

L'héritage familial immatériel au Japon

Immaterial family inheritance in Japan

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A. Marriage and inheritance

In his book entitled *Métamorphoses de la parenté* (Transformations of Kinship), Maurice Godelier explains that studying kinship means investigating:

- 1. descent, material and immaterial objects inherited and handed down through following generations,
- 2. marriage rules, alliance strategies, incest prohibition (and residence after marriage, family, lineage),
- 3. representations about what a child is, the conception process, a child's development and the meaning in different cultures of the words "fatherhood", "motherhood", "blood relations", "affinity" and so on, as well as all the rights and the duties binding relatives together.

➔ My thesis was about point two. The present proposed research will explore point one.

B. Main old forms of marriages

Mariage	Cérémonie	Résidence
Par « entrée de la bru » (<i>yome iri kon</i> 嫁入り婚) Yome-entering marriage	Maison de l'époux Into the husband's household	Virilocale Into the husband's household
Par « entrée du gendre » (<i>muko iri kon</i> 婿入り婚) Muko-entering marriage	Maison de l'épouse Into the wife's household	Uxorilocale Into the wife's household
Par « pose du pied » (<i>ashi ire kon</i> 足入れ婚) Foot-in marriage	Maison de l'époux Into the husband's household	

➡ What is the meaning of marriage within contemporary Japanese society?



C. Evolution of inheritance law

- Before 1946: unequal sharing in favor of the eldest son

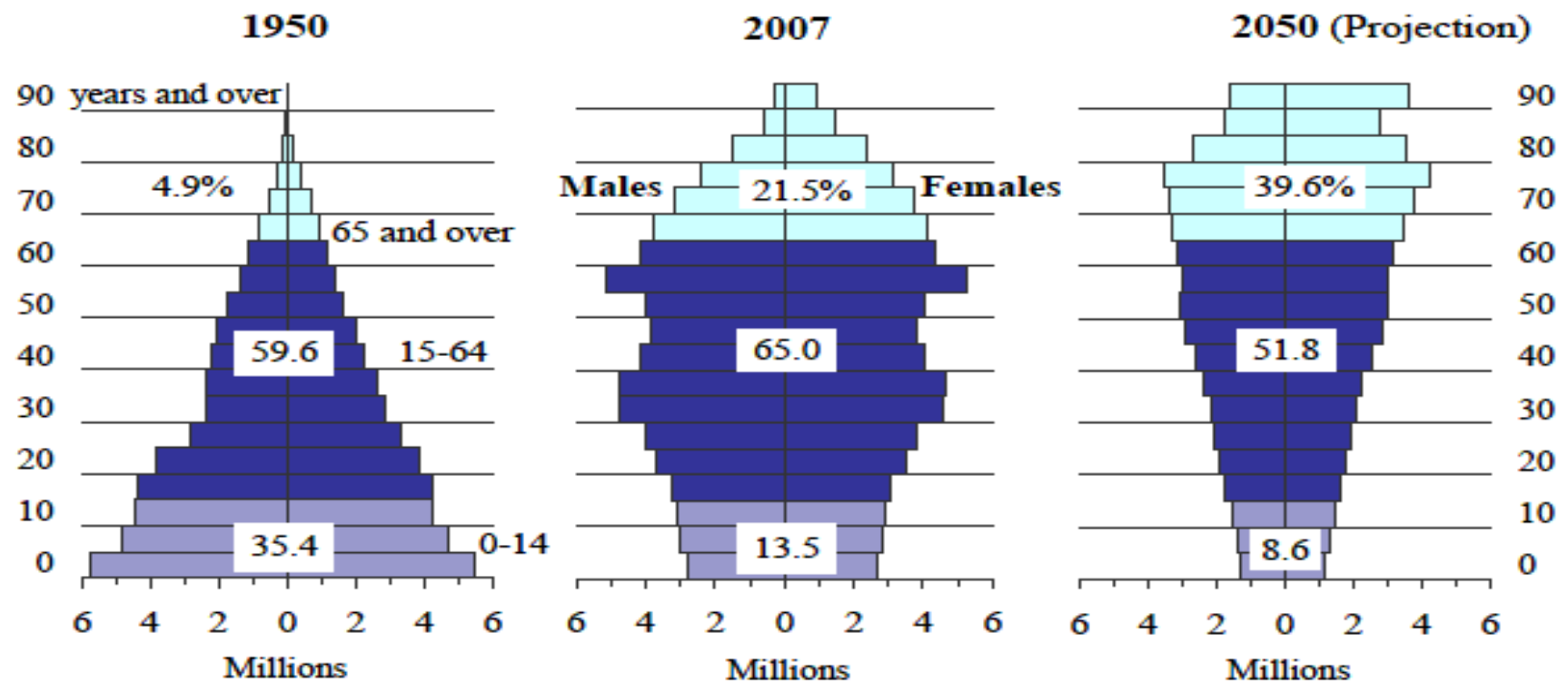


Changes in the law : equal sharing

- Persistence of old ways of thinking and acting
 - Ex: - survey
 - weaknesses in the law

D. Ageing Japanese population

Figure 2.3
Changes in the Population Pyramid



Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.



E. Expected Impacts

In *The Japanese Family System in Transition*, Ochiai Emiko 落合恵美子 (1997) predicts that:

1. The last vestiges of the *ie* are destined to disappear because of the declining birth rate and the growing number of households with only daughters as direct descendants (one in four if it is considered that each couple has two children on average)
2. It will force Japanese society to become bilateral.



F. Proposed research

- Proposed perspective : immaterial inheritance because it is controlled less by law
- Points to investigate :
 - - inheritance and parents/children relationship
 - - inheritance and husband/wife relationship
 - - inheritance and grandparents/grandchildren relationship
- Method and location

Location



G. Conclusion