**YUZAWA Noriko:**

**Zairai sangyo to kazoku no chiikishi: Raifu hisutori kara mita shoukibo kazoku keiei to yuki tsumugi seisan**

*(The Regional History of Local Industry and Families: Small-scale Family Management and Yuki-tsumugi Production using a Life History Approach)*


*Yuki-tsumugi* is a traditional silk fabric that is produced in the regions centering on Yuki City, Ibaraki Prefecture and Oyama City, Tochigi Prefecture. Whole production processes are conducted manually, and they are one of the few traditional skills in Japan that are still being inherited. This book is a monograph that describes in meticulous detail the *Yuki-tsumugi* production process as well as livelihood and changes of the families involved. This book also traces the long-term regional and socio-structural change from the middle of the Meiji period, through World War II, and the rapid economic growth period, to the present by focusing on the life histories of the women as handweavers. What makes such things possible is Yuzawa’s consistent position of “grasping individual human characteristics and the livelihood of people living in the region and working on production of *Yuki-tsumugi* as regional issues” (p. 10) and her effective use of life history as a research methodology.

In Chapter 1, Yuzawa clearly states her research questions and the problems in previous studies. She argues that the region in which *Yuki-tsumugi* is produced, which has played a role in the intrafamily division of labor, is not a “backward area” of textile weaving, but rather a region that developed independently. As a result, by examining “family,” “skills,” “livelihood,” and life history that have extended across multiple generations, changes in the families and livelihoods can be connected to regional change.

In Chapters 2 and 3, Yuzawa analyzes the establishment and development of *Yuki-tsumugi* production area and its regional characteristics. *Yuki-tsumugi* production, which has not been mechanized and has consistently been produced manually, developed in the middle and the late Meiji period. *Tsumugi* production that was integrated with a variety of part-time work continued from post-World War II to the early rapid economic growth period. After the rapid economic growth period, however, internal contradiction within *tsumugi* production regions occurred by the changes in production system through the specialization to textile industry and the emergence of part-time weavers. This, Yuzawa points out, led to a decrease in production. In addition, changes in the family labor composition of the division of labor together with changes in skill development through familial ties and local connections resulted in differences in qualities and textile patterns. She describes the features of *tsumugi* production that are incorporated in multiple and various business structures within the region.

In Chapter 4, the period from the post-World War II to the early rapid economic growth period is analyzed in depth. This was a prime time period of *Yuki-tsumugi* production and the working population. In order to implement analysis from the perspective of handweavers, the analysis makes full use of various data including *tsumugi* producers’ family life histories, diaries of *tsumugi* production, and records of daily activities. As a result, this chapter, along with the next, makes very worthwhile reading. In particular, Yuzawa utilizes the remnants of a *tsumugi* cloth that a woman had preserved to effectively indicate that sleeve patterns of products were adjusted by responding to the changes in the state of families including child-rearing tasks, caring for a sick family member, and other works. This highlights the strength and originality of this book.
In Chapter 5, Yuzawa compares the life histories of three generations in one family, and describes the transformation of the past production system that gradually collapsed leading to the restructuring of the production region after the rapid economic growth period. This was the period that reorganized production system into a full-time operation of tsumugi production with the employment of part-time weavers. She points out the emergence of discrepancy that occurred in terms of adjustment of income, workforce, and skill inheritance, which could have been addressed with the past intrafamily division of labor. Furthermore, women and family lifestyles have changed, responding to the modern change of livelihoods and society in general. As a result, they were restructured into a system that depended on the employment of part-time workers. Downsizing of production during this period paradoxically proves how Yuki-tsumugi production was established and maintained under the flexible and subtle balance of intrafamily division of labor. In Chapter 6, the conclusion, she stresses the significance of analyzing specific individuals, families, and regional societies from the micro-scale perspective with regard to local craft industry and ways of families in Japan.

As mentioned above, concrete and detailed descriptions on individuals and families involved in traditional craftworks are developed throughout this book. The argument that modernization was supported by small-scale family management is convincingly presented. This book is an excellent example of historical geography based on careful fieldwork.

Finally, I would like to point out two things. First, this book could have benefitted substantially from including more descriptions of the transition or decline of the “traditional family system” with reference to the conceptual difference between “family” and “ie.” I wonder if the association of households (ie-ren'gi) or cognate groups (douzoku-dan) as operational organization that are discussed in Japanese rural sociology could not have been seen in this region? Likewise, I am also curious to know if any intermediate groups that were situated between family and region have no relation to tsumugi production. If these points are discussed in detail, the relation between families and region will be clearer.

Second, Yuzawa’s use of life history is primarily based on the positivist perspective. This is a matter, of course, to serve the purpose of this book. In addition to this positivist view, however, analysis from the interpretive and constructionist perspectives could have been made. For example, in addition to making use of “what was told,” by focusing on “the way it was told,” the following questions can be asked: How have tellers considered the past at present? How is it reflected to the current situation? Do activities on tsumugi production differ between people who could refer to the past and those who could not? These are slightly demanding requests. This book, however, presents first grade study materials based on detailed investigation, and therefore I hope she can explore these issues further in her work.

NAKAMURA Akifumi
Research Fellow, Faculty of Life and Environmental Science, University of Tsukuba