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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.
