



universität
wien

TOSHIBA
Toshiba International Foundation



Department of
East Asian Studies
Japanese Studies



Family Matters: Gendering the Japanese State Governance System

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Hiroko Takeda

Thursday
2025-11-13
18⁰⁰~19³⁰



<https://japanologie.univie.ac.at/ujapanlectures>



Family Matters: Gendering the Japanese State Governance System

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Hiroko Takeda

Thursday
2025-11-13
18⁰⁰~19³⁰

Studies of state governance have long excluded the family from their scope due to the conventional liberal understanding of the public-private divide. Feminist critiques, particularly those in the field of Feminist Political Economy, have challenged this view by highlighting that families play a vital role in reproducing a national economy and a nation-state by maintaining the current workforce/citizens and replenishing the future one. As Melinda Cooper has discussed, the spread of neoliberal financial capitalism, which emphasises individualisation as a normative value and operates transnationally, has not fundamentally transformed the functioning and understanding of the family as the backbone of everyday stability, happiness, and well-being. Or rather, according to Wendy Brown, its significance as a safe haven in the competitive socio-economic environment has been strengthened. In this way, the sound

biological, economic, and socio-political reproduction based on gender roles within the family remains part of the state governance system, which maintains and further develops nation-states and national economies.

The trajectory of Japan's governance system since the mid-19th century presents an intriguing case study for examining the political functions the family has played. By referring to the concept of governmentality, which operates through two distinct types of power—biopolitics and necropolitics — the lecture aims to illuminate the ways in which the family is situated within the modern and neoliberalized governance system in Japan, being mobilised for the governing of the nation-state and national economy. This enables us to grasp the crucial importance of gender when studying the Japanese governance system.



TAKEDA Hiroko is Professor of Political Analysis at the Graduate School of Law, Nagoya University. She completed her PhD at the University of Sheffield, and taught at Cardiff University, the University of Sheffield and the University of Tokyo prior to taking up the current post. She specialises in political sociology and her research interests include gender and politics/political economy in Japan and East Asia, biopolitics/necropolitics/governmentality and governance, and political discourse analysis. Her major publications include: *The Political Economy of Reproduction in Japan: Between Nation-State and Everyday Life* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); "Structural Reform of the Family and the Neoliberalisation of Everyday Life in Japan", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 13 No. 2, 2008, pp. 153-72; *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Japan* (Routledge, 2021, co-edited with Mark Williams); "Gender and the Operation of Biopolitics/Necropolitics under the COVID-19 Pandemic", *the Annuals of Japanese Political Science Association*, Vol. 2022-1, 2022, pp. 15-34 (in Japanese); "Overcoming Neoliberalism: From Authoritarian Populism to Popular-Democratic", *Shiso*, No. 1217, 2025, pp. 141-155. (in Japanese).

<https://japanologie.univie.ac.at/ujapanlectures>
ujapanlectures.ostasien@univie.ac.at