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“It is an astonishing, but undeniable fact that modern medicine has no peculiar science of the person who is ill.”

More than ninety years have passed, since Viktor von Weizsäcker, a German physician-philosopher, declared this critical indictment of modern medicine, in 1926. This indictment may also apply to today's health sciences, which certainly do teach us about the phenomena of illness, such as causes, consequences and therapeutic methods of diseases, but little to nothing about the person who is ill. Practitioners of medicine seem to rely too much on the life sciences in the rush to name and objectify illness by causal explanation based on molecular genetics and biotechnology. However, such objective thinking suppresses the *subject* of the person who is ill. Against this trend toward objectification, von Weizsäcker advocated his peculiar Medical Anthropology and the “introduction of the human *subject* to medicine.”

In November 2016, our association held the 35th congress under the theme titled, “The Human Being who Lives *between* Birth and Death.” This theme is naturally based on the words of von Weizsäcker: “Life is both birth *and* death.” Considering how concepts of life and death intersect, participants were able to assemble and describe relevant experiences from medical, philosophical, and ethical vantages. The articles appearing in this issue also cope with various topics concerning this thematic intersection, using several frames of analysis.

First, Yutaka KATO explores the ELSI of communication robots currently used in care settings. This pioneering research gives us an opportunity to reconsider the relationship between patient and healthcare provider from a quite different angle.

By analyzing the Victorian 2016 Amendment Act, Takako MINAMI clarifies issues surrounding legislation that allows all donor-conceived offspring their right to know their origin. Through

real examples, Minami highlights the question of the right to know one's biological origin. For instance, a DI offspring who was told of her DI origin from her parents at the age of 12 said, “Choices were made before I was born that mean I am not able to access information that most of the population is able to access.”

Yoshinori MORI critically examines the ethics of withholding / withdrawing of treatment to neonates born with impairment. His main question is the following: “Since autonomy is impossible, in potential form, how can we ethically justify withholding / withdrawing treatment to them?” Mori argues powerfully and convincingly for the necessity to construct a “society respecting human life” based on mutual understanding and approval between persons with and without impairment.

After reviewing several philosophical arguments about Italian and Japanese laws concerning brain death, Emil MAZZOLENI proposes a “practical solution” based on the reciprocity principle. His practical proposal that only those who choose to donate their organs (and therefore accept the brain death standard) have a right to receive organs by transplant is very attractive.

Michio ARAKAWA deconstructs conceptual confusions of inadequately defined concepts of dying and of dying with dignity. From the standpoint of a clinician at bedside, he raises various questions about the status quo of the healthcare setting, questions that a thoughtful physician needs to keep in mind, while empathizing with the patient at the end of the terminal stage of life.

Introducing the current state of healthcare mediation in Japan and the activities of the Japan Association of Healthcare Mediators and the like, Ritsuko YOSHIMURA describes relevant

moral issues and useful suggestions relating to healthcare mediation. In particular, she makes it clear that the matter of neutrality / impartiality of medical healthcare communication facilitators should be argued in a more in-depth manner, from ethical and philosophical points of view.

Lastly, Masayuki KODAMA reports how commercial surrogacy has been banned in Thailand since 2015. In describing in detail the present situation, he offers us a common ground for discussing various ethical problems arising from surrogacy.