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Japan Today's Takanori Kobayashi dropped into Shinjuku to ask:

Are you concerned about Japan's low birthrate?

Japan's birthrate has been declining year by year while the number of elderly people has been increasing. If this trend continues, it will lead to a collapse of both the national health insurance and pension system, the government fears.



"I'm not worried about it or the future so much. I'm in a welfare insurance and pension plan managed by a private company, so I don't pay for a public one. I don't expect the government to do anything good for us anyway."
- Ryu Sakanishi, 26



"No, because I'm sure I'll be able to earn enough money to take care of myself after retirement. Anyway, I've been paying the national insurance and pension fees every month. If the government won't pay me a pension in the future, I'll stop paying into the plan."
- Naaki Miyazato, 26



"Not seriously but I'm a little concerned about it. Some might say the cause of the low birthrate is due to the poor social environment of Japan for raising children. However, as a father, I don't think that's so. I haven't faced any difficulties over childcare."
- Shogo Iida, 23



"If the birthrate keeps at this low level, the ratio of the aged will be overwhelmingly high, which may be a big problem for Japan. The reason for the low birthrate is that many women just don't see why they should have children."
- Kenji Matsukawa, 27



"The birthrate won't increase whether I worry about it or not, but to be honest I'm worried that the low rate might affect my pension. I understand that young people don't want to pay into a national pension plan because they're not sure if they'll get a pension in the future. However, they should realize that everyone lives in cooperation with each other and they will become old one day too."
- Yasuhiro Kurumisawa, 58

"I don't care about it because it doesn't concern me. Some might worry about their pensions after retiring, but I don't think the government will give us pensions even if we do pay for it now."



- Hiroyuki Sato, 21



"Even though many people tend to get married late in life, they still will have at least one child when they do, so I'm not too worried about the low birthrate. Probably, people in their 40s or 50s may be worried about their pension being reduced or even not paid. For me, it's not an urgent matter yet."

- Yousei Arakawa, 26



"The low birthrate is quite understandable. Many people may not want to raise their children in the current poor public security and economic conditions in Japan. In addition, it's hard for working women to have a baby since many companies don't understand the concept of maternity leave yet. We should stop relying on the young generation for pensions and plan for our old age ourselves. My idea is that the government pays back pensions, which each individual has paid before, to everyone. Then, they manage the returned pension themselves and take full responsibility for it."

- Toru Ando, 42

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