

explaining the continuing hostility between *Sobyo* and *Zenro* even after both confederations turned to labor-market strategies after the mid-1950s, Carlile largely overlooks the fact that the division between the two confederations increasingly reflected the three-way divisions of the labor market: while *Sobyo* tended to represent the interests of public-sector unions and unions of the small- and medium-sized firms where labor relations were adversarial, *Zenro* mainly represented the interests of enterprise unions of large private-sector firms where labor relations were harmonious.

Despite these drawbacks, *Division of Labor* is a book highly recommended for labor historians and social scientists whose main concern are cases in Anglo-American or European countries, because the book allows them to grasp details of the Japanese labor movement in comparison with the cases with which these researchers are familiar.

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MACNAUGHTAN, HELEN. *Women, Work and the Japanese Economic Miracle. The case of the cotton textile industry, 1945–1975.* [Routledge-Curzon Studies in the Modern History of Asia.] RoutledgeCurzon, London [etc.] 2005. xiv, 231 pp. Ill. £65.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859007072860

In 1970 Korean tailor Chun tae-il committed suicide by self-immolation as a way of drawing attention to the inhumane and cruel working conditions of women garment workers in Seoul. Thankfully, his death was not in vain as it reignited women workers' activism and ultimately the formation of a democratic union movement. We know from earlier research that women workers in Japan's prewar textile industry also resisted against their harsh and inhumane working conditions, individually and collectively, and conducted the first recorded strike in 1886.¹ From this present volume we understand that women workers in the postwar textile industry continued to resist patriarchal managerial control and restrictions on their private lives. This volume is a valuable contribution to the literatures on women, work and management strategies in a feminized industry.

Earlier studies demonstrate that the prewar textile industry was significant for Japan's economic development and, as Macnaughtan's analysis of the textile industry from 1945–1975 illustrates, the industry continued to be a significant industry in the postwar period. In particular the two decades 1955–1975 covered Japan's period of high economic growth as well as its becoming the largest employer of women in the postwar period, when women entered the workforce in large numbers. The book details the development of the industry and its labour management practices from the Occupation period (1945–1952), when it was emerging from its wartime focus, until the mid 1970s when the industry underwent a programme of rationalization and diversification. As such, we understand the evolution of the industry during the period of rapid economic growth and its eventual decline as it tries to adjust to technological advances and developing low-cost textile industries in other countries in Asia.

The book sets the scene in discussing the industry's prewar history and postwar transition and the configuration of Japan's early postwar labour market. The remaining chapters

1. Sharon Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford, CA, 1983), pp. 81–83; E. Patricia Tsurumi (1990) *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan* (Princeton, NJ, 1990).

analyse in detail how women workers were recruited, how they were managed, how they were educated and trained, and finally discusses their wages and welfare provisions. The book provides more research and broadens our understanding of the intersections of capitalism and gender in two ways by analysing: (1) the decline in availability of young female workers and the consequent restructuring of the workforce around older, married women; and (2) the way managements/employers control the labour force, in this instance through the provision of dormitory accommodation. These issues are also significant because they allow for a discussion of the textile industry federation – *Zensen Domei*, which was a key supporter of the ideological reorganization of Japan’s union movement in the late 1970s, and remains central to the contemporary union movement.

Macnaughtan’s core argument is that the textile industry (prewar and postwar) was instrumental in formulating employment relations for women workers and “as such had a decisive influence on the segmented nature of the labour market that developed for women workers in Japan” (p. 15). This argument is adequately demonstrated throughout the book and the chapter focusing on the industry’s process of workforce restructuring mirrors that used by other industries reliant on young, female school leavers. As the supply of young female workers contracted, industries such as textiles, electronics, and retail actively sought to increase their number of older, married women, or for the first time turned to older, married women whom they employed on a part-time basis. Macnaughtan concludes that “employer attitudes and strong social domestic roles for older women contributed to their employment as non full-time workers” (p. 100); in other words employers viewed them as “housewives” and so the jobs they were employed in were constructed as part-time. At this time we see the beginnings of the systematization of employing older women as part-time workers but it is unclear (and probably the data doesn’t exist) as to the length of hours worked by part-time workers. My experience of retail shows that in the 1970s the hours of part-time workers in textiles were probably much shorter, or at least the shifts were more “part-time-worker-friendly” than those worked by full-time workers. But by the 1980s (and up to the present) part-time workers were working the same number of hours as full-time workers, but as they were defined as “part-time” they were not receiving equivalent wages or conditions.

The discussion of dormitories and the roles they fulfilled in the lives of women workers is valuable as I don’t think this area has been adequately researched in English. While there is scope for future research, this is a welcome beginning. As Macnaughtan’s research demonstrates, dormitories addressed numerous accommodation issues from supply to cost, but more importantly they were instrumental in providing management a means of controlling the workforce. To compare the significance, in Korea during the period of export oriented industrialization (1960–1980), women workers were also housed in dormitories, and for similar reasons. Unlike Japan, however, the Korean textile union was not responsive to the conditions and demands of the women workers. The collective housing of hundreds of young women created the opportunity for the development of a working-class consciousness and the radicalization and mobilization of women workers. This resulted in them challenging the male dominated leadership of the existing *oyong* (company-friendly) unions and ultimately successfully sparking the creation of an independent union movement in Korea.²

In contrast Japan’s primary textile workers union – *Zensen Domen* – was active in all

2. Chun Soonok, *They Are Not Machines: Korean Women Workers and Their Fight for Democratic Trade Unionism in the 1970s* (Aldershot, 2003).

areas of women's working conditions and wages, welfare, and education. The most well-known example, which is discussed by Macnaughtan, is the strike at the Omi Kenshi company in 1956. The strike concerned a number of issues but one of significance was that women workers resented the extent of the company's control of their private lives through the dormitory system. The strike lasted a staggering 106 days with the workers sustained, financially, organizationally, and emotionally, by both the union and the local community. While beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to know if the experience of the strike encouraged the women workers to remain active.

This volume provides a welcome addition to the growing but still far from adequate body of research on women and work, and is a fascinating account of this well-known period in Japan's history. I would recommend it to anyone interested in the evolution of women and work, women's employment conditions, managerial strategies and the role of unions and the shape and form these take in a feminized industry.

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