

The Characteristics and Global Position of the Japanese *ie* System

Yoshihiro Sakane

(Received on October 31, 2016)

1. The characteristics of the Japanese *ie* system

The Japanese *ie* (家) or “family” system¹ encompasses family businesses, names, and property. That is, an *ie* is a group that, on the basis of indivisible family property, works at a hereditary family business, has a socially constructed family name, and is tied together mainly by a biological family relationship. Generational inheritance is generally accomplished through the succession of a single son with the intention of ensuring that the *ie* is maintained through the generations. This maintenance of the *ie* through the generations is referred to as “the continuity of the *ie*.” It is rare to find anything resembling the Japanese *ie* system among other ethnic groups, and in this sense, the *ie* is a traditional family/kinship system unique to Japan [Nakane 1970; Ōtake 1982; Mizubayashi 1987; Nakane 1987; Ōtō 1996].

The Japanese *ie* system has numerous unique characteristics that are worthy of attention.

The first characteristic is single succession. Divided succession was practiced in Japan until the early Edo period. Thereafter, with the establishment of the *ie* system in the early modern era, there was a transition to single succession. Thus, the heir of the *ie* inherited all of the family’s assets, including movable and immovable property. Ideally, the heir was the oldest son. As he was likely to be the heir, particular attention was given to the oldest son’s upbringing and education [Ōta 2006]. The family property was, in principle, indivisible. In the *ie* system, the position of patriarch and the family property were passed down in an exclusive fashion. It was believed that the *ie*, along with the family business and the family name, had to be passed down to children and grandchildren. Therefore, in the event of an unfortunate interruption in the *ie*, often someone would enter

1 In Japanese, the word *ie* ordinarily refers to the house or residence, but in this essay, it is used to refer to social family and kinship structures. For details, see the main text.

and revive it.

The second characteristic is the establishment of the family name. The family name is the proper noun used to refer to the *ie*. It demonstrates the attitude that an *ie* is hereditary and genealogical. As in the expression “*kamei o ageru* (raising the family’s reputation),” there is a strong sense of the *ie* being something that is presented to the outside [Mizubayashi 1987; Ozasa 1994].

Thus, the *ie* is, for the family patriarch, something passed down by his ancestors and something that his children and grandchildren must inherit. It was thought of as passing through his hands for a brief time, so the family’s assets could not be freely split up just because an individual patriarch wished to do so. The family precepts of the Edo period merchant families make this clear [Miyamoto 1999]. The family headship, the property, and name did not belong to the patriarch but were entrusted to him by his ancestors and had to be passed down to the next generation. In other words, the family patriarch was a temporary post that lasted only until it was passed on to the next family patriarch. This demonstrates clearly the principles of the *ie*: strong social regulations applied to the disposition of family property, withdrawal from the family business, and the decline of the family business.

The third characteristic is the lack of regulations preventing the adoption of outsiders into the family. In the event that there was no oldest son or other appropriate heir, an adoption system allowed an adoptee to be brought in to inherit the *ie*, and the adoptee did not have to be a blood relative. In other words, under the Japanese *ie* system, there were no regulations stipulating that only men from the father’s side of the family could serve as adoptees in order to prevent outsiders from entering the family line. In comparison with other family systems worldwide, the Japanese *ie* system is unique in that it is not concerned with consanguinity.

The fourth characteristic is the formation of affiliation groups. When the family branched off, an affiliation group was formed based on the genealogical relationship between the main family and the branch family with a hierarchical structure. Japan is unique in that affiliation groups formed within villages and did not spread outside of them [Nakane 1987].

The fifth characteristic is ancestor worship. Ancestor worship formed with the founding of the *ie*, and it is demonstrated by the construction of temples and the establishment of farmers’ graves. The concept of the founder (ancestor) of the *ie* first

appeared in the mid-17th century, and spread rapidly from the end of the 17th century until the beginning of the 18th century [Takeda 1957; Mizubayashi 1987]. Ancestor worship was linked to estates and estate grounds and encouraged special consideration toward them. The estate was thought to belong to the ancestors, and it comprised a special magical/spiritual space [Muratake 1973]. The inheritance of the estate and the estate grounds had special significance in terms of both the inheritance of mortuary tablets indicating ancestor worship and the succession of the *ie*.

2. The Japanese-style *ie* in East Asia

In the past, discussions concerning families and kin have taken place in various academic fields, and among these, the family and kinship theories of social anthropology have demonstrated probably the most thorough deductive reasoning and global awareness. It is necessary to consider the Japanese *ie* in a global manner based on these theories.

Yoshida [1983] and Akashi [1990] used the family and kinship theories of social anthropology to bring about a revolution in the family and kinship theories of Japanese historical studies. Up until then, family and kinship studies in the field of Japanese history mainly used Marxist theory, and this discourse contained numerous errors [Akashi 1983]. At present, in social anthropology, hypotheses regarding families and kinship based on Marxism have been rejected [Shimizu 1987].

This essay takes up the task of situating the Japanese *ie* system among the family and kinship systems of East Asia using the framework of the family and kinship theories of social anthropology. In so doing, emphasis is given to regional differences and historical changes. This is the main concern of this essay.

2.1. Stem families

We will first review the forms that families take in Japan. As a familial concept, the Japanese *ie* refers to a stem family. Families can be broadly separated into large and small. Large families include numerous married couples, and small families are the minimum family unit, involving only one married couple. Small families are also referred to as nuclear families. Large families include stem families in which married couples of the same generation are connected vertically and joint or extended families made up of multiple married couples from a single generation. Ever since the establishment of the

ie in the early Edo period, Japanese families have been stem families. In these stem families, married couples from a single generation are vertically linked through father-to-son succession [Saitō 1988; Ōtō 1996]. In the case of Japan, based on the fact that stem families do not prefer to split into small families and because there is no evidence that small families were regarded as the ideal family type, it is appropriate to state that stem families are the prevalent family type. Of course, small families do exist but only at a temporary point in a family's life cycle.

2.2. The Japanese *ie* in East Asia

Social anthropology has put its energies into explicating consanguineous structures, that is, descent groups. Descent groups are groups of biologically related family members originating from the same ancestors. The unique characteristics of descent groups are: (1) they acquire their members through birth and do not change based on marriages, etc., (2) they are subject to rules prohibiting marriage within the lineage, that is, exogamy, and (3) they are characterized by the custom of preventing the adoption of those not of the same bloodline into the family, for instance, preventing the adoption of non-biologically related sons into the father's side [Nakane 1987]. Based on these descent groups, we can separate the kinship structures of the world into two main types: unilineal societies with either paternal or maternal consanguineous structures and bilateral societies that do not have this feature.²

Japan is a bilateral society that lacks descent groups. Japan's kinship structures appear to be patrilineal descent groups, but because membership privileges change based on marriage and adoption, that is, because members' surnames change, and because there are no regulations on marriage and adoption of outsiders, they are not descent groups. Patrilineal principles such as those seen in China did not take root in the same form in Japanese society. In their place, we find the *ie* system, which is exceptional in a bilateral society and is characterized by being strongly slanted toward the father's side of the family.

Southeast Asia is in general a bilateral society similar to Japan. In contrast, China and India have patrilineal descent groups. In particular, the patrilineal principles of China have had an overwhelming influence upon the societies of the surrounding regions. First,

2 In this essay, I do not use the word "bilineal" because I have misgivings concerning this concept.

let us examine the regions in East Asia under this influence [Fukuda 1992; Sakane 1996].

China has patrilineal descent groups called *zongzu* (宗族) [Segawa 2004; Shiga 1967]. *Zongzu* are organizations of descendants sharing common ancestors. The members have the same surname, and because surnames do not change upon marriage, husbands and wives do not share them. There is a custom of individuals of the same generation sharing one character of their names, and genealogical charts of their members were created. These genealogical charts and naming customs led to a strong sense of belonging to the *zongzu*. *Zongzu* have group assets and ancestral temple halls on common land. In China, rules prohibiting marriage within the lineage and the adoption of outsiders into the family were strictly upheld. In traditional Chinese families, sons remain even after marriage, ideally in rooms beside those of their parents, and extended families live together and share assets [Shiga 1967; Chen 1990]. However, this is ultimately the ideal form, and in fact, there are not many such large families. Due to the concept of shared residences and assets, succession of property involved equal division of assets among only those sons who were full family members.

Korea, like China, has patrilineal descent groups called *munjung* (門中), which have genealogical records and practice the custom of members of the same generation sharing a character in their names. There are rules preventing marriage within the lineage and the adoption of outsiders, and because surnames do not change upon marriage, husbands and wives do not share the same them. The difference with China is the family system. Korea, like Japan, has stem families, and the ideal form is not a large family, as it is in China. Divided succession of assets by sons is practiced, and because only the oldest son officiates the ancestor rituals, he inherits more assets than the others. In both China and Korea, descent groups are not formed within villages but are spread out between different villages.

Okinawa, as well, has patrilineal consanguineous groups known as *muntyuu* (門中). However, the extent of their regional diffusion and the consistency of their patrilineal bloodline principles do not reach the levels of those of China and Korea. Their social functions are more limited than in China and Korea. The Okinawan *muntyuu* was institutionalized from the end of the 17th century onward for purposes of political control by the Ryukyu Kingdom. Thus, the institutionalization of the peasant class in the *muntyuu* occurred only recently, in the Meiji period. In regional terms, the institutionalization occurred mainly in Shuri and surrounding areas in the southern part of

the main island of Okinawa, but on outlying islands surrounding the main island as well as in Miyako and Yaeyama, patrilineal principles were fairly weak. Among the special characteristics of patrilineal consanguineous structures in Okinawa is the fact that there are restrictions preventing the adoption of outsiders into the family but no restrictions on marriage. The lack of restrictions on marriage resembles the *ie* system of the Japanese mainland. However, there are four main taboos, including the prohibition of the adoption of outsiders, which apply to inheritance, making it clear that the patrilineal principle is stronger than it is on the Japanese mainland.³ The family system involves stem families where the oldest son remains, and like Korea, divided succession by sons only is practiced with the oldest son, who is responsible for mortuary rituals, given preferential treatment [Higa 1986; Kurima 1990; Kitahara and Awa 2001; Nakachi 1994; Sugihara 1994].

A diagram comparing patrilineal principles in China, Korea, Okinawa, and the Japanese mainland would show that the typical patrilineal society of China lies at the opposite extreme from the *ie* system of the Japanese mainland, with Korea located near China and Okinawa located between Korea and the Japanese mainland [Nakane 1973].

Above, I have mainly described the structure of kinship based on descent groups, but the structure of kinship involves both ancestor-centered descent groups and self-centered kinship relationships [Gamō 1974; Muratake 1973]. Because descent groups are based mainly on ancestor worship, in general, they do not play significant roles in economic activities or poverty relief. Traditionally, Japanese researchers have tended to emphasize the roles of consanguineous structures in economic activities, but this is a mistake. With regard to everyday life and production, self-centered kinship relationships in fact play a more significant role. In all regions, they occupy an important position in everyday life and production.

3. Kagoshima, where *ie* were not established

When situating Japanese *ie* globally, and in particular, when situating them within Asian society, it is necessary to consider the family and kinship structures of the Kagoshima region.

In the society of the Kagoshima region, divided succession was practiced, and there

3 In this essay, the Japanese mainland refers to the three islands of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu (excluding the Kagoshima region, the Amami region, and the Okinawa region).

was no clear *ie* system, as there was in other regions of the Japanese mainland. It is apparent that the norms of the *ie* are quite limited. Kagoshima is characterized by the following: (1) equal, divided succession of land assets by sons is practiced in place of single succession, (2) various divided households existing alongside one another, (3) weakness of social restrictions regarding assets handed down by ancestors, that is, the concept of family property, (4) the non-use of the words “main family” and “branch family” in the sense intended on the Japanese mainland, (5) the weak development of affiliation structures, and (6) the weakness of the concept of ancestors, with a lack of special attachment to estate grounds linked to ancestor worship. In general, it may be said that *ie* did not develop there [Sakane 1996].⁴

On the Japanese mainland, the succession system transitioned from divided succession to single succession from the late 17th century onward, and the *ie* system was gradually established; however, in the Kagoshima region, such a transition did not occur. This seems to be due to both systemic and economic factors related to political rule. The systemic factors include the fiefdom’s farmland division system, called the *kadowari* (門割) system, under which the farming households switched to different plots of farmland, called *kadochi* (門地), after a certain number of years, which seems to have inhibited the development of the concept of family property among the peasant class. Due to the *kadowari* system, the Satsuma fiefdom lacked the body of *Honbyakusyo* (本百姓) and the village taxation system⁵ that would have been needed to implement the *kadowari* system, and this also served to prevent *ie* from forming. Economic factors included the wide distribution of uncultivated land and an imbalanced resource situation involving a lack of manpower to work the land. That is, farmers functioned as development groups, and under these conditions, they were granted small plots of land through divided succession, a situation that seemed to encourage them to increase their land holdings through new development. In addition, an extensive, unproductive management style and the fact that little work had ever been done on the land were probably also factors that facilitated the division of the farmland [Sakane 1996].

In the Kagoshima area, small families were the main family type. In Kagoshima,

4 Even in the Satsuma fiefdom, the *ie* system was established among the warrior class. This discussion is focused on the peasants’ society, referred to as “*zai*” (在) in the Kagoshima region.

5 *Honbyakusyo* refers to the main constituents of the village, who owned farmland and were responsible for paying yearly taxes. Under the village taxation system, the villages were responsible for collecting taxes from the village overall and paying them to the feudal lord.

households were divided in various ways, with *inkyobunke* (隱居分家) being one of the most prevalent. Specifically, when the oldest son married, his parents would move, along with all members of the household other than the oldest son and his wife, to a new household, and when the second-oldest son married, they would move again, along with all members of the household other than the second-oldest son and his wife. As this was repeated, eventually, when the youngest son married, a single household of only the parents was formed. When this household division occurred, assets were distributed almost equally to the sons through divided succession, with the exception of the portion for the parents, called the *inkyobun* (隱居分). In this way, the division of households was repeated alongside divided succession among sons. Therefore, the family type was a small family comprising a single husband and wife in the Kagoshima area.

The divided households were managed separately, and the parents lived independently. When it became difficult for the parents to live on their own, the youngest son took charge of looking after them. When the parents passed away, their *inkyobun* assets were inherited by the youngest son. Thus, because the youngest son inherited the *inkyobun*, he inherited more assets than his brothers. The mortuary tablets moved with the parents, and they were ultimately inherited by the youngest son, who thereby became the *ihaimoto* (位牌元) or the holder of the tablets.

The form of divided succession practiced in the Kagoshima region is often referred to as succession by the youngest son because he looked after his aged parents and often inherited the *inkyobun* as well as the mortuary tablets. However, the unique characteristic of succession customs in Kagoshima is not the fact that the youngest son played a relatively significant role but that there were no particular fixed succession customs. With regard to household division, there were cases in which the married older brothers successively moved to new residences, leaving the parents in the original residence; there were also cases in which mortuary tablets were divided among brothers, and tablets older than a particular generation were discarded [Ono 1965]. Thus, the unique characteristic of the Kagoshima region is the lack of a particular, unified method of handing down mortuary tablets and dividing households. However, with regard to inheritance of assets, relatively equally divided succession among sons was practiced [Kawashima 1965; Takeda 1970; Naitō 1973; Sakane 1996].

How, then, should the family and kinship relationships of the Kagoshima region be situated globally? In traditional family and kinship studies, the divided succession of the

Kagoshima region and the family and kinship relationships based on it are generally either treated as exceptional phenomena of the Kagoshima region, or they are treated as part of an emphasized pattern of diverse family forms on the Japanese mainland [Kawashima 1965; Fukuda 1992; Mitsuyoshi 1986]. However, these conceptions are mistaken. This essay proposes that the Kagoshima region occupies a more mainstream position.

In this essay, I would like to emphasize the fact that (1) divided succession, like that practiced in the Kagoshima region, was historically typical on the Japanese mainland as well until the *ie* formed in the early modern period, and that (2) in global terms, family and kinship relationships in Southeast Asia, which is a divided succession society, resemble those of the Kagoshima region.

It is very clear based on prior empirical studies that the form of succession practiced on the Japanese mainland prior to the formation of the *ie* was divided succession. The *inkyobunke* method was also widespread [Sakane 1996]. There is also no sign that descent groups existed in Japanese society prior to the formation of *ie* and affiliation structures, and society featured the same bilateral social structure as Southeast Asia [Yoshida 1983; Akashi 1990]. Given this, it seems that in the Kagoshima region, as a result of the obstruction of the formation of family property and the development of group functions of farmers under the *kadowari* system as well as the lack of a village taxation system and a body of *Honbyakusyo*, *ie* did not form, and the divided succession customs of the Middle Ages therefore persisted. This is the first way in which we will situate the system historically.

Second, I would like to compare family and kinship relationships on the Japanese mainland to those in Southeast Asia. I will discuss Thailand as a representative example of a bilateral society in Southeast Asia. According to Mizuno's study [1981] comparing family and kinship relationships in Thailand to those of Japan, Thai family and kinship relationships as well as succession customs demonstrate the typical characteristics of a bilateral society. In other words, there is a tendency toward nuclear families, *ie*/affiliation structures do not exist, parents are often cared for by the youngest son, there is no particular fixed norms of family relationships and succession customs, bilateral kin play an important role, and equal, divided succession of assets is practiced. All of these points are shared with the Kagoshima region. Referencing again the previously mentioned diagram of patrilineal principles, if the patriarchal society of China lies at one extreme, then the bilateral society of Southeast Asia lies at the opposite extreme. If the Japanese

mainland with its *ie* and affiliation groups lies in the middle, the Kagoshima region is no doubt situated quite close to Southeast Asia. This is the second way in which we will situate the system globally. That is, in order to accurately understand the character of family and kinship relationships in the Kagoshima region, they should be looked at in terms of their similarity to the bilateral society of Southeast Asia rather than forcing a comparison with Japanese *ie* kinship structures, as is often done.

4. Historical transformations in kinship organizations and Chinese civilization

Finally, let us situate the family and kinship relationships of East Asia from a historical perspective with reference to those of the Kagoshima region. Looked at over a long span of history, Chinese-style Confucian ethics and patrilineal consanguineous principles had a significant influence upon mainland China and surrounding societies, and there is no doubt that these societies were drastically transformed as a result. In other words, all of these regions are bilateral societies in terms of their cultural roots, but due to the influence of Chinese civilization, they seem to have transitioned to patrilineal societies.

Korea is the most typical example. In Korea, Goryeo Dynasty kinship structures are thought of as bilateral relationships lacking descent groups, and temporary residence in the wife's home was normal. This changed drastically in the mid-Joseon Dynasty (17th century). In other words, there was a transformation in marriage types from temporary residence in the wife's home to residence in the husband's home, a transformation in rituals, which were now carried out by the oldest son alone instead of all of the sons and daughters, a transition from equal succession by sons and daughters to succession by sons alone, with preference given to the oldest son, a transition from succession by all members of the children to selection of heirs excluding the children of daughters with different surnames, the development of genealogical records, and the transition to recording methods that prioritized sons in those genealogical records. Obviously, there was a transition from bilateral family and kinship relationships to Chinese-style patrilineal family and kinship relationships. These changes were brought about by neo-Confucian ideas imported in the late Goryeo Dynasty and strong implementation, encouragement, and management of a Chinese-style family system by rulers. As a result, from the 17th century onward, patrilineal consanguineous groups called *munjung* gradually gained

traction. In the course of this, needless to say, Chinese-style patrilineal consanguineous principles and native Korean bilateral customs both conflicted and united. This is demonstrated by the fact that native Korean bilateral customs such as residence in the wife's home, marriage within the lineage, and adoption of outsiders into the family were preserved, mainly in the common class, until the late Joseon Dynasty [Inoue 1985; Shima 1994]. In Korea, patrilineal principles gained strength, and exclusive rituals by oldest sons as well as divided succession prioritizing oldest sons were established from the late 17th century to the 18th century [Shima 1992], the same period in which the *ie* system formed on the Japanese mainland.

I would like to emphasize here that, along with the penetration of Chinese patrilineal principles, there was a transformation in family structures. According to an analysis by Shima [1992] of Daegu family registers, prior to the establishment of patrilineal principles, family structures involved a pattern of living together with the youngest son, but this gradually transformed into a pattern of living together with the oldest son from the 18th century onward. The pattern of living with the youngest son refers to cases in which adult sons successively married and became independent, and the father and mother ultimately continued living together with the youngest son or the youngest son and his wife. The pattern of living with the oldest son is seen currently in Korea and refers to cases in which the oldest son and his wife live together with the son's father and mother, and the younger sons get married and become independent. Among these, the pattern of living with the youngest son is seen currently in the Kagoshima region, and with the exception of the gender difference, it greatly resembles the Thai pattern of the youngest daughter ultimately continuing to live together with her parents. In this sense, as well, prior to the penetration of Chinese-style patrilineal principles, it can be said that Korean family and kinship relationships were bilateral.

In other societies surrounding China, similar transformations took place. Okinawa originally lacked a patrilineal consanguineous system, and family and kinship relationships were bilateral, but beginning in the end of the 17th century, patrilineal consanguineous structures called *muntyuu* began to form in the ruling class. The formation of *muntyuu* in the countryside occurred relatively recently, during the Meiji period at the earliest, and in the Taishō period in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa. Okinawan *muntyuu* lack restrictions on marriage, and although numerous examples of outsider adoption may be found in genealogical charts of the Ryukyu warrior class, this indicates a

process of conflict and merging between Chinese-style patrilineal principles and native Okinawan bilateral kinship customs. It has been pointed out that there was a custom of succession by the youngest son prior to the formation of *muntuyu*, suggesting the existence of the above-described pattern of living together with the youngest son [Nakane 1973; Kitahara, Awa 2001; Niizato 1994].

Family and kinship relationships on the Amami islands were also bilateral [Nakane 1964; Ueno 1983; Katō 1999]. Succession of assets involved equal, divided succession by the sons. Some degree of preference was given to the son who carried on the ancestor worship. In Amami, there is a stronger concept of inheriting mortuary tablets than on the Japanese mainland, although it is not accompanied by taboos, as in Okinawa. However, there were no particular regulations regarding who could serve as heir. This indicates, as in Okinawa, that an *ie* system such as that of the Japanese mainland was not established. With regard to family types, because sons gained a portion of the family property upon marriage and successively became independent, the nuclear family was the most prevalent [Toya 1981; Nakachi 1991]. With the exception of the emphasis on the concept of mortuary tablets succession, the family and kinship relationships as well as the asset succession type greatly resemble those of the Kagoshima region.

Directly to the south of China, in northern Vietnam, patrilineal kinship groups called *dong ho* took shape. *Dong ho* are kinship structures with clear membership rights for members on the father's side of the family, and they may be seen as patrilineal descent groups; however, because of the bilateral mixture of kindred and patrilineal descendants in family trees, the lack of shared characters in the names of family members of the same generation, the high position of women in terms of assets, divided succession by men and women, the diversity of *dong ho*, some of which had shared assets, lineage charts, and shrines, the relative lack of clarity in the restrictions on marriage, the fact that the recording of lineage charts was simple and consisted of memos regarding rituals and grave visits, and the high status of family members by marriage, it is apparent that they are overall different from the Chinese-style model of patrilineal descent, with pronounced bilateral elements [Suenari 1995; 1998; 2002; Miyazawa 1996; 1999; 2000]. This seems to be the result of conflict and merging between a base of original Vietnamese bilateral kinship customs and the Chinese-style patrilineal descent model.

In contrast to the strongly Chinese-style, patrilineal characteristics of northern Vietnam, southern Vietnam is more Southeast Asian/bilateral. In southern Vietnam,

divided succession by men and women is practiced, and the nuclear family is the main family type. Because children successively split off into different homes with marriage or the birth of their first children, there is a tendency for the youngest son or a daughter and his or her spouse to support the mother and father, and the youngest son carries on the rituals. Couples often reside with the wife's family, but there is no rigid pattern. Kinship structures and rituals are bilateral, and there is little awareness of genealogy. Residence styles resemble the estate-based common residence groups of Thailand, and in general there are many points of similarity with families and kin of the Southeast Asian mainland, including Thailand [Takahashi 1971; Nakanishi 1998; 1999; 2004; Shibuya 2000].

Table 1 depicts the kinship system described above. In conclusion, there are two points I would like to mention.

The first is the transformation of kinship structures. Owing to the overwhelming influence of Chinese civilization, the societies surrounding China that were originally bilateral seem to have progressively absorbed Chinese-style patrilineal ideology and transformed into patrilineal societies. When this occurred, different types of conflicts and merging between the bilateral principles of the base cultures of the various regions and Chinese-style patrilineal principles took place, and the extent of the acceptance of Chinese-style patrilineal principles varied widely. These variations were largely a result of the geographical position of China, the strength or lack thereof of political forces that attempted to impose Chinese-style systems, and the region's political relationship with China. Above, I have described concrete details concerning these comparisons and contrasts. Unlike East Asia, Southeast Asian regions did not often transform into patrilineal societies because of their geographical relationship with China as well as the stronger influence of Hindu civilization, which was very distinct from Chinese civilization, and the subsequent conversion to Islam.

The second point concerns the succession of assets. It seems that societies surrounding China, including the Japanese peninsula, originally practiced the custom of divided succession by men and women, as in bilateral societies. Apparently, due to the permeation of Chinese-style patrilineal ideology, the tendency to distribute divided assets to sons alone gradually strengthened. When this occurred, due to the conflict and merging with the bilateral customs unique to these societies, there was a division between those societies that transitioned to divided succession between sons alone and those that continued to practice divided succession between both sons and daughters. One

Table 1. Family systems in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

	China		Korea		Mainland Japan		Okinawa		Amami		Vietnam		Thailand
Succession of assets	China	Goryeo	From the late Joseon Dynasty onward	Middle Ages	From the early modern times onward	Kagoshima	Early modern	Modern	Modern	Modern	North	South	
	Divided succession by sons	Divided succession by sons and daughters	Divided succession by sons (preference to oldest to oldest son)	Divided succession by sons and daughters → Divided succession by sons	Single succession by oldest son	Divided succession by sons	Divided succession (preference to oldest to oldest son)	Divided succession by sons (preference to oldest to oldest son)	Divided succession by sons (preference to oldest to oldest son)	Divided succession by sons and daughters	Divided succession by sons and daughters	Divided succession by sons and daughters	Divided succession by sons and daughters
Kinship structure	Patrilineal/ <i>zongzu</i>	Bilateral	Patrilineal/ <i>munjung</i>	Bilateral	Bilateral/affiliation	Bilateral	Bilateral	Patrilineal/ <i>munbyuu</i>	Bilateral	Patrilineal/ <i>dong ho</i>	Bilateral	Bilateral	Bilateral
Family type	Joint family	Nuclear family	Stem family	Nuclear family	Stem family	Nuclear family	Nuclear family	Stem family	Nuclear family	Stem family	Nuclear family	Nuclear family	Nuclear family

References: Fukuda 1992; Inoue 1985; Shima 1992; Sakata 1994; Sakane 1995; Kitahara and Awa 2001; Toya 1981; Nakachi 1991; Suenari 1998; Nakanishi 1998; Mizuno 1981.

manifestation of this is the way in which succession of assets began to follow succession of rituals, and some societies began to give priority to oldest sons as the successors of rituals.

On the Japanese mainland, there are no historical traces indicating that descent groups once existed, and the region was originally a bilateral society. In ancient times, Chinese-style principles were introduced by the ruling class [Yoshida 1983; Watanabe 1985], but as these conflicted and merged with native Japanese bilateral principles, patrilineal kinship structures did not develop into patrilineal descent groups. What developed instead were the kinship structures of *ie*/affiliation groups, which resemble, yet are distinct from, patrilineal descent groups. In this process, the unusual system of single succession by the oldest son developed. As shown in Table 1, single succession occurs on the Japanese mainland only. This is one of the points I would like to emphasize in this essay.

Where, then, should the Kagoshima region be situated? As shown by the previous discussion and by Table 1, the Kagoshima region is an East Asian society that, perhaps coincidentally, has almost completely failed to absorb Chinese-style patrilineal ideology and the principles of the *ie*. Viewed from the world of East Asia, it is an isolated pocket where Chinese-style patrilineal principles and the principles of the *ie* failed to penetrate. Next to the Kagoshima region, the region over which patrilineal principles and the principles of the *ie* exhibited the least influence is the Amami region. A consideration of the above points seems to show that the Kagoshima region features a society in which the bilateral base of Japanese society was left behind in a more complete form than it was in other regions. It is the assertion of this essay that regarding this as a point of commonality with bilateral Southeast Asian societies provides the clearest view of its historical positioning. It is for this reason that I stated that the family and kinship organizations of the Kagoshima region are indispensable in globally situating the Japanese *ie*.

Bibliography

- Akashi, Kazunori. *Nihon kodai no shinzoku kouzou (Kinship Structures in Ancient Japan)*. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1990.
- Chen, Chi Nan. “Bou to dentoteki chugoku kazokuseido (Housing and the Traditional Chinese Family System)” *Gendai chugoku no teiryu (Contemporary Chinese Undercurrents)*, edited by Hashimoto Mitsuru and Fukao Yōko. Kōrosha, 1990.

- Fukuda, Ajiō. “Asia ni okeru ie to sonraku (*Ie* and Villages in Asia)” *Asia no nakano nihonshi I: Asia to nihon (Japanese History in Asia I: Asia and Japan)*, edited by Arano Yasunori, et al. University of Tokyo Press, 1992.
- Gamō, Masao. “Ningen to shinzoku (Humans and Kin)” *Gendai no esprit: ningen to shinzoku (The Contemporary Esprit: Humans and Kin)*, no. 80, 1974.
- Higa, Masao. “Ryūkyū minzoku shakai no kouzō to hen’yō (The Structure and Transformation of Ryūkyū Folk Society)” *Nihon minzoku shakai no keisei to hatten (The Structure and Transformation of Japanese Folk Society)*, edited by Takemura Takuji. Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1986.
- Inoue, Kazue. “Chosen kazokushi kenkyū no genjō to kadai (Present Status and Themes of Historical Studies on Korean Families)” *Rekishi hyoron (Historical Criticism)*, no. 424, 1985.
- Katō, Masaharu. *Amami Yorontō no shakai soshiki (The Social Structure of Amami Yorontō)* Daiichi Shobō, 1999.
- Kawashima, Takeyoshi, ed. *Nouka souzoku to nouchi (Succession in Rural Families and Farmland)* University of Tokyo Press, 1965.
- Kitahara, Jun and Morishige, Awa. *Okinawa no ie muntyūu sonraku (Homes, Muntyūu, and Villages in Okinawa)* Daiichi Shobō, 2001.
- Kurima, Yasuo. *Okinawa Keizai ron hihan (Okinawa Economic Theory Criticism)* Nihon Keizei Hyōronsha, 1990.
- Mitsuyoshi, Toshiyuki. “Kazoku bunka no tayousei kaisetsu (The Diversity of Family Culture: An Interpretation)” *Readings nihon no shakaigaku 3 dentō kazoku (Readings Japanese Sociology 3: Traditional Families)*, edited by Mitsuyoshi Toshiyuki, et al. Tokyo University Press, 1986.
- Miyamoto, Matao. *Nihon kindai 11: kigyokatachi no chosen (Modern Japan 11: The Challenge of the Entrepreneurs)*. Chūōkōron-Shinsha, 1999.
- Miyazawa, Chihiro. “Vietnam hokubu hokuchubu sonraku no dentō kouzō to sono henka (The Traditional Social Structure and its Changes in North/North-Central Vietnam)” *Jinruigaku kara mita Vietnam shakai no kiso teki kenkyū (Basic Studies of Vietnamese Society from an Anthropological Perspective)*, edited by Suenari Michio, 1996.
- Miyazawa, Chihiro. “Vietnam hokubu no fukei shinzoku shudan no ichijirei (A Case Study of a Patrilineal Kinship Group in North Vietnam)” *Vietnam no shakai to bunka (Vietnamese Society and Culture)*, no. 1, 1999.
- Miyazawa, Chihiro. “Vietnam hokubu no fukei shutsuji gaizoku dousei ketsugō (Mixing of Patrilineal Descent, Outside Groups, and People with the Same Surnames in North Vietnam)” *Ketsuen no saikouchiku (Reconstructing Consanguinity)*, edited by Yoshihara Kazuo. Fūkyōsha, 2000.
- Mizubayashi, Takeshi. *Houkensei no saihei to nihon teki shakai no kakuritsu (The Reorganization of the Feudal System and the Establishment of Japanese Society)*. Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987.
- Mizuno, Kōichi. *Thai nouson no shakai soshiki (The Social Structure of the Thai Countryside)*. Sōbunsha, 1981.
- Muratake, Seiichi. *Kazoku no shakai jinruigaku (The Social Anthropology of Families)*. Kōbundō, 1973.
- Naitō, Kanji. *Masshi souzoku no kenkyū (A Study of Succession by the Youngest Child)*. Kōbundō, 1973.
- Nakachi, Sōshun. “Amami syotō ni okeru nouchi no souzoku to nouka no keishō (Succession of Farmland and Inheritance in Rural Families in the Amami Islands)” *Nantō bunka (The Culture of the Southern Islands)* no. 12/13, 1991.

- Nakachi, Sōshun. *Okinawa ni okeru nouchi no shoyu to riyō no kōzō ni kansuru kenkyū* (A Study of Ownership of Farmland and the Structure of Usage in Okinawa) Reprint of Academic Report 41 of the University of the Ryukyus' Agriculture Department, 1994.
- Nakane, Chie. "‘Hiki’ no bunseki: amami soukei shakai no ketsuen soshiki (An Analysis of ‘Hiki’: Consanguineous Structures in Amami Bilateral Society)" *Tōyō bunka kenkyūsho kiyō* (Eastern Culture Research Society Memo), no. 33, 1964.
- Nakane, Chie. *Kazoku no kōzō* (Family Structures) Tokyo University Press, 1970.
- Nakane, Chie. "Okinawa hondo chūgoku chosen no douzoku montyū no hikaku (A Comparison of Affiliation Groups and Montyū in Okinawa, Mainland Japan, China, and Korea)" *Okinawa no minzokugaku teki kenkyū* (Okinawa Ethnological Studies), edited by Nihon minzoku gakkai (the Japanese Society of Ethnology). Minzokugaku shinkōkai (Ethnology Promotion Society), 1973.
- Nakane, Chie. *Shakai jinrui gaku* (Social Anthropology). Tokyo University Press, 1987.
- Nakanishi, Yūji. "Setai wo tooshite mita Vietnam nanbu sonraku ni okeru shinzoku no ichizuke (The Position of Kinship in a Village in South Vietnam as Seen in Households)" *Tōyō bunka* (Eastern Culture), no. 78, 1998.
- Nakanishi, Yūji. "Vietnam nanbu Sóc Trãng syō D mura ni okeru shinkō to saishi (Faith and Ancestral Ritual in D Village, Sóc Trãng Province, South Vietnam)" *Vietnam no shakai to bunka* (Vietnamese Culture and Society), no. 1, 1999.
- Nakanishi, Yūji. "Vietnam ni okeru souzoku doukyō fuyō (Succession, Cohabitation, and Family Support in Vietnam)" *Series hikaku kazoku dai 2 ki fuyō to souzoku* (Series Comparison Family Vol. 2: Family Support and Succession), edited by Okuyama Kyōko, et al. Waseda University Press, 2004.
- Niizato, Gunko. "Tochi seiri to totome kankō no seiritsu (Land Management and the Establishment of Totome Customs)" *Rekishi hyōron* (Historical Criticism), no. 530, 1994.
- Ono, Jūrō. "Kado no ie to douzoku shudan (Kado Homes and Kinship Groups)" *Shakai to denshō* (Society and Tradition), vol. 9, no. 4, 1965.
- Ōta, Motoko. "Banshū nōson no kazoku kankei to kosodate (Family Relationships and Child-Raising in Rural Banshū)" *Tokugawa nihon no life course* (The Life Course of Tokugawa Japan), edited by Ochiai Emiko, et al. Minerva Shobō, 2006.
- Ōtake, Hideo. *Houken shakai no nōmin kazoku* (Farm Families in Feudal Society). Sōbunsha, 1982.
- Ōtō, Osamu. *Kinsei nōmin to ie mura kuni* (Modern Farmers and the Family/Village/Country). Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1996.
- Ozasa, Yoshimoto. "Kamei (The Family Name)" *Minzoku gaku jiten* (Dictionary of Folklore), edited by Ōtsuka minzoku gakkai (the Ōtsuka Folklore Society). Kōbundō, 1994.
- Saitō, Osamu. "Daikaikon jinkō shōnou Keizai (Large-Scale Land Reclamation, the Population, and Small Farm Economics)" *Nihon Keizai shi 1 keizai shakai no seiritsu* (Japanese Economic History 1: The Establishment of the Economic System), edited by Hayami, Akira and Miyamoto Matao. Iwanami Shoten, 1988.
- Sakane, Yoshihiro. *Bunkatsu souzoku to nōson shakai* (Divided Succession and Rural Society). Kyushu University Press, 1996.
- Sakata, Satoshi. "Tyusei no ie to josei (Homes and Women in the Middle Ages)" *Iwanami kouza nihon rekishi chusei 2* (Iwanami Courses, Japanese History, Middle Ages 2). Iwanami Shoten, 1994.
- Segawa, Masahisa. *Chūgoku shakai no jinrui gaku* (Anthropology of Chinese Society). Sekaishisōsha,

2004.

- Shibuya, Setsuko. “Mekong delta C n Th  sh  no kazoku to shakai (Family and Society in C n Th  Province in the Mekong Delta)” *Vietnam no shakai to bunka (Vietnamese Society and Culture)*, no. 2, 2000.
- Shiga, Sh z . *Chugoku kazoku hou no genri (Principles of Chinese Family Law)*. S bunsha, 1967.
- Shima, Mutsuhiko. “Daegu koseki ni miru ch sen kouki no kazoku kouzou no henka (Changes in Family Structure in the Late Joseon Dynasty as Seen in Daegu Family Registers)” *Ch sen gakuhou (Korean Studies)*, no. 144, 1992.
- Shima, Mutsuhiko. “Shinzoku seido kara mita chosen shakai no hendou (Korean Social Changes as Seen in Kinship Systems)” *Asia kara kangaeru 6 cyouki shakai hendou (Considering Asia 6: Long-Term Social Change)*, edited by Mizoguchi Y z , et al. Tokyo University Press, 1994.
- Shimizu, Akitoshi. *Ieshintai shakai (Family, Body, Society)*. K bund , 1987.
- Suenari, Michio. “Vietnam no kafu (Genealogy’ in Vietnam)” *Touyou bunka kenkyusho kiyou (Eastern Culture Research Society Memo)*, no. 127, 1995.
- Suenari, Michio. “Vietnam no fukei syudan (Patrilineal Kinship Groups in Vietnam)” *Touyou bunka (Eastern Culture)*, no. 78, 1998.
- Suenari, Michio. “Vietnam no kagami wo tooshite mita kan nichi no shakai soshiki (Korean-Japanese Social Groups as Seen in the Mirror of Vietnam)” *Kan nichi shakai soshiki no hikaku (A Comparison of Korean and Japanese Social Groups)*, edited by Abito, It  and Han Kyung Koo. Keio University Press, 2002.
- Sugihara, Tamae. *Kazokusei nougyou no suiteen katei (The Transition Process in Family-Style Agriculture)*. Nihon Keizei Hy ronsha, 1994.
- Takahashi, Tamotsu. “Vietnam ni okeru nouson shakai no hendou katei to kachi taikei (The Process of Change in Rural Society and Value Systems in Vietnam)” *Tounan Asia no kachi taikei 3 Vietnam (Southeast Asian Value Systems 3: Vietnam)*, edited by Shinbo, Jun’ichir  and Takahashi Tamotsu. Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1971.
- Takeda, Akira. *Ie wo meguru minzoku kenkyu (Studies of Folk Customs Related to Ie)* K bund , 1970.
- Takeda, Ch sh . *Sosen suuhai (Ancestor Worship)*. Heirakuji Shoten, 1957.
- Totani, Osamu. “Amami nouson ni mirareru shakai teki seikaku no shosou (Aspects of Social Character in Rural Amami)” *Amami nouson no kouzou to hendou (Structure and Change in Rural Amami)*, edited by Matsubara Haruo. Ochanomizu Shob , 1981.
- Ueno, Kazuo. “Amami no shakai kouzou (The Social Structure of Amami)” *Gendai no esprit: amami no kami to mura (The Contemporary Esprit: The Kami and Villages of Amami)*, no. 194, 1983.
- Watanabe, Hiroshi. *Kinsei nihon shakai to sougaku (Early Modern Japanese Society and Neo-Confucianism)*. Tokyo University Press, 1985.
- Yoshida, Takashi. *Ritsury  kokka to kodai no shakai (The Ritsury  State and Ancient Society)*. Iwanami Shoten, 1983.