

<b>Institution:</b> The University of Oxford
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA27
<b>Title of case study:</b> Reforming the System for Looked-After Children in Japan
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This research involved the first socio-political analysis of the Japanese child protection and child welfare system to be published in either Japanese or English. It has had a major impact on debates which led in Japan in 2010 and 2011 to the most significant policy changes in the past sixty-five years in relation to the care and treatment of all looked-after children (in Japan currently numbering around 40,000). It has also influenced the way in which trainee child protection social workers are educated and how research on child welfare institutions is undertaken.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>This project was the first study ever undertaken which placed the Japanese system for children in the care of the state in a comparative political, economic and historical perspective. The study was based on intensive participant observation and extended interviews, and it showed that, in Japan, when compared to the OECD average: (a) a very high proportion (around 90%) of children go into residential care as opposed to adoption and fostering; (b) when children are taken into care, they tend to stay in the care system for a long period of time (over five years on average); (c) while in care, they are cared for in large groups and achieve less educationally, socially and emotionally than their peers in the wider society.</p> <p>The research also concluded that the operation of the Japanese system was the result of a number of social phenomena which would all be susceptible to change if the political will existed. These social phenomena included: the difficulties for the authorities in mobilizing alternatives to residential care such as fostering and adoption due to the meanings historically ascribed to these practices in the traditional Japanese kinship system; the vested interests of the private welfare organisations which ran the children's homes; the general lack of public awareness of the child protection system; and the fact that current practices were considered to be the 'natural' outgrowths of historical and traditional cultural patterns. The study placed particular emphasis on the fact that, over the past twenty years, there has been huge growth in the number of reported cases of child abuse (from 1,000 in 1991 to over 50,000 in 2011), an issue which had thus far been virtually dismissed in Japan as a 'western' social problem. The research explained in detail the reasons for this huge increase and why it necessitated a complete re-examination of the assumptions which had underlain the Japanese child protection system hitherto.</p> <p>All the research was carried out by Roger Goodman. In 1991, when Goodman was at the University of Essex, he undertook a pilot project to test the feasibility of the research. After moving full-time to Oxford in 1993, he made a series of short fieldwork trips before undertaking the major research in Japan over 12 months in 1997-98. The research was funded by two competitive grants, which covered a year of fieldwork and a year for writing-up, from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (a government agency) and the Japanese Ministry of Education, respectively. The main findings were published in English by Oxford University Press in 2000 and in a widely-disseminated Japanese version by Akashi Shoten (the major publisher of works on Japanese social welfare policy and practice) in 2006. The translation of the Japanese version was undertaken by Tetsuo Tsuzaki, one of the key policy-makers in child welfare issues in Japan, who has in turn been one of the main conduits for disseminating the results of the research to other major Japanese policy-makers.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Roger Goodman, 2000, <i>Children of the Japanese State: The Changing Role of Child Protection Institutions in Contemporary Japan</i>, 2000, Oxford University Press: Oxford. 248pp. Available on request. (This is the main English publication from this project; there are numerous articles in English updating and expanding on various sections of it from the mid-1990s onwards.)</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Roger Goodman, 2006, *Nihon no Jidōyōgo: Jidōyōgogaku e no Shōtai* (Child Protection in Japan: An Introduction to the Study of Child Protection), 2006, Akashi Shoten: Tokyo. 416pp. Available on request. (This is the main Japanese publication from this project. It was translated from the English original by Professor Tetsuo Tsuzaki who also added a substantial and important afterword specifically written to engage Japanese child welfare practitioners, academics and policy-makers.)

Review by Professor Masaaki Noda in *Kumamoto Shinbun*, 25th June 2006 “*This is a book which should be read not only by students and staff who want to learn about child welfare but also people who would like to think about the structure and distortion of Japanese society*”.

Review by Professor Reiho Kashiwame in *Satooya to Kodomo* “[Goodman’s] incisive perspective on issues concerning the structure of child welfare, especially the organization of nongovernmental children’s homes, management problems, salary issues, and union problems etc., which child welfare researchers and media in Japan have not pointed out before even though they are aware of these problems, is very valuable... One can say that this book perceptively brings to light the nature of child welfare system in Japan... the author’s analysis which also encompasses adoption and child abuse makes it possible to see the present circumstance in Japan objectively”

Roger Goodman, 2011, ‘Fukushi seido wa, sono bunkateki, reikishiteki haikai wo shirazu ni rikai dekiruka: Eikoku no shiten ni okeru Nijon no jidō yōgoshisetsu no casestudy’ (‘Can Welfare Systems be Understood Outside their Cultural and Historical Context? A Case Study of Children’s Homes in Contemporary Japan from a British Perspective’), p. 44-7 in *Kikan Jidōyōgo (Child Welfare Quarterly)* Vol. 42, No. 1, 2011. Available on request.

This was an invited article, based on the Japanese monograph above, in the leading *practitioner* journal in the field in Japan. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at numerous workshops inside and outside Japan over the previous decade.

Roger Goodman, 2008, ‘The state of Japanese welfare; welfare and the Japanese state’, pp. 96-108 in Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (ed.), *Welfare State Transformations*, London: Macmillan Palgrave. Available on EBSCOhost via institutional account.

This article places the Japanese case study in a comparative framework for understanding welfare state transformations more generally in advanced societies.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In recent years, there have been major changes in both Japanese central and local child welfare policy and legislation, culminating in 2010 in the publication by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of the ‘2010 Vision for Children and Childrearing’ which advocates: much greater use of adoption and fostering, greater investment in keeping birth families together, and the massive reduction in the average size of residential units for children in care. The impact that the research undertaken by Goodman had on the debates which led to these reforms was due to the fact that his was the only research written by a foreign scholar on this topic (foreign scholars are often drawn on in internal policy debates in Japan) and that it became widely disseminated in Japan after it was translated by one of Japan’s leading child welfare policy-makers, Tetsuo Tsuzaki. Beyond its policy impact, Goodman’s book *Nihon no Jidōyōgo* (see above) has become a textbook on many social work courses in Japanese universities<sup>[1, 2]</sup>, and his research has helped raise public consciousness in Japan on the rise of reported rates of child abuse (see for example: Roger Goodman, 2000, ‘Jidō Gyakutai no "Hakken" to Senmonka no Fuzai’ [The ‘Discovery’ of Child Abuse and the Shortage of Specialists], *Asahi Shinbun*, 29 May, which was a specially invited column in the Asahi newspaper, daily circulation 11.4 million.)

##### **1 Political, administrative and practical impacts**

Since its publication in Japanese, this research has been drawn on in relation to a number of major recent changes in Japanese state policy for looked-after children and young people. Collectively, these reforms presage a radical change from the situation described in the research in the late 1990s where 90% of children lived in children’s homes with, on average, over sixty residents. In future, one-third of children and young people in state care will be placed in foster homes, one-third in community group homes and one-third in children’s homes<sup>[1]</sup>. In relation to the last of these, the

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Ministry also determined that, within a decade, no children's homes will house more than 40 children in total. Several local governments have recently set up local initiatives to increase the number of placements in fostering while reducing those in children's homes; the proportion of looked-after children in foster homes in Fukuoka, which was only 6.9% in 2004, had increased to 24.8% by 2010.

Many MPs and local politicians in Japan have begun to argue for greater opportunities for this disadvantaged group in Japanese society and for an improvement in provisions for care leavers, including housing, training and income maintenance. Until recently, children have had to leave care homes as soon as they left full-time education (which can be as young as 16). Recent policy now defines 'looked-after children' as under 18 years old, which can be extended to under 20 years old if it is necessary, and a ministry administrative notice states that children with disability can stay longer than 20 years old<sup>[ii]</sup>.

Greater awareness of all the above issues has been aided by the Japanese version of Goodman's book published in 2006. MPs from the Social Democratic Party (when it was in opposition) referred to the work as evidence in the Committee Session on Children's Social Care, including Hosaka Nobuto who is now the Mayor of Setagaya Ward in the Tokyo Metropolitan Council, which has taken a lead in this area.

Tetsuo Tsuzaki is a member of numerous government advisory panels on child protection issues and probably the best known scholar in Japan working on issues of Japanese child protection. He has stated that:

*"Professor Goodman's social anthropological work on Japan's orphanage system has had enormous impact on child welfare policy as well as on academic world. Prior to his work academic research into indigenous management of orphanages was virtually taboo in children's social care field across Japan. His work set out a sort of climate in which more open discussion and research should be undertaken amongst people concerned. His elaborate research into what went on in Japan's orphanages was shocking as well as revealing not only to academics but also to administrators in central and local governments.... To sum up, his work has been widely or universally cited in any serious research into Japan's children's social care policy and practice and it shall be providing the lasting impact on policy and researches of child welfare, particularly of the best interests of children and young persons deprived of normal family life in Japan for at least next quarter a century"*<sup>[3]</sup>.

According to Toshikazu Takahashi, Chairman of the Japanese Society for Residential Child Care:

*"Professor Goodman's work, especially the book, *Nihon no Jidōyōgo* (undertaken from the perspective of an external and neutral observer), has been widely read and had a major impact on the way that both practitioners and policy-makers in Japan have looked at the system of child protection. It significantly influenced the terms of the debate which led, most recently, to the 2010 policy changes in Japan for children in care"*<sup>[4]</sup>.

The Japan Bar Association drew on Goodman's research in their argument for the better treatment of children in care and for the need for Japan to sign up to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The work has also been referred to in many blogs and on-line sites, for example where local councillors have described how it was the first time they became informed of what has been going on in Japanese children's homes<sup>[iii]</sup>.

## **2 Impact on Training and Research**

The main Japanese publication from this project, *Nihon no Jidōyōgo*, is currently used, according to web searches, in over 200 Japanese universities and colleges who specialize in child protection (including major programmes at Kyoto Furitsu University<sup>[iv]</sup>; Shukutoku University<sup>[v]</sup>; Japan College of Social Work, Senshu University, Rikkyo University, Dokkyo University) as a text on programmes for training social workers. Moreover, the use of the ethnographic method and the idea that social problems are to an extent socially constructed – a methodological approach and a

theoretical innovation first introduced into the literature on looked-after children in Japan via this research project – can be seen in projects which are currently being undertaken in Japanese social policy by Japanese researchers and which are having a direct effect on social work training and research. Examples of major works published in Japanese on looked-after children, which acknowledge a debt to the approach pioneered in this research, include *Children's Homes and Social Exclusion*<sup>[vi]</sup> and *The Process of Children's Lives in Children's Homes*<sup>[vii]</sup> both published in 2011. The research has also been widely presented in social policy and social work departments in universities in the UK, US and Hong Kong as representing an example of this approach as a mirror in which to examine local practices (see Goodman, 2008, above).

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

##### *Testimony*

Japanese government policy discussions and debates are not recorded on-line; policy documents rarely explicitly refer to external influences on government policy-making; and it is difficult for current members of the civil service in Japan to publicly acknowledge external influences on their policy-making even when, as in this case, the research is partially funded by government grants. The following four very senior individuals who were closely involved in the debates which led to changes in government policy, however, have provided, or have indicated that they will be able to provide, further corroboration of the influence of the research outlined in section 2 on Japanese child welfare policy.

[1] Corroboration of influence of research on policy makers available from Emeritus Professor, Kansei Gakuin University

[2] Corroboration of influence of research on policy makers during the period of reform to the child protection system available from Chairman of the Labour and Welfare Committee of Social Care for Children, Ministry of Health (MHLW)

[3] Statement provided by Professor, Kyoto Prefectural University

[4] Statement provided by Chairman, Japanese Society for Residential Child Care

##### *Other Sources of Evidence*

[i] Report, in Japanese, relating to the current state of out-of-home care (July 2011). See page 8: [http://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/kodomo/syakaiteki\\_yougo/dl/11.pdf](http://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/kodomo/syakaiteki_yougo/dl/11.pdf)

[ii] Report, in Japanese, relating to the current state of out-of-home care (July 2011). See page 12: [http://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/kodomo/syakaiteki\\_yougo/dl/11.pdf](http://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/kodomo/syakaiteki_yougo/dl/11.pdf)

[iii] Wakayama Local councillor's blog, in Japanese. <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/shu0712/e/d7a4b5f887d6a41191fcb177095f4727>

[iv] Kyoto Prefectural University course description including Goodman's book as a course reference book. In Japanese. [http://www.kpu.ac.jp/cmsfiles/contents/0000001/1614/\(231-321\)kokyo\(1-3\).pdf](http://www.kpu.ac.jp/cmsfiles/contents/0000001/1614/(231-321)kokyo(1-3).pdf)

[v] Shukutoku University course description including Goodman's book as a course reference. See page 42. In Japanese. <http://www.shukutoku.ac.jp/about/faculty/sougou/fukushi/kashiwame.pdf>

[vi] Nishida Yoshimasa, Tsumaki Shingo, Nagase Masako and Uchida Ryushi, *Jido yogo shisetsu to shakaiteki haijo: kazoku izon shakai no rinkai*, Kaihō Shuppansha [2011]

[vii] Taniguchi Yukiko, *Jido yogo shisetsu no kodomotachi no seikatsu katei: kodomotachi wa naze haijo jotai kara nukedasenai no ka*, Akashi Shoten [2011]