

Brian J. McVeigh, *The History of Japanese Psychology: Global Perspectives, 1875-1950*, SOAS Studies in Modern and Contemporary Japan Series, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, 336 pp.

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Brian J. McVeigh's *The History of Japanese Psychology: Global Perspectives, 1875-1950* is an ambitious history, aiming to provide a complete history of psychology in modern Japan. It details this history from the precedents of psychology in the pre-Meiji period to post-war developments, ranging from the most important to the more minor figures, concepts and currents in psychology and several related fields, the history of research laboratories, its applications, especially in education (one of McVeigh's fields of expertise), and its mobilization for the state and army from the 1930s. As the title indicates, the development of psychology in Japan is situated within a "global perspective," the two global processes of "socio-externalization" and "psycho-internalization." McVeigh explains these in terms of the creation of the nation-state and capitalism which brought the top-down creation of large national identities and management of people, and therefore an interest in psychology, and second, a gradual coming into focus of an "interior" self that becomes an object for scientific research.

The History of Japanese Psychology is certainly a welcome book as an overview of psychology in Japan. Its greatest strength is that it contains a wealth of information on the history of psychology in Japan, which will be of use for future researchers.

However, the book suffers from several limitations and weaknesses: in short, in its aim to provide an encyclopedic overview, it has sacrificed depth. At times, the book reads as a collection of lists: of people, institutions, and publications. There are many mini-biographies of figures without explaining what the significance or originality of their activities were (see for example page 131, or the two page section "key sociologists" which simply lists eight sociologists, pp. 108-109). McVeigh often labels psychologists in too general terms, or does not explain their contribution for the history of psychology in Japan. (For example Narazaki Asatarō "saw pedagogy as a means to promote Japanese nationalism," and Kido

Mantarō “attempted to develop an ‘educational science’,” p. 131.) The book also contains a large number of separate “snapshots” that aim at providing context or introduce figures and themes. While some are helpful, often these snapshots are again short and too general (Inoue Tetsujirō, a major figure in Japanese intellectual history has a snapshot of two sentences, p. 46), while others, perhaps aimed at an audience not too familiar with Japanese history, seem divorced from the main line of inquiry of the book (for example the snapshot “imperialism and fundamentalist national statism” is a standard textbook paragraph about Japan’s road to the Pacific War).

This is unfortunate since McVeigh brings up several important and interesting problems for the history of science in Japan. For example, of particular interest to this reviewer is the intersection of psychology and religion (the book’s cover photograph hints at the importance of this dimension as it features a person praying to a Bodhisattva statue). The book touches on the legacy—and dismantling—of pre-Meiji religious thought, the role of Buddhist philosophers Inoue Enryō and Hara Tanzan, and that psychologists such as Mōtō Yūjirō (one of the founders of Japanese psychology) and Mori Masatake, the founder of Morita therapy, one of the perhaps most distinctive movements in therapy in Japan, engaged with Buddhism and meditation. However, McVeigh does not explore these engagements in depth. I hope the book will provide stimulus for further research into these themes.