

The Insularity of Jeju Culture: Jeju Kwendang, Building Up the Trustworthiness inside Community and An Exclusive Attitude against the Outside

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Abstract

Jeju Island has been isolated historically from the central government socially, economically and politically as it has own insularity of the closed space and resources. A few cultural aspects for survival have grown in these harsh environments. Especially, Jeju's unique community culture of cooperation at any time was taken place while it kept the family system for guaranteeing the personal self-regularity, so called Kwendang. But the conflicts were seen from 'Kwendang' culture while population inflowed increasingly into Jeju Island today. There is a need to provide political solutions for the social issues arisen from confronting with the central government.

Key words :

Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Insularity, Kwendang, Community, Culture, Island, Conflict and Closedness.

Introduction

Jeju Island has different geographical and cultural factors with Korean Peninsula. These make the migrants who want to settle to Jeju hard to get along with native residents and adapt to the local society of Jeju. Accordingly, it is meaningful to study how to communicate between native residents and migrants and how the migrants to participate into local community(Jung, 2020).

The precedent studies are focused on studying the phenomena spread from the heterotopia discourses which contain the fantasies of moving to Jeju(Kim, 2018, Oh and Park, 2019) and the policies related to the residents who settled to Jeju(Kim and Kim, 2017), in the other words, those are intensified to the views of the migrants on Jeju.

The position of Jeju will not fully common sensed to the viewpoints of the migrants. These were looked into again in the viewpoint of Jeju. Jeju had been exposed to the influence of Korea, Japan and China from Tamra State era till today and politically upheaved due to its geographical characteristics of the island. In addition, Jeju had difficulties to incubate specific industries and enjoy economic richness as its soil is infertile and so windy. These factors forced for the Jeju's residents to form voluntarily the mutual rescue system of 'Kwendang.' But the Kwendang acted for conflict making with the external people as it acted for a repulsive organizational culture rather than a mutual relief organization. Accordingly, this study will look into the conflicts between the Jeju residents and migrants through the organizational culture of 'Kwendang'. The related papers and reports will be quoted for this issue.

Chapter 2 will discuss on the historical processes and its characteristics of 'Kwendang' in theoretical background. Chapter 3 will look into the outstanding closedness of Jeju's 'Kwendang' while contacting with external factors. Chapter 4 is the conclusion.

Kwendang, Cooperation for Survival

Jeju Island experienced the political upheaval easily while it was exposed to the influential forces of other countries as it is an island. Jeju endangered to the

economic difficulties as own industries to be fostered were poor. The political upheavals of Jeju Island are easily seen in the historical cases. First of all, the shapes of Jeju from Goryo Dynasty till Choseon Dynasty should be examined. Tamra existed as an independent kingdom, but it was organized into the territory of Goryo while Goryo held the supremacy in Korean Peninsula. But there had been difficulties in governing as the political orders of Goryo were different from the customs of Tamra. At that time, Goryo regarded Tamra as barbaric outlanders and the bureaucrats hesitated to take office there. Therefore, Tamra was offered to the local officials who took offices in the evading region with incentives for future success and approved for economic extortion from Tamra. The economic burden of Tamra got bigger while it offered tribute to the local officials independently with the tax paying to the central government(Kim, 2018). Especially, Tamra's people excluding a part of powers allied with the central government, in the other words, most of Tamra' people who experienced the political alienation and economic extortion in the course of organizing the local area raised the civil riots protesting to the violent ruling of the local officials dispatched by Goryo(Jeon, 2017). In mid of 13th century, Yuan Dynasty had developed Tamra as a hub, but in early 14th century, Goryo tried to recover the administrative management and financial governance in Tamra. King Gongmin of Goryo drove out the power of Kee families who allied with Yuan Dynasty, dispatched circulating officials (Soon-Moon-Sa) for stabilizing Tamra, quelled Mokho and collected horses(Lee, 2017).

The Jeju Island and the islands like Chooja Island, Chakwi Island and Woo Island around Jeju Island became the footholds of Japanese raiders from the end of Goryo Dynasty and beginning of Choseon Dynasty. Jeju Island was used for refugee to avoid the wind, logistic base for food distribution and foothold for looting Korean Peninsula as it is situated at the traffic line of Japanese raiders. Accordingly, Jeju was not free from the Japanese raiders. Japanese raiders burnt buildings, killed people and deprived the tax carrier through invading to Jeju(Ko, 2007). The invasions of Japanese raiders were continued towards Jeju such as Sampo war with Japanese on 1510, Japanese raid to Chunmipo on

1552 and Eulmyo Japanese raid on 1554.

On 1901, the riot of Lee Jae-soo was taken place due to imposing heavy taxes by the village head and government officials, corruption and excessive taxation by the tax officials and violence from catholic evangelists and believers(Han, 2017). Two French warships were landed to Jeju for the catholic believers to escape, 2 warships of Choseon and 1 warship of Japan arrived after 200 catholic believers were murdered(Han, 2017). Four years had been passed to finalize the riot of Lee Jae-soo and ordinary people of Jeju were damaged greatly in finalizing courses.

4.3 Protest in Jeju was the case which cost severest damage second only to Korean Civil War. 4.3 Protest in Jeju was the case with huge victims by Korean central government. It was sufficient enough for Jeju people to have suspicious feeling to Korean central government and people from mainland.

The island of Jeju has unfair environment to foster own industries. Let's look into the natural environment and industries of Jeju.

Jeju is the district with frequent big winds as the annual storming days are 1/3 of a year. The climate of Jeju made big influence on the living of Jeju residents who mainly live on agriculture and fishery. Thrifty dietary living and food deposit were required as the island was vulnerable to the wind, flood and draught. The economy of provincial citizens was mainly small scale farming as Jeju does not have fertile plains. The small farming households lived on working for forest, fishery and other side jobs. On the other hand, Jeju has favorable conditions for livestock industry as Halla Mountain in Jeju has wide prairies and there are no wild animals. The central government encouraged to operate large scale meadows since Goryo Dynasty. The residents of Jeju were exposed to the extortion of the officials while they were mobilized to meadow operation. There are fishermen who caught the fishes from generation to generation as Jeju was an important fishing ground at Southern Sea. Later, the surplus fishery products were exchanged with the products from the land while Jeju entered into agrarian society. The continued external trading by the farmers and fishermen of Jeju can be seen as purposed to obtain the food for survival(Han, 2017).

The productivity of the soil in Jeju Island is low and

it is infertile. The labor force should be mobilized or exchanged effectively as the island is under unfavorable condition for farming. Kwendang served as an ideological means to act and function as one of the village communities while the regional ties were emphasized for this purpose. It is possible to include the majority of villager as relatives while classifying all village members locked by wedding and ancestry. In addition, people living in the same village form kinship via key family members. The villager will have strong community sense while they are connected in kinship in anyway because such relative ties are spread through other key kinship members. Such community sense enabled for the regional groups to exchange the labor force through cooperating with more extensive people than paternal group while the community sense became the ideological system for binding the regional groups(Kim, 1992).

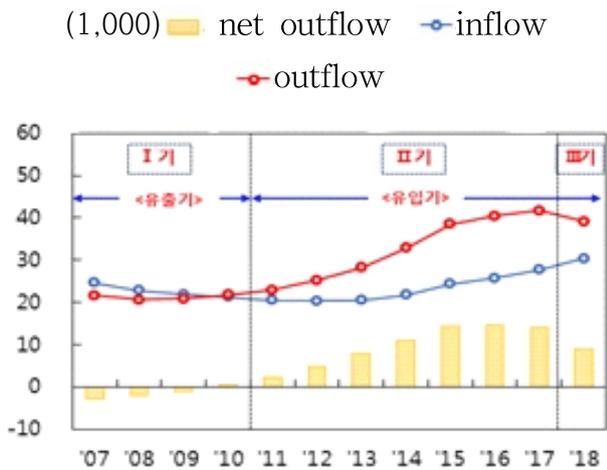
Jeju experienced political upheaval as influenced by other countries. This continued from the Goryo Dynasty to the Jeju 4.3. In addition, Jeju's harsh environment made residents confront economic difficulties. The provincial citizens organized Kwendang to overcome the situation effectively and mobilize the labor force. In other words, Jeju residents necessitated to cooperate in order to survive and overcome the difficulties of political and economic factors with the village community at its center. Therefore, the residents of Jeju reached to organize Kwendang as a means of maintaining community.

Jeju's Kwendang culture allows community members to build trustworthy relationships. However, it presents dual aspects those are exclusive to the outside. This blocks the social integration and makes Jeju feel conservative and exclusive to outsiders. New implications can be derived when we approach to the recent political, economic, and social conflicts taken place in Jeju in respect of Kwendang.

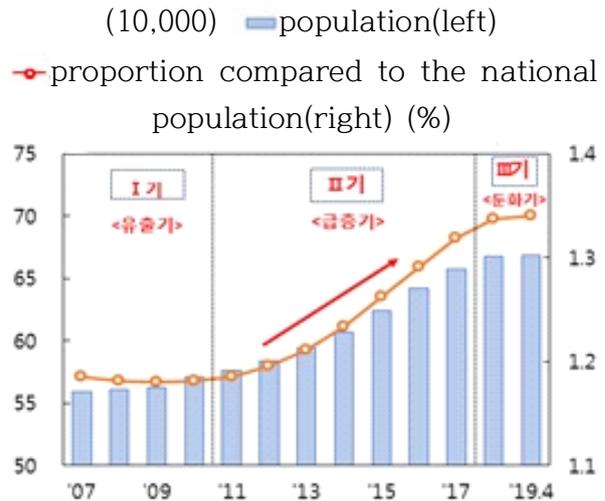
Impact of Kwendang Culture by the Influx of Population

As discussed in Chapter 2, Jeju's Kwendang culture was a community culture for survival under the harsh environment of Jeju in the past time. Jeju's people took a dynamic balance between 'independently'

surviving life and a community life of coexisting 'together' through Kwendang culture. Jeju people use the terminology of 'Kwendang [眷黨]' as a concept that encapsulates all relatives. The father's relatives were called as Sungpen Kwendang[父系親], the mother's relatives were Woe Kwendang[外戚], the relatives of the wife by a marriage of a man were Cheo Kwendang[妻族], and the relatives of the husband by a marriage of a woman were called as Shi Kwendang[媿家](Kim, 1999). However, the Kwendang culture which made positive influence in the past, its unique closedness and exclusivity appear as negative factors that prevent harmonization between migrants and local residents today. The migrants are lacked understanding on such Kwendang culture and they take different actions which do not meet the expectation of local community. It acts eventually as an important factor for failing the settlement in Jeju as such actions provoke the territorial culture of indigenous people towards the outsiders(Kim et al, 2016). The strong regionalism of 'Kwendang' in Jeju society has aspects of taking unreasonable choice at decision making or making difficult for criticizing the corruptions and irregularities(Yoon, 2010). It can be a direct factor which forces the unified action of the local community by making Jeju society as a same natured strong regional society(Hwang, 2015).



<figure 1> The population flow in Jeju Island



<figure 2> The total population of Jeju and the proportion compared to the national population

Source: Bank of Korea, 2019

The population flow in Jeju Island showed a net outflow before 2009, but the net inflow increased rapidly and slowed gradually recently since it turned to net inflow in 2010(Lee et al, 2019). In particular, on 2018, the population which moved to Jeju Island from other regions was 39,189, a decrease by 6.1% (2,563) from the previous year, while the population which moved outside was 30,336, an increase of 8.5% (2,589) compared to the previous year. This is nearly 10,000 increase from the outgoing population of 21,917 in 10 years ago on 2009. It can be seen that it emerges as significant social issue because the considerably many Jeju migrants left Jeju without adapting to life in Jeju(Kim et al, 2020). The survey on the level of adapting to Jeju for the households stayed less than 10 years showed the yearly increasing negative answers of no adaptation for 8.3% on 2018, 12.5% on 2019 and 15.2% on 2020. For the reasons of no adaptation, the 1st rank was 'local culture such as language and customs' and the 2nd rank was 'relationship with local residents' throughout 2018 and 2020. It can be analyzed that the migrants do not adapt to the Kwendang culture. It was revealed that the residents' negative understanding on the increased population influx prevailed. According to the social survey by Jeju Special Self-Governing Province on 2018-2020, the

negative answers (45.6% on 2018, 41.0% on 2019 and 34.2% on 2020) were reduced year by year, but it prevails the positive answers (30.9% on 2018, 24.2% on 2019 and 26.9% on 2020)(Jeju Special Self-Governing Province 2019).

Migration to Jeju increased explosively before and after 2011, it began to settle as a social phenomenon when the celebrities resided increasingly in Jeju as well as the general public. Jeju migration has become a social syndrome since the discourse of 'Hell Choseon' emerged in Korean society on 2014. Jeju stands as a place to cope with large cities or Koreanish living spoken as 'Land' by Jeju commoners or at the center of the social phenomenon of 'post-city' for dreaming utopia(Kim, 2018). In these changes, the romantic image of Jeju was outstanding while the socially influential famous entertainers moved to Jeju and the programs for introducing the nature, tourist's attraction and gourmet's houses televised or spread via SNS. The living in Jeju of high satisfaction shown on the media and SNS drew a big attention of the potential tourists, the viewers and SNS users. Afterwards, Jeju migration and travelling became more popular in line with the recent trends such as "Quality of Life, YOLO, Healing, Local Experience, and Food Tour". In particular, the count of Koreans visiting Jeju for about three months from June to September 2017, when the famous TV program "Hyori's Homestay" was aired for Jeju life, recorded the highest (Kim et al., 2019). In this way, Jeju migration is a trend differed with the traditional modern urban problems such as urbanization and gentrification, and it can be said that the image of Jeju as a post-city utopia became the fundamental reason of the migration. This reason is a major cause for migrants to fail through conflicting with the indigenous people of Jeju Island. Most of the migrants mentioned most frequently the difficulties of setting relationships with local residents due to the distortion of communication and the heterogeneous Jeju dialect, discrimination from the strong solidarity and exclusivity of Jeju indigenous people, and value differences throughout general life(Kim et al, 2020).

Jeju experiences political upheaval due to central government policies such as the Jeju Naval Base. This confusion caused the local community of Jeju to rally around the familiar Kwendang group and

changed exclusively to the central government. The issue of the Jeju naval base is a representative case of Jeju characterized by Kwendang, showing repulsiveness against the central government. Let's examine the issue of the Jeju naval base.

The controversies on the Jeju naval base began with the Hwasun Naval Pier Plan on 1992. The naval pier construction plan was established by the central governments such as the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and residents' opinions were not taken into account in this process. On 2001, Jeju Island conducted an inquiry on residents and submitted the results of 24% in favor and 58% in opposition to the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, but Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries left the room of re-consideration by not abolishing but deciding for suspension(Baek and Hwang, 2014). Subsequently, conflicts such as legal litigation continued during the site selection and construction process. Especially, the distrust of the local residents to the central government reached to its peak when the government mobilized the public power at the construction site of the Jeju Naval Base and collided with the local residents, The issue of the justification on using the public power was raised continuously at a press conference calling for the suspension of construction in the level of the Jeju Province council and a press conference against the method of mobilizing public power and the enforcement of construction. Among them, the explosion of Gurumbibawi shows that public power was forcibly exercised in the situation of strong resistance from local residents and a request for cancelling blasting by the governor of Jeju Island. The exploding Gurumbibawi even acts as a factor that amplifies the discord among the villagers of the 'pros and cons'(Hong, 2018).

The central government's policy of the Jeju Naval Base resulted in protesting by gathering Jeju at the regional level. In addition, within the local community, residents were confronted with the base proponents party and opposition party, and the conflict aspect is more acute than other regions(Hong, 2018).

conclusion

Jeju Island has limited space and resources due to the special environment of an island remote from the land. Besides, it has experienced turmoil many times historically. In such a harsh environment, the survival of Jeju people was possible as some wise Jeju cultures were together with them such as 'Sunuulum' and 'Gye' for efficient management with smallest manpower and resources and keeping family system that guarantees individual autonomy and Kwendang as a community culture for anytime cooperation (Yoon, 2010).

Since 2009, the population inflow to Jeju Island has been increasing, but migrants are leaving without adapting to "local culture such as language and customs" and "relationships with local residents". In order for the Kwendang culture to act positively on regional development, it is necessary to escape from encouraging closed group society or the structure driven by a leader, and to pursue the common virtue based on mutual bonafide trust among members in a community relationship. To this end, it is necessary to provide a policy to foster social capital and involvement of resident in variety (Hwang, 2015). Consequently, the policies and systems should be made to expand communication opportunities between migrants and residents, and to enhance the accessibility of migrants to Jeju culture in order to overcome the heterogeneous cultural differences between residents and migrants and establish the community relationship.

This study looked into the closedness of Jeju culture and the formation of Kwendang as the historical situation (Politics and economy) of Jeju, and suggested appropriate political recommendations through understanding the current social conflict between the residents and the government, and between the residents and migrants as the characteristics of Kwendang. However, further study is needed by adding quantitative research methodology in the future since this study has limitations in quantitative research.

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