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139 districts with “winner-take-all” single-member districts, and also changes to the way
140 in which the LDP president was selected, which reduced the appeal of special
141 interest candidates while favoring those who could appeal to a broader electorate. The
142 novel contribution of this book is that it demonstrates how these proximate factors
143 interacted with much longer-term transformations that occurred endogenously among
144 the postmasters, the postal workers, the political parties, and the ministries that governed
145 postal affairs.

146 Particularly useful is the description of how long-festered resentments between and
147 among these actors became highly politicized in postwar society. Maclachlan offers a de-
148 tailed account of how old conflicts met new channels of voice and interest mobilization in
149 the 1950s. The roots of the Koizumi reforms go deep: it was the latest in successive at-
150 tempts in the postwar period to reform commissioned post offices (and more generally,
151 the bureaucracy). Each such attempt resulted in institutional changes that altered the
152 game for the next set of reform efforts. Koizumi, while establishing new institutions of
153 his own, was able to leverage the political changes made by predecessors to push
154 through the legislation that would ultimately break up the postal system, and break the
155 hold that postmasters and LDP politicians had on each other.

156 Students of modern Japanese politics will find this a fairly convincing narrative that is
157 well researched and employs numerous interviews and Japanese archival sources. The
158 book’s use of archival photographs from the Communications Museum in Tokyo is par-
159 ticularly engaging. Those who are curious about the uniquely central role of postal
160 savings in Japan’s economic development will also find this book to be informative.
161 The repercussions of the reforms that Maclachlan traces back historically are still felt
162 in Japan’s electoral politics and financial circles. This book goes a long way towards ex-
163 plaining why.

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168 *Japan’s Shrinking Regions in the 21st Century: Contemporary Responses to*
169 *Depopulation and Socioeconomic Decline.* Edited by PETER MATANLE and
170 ANTHONY S. RAUSCH with THE SHRINKING REGIONS GROUP. Amherst, N.Y.:
171 Cambria Press, 2011. 564 pp. \$139.99 (cloth); \$41.99 (ebook).
172 doi:10.1017/S002191181400134X

173 Compiled by eighteen researchers from different scholarly disciplines who partially
174 live and work in rural Japan, this timely and interdisciplinary volume addresses the bleak
175 topic of shrinkage and depopulation in Japan’s rural areas. According to the authors’ pre-
176 diction, the depopulation of Japan will manifest itself in a shrinkage by an average of half a
177 million people per year over the next forty years. The main question that the authors ask
178 is what would constitute a successfully engineered regional or community regeneration
179 against the background of continuing depopulation.

180 Demographic transformation in Japan has been previously addressed, such as by
181 Florian Coulmas, Harald Conrad, Annette Schad-Seifert, and Gabriele Vogt in their
182 work *The Demographic Challenge: A Handbook about Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
183 Ethnographic case studies by Peter Matanle on Sado Island (2006) and by Philip
184 Seaton on Yūbari in Hokkaido (2010) have addressed the implications of population
shrinkage in rural areas. However, a merit of this study is the fact that for the first

185 time ethnographically rich case studies that move beyond the mere acknowledgement of
 186 depopulation and search for coping strategies are summarized in one publication.

187 The authors show that depopulation is not a new phenomenon but began in the
 188 postwar period after a brief baby boom between 1947 and 1949. Population shrinkage
 189 in developed countries is associated with a decline of the total fertility rate, which is
 190 defined as the average number of children born to a cohort of women in their lifetime.
 191 Since then, Japan's fertility rate has been declining and reached a postwar level of 1.26 in
 192 2005 (p. 425). Combined with increasing life expectancy, high numbers of postwar baby
 193 boomers (who are approaching retirement age), and outmigration of younger people to
 194 large cities, a decline of fertility has led to population shrinkage. Another form of depopulation occurs when one major industry ceases to exist, such as in Yūbari, a former coal-mining town in Hokkaido, or in Kamaishi in Iwate Prefecture, a former steel town. In their analysis of population shrinkage, the authors introduce the two key terms *kasochi* (depopulated rural areas) and *genkai shūraku* (communities that have experienced severe depopulation and aging such that more than 50% of the population is aged sixty-five and older). As of 2006, 7,878 *genkai shūraku* exist in Japan, which underlines the pertinence of population shrinkage occurring (pp. 25–26).

201 The volume is divided into two parts. Each chapter is coauthored by two or more
 202 contributors. The first part addresses the impacts and implications of shrinkage in
 203 Japan's peripheral regions. Following an introductory chapter, two case studies situate
 204 Japan in a global context and address how depopulation is being dealt with in the
 205 Ruhr region in Germany and in rural Scotland. Subsequent chapters present case
 206 studies of population shrinkage in Niigata and the remote islands of Okinawa, paradoxically an area where population is expected to grow from 1.39 million people in 2009 to 1.43 million between 2010 and 2030 (p. 169). Christopher Hood investigates the extensions of the Japan National Rail's *Shinkansen* into rural areas such as Hachinohe (2002) and Shin-Aomori (2011) in the Tohoku area (pp. 135–56), whereas John Knight describes the effects on *akiya*, empty houses, that fall victim to forest encroachment and damage from aggressive wildlife such as wild boars and monkeys (pp. 159–70).

212 The second part discusses four different responses in the form of redeveloping, re-
 213 populating, recovering, and reinventing peripheral regions. Contrary to the rhetoric of
 214 governmental measures that seek to achieve renewed growth in rural regions, one
 215 merit of the study is its acceptance of the shrinkage of Japan's rural areas. Governmental
 216 responses to the shrinkage of peripheral regions have long centered on infrastructure development projects, such as building airports and high-speed train connections in marginalized areas. Mergers of shrinking cities, such as the Great Merger of the Heisei Era as discussed by Anthony Rausch, have been an additional policy to counter the depopulation of shrinking regions. However, the researchers of the Shrinking Regions Group argue that infrastructure developments have resulted in a relationship of codependency among national, regional, and local actors, which has prevented local actors from seeking independent solutions for how to cope with the profound changes in the shrinking regions. Drawing on case studies such as Yūbari, a former coal-mining town near Sapporo, which underwent a radical restructuring response termed "*tankō kara kankō e*" (from mines to tourism), the authors further show that attempts to transform shrinking towns into tourist destinations have often failed and that tourism as a means to revitalize rural regions is not sufficient.

227 Based on the problematic nature of infrastructure developments and tourism as
 228 strategies to revitalize declining regions, the authors present four policy recommenda-
 229 tions: firstly, the inclusion of local nongovernmental actors in decision-making processes;
 230 secondly, the development of professional brand-creation capacities that highlight the

231 cultural assets of shrinking regions; thirdly, the establishment of an independent think
 232 tank, which compares and addresses population shrinkage in Asia and Europe and
 233 seeks solutions; and finally, doing more research on the relationship between depopula-
 234 tion and reducing human pressures on the environment.

235 In light of the tragic events of the Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami, and
 236 nuclear disaster that occurred on March 11, 2011, in the Tohoku area in northern
 237 Japan, the authors offer an epilogue, which seeks to restore hope and outlines ten
 238 policy responses to the disaster, such as strengthening community ownership, sustainable
 239 local employment, renewable energies, and sustainable agriculture.

240 The merit of this study is its fresh and unconventional approach towards the accep-
 241 tance of population shrinkage. As such, the authors' viewpoint is not one of resignation
 242 but one of cautious optimism, which is expressed in policy recommendations that are
 243 summarized and augmented in the epilogue. However, these policy recommendations
 244 are not detailed but rather appear as a list of future tasks whose method of implementa-
 245 tion remains unclear. Furthermore, the various parts of the volume appear at times
 246 disjointed, although each chapter offers valuable ethnographic insight. Despite these
 247 flaws, this study is essential reading for students of sociology, cultural anthropology,
 248 and public policy studies. In particular, readers who are interested in the effects of demo-
 249 graphic transformation processes and search for sustainable concepts of improving the
 250 quality of life for future generations in shrinking rural regions will greatly benefit from
 251 this book.

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 256 *East Asian Development: Foundations and Strategies*. By DWIGHT H. PERKINS.
 257 Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013. 214 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).
 258 doi:10.1017/S0021911814001351

259 East Asia—currently one of the most dynamic and powerful regions globally—has
 260 historically experienced substantial economic development. Dwight Perkins's book
 261 *East Asian Development: Foundations and Strategies* provides a unique comparative
 262 account of economic development in ten East and Southeast Asian economies that
 263 achieved rapid economic growth in in the second half of the twentieth century.

264 Perkins clearly says that this book does not attempt to define an “East Asian model of
 265 economic development,” because no single model accurately describes what the ten most
 266 successful economies in the region did to achieve this transformation (p. 201). The book
 267 does not explore an ideal model; instead, Perkins provides interesting and detailed stories
 268 based on his “direct experience in working with governments in the region” for a substan-
 269 tial period as an advisor on economic policies and performance (p. 12).

270 The book attempts to answer important research questions: Why have several of the
 271 East and Southeast Asian economies achieved rates of growth seldom witnessed else-
 272 where? Why have some economies in the region performed better than others? Lastly,
 273 why have all the richest economies eventually slowed their growth (p. 5)? To solve
 274 these questions, Perkins classified the ten economies into three groups based on per-
 275 capita GDP growth rates. The first group includes Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong
 276 Kong, and Singapore, all of which grew rapidly until they reached over \$13,000 GDP
 per capita and then slowed their growth. The second group includes Malaysia, Thailand,