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Histoire du Japon moderne et contemporain : permanences et ruptures

## «Japan's obesity panic: health and risk management in contemporary Japan»

Wolfram Manzenreiter (Université de Vienne)

### ABSTRACT

This lecture focuses on the background and the repercussions of the new mandatory Special Health Checkup for Adults between 40 and 74 years of age which has been popularized under the name of *metabo kenshin* (Metabo Health Checkup). I will place the Japanese government's long-standing interest in surveying the national body and the recent shift towards mapping adipose bodies into the context of the sociological discussion on risk and reflexivity in modernity. In doing so, I want to focus on three major issues emerging from the risk society thesis: the fabricated nature of risk in contemporary society; the political weight of experts and expert knowledge in contemporary forms of governance; and the changing relationships between individual, state and society. My argument is based on primary sources forwarded by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, minutes from diet sessions and parliamentary committee meetings, media accounts and secondary sources on health promotion, both academic and popular in kind. Finally, I also want to ask to what degree the current debate on health and obesity in Japan has been tainted by neoliberal politics.