

## 生命というリスク—二〇世紀社会の再生産戦略

### **Osamu Kawagoe and Ken'ichi Tomobe, eds., *Seimei to iu risuku: nijisseiki shakai no saiseisan senryaku* [A Risk Called Life: Reproductive Strategies of Twentieth-Century Society]**

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Toward the end of the twentieth century, reproduction surfaced on the public agenda in Japan—yet again. As it had half a century earlier, the reasoning of policy makers followed utilitarian lines: reproduction at replacement rates was essential to the thriving state. This time, however, the aim was not military victory or imperialist expansion but overcoming the dwindling birthrate and the so-called super-aging society. The framework, too, was different. Osamu Kawagoe, one of the editors of the book under review, *Seimei to iu risuku: nijisseiki shakai no saiseisan senryaku*, claims that Japan's quandaries about reproduction “derive from attempts to solve problems . . . in a ‘risk society’ using systems and methods now conventional to ‘industrial society’” (12). Drawing on concepts proposed by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck in his seminal monograph, *Risikogesellschaft (Risk Society)*, the editors define their project as a “historical analysis of the politics of reproduction” (12) which they approach by “clarifying the historical starting point of problems surrounding life today” (12) and “illuminating the historical processes responsible for the emergence and development of twentieth-century society” (1). Essays in the collection focus on moments when Japan or Germany was grappling with decisions about reproduction and child care, dilemmas born of the tension between traditional mores and modern medicine. The editors propose a new term, “life risk” (*seimei risuku* 生命リスク), which they set at the center of their analytical framework. Life risk is, according to the book, “a working and hypothetical notion . . . that seizes

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those groups of issues around the body that surface over the course of life, moments such as infancy, toddlerhood, pregnancy and childbirth, illness and aging, all of which destabilize one's life" (1).

In Chapter 1, Ken'ichi Tomobe discusses "Life Risk from the Perspective of Population." Through a reading of discourses around the death of children from the Tokugawa (1603–1868) to the Meiji (1868–1912) period, Tomobe rejects conventional interpretations by suggesting that the Tokugawa was haunted by images of dead children. He then describes how venereal diseases became associated with prostitution in the Meiji period (as the term *karyūbyō* potently illustrates). His analysis of the rate of infection in the Taisho (1912–1926) period, which he explains as a "negative effect . . . of urbanization and the move to a market economy" (28), correlates with data about children's health extracted from a census conducted in Gunma Prefecture, some 100 km northwest of Tokyo. The latter half of the chapter uses statistics to identify risks—demographic data are presented as an indicator of life risk and as a point from which discourses of reproductive politics and policies can be analyzed.

A similar theme unites Chapters 4, 6, and 7. In "A Reexamination of Wartime 'Population Policy,'" Hiroyuki Takaoka refuses to consider demographic figures as self-evident, choosing instead to subject them to critical scrutiny. From 1938 a wide range of ideas about population stretched from a policy that placed the industrial population at the center to a policy that focused on agrarian population (146–54). Takaoka also reveals how the speculation over future birth rates by demographer Tomonaga Nakayama became a foundation for the new policy of the 1940s. Similarly, in "Life Risk and the Modern Family," Osamu Kawagoe introduces demographic data and other figures to define changing family structures in West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. Unable to reconcile these numbers with the state's childcare policies, he dives into official reports as well as surveys in a popular women's magazine, *Brigitte*. He concludes that men (including politicians) came during that period to embrace the idea of *sansai shinwa*, the superiority of mothers as caregivers during the first 3 years of a child's life, judged in terms of emotional, mental, and intellectual development. In "The Politics of Risk Avoidance during Childbirth," Makiko Nakayama begins with a graph that compares maternal and infant mortality rates with the duration of labor in the latter half of the twentieth century. The graph, which shows a clear correlation between declining mortality rates and the "institutionalization" of childbirth (i.e., children born in hospitals), may explain the "process of overcoming the risk of death . . . in childbirth," but it omits another risk, a possibility of "embracing new crisis and danger in exchange for the avoidance of the risk called death" (222). Therefore, Nakayama dedicates the chapter to accounting for "policies and regulations enabling changing processes, or a politics of hierarchy as well as of changes in leadership" (221). She focuses on two cases: the policies and politics of maternal and child health centers, which enjoyed their heyday between the 1950s and the 1970s, and the discourse of risk underlying the contemporary debate about using nurses to examine pregnant women and women in labor.

Chapters 2, 3, and 5 deal with imminent risks and the perception of risk. In "A Risk Called Infant Death," Tomoyo Nakano examines an infant health campaign organized at the turn of the nineteenth century by the Association for Infant Care in the

Düsseldorf Administrative Region (*Verein für Säuglingsfürsorge im Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf*) in pre-war Germany. Nakano analyzes dialogs among campaigners and points out how they considered infant death in terms of social hygiene, concerns over the national economy, and imperialism. Nakano then delineates the structure of the campaign that Marie Baum, a university-educated former factory inspector, led in rural areas around Düsseldorf. Looking at how Baum and her colleagues talked about their practice, Nakano finds that those who identified themselves with medical modernity were suspicious of the hygiene of mothers and midwives, which they saw as marked by ingrained traditions—hence “risky” for the health of babies. That essay forms a neat pair with Naoko Yoshinaga’s “The ‘Problematization’ of Childbirth and Childcare in Farming Villages.” Reflections akin to those Nakano highlights in Prussian Germany occurred later in Japan—the 1910s in the city and the 1930s in the countryside. Yoshinaga concentrates on the campaign by Aiikukai (literally, Society for the Love of Nurturing), a foundation set up to promote the welfare of small children on the occasion of the birth of Prince Akihito in 1933. Yoshinaga first discusses exhibitions and publications organized by Aiikukai to educate the people in farming villages, then traces the process by which infant death came to be viewed as a risk to be addressed by modern medical professionals. Working in “Aiiku villages,” campaigners exhibited a kind of ambivalence toward the locals, who, in their opinion, seemed intent on subverting the campaign. The villagers became a risk factor not only to infant health but also to the Japanese state, especially if Aiikukai was influenced by the state population policy. Finally, in “Politics around the ‘Beginning of Life’” Miho Ogino maps out the reproductive politics at play from 1945 to the late 1970s in a careful study of opinions about birth control and abortion. By combing through magazines, journals, religious writings, and symposium proceedings, she gives us the voices of a diverse group that includes politicians, medical practitioners, family planning activists, feminists, and people with disabilities. Ogino carefully illustrates how the fetus became gradually came to be endowed with life during this period and how this conceptual shift corresponded with the demarcation between abortion and birth control as well as the emergence of a new moral judgement (i.e., abortion viewed as bad because it kills life, whereas birth control is good because it prevents one from killing). Still, in practice, many women viewed abortion as a form of birth control, especially after the enactment of the Eugenic Protection Law in 1948. But by the 1970s and 1980s women from diverse backgrounds still wrestled with many of the same moral quandaries—one thinks of the feminist Mitsu Tanaka’s hesitation on the question of whether abortion was a woman’s right.

The essays in the collection are ordered chronologically, leading readers to follow the historical process articulated by Beck, namely, the change from an industrial society in which advocates of modernization attempted to overcome what they conceived of as life risks arising from dated traditions to one in which people tried to come to grips with the new life risks that emerged from within the industrial society. Yet the collection avoids conveying any sense of historical determinism, or the idea that history progresses on a linear line towards an ontological future, a success due to the use of two national contexts. (Also note the existence of the distinctive cultures within a state defined today as united—the difference between Prussian Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century and West Germany in the 1960s.)

All the essays address reproductive politics, a subject of intensive study in the social sciences and humanities. Consistently, the term used to refer to reproduction is *saiseisan* 再生産, not *seishoku* 生殖. The adoption of this term is appropriate because, firstly, *saiseisan* captures the dialog between the biological function of generating a new life and the social discourses surrounding it (including the reverberations between reproduction and industrial production). For instance, in Takaoka's chapter, Japanese wartime reproductive policy is described as a "unique 'reproductive strategy' [*saisensan senryaku*] of the 'inlander' = 'Japanese race,' inseparable from the policy of expanding Japan's sphere of power, therefore doomed to crumble before military defeat" (174). And secondly, the word *saiseisan* also embraces the phenomenon of reproducing life risks *themselves*—the term "reproduction" is pertinent to characterizing the "reflexive modernization" of the risk society. Embracing the concept of life risk without discarding other conceptual frameworks such as gender and medical modernity, *Seimei to iu risuku* opens up new avenues of research, offering a new way to look at old narratives, something as fresh as the offerings of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, as invigorating as that classic work on women's reproductive health, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.