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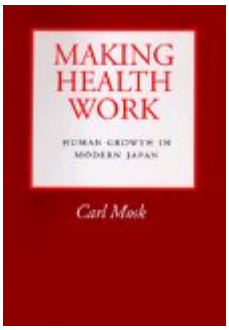
Carl Mosk. *Making Health Work: Human Growth in Modern Japan.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. xv + 156 pp. $45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-520-08315-8.



Reviewed by Mitsuhiko Kimura

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Anthropometric study is flourishing in economic history today. In this book Carl Mosk makes a solid contribution to that growing literature.

Mosk (Professor of Economics at the University of Victoria) begins by collecting and analyzing a set of anthropometric data for modern Japan (from the Tokugawa era to the mid-twentieth century). He examines height, weight and other related variables such as a composite index of these two (the body mass index) on the one hand and nutritional intake, public health and medicine, and labor input on the other. The second half of the book discusses Japanese economic history using the findings above. It is divided into three chapters on, first, the Tokugawa legacy, then the balanced economic growth between 1880 and 1920 and finally the unbalanced economic growth between 1920 and 1940.

The statistical data that Mosk has collected are not new; indeed, they are easily available and, except for the composite index, have been used commonly by researchers. But Mosk analyzes them in depth, thus clarifying social and economic factors affecting Japanese anthropometry since the Meiji era. This is a major contribution of this book. However, the main concern of Mosk in this book is not statistical analysis. Mosk's goal is to develop a theory about Japanese economic history from a perspective of causes and effects of population quality represented by anthropometric characteristics.

Readers will find that Mosk has a wide and up-to-date knowledge of the literature on Japanese economic history and provides a good summary of it. This will help students who wish to have a quick review of the development of commodity and labor markets conditioned by the economic and social institutions of the Tokugawa regime and also patterns of agricultural and industrial growth, features of regional differentials, and government policies concerning modernization after the Meiji Restoration.

Mosk analyses secular improvements in net nutritional intake in terms of supply factors and demand factors in population quality. The former includes medical technology while the latter is "voiced through markets and social movements designed to assert the importance of the commu-

nity over the market through the call for health-enhancing entitlements" (p. 59). Here "entitlements," a term borrowed from A. K. Sen, means the legal right to resources that secure the quality of the human body--such as foodstuffs and public health. Using this conceptual framework Mosk puts more emphasis on demand factors than supply factors in explaining changes in population quality in modern Japan. This is an interesting thesis, but it seems to me that this theory needs elaboration because when Mosk talks about the supply of and the demand for population quality what he really means is sometimes ambiguous.

For instance, he says that "the decline in fertility [during the Tokugawa era] tended to improve population quality on the supply side ... [a]nd on the demand side the same households who by limiting supply enhanced quality also demanded greater work capacity and capabilities from their offspring" (p. 77). This statement will confuse many readers. In any event "supply of population quality" decided by households is a notion that is not readily understandable.

All in all, this book provides good material for Western students who are interested in Japanese economic history since the Tokugawa era and those who wish to gather anthropometric data for pre-war Japan or conduct cross-country studies in this field.

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