

Social Structures and Neo-Confucianism of Chosun Dynasty and Tokugawa Japan*

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【Abstract】

The purpose of this paper is to examine the differences stated between Korea and Japan is the result of the Neo-Confucian acceptance process and the social characteristics of each nation.

Japan and Korea have very different social structures. The Neo-Confucian acceptance process and the social characteristics of each nation lent significantly to the differences between Korea's and Japan's structure of consciousness. Since Neo-Confucianism was as much a moral and political philosophy as it was a religion the extent and rate of its implementation governed the thought and behavior of each society. Zhu Xi's family rituals and the national civil and military examinations solidified Neo-Confucianism as the dominant feature of Korean societal thought.

On the other hand, Japan's eclectic coexistence of adopted religions and their placement of Military at the top of their social hierarchy, instead of intellectuals as in Korean society, drove Japan in a slightly different direction of social consciousness than happened in Korea. Also, most importantly, Japan's system allowed for little upward advancement regarding status.

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The societal pressures in Japan led the populace to find an occupational niche and in so doing thrive for a time individually and pass on their tradition to their progeny. Whereas, in Korea all were driven to compete in the same tests for the same coveted high status positions which created a disproportionate amount of jobs routed in abstract thought and paper pushing rather than jobs that produced tangible items or services. Most families sought out an elevated status, thus Korean social consciousness was firmly rooted in the advancement of status.

Key Words: Neo-Confucianism, examination system (*gwageojedo*), Descent Groups, *Samurai*, *Yangban* (nobility), Household (*Je*) Groups, Zhu Xi's Family Rituals, Structure of consciousness

I . Introduction

Traditional thought can dominate the overall values of a society creating morals and customs, thus shaping a nation's social culture. Both Chosun Korea and Tokugawa Japan accepted the same Neo-Confucianism as their main ruling ideology, and it has been kept alive even today. Each country has the same Confucian culture, and both countries look quite similar to each other in terms of their viewpoint and life in general. Yet, each has very different social characteristics and structures reflecting different aspects in their respective politics, economy, society and culture. How can this be so?

Korea boasts one of the world's highest college and university entrance ratios. In 2010, about 80 percent of high school graduates attended colleges and universities, compared with approximately 52 percent in Japan. In Korean society, the disparity between social status and wage inequality has significantly continued to exist between college graduates and high school graduates with no college experience.¹⁾ However, in Japan it is quite possible for craftsmen, such as engineers and technicians, via their business performance, to obtain good financial compensation and social prestige without a college or university degree.²⁾ This may be closely related to the fact that there was a national civil and military service examination system (*gwageojedo* 科擧制度) in Chosun society, but not in Tokugawa Japan.

Furthermore, in contemporary Korean society, the tendency to neglect physical work still remains. In today's advanced modern society Koreans still prefer professional and

1) According to the Ministry of Labor Affairs, the wage gap between university graduates and high school graduates has become wider in Korea. The wage index for university graduates against high school graduates increased from 149.4 in 2002 to 151.7 in 2003, 152.3 in 2004 and 154.9 in 2005. In addition, according to the Ministry of Employment and Labor, the 2009 average entry-level pay for a university graduate was at 24.36 million won, about 50 percent more than that of a high school graduate. No wonder as many as 71.1 percent of vocational high school students obtained admission to junior colleges or universities, compared with around 49 percent in Japan, instead of seeking jobs they had been trained for. The wage gap is not as wide as in Korea nor are there educational differentials in employment rates. In Japan, there was a more nourishing environment for craftsmen and worker. Japan was a society that respected craftsman in the past.

2) In Japan, the environment has been well equipped to work with only one technology. The importance and value of such craftsmen would be widely acknowledged and respected by Japanese society. Japan which has a culture of respect for the craftsman is highly different from Korea.

administrative jobs, such as lawyers, doctors and public officers. Recently, in Korean society, it seems the phenomenon of avoiding science and engineering is closely related to the occupational consciousness that has been continued from traditional society.

This paper will suggest that the differences stated between Korea and Japan is the result of the Neo-Confucian acceptance process and the social characteristics of each nation. Through a comparison of political systems, social structures, Neo-Confucianism, the political elites, surnames and marriage, descent groups and household groups of both Chosun Korea and Tokugawa Japan, the structure of consciousness, such as the occupational ethos and behavior patterns within these two countries can be studied. This paper will contribute to the understanding of the structure of consciousness of the two countries.

II. The Political System and Social Structure

With the founding of the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), Neo-Confucianism was adopted as the official state ideology. Neo-Confucianism was as much a moral and political philosophy as it was a religion. During the Chosun period, a strong central bureaucracy was established, building on the Chinese model, but extending government control over the territory.³⁾ In the Chosun Dynasty, the social stratification was centered on a strictly hierarchical class structure. The population was divided into four distinct socioeconomic strata: *yangban* (兩班; nobility), *jungin* (中人; middle class), *sangmin* (常民) or *pyeongmin* (平民) and *chonmin* (賤民). Each of these four social classes will be discussed in more detail later.

New officials were appointed from among the ruler's followers and land was re-divided. Large numbers of civil and military officials were recruited through a rigorous series of national civil service or military examinations called *gwageo* (科擧).

3) Max Weber defined Patrimonialism is a form of governance based on a centralized ruling class or aristocracy and all power flows directly from the leader. These regimes are autocratic or oligarchic and exclude the upper and middle classes from power. The leaders of these countries typically enjoy absolute personal power.

Since serving in office was the most prestigious occupation as well as a vital way to protect a family's interests, it became the goal of the most ambitious families to have a son who passed the exams. In a society where no other culturally sanctioned avenue to power and prestige existed, the exam system was of enormous importance. While education was recognized as an end in itself, in practice, potential office seekers had to go through a series of highly competitive examinations. It was also understood to be a means of social mobility and status selection.⁴⁾

“The Chosun Dynasty also established a new system of land tenure, the so-called “status land system”(kwajon-pop 科田法). In this system, all land was officially held by the state, which was owned by the king, and there was no private ownership. However, government officials held land on the basis of their status or rank in the state. “Landholding tenure for all officers was for the duration of their life only, except that if an officer-holder died and left a widow and children, they would be able to retain the land until the children were grown or the woman remarried.”⁵⁾ They were allowed to collect rent on their allocated partitions and maintain slaves. When land also became scarce, salaries were paid. The *yangban*, unlike the *samurai* under the *bakuhun* system in Tokugawa Japan, remained able to own land. Local government officials were also paid with allocations of land in their areas, and unlike the central officials, they were not regularly rotated between posts to prevent connecting their offices to local interests. With the increase of land grants to the officials under “the status land system,” however, land available for the new officials decreased. In order to solve this problem “the official land system” (*chikchon* 職田法) was instituted in 1466, which allowed land grants in terms of rent for office tenure only. Thus the status land system by which the officials enjoyed lifetime tenure was discontinued, and those parties who refused to compromise lost their land holdings altogether. This limitation of land grants to incumbent officials meant that

4) Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period through the Nineteenth Century*, (Rowman & little field publishers, Inc., 2006), p.129.

5) *Ibid.*, p.129.

the old *yangban* class with land changed to either an employed bureaucrat with land, or a landless *yangban* with prestige only.⁶⁾ Over the centuries, private land possessions gradually grew larger, proportionately with the increasing power and prestige of the *yangban*, reducing the influence of the king.

Factional disputes (*dangjaeng* 黨爭)⁷⁾ were especially rampant during the middle period (mid-15th century to 1800). From the late sixteen century, factional disputes increasingly shaped between the East Party (*dongin* 東人) and West Party (*seoin* 西人). Factional disputes were closely related to political issues such as the designation of an heir to the throne, the appointment of officials to government positions and the related problem of mourning rites. Political maneuvering by political factions had a serious impact on the social and economic position of the entire *yangban* class. Factional disputes became "all or nothing", zero sum game battles for supremacy.

As time passed, factional disputes became socially and politically rooted in Chosun society. Two main factors contributed to the growth of these disputes. The first was the institution of a landholding system. The second factor related to the limited number of government positions available. Since Confucian ethics deemed civil service the only appropriate occupation for the *yangban*, those unable to secure official posts were left to plot and intrigue among themselves or to found private Confucian academies (*seowon* 書院)⁸⁾ that openly became important bases for political factions.⁹⁾ Seizing political power of one faction ultimately led to sweeping purges of rivals by means of execution, dismissal, or banishment to such undesirable areas. The families of purged

6) For details, see Early Jeseon Period-Monarchy versus Yangban, <http://www.koreaaward.com/kor/index>

7) For details, see Lee, Sung moo, *A History of Factional Strife in Joseon 1 -2*, (Beautiful Day, 2007).

8) *Seowon* were the most common educational institution between the middle of sixteenth century and late Chosun Dynasty. They were private institutions, and combined the functions of a Confucian shrine and a preparatory school. In educational terms, the *seowon* were primarily occupied with preparing students for the national civil service examinations. In most cases, *seowon* served only pupils of the aristocratic *yangban* class. About 1,000 *seowon* were founded by the end of eighteenth century, and they served as the centers of dissident political activity until most of them were closed in the decade after 1864.

9) Nena Vreeland, Peter Just, Kenneth W. Martindale, Philp W. Moeller and Rinn-sup shin, *Area handbook for south Korea*, (The American University, 1975), p. 16.

officials were similarly subjected to political discrimination. Because of the Confucian exhortation to filial piety and to upholding the family name, feuding was invariably handed down along family or kinship lines.¹⁰⁾ Since the Imjin War (壬辰倭亂), also known as Japanese invasions of 1592 and 1598, a large number of apparently well-qualified candidates started pursuing a limited number of postwar government positions available. Eventually, the national civil service or military examinations had become little more than influences in the hands of powerful officials or the faction in power, and were eventually eroded by favoritism and nepotism. Political leaders were unable to unite effectively across factional lines.

Political disputes during the period were mainly caused by factional activity based upon kinship, regional commonality or school-disciple relationships. The Neo-Confucianism emphasis on filial piety and ancestor worship (*jesa* 祭祀) strongly reinforced the intensity of factional struggles along with the attitudes and values they represented. A complete code of laws (*kyeonggukdaejeon* 經國大典) that comprises every law, act, custom, ordinance, compiled in 1469 required all Chosun people to perform ancestor worship rituals. In the ancestor worship rituals, family members pay homage to ancestors (*josang* 祖上). This emphasized that the ties of kinship extended to include the dead as well as the living. Ancestor worship rituals became extremely important in establishing strong kinship ties.¹¹⁾ In particular, loyalty to abstract and often debatable political principles disappeared, overridden by the strength of personal and kinship relations.¹²⁾ Factionalism in the government followed regional lines and continues in politics even now.

In contrast, the Tokugawa period brought 265 years of stability to Japan. The political structure was a feudal system call *bakuhau* (幕藩), a combination of the terms *bakufu* (幕府) and *han* (藩) to describe the government and society of the period. *Bakufu* means,

10) Ibid., pp.16-17.

11) Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period through the Nineteenth Century*, (Rowman & little field publishers, Inc., 2006), pp.152-3.

12) "Ch 13: The Hermit Kingdom, New Challenges, *New Beginnings*," *Korea in the Eye of the Tiger*, 1997. <http://koreanhistoryproject.org/Ket/C13/E1302.htm>

“military government”. The *han* were the domains headed by *daimyo*¹³⁾. In the *bakuhan* system, the *bakuhu* served as the central government over a federation of over 270 *han*; the *Shogun* had national authority and the *daimyo* had regional authority. Vassals held inherited lands(fiefs) and provided military service and paid homage to their lords. The *bakuhan* system split feudal power between the *Shogunate* in Edo and the provincial domains throughout Japan. Provinces had a degree of sovereignty and were allowed an independent administration of the *Han* in exchange for loyalty to the *Shogun*. The *Shogun* and lords were all *daimyo* with their own bureaucracies, policies, and territories. The *Shogun* also administered to the most powerful *hans*, the hereditary fief of the House of Tokugawa, called *fudai* (譜代). This represented a new unity in the feudal structure, which featured an increasingly large bureaucracy to administer the mixture of centralized and decentralized authorities.

The Tokugawa regime ruled through a complicated network of alliances with approximately 270 regional lords, some closely allied to the Tokugawa and others in opposition after the Battle of Sekigahara (関ヶ原の戦い 1600) consolidated Tokugawa control but that were permanently subdued thereafter. Each fief retained its own castle town, and as a political strategy, some fiefs maintained a high degree of economic, social, and cultural autonomy.

A code of laws was established to regulate the *daimyo* houses. The *daimyo* were put under the *Shogunate*'s tight control. Even if a *daimyo* had an heir, succession was not automatic because the heir had to receive formal *bakuhu* approval before he could inherit the domain. The most important measure for keeping the *daimyo* under control was the adoption of the *bukeshohatto* (武家諸法度, Various Points of Laws for Warrior Houses). The contents of the edicts were seen as a code of conduct. The most relevant of these edicts restricted repairing castles, and required permission to be obtained for marriages

13) *Daimyo* (大名), is a generic term referring to the powerful territorial lords in pre-modern Japan who ruled most of the country from their vast, hereditary land holdings. In the term, “*dai*(大)” literally means “large”, and “*myo*” stands for “*myoden* (名田),” meaning private land. Subordinate only to the *Shogun*, *daimyo* were the most powerful feudal rulers from the 10th century to the middle 19th century in Japan.

between the *daimyo* and related individuals of power. In 1635, these thirteen articles were revised and expanded to nineteen. These laws regulating the *daimyo* constituted the central mechanism of *bakuhu* control during the Tokugawa era.¹⁴⁾

A system called *Sankinkotai* (参勤交代 alternate attendance) was a key policy of *Shogunate*. It stated that suspect *daimyo* were to reside in the city of Edo during alternating periods and to leave key family members behind when they returned to their own *han*. This system of “alternate attendance” was a de facto “hostage” system and worked effectively to reduce scheming against the *Shogun*.¹⁵⁾ It was begun in 1635, and was virtually abolished in 1862.

The various regulations and levies not only strengthened the Tokugawa but also depleted the wealth of the *daimyo*, thus weakening their threat to the central administration. The *han*, once military-centered domains, also became mere local administrative units as peace not only reduced the value of military skill, but led to increased economic development, trade and an increased focus on “non-military” occupation that made rival *han* less threatening to the *shogunate* for a long time. The *daimyo* did, however, have full administrative control over their territory and their complex systems of retainers, bureaucrats and commoners.

III. Neo-Confucianism and Thoughts

In Confucian culture, the religion and philosophy of Confucianism has had a deep impact on the Korean way of life from ancient time through to the present. The practice of filial piety and loyalty within Confucianism still influences a vast amount of people today.

14) Chie Nakane and Shinzaburo Oishi, *Tokugawa Japan*, (University of Tokyo Press, 1990), p. 23.

15) Many resources were necessary to maintain lavish residences in both locations, and for the procession to and from Edo, placed financial strains on the *daimyo* making them unable to wage war. The frequent travel of the *daimyos* encouraged road building and the construction of inns and facilities along the routes, generating economic activity. It also led to the improvement of communications and the development of a commercial economy, as merchants gathered in the provincial and metropolitan capitals to supply the needs of these lords.

Neo-Confucianism, developed by the Chinese Song Dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi, was first introduced during the closing years of the Koryo Dynasty(918-1392) and was adopted as the official state doctrine during the Chosun Dynasty. The government of Chosun promoted an anti-Buddhist policy based on the social and cultural changes affected by Neo-Confucianism. As a result, Buddhism greatly declined, and Buddhists lost much of their wealth and power. As the power of the Buddhist organizations was weakened, Confucianism was promoted and elaborated under the tenets of Neo-Confucianism.

The Neo-Confucians of the Chosun Dynasty recognized the significance of rites as a device for ordering society and formulating their social policies. They heavily relied on "Zhu Xi's Family Rituals." As the reigning orthodoxy in Korea for around five hundred years of the Chosun dynasty, Zhu Xi's teachings have deeply shaped Korean attitudes, ancestor worship, funerary rites, succession, inheritance, the position of women within the marriage institution, and the formation of descent groups.

Neo-Confucianism for "the examination teaching (受驗用教学)" had, institutionally, been supported by the national civil service examination system. The Wang Yang-ming Schooling was considered as one heterodox school of Confucianism. Thus, it was "squeezed out" by the new focus on Zhu Xi's philosophy in the examination process. In addition, late in the Chosun period Western Studies such as Christianity were deemed yet more heretical, and likewise suppressed. For these reasons, Korea maintained a unitary philosophy of Neo-Confucianism in the Chosun Dynasty for over 518 years.

In Tokugawa Japan, there was no comparable experience related to Confucian practice. The Tokugawa government had also adopted Confucianism from Chosun Korea as the official ideology as a normative justification for social hierarchy and the Tokugawa power structure. Similar to Chosun Korea, Neo-Confucianism was the most important philosophy during the Tokugawa period, stressing the importance of morals, education and hierarchical order in the government and society. There was a powerful Confucian influence on the lives and thinking of samurai and on commoners as literacy, schooling and access to books and teachers increased. A strict four class system existed during the

Tokugawa period. In the shifting multi polar system of Japanese thought and moral values, Confucianism held a dominant position by the seventeenth century. Tokugawa ideology, however, was far from being exclusively Neo-Confucian. In fact, Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto all coexisted without harming each other, maintaining a pluralistic structure of religious thought. In this system the influence of Neo-Confucianism on the normal way of life was very weak in comparison to Chosun Korea. Although Neo-Confucianism was the formal academic approach of the Tokugawa shogunate, Japan had no such "Zhu Xi's Family Rituals" as the formal Life House Law. Even if it had been issued, it would not have been effective.

Even within the realm of Confucianism Neo-Confucianism never drove out other Confucianism Schools, such as the Wang Yang-ming School. Instead, Confucian thought in Tokugawa Japan was rich in diversity. Along with Neo-Confucianism, the Wang Yang-ming School, OgyuSorai School, Eclectic school and Mito school flourished and are well developed. This may be closely related to the fact that there was not a national civil service examination system in Japan. Confucianism was institutionally weak. The *bakuhu* did not use the national civil service examination system to recruit its officials and never gave Neo-Confucianism, or any other form of Confucianism, exclusive institutional support.

Tokugawa Japan was also more pluralistic and diverse in the field of thought and studies owing to a history of eclectic borrowing of foreign influences. Besides Confucianism, kokugaku (national learning or national studies), kogaku (ancient studies) and rangaku (Dutch studies) were all extensively studied. After the early nineteenth century, Tokugawa Japan's academics and intellectuals were especially varied.

In both Chosun and Tokugawa societies, the two essential fundamental virtues of Neo-Confucianism were loyalty and filial piety. Education in Chosun Korea was based on the virtues of loyalty to the state and filial piety to kinship groups. In the case of conflict between the two obligations, filial piety to kinship groups was often deemed more important than loyalty to the state.¹⁶⁾ Filial piety was the prime virtue by which clan lineage was preserved, and ancestor worship was its salient feature.

16) Nena Vreeland, Peter Just, Kenneth W. Martindale, Philp W. Moeller and Rinn-sup shin, op.cit, p. 16.

On the other hand, in Tokugawa, filial piety was subordinate to feudal loyalty ties. Namely, in samurai society, loyalty as ethical principle was more heavily emphasized than filial piety; polity overrode family.¹⁷⁾ In times of conflict between the fulfillments of the two, loyalty to the lord had higher priority than filial piety to the parents. This is a distinct contrast to Chosun Korea, where filial piety towards the parents was seen as a way of being loyal to the lord--where loyalty was deemed an extension of filial piety or, in other words, a way to fulfill filial piety. Loyalty and filial piety were pivotal Neo-Confucianism virtues, which permeated the samurai code(bushido).¹⁸⁾

Nevertheless, the virtues of loyalty and filial piety practiced in Neo-Confucianism are still enormous influence for a vast amount of Korean and Japanese people today. At least here, Confucianism in Korea and Japan seems to be essentially similar within each society. In contemporary Korea, however, the influence of Zhu Xi's Family Rituals is particularly immense; a veritable "living thought" influencing home and social life. It is the major difference between the two's adoption of Confucianism.

IV. The Political Elite: Yangban and Samurai

The Chosun Dynasty had a four class system: the scholar officials, *yangban* (兩班 nobility); the technician and artisan class, *jungin* (中人 middle class); the freed commoner class, *sangmin* (常民) or *pyeongmin* (平民); and the indentured servants and slave class, *chonmin* (賤民), like the *burakumin* in Japan. The system maintained public order. At the top of the social hierarchy, were the elites called the *yangban*. The term *yangban* means literally "two groups," the *munban* (文班: civil officials) and *muban* (武班: military officials). The ultimate goal of each *yangban* was to become a high

17) Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa religion* (徳川時代の宗教), (Iwanamibunko: 岩波文庫, 1957)

18) Wai-ming Ng, Filial Piety and Loyalty in Tokugawa Confucianism: Nakae Tōju (1608-48) and His Reading of the Xiaojing (Classic of Filial Piety), Read at the International Conference on Filial Piety, NUS, Singapore, 10-12 January 2002

official through passing the civil service examinations. The most ambitious sought to move to the capital; but even officials in the capital tended to return to their home villages.¹⁹⁾The Chosun Dynasty relied mainly on recruitment examinations to select officials to serve in the government. There were three types of examinations: the civil (*munkwa* 文科), the military (*mukwa* 武科), and technical examination (*japkwa* 雜科). Aristocratic status was linked to holding office, with the civil service examinations being the most important route to office. Civil officials dominated Chosun society, but military examinations continued to be secondary path despite the general disdain for warriors. Reflecting Chinese influence, in the Chosun Dynasty under the principles of civilian government the civil service officials were ranked considerably higher than those in the military service. During the Chosun Dynasty, between 150,000 and 170,000 people passed the military examinations. Considerably more people passed the civil service examinations than the military examinations. By comparison, 14,607 people passed the highest *munkwa* exam, 47,000 people passed the lower *sanwon* (生員) degree for classics and *jinsa* (進士) degree for literary writing, and 12,000 people passed technical exam.²⁰⁾ The *yangban* were either aristocrats with or without land. They comprised the Korean Confucian idea of a “*sadaebu*” (士大夫 scholarly official), that is, someone whose status was based on moral virtues attained through the study of Confucian classics. Because the government was small, a great many number of *yangban* were local gentry of high social status, but not always of high income. They were exempt from taxes and military service, while striving to be Confucian scholars writing three lined *sijo* (時調) poems that demonstrated their high literary status.

Unlike the Japanese *samurai*, whose elite titles were conferred on a hereditary basis, the *yangban* title was conferred to those individuals who were recruited through the highly rigorous and competitive national civil service examinations. Typically quite demanding, these tests measured candidates' knowledge of the Confucian classics and history. These

19) Michael J. Seth, op. cit, p.160.

20) Eugene Y. Park, “Military Examinations in Late Choson: Elite Substratification and Non-elite Accommodation,” *Korean Studies* 25, no 1(2001) 1-49. Details for, see the website of the Academy of Korean Studies: people.aks.ac.kr

were the primary route for most people to achieve positions in the aristocracy. These *gwageo* were the centerpiece of most education in the Chosun Dynasty. Those who passed the higher literary examination came to monopolize all of the dynasty's high positions of state.

During the Chosun Dynasty, *yangban* were the single office-holding elite who dominated the government.²¹⁾ Also, one way of guaranteeing their special status was to have their genealogies recorded as descent group charts (*jogbo*: 族譜), books where births, marriages and deaths were recorded over the generations. The ideological construct guiding the formation of patrilineal worshipping groups was the "agnatic principle".²²⁾ Traditionally, they were used in Chosun Korea as proof of being in the *yangban* class. This reflected the consolidation of the *yangban* into distinct family units that were structured patrilineally. Other classes were not permitted to track their genealogies. The publishing of these genealogies became widespread during the 17th and 18th century. At this time, a lot of falsified genealogies appeared under the cover of social chaos.

In the 14th–16th centuries, the four class classification was strict and stable. Since economic opportunities to change social status were limited, there were few pressures to change this system.²³⁾ During the 17th and 19th centuries, however, this socioeconomic class system began to lose some of its strength and rigidity, as the result of the momentous social chaos such as the Japanese invasions in 1592 and 1598, as well as, the Manchu invasions in 1627 and 1636. These invasions ravaged the Chosun people and economy, turning a vast area of farmland to waste for a long period thereafter. Later in the dynasty, his remote relatives and his patrilineal descendants were all permitted to acquire *yangban* class status, who not only were officials and passed the national civil service examination, but were also all members of his family. Regardless of wealth and government posts, they were also considered members of a "*yangban* family" and thus shared the ambience of the elite as long as they retained Confucian culture and rituals.²⁴⁾

21) Chie Nakane and Shinzaburo Oishi, op. cit, p. 227.

22) Martina Deuchler, *the Confucian Transformation of Korea: a study of Social and Ideology*, (Council on East Asian Studies: Harvard, 1992), p. 164.

23) From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseon_Dynasty

Furthermore, the changing times of the late Chosun Dynasty and economic activity allowed some social mobility between the classes. Because of the increase in size of the *yangban* class, many *yangban* families faced financial hardships, and were unable to attain government positions, rendering their titles almost meaningless. Meanwhile, some commoners amassed great wealth and even began to buy themselves into social ranking. Fake genealogies could frequently be bought, and commoners occasionally attached their names to *yangban* genealogies to avoid military service taxes.²⁵⁾ Accordingly, although *jogbo* was an exclusive privilege of the *yangban*, most of commoner decent groups began to keep their genealogies in the late Chosun Dynasty.

According to estimates, the percentage of *yangban* was merely 4 percent of the Korean population in the early part of the Chosun period. Although there was considerable local variation, this gradually increased to 9.2 percent by the year of 1690 then to 37.5 percent in 1783, and had mushroomed to an incredible 70.3 percent by 1858.²⁶⁾ Almost all Koreans now claim *yangban* descendant.

As noted during the Tokugawa period, the most important philosophy in their eclectic environment was Neo-Confucianism, which stressed the importance of morals, education and hierarchical order in government and society. The Tokugawa government intentionally created a strict four class system called *mibunsei* (身分制), to stabilize the country, though it differed from Korea and China by enshrining a military elite at the top of the social hierarchy. The samurai constituted about 5 percent of the total population in the 17th century.²⁷⁾

At the end of the Tokugawa era the *samurai* population held consistently at around 6 percent.²⁸⁾ This situation in Japan contrasted sharply with that of Chosun Korea. There

24) Andrea Matles Savada and William Shaw, editors, *South Korea: A Country Study*, (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), pp. 91-92.

25) *Ibid.*, p. 93.

26) Atlas Hangunsa Pyunchanwiwonhoi, *Historical atlas of Korea*, (sageyejeol, 2004), pp. 132-133.

27) http://en.wikipedia.org/Edo_period. For details, see Population according to classes. Neil Skene Smith B., *Materials on Japanese Social and Economic History*, (University Publication of America, 1979), pp. 31-37.

28) Chie Nakane and Shinzaburo Oishi, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

was little fluctuation in the *samurai* population because class status was hereditary. Hierarchical movement was not allowed into the *samurai* from lower classes, even when the Tokugawa samurai became a hereditary class of bureaucrats. Peasants on the second level were at least 80 percent of the whole population. Below the peasants were artisans and merchants. In 1800, artisans and merchants were about 10 percent of the population. Outcasts with professions, so-called *eta*(穢多) and *hinin* (非人), were considered impure, and formed a fifth class.

Samurai, craftsmen and merchants lived around their *daimyo*'s castles, and during the long Tokugawa peace created a thriving town environment around the political center of a domain. Most castle towns were built during the few years between 1580 and 1610. The *daimyo* and their *samurai* did not produce any goods themselves, but they used the tax surplus from the land to fuel their consumption. *Samurai* were paid a stipend from their lord. A Samurai member in the Tokugawa period was similar to a salaried man modern day. His needs were met by artisans, who moved closer to the castles, and merchants, who traded local and regional goods. Each class in the city was restricted to living in its own quarter. In Tokugawa Japan, eventually the rise of a townsmen culture came to challenge the samurai grip on power, in contrast to Chosun Korea where there was no internal development of trade and commerce.²⁹⁾As part of an early effort to separate the *samurai* class from the peasants, peasants were allowed to live in rural areas. As part of the same process, the Proclamation of Seven Articles issued by *bakuhu* obligated peasants to pay taxes from their assigned land. It also tried to protect them from excessive exploitation by giving them the right to leave the village with a legitimate reason, and also banned the samurai class from executing peasants without “legitimate cause”.³⁰⁾ In 1649, thirty-two articles were issued and promulgated as the frugality ordinance. It was known as, the Keian no Ofuregaki (慶安御触書: “Proclamations of the Keian era”). It was directed toward farmers insisting that paying taxes was their primary responsibility, followed by working diligently on their farms. Peasants were strictly prohibited from buying, selling,

29) Walter H. Slote and George A. De Vos, *Confucianism and the Family*, (published by State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998), p. 111.

30) Ibid., p. 41.

or abandoning their land or from changing their occupation. As a result, many would not be able to support even their own family because of heavy and unequal tax burdens imposed on them by the *daimyo*. The village had been the unit for collecting land taxes. Peasants rarely moved beyond their village because journeys and pilgrimages required a permit.

V. Surnames and Marriage

One of the biggest differences in Confucianism between Korea and Japan was reflected in their thinking about surnames. All Koreans have surnames as well as ancestral seats. The marriage system in Chosun Korea was characterized by strict clan exogamy and a strong sense of social status. Women were forever separated from their natal lineages at their marriages, after which they were a member of their husband's lineages.³¹⁾ In Korea, there is a tradition of significant social norms of "taboo to have a marriage between two people with the same surname and the clan origin (*donosung-dongbon-bulhon* 同姓同本不婚)".³²⁾ The rule "was the most concrete mechanism by which family identities were maintained, thereby ensuring the integrity of the family as a sociopolitical institution."³³⁾ The range of the ban on consanguineous marriages in Korea was and still remains much broader than in Japan. In case of Korea, for example, lineal and collateral relatives by blood within the eighth degree of kinship now cannot marry each other by law.

As mentioned earlier, "Chu Hsi's Family Rituals" became the basis for rules governing the marriage institution. Under this influence people who had the same surnames and ancestral homes tended to develop a strong collective consciousness of the paternal clan.

31) Nena Vreeland, Peter Just, Kenneth W. Martindale, Philip W. Moeller and Rinn-sup shin, op.cit, p. 82.

32) Article 809 of the Korean Civil Code was the codification of a traditional rule prohibiting marriage between men and women who have the clan name and the clan origin. On July 16, 1997, the Constitutional Court of Korea ruled the article of the Civil Code unconstitutional.)

33) Daniel A. Bell and HahmChaibong (ed.), "Family versus the individual: the politics of marriage laws in Korea," *Confucianism for the modern world* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 336.

Modern Japanese names are very different from those of around 150 years ago. In 1587, Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued a decree forbidding all non-samurai from bearing either swords or adopting that other mark of distinction, surnames. Commoners were not allowed to use surnames until 1870. Only the aristocracy, the samurai, and certain merchants and artisan had that privilege. Moreover, with endorsement from the emperor the government made it mandatory for everyone to choose a surname using a list of authorized Chinese characters (*kanji*). Many people adopted historical names, others simply made names up, chose names through divination, or had a Shinto or Buddhist priest choose a surname for them.³⁴⁾ In 1871, the government established the *koseki-ho* (戸籍法 family-registration law). In 1875, the Meiji government passed a law requiring all Japanese to register surnames for their families as part of efforts to catch up with the West.

Currently, there are so many Japanese surnames due to the number of “legal” *kanji* expanding dramatically. It is estimated that there are 291,129 Japanese family names used in Japan today,³⁵⁾ though a list of the top 100 surnames comprises almost one third the population. This diversity is in stark contrast to the situation with Korean names. Thus, lineal and collateral relatives by blood within the third degree of kinship cannot marry each other. As a result, the range of a ban on consanguineous marriage is very narrow.

Korea, according to 2,000 Population and Housing Census, has only 286 surnames. In Korea, the top five names such as Kim (金), Lee (李), Park (朴), Choi (崔) and Chung (鄭) cover almost half the population. Looking at the percentage of each surname, Kim clans have the highest percentage with 21.6 percent of all Korean population followed by Lee (14.8 percent), Park (8.5 percent), Choi (4.72 percent) and Chung (4.37 percent).

Altogether 4,179 different common ancestral seats (*bongwan* 本貫) that relied on highly patrilineal descent groups still exist. The notion of “*bongwan*” is the name of the locality where a given surname is supposed to have derived from. A Korean clan is a group of

34) Hiroshi Morioka, *ZengokuMyoujiDaijiten*(全国名字大辞典), (Tokyodoushuppan,2011). Japanese surname are classified into seven surnames: place(85 percent), topographic(5 percent), occupational(5 percent), object(2 percent), given(1 percent), composite and abbreviation(1 percent), creation and bestowing names(1 percent). <http://blog.livedoor.jp/namepower/archives/1239905.html>

35) Houbunkan, *Nihon MyoujiDaijiten*(日本苗字大事典), (Houbunkanshuppanbu, 1997)

people that share the same paternal ancestor, and is indicated by the combination of a same clan name and an ancestral seat. An ancestral seat does not change by marriage or adoption and are used to distinguish different clans that bear the same surname name. There are 349 different common ancestral seats for Kims, 276 for Lees, 159 for Parks, 136 for Chung and 159 for Chois, respectively.³⁶⁾ For example, those surnamed Kim can be divided between 349 different clan ancestors, each of whom are identified with a different ancestral seat. The two most populous branches of the Kim clans are members of the approximately 4.12 million Gimhae (金海) Kim and members of the approximately 1.73 million Gyeongju (慶州) Kim. These two Kim clans are considered different clans, even though they happen to share the same surname. As long as their ancestral seats are different, a Gimhae Kim and a Gyeongju Kim are not considered "relatives," and therefore can inter-marry. Before the 1997 Constitutional Court decision, however, marriage between a man and a woman of the 4.12 million Gimhae Kim could not marry, regardless of the distance of their relationship.

Koreans make no terminological distinction between lineage and clan, using one term to refer to both. The term clan is used here to denote the largest localized expression of the lineage. The village clan is an institution based on common descent and common residence. Next to the extended family itself, the clan was the most important social institution in traditional agrarian Korea and retains much of its influence in modern times. It was formed of the households of a given lineage within a community, centered on an agnatic core of male household heads (*gabujang*) directly related to a single chief. In villages where a lineage is particularly populous, it is usually divided into two or more segmentary lineages which might be considered subclans.³⁷⁾

VI. Descent Groups and Household (*Ie*) Groups

When compared to the concept of lineage group (*dozoku* 同族) between Korea and Japan, the structure of Korean lineage group organization is distinct in that it is “a

36) Korea Census Offices, 2000 Population and Housing Census of Korea, (Korea Census Offices, 2000).

37) Nena Vreeland, Peter Just, Kenneth W. Martindale, Philp W. Moeller and Rinn-sup shin, op.cit, p. 83.

patrilineal descent group. The organizing of lineage group is guaranteed by the concept of hereditary of social status."³⁸⁾ Also, Korea's lineage group is "a patrilineal descent group, and formally refers to, male line relatives with the same surname and the clan origin."³⁹⁾ In the Chosun Dynasty, a lineage group system depended on highly structured patrilineal descent groups. These *munjung* (門中 patrilineages) comprised patrilineal descent groups who originated their common decent from an apical ancestor (*sijo* 始祖) and identified themselves with a common surname and a common clan origin.⁴⁰⁾ Moreover, the integrity of the clan lineage was maintained by the keeping of *jogbo*, recording all relevant information. The keeping of *jogbo* made possible the establishment of blood ties with a wide range of paternal relatives.

In such form, the Japanese 'ie'(家; household) society has having ultra-kin, genealogical continuity, functional systemicity and independence as its characteristics.⁴¹⁾ Thus, the Japanese household, known as an 'ie' might be classified as an ongoing management community rather than a family.

The previous Tokugawa period in Japan, the most important unit was the extended compound family. The Japanese word 'ie' originally referred to a residence or to the premises. The relationship between *oya* (親 parents) and *ko* (子 children) was not necessarily a biological one.⁴²⁾ The family system was more loosely defined than Korea, which had been more strongly influenced by Confucianism, and with a strong family system was to the aristocrats and the *samurai*.

During the Tokugawa era the extended compound family lost its importance. Land taxes were normally paid to the feudal lords by the small stem family. However, families in a village were given collective responsibility for crime and for non-payment of taxes.

38) Suzuki Eitaro, *Chosunnounsonshatousaki(A Survey on Chosun Agricultural Society)*, (Osakayagoshoten, 1944), p. 62.

39) Choi Chae-sok, *Nongchonsahoihak(Agricultural Sociology)*, (Minhosa, 1965), p. 95.

40) Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Social and Ideology*, p. 7.

41) Murakami Yasusuke, Kumonshumpei, Sato Seizaburo, *BunmeitositenoeShakai(Society as a Pattern of Civilization)*, (Chuokoronsha, 1979), p. 224.

42) Yoshio Sugimoto and Ross E. Mouer, *Constructs For Understanding Japan*(Kegan Paul International Limited, 1989), p. 205.

Teams of peasant families were formed groups of five households called a *goninkumi* (五人組)⁴³⁾. When one family failed to pay its land taxes, the other four families would be forced to make up the difference. If one member committed a crime and fled, then his fellows would have to pay compensation on their behalf. If a *goninkumi* failed to pay its share, the village as a whole was made to pay. These semi-legal regional relationships between peasants, thus, came to be more important than blood ties. Nevertheless, the continued emphasis on primogeniture meant that blood relationships would retain some importance when defining interpersonal relationships within the village community.⁴⁴⁾

Under these circumstances, the stem family emerged as the major family unit. In the stem family, the first born son succeeds as a head of the family. Other sons establish branch families or marry out if at all possible. Otherwise they remain unmarried. Daughters marry and enter other households, except when all the children are girls. The continuity of the household is a central concern for the head of family. The original family comes to stand the top of a huge genealogical hierarchy of *dozoku*. The eldest son has special privileges and obligations. In Japan these stem families tended to form a lineage group (*dozoku*). The land is the property of the household and should be managed by the next head. Under these conditions, the 'ie' and the *dozoku* in the village community still function.⁴⁵⁾

The Japanese family system was defined by establishment of the Meiji Civil Code of 1898, and the male line-oriented family system had been introduced. Under the Meiji Civil Code the family system limited to aristocrats and samurai during the Edo period, was expanded to all people. Under the this system, a small group consisting of kinship and living in a house is considered as a family and a family has a householder(戸主) who

43) The *goningumi* were primarily aimed at combating the vagabondage and brigandage of the time, including mutual defence against the *ronin* (浪人), a samurai with no lord or master. They were headed by a leader who was usually elected from within, but sometimes appointed from above. The groups did not always contain five households. In some districts, the groups could comprise six, or even ten, households. The *goningumi* were formal institutions, involved in law enforcement. The practice was resurrected during World War II, when the Japanese government mobilized the nation for the war effort.

44) *Ibid.*, p. 205.

45) *Ibid.*, pp. 205-8.

was given authority to lead a family. This system was based on the feudal and patriarchal family system of the samurai class. Furthermore, Article 746 stipulated that "the head and the members of a house bear the name of the house," and Article 788 stipulated that "by marriage the wife enters the house of the husband." The modern "single surname system" has also been established by this law. Therefore, by marriage, a woman changed her surname to that of her husband. In doing so, she essentially deserted her birth group and was assimilated into her household group. In these ways, the 'ie' system has played an important role in Japan. For instance, heirs of 'ie' could generally be succeeded only by the eldest son, who expected his parents to live with his family. Only when the eldest son is not available, or not able to assume this position, would one of the younger sons do so. The remaining sons and daughters are eventually required to leave home.⁴⁶⁾ The remaining sons could not receive an inheritance, went into household without no a male heir as an adopted son or also were hired in by large-scale farmers and merchants. As industrialization progressed, they become integral part of modern industry as city workers. They are in turn, the driving force for the promotion of industrialization.

In rural areas farmers began to fade from glory of division of land by inheritance. In order to maintain farmers' position the Tokugawa *Shogunate* in 1673, promulgated law limited the division of land in inheritance. As a result, since the middle of the Tokugawa period, inheritance by the eldest son exclusively has become customary. If there is no a male heir, the son-in-law (*mukoyoshi*) is adopted into the family. This is done to preserve the name and occupation of the family when there is no suitable male heir. Also, if there is no daughter, the son-in-law can take a bride from outside his adopted family. Kinship ties to the head of the household or his wife were not an indispensable factor in adopting a successor, the candidate's ability and suitability for carrying on the household name being considered more important.⁴⁷⁾

46) Kenichi Tominaga, "Chapter 8: Kazoku no Kouzouhendou (家族の構造変動)", *Nihon no kindai to shakaihendou*(日本の近代化と社会変動), (Koudanshabunko, 1990).

47) Chie Nakane and Shinzaburo Oishi, op. cit, p. 217.

Among merchant households particularly, a son deemed unsuitable to carry on the family business might well be excluded to establish his own home, while a longtime and faithful employee might be chosen as the successor and adopted into the household through his marriage to a daughter. In the merchant households of the Edo era, the employees of larger retail stores and wholesalers were divided into carefully prescribed ranks. These ranks were *detchi* (丁稚: apprentice), *tedai* (手代: clerk) and *bantoh* (番頭: head clerk). Most employees were hired at approximately age 10 and were promoted to become department managers after serving for 10 to 15 years. It usually took from 12 to 18 years to advance to the rank of head clerk. But competition was severe, and no more than 10 percent of all employees were promoted from apprentice to head clerk, usually around the age of 30.⁴⁸⁾ The *bantoh* served for many years, signing contracts to use some form of the shop name and the *noren* (暖簾: shop curtain) from the main house. There is a tradition for the branch house. The merchant household, called "large stores", is a well-known example. After modernization, small merchant households also were seen, and referred to as "*norenwake*." At that time the branch house can receive financial support and can have separate customers. A *bunke* (分家: related branch house) is a branch house established by collateral of the *honke* (本家: main house). In this way, the relationship between the main family and branch family is based on lineages rather than blood ties.

On the other hand, family and lineage were fundamental to the Chosun Confucian order. Significantly, the perpetuation of family lines by paternal blood ties was very important.

The main purpose of marriage in the Chosun kinship system was the childbearing of male children to carry on as householder and leader of ancestor worship. The continuation of the male line was so important that, if no male were available, Koreans might take a male child or adult from within patrilineal descent groups to serve as the male heir. However it was a taboo to adopt a child of a different clan name or a different origin. Therefore, the new heir must share the same combination of the family name and ancestral seat. Even when the child belonged to the same clan, the order of generation was

48) Ibid., pp. 159-162.

important. If the order of generation of a projected heir was higher than their future parents, he could not be permitted to fill the role.⁴⁹⁾ The Japanese, in contrast, often take the adopted child of a different family name.

As mentioned above, in terms of kinship, the clan of Korea and the same family of Japan differ. In Korea, blood relationships were given primary emphasis. Blood relationships were not absolutely important in Japan because of the existing concept of the ‘*ie*’ in Japan.

In the case of inheritance, the father and children in Korea represent “the stem and branches”. Therefore, personal belongings like assets, property, as well as enterprises are bequeathed to blood-related individuals, namely from father to son. In Japan, conversely, the acceptance into the family of those with weak family blood ties, created more diversity of human resources and patterns of inheritance. In part for this reason, technology transfer might be easier in Japan than in Korea.

VII. Conclusion

In Tokugawa Japan, the political structure was a feudal system called *bakuhau*. The political system was a mixture of centralized and decentralized authorities. A concentration of population and economic development were seen by forming regional castle towns, in contrast to Chosun Korea where there was no internal development of trade and commerce. Tokugawa Japan was able to accomplish active trades and the development of their market economy through the unit of *han* through the development of commerce. Meanwhile, Chosun Korea was a fully centralized authority, there was no historical precedent for the decentralized authorities.

Chosun has maintained only a unitary philosophy of Neo-Confucianism as the dominant thought and religion. In contrast, in Tokugawa Japan Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto all coexisted without harming each other, maintaining a pluralistic structure of

49) Recently the clan or family name is not a deciding factor in adoption. It is due that now it is legally possible to adopt a child from a different clan and family name, and also change the child's family name.

religious thought. Tokugawa was also more pluralistic and diverse in the field of thought and studies owing to a history of eclectic borrowing of foreign influences. Also, this may be closely related to the fact that there was no national civil service examination system in Japan; Confucianism was institutionally weak.

In Chosun Korea, there was no comparable experience related to ‘expanded household (*ie*)’. In Chosun Korea filial piety to kinship groups was often deemed more important than loyalty to the state. Filial piety was the prime virtue by which clan lineage was preserved, and ancestor worship was its salient feature. Filial piety to the kinship group strengthened the integration of within the family, but was unable to integrate separate families without blood relationship.

Chosun Korea, by the institution of patriarchal society and extreme clan exogamy, had definitely stronger kinship group consciousness than in Japan. Blood relationships were not absolutely important in Japan because of the existing concept of the household (*ie*) consciousness in Japan. The continuation of the male line was so important that, if no male were available, Koreans might adopt a male child or adult from within patrilineal descent groups to serve as the male heir. The Japanese, in contrast, often adopt a child of a different family name. In Japan, the acceptance into the family of those with weak family blood ties, created more diversity of human resources and patterns of inheritance. In part for this reason, the technology transfer might be easier in Japan than in Korea.

Moreover, in Korea, craftsmen and skilled laborers have been neglected among intellectuals. The studies in technical and professional fields such as agriculture, science, technology and engineering have been neglected since the Chosun Dynasty adopted the four class system. In Korea, the range of high to low in occupational consciousness has strongly remained, except for some special occupations, and parents tend to not want their occupations to be inherited by their children. Meanwhile, in Korean societies, through education, the social mobility between generations can be moved, and the social environment across generations can be moved through the network. Under these environments, Korean society has become an even more competitive society. Furthermore, education has been functioning as the positive aspect that strengthens the energy of economic development. The tradition of national civil service has had a deep impact on

the Korean way of life from ancient time through the present. This may become the source of human resources to support economic development.

On the other hand, unlike the situation in Korea, a sense of occupational mission in Japan has appeared and persists in the identity of modern day descendent in the attitude of the samurai who protect the family stipend and business. It may be closely related to the fact that class status was hereditary, and hierarchical movement was not allowed into the *samurai* from lower classes. Especially in Japan, the consciousness of 'ie', in the examples of the family business, the household name, and family occupation, seems not to be related to Confucianism. Yet Confucianism remains in many aspects of Japanese culture.

As a result, Japan has the Confucian culture, and at the same time remnants of feudal society have strongly remained. The Confucian culture of Japanese society has a very distinctive characteristic enough to be called a mutation. The loyalty to the *han* in the past has transformed into loyalty to the company in modern day, which is a result of cultural continuity.

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