygve Has-Ellison
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The Likeness of the Unlike

Masako Shibata's comparison of U.S. educational policy towards occupied Japan and Germany after World War II addresses an important subject that deserves careful attention. This is only the second book in English that I am aware of that compares aspects of the Japanese and German experience with modernity, the first being Bernd Martin's book on the political and economic similarities between the two countries. Shibata's work is a case study rather than a theoretical exercise and focuses on the educational establishments of Germany and Japan during the nineteenth century, followed by their common experience of negotiating with American occupation authorities' mandate to alter traditional pedagogical principles. Shibata ultimately concludes that local elites mediated the American educational initiatives and were critical to their success in Japan and failure in Germany.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part outlines the education systems that were constructed or modified in Meiji-era Japan and imperial Germany. Part 2 describes American educational policy towards Germany and Japan after 1945 and the response of the defeated educational elites to the imposition of American policies. The book sums up the long-term success or failure of these policies, concluding that American policies succeeded in Japan because of the compliance of Japanese educational elites whereas they failed in Germany because of the resistance of German educational mandarins. The book also posits that American success in Japan and failure in Germany was partially based on American feelings of superiority to the Japanese as opposed to their uncomfortable uncertainty as they faced the formidable reputation and status of German education.

As a work of comparative history this book leaves much to be desired, both in terms of content and technical presentation. In fairness to the author, this was a text written for an audience of education specialists rather than historians. This would account for its surprising historical gaps and omissions as well as its unsatisfactory bibliography. The culture gap between education and history does not have to be an insurmountable obstacle however, and a few clarifying paragraphs that linked themes together would have gone a long way to make this a more useful text. It also suffers from the usual difficulties of publishing a doctoral dissertation more or less as is, and the author has not been well served by her editor. This is a pity, because the subject is an interesting one worth investigating and the author clearly knows what she is talking about when it comes to American educational policy after World War II.

My primary criticism is directed at part 1 of this book, whereas part 2 is easily the strongest and most well-written section. Part 1, an investigation of the educational establishments and policies of Meiji Japan and the German empire, is deeply flawed on many counts. Shibata describes in broad contours the essential nature of education in pre-World War I Japan and Germany, but her analysis of the cultures of both nineteenth-century entities and their connection to the militarist regimes in World War II Japan and Nazi Germany is problematic. Shibata describes Meiji educational policy as liberal and imperial German educational policy as conservative. Even if this was broadly true, there were enough exceptions in both countries to disprove the assertion. It also strikes me as bizarre to describe the late-nineteenth-century educational policies of both countries and then immediately skip to World War II and the occupation. There is a brief mention of the Taisho democratic era for Japan, but Shibata writes as if the Weimar Republic failed to exist. Surely there was an evolution in German pedagogical practice and policy between the Wilhelminian era and the Federal Republic?

Even more questionable is the liberal/conservative dichotomy between Japan and Germany. The Japanese oligarchy that founded the Meiji state was undoubtedly in-

fluenced by classical liberalism, but over time moved toward conservative social values as it became concerned with the social anarchy that it believed was endemic to liberal societies such as the United States. Moreover, for every liberal policy that its members enacted, they made sure to provide a balance of conservative institutions to keep rampant liberalism in check. So, for example, the primary educational establishment promoted loyalty to the emperor and patriotism, but the university system promoted free-thinking and learning on the Western model. Moreover, if the Meiji university system was fully meritocratic, how does one explain the existence of Gakushuin University, a preserve of the former *Kuge* (court nobility) and *Buke* (military nobility) of the pre-Meiji era? Perhaps the old tropes of "poor as a *Kuge*" and "stupid as a *Buke*" still exist. Again, I broadly agree with Shibata's contention that the Meiji educational system was liberal, but attention given to anomalies and exceptions would have only strengthened her thesis, rather than weakened it.

More troubling is Shibata's complete reliance on *Sonderweg* interpretations of imperial Germany. Apart from a brief mention of Eley and Blackbourn's seminal *Peculiarities of German History* (1984) in a footnote, there is essentially no recognition of the past thirty years of German historical scholarship, other than books with the unmistakable aroma of Bielefeld. This, in part, accounts for the excessive Borussian orientation, which is much more easily blended with the notion that the German educational system was deeply conservative. Conservative academic mandarins there were, and the Burschenschaften were a reactionary element in German university life, but liberalism was alive and well at the municipal and university levels throughout *all* the German states. Although the German universities certainly made a significant contribution to the nationalist culture of Germany and played dead from 1933-45, conservatism does not account for the attitude of resistance to American pedagogical practice. It was the belief in the superior qualities of classical *Bildung* espoused by liberals of all stripes that was at the vanguard of resistance to the perceived materialism and consumerism inherent in American pedagogy. In sum, a conservative/liberal dichotomy between Germany/Japan, which accounts for their differing modes of acceptance/rejection of post-World War II educational policy, is a straw man. Shibata's analysis of these differing paths is essentially correct, but the historical background that she posits for them is deeply problematic and limited.

Overall, this text is useful, particularly the comparative aspects of post-World War II education policy, if approached with appropriate caution. However, the historical background to the application of American educational policy in Japan and Germany is deeply flawed both in scope and analysis.

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