

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910785771303321
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Titolo	Welfare through work [[electronic resource]] : conservative ideas, partisan dynamics, and social protection in Japan / / Mari Miura
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Ithaca, : Cornell University Press, 2012
ISBN	0-8014-6548-6 0-8014-6592-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource : illustrations (black and white)
Classificazione	MH 48920
Disciplina	331.25/96
Soggetti	Job security - Political aspects - Japan Public welfare - Japan Economic assistance, Domestic - Japan Labor policy - Japan Conservatism - Japan Japan Social policy
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- List of Tables and Figures -- Acknowledgments -- Abbreviations -- A Note on Conventions -- Introduction -- 1. Welfare through Work and the Gendered Dual System -- 2. Situating Japan's Social Protection System in Comparative Perspective -- 3. The Conservative Vision and the Politics of Work and Welfare -- 4. Reforming the Labor Markets -- 5. Who Wants What Reform? -- 6. The Neoliberal Agenda and the Diet Veto -- 7. The Double Movement in Japanese Politics -- Conclusion -- Notes -- References -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	High economic growth and relatively equitable distribution were among the most conspicuous characteristics of the postwar Japanese political economy. The lure of the Japanese model, however, has faded since the 1990's. Growth is in short supply and equality a thing of the past. In Welfare through Work, Mari Miura looks in depth at Japan's social protection system as a factor in the contemporary malaise of the Japanese political economy. The Japanese social protection system should be understood as a system of "welfare through work," Miura

suggests, because employment protection has functionally substituted for income maintenance. A gendered dual system in the labor market allowed a high degree of labor market flexibility, which enabled Japan to achieve high employment rates as well as strong legal protections for regular workers. In recent years, conservatives gradually replaced the productivism and cooperatism that had resulted from earlier party politics with neoliberalism, which, in turn, hampered the effectiveness of the welfare through work system. In Miura's view, the dynamics of partisan competition fostered ideational renewal, just as the political visions and ideologies of the governing party strongly affected the design of the social protection system. In the scenario Miura describes, the partisan dynamics since the 1990's resulted in the policy change that further undermined the social protection system, and the ensuing disruption has been felt throughout Japan.
