



Shogun's Ghost: The Dark Side of Japanese Education (ACM Distinguished Dissertations)

Ken Schoolland

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In most accounts of the struggle for economic supremacy between the United States and Japan, the inferiority of the United States' education system is continually pointed out. Here, Ken Schoolland, who taught in Japan at the college level, tells a different story about Japanese education. Schoolland gives a first person account of a side of Japanese education rarely seen in the West. Having spent five years teaching in a Japanese university, he writes of pervasive problems with the system of lower level colleges; unruly classrooms where discipline is a myth and cheating is a fact of daily life. Schoolland uses this new knowledge to redefine what he terms the new cold war between United States and Japanese systems of education.

Schoolland begins by sharing his experiences as a professor at a Japanese university. He then explores some of the attitudes on education that are typical of publications that seem to be fueling a race between the economic superpowers. He describes some of the changing, relevant characteristics of Japanese society and how these shape the education system. Turning up the dark side of Japanese education, Schoolland elaborates on punishments in the schools and reveals the challenge that has come forth against physical punishment, the debate over students rights, court battles, and models of leadership. Finally, Schoolland shows the extent of student violence in the schools, he dissects the myth of Japan as unified, harmonious, homogeneous society, and reaches into Japanese history to show the roots of group responsibility in Japanese society.

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