

Changes of family pattern before and after the war from Ozu's films

家族のパターン：戦前と戦後 (小津の映画について)

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Background: Joy first mentions the importance of kin relations as a base for Japanese family system and introduces the debate about the conflicts between traditional Japanese family system (since Meiji period, combined style of samurai and Confucian) and modern Japanese family system (western influences). One thing important is that “family system” does not necessarily equal “family”, because rather than only referring to a household, it includes history, tradition and cultural aspects as well.

War and western influences had certainly imposed a change on Japanese's family systems. According to Sugimoto, there are several family system changes:

1. From couple with children or extended family to single family, and there is an obvious decline in extended family in modern society.
2. About women, as women gradually gain their rights, the divorce rate increased and the labor market of women trend was like a M curve. He then talks about the four types of married women, which are part-time worker & housewives, career women, full time housewives and networkers. Inspired by him, my hypothesis regarding the change of family pattern are:
 1. women's position would be higher than pre-war time in families, and therefore the interpersonal relationships between family members would be stronger.
 2. Size of family would be reduced. Young people became more independent after the war, so that they would leave the big family in which their parents and grandparents live, and form a smaller family.

仮説：

1. 家族内で女性の地位が戦前より高くなったため、家族のメンバー間の関係が強まったであろう。
2. 若い人たちは戦前より独立的になったため、家族のサイズが小さくなったであろう。

Different from past research that focused on the data from real life, my research will draw resources from both reality and Ozu's films. I will connect all the Ozu's film that focused on family to the reality in those years, **revealing Ozu's view about the change, and analyze the way he expresses it in the films.**

この研究では今までの研究と違い現実と小津の映画の両方を資料として使用する。

Ozu's films 小津安二郎の映画

Tokyo Story 東京物語 – a change of family pattern

The story happens right after WW II, the beginning of 1950. It is a story about the collapse of fraternal rights and the formation of nuclear families. Grandsons are no longer familiar with grandparents, even afraid of them at first, and there is no place for grandparents to live in their house. Children are all growing up, like Ozu said, becoming very busy, struggling for their life, and therefore have no time to spend time with their old parents. They accept the western ideas that younger generations do not have to live with parents.

これは、核家族の形成と父権の崩壊についての話である。

Late Spring 晩春 - a change of Women's status

The story happens in 1949, the end of late spring. In this movie, most scenes are of women: they use casual language with men, tell jokes, and laugh loudly. When the main character's classmate talks about her ex-husband, she says she wants to punch him and hate him so much. Japanese women are thought to be kind and domestic and gentle, thus this impolite language also shows a change. Also, Mars-Jones mentions that “remarriage in traditional Japanese culture, especially for women, was seen as an offense against the existing family. However, it doesn't seem to apply here, her classmate does not care about this, and Noriko, the main character also does not. It shows that both of them are modern Japanese girls instead of traditional ones.

これは、登場する若い女性達が伝統的な日本女性ではなく現代の日本女性であることを示している。



Thoughts from Ozu: I tried to represent the collapse of the Japanese family system through showing children growing up.

Hara Setsuko, everyone knows her and likes her in Ozu's era. Same name, same actress, and the same smile, were in many of Ozu's films.

Conclusions & Implications 結論

If Kurosawa is a representative of Samurai culture, Mizoguchi is a representative of Kabuki culture, then Ozu would be the best representative of 市井の人の文化 (civilian culture).

His films perfectly prove my hypothesis that family became smaller and women's status became higher after WWII compared with traditional families. The conflicts between tradition and modern western culture brought by the United States during wartime are the main reasons for these changes. However, the implications under these changes should also be focused. For example, the collapse of fraternal rights should be examined. Also, rather than focusing on the closer interpersonal relationship within the smaller families on the face, we should pay attention to the distance between the younger generations and the older generations as they represents the “traditional and the “modern”.