Family Farm, Migration, and Land Tenure

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Family and Farm Coadapt

- Family size determines consumption needs
  - Measured in AME (adult male equivalents)

- Consumer/Worker Ration measures how adequate the family labor supply is in order to supply family members

- Amount of farmland owned by the family determines the efficacy of family labor
  - Highest return on farming one’s own land
  - Tenancy, paid labor, etc. second best
In stem family cycle eldest son brings in daughter-in-law while other sons and daughters marry out

Most favorable CWR 3 years after marriage of eldest son (see Figure 6.3 p 177)

Most difficult CWS 10 years before marriage of eldest son when the grandparents are declining and the grandchildren too young to be of much help
Stem Family Cycle Smoothes out Family Labor Supply

- Overlapping of generations in stem household provides added labor early in marriage when CWR is low

- Partition of the household several years after the marriage of the eldest son prevents the household from getting too big

- The fact that actual labor supply of families is smoother than theoretical labor supplies implies additional factors leading to smoothing
Determinants of Land Tenure

- **1950 Land Reform**
  - Limited farm size to 3 ha
  - During land reform 25% of land was distributed by the government, but another 25% of rented land was sold privately (illegally)

- **Partible unequal inheritance**
  - Land split in each generation, but position of the Big House was preserved

- Families with sons could rent extra land to earn money to buy

- Families lacking labor could rent out land to reduce labor need
Migration Adjusts Family Labor to Farm Size

- People don’t just “automatically” follow rules of family cycle, but adjust their labor supply through migration
  - surplus sons on farms with little land can migrate and become mősům or factory workers
  - Surplus daughters can also work

- Age at marriage reflects family circumstances
  - the poorer the family the later the sons get married, and the earlier the daughters get married
    - In extremely poor families minmyŏnŭri (child brides)
  - the richer the family the earlier the sons get married, and the later the daughters get married
    - In elite families it was not unusual for women to be 5-10 years older than their husbands
Farm Size Influences Migration

- Most families in 1977 owned 50 to 125 ares (c. 500 to 1250 p’yŏng)—right around the subsistence minimum

- Those with the least and the most land were most likely to migrate
  - Those with the least land could raise their standard of living by moving to the city and taking factory jobs
  - Those with the most land could afford to educate their children who could then take good urban jobs that don’t require stoop labor

- Middle peasants could afford to buy land, but didn’t want to migrate—they increased the size of their farms
Industrialization Changes Migration Patterns

- Pre-industrialization
  - Middle stayed put, poor wandered looking for tenancies and labor opportunities
  - Very rich lived in town with marūm to manage their land

- Post-industrialization
  - Young between 14 and 40 mostly migrated to town
  - Young of rich got educated out-of-town—some sold their land to do this
  - Young of poor went into factory work (women temporarily until marriage)
  - Younger sons more likely to migrate that eldest (unless education was involved)