

## Affection and Economic Action: On the Socio-economic Life of Organs

Goro Yamazaki (Osaka University)

In this paper I discuss the relationship between body images, affection and economic practices in the case of organ transplantation in Japan. Most of the materials cited here were collected during my anthropological fieldwork in Japan from 2002 to 2008, including interviews with recipients and donor families.

As is well known today, contemporary medicine evokes many questions on humanity and subjectivity in relation to the use of human body as resources. Resources imply an economy and that is why recent medical practices are frequently discussed as a matter of bioeconomy. Following the Foucauldian conception of biopolitics, this term is used in social sciences to refer to the economy of life itself, and it is characterised by the specific way of transforming non-economic materials (human bodies) to exchangeable objects. This socio-economic process of transformation involves various problems from ethics to the way of imaging the body. Thus the economy of human bodies is different from market economy.

In order to understand this process, I focus on the effects of affection that recipients and donor families have when they participate in the medical practices. For example, recipients have curious feelings after the transplantation in relation to the anonymous deceased donor. These feelings are sometimes expressed in terms of rebirth, change of personality, naming the organ and so on. Furthermore, this kind of imagination leads them to participate in social activities together with other recipients and donor families. Without these social relationships, the act of donation and the experience of transplantation remain a personal matter. I also examine how these social imaginations construct the economy of organs. In other words, I focus on the processes that body and economy are co-constructed through these social practices.

Organ donations and their implications are often explained in terms of gift economy. But when we take into account the aspect of affection, it reveals another dimension which differs from the theory of gift in anthropology. I try to clarify the difference and argue the importance of reconceptualizing the bioeconomy of organs from the point of view of affection. By doing so, we can understand the significant relationship between affection and economic actions.

The investigation of bioeconomy from the point of view of affection opens up a new horizon in understanding the experience of organ transplantation. As conclusion, I point out that experiences of recipients and donor families, which sometimes appear to be curious and over personalized, are crucial to understanding the socio-economic status of the body. The body can be imaged without specific person-body correspondence and can be experienced differently from organic unity through such medical practices. I also argue that focusing on the role of affection provides an important key to conceptualizing bioeconomy beyond the gift/commodity dichotomy.