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Social & Behavioral Sciences \ History, Geography & Area Studies \ Asia & Oceania

The Demographic challenge: a handbook about Japan, ed. by Florian Coulmas et al. Brill, 2008. 1,199p bibl indexes; ISBN 9789004154773, \$249.00. Reviewed in 2009mar CHOICE.

This very impressive compendium on a timely subject consists of 63 well-researched articles, written by Japanese and non-Japanese scholars from a variety of academic/research institutions and edited by four outstanding specialists. Chief editor Coulmas is director of the German Institute for Japanese Studies, Tokyo. The editors did a fine job of managing the difficulty of doing demographic research on a population that requires dealing with economic, political, and cultural factors. Each part begins with an introduction, followed by general articles and "case in point" articles. In part 1, editors offer an introduction to major population issues for nonspecialists, including the fundamentals of Japanese demographics. Part 2 concerns social aspects of demographic change, with its case in point being time spent with children. Part 3 on cultural aspects of demographic change focuses on a pet culture in the making. The political aspects of demographic change are the focus of Part 4, with the case in point being the age structure of volunteers. Part 5 features two cases in point: "silver" customers and "ward that takes pride in being traffic safe for the elderly." Readers can find a special subject of interest, yet the work serves nonspecialists as well. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. All large academic libraries. -- *M. Y. Rynn, Lackawanna College*

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