

Lineage and Society: A Comparison of Korea and China

Kim Song-Chul*

(In lieu of an abstract) Anthropological research on social structure in East Asia entered a new era with the publication of Maurice Freedman's monumental books, in 1958 and 1966, about Chinese lineages. Freedman examined in the context of Chinese society the classical model of the lineage as a unilineal descent group as established by British social anthropologists in the 1940s and 1950s based on data from African societies. While comparing African tribal and Chinese societies, Freedman inevitably found himself rejecting the argument that the lineage model as asserted by British social anthropologists was incompatible with centralized state systems. He denied, in other words, the position that lineages could not exist in a centralized society as argued on the basis of the logic that the most important social function of lineages in African tribal societies was political, and that African political orders were maintained by the lineages. Instead, Freedman attempted to explain how lineages had continued to exist within the centralized social systems of China.

1. Introduction

Anthropological research on social structure in East Asia entered a new era with the publication of Maurice Freedman's monumental books, in 1958 and 1966, about Chinese lineages. Freedman examined in the context of Chinese society the classical model of the lineage as a unilineal descent

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*Professor, Department of Korean Studies, Inje University

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group as established by British social anthropologists in the 1940s and 1950s based on data from African societies.¹ While comparing African tribal and Chinese societies, Freedman inevitably found himself rejecting the argument that the lineage model as asserted by British social anthropologists was incompatible with centralized state systems. He denied, in other words, the position that lineages could not exist in a centralized society as argued on the basis of the logic that the most important social function of lineages in African tribal societies was political, and that African political orders were maintained by the lineages. Instead, Freedman attempted to explain how lineages had continued to exist within the centralized social systems of China.

Data regarding the Nuer and the Tallensi analyzed by Evans-Pritchard and Fortes reveal several characteristics of the African lineages. Firstly, members of a lineage are relatives whose genealogy can be traced by the unilineal descent rule and generally all live in the same region. In addition, lineage members are homogeneous in terms of economy or class and form a corporation to carry out such events as ancestral rites together. Also, African lineages function as political bodies vis-à-vis other lineages and are divided into smaller groups of close relatives to maintain relationships of competition, conflict, and cooperation among those groups. In African tribal societies, then, politics, rituals, and other social institutions can be explained such that the principle of kinship based on the unilineal descent rule is the foundation of social structure.

¹ Studies of family and kinship by (British) social anthropologists broadly were carried out in three regions and can be distinguished in their approaches depending on where the data were gathered. The first approach applied the so-called classical model of the unilineal descent group, based on data from Africa, to establish the fact that unilineal descent groups are political corporations. Leading works in this approach include Evans-Pritchard (1940, 1951), Fortes (1949, 1953), and Smith (1956). From the 1960s, the field work of social anthropologists expanded into New Guinea and other regions outside Africa, leading to an argument over "loosely structured society." Loosely structured society, based in particular on field studies conducted in New Guinea, refers to a society where kin groups include affines and other relatives who cannot be affiliated with unilineal descent groups according to descent. Early studies in this approach include Barnes (1962), Langness (1964), and Meggitt (1965), while a comprehensive interpretation can be found in Kelly (1974). The third approach uses data from China and attempts, like Freedman, to investigate kinship in consideration of socio-economic context, clarifying issues such as coexistence between kinship organizations and state systems. Key works on Chinese kinship, in addition to those cited in this study, include Ahern (1973), Baker (1968), Pasternak (1972), Watson (1974), Ebery and Watson eds. (1986) and Freedman ed. (1970).

China, however, has had such diverse heterogeneous social elements as status, class, and ethnic origin throughout its long history; these elements have served to cross-cut even the membership of a single lineage.² Chinese lineages have survived despite this, an observation that Freedman (1958: 135-7) attributes to the fact that Chinese society, where the principle of primogeniture is not recognized in descent, has facilitated class and economic heterogeneity through asymmetrical segmentation within lineages. In other words, segments of a lineage that accumulate wealth and power do not separate themselves and form new lineages, but instead form their own exclusive segments, distinguishing themselves ritually and economically from other segments of the same lineage and sharing profit generated from common assets.

Freedman briefly mentioned the situation in Korean society, taking the view that internal segmentation would not be tolerated as much as in China due to Korea's clear principle of primogeniture, which would lead to clearly defined hierarchies within lineages. In this context, he believed, another explanation was needed as to how Korea's lineages had survived in a centralized society. Janelli and Janelli (1978) agree that segmentation has not been as frequent in Korean lineages as in their Chinese counterparts. However, they attribute this not, like Freedman, to the clear principle of primogeniture in Korean lineages, but to constraints on status assertion in Korean society. They therefore believe that forming an independent segment, separate from other members of a lineage, merely due to accumulated wealth as in China, would be meaningless in Korea. Janelli and Janelli also cite the fact that lineages have survived in Korea without frequent segmentation, rejecting Freedman's assertion that segmentation functions as a means to allow the continuity of lineages in a centralized society and claiming that lineages can neither be deemed incompatible nor compatible with a society comprising heterogeneous elements. Janelli and Janelli concluded that the compatibility or incompatibility of lineages in complex societies depended on particular lineage functions, not on the

² Cross cutting lineage membership to create heterogeneity within a lineage indicates that more significance is attached to features such as class and status than to affiliation with the same lineage when it comes to determining personal identity. Classical unilineal descent theory holds that in a society containing heterogeneous elements, mere affiliation with one lineage is not enough to produce cohesion among its members, and either unilineal descent groups cannot exist or that their existence is almost meaningless in terms of social structure.

characteristics of lineages *per se*, citing the control of *seowon* (書院)³ by the lineages in Korea as an example of such a function.

This study attempts to reassess the relationship between lineages and society in Korea and China, based on the arguments of Freedman and Janelli and Janelli regarding the compatibility of lineages and societies with heterogeneous elements.

2. Segmentation in Chinese Lineages

Freedman focused his research on lineages in southeastern China, defining the concept of Chinese lineage as a corporate group of agnates living in one settlement or in a cluster of settlements (Freedman 1958, 1966). He believed that southeastern Chinese lineages could be arranged along a continuum, the two poles of which he labeled A and Z, according to the number of members (size), degree of segmentation, and amount of corporate property. According to Freedman's model, Type A lineages were small, less-segmented, and possessed little or no corporate property, while Type Z lineages were large, possessed significant amounts of corporate property, and were extensively and asymmetrically divided into various internal segments. Freedman compared Chinese lineages to their African counterparts, questioning how the former were able to survive in a complex and centralized society. The most important function of the lineages in African tribal societies was political. In other words, although economic and other aspects of tribal society were homogeneous and could, therefore, not function as mechanisms for differentiating and grouping members, and given the lack of a centralized political order, integration and division along genealogical lines allowed lineages to be ranked and maintain their identities in relation to other lineages above and below in genealogical terms, thus sustaining a structural equilibrium (Evans-Pritchard 1940). This is how relationships of confrontation, competition, and cooperation were formed in aspects of politics at the tribal level including revenge and conflict resolution according to a principle of "I against my brothers; my brothers and I against our first cousins; my brothers, my first cousins and I against our second cousins." In this respect, segmentations in African lineages should be understood in the context of a segmentary political

³ Confucian private academies.

system. In China, however, the situation was different. Politically, a centralized state had existed throughout history, while a number of heterogeneous elements differentiated people economically and otherwise, so that lineage alone was insufficient when it came to fully explaining the various aspects of the social organization.

The first thing that interests Freedman in his study of Chinese family relations was that Type Z lineages were more widespread in southeastern China than in the north. He attributed this to economic factors in the southeast (1966: 159-162): double rice cropping in this region led to higher productivity per unit of area of land, allowing lineages to accumulate large amounts of corporate property through higher rents than in other regions. These benefits served as a focal point that united lineage members. Therefore, while African lineages were corporations with primarily political functions, those of China were economic corporations. Furthermore, he went on to say that lineage members maintained social status vis-à-vis the outside world by belonging to their lineage, based on its economic capacity, which in turn served to increase cohesion in the lineage.

Potter (1970) later cited additional factors, such as the fact that flourishing commerce in southeastern China from the Song Dynasty onwards had provided another means of accumulating wealth⁴ in addition to agriculture, and that peripheral regions such as Fujian and Guangdong were harder for the central government to control, enabling easier wealth accumulation that allowed lineages to maintain power and status in local society. Among these arguments, the claim about the role of the periphery was partially rejected with the publication of books by anthropologists studying Taiwan (Pasternak 1969). In Taiwan, which could be regarded as truly peripheral, corporations could be formed via various relationships, including not only between fathers and sons but between in-laws and sworn brothers, as a response to uncertainty in this frontier region.

At any rate, Freedman claimed that Chinese lineages were able to overcome heterogeneous social elements and maintain a sense of community among their members because, unlike their African counterparts, they were economic groups based on corporate property known as *weitu*

⁴ As mentioned above, the most important characteristic of Chinese lineages is an economic one: The accumulation of wealth by any means allows asymmetrical segmentation and the formation of a new segment within the lineage. The accumulation of wealth through commerce, of course, is one means of achieving this.

(位).⁵ In other words, the existence in China of a centralized political system and various heterogeneous elements within society cross-cut the members of the same lineage in terms of status, class or wealth, yet Chinese lineages maintained unity among their members while managing corporate property through asymmetrical segmentation. More precisely, the principle of equal distribution of inheritance is observed in China, and succession in the family line is based on generation and age. The lineage ideology formed upon these principles does not conflict with class ideology; for this reason, small agnatic groups within the lineage possessing wealth or reputation were able to form their own exclusive segments, funded by property of their own. In this way, members of wealthy segments distinguished themselves from the whole lineage and pursued their own exclusive socio-economic goals.

The survival of lineages under the nominal pretext of agnatic community, despite the inequality among their segments, was, as suggested by Watson, due to political and economic factors. According to Watson (1985), the lineage, to its wealthy and prominent segments, was both a source of labor under the tenant farming system and, in times of crisis, a private source of military power. Such segments used their control over the lineages as a resource for participating in regional and even national-level politics, which in turn provided a mechanism to maintain their status. To its less wealthy members, by contrast, the lineage functioned as a mechanism that provided a minimal level of economic stability, a situation that differed hugely from the extremely poor peasant class that lived close to powerful lineages. For that reason, the establishment of exclusive corporate property by some wealthy segments within a lineage was not particularly harmful, either for achieving the ambitions of a smaller segment or for maintaining the lineage.

One pronounced difference between Chinese and African lineages is that the former, in a word, were economic units based on corporate property. Lineages in southeastern China were able to accumulate wealth to form corporate property in several ways, including creating surplus from double rice cropping, commerce, and government officialdom (Potter 1970). Moreover, on occasions when political turmoil weakened the control of central government, it would have been even easier to accumulate wealth. At the same time, because Chinese lineages were

5 Property in the form of land to provide the expense for the gravesite ancestor ritual.

fundamentally economic corporations, the primary consideration when establishing an internal segment, or a whole lineage itself, was whether enough wealth had been accumulated. No matter how well-known the ancestor of a segment, or a lineage, be it in terms of status or official position, if his descendants could not accumulate enough corporate property there would be no need for them to pursue their own exclusive economic agenda, and therefore no need to establish another segment or lineage.

3. R. M. and D. Y. Janelli's Opinion Regarding Korean Lineages

Freedman, based on the fact that systems of inheritance and succession in China were egalitarian, inferred that adherence in Korea to principles of unequal inheritance, whereby the eldest son almost invariably inherited patriarchal rights and the majority of family assets, would result in minimal segmentation within Korean lineages. In this context, he raised the question of how Korean lineages had accommodated internal differentiation among their members and survived in a complex society. As mentioned above, Janelli and Janelli agreed with Freedman that internal segmentation in Korean lineages had not occurred as frequently as in China, attributing this to constraints on status assertion in Korean society.

Janelli and Janelli (1978) assert that age, generation, wealth, education, and famous ancestry were also factors that conferred status in Korea. Therefore, they argue, that when determining whether a certain group of kinsmen within a lineage could establish a separate segment, merely the existence of an apical ancestor with enough descendants and the ability to create a separate ritual fund would have been relatively unimportant. In other words, in China, building an ancestral hall and establishing a ritual trust (irrespective of how the wealth required to create the trust was accumulated) were deemed sufficient grounds for asserting status within a lineage, so that any ancestor could be used as the focal point of the new segment, but in Korea the status of an ancestor had to be officially recognized⁶ in order for it to be asserted within the lineage. Consequently,

⁶ The most common form of such official recognition was government permission to create a special ancestral tablet called a *bulcheonjiwi* (不遷之位), which allowed the

in Korea, “establishing a separate trust for an ancestor would have been almost pointless [when it came to segmentation] unless he had really attained a social position at least as high as both his predecessors and collaterals” (Janelli and Janelli 1978: 283), and only a famous scholar or a high government bureaucrat could become the focal point of a new segment.

For this reason, Janelli and Janelli argue that segmentation did occur in Korea, within elite lineages only, but that this segmentation still did not occur as frequently as in Chinese Type Z lineages. As possible reasons for this, in addition to the issue of constraints on status assertion, they mention that Korean lineages had shorter histories than those in southeastern China, and therefore, lack the genealogical depth necessary for a complex segmentary system, and the fact that greater economic homogeneity may have existed in Korean lineages than in those of southeastern China. Ultimately, however, Janelli and Janelli have deemed constraints on status assertion to be the most plausible reason.

Regarding the question of how members of a lineage accommodate socio-economic heterogeneity, Janelli and Janelli cite the fact that Korean lineages, unlike those in China, controlled *seowon*, and that this unique function played a role – achieving the exclusive economic goals of a minority of wealthy elite groups within lineages – that corresponded to the internal segmentation seen in China. In other words, by operating *seowon*, scholars belonging to famous lineages were able to form networks with scholars in other villages and wield political influence beyond the boundaries of the areas where they lived. Janelli and Janelli assert that these scholars jointly managed the property of the *seowon*, establishing political connections among themselves within their areas; and that they supported officials from their own political factions employed in Seoul, thereby establishing their own status and, based on this, pursuing their own exclusive interests.

The clear point in Janelli and Janelli’s argument is that there were constraints on asserting status in Korean society, so that creating a segment was only possible if there was a famous ancestor to become its focal point, and that control of *seowon* allowed small numbers of closely related lineage members to pursue their own goals. However, it is unclear how socio-

ancestor in question to be venerated at death-day ancestor rites even after more than four generations had passed.

economic differences among members of a lineage, the basis of Freedman's argument, can be accommodated through control of *seowon*. In order to resolve this issue, it is possible to claim that the shorter history of Korean lineages means their genealogical depth is shallower than those in China, making problems within the lineage insignificant; indeed, Janelli and Janelli suggested this as a possible reason why Korean lineages did not develop the segmentary complexity of their Chinese counterparts. It is necessary, however, to approach this issue starting with a more fundamental question. Namely, we need to reassess the questions, briefly mentioned by Janelli and Janelli, of whether heterogeneity within lineages in traditional Korean society was as significant as in China, and whether there were serious socio-economic distinctions between lineage members.

In the next section, I supplement Janelli and Janelli's cultural interpretation of the relationship between Korean lineages and society by discussing the social context faced by Korean lineage members due to their greater homogeneity in comparison with China in terms of both social status and economic situation. Of course, to say that Korean lineage members were more homogeneous is not to deny that heterogeneous socio-economic elements existed in traditional Korean society. However, in the next section I discuss the fact that this issue must be more seriously considered in terms of the difference between those within lineages and those outside them.

4. Discussion 1: Traditional Korean Society and Yangban (兩班)

According to Kim Taekgyu (1964), the status of *yangban* in Korean society was determined by belonging to a particular lineage. In other words, *yangban* in traditional society were defined by having an ancestor of social prominence, just as people today, when introducing themselves, mention their clan, their surname, and their famous ancestors. Jo Okla (1981: 84), too, agreed with Kim, saying, "*yangban* refers to a group of people belonging to a lineage that plays a leadership role in their local community." Both Kim's and Jo's opinions make it clear that the image of a *yangban* in traditional society was absolutely inseparable from belonging to a lineage.

Jo Okla also stated that while the social status and economic class of *yangban* in traditional Korean society did not necessarily correspond, they fundamentally belonged to a land-owning class, because of the absolute

need to spend time preparing for the civil service examination (*gwageo*, 科擧), rather than engaging in economically productive work. This becomes clear when we consider the way the country's old *yangban* class retained its power throughout the Japanese colonial period despite the official abolition of the social status system in late Joseon, but became weaker when it lost its land, the source of its profit, as a result of land reforms after national liberation.

Though criteria for defining a *yangban* differ among scholars, most historians agree that *yangban* first appeared in the form of bureaucrats who studied Neo-Confucianism in the early Joseon period. But since Korea's ancient states were formed based on clans,⁷ the tradition of a hereditary nobility based on land ownership failed to disappear throughout the Joseon period; this was why a bureaucratic system based purely on merit, like those of Ming and Qing, could not be established even after Korea's adoption of the Chinese bureaucratic system. For this reason, Palais (1975: 7) claimed that the *yangban* status was "mostly inherited and that it conferred eligibility for participation in the civil examination to the exclusion of other status groups." This was very different from China, where social status was acquired by actually holding government office, or after passing the civil service examination. Moreover, in the Joseon period, not only the status of the bureaucratic class but land given to bureaucrats under the Office Land System (Jikjeonbeop, 職田法) effectively became their private property and was handed down through their families. This caused Palais (1975) to claim that the central bureaucracy and the hereditary *yangban* system existed in a symbiotic relationship. Furthermore, *yangban*, accounted for five percent of the population in early Joseon, rose to 20-30 percent by the end of the dynasty: the figure in China was incomparably lower at less than one percent (Freedman 1966: 71). In this context, I believe it can be inferred that Korean *yangban* in traditional society actively formed lineages as a mechanism for continuously asserting status and for maintaining associated economic privileges, particularly from the Joseon period onwards.

Our discussion so far has focused mostly on the social status of *yangban* in traditional society. But the economic discrepancies at the heart of the discussion of Chinese lineages do not always correspond exactly to

⁷ The establishment of Three Kingdoms, the 6 villages of early Silla in particular, provides a typical illustration of a clan-based state.

differences in status. When it comes to regions of southern China where Type Z lineages are commonly found, the accumulated profit required to form an exclusive segment within a lineage can come from various sources, including agricultural profit derived from land (especially double rice cropping), commerce, and government office (Potter: 1970). In Korea, on the other hand, there was minimal accumulation of wealth or formation of capital through commerce; indeed, the system of currency was barely developed, so that producing profit from any source other than land was almost impossible. And since Korea's climate does not allow double rice cropping in any region, the only criterion for gauging how much profit could be made from land was the area of land owned. Land in traditional Korea, with the exception of private land owned by some independent peasants, was distributed to those in government positions according to the Office Land Law; as mentioned above, this was handed down to descendants by way of inheritance, making most of it the exclusive preserve of *yangban*.

As mentioned by Janelli and Janelli, there can be huge discrepancies between rich landowners and tenant farmers belonging to the same lineage. Statistics from Hahoe 1-dong, however, show that, before the land reforms of 1953, 75 percent of households in the Hahoe Yu Clan owned land, while only five percent of those not belonging to this clan were landowners (Kim Taekgyu 1964: 204). This suggests that economic differences in traditional society could conform to traditional *yangban*/non-*yangban* distinctions; or, put another way, lineage member/non-member. Meanwhile, Jo Okla (Cho 1979, 1981) reports that the buying and selling of land in traditional Korea took place almost entirely among *yangban*, in order to preserve their exclusive privileges. The situation in traditional Korean society was thus completely different from that of China, where inheritance of land allocated to government officials was strictly limited and the social status of segments consisting of small numbers of close relatives was formed by the establishment of *weitu* through the accumulation of wealth derived from various resources (Freedman 1958, 1966; Watson 1985).

To summarize the point above, economic differences in traditional Korean society did come down to the issue of *yangban* status versus non-*yangban* status; in other words, belonging or not belonging to a lineage. Members of Korean lineages were much more socio-economically homogeneous than those in China. And, for this reason, it was not as easy

in Korea as in China to create a basis for exclusive profit creation within a lineage. It follows that the creation of a segment within a lineage was not an economic issue but related purely to social status. As claimed by Janelli and Janelli, providing separate ritual funds for a particular ancestor was meaningless if he had not attained social status as high as other famous ancestors in the lineage; only ancestors such as renowned scholars or noblemen could form the focal point of a segment and become its progenitor.

5. Discussion 2: The Case of Dongmal

In the section above, I attempted to clarify the relationship between lineages and society while considering the socio-economic conditions faced by lineages in a traditional society where land ownership was the only possible basis for surplus accumulation, due to agriculture being almost the only way to make a living. In this section, conversely, I analyze, based on field research, how segmentation within lineages is taking place today, at a time when means of subsistence are diversified – in other words, when various heterogeneous elements are cross-cutting lineage membership in terms of wealth. Yu Myeonggi (1977) has already suggested the possibility of asymmetrical segmentation within lineages, reporting how small groups of close agnates within lineages formed exclusive organizations in order to create *wito*⁸ for holding gravesite rituals for ancestors of more than four generations removed, in the forms of *mungye* (門契) or *setgye* (-契), raising the possibility of asymmetrical segmentation within lineages. Below, I examine segmentation within lineages through the data gathered from Dongmal, located in Gaya-myeon, Hapcheon-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do.

Dongmal is a lineage village consisting of 36 households, 32 of which belong to the Jeonju Yi lineage. It is poor: located in a valley, it suffers from a serious lack of arable land; unlike neighboring Goryeong, the village does not grow strawberries in greenhouses as a cash crop due to lack of capital and labor. Almost its sole source of cash income comes from women's hired work in Goryeong strawberry greenhouses each winter. Like most other farming villages, many households have left the land. Dongmal today is a typical farming village, with a striking number of empty houses and those

⁸ Korean pronunciation of *wetu*.

in their 50s constituting its youngest members.

The apical ancestor of the Yi lineage in Dongmal was a provincial official working at the state farm in Geochang, who came to Dongmal while fleeing from war during the Japanese invasions of the late-sixteenth century. In the 15 generations since then, no one from the lineage has reached a central government position, and insufficient land kept the lineage from producing agricultural surplus, which means that this is by no means an elite lineage. The founder had three sons; the current lineage consists of a similar number of households descended from each son. Even the descendant of the lineage as established by primogeniture, who normally becomes the leader in lineage villages, barely wields any influence due to the lack of close relatives. Rather, the village head (*ijang*; 里長) and the New Community leader (*saemaetul jidoja*) stand out as lineage leaders, based on the success of close relatives who have left the village.

Among the several notable buildings in the village are two ancestor shrines (*jesik*; 祭室); the older of these honors the grandson (son of the second son) of the apical ancestor, while the other was built very recently. This second ancestor shrine was erected some 15 years ago from the funds pooled from the descendants who achieved social and economic success after leaving the village, to honor an ancestor seven generations removed. But since this ancestor was not a government official or a prominent scholar, there is no way, according to Janelli and Janelli's assertion, that he could become the focal point of a separate segment. A third building of note is a villa built 12 years ago, which stands on a 500 *pyeong*⁹ plot of land by the road some 100 meters from the entrance to the village, striking a strong contrast with rest of the village, which appears entirely poor. Here, I discuss exclusive segments, focusing on the new ancestor shrine and the villa.

The genealogical diagrams of all lineage members living in Dongmal are much more complicated than those shown in Figure 1, but the figure does conceptualize asymmetrical segmentation within the lineage, illustrating the two sub-groups that have recently formed around the new ancestor shrine and the villa. The new shrine was built in the early 1980s, when the village head decided to display the fact that his first cousins and those of the New Community leader had achieved success after leaving the village. All agnatic descendants of the seventh-generation ancestor got

⁹ 3.3 m².

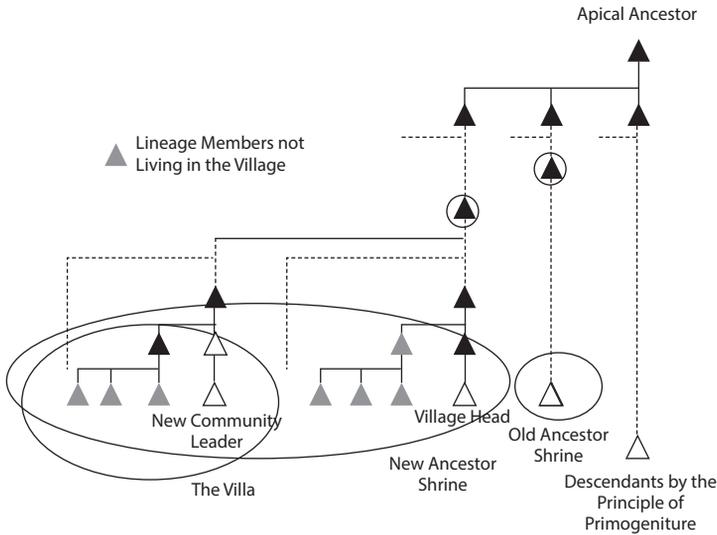


Figure 1. Asymmetrical Segmentation in the Dongmal Lineage

together to provide *wito* for this ancestor and some fifth- and sixth-generation ancestors, for whom *wito* had never before been prepared; at the same time, the new ancestor shrine was built. While the old ancestor shrine demonstrates the social status of descendants of the second son of the lineage's apical ancestor, the new one symbolizes the status of those of the apical ancestor's third son; on holidays, the latter hold parties together with those who live outside the village and have returned to perform ancestor rituals in the new shrine, showing off their status (one of the village head's first cousins is a lawyer, while all the first cousins of the New Community leader are economically successful).

The villa is owned by the second first cousin of the New Community leader, who runs a sizable business in Seoul. It was built in the mid-1980s and is quite different, in symbolic terms, from the new shrine described above. The house is luxurious not just by Dongmal standards but by those of the whole county region. It is of no ritual significance, but it symbolizes the fact that the lineage members most closely related to the New Community leader have been the most successful in the village, and reflects their desire to display this success. When the villa was complete, the New Community leader and his first cousins (excluding the village head and his first cousins) prepared *wito* for the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-generation

ancestors of the New Community leader, who had not been included when the new shrine was built. In summer, the New Community leader's cousins show up at the villa in expensive cars and stay for a few days, implicitly demonstrating that when it comes to venerating ancestors in the lineage, the New Community leader and his first cousins are the most dutiful. The New Community leader's line has thus separated from the other descendants of the apical ancestor's third son and formed a new organization, by building the villa. This may reflect Lee Kwang Kyu's (1988-9) principle of conflict and harmony inherent in Korean lineages and villages, yet we cannot overlook the fact that the New Community leader's line was mobilized to separate from the line associated with the new ancestor shrine and create corporate property for its own exclusive ancestors – in other words, this is a demonstration of exclusive asymmetrical segmentation.

I believe these examples from Dongmal were made possible because of today's greater diversity in occupational structures, which have enabled socio-economic distinctions to emerge among lineage members. Agricultural surplus from the land alone makes the accumulation of wealth difficult, preventing such distinctions from forming. Furthermore, in neither case had the ancestor at the apex of the new segment achieved particularly high social status. This suggests that lineage segmentation in Korea occurs not when a special ancestor comes to occupy a new focal point, but when, as in China, heterogeneity emerges within the lineage and a small number of wealthy members create a new segment in order to serve their own interests. Conversely, the information from Dongmal also agrees with the argument made in the previous section: that in lineages in traditional Korean society, hardly any heterogeneous socio-economic elements that could allow the accumulation of wealth, apart from the land itself, existed. Meanwhile, ongoing study will be required to determine what future actions the members of these asymmetrical segments take to pursue other exclusive goals.

6. Conclusion

This study suggests alternative explanations regarding the relationship between lineages and society in Korea, along with Freedman's theory of Chinese lineages and Janelli and Janelli's discussion of Korean lineages. Janelli and Janelli offered a "cultural" interpretation of lineages and society

in Korea, citing constraints on status assertion in Korea to explain the lack of internal segmentation in lineages compared with those of China. A cultural interpretation is one that explains a particular human behavior in a particular society in terms of the society's peculiar cultural institutions. But since human behavior depends not only on cultural rules but on the socio-economic context in which they occur (Harrell 1982), this study has examined the socio-economic context that applied to lineages in traditional Korean society, in an attempt to supplement Janelli and Janelli's interpretation.

The lack of internal segmentation in Korean lineages when compared with those in China is, as Janelli and Janelli asserted, partly because constraints on status assertion rendered the establishment of exclusive segments meaningless in the absence of an ancestor of high status. I believe, however, that another reason was that lineage members in traditional Korean society, particularly during the Joseon Dynasty, were much more socio-economically homogeneous than their Chinese counterparts, while society itself lacked bases for producing the surplus that would enable segmentation. Conversely, the findings of recent fieldworkers show that collective efforts by small agnatic groups within a lineage create *wito* for a common ancestor, usually more than 4 generations removed, as in China. This is possible because there are far more and diverse ways of making a living today than in traditional society, so that lineages now include various heterogeneous elements.

Since not enough time has passed since such asymmetrical segmentation has taken place within Korean lineages, future research will be needed to determine what actions small groups of close relatives within lineages take to further their own exclusive interests.

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