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Maho Toyoda
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American Fears in Post-war Japan: Motivations behind Suspending and Promoting Birth Control

Maho Toyoda
Associate Professor
Kansai University

The 1955 International Planned Parenthood Conference in Tokyo created drastic change in governmental efforts to promote birth control as a means of population control. As this paper shows, the shift in policy on population control in the mid-1950s emerged partly from two separate but related American fears. One fear suspended any positive approach to population control immediately after the WWII during the occupation period. General Douglas MacArthur rejects all attempts to authorize birth control for fear that it would be construed as racism, eugenics and “genocide.” This attitude gave Japanese the impression that SCAP was in fact opposed to any birth control programs. A similar fear led Clarence J. Gamble, an American birth control advocate, and others to conceal their involvement in Japan’s birth control programs. However, another fear actively promoted them. Gamble and Margaret Sanger, a prominent American birth control activist, helped Japanese birth control movement financially and practically, which ultimately led to national policy changes. The motivation of these Americans can be expressed as a fear of the high fertility rate of an “unfit” population. This eugenic sort of concern was partly shared by their Japanese counterparts who sought to achieve a eugenically better society. As a result, Japan’s postwar efforts to promote birth control were enmeshed in hidden agendas of population control and eugenics.

birth control | Allied Occupation of Japan | population control |
eugenics | Clarence J. Gamble | Margaret Sanger

Introduction

By the 1960s the world was heralding Japan as one of the first countries to embrace birth control as a government policy and as the first Asian nation to get its birth rate under control. Just two decades earlier during World War II, however, the national government in Tokyo had developed a considerably strong natalist policy, with the edict “Beget and Multiply.” Even after the war, although Japan’s rapid population growth was common knowledge and the country’s legislature adopted a law supporting contraception, the government continued to reject any sort of ideas about active population control. A turning point, though, finally came in the mid-1950s. In 1954, the Welfare Minister stated clearly that the government would actively promote birth control as a means to control Japan’s rapid population growth.

What caused this change to government-led population control? Past studies have indicated that the trigger for this switch was Japan’s hosting of the Fifth International Planned Parenthood Conference in 1955.¹ The title of the Conference

¹ Norgren, Tiana, *Abortion Before Birth Control: The Politics of Reproduction in Postwar Japan*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Yuki Fujime, *Sei no rekisigaku* [History of Sexuality: From Public prostitute and criminal abortion system to anti-prostitution law and eugenic protection law] Tokyo: Fuji shuppan,

reflects the change: “Overpopulation and Family Planning.” The official story, according to the conference proceedings, was that it was Clarence J. Gamble, an American phil-anthropist and birth control advocate, who first suggested that the conference be held in Tokyo.² On the last day of the conference, Gamble was awarded an enormous silver cup, “the Margaret Sanger trophy,” as a token of appreciation for his outstanding service to Japan. The inscription on the trophy read, “Dr. Clarence J. Gamble, the Benefactor of the Family Planning Movement in Japan,”³ a clear implication of the American influence that led to the Japanese government’s radical shift in policy.

The Japanese government has also indicated that it owes much to the trophy’s namesake, Margaret Sanger, a prominent American birth control activist. She received a welfare minister’s letter of appreciation in 1955 after making history in the previous year as the first foreigner ever to speak before the Japanese Diet, where she proclaimed the need for Japan to control its population growth by introducing birth control. A decade later in 1965, she received an honor, the Third Class Order of the Sacred Treasure, from the Japanese government in recognition of her contribution to Japanese society.

The motivation of these two Americans, who actively promoted birth control in postwar Japan, can be expressed as a fear of “racially adverse” selection, where the “unfit” increase their reproduction, and while the “fit” limit their reproduction. In other words, they harbored concerns of the eugenic sort over fertility differentials in the global context. This fear was partly shared by Japanese birth control advocates, who felt uneasy about the growing “undesirable” population within Japan.

Neither Gamble nor Sanger, however, was allowed to visit Japan during the Allied Occupation, so their influence was limited during this key period in the country’s history. Further, General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), blocked all attempts to officially authorize birth control. There was a consensus among the occupiers that population pressure in pre-war Japan had caused its desire to expand its empire overseas. Keenly aware of Japan’s once again burgeoning population, SCAP hired several population experts as consultants, but it took a non-intervention policy toward controlling the Japanese population. A key reason for this was the concern that SCAP

2005); Miho Ogino, *Kazoku keikaku heno michi* [A road to “family planning”: Politics of reproduction in modern Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2008).

² Dai 5 kai kokusai kazoku keikaku kaigi jimukyoku ed., *Jinko kajo to kazoku keikaku* [Overpopulation and Family Planning: Proceedings of the 5th International Planned Parenthood Conference] (1955) p.3.

³ Williams, Doone and Greer Williams, Ed. by Emily P. Flint, *Every Child a Wanted Child: Clarence James Gamble, M.D., and His Work in the Birth Control Movement* (Boston: Harvard University Press, . 1978) p.219; p.299.

and the Americans could be criticized for inducing Japan to reduce its population.

So in postwar Japan, the American stance toward population control was driven by two separate but deeply related fears. One suspended any positive approach to population control during the occupation period, while the other actively promoted it after 1950s. This paper will focus on the shifting American involvement in Japanese population policy. First, I would like to trace in detail why SCAP avoided any action to limit Japan's population growth, even though the Americans were deeply concerned about the trend. Next, I will show how and why Clarence J. Gamble made contributions to the Japanese birth control movement. This will serve as a case study of American influence on birth control in postwar Japan. Finally, I will focus on the process that convened the fifth conference of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in Tokyo, the turning point of the Japanese government's policy on population control.

Population Problems & Birth Control During Occupation

Immediately after the war, Japan's sudden surge in population became a serious issue. The great influx of repatriates, in addition to a baby boom caused by demobilized soldiers returning home, resulted in concerns about population growth, particularly when people faced food shortages and housing problems.

Various groups were organized for promoting birth control in the country. But each of these groups had different strategies and acted separately, competing for leadership.⁴ In addition, a group of lawmakers, aware of the growing population problem, created the Eugenic Protection Law, which was passed in July 1948. Taniguchi Yasaburo, one of the three who submitted the bill in June, explained its necessity: "Already we are seeing an adverse selection and degeneration in population quality, because upstanding individuals who consider the long-term careers of their offspring practice birth control, while other irresponsible and incompetent fools don't care about it. Therefore we'll need the Eugenic Protection Law to prevent this tendency."⁵

The new law legalized abortion, sterilization and birth control under certain conditions. Revised in June 1949, the law set out the role of marriage consultation offices as disseminating information on contraceptives. These offices, to be established in each of Japan's prefectures, were to promote "propagation and guidance concerning the proper method of adjusting conception."⁶ Even with the law, how-

ever, the government remained inactive in directly controlling the increasing population.

While acknowledging rapid population growth as a pressing issue, SCAP maintained a neutral policy on the question of birth control. SCAP wanted to stabilize or to reduce the population but allowed the Japanese to handle their own affairs, in part because birth control had fallen into disrepute due to its association with racism, particularly due to its connection with Nazi theories and practices.

Some American birth control advocates who offered financial support shared the sentiment of SCAP. For example, representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation demurred a request from a Japanese individual to use American funds to disseminate birth control information. During a meeting in September 1948 on the country's population problems, which included representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation, several SCAP personnel, and Japanese birth control advocates, the subject turned to an educational campaign about birth control. Because of financial difficulty on the part of Japan, Kan Majima, a Japanese birth control activist, and others requested assistance from the Americans and the use of an American educational film. The response to these requests by Dr. Frank W. Notestein, Director of Princeton's Office of Population Research, sums up the nature of SCAP's concerns:

How much danger would there be in using American films? There are some films, but the U.S. may be criticized for propagandizing another country. You can see how it would be if one country attempts to reduce the population of another.⁷

Here, Notestein and the Office of Population Research clearly show deep concern about being seen by the Japanese people as worried about the country's rapid population growth and actively promoting birth control.

These concerns mirrored the eugenicists' attempts to separate themselves from Nazi theories and programs. Stefan Kühl, a sociologist who uncovered ties between the American eugenics movement and the Nazi program of racial hygiene, found that the Rockefeller Foundation played a key role in establishing and sponsoring eugenic research in Germany, including the founding of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Eugenics and Human Heredity, and other important institutes. But as Nazism grew more unpopular with the American public in the 1930s, mainstream eugenicists that supported Nazi racial policies began to lose

⁴ Tenrei Ota, *Nihon sanji chosetsu 100 nenshi* [History of 100 years of birth control in Japan] (Tokyo: Shuppan kagaku sogo kenkyujo, 1969) pp. 392-94.

⁵ Proceedings of the Welfare Committee, the House of Councilors, 2nd Diet, No. 13, June 19, 1948.

⁶ Art. 20, Partial Revision to Eugenic Protection Law, Legislation

number 216, June 24, 1949.

⁷ Memo, "Conference on Problems of Public Health and Demography in Far East, September 14, 1948, CIE01750-51, Box. 5247(28), GHQ/SCAP Records, Microfiche. Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room, National Diet Library. (Hereafter, GHQ/SCAP Record)

power in the United States, while reform eugenicists, including Notestein, gained control. After World War II, eugenicists tried to separate themselves from the field of eugenics and took to describing themselves as “population scientists,” among other similar distinctions. So it is no wonder that Notestein at the Office of Population Research, which received substantial grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, was deeply concerned about the “danger” of offering American money to reduce Japan’s birth rate.⁸

This was also a concern in terms of the general Japanese population. For example, Majima recognized that in the 1930s many Japanese felt that “the birth control movement was American propaganda, or an effort to make Japan weak” in order to be defeated easily by the U.S.,⁹ and similar apprehension persisted in the postwar period. When Sanger asked about the possibility of testing progesterone, a new contraceptive pill under development, Yoshio Koya, the Director of the National Institute of Public Health, a research bureau under the Welfare Ministry, told her discreetly that although it was necessary to obtain American financial assistance to do so, it would cause “a serious misunderstanding” if the project was understood “as if it were conducted by the request of American people.” Therefore, Koya continued, “it is important for the Japanese side to take the initiative.”¹⁰ In sum, the fear of being accused of propagating eugenics restrained Americans from publicly expressing their desire to reduce the Japanese population.

The other important reason for SCAP’s non-intervention policy on birth control was a barrage of criticism from religious protesters. Once birth control was legalized, a group of American Catholics, both in the United States and Japan, began to pressure SCAP to abandon plans of promoting birth control. For example, when one of SCAP’s consultants on population, Warren S. Thompson of the Scripps Foundation, emphasized the necessity of birth control in Japan in March 1949, religious protestors intensified their campaign against it and flooded MacArthur with letters of protest.¹¹

⁸ Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 20-21; 82-83; 105-106; Ansley J. Coale, “History of Office of Population Research,” <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/office_population_research.html>; Rockefeller Foundation, “Moments in Time, 1940-1949” <<http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/who-we-are/our-history/1940-1949/>>; Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), pp.277-286

⁹ Memo, “Conference on Problems of Public Health and Demography in Far East,” 14 September 1948.”

¹⁰ Koya, Yoshio. to Margaret Sanger, July 8, 1954, Reel S44, The Margaret Sanger Papers: Documents from the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College (series 2), Microfilm. (Hereafter, MSP).

¹¹ *Nippon Times*, March 6, 1949; “Birth Control to Check Jap Growth,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1949, pg.21; Patrick O’Conner to Crawford F. Sams, September 6, 1949; Lois Bingham

Several months later in June 1949, MacArthur duly announced that birth control was something that SCAP should not be involved in. In his statement, “SCAP’s open letter to the Allied Catholic Women’s Club of Tokyo,” he said that he was “not engaged in any study or consideration of the problem of Japanese population control,” and that Dr. Thompson’s statement was “only his individual opinions” and were “not based upon any views of the Occupation.” Then, he summarized the SCAP policy on birth control and population problem as follows:

Birth control with its social, economic, and theological sides is in final analysis, for individual decision. The more basic problem of population is long range and worldwide and certainly not within the purview of prescribed Allied policy or the defined scope of the Supreme Commander’s executive responsibility or authority.¹²

This event occurred almost at the same time that Shizue Kato, a birth control advocate, and some of her associates tried to invite Margaret Sanger to Japan. In April 1949, Kato succeeded in obtaining a travel grant from the Yomiuri Newspaper Company to invite Sanger. The chief of SCAP’s Public Health and Welfare section, Crawford F. Sams, however, expressed his opposition to the proposed invitation of Sanger. He said: “Mrs. Sanger has no professional knowledge which she can contribute to the Japanese in the use of contraceptives, now authorized by Japanese law, which has already been made available by qualified professional personnel in SCAP.”¹³

Finally, MacArthur announced his formal disapproval of the visit in line with Sam’s stance. The news was splashed on the front page of the *New York Times* and other newspapers in the U.S. MacArthur was once again flooded with letters, this time from those advocating birth control and protesting the denial of a visa for Margaret Sanger. He replied to every protester, essentially with the same letter.

In this letter, MacArthur stated that if he approved her entry, it would imply “particularly to the Japanese mind, that an Occupation objective is directly involved and that the entrant is fully accredited by the Supreme Commander.” He once again made clear that population and birth control is “not within the purview of prescribed Allied policy.”

to Douglas MacArthur, June 13, 1949, PHW 02609-12, Box 9344(5), GHQ/SCAP Records. *Our Sunday Visitor*. “Priests Score Birth Control Drive in Japan,” *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1949, pg.23; “Vatican Says Birth Control will Aid Reds,” *The Washington Post*, August 4, 1948, pg.11.

¹² SCAP’s Open Letter to the Allied Catholic Women’s Club of Tokyo, dated June 6, 1949, *Nippon Times*, July 2, 1949.

¹³ Check Sheet, “Visit to Japan by Margaret Sanger” CIE to G-1, 7/25/49; G-1 to PHW, 7/28/49; PHW to G-1, 8/9/49, PHW 02609-12, Box. 9344(5). GHQ/SCAP Records.

He continued that if he admitted Margaret Sanger to enter the country and let her speak of limiting family size, Japanese people would think of her as an American representative seeking to diminish the Japanese population. In his distinguished style, MacArthur wrote:

... the entrance of Mrs. Sanger for the purpose indicated could not fail to invite propaganda attributing responsibility to the Allied Powers for that which had already been done by the Japanese themselves toward birth control and with it the charge that the Allied Powers in the exercise of their supreme authority through coercion had imposed measures upon the conquered Japanese People leading to genocide.¹⁴

By explicitly using the term “genocide,” MacArthur warned that SCAP needed to keep away from direct population control. For the same reason, Clarence J. Gamble, an American birth control advocate, did not obtain permission when he attempted to visit Japan with his son Richard, in 1950.¹⁵ As Rockefeller Foundation members frustratingly pointed it out, SCAP’s neutral attitude toward population control gave Japanese the impression that SCAP was opposed to any birth control programs.¹⁶ SCAP fears may have had an impact on the Japanese government’s inaction in promoting birth control as a countermeasure to the country’s population growth.

Clarence J. Gamble and Birth Control

Beginning in 1949, Clarence J. Gamble made a number of small financial gifts to three or four Japanese birth control organizations. The idea of supporting birth control in Japan emerged from the thirty-fifth reunion of his Princeton class. He dropped in on Frank W. Notestein at the Office of Population Research and heard about the situation in Japan. Notestein concluded that birth control offered the only hope of solving the Japanese population crisis, but this belief contradicted the official views of SCAP, which insisted that the Occupation could not force such a program on the Japanese. He also introduced Gamble to Warren S. Thompson, the SCAP population consultant whose ideas

MacArthur had said were separate from Allied policy.¹⁷

Gamble started to carefully seek ways to help the Japanese birth control movement financially. He asked for advice from Thompson, who suggested he contact Juitsu Kitaoka, a professor at Kokugakuin University, and Shizue Kato, who was known as the “Margaret Sanger of Japan.”¹⁸ Gamble then asked Kato for specific measures that could be taken in Japan to familiarize the population with birth control.¹⁹

In September 1947, Gamble sent a small monetary contribution to Shizue Kato for birth control work in Japan. However, he explicitly requested that the source of financial support be kept secret:

It will be better if my name is not published as the source of this gift. It will be better too if it is not generally known that it comes from an American, for there is the possibility that the public will think that Americans are trying to decrease the Japanese Race.²⁰

These sentiments mirrored the fears expressed by the Rockefeller Foundation and MacArthur.

Meanwhile, Gamble contacted by mail Yoshio Koya, the Director of National Institute of Public Health. Gamble contributed substantial financial aid to birth control research undertaken by Koya, later known as the Three Village Study. However, Gamble again asked that he not be identified with the study. His intention was to avoid any negative reaction to perceived American interference in Japanese affairs. Although he personally regarded genetic improvement of human stock as a desirable goal, and population control as a desirable result, he was aware of the difficulty of informing certain racial or national groups that it would be better for society if they limited their population.²¹

This eugenic aspect of his views was fostered during his early involvement in birth control movement in the United States. Originally, the birth control movement as started by Margaret Sanger was a feminist venture aimed at winning reproductive autonomy. But as the movement expanded, eugenicist tones began to seep into its central theme, in part to win support from private foundations as well as the general public. Gamble, for his part, had been explicit from the beginning that the high fertility of the “unfit” would cause deterioration of the social order.

Racism, class bias and eugenic beliefs combined to form the target of birth control: the “unfit.” And the “unfit” included

¹⁴ MacArthur Memorial Archives, 3, Box 70(9); 71(1), Microfilm.

¹⁵ Clarence J. Gamble to Frank McCoy, May 24, 1950; Gamble to Crawford F. Sams, June 22, 1950; Gamble Juitsu Kitaoka, June 23, 1950, Box 94, Folder 1532, “Correspondence and Related Materials pertaining to Countries,” Boxes 58-127, Clarence James Gamble Papers, The Center for History of Medicine, Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School. (Hereafter, CJGP)

¹⁶ Aiko Takeuchi-Demirci, “From race biology to population control: The Rockefeller Foundation’s “Public Health” projects in Japan, 1920s -1950s,” in Liping Bu, Darwin H. Stapleton and Ka-che Yip, eds., *Science, Public Health and the State in Modern Asia* (London: Routledge, 2012) 119.

¹⁷ Gamble to Warren S. Thompson, June 17, 1949; Gamble to Christopher Tietze, June 1949, Box 94, Folder 1530, CJGP.

¹⁸ Warren S. Thompson to Gamble, July 14, 1949, Box 94, Folder 1530, CJGP.

¹⁹ Gamble to Shizue Kato, February 14, 1950. Reel S31, MSP.

²⁰ Gamble to Shizue Kato, September 26, 1947, Reel S31, MSP.

²¹ Williams pp.215-216; p.234.

a wide variety of undesirable inferiorities, including the poor and racial minorities, particularly for Gamble and for other birth control advocates. A well-known program proposed by Gamble together with Margaret Sanger, and administered by the Birth Control Federation of America in cooperation with southern state public health officials, was the “Negro Project,” which specifically targeted African Americans. Launched in 1939, the project aimed to ameliorate southern poverty through birth-rate reduction. “The mass of Negroes,” Gamble explained in the project proposal, “particularly in the South, still breed carelessly and disastrously with the result that the increase among Negroes, even more than among Whites, is from that portion of the population least intelligent and fit.” The project intended to hire African American ministers and physicians to avoid the appearance that a program of “extermination” of the black population was underway. Sanger wrote in a letter, “We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population.” Gamble shared this fear: “There is great danger that we will fail because the Negroes think it a plan for extermination.” So he suggested that the project appear “to let the colored run it.”²²

These fears persisted when Gamble extended their work abroad. In the United States, sterilization operations and diaphragms fitted by a doctor were the two options available at the birth control clinics. Gamble found both methods inappropriate to be used among the poor because they required doctors and were too expensive. So he searched for a cheap, simple and homemade contraceptive, and started to spend his money researching the effectiveness of various methods, through laboratory and field tests. His persistence in promoting simple methods became increasingly apparent as his work expanded abroad, especially to Third World countries from the 1950s.

For Gamble, who started his birth control work out of concern over differential birth rates between different races and classes, the rapid population growth in the Third World, including Japan and India, linked the issue of fertility differential to world politics. He sought contraceptives that were simpler and more suitable for use in poor countries. For example, Gamble found that X-ray film used in cauterization sterilizations was “too expensive for Japan,” so he searched for other cheaper methods, including the use of carbon dioxide.²³ In 1953, he wrote in a letter to Sanger that people in Ceylon felt that “diaphragms were too expensive and difficult” and chose simpler methods. So he arranged for “a careful statistical estimate of the effectiveness of the

diaphragm” so that he could “compare the results of tests of simpler methods.”²⁴

Among the methods that didn’t require much care from physicians, Gamble in particular promoted salt-based contraceptives. These included a sponge dipped in 10 percent salt solution, salt rice jelly, or a rag soaked in salt water. It is true that salt works as a spermicide, but it is also true salt dries out the vaginal tissues. For example, Mary Calderone, the medical director of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), did not include the simple salt-and-sponge method when she published the *Manual of Contraceptive Practice*, because the obstetricians she consulted felt that “it really had a good possibility of irritating the vagina.” Calderone further said that it was not included because at the time people tried to “develop medical attitude toward birth control as a medical technique rather than a homemade method,” and that the simple method might “work for outside the country,” but not “for this country.”²⁵ So birth control proponents sought to decide not only which races and classes should use contraceptives, but also which types of contraceptives they should use.

In addition, the effectiveness of the salt solution method was not clinically proven. The Margaret Sanger Clinical Research Bureau had a total of only three patients who tried salt jelly, but Gamble told local doctors that the method had been thoroughly tested, and even colored the water in the solution to make it look more medical. According to Frances Ferguson, the President of PPFA and later Vice-President of IPPF, Gamble “did not tell the truth always to the people especially out in Asia ..., when he used certain colored saline solutions that were very ineffective and told people that they were effective.”²⁶

In order to disguise his eugenic purpose, Gamble always put his “emphasis on wanted children, women’s and families’ desire” while “leaving out the population aspect,” as he knew “population and war are good themes for raising money in the U.S. ... but they’re not so popular in ... overpopulated countries.”²⁷ Gamble said on one hand that his aim was to protect women’s health, while at the same time persisting in using salt-based contraceptives that may harm the vagina. So, we can see that the fear of fertility differential exceeded the fear of being accused of conducting “genocide.”

²² Gamble memo, n.d., quoted in Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America*, 3rd ed., (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007) p. 235; Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University of Press, 1995) p. 156.

²³ Gamble to Family, November 6, 1952, Box 25, Folder 492, Sarah Merry Bradley Gamble Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University

²⁴ Gamble to Margaret Sanger, January 1, 1953, Reel S40, MSP.

²⁵ Calderone, Mary Steichen. Interview, August 7, 1974, Family Planning Oral History Project. OH-1; T-25; M-138; A1-3. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University 所藏 (Hereafter, FPOH)

²⁶ Frances Hand Ferguson, Interview, June 3, 1974, FPOH; Ellen Watumull to Gamble, 26 January, 1951, Box 196, Folder 3097, CJGP; James Reed, *The Birth Control Movement and American Society: From Private Vice to Public Virtue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 299.

²⁷ Gamble to Margaret Sanger, November 12, 1952, Reel S40, MSP.

At Gamble's insistence, Koya included the salt-and-sponge method in his experiment Three Village Study. When SCAP sent Koya and other doctors at the National Institute of Public Health to visit the United States in 1950 to study public health facilities, Gamble seized the opportunity to meet one of Koya's staff, Minoru Muramatsu, who showed much interest "in the rice starch and salt jelly" and agreed to test it in Japan.²⁸

The Koya group started their three villages study in 1950. Koya selected three typical rural villages: a rice-growing village, a farming community in the mountains, and a seaside fishing village. At each village, doctors and nurses visited to instruct on a variety of contraceptive methods, including diaphragms, condoms, rhythm, and the salt-and-sponge method. Gamble gave Koya not only a total of \$23,500 between 1950 and 1957, but also detailed instructions on the testing of the simple methods to see how they worked.²⁹

Koya became an important partner for Gamble in Japan, as the two shared similar eugenicist views. During the war, Koya feared adverse selection as a result of birth control practiced by the "fit" in society, and established the Race Hygiene Association of Japan in 1930 to combat the growing popularity of birth control. Koya, then at the Welfare Ministry, was always at the center of policy making at the time. Based on a concern that smaller family size would result in eugenic deterioration, the government began an intensive natalist policy, which included prohibition of contraception.

While it took much longer for the government to change its natalist policy, Koya made a quick shift in his attitude toward birth control, from suppressor to advocator. For example, Koya persuaded Minister of Welfare Hashimoto Ryugoro to include in a Cabinet decision in 1951 that the government help promote birth control for purposes other than eugenic protection.³⁰ But the attitude of Koya had changed only on the surface: his base views had always come from fears of adverse selection, where "high-rank" and educated people practiced birth control, while the "lower-class" population increased. He clearly stated in 1957 that birth control should be spread among the "poor" because it had great value and significance from the perspectives of both social policy and race selection.³¹

Convening the International Planned Parenthood Conference in Tokyo

True to form, Yoshio Koya was also an important actor in bringing the 1955 International Planned Parenthood Conference in Tokyo to a successful conclusion. Historical accounts indicate that the conference brought drastic changes in governmental efforts to promote birth control as a means to control population, and that Clarence J. Gamble was the key figure in bringing a successful conference to Tokyo. But in reality, the preparation for the conference started at the suggestion of Koya, that parties interested in such a conference should "establish a temporary organization, ...which will be headed by such persons as Mr. Shimomura, who was the former Minister of Education." Koya constantly worked in government circles, and thus he knew that "nothing goes right without the support of the government."³² His suggestion to appoint the former minister aligned with his strategy to gain as much support as possible from the government.

But why did Koya suddenly attempt to establish such an organization? Koya referred to an occurrence at the IPPF Conference of 1952 in Bombay:

In fact, I was greatly surprised when Dr. Majima made a proposal to invite the Conference to Japan so suddenly, without necessary preparations in Bombay. Because although Dr. Majima mentioned then that many Japanese people wanted to do so, this only relates to those who are close to Dr. Majima.... I do not think this is a good situation, but still it remains as a fact.³³

Although Koya grieved over Majima's hasty suggestion, he swiftly moved to set up the organization, in part because he gained Sanger's support. Sanger told Koya that "these things do occur," and not to be disturbed over it. If the Tokyo conference could not gain proper support, she continued, "then we can only try and try again to win public approval for another time." But she knew that the conference "would attract a large number of intelligent people from this part of the world," once it was held in Tokyo. So she suggested urging the city government, or the Public Health Institute, or the Mainichi Press to offer support.³⁴

It was at this precise moment when Clarence J. Gamble visited Japan. At Koya's suggestion, Gamble invited a few people to dinner to "talk over the best plan for Japanese sponsorship," in March 1953. Eight individuals were invited, including Koya, Kan Majima, Juitsu Kitaoka and Shizue Kato. At the dinner table, Koya repeatedly emphasized the importance of getting governmental approval. He mentioned

²⁸ Gamble to Sanger, February 20, 1951, Box 196, Folder 3097, CJGP.

²⁹ Gamble to Yoshio Koya, December 6, 1951, Box 94, Folder 1535, CJGP; Reed, 295.

³⁰ Tama Yasuko, "*Kindai kazoku to bodi poritikusu* ["Modern Family and Body Politics] (Tokyo: Sekai siso sha, 2006) p. 38.

³¹ Yoshio Koya "Noson, tanko oyobi seikatu hogo setai no kazoku keikaku ni kansuru kenkyu [Studies on family planning in farmer villages, coral mines and families on welfare]" *Kokuritsu koshu eisei kenkyu hokoku [Study Report of National Institute of Public Welfare* 6(3) (July, 1957): 86.

³² Koya to Sanger, January 31, 1953, S40, MSP.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Sanger to Koya, February 9, 1953, S40, MSP.

Sanger's visit in 1953, and that the publicity of her visit "greatly improved the acceptance of birth control in Japan, and that the attitude of the government has improved greatly."³⁵

After Gamble's dinner, it took half a year to realize the unification of the movement into one organization. A few representatives of various associations assembled repeatedly at the Institute of Public Health, of which Koya was the chairman. By early June 1953, the federation began slowly to take shape, but it was not until September that the Planned Parenthood Federation of Japan (PPFJ) formally announced its formation. The appointment of the President then became an issue. At last, Yasumaro Shimojo, the former Minister of Education, was elected president. The appointment, along with others, was based on Koya's consistent belief that it was "essential to secure the full understanding and cooperation from the Government."³⁶

On Koya's initiative, the Conference Preparatory Committee was established in February 1954, with Shizue Kato as the chairperson. At the committee meeting, Koya showed a letter from Sanger, noting her concern about the 1955 Conference agenda. In the letter, she suggested she might visit Tokyo in order to work out a proposed agenda for the Conference.³⁷ This was only a few years after the end of the Allied occupation, when people more inclined to see any suggestion from Americans as an order. Thus, it was natural for the committee members to feel it necessary to consult with Sanger. Having a good knowledge of this tendency of his countrymen, it seems Koya tried to take the lead in preparing the conference with the authority of the letter from Sanger.

The committee went further and requested that Sanger attend the first national assembly of PPFJ "as an honorable guest." They even changed the original planned date of the assembly to meet Sanger's schedule. So although it may appear that Sanger controlled the Japanese members, in reality they obeyed Sanger only because they knew that they could gain the powerful "Sanger effect" in publicizing birth control as well as publicizing and legitimizing the existence of the PPFJ. As Koya emphasized, they had already experienced how Sanger's visit in 1953 changed the attitudes of the public as well as the government.³⁸

Koya did not miss any chance for popularizing and getting governmental support for birth control. He even suggested to Sanger what she should tell the press upon her arrival, going

as far as to create a script for her to read out. It included praise for the Japanese Ministry of Welfare, which was reaching "the first-ranking position in the world regarding family planning," the statement that the PPFJ would hold its first national assembly, and that she would attend that momentous occasion.³⁹ Sanger told the press exactly what Koya suggested to her upon her arrival at Tokyo Airport in April 1954.⁴⁰

Sanger's visit had a great impact. Gamble, who visited Japan a month later, found, she left "a trail of glory," and the country enthused about birth control and the coming IPPF Conference.⁴¹ The conference preparatory committee succeeded in obtaining corporate sponsors as well as support from the national and municipal governments. The conference concluded successfully with a record of 101 international and 471 Japanese participants attending. At the opening ceremony, many officials made congratulatory speeches, including the Welfare Minister, the Mayor of Tokyo, the chairperson of the Socialist Party, and a representative of the Liberal Democratic Party, which demonstrates wide-ranging political support for birth control.⁴²

As we've seen, the reality differs a bit from the official story that the conference was Gamble's project. It was Majima who hinted that the IPPF Conference should be invited to Japan; it was Sanger who sensed the necessity of unifying various Japanese organizations; and it was Koya who maneuvered to gain governmental approval – whereas Gamble merely happened to be in Japan when Koya and others were struggling to find a way to invite the conference.

So why was Gamble given major credit for the success of the Tokyo IPPF Conference? A more intriguing curiosity emerges when this question is viewed in light of Gamble being a fervent eugenicist. His main concern was the fertility differential between classes, and the development of a simple birth control method, using a salt solution, which he favored once he extended his work into Asia.

This question may presumably be explained from its results. On the last day of the Conference, Gamble received the trophy-cup. It impressed him that it was the Japanese birth control advocates who appreciated his work. As a result, Gamble, who had already given substantial funds to the Japanese birth control movement, continued to provide financial support. Koya was the major recipient, receiving from Gamble more than \$37,000 from 1951 through 1962, at the rate of \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year.⁴³ While Koya used the "Sager effect" to gain public support, he praised Gamble's continued financial support for birth control research.

³⁵ Clarence Gamble to Sanger, March 16, 1953, S41, MSP.

³⁶ Koya to Gamble, September 5, 1953, S42; Koya to Sanger, November 17, 1953, S42, MSP.

³⁷ Sanger to Gamble, February 26, 1954; Sanger to Kato, January 20, 1954; Sanger to Koya, February 4, 1954; Koya to Sanger, February 9, 1954, S42, MSP.

³⁸ Koya to Sanger, February 11, 1954; Sanger to Koya, February 26, 1954; Sanger to Koya, March 5, 1954; Sanger to Koya, March 11, 1954, S42, MSP.

³⁹ Koya to Sanger, March 11, 1954; Sanger to Koya, March 17, 1954; Koya to Sanger, March 24, 1954; Sanger to Koya, March 29, 1954, S43, MSP.

⁴⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, April 9, 1954.

⁴¹ Gamble to Sanger, May 26, 1954, S43, MSP.

⁴² Dai 5 kai kokusai kazoku keikaku kaigi jimukyoku ed., p.1.

⁴³ Williams 1978, 215

Conclusion

The most significant milestone in the government's efforts to promote birth control as a means of controlling its population was the actual holding of the 1955 IPPF Conference in Tokyo. As we have seen, American fears greatly influenced Japan's government policy on population control both before and after the conference.

Immediately after the war and during the occupation years, when the country faced rapid population growth, the Japanese government never accepted birth control as a means to control its population. SCAP did not take any action to engage with anything that would associate with population control, for fear that it would be construed as racism, eugenics, or "genocide." This concern, and SCAP's 'hands off' approach, was a factor in the Japanese government's inaction to control its birth rate and population.

A similar fear led Gamble and others to hide their involvement in the Japanese birth control movement. Gamble made substantial financial contributions to the birth control projects in Japan. However, he wanted to keep the financial source unknown, as he knew there would be negative reaction to American interference in the Japanese population.

On the other hand, Gamble's fear of the high fertility rate of the "unfit" population influenced him as well. Concerned with the increase of the "unfit," as a result of the poor, undereducated population breeding "carelessly and disastrously," he persistently backed simple birth control methods, especially salt-based contraceptives, which may damage the women's body. By financially supporting research and investigations that promoted such methods, he made clear who was actually seeking to control the reproduction of the Japanese population.

Although Gamble dreamed of a world safe for his social group, the Anglo-American elites, his Japanese counterpart Koya shared Gamble's fear of a fertility differential between classes. The salt-and-sponge method was included in the three villages experiment by Koya's group, a project funded by Gamble for more than seven years. Koya introduced such simple methods, because he feared the effects of adverse selection and wanted to promote birth control specifically among the poor and undereducated.

In preparing for the 1955 IPPF Conference, Koya used every opportunity to gain financial aid and governmental support. It is clear that Koya was a shrewd manipulator of public opinion and knew exactly what he was doing when he used Sanger's name, while praising Gamble in a smaller circle of birth control specialists to keep his donations flowing.

Ultimately, the reversal of Japan's government policy on population control in the mid-1950s may not, in fact, be best understood as a pure "switch." A closer look at both the wartime natalist policy and postwar population control reveals that the underlying ideas were similar and deeply rooted in

eugenics, as demonstrated by Koya's shift from opposing birth control to a becoming dedicated advocate. The government recognized that adverse selection was something that had to be avoided: during the war, it promoted overall population growth, but then promoted birth control in postwar period especially among those deemed "socially unfit." It took a few years after the war for the Japanese government to publicly state that it would take positive action on birth control in order to achieve a eugenically better society, because SCAP gave the impression of opposing anything that could be associated with population control. In the end, this fear, shared by American birth control advocates and their Japanese counterparts, dictated the policy of population control in Japanese society.

The start of Japan's postwar governmental efforts to promote birth control was enmeshed in the hidden agendas of population control and eugenics. This is clearly shown by subsequent governmental policy: in 1955, the government sponsored a birth control project that targeted the poor and needy. This focus on the poor or "unfit" by the Japanese government paralleled that of the American birth control advocates, among whom Gamble was but one example.