

# How Family Works?:

## Childcare Support Networks in Taiwan and Japan

Kinuyo Ohne

### 要約

#### 家族をめぐるネットワークと女性の就業

台湾女性のライフコースパターンは、この20年間にM字型から右肩下がりの型へ大きな変化を遂げた。その要因として、急速に進んだ台湾女性の高学歴化が指摘されている。一方、日本女性のライフコースパターンは、高学歴女性の割合が高いにもかかわらず、第一子誕生前後に仕事を辞め、子育て後に再就業をするというM字型曲線を維持している。乳幼児の養育が特に重視される日本で、子育てのために家庭に入る女性の多くが、社会的ネットワークの希薄な子育てに、孤立感を高めストレスを感じている。一方、働きながら子育てをする女性たちの多くは、仕事と家庭の両立に苦しんでいる。台湾の家族を取り巻くネットワークは、おじ、おばなどを含め豊富な血縁によるサポートが特徴的である。加えて、海外からの移住労働者による家事労働、育児の提供も法的に整備されている。しかし、家庭領域を家事労働者に依存することによって、台湾女性は、女性としてのアイデンティティに不安を感じている。少子化世代が家族形成期を迎えている現在、家族のサポートネットワークの再編成が要請されている。どのような方向でのネットワークの提案が可能だろうか。

I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to talk to you today. I would like to consider the relationship between family and work. **PP1**

The significant rise of female's labor force participation in recent decades has become a focal topic worldwide. The linkage between family and employment has come to our attention, especially, in East and Southeast Asia, which are in the face of the aging society with fewer children,

South-East Asian and Japanese welfare regimes are said to be classified under a so-called "familism" regime<sup>1</sup> .

Have you ever seen this curve? **PP2** This chart indicates the labor-participation rate of Japanese women in 2000. Now I would like to look at female labor participation in some other East and Southeast Asian countries, such as China, Singapore, Thailand, Korea, Taiwan and Japan. **PP3** The most important point here is that there are three types of women's life-course<sup>2</sup> .

**PP4** China and Thailand in Type1 have one plateau, which is similar to Western industrialized nations'. **PP5** Taiwan and Singapore are categorized into Type2, which has one peak and is decreasing with age.

**PP6** Japan and Korea belong to Type3, a M-shaped pattern Type.

**PP7** The next M-shaped curve is the labor participation rate of Taiwanese women in 1980<sup>3</sup>. There has been a rapid expansion of education for women last two decade in Taiwan. And the 2004 investigation shows that 70% of highly educated women have chosen the life-style of dual-earner households<sup>4</sup>. **PP8** So this shift from 1980 to 2000 comes from the participation of the well educated marriage women.

**PP9** But about 70% of women in Japan quit their jobs when they are going to have a baby. They re-enter the labor market after they complete child-rearing stage, but most of them are employed as part-time workers.

Let's take a look at some key factors which would make these considerable differences between Taiwan and Japan? **PP10**

The next slide of the summarized date (**PP11**) is based upon the recent study on support networks for childcare in Asia societies<sup>6</sup>. Please look at a multiple support pattern of Taiwan. In Japan, grandparents are unavailable to offer care not only because they live apart from their grandchildren, but also because they are more likely to continue working. The Japanese kin network is poorer than the Taiwanese one.

**PP12** In 1992, the Japanese government passed the law concerning the welfare of workers who take care of children or other family members. This law permits childcare leave for either a male or a female partner when his/her child is less than one year old. According to the survey in 2007, only 1.5% of fathers take the childcare leave, in contrast to more than 70 % of women when they are going to have a child<sup>7</sup>. There is a traditional Japanese proverb: the soul of the 3-year-old lasts till 100. What children learn for their first three years effectively remains to the rest of their lives. Consequently, the Japanese prefer getting in touch with their children especially when they are young. Although there are many women who have voluntarily chosen to stay at home and raise children, the responsibility for nursing alone and the isolation from the society can be a big source of stress for Japanese young mothers. On the contrary, mothers who choose careers also have to struggle with fulfilling two

demanding roles of a good mother and a successful career woman.

When we look at some surveys in contemporary Taiwan, the kin-network is still strong, since not only grandfather and grandmother but also uncles, aunts, and cousins are supportive for any isolated nuclear family, although young couples do not want to live with a husband's family as much as they used to<sup>8</sup>. **PP13** Besides these various kinship relations, the Taiwan government officially announced the importance of foreign domestic-workers in 1992. Since then, many upper- and middle- class families have depended on foreign maids as a source of keeping house and nursing. This custom has changed the sphere of domesticity into the workplace, and a role of housewives into a household manager. Multiple networks for the employed women seem very helpful to the Japanese women. However, it turned out that many of Taiwanese females depending on the domestic workers feel constant anxiety about playing the three different roles: a woman, a wife, and a mother. They are now confronting an identity crisis<sup>9</sup>.

There are several other minor differences concerning Asian families. The efforts made by female to reconcile work with the child and family care has caused low fertility in an aging society. The equal responsibilities between women and men in childcare and household matters should be the important factor now. **PP14** Additionally, the new generation of the low fertility rate will be parents in the near future,. The nuclear families in Asia require a new network replacing a traditional kinship.

Today I've talked about the different childrearing patterns in terms of the roles females in Asia, especially in Taiwan and Japan. Would you give us suggestion how to construct a new support network in Japan, since your country has a strong bond between relations? Would you also some suggestion about my views on the female's identity crisis in Taiwan?

## Reference

1. Esping-Andersen, Gøsta, 1990, *The three World of Welfare Capitalism*,

- Cambridge, Polity Press: 岡沢憲美・宮本太郎監訳、『福祉資本主義の三つの世界』ミネルヴァ書房、2001
2. 落合恵美子、山根真理、宮坂靖子編、『アジアの家族とジェンダー』、勁草書房、2007
  3. 広田照幸監修、『リーディングス日本の教育と社会 第3巻 子育て・しつけ』、日本図書センター、2006
  4. 落合前掲書
  5. 『男女共同参画白書 平成20年版』内閣府  
<http://www.gender.go.jp/whitepaper/h20/zentai/top.html>
  6. 落合前掲書
  7. 『平成19年度 雇用均等基本調査』厚生労働省  
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/list/71-19.html>
  8. Ying-Hwa Chang, Kin Network and Its Effect on the Psychological Well-Being of the Youth : The Case of Taiwan, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 2008 ,Journal of Comparative Family Studies
  9. Shu-Ju Ada Cheng, When the Personal Meets the Global at Home: Filipina Domestic and Their Female Employers in Taiwan, Frontiers-A Journal of Women's Studies, 2004, University of Nebraska Press
  10. 『平成20年版少子化社会白書』内閣府  
<http://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/whitepaper/w2008/20webhonpen/html/i1112000.html#clm>