Budget of Ie, family and household: an empirical historical study for the paralleling and contrasting of regions in Japan and Europe

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Purpose of the Research (Outline)

This research focuses on the 'budget' of villagers, 'Ie', families and households. The habit of drawing up a budget was something that is first observed in the period of the transition to the market economy in both Japanese and Western European societies. This research aims to clarify how families and household units went about producing their budgets. This research project is part of the development of the Scientific Research B: Overseas Academic Research 'Finding 'Ie' in Western Society: Historical empirical study for the paralleling and contrasting between Japan and Europe'. This research group intends to analyse and compare the transformation of village society in response to the transition to the market economy and, in particular, to examine the history of how people went about drawing up a 'family budget', and to undertake a comparative study of the complicated process of the emergence of the modern market economy society which cannot be understood simply by examining the recent theories about peasant life. This project is going to 1) re-examine from a historiographical perspective 'families' in different regions of Japan and Europe in the period of the transition to the market economy focusing in particular on the history of the drawing up / creation of household 'budgets', 2) make physical connections between 'Ies', families and households and the villages which they belonged to, 3) make a comparative analysis of the regional characteristics of the transition to the market economy in Japan and Europe, concentrating mainly upon the structure of family occupation (and property) which provides the basis for their 'family budgets'.

Scientific background for the research

The process of getting the idea for this research and the results of studies done so far

This is, basically the development of the Scientific Research B: Overseas Academic Research 'Finding 'Ie' in Western Society: an empirical historical study for paralleling and contrasting between Japan and Europe'. (2010-2012). The principal and well-established historical responsibility of the Japanese 'Ie' is to ensure that business, property and the family name are passed on to the next generation. We took the Japanese Ie as our starting point and examined the basic characteristics of family or household, that is, the lineal family, the organisation of farming and housing, and as a result of this work managed to find the unit known as “house” in southern France, which was very similar to an ie, and which was particularly common in the French Pyrenean regions. We can also confirm that northern Europe, including Finland and central Europe and such areas as northern Germany have something that is the equivalent of the Japanese 'Ie' (namely the 'Grand House'). Perhaps even more significantly, we found that even in northern and north western Europe, in particular Sweden and England, where the factors that might lead to the formation of an Ie had always been assumed to be largely absent, the 'family land' was the symbol of the continuation of the family line over time and thus the counter-part of the Japanese 'Ie', at least up until the early modern period. The research has further clarified that it is possible to find, in physical form, the kin groups which sustain and support the family continuum, and that they are not confined within the boundaries of a single village or parish but extend into neighbouring areas (M.Takahashi, ed., Finding 'Ie' in Western Society: Historical empirical study for the paralleling and contrasting between Japan and Europe (Matsuyama, 2013).
On the other hand, as a result of the development of the project of 'Finding 'Ie'', not only has a considerable amount of invaluable data been collected, but also a far greater range of approaches has become possible, many of which look at the issue from very different and more sophisticated perspectives. It is also the case that because of the many seminars that have taken place as well as the symposium, there is now more discussion among researchers in this field, and greater cooperation between them on closely related projects, and the exchange of research findings, as well as the sharing of data between those working in contiguous research fields. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the comparisons made between Europe and Asia, and between individual countries have not raised as many new questions as when direct, in-depth comparisons are made between different regions or localities. Effective use of the huge number of detailed surviving European family histories, with a focus on the structure of the family occupation combined with a detailed look at the property they owned, and empirical comparison in broader perspectives would almost certainly help us to find answers to these questions. And so what we have done in this study is to re-examine the peasant economy from this new perspective that is focusing on the 'budget'of 'Ie's, families and households.

**Domestic and Overseas Trends in the research connected with this study**

This study could be the next generation’s empirical research carried out under the auspices of the Eurasia Project (the representative is A. Hayami) and in the long term it could prove to be important in the history of research. This research project is to conduct international comparative research into family and kin relationship groups in the period covering the transition to the market economy as well as industrial development. This can be done in the traditional way, which is to build a bridge between demographic history and economic history by means of a new focus on the ‘budget’of ‘Ie, family and household at the regional and local levels.

When we consider how family and kin relationships have been examined in Europe we find that there are various approaches. However, the more varied the studies, the more fragmentary they inevitably become: as any examination of the collection of studies by the mecca of historical demography, the Cambridge Group for the study of history of Population and Social Structure in England, and the Annales studies in France both show. Furthermore, the Max Planck Institute for demography is currently working on a project to collect data on the structure of households (MOZAIC), which fundamentally re-examines the kinship relationships on a Europe-wide scale. However, precisely how to build bridges across the gaps that are the result of the extremely diverse nature of the studies is a problem that has not been solved yet. In particular, there are still few studies that examine how the individual families lived and what property and land they occupied and there has also been very little research done on the multiplicity of families and kin groups that played an active part in social and economic life.

Perhaps the reason for this is that although in the discussion of theories on peasant life, the ‘Ie’ has been treated as the main unit involved in peasant farming, the relationships the ie had with the wider village society and the multiple communalities have been almost completely ignored. Moreover, looking at things from the global viewpoint, in the field of Development Economics, family and household is currently the issue receiving the most attention. The radical new research approach in Europe might give some clues to how these issues can be resolved.

What issues will be investigated and how much can be achieved during the research period?

This research project is carrying out a comparison and analysis focusing on the ‘Ie’ as the fundamental layer of village society, and how it responded to the emergence of the market economy in Japan and Europe, in particular focusing on the ‘family budget’ and its close link with family occupation and property.
In the Research project mentioned above, by examining the general characteristics of genealogical relationships, the organisation of farming and houses, we were able to prove the existence of units that are approximately equivalent to the Japanese 'Ie' in what might be seen as somewhat peripheral areas of Europe such as the southern French Pyrenean regions, northern Germany and Finland. Furthermore, this focus on regions allowed us to confirm the existence of some of the characteristics of 'Ie' even in regions of countries where the factors that might have led to the formation of 'Ie' were always assumed to be absent, or hardly present at all. Taking all this into consideration, the current research project intends to analyse and compare the transformation of village societies in different countries as they responded to the transition to the market economy, and to see this process as the history of how people went about drawing up a 'family budget'. We also sought to widen the framework of the analysis from the level of individual villages to the regional level, and to conduct research on the complicated process by which the modern market economy society emerged, something which cannot be understood simply by examining the recent theories about peasant life.

Therefore, this project is going to 1) from the historiographical perspective re-examine 'families' in different regions of Japan and Europe in their transition to the market economy, and to do so by looking at the history of how household 'budgets came to be drawn up', 2) establish clear connections between 'Ies', families and households with the villages which they belonged to, 3) carry out an analysis that parallels and contrasts the regional characteristics of the transition to the market economy in Japan and Europe, focusing on the structure of family occupation (and property) which is the basis of their 'family budgets'. We carried out a general survey of the literature on the villagers' 'family budget' by a detailed examination of the catalogues in the archives nationwide. In addition to that, our research group made full use of the results and the data of all the research done so far, making a detailed analysis of the 'family budgets' as seen in the monographs. By taking these steps, we are able to describe the history of how family budgets were drawn up, accompanied by a history of how 'Ies' were formed.

The research field comprises both Japanese and English villages for which we know reliable data on their social and economic history exists: namely Kami-shiojiiri, Ueda, Nagano and Willingham, Cambs. Added to this will be studies on north-western and southern-western Germany (Niedersachsen and Schwaben) and east Germany (including Czech villages) where it is assumed that there will be little difficulty in obtaining materials of the same quality as that which we have for the Japanese and English villages. In addition, we will include research findings for Northern France (Champagne and its surrounding districts), southern France (Pyrenees districts) and the Swedish mid-east Usteljutoland area as well as Finnish Tampere regions. Earlier studies are used in these cases. There were, and still appear to be the equivalents of 'Ie' in some Italian regions too. Because of the ready availability of previous research, we chose Trino and have included it in this research project.

Scientific characteristics and expected achievements and significance of the research in the area

It should be emphasised that this international comparative research is done by the ‘parallel and contrast’ study approach. This approach is based on the recognition of the historical originality (uniqueness?) of each object and on a determination to find the ways they are the same as other places, their similarities and their distinctive characteristics, rather than seeking to find the ways in which they are completely different.

This approach is, above all, based on dialogue between the researchers whose countries, backgrounds and histories are very different. On this basis, we can discuss ‘family budget’. The seed of this research project is the new idea of finding 'family' units in western society that are not dissimilar to the Japanese 'Ie'. We have already collected the empirical data and looked at this information on a wider, regional level, focusing on the structure of family businesses as well as the nature of the property owned, both being the basis of the 'family budget', in order to find what the reality was. In other words, contrasting and paralleling the historical experience of the peoples living
in the regions of Japan and Europe provides us with clues which can help us feel sympathy for and truly understand each other, particularly with regard to people’s economic activities.

Furthermore, the three methods adopted here have the following academic characteristics (aims?).

(1) The construction of a Japanese and European sophisticated and fully integrated genealogical database based on the already established Japanese and English social and economic history database (including Religious Faith Registers DB, historical documents image DB, wills DB etc.), with sufficient flexibility to carry out the contrasting and paralleling study focusing on the family budget. This flexibility enables the findings of the Japanese research group to be integrated with the database which European members of this research group have already constructed, and allows us to do the things described in points 2 and 3 below.

(2) A Sharing of the historical terms appearing in the ‘Ie’, family and household: ‘family budget’ glossary. This will be done Mainly in English, with the ultimate aim of placing the glossary on the web. This glossary is growing as a result of discussion and takes account of the historical context and historiography.

(3) The field research for the collection and examination of historical information on Housing has been done because it is considered to be one of the components of ‘family’, as it is an indispensable part of the family business and way of life. In connection with the database described above, the changes over time will be set against the background of the geographical data.