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学位論文題目 The Organization of Merchant Houses in Tokugawa
Japan - a Comparison with the Low Countries -

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論文内容の要旨

The Organization of Merchant Houses in Tokugawa Japan – a Comparison with the Low Countries –

The goal of this study is to consider the organization of the most representative unit of business in Japan during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), the merchant house, through a comparison with pre-industrial firms from the Low Countries, the present Belgium and Netherlands. It is accepted that Tokugawa Japan possessed a well-developed commercial economy. Business organization applied by merchants from the Low Countries ranked among the most advanced in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. In my dissertation the method of comparative history is applied in order to highlight the common characteristics and peculiarities in the organization of firms in early modern Europe and Japan.

Previous historical studies on Japanese merchant houses and comparisons with Europe have concentrated, first, on organizational aspects of the *ie* as an early modern Japanese type of commercial concern; these works were aimed at seeking the origins of contemporary Japanese-style management, or at discovering characteristics of the joint-stock company such as incorporation, limited liability, perpetual succession, and personal separation of management and ownership in Tokugawa merchant houses. A second current of works has focused on the role of collectivism in *ie*-organization, and specifically its function in modernization, as opposed to the individualism characteristic for western development. A third group of previously conducted studies considered the position of the family in the firm: although in both Europe and Japan the institution of the family served to ensure the continuity of the business, in the West the firm was subordinate to family interests, while in Japan the opposite held true. In order to assess these suggestions and offer a modified view of the role of the *ie*-concept in the Tokugawa merchant class, I compare characteristics of Japanese commercial houses with prevailing forms of business organization in Europe. The present study focuses on the following three points. (1) Type of business enterprise or external organization; (2) configuration of leadership and representation or internal organization; and (3) continuity of the firm and the role of family, inheritance and succession.

My dissertation centers on a number of case studies concerning representative Japanese merchant families having their origin in the beginning of the early modern period. The case of Mitsui can be considered an ideal type of merchant house organization and centralized family management. In order to get a more balanced view, I add other examples, such as Izumiya-Sumitomo, an enterprise ruled as one household or *ie*, and the Nakai conglomerate of merchant firms originating from the Ômi region. The case of Izumiya in particular offers a valuable insight into the inner workings of a large-scale concern. In addition to scholarly publications by Yasuoka Shigeaki, Miyamoto Mataji, Nakase Toshikazu, Egashira Tsuneharu and others, I examine house codes and constitutions related to organization, succession and inheritance. As a third source of information on internal merchant organization, I make use of the *Oshioki reiruishû*, a collection of

Tokugawa juridical verdicts and punishments, in particular on the Izumiya house feud. I further utilize examples from representative mercantile firms which were based in the Low Countries and active in international trade with Italy and Spain such as the De Groote, the della Faille and the Van Immerseel. In addition to some samples of company contracts and testaments gathered from the archives of the Antwerp Municipal Archives and Court of Bankruptcy (*Insolvente Boedelskamer*), I draw on the secondary works of Roland Baetens, Wilfrid Brulez, J. Everaert and Eddy Stols. An important supplementary source is the customary commercial law of the city of Antwerp, the so-called *Costumen van Antwerpen*, codified in 1582 and 1608.

In the second chapter I examine common types of early modern business enterprise in Europe and Japan and argue that it is important to consider the one-man firm, the partnership and the participation technique as the principal patterns. In Europe, shareholding in other firms or participation (*participatie*) was integrated in the private enterprise as well as the partnership. It allowed an investor or secret partner to place his money in the hands of a trader or a firm and share in profits without risking to lose more than the invested amount. The increased appearance of lasting firms based on a company contract is characteristic for the early modern period. In Antwerp the company as a firm with (yet imperfect) juridical personality was codified in 1582: the formation of separate company capital in joint ownership led to the establishment of a *compagnie* (*compaignie*) or *geselschap van handel*. This type of enterprise remained the most commonly used form throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

A comparison with Japan reveals parallels concerning the existence of similar types of commercial enterprise. The main business form was the individual proprietorship, the private family firm, since Japanese commercial organization revolved around the *ie*. However, in reality partnerships based on either kinship or geographical ties were formed and also the single proprietorship was often composed of an alliance of related families. Participation in money-lending ventures became fairly common during the second half of the Tokugawa period. The absence of the legally established principle of limited liability can be considered an important difference with Europe. Nevertheless, two modes of business organization seem to confirm the *de facto* existence of limited responsibility: first, the system of nominal ownership, which allowed branch firms to function as independent units; and second, the limited partnership-type of merchant house organization in which branch families (*bekke*) participated in the money-lending activities of the main house. These practices closely resemble methods applied in early modern European firms: the establishment of independent branches, and participation in lasting firms. However, in view of the lack of a judicial basis, the suggestion that large merchant houses embodied aspects of limited responsibility, needs to be corroborated by additional evidence. More illustrations are required to substantiate both legal consequences of nominal shop ownership to liability, and the possible existence of internally agreed limited liability comparable to European modes of operation.

The third chapter examines the internal organization of the unit of business. During Europe's early modern period a shift occurred from the centralized, vertically organized firm to a decentralized, horizontally organized partnership. The former was usually headed by a *pater*

familias, and relied on representation abroad by salaried factors, often sons or other kin, who were in charge of the local branches. Gradually more partnerships between equal partners were established. However, due to the expanded international business environment, independent subsidiaries and temporary agents working on commission (*commissionairs*) replaced the permanent representatives. The overall size of the firm decreased and a low degree of managerial delegation was characteristic. Management based on consultation was the contractual prerequisite, although in reality the associate who made the highest investment possessed the decisive say in management and functioned as the main coordinator of business. Also larger manufacturing enterprises, such as the Plantin-Moretus printing business, showed little separation between ownership and control.

In Japan, a reverse development can be observed in the expansion of the firm from the middle of the Tokugawa period onwards. The early separation between management and ownership and the extensive delegation of authority to salaried managers are often quoted as chief features of early modern Japanese business history. The institutionalization of consultation and the establishment of administrative bodies reduced the power of managers. On the basis of data provided by an examination of Sumitomo's development, I describe how the coexistence of a high degree of managerial delegation and the preservation of control by the family members constituted a salient characteristic. The Izumiya feud further reveals the conflict between the ideal of *ie*-collectivism and joint-management on the one hand, and personal interests leading to the formation of opposing factions on the other.

The fourth chapter studies the continuity of the enterprise and the role of the family, inheritance and succession in Europe and Japan. Scholarly works often juxtapose the "perpetual existence" of Japanese houses and the *a priori* limited continuance of European firms. The early modern European firm was characterized by short-term commitments; a lasting concern was actually a succession of several firms, with numerous contract renewals, new partners, and diverse investors. Unlimited liability of the associates in a partnership was a factor contributing to that periodic character. Normally the partnership ended with the death of an associate. Discontinuation of the firm before the end of the contractual period was not infrequently avoided through the appointment of a successor in testaments and company contracts, or the contractual provision that associates in the partnership could continue the legacy of the deceased for the benefit of the heirs. The tendency to prevent litigation was one interesting contractual clause that aimed at promoting continuity. Family firms offered more opportunities and incentives for reinvestment of capital and pursuit of continuity, since the social status of the family was directly linked to the prosperity of the firm. In the Low Countries inheritance usually implied a division of the family estate. Efforts were made, however, to ensure the continuance of the firm through a number of methods. One or more successors to the firm title could be assigned beforehand; the widow could succeed her husband as head of the business or as partner. Occasionally undivided inheritance was stipulated in the will. Nevertheless, it is more important to consider the family and kinship relations as a means to pool capital and promote loyalty. The business was an instrument to acquire personal profit and to elevate family status.

In Japan, on the other hand, the *ie*, including the business, was supposed to endure forever. Tokugawa society offered few chances for social promotion, so the prosperity of the *ie* became a goal in itself. Constant reinvestment and specialization in one central business were characteristic. Inheritance was ideally carried out as one undivided whole and the house assets were governed with the principle of collective or joint ownership, of which the house of Mitsui is a representative example. Generally the heir to the position of household head, usually but not necessarily the eldest son, singly inherited the house assets and business at the time of his succession and became the nominal owner of the estate (*katoku*). Again the Izumiya-Sumitomo *ie* presents a rare case of disparity between succession (*atoshiki sôzoku*), nominal transfer of the *katoku* as estate to the heir and actual managerial authority in the house business, after family and managers forced the head Kichizaemon to retire by an appeal to the magistrate.

In the concluding chapter I argue that in Japan as well as in Europe development of business organization can be regarded as an evolution to rational management. In Europe this led to the formation of the corporation, and in Japan an expansion of the business aspect of the *ie* was the outcome. The Japanese *ie* as it existed in the merchant class was suited for business, in view of the easy capital formation and spread of risk, and even possessed certain characteristics of legal personality *in se*: a lasting existence and a large degree of separation between ownership and management. Similarities between Japanese and European business organization concern mainly aspects of the enterprise form. The *ie* offered opportunities to unite trustworthy partners, join capital and diffuse risks. In Europe as well particular examples of lasting firms based on undivided business can be retrieved. On the other hand, it is misleading to put too much emphasis on the similarities between Europe and Japan, or to apply Western corporate characteristics to Tokugawa business. The Japanese merchant house faced inherent disadvantages. Limited liability could only be attained indirectly and did not have a legal foundation. Since the business was a tool to promote continuity of the *ie* as a whole, the owners were forced to take a long-term view and adopt conservative management policies. A further disadvantage was the ingrained possibility of conflict between management and family-owners. In contrast, the firm which originated in the Low Countries partially incorporated legally codified limited liability, but management was seldom delegated and the preservation and continuous application of capital in a lasting enterprise was problematic.

論文の審査結果の要旨

総研大国際日本研究専攻に在籍バルト・ガーンズの学位申請論文「The Organization of Merchant Houses in Tokugawa Japan -a Comparison with the Low Countries -」は徳川時代の商家の経営形態と、16・17世紀における今日のベルギーを中心とするロー・カントリー地方の商人の経営形態をそれぞれ分析し、さらに両者の比較検討を試みた比較経営史の研究である。徳川時代の商家の経営の基礎には、日本社会に独特のイエという集団形成原理が存在しているが、ヨーロッパの場合にも経営の基盤としての家族の意義は決して小さくない。本論文ではこのような前近代の経営における家族的要素の役割に着目しつつ、資本の結合、所有と経営の分離、経営の意思決定過程、組織の権力構造、等々の問題を論じている。

具体的な経営分析は日欧ともに多岐にわたっているが、徳川の商家経営では主として大坂に本店を置き銅山経営を行っていた泉屋住友の場合を取り上げ、ヨーロッパの場合には、16世紀より累代にわたって持続的経営を続けていたアントワープの印刷業者であるプランタン一族の経営をケーススタディとして研究対象としている。

経営の持続性の問題について、日本ではイエの継続性と財産の家産としての一体的相続、家業の継承などの要素によってそれが実現されているのに対して、ヨーロッパの場合には経営はパートナーシップによる資本結合を基本として行われるのであるが、プランタン一族の経営においては、財産の兄弟分割が行われるにも拘わらず未亡人による相続財産の再統一の力によってパートナーシップの持続が実現されているのである。

尤もヨーロッパの場合には、商業経営で成功した場合には土地を購入し、爵位を得て貴族身分へと上昇転化していく傾向が見られ、このような身分上昇のチャンスが開かれていることが経営の持続性を阻害している事情とする。日本の場合にはこのような身分上昇の機会が閉ざされていることが経営持続の基本的要因と見なしている。

他方、日本のイエを基盤とする商家における所有のあり方は総有ないし共有が支配的であり集団主義的・ケイパブルな性格のものであるのに対して、パートナーシップを基本とするヨーロッパの経営における所有は著しく個人主義な性格を帯びていると認定する。

しかしながら18世紀の半ばから19世紀初頭にかけて繰り広げられた泉屋住友家における前当主と子供の新当主との対立、住友一族から有力支配人にいたる住友の経営幹部たちをも二分して争われた御家騒動を本研究では詳細に検討するのであるが、その結果として、日本のイエ的経営といわれるものが単に集団主義的所有にとどまるのではなく、そこに個人所有の契機を深く内在させているものであることを結論として提示している。

研究は以上のように、すぐれて実証的なものであり、日欧両世界の前近代文書を博搜して丹念に新たに諸事実を発掘するとともに、また同時に資本の結合形態や組織論的問題に関する諸々の理論的カテゴリーをよく踏まえて、理論面からする日欧の比較経営史研究としても優秀な成果を収めていると判断される。

もとより日欧の両経営の持続性のいかにめぐる原因分析の甘さや、また日本的経営における個人所有の要因に関する仮説の実証などの点においてなお不十分さを残すものの、これらは将来の継続的な研究の中で自ずから克服されていく問題と考え、論文審査委員会は以上の検討を経た結果、本論文を博士の学位に相当するものと判定した。