

## Presentation 3



## Korean Traditional Tug Of War and Community

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### 1. Introduction

The research subject of this article is gijisi tug-of-war, one of Korean traditional tug-of-wars. The purpose of this paper is to consider a temporary community, which is formed by playing gijisi tug-of-war, and continuous transmission community, which enables to form a temporary community. In particular, this article might be meaningful for providing different perspectives with previous researches, focusing on contemporary traditional tug-of-war.

First of all, this paper will explore the community which is formed by playing gijisi tug-of-war. Especially, in this paper, the followings will be discussed; how community playing gijisi tug-of-war is formed, what features it has, what's the meaning of such temporary community and so on. In addition, this article will examine how continuous and conventional community enable to paly gijisi tug-of-war. As doing so, different features with the community of playing tug-of-war could be discussed. Such features are opposed to those of community formed by performance of tug-of-war, but they support gijisi tug-of-war having strained relations.

And then, this paper will compare characteristics of community of gijisi tug-of-war with those of 'Jul Nanjang community'. Among them, there are obviously differences, and both have changed; however, here, the characteristics of familiar contemporary traditional

transmission community will be clarified. And such comparative research might give the opportunity that gijisi tug-of-war would find out its unique position in traditional tug-of-war.

## 2. The play of tug of war and reorganization of the regionalism community

The following picture is a scene of gijisi tug-of-war in 2014. It is indeed spectacular. What makes such spectacular with large numbers of people? What kinds of group does it possible? Who is the people pulling a string? To what kinds of community do they belong? What kinds of community are created by performance of tug-of-war? A barrage of questions come up with.



**[Figure 1] gijisi tug-of-war (2014)**

From the name of gijisi tug-of-war, people to create the spectacular might be guessed as residents in Gijisi-ri. Furthermore, they might be expanded into residents in Dangjin where includes Gijisi-ri. However, people who participate in playing tug-of-war are not restricted in residents in Dangjin district. The participants go beyond Gijisi, include entire Dangjin as well as visitors from the whole country and foreigners. The channels to be able to participate in tug-of-war are variously opened. Such community for playing tug-of-war

is temporarily formed. In other words, it is a temporary community, which is formed in specific time and space.

The community playing gijisi tug-of-war consists of two parties: ‘Susang’ and ‘Suha’. The side of Susang pulls a male string and the side of Suha pulls a female string. Two different parties compete, pulling a string. The parties of both Susang and Suha show that the community playing gijisi tug-of-war does not consist of only outside participants. Instead, it shows that separating Susang and Suha into parties is based on regionalism community of Gijisi and near region. The standard of separation is Route 32 and Route 34. The south of Route 32 and 34 is Susang and their north is Suha.



[Figure 2] Part of a tug-of-war

In other words, two parties signify that there are two communities based on regionalism in performance of gijisi tug-of-war. Residents in Dangjin can participate in a fight between two parties based on regionalism community. Gyeonggi, Seoul and Gangwon provinces belong to Susan, and Chungcheong, Jeolla and Gyeongsang provinces belong to Suha. Continuous Regionalism community in Dangjin embraces outsiders as a center.

There are only the region of Susang and Suha in the world of gijisi tug-of-war. South districts are reorganized with Gijisi as the center. Such regional reorganization is interesting. Here, there is the idea to get rid of binary value hierarchy such as Seoul/provinces and

center/suburbs. Districts are being reorganized with Gijisi as the center. It shows that value hierarchy, which Yeolgyu Kim even mentioned ‘cultural inheritance of evil’, is already being broken. Ready-made value hierarchy such as ‘center/suburbs’ and ‘center/edge’ is not at least applied in the world of performance of gijisi tug-of-war. There is not disparaging sense that a region gives itself. In the performance of gijisi tug-of-war, there is not “centripetal and exclusive community that was tied to restricted region” but “wide regional and centrifugal community”.

### **3. The transmission of tug of war and characteristic of solidarity**

As described earlier, channels to participate in gijisi tug-of-war are opened. It means that performance community is formed by opening outside of Dangjin. However, such opening does not mean pulling a string itself. Channels that various people can participate in the whole process of gijisi tug-of-war are opened. Various people participate in whole process such as preparing materials, twisting Saekijul (straw rope) and Jeokjul (several straw ropes), taking out and installing Jultl(the mold for twisting straw rope), twisting Momjul (main straw rope), twisting Gyekjul(straw ropes derived from main straw rope), making the head of Momjul (main straw rope), piecing together Gyekjul (straw ropes derived from main straw rope) and Jeokjul (several straw ropes), piling up strings, standing up the head of Momjul, making linchpins and so on.

Channels to participate in gijisi tug-of-war are opened, while it is more likely to be opened in the future. Twisting a straw rope takes over one months, and around 1,000 people are mobilized. Not only regional residents but also tourists and even soldiers participate in here. There are workers who participate receiving daily wages. However, people who lead whole process of tug-of-war are members of gijisi tug-of-war preservation association. Gijisi tug-of-war preservation association continue to play an important role in the whole process from preparing materials to dismantling straw ropes after tug-of-war. Therefore, gijisi tug-of-war preservation association can be considered as a transmission community.

Gijisi tug-of-war preservation association, which was founded in 1986, consists of 29 members. Most of members live in villages near Gijisi. They involve in the education and

various events related to gijisi tug-of-war, working to get a each living. The spectacular of gijisi tug-of-war that a lot of participants create is made by drops of perspiration of members of gijisi tug-of-war preservation association. They share the birth and disjointedness of straw ropes. It is “gijisi tug-of-war preservation association” that share every year new born ‘the life of straw ropes’.

There is a continuous community behind temporary community formed in the performance of tug-of-war. Centripetal and closed gijisi tug-of-war preservation association enables tug-of-war to paly, opening the opportunity to participate temporarily. Its centripetal but reciprocal feature, or centricfugal but self-centred feature show in reorganization of district for the tug-of-war. Gijisi attended to tug-of-war and its near regionalism community can be categorized like following.

- ① Gijisi: the other side of the spring, marketplace, Gongjaengi, Antlmosi
- ② Songak-myeon: Gagyori, Banggye-ri, Bondang-ri, Banchon-ri, Bonggyo-ri, Gwangmyeong-ri, Bogun-ri, Jungheung-ri, Ogok-ri, Bugok-ri, Wolgok-ri, Jeonggok-ri, Hanjin-ri, Gahak-ri, Seokpo-ri, Godei-ri
- ③ Hapdeok-eup, Sinpyeong-myeon, Ugang-myeon, Sunseong-myeon, Myeoncheon-myeon, Dangjin-eup, Songsan-myeon, Godei-myeon, Seongmun-myeon, Jeongmi-myeon, Daehoji-myeon

Above region ① is Gijisi. The regional unit of Gijisi to participate in tug-of-war is a village. ② region is Songak-myeon. Participants of Songak-myeon are divided depending on ri (a unit of Korean administrative district). ③ region consists of eup or myeon (a unit of Korean administrative district). Participants of Gijisi in tug-of-war are divided depending on villages under Gijisi, while participants of Songak-myeon where is a little bit remote from place of tug-of-war are divided depending on a unit of Korean administrative district. In other words, in the case of remote place from Gijisi, participants are divided depending on a district.

It is not recent phenomenon that the category of participants depends on streets centered Gijisi. From Japanese occupation to 1970s, villages over Dangjin brought Nonggi (a flag of the village). And, as a participation unit, in Gijisi, several pungmul band (Korean folk band) of each village attended, and eup and myeon near Gijisi such as Songak-myeon

and Songsan-myeon were a unit of a district. Dangjin, Myeoncheon-myeon, Hapdeok and so on were a unit jointed eup and myeon.

In the region of tug-of-war, divided feature of the center and undivided character of periphery show some value hierarchy. A boundary among districts was set and binary opposition such as central/peripheral, divided/undivided, organized/unorganized can be developed among districts. It can be interpreted as 'the level of organization or order that centered-we have' and 'unorganized feature that peripheral-they have. Finally, it means that a community of gijisi tug-of-war is not always open but there is a division between inside and outside. There is a boundary that inside and outside of a community clarify.

As state above, a community of gijisi tug-of-war has a center. It does not lose its central role in the performance of tug-of-war and transmission. In a community of gijisi tug-of-war, a preservation association functions as a center while regionalism communities support its roles. A preservation association reveals centripetal feature strongly, having rule and regulation. Regionalism communities surrounding a preservation association are divided into the center and periphery. A community of gijisi tug-of-war is opened externally, but it has its rules. That is, in gijisi tug-of-war, a preservation association is a center and regionalism communities is a periphery. Also, a boundary of a center and periphery among regionalism communities supporting a preservation association is set.

The characteristics of a community of gijisi tug-of-war show a center of certain local area as well as openness toward the outside. Such community is not conservative and reactionary. It is not engrossed in defending a pre-existing condition. Its identity is not exclusive and self-righteous. Contemporary gijisi tug-of-war does not contribute to strengthen already established relation. It extends its arm and hugs people. Such formed solidarity signifies inner unity as well as growing solidarity toward the external.

#### **4. The memory of 'Jul Nanjang' community and familiar new community**

In the past, gijisi was a major transportation point where people in the south and west of Myuncheon-gun could go to Hanyang (Seoul) and was a place opened market. In Gijisi, a tug-of-war was played in order to activate the market. The past name of tug-of-war

shows the relationship between market and gijisi tug-of-war and between merchants and a community of gijisi tug-of-war. Gijisi tug-of-war was called as 'Jul Nanjang' before a formal name, 'gijisi tug-of-war', was given in 1982 by designation of an important intangible cultural asset. However, a word of 'Jul Nanjang' reveals a close relationship between a tug-of-war and a market and between a community of a tug-of-war and merchants.

A close relationship between a tug-of-war and merchants in gijisi reveals in old sayings such as "If opening '*Jul Nanjang*' once, a village could get a living for three years", "If opening '*Jul Nanjang*' once, a person could buy huge rice paddy", "If opening '*Jul Nanjang*', a spring of distillery would be dry" and so on. In addition, following old sayings reveal economic usefulness; "There is not farmland in a avenue, '*Tlmusi*', and merchants in this place get a living as a trade. It is a way to earn a living without a farmland. Residents in Tlmusi seem to use their brain well."

Merchants took roles of plan, sponsor, progressing an event and so on in Jul Nanjang. The mention that "a leader was selected among merchants and was in charge of whole process of tug-of-war from making straw ropes to supervising an event" brings a preservation association to mind. Being in charge of securing financial resources and progressing whole event are the role of contemporary local government or the festival board; therefore, merchants might take more active and expanded roles than those of present preservation association.

However, merchants who planned, supported and progressed 'Jul Nanjang' belonged to certain organization. From the fact that Dongseok Gang was a leader of Susang party and at the same time he was an 'Sijang Yeonggam (administrative boss of giji market)' in 1940s, one of peddlers' organizations, Yedeok Commerce might commend Jul Nanjang at the moment. It is the reason why Sijang Yeonggam was a title of honor of an executive in Yedeok Commerce. Therefore, a peddlers' organization supervised Jul Nanjang. This organization might take all roles of contemporary preservation association, festival board and local government.

As several interviews showed, when paying a tug-of-war in Gijisi, merchants supported it actively. From the fact that a place for tug-of-war was a market and merchants gained big profits supporting Jul Nanjang, an inseparable relation between a tug-of-war and market can be inferred. However, only the power of merchants was not possible to play a

tug-of-war in Gijisi. In the case of twisting straw ropes, fishermen in Ansem port was responsible.

When paying a tug-of-war, residents in farming village near Gijisi twisted Gyekjul (straw ropes derived from main straw rope) that they were supposed to pull and participated in a tug-of-war raising a village flag. The districts where participated in a tug-of-war raising a village flag from Japanese colonial era to 1970s were Sunseong-myeon, Songsan-myeon, Songak-myeon, Sinpyeong-myeon, Hapdeok-eup, Myeoncheon-myeon, Dangjin-eup, and so on. Villages participated in a tug-of-war were mostly matched up with those used a market in Giji. It means that a tug-of-war in Gijisi was not a simple event of market but a play of community to unify zones of local trade.

Before designation of an important intangible cultural asset, Jul Nanjang in Gijisi was an event that merchants of a branch of Yedeok Commerce in Gijisi, fishermen near parts and residents near farm villages were responsible together. It was an wide-regional event that tied near farm villages and several ports as a community. Jul Nanjang in Gijisi can be considered as ‘an wide-regional event’ that fishermen twisted straw ropes and farmers participated in under the plan and support of merchants.

Through Jul Nanjang, merchants might benefit economically by activation of market, and fishermen might be rewarded as providing the wisdom and technique. In addition, farmers might represent their real fun and gain experience the solidarity through Jul Nanjang. And these might be helpful for that communities in the market of Gijisi were activated and strengthened.

By the way, was Jul Nanjang held only by such reasons? The question, “did Jul Nanjang communities in Gijisi cooperate to satisfy practical and secular desire?,” comes to mind. Here, Jaeho Kim’s ‘traditional values toward a market’ is worthy of notice. Traditional values toward a market, which people with various occupations shared, might be important for that Jul Nanjang in Gijisi began.

That is a cognition that ‘the communication between a sky and human and between human and human plays an important role in the birth of market’. In Korea, there was traditional thought that market distribution might flow smoothly and its function could be kept properly when both a sky and human, or both human and human could communicate mentally and physically. In the case of Gijisi, such communication between a sky and human was tried as Majeon Gut. The discourse of geometric geography related to Jul



Nanjang might also resulted from the recognition, that is to say the communication between a sky and human. The communication between human and human was attempted through Jul Nanjang. Through Gijisi Jul Nanjang, people experience to twist, move and pull straw ropes. The solidarity resulted from whole process of tug-of-war becomes an example of good communication.

Finally, Jul Nanjang can be considered as an event to activate communication between a sky and human and between human and human. People thought that the prosperity of Gijisi was God's will, and at the same time it was possible only when people could communicate smoothly. The perspective that attempts to understand traditional values toward a market through Jul Nanjang takes a different position with the perspective that considers Jul Nanjang as contemporary figure or transformation of traditional tug-of-war. The former sees Jul Nanjang as a cultural device based on traditional market value.

The memory of Jul Nanjang in Gijisi began form the early 20th century. If tracing back patchwork of such memories, gijisi Jul Nanjang was begun in 1922 and was kept by the plan and support of merchant organization. It was halted from the end of Japanese occupation to Korean war. From 1960s to the early 1970s, in the plan and support of tug-of-war, not only merchants but also veterans' association, Gijisi 10 Young Men's association, co-op of Gijisi, presidents of gijisi neighborhood association, development committee and so on were added.

Jul Nanjang that could reconstruct by the memory is merchant-centered and wide regional Daedong play. Here, merchants provide the place for Nanjang, fishermen offer the wisdom and technique, and farmers participate in here actively. Merchants in Gijisi play a key role in holding Nanjang, while here is not closed Nanjang for them. It is not limited in certain market. Because of characteristics of market, it should be opened. More people participate the better. From the very beginning, Nanjang was centrifugal and opened.

Since 1986, an agent of Gijisi Jul Nanjang had been changed from merchant organization to a preservation association. Such change of agent is continued. The change of agent causes several changes. It means that there are differences between Jul Nanjang and contemporary preservation association-centered tug-of-war. One of such differences is 'which party between Susan and Suha is in charge of the head'. In the past, as a head of Susang or Suha, a fine-built and venerable man was selected. A head supervised all processes of Jul Nanjang. It was an executive of Sangmu commerce that had played a role

of head from Japanese occupation to independence of Korea. Today, a head is also selected among members of preservation association.

In spite of difference between merchant-centered organization and preservation association-centered organization, characteristics of past Jul Nanjang community look like those of contemporary tug-of-war community. 'Aiming wide regional and centrifugal community', 'seeking transcendental community beyond regionalism and blood ties', 'opening outside of the group' and so are similar. Today, preservation association-centered tug-of-war community is being opened, aiming a new composite festival.

Such opened community is being formed newly, while it is very similar with past Jul Nanjang community. Jul Nanjang was merchant-centered and wide regional Daedong play. In Nanjang that merchants supported, the wisdom of fishermen was added and farmers participated in there actively. The place of such Nanjang was a market, so that it was opened. Also, more people participate the better. That is the reason why a preservation association centered-tug-of-war is obviously different to past Jul Nanjang but is familiar. It shows that past Jul Nanjang was a model of regional festival.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, a community in Korea might play a tug-of-war for praying its prosperity, social unity, harmony and solidarity. In the performance of traditional tug-of-war, men and women of all ages have participated and communicated multi-dimensionally. In other words, a tug-of-war has led to reinforce a solidarity, a sense of belonging and an identity of members of a community. A community, which participates in a tug-of-war, involves from twisting straw ropes to pulling a straw rope. By doing so, they sought to maintain a peace in a community and shared a sense of unity. The way which do not restrict a condition of participants in a tug-of-war makes people to feel homogeneity as a member of a community. In addition, belief or recognition, that misfortune could be prevented and a peace of community could be kept by a tug-of-war, have played an important role in bonding and keeping communities related to a tug-of-war.

General characteristics of gijisi tug-of-war are also similar with those of traditional tug-of-war. Noticeable results of research for gijisi tug-of-war are a point which the past gijisi

tug-of-war was Jul Nanjang that merchant's organization planned and supervised and a point which communities related to a tug-of-war consist of various occupational groups. It is also noticeable that Jul Nanjang was a play of the community which was not based on villages or towns but a market.

Contemporary gijisi tug-of-war shows such noticeable points oddly. The reason why I represent 'oddly' is that gijisi tug-of-war shows the past features of Jul Nanjang even though it has not developed continuously from Jul Nanjang. It signifies that gijisi tug-of-war aiming to new composite festival has features of past Jul Nanjang. In other words, it is possible because past gijisi Jul Nanjang was a model of new composite festival that gijisi tug-of-war aimed to.