

The Evolution of Feminism in Japan: Issues of Gender and the Perception of Japanese Women

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Abstract:

This paper analyses the history of feminism in Japan, illustrates the evolution in the role of Japanese women in society, provides a comprehensive view and detailed characteristics of the feminist movement. Furthermore, it includes: an accurate description of the development paradigm of feminism in modern Japan and an analysis of gender inequality. Finally, it illustrates the positive and negative impact of feminism on Japanese culture and examines the main trends in gender roles and gender bias in society. Based on the historical approach and examination of ideological features, a typology and specifics of the feminist movement, as well as the peculiarities of feminism in Japan, are provided. In the end, it was concluded that the combination of old post-war ideologies such as “Ryosai-kenbo”¹, the system called “Fuyou”², and the tendency to impose old traditional roles on men and women not only slowed down the development of feminism in the 60s or 80s but still affects Japanese society and became an indirect reason of gender inequality. Moreover, it was proved that the ideology of successful marriage (so-called “escape route” for Japanese women) that contradicts feminism remains a solution to problems nowadays too. Gender inequality became well known and discussed topic in contemporary Japan. Therefore, further study of this research field is necessary.

Keywords: feminism, Japan, gender equality, social issues