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Gakureki kakusa no keizaigaku

[The Economics of Academic Disparity]

By Tachibanaki Toshiaki and Matsuura Tsukasa

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学歴格差の経済学

橘木 俊韶、松浦 司

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This book is not about the educational system per se. Rather, it looks at things like selecting schools and choosing between arts or sciences from an alternative perspective. The idea of interpreting problems in Japanese education—such as overemphasis on memorized facts, fierce competition for entrance into schools and colleges, and emphasis on academic background—from the angle of their economic effects is of great interest.

From the country's point of view, education is a means for shaping society and ensuring the succession of culture, whereas from the point of view of the individual, it is often an economic activity with clear objectives. The increasing number of Japanese students moving away from science has recently become a topical issue, with the underlying reasons considered to be related to the school system and teaching methods. This book carries out a statistical analysis and shows that compared to people with a humanities background, those with a science and technology background are at a clear disadvantage in terms of both income and position. It also takes a fresh look at one aspect of contemporary Japanese society by looking at such areas as the relationship between academic background and parents' income, the secrets of the popularity of medical schools, the reasons why private elementary and junior high schools get preference, and how Waseda and Keiō came to be prestigious universities.

Knowledge of the state of education is essential to understanding Japanese culture. However, information on the public education system and school administration is not enough for true understanding. Areas untouched by the power of public education, such as the role of cram schools or the awareness of students and parents, impact enormously upon the awareness and behavior of Japanese people and upon the state of Japanese society. In that sense, this is an essential volume for understanding Japan. (CK)

Tachibanaki Toshiaki

Born in 1943. Specializes in labor economics. Works include *Kakusa shakai* [Society with Income Gaps], *Jojo kakusa* [trans. *The New Paradox for Japanese Women: Greater Choice, Greater Inequality*], and *Nihon no kyōiku kakusa* [Social Disparity of Japan's Education].

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Born in 1977. An associate professor at the Faculty of Economics of Chūō University, where he specializes in applied economics.

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1943年生まれ。専門は労働経済学。著書に『格差社会』、『女女格差』、『日本の教育格差』他。

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本書は教育制度そのものではなく、学校選びや専門の選好などについて、従来と異なった視点から考察を行ったものである。知識偏重、受験競争、学歴重視など、日本の教育問題を経済効果の角度から読み解くという発想は興味を引く。

教育は国家にとって社会を形作り、文化を継承させるための手段だが、個人にとっては、しばしば明確な目的を持つ経済行為でもある。近年、学生の理科離れが話題になり、その原因について、学校制度や指導方法と関連付けて語られていた。本書は、統計資料にもとづいて分析を行い、文系出身者に比べて、理工系出身者は収入の面においても、出世の面においても明らかに不利である実態を明らかにした。また、学歴と親の収入との関係、医学部人気の秘密、私立小中学校が選好された理由、早慶が名門校になった経緯などを通して、現代日本社会の一側面が鮮やかにクローズアップされている。

日本文化を理解するには教育のあり方を知らなければならない。しかし、教育制度や学校運営など公教育の情報だけでは必ずしも十分ではない。むしろ塾の役割、生徒および保護者の意識など、公教育の力が及ばないところは日本人の意識や行動、日本社会のあり方に大きな影響を与えている。その意味では本書は日本理解にとって欠かせない一冊といえる。(CK)

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