

The Origin of Korean Traditional Family System and the Socio-Economic Crisis

- Focusing on the Matrilocal Marriage

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This study examines the origin and socio-economic background of the system of "Nam-gui Yeo-ga" a type of traditional family system before Confucianism was accepted in Korea. "Nam-gui Yeo-ga" is a marriage system in which the groom lives in the bride's house, a matrilocal marriage.

The most common type of marriage in ancient Korea was the Seo Okje. The Seo Ok-je refers to an ancient wedding ceremony in which the groom lives in the bride's house after marriage. "Seo ok" means "house of son-in-law" made by his wife-in-law. The records of the Seo Ok-je are contained in the Chinese historical books "Samguksa" and "Huhanseo" from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD.

In previous studies have regarded Seo Ok-je as the residual culture of matrilocal resistance and matrilocal communities. The research results of anthropology have revealed that the transition from maternal to paternal did not take place on a single-track basis. In fact, until the 10th century in ancient Korean society, the paternal and maternal families both served as factors for determining social status together.

The system of "Nam-gui Yeo-ga" is also related to the practice of equal inheritance of children until the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), when labor was provided to their wives-in-law. There are two socio-economic backgrounds of the "Nam-gui Yeo-ga" system. First of all, settlement costs are reduced because new couples belong to the existing community at the same time as marriage. The husband also provides labor to his wife's community through marriage. When the child grows up, the couple and the child return to their husband's house. In other words, the groom only provides labor for about 15 years, the period during which the child grows up.

This study suggests that marriage practices played a role in the principle of reciprocity by providing "labor". The socio-economic background, in which human labor is valued, formed a marriage and family system to minimize the occurrence of labor deficits. The combination of the two forces through marriage soon leads to an economic crisis of labour deficits. As a way to overcome this economic crisis, the government introduced a method of exchanging women's

reproduction and men's labor. This method led to the matrilocal marriage and family system, it lasted for a long time until Goryeo and Joseon (1392-1910) dynasties of Korea. In other words, the traditional Korean form of marriage, "Nam-gui Yeo-ga" was designed and operated as a way to overcome the socio-economic crisis.