

Ancestor Worship and Family Structure in Japan

UENO Kazuo

This paper describes and analyses ancestor worship in Japanese family, especially Ihai (memorial tablet of ancestors) cult. In the Japanese family, various forms of ancestor worship is practiced traditionally and briskly. These ancestor worship is practiced every day and special events in the year. There are various types of ancestor worship in Japan, feneral and grave system, succession system of ancestor's personal name, mourning rule, and fukudanka system (double affiliation system to the family temple) are some example. Among the various types of ancestor worship, I analysed the succession system of ancestor's personal name (UENO 1982, Structure of personal names and family types in Japan., in *Review of economics and political science, Meiji University*, vol. 50, No.5-6, pp. 249-321.). This paper has very much to do with my previous paper.

In this paper I attempt to clarify the relationship between ancestor worship and family structure typologically. In the other paper, I classified Japanese family typologically into four types from family construction, and three types from family structure. (UENO 1984, Family structure in Japan, in *Nihon Minzokubunka Taikai (An Outline of Japanese Folk-culture)*, vol. 8, pp. 409-454.). Four types of family construction are as follows. (1) Extended family type, (2) Stem family type, (3) Family type with inkyo system (inkyo is domestic residential separation system into some smaller units in the family), and (4) Nuclear family type. Three types of Family struction are as follows. (1) Patrilateral family, (2) Patrilateral conjugal family, and (3) Bilateral conjugal family.

The data on which this paper is based were collected by my fieldwork from 1970 to 1983 and from various reports and papers by Japanese folklorist, anthropologist and sociologist. I analysed these data from two points. First point is form of memorial tablet, for example shape, material, site in the house etc, and rule of cult. Second point is kinship relationships between ancestors which is worshipped by memorial tablets and living members of the family, especially family head. Then I classified Japanese ihai cult into three types. First type is *Patrilineal type*. In this type Fa (father), Mo (mother), Fa Fa, Fa Mo, Fa Fa Fa, Fa Fa Mo of family head is worshipped by the memorial tablet in the same family. Second type is *Bilateral Type*. In this type Fa and Mo, Fa Fa and Fa Mo, Mo Fa and Mo Mo, or wife's Fa and Mo of family head are worshipped in the given family. Third type is intermediate type of the two types. In this type, Mother's parents or wife's parents are worshipped temporarily in the family. In many areas this

type of ihai cult is called *Ihaiwake*.

In conclusion, the relationship between types of ihai cult and family structure is as follows.

family types	types of ihai cult
(1) Extended family type	(1) Patrilineal type
(2) Stem family type	(2) Ihaiwake type
(3) Family type with inkyo system	(3) Bilateral type
(4) Nuclear family type	