

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)
DIJ Social Science Study Group



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Meanings of graduate education for women in Japan: A study of University of Tokyo Alumnae in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Higher education is thought of as a means of empowerment for men and women. In Japan, however, graduate education can have the opposite effect for women in Japan, making their lives more difficult and precarious. Firstly, a graduate degree in humanities and social sciences seems to be of merit only for the academic job market, otherwise being depreciated. Secondly, the higher the level of education credentials women have beyond the undergraduate level, the harder it gets for them to find a partner or spouse. In spite of these negative factors, my research shows that graduate education can empower women by training them to be critical thinkers.

In order to analyze meanings highly educated women attach to graduate education, I carried out interviews and participant observation in Tokyo and neighboring prefectures, focusing on female graduates from the University of Tokyo in the social sciences and humanities. By choosing female graduate degree holders from the most prestigious university in Japan, I aimed at capturing the experiences of highly educated women more clearly than by choosing female graduate degree holders from other universities.

Yuki Yamamoto, PhD, is a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Educational Policy Studies. She did research as a scholar of the Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program. She received her M.S. in International and Comparative Education from Indiana University.

The DIJ Social Science Study Group is organized by P. Holdgrün and C. Hommerich.
All are welcome to attend, but registration (holdgruen@diptokyo.org) is appreciated.

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