

ences are widely felt in Indonesia (p. 156). Rüdiger Lohlker maintains that the humanitarian Islam of Nahdlatul Ulama and its autonomous youth body represent the evolution of Islamic law (*fiqh*) as a consequence of the intense discussions among Indonesian Islamic scholars regarding the goals of Islamic law and the contextualisation of shari'a in contemporary plural societies.

Above all, this book enlightens readers on how an astonishing concept like "humanitarian Islam" has emerged in Muslim cultures, particularly in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority nation in the world. In order to examine Nahdlatul Ulama's and Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's concepts of "Islam Nusantara" and "humanitarian Islam", the editors have assembled articles with vibrant viewpoints. Nevertheless, the editors examine only "traditionalist" Muslims in their analysis of Muslim dynamics in the formulation, interpretation and expression of humanitarian Islam in the Indonesian context. They don't give enough room to discuss how "modernist" Muslims have articulated and understood humanitarian Islam in public domains. Despite this limitation, the book provides a crucial insight into the evolving landscape of Islamic thought in Indonesia.

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SABINE FRÜHSTÜCK, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan*. (New Approaches to Asian History). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 280 pages, £ 22.99. ISBN 9-781-1084-3072-2

It is now common knowledge that sex, gender and sexuality are constantly (re)configured and should be understood as being locally specific while still connected to global developments. Yet, in looking at Japan, the English-language literature and media have commonly and constantly characterised these notions as marked by strangeness and otherness. Such a Western gaze not only homogenises sexuality and gender in Japan but also undermines the complex developments and changes that these categories have undergone over the last centuries. In order to challenge the simplistic depictions of gender and sexuality in Japan as being different due to unique cultural values, comprehensive insights drawing from multiple sources and local, regional and global perspectives are needed. Sabine Frühstück's *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* is a book that provides precisely such insights. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines history, anthropology, sociology and visual studies, Frühstück's latest monograph vividly elucidates how sex, gender and sexuality in Japan have been socially, scientifically, culturally and politically constructed, negotiated and transformed over time.

The book makes an inviting impression with its front cover showcasing a magazine shot of the blonde-haired kabuki and film actor Nakamura Shidō holding his infant son close to his kimono-covered body. The cover perfectly hints at the book's goal of discussing the intersection between tradition and modernity, and the constantly reconfiguring manifestations of sex, sexuality and gender in Japan. The book consists of an introduction, seven individual chapters and an epilogue, presenting contents that do not follow "the fantasy of linear progress" (p. 12). Rather, each chapter describes significant events and materials that span national and temporal frontiers yet still revolve around the topics in focus, which range from the changing perceptions towards manhood and womanhood, to the management and debates surrounding sex and reproduction in different times, to visual culture and movements such as women's liberation or LGBT+ activism. Throughout the chapters, different aspects of sex, sexuality, masculinity and femininity and everything in-between are illustrated with consideration to the entanglement of not only cultural, socio-political, local, regional and global forces but also identity markers such as ethnicity, class and sexual orientation.

One of the most noticeable strengths of the book is the incredibly rich data from multi-language and multi-perspective sources. Frühstück has skilfully woven together a wide range of materials, including historical and governmental documents, media representations and biographical accounts to trace the debates surrounding sex, gender and sexuality in Japan through a period that spans more than a century. The analyses also illustrate how notions of ethnicity, class, gender, sex and sexuality intersect to shape individuals' perceptions and experiences. Such a commitment to intersectionality allows a bottom-up approach to the understanding of how individuals of diverse backgrounds engage with sex, sexuality and gender in Japanese society and therefore greatly complements the macro-level analyses of policies, political debates, social norms and public discourses. It also gives attention to the commonly overlooked tensions and contradictions in how individuals and communities assert their agency and resistance when navigating dominant gender norms, the status quo and changing social milieus. For example, Frühstück mentioned how aspects that made the white-collar salaryman the epitome of Japanese masculinity such as securing lifetime employment or being married were unattainable and, therefore, resisted or rejected by different groups of men amid Japan's economic downfall and sociocultural changes (chapter 1). Similarly, several Japanese women no longer adhere to the expectation of being the submissive and obedient "good wife, wise mother", as reflected through the country's low marriage rates and birth rates (chapter 3). Another example is how both men and women navigated the sex industry in Japan and circumvented as well as protested institutional barriers such as the Prostitution Prevention Law (chapter 5). I also appreciate the author's critical stance towards prominent feminists

such as Ishimoto Shizue, Yosano Akiko or Hiratsuka Raichō who were “heroines of radical political change” (p. 84) for women’s freedom in Japan but had few words about or for colonized fellow females who lived under Japanese empirical rule in Korea, China, Mongolia or Manchuria.

While the book’s broad scope makes it an ideal and comprehensive introduction to gender and sexuality in Japan, it is also a double-edged sword, since some aspects could benefit more from deeper explorations. For instance, the analyses regarding queer identities and activism remain at the mainstream level. While the experiences of sexual minorities and LGBTQ+ activists in large urban Japanese cities are very different from those living in rural areas, local and regional variances in queer experiences remain undiscussed. There is also no mention of the debates about the sexuality and gender of socially marginalised groups such as *hikikomori*, *otaku* or *burakumin*. If these topics were addressed, they could provide an even more nuanced and intersectional insight into the lived reality of those who are often overlooked by mainstream reports. Additionally, it would have been beneficial to mention how sexuality and gender in Japan are manifested through and by the internet, social media and online dating platforms, given the significant role of cyberspace in people’s engagement with sexuality and gender nowadays.

In general, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* offers a compelling exploration of the developments of and debates surrounding gender and sexuality in Japan from the late nineteenth century to the present day. With its interdisciplinary approach and diverse data set, Frühstück’s book nicely shows that gender, sex and sexuality in Japan cannot be simplistically and rigidly understood merely as being different and unique. Rather, these notions have undergone complex (re)configurations over times under the influences of not only cultural factors but also Japan’s colonial past and present socioeconomic landscapes as well as the resistance of marginalised groups. The author has also done an excellent job of introducing references to other relevant academic literature that can provide deeper investigations of specific topics. As such, the book consolidates Sabine Frühstück’s position as one of the leading scholars of sexuality and gender in Japan and serves as an important resource and inspiration for students and fellow scholars of not only Japanese studies but also other disciplines.

An Huy Tran