The 50,000 Won Friends

Gift Money Exchange in the Alumni Network of South Korea

A dissertation

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Note

All names of the person, organization, and location in this study are pseudonyms for confidentiality. Moreover, all Korean names are given in their original form; the given name follows the family name. In romanizing Korean names and words, this study follows the modified McCune-Reischauer system, which is widely accepted in the academy. However, place names except pseudonyms follow the official romanization established in 2000 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of South Korea as they are conventionally written in English.

Abstract

Despite the widespread perception that money is the standard of value and means of payment, recent studies have shed light on the social meaning of money. However, the role of money as a gift has still only been marginally discussed. This study explores the exchange of monetary gifts in South Korean weddings and funerals, called helping money (*pujogŭm*). Helping money exchange was intensively observed among the members of a high school alumni association of the same year graduates for more than 30 years. This alumni relationship is called *tongch'ang* and has pivotal relevance in one's social capital in Korea. Through the standardized manner of giving helping money in terms of the sums and the modes of exchange, the investigated alumni strengthen their network and reinforce their mutual identity. The sum of helping money exchanged among the alumni is mostly 50,000 won or 100,000 won, which is comparably less than to kinship or to business associates. According to the alumni, a relatively smaller amount of helping money among the tongch'ang is a symbol of their lasting relationship. It does not need to be high as they have already built strong trust and solidarity since their youth. In other words, the investigated alumni assign different meanings to money, depending on the relationship and the purpose of giving the gift. To sum, money, similar to other types of gifts, also embodies social relationships. Thus, the 50,000 won friends stand for a lifelong friendship with strong belongingness.

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Prologue

During my childhood in South Korea, I often received pocket money from adult relatives, neighbors, or friends of my parents. When this happened, my mother always asked me how much it was. I did not want to answer her question because I was afraid that she might take it away. It was not until I got older that I began to understand the logic of monetary gift exchanges in Korea and the importance of my mother's question in those days; my mother was expected to reciprocate an equivalent sum to her friends' children. I also grasped that this practice is a substantial part of social relationships in Korea. Since I moved from South Korea to Germany, I have paid particular attention to relations involving money or gifts. Germany is the first country abroad where I have lived for over ten years. It has been a dramatic change in the living environment. I have come to realize that the way that people interact through money, gifts, and monetary gifts is somewhat different in Germany from what I used to know in my homeland. For instance, people in Germany do not often give cash gifts in envelopes at weddings and funerals. If it has to be given, people pay special attention to decoration, so that cash properly turns into a gift. In other words, cash itself is not a suitable gift in Germany. On the other hand, a cash gift is favored in Korea for various occasions, not only in weddings and funerals but also for birthdays and national holidays.

The objectives of this study are based on my long-time experience and observation of two culturally distinct environments. With this study, I want to date the curiosity which I have kept inside for a long time. Why do Koreans give and return a similar amount of money to each other on various occasions? If there is no profit from monetary exchanges, does this practice have other reasons? I believe this phenomenon is well represented

in the Korean practice of *pujogŭm*, the exchange of cash gifts, particularly in weddings and funerals. Pujogŭm can be literally translated as helping money in English. The sum of helping money is usually either 50,000 or 100,000 won in South Korea in the 2010s. During my Ph.D. project, I was told several times by Korean scholars, including Korean social and cultural anthropologists, that there is little need to study helping money. The reason for their argument was that the mechanism is so obvious; what is given is returned. However, the reciprocity seemed to be a too simple answer to explain the standardized sums of helping money, in my opinion. Moreover, it was important for me to understand the significance of such practices in specific social organizations, such as school alumni networks. I was convinced of the worth in conducting a study about it. Also, there have not been enough studies ethnographically exploring the nature of helping money exchanges in South Korea. With this backdrop, I am grateful to be able to present here my dissertation "The 50,000 Won Friends: Gift Money Exchange in the Alumni Network of South Korea".

One. Helping Money Exchanges among the School Alumni

Helping Each Other with Money

Scene 1: The wedding ceremony of Mr. Tak Hun's daughter in March 2014

The elevator door opens, and we step into the slightly dark corridor before us. We have just arrived at a wedding house located on the eleventh floor of a big shopping mall near Seoul, South Korea. I am accompanying two men in their late 50s, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi and Mr. Ch'a Chi-Won. Their mutual friend from the same high school, Mr. Tak Hun, is celebrating his daughter's wedding ceremony here today at noon. It is now 11:40 am. We got to the location 20 minutes earlier. Two screens are set in front of the elevator, the place at which everyone will glance as soon as they enter the wedding house. The screens are showing today's wedding schedule; a number of couples will celebrate their wedding ceremonies after the one we are attending. In reality, each couple has only a few hours to use the ceremony hall, as ceremonies are scheduled at two hours intervals. Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a quickly move through the corridor as they have been here before. I run after them. The interior of the house is decorated with orange light and wooden furniture. Especially with the whispering stream of classical music, the location creates a somewhat elegant atmosphere. At the end of the corridor, we reach the reception hall. It is already filled with guests. They are mostly dressed in single color suits or dresses, but a few older women are wearing traditional Korean dresses, *hanbok*, in vivid

colors. The reception hall is somewhat hectic. About ten standing flower arrangements made of colorful flowers and green plants (approximately two meters tall) stand next to each other and fill the middle of the reception hall. Between these colossal flower arrangements stand two wooden reception desks. These are to welcome the guests from the bride and groom's side. Two people are sitting at each desk and receiving guests. Soon after we arrive at the reception hall, Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a find a group of their mutual friends. Around ten male friends from the same high school have already gathered together in the left corner of the hall. They all belong to the same alumni association as the class of 1974 from the Hani high school in Songwŏn County in the southwest of South Korea. As I meet many of them for the first time, I introduce myself as the daughter of one of their alumni. They are surprised, probably either because I am the only young female participant among the much older men or because I am attending a wedding ceremony which is not directly related to me. After greeting their friends, Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a go toward the reception desk. Many people are already waiting in line. I struggle not to lose Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a in the frenzy surrounds. While we are waiting in the line, Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a greet Mr. Tak Hun. Mr. Tak and his wife stand next to their reception desk (bride's side) as they are the main hosts of today's ceremony. However, neither the bride nor the groom is seen in the reception hall. As they finally reach the reception desk, Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a start writing their names separately on a white envelope. Many new white envelopes and black pens are already prepared on the desk. Filled with money, these simple envelopes turn into *pujogŭm*, the 'helping money'. Mr. Pan takes five or six envelopes at once. He writes different names down on each of them and fills each envelope with 50,000 won or 100,000 won. I ask him why he does so, and he answers that he was asked to do so as a favor for his high school friends who cannot come here today. All envelopes are finally handed into two men sitting at the reception desk. As they receive the envelopes, the receptionists give Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a two coupons for the buffet. As Mr. Pan handed in five envelopes, it looks quite easy to ask for an extra buffet coupon for me. The receptionists at the reception desk document the giver's name and the amount of their helping money in a registration book. Since they are very busy, the receptionists do not check the giver's actual identity. Some of those who did not make it to this event today will have their names listed in the registration book as if they were

physically present. Shortly after Mr. Pan and Mr. Ch'a submit their envelopes, the wedding ceremony starts. Most of the 1974 alumni of the Hani high school go into the wedding hall, but some of them run directly to the buffet without attending the ceremony.

Scene 2: The funeral ceremony of Mr. Ma Tong-Su's mother in August 2015

A wall clock in the lobby points at 7:20 pm. I have been waiting for the members of the 1974 alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School since 7 pm here on the first floor of a funeral ceremony home in Seoul. The alumni are supposed to meet in this funeral home at 7:30 pm in order to participate in Mr. Ma Tong-Su's mother's funeral ceremony. Mr. Ma Tong-Su is a firm member of this alumni association. Months ago, Mr. Ma often missed or came late for their alumni reunions and other alumni's ceremonies because his mother was in a critical condition. As the eldest son of the family, he brought his mother from his hometown Songwŏn to Seoul a long time ago when he decided to settle down in the capital of South Korea. While I am waiting for the 1974 alumni in the lobby of the funeral home, I check the ceremony information on a big screen near the entrance. I find Mr. Ma's full name on the screen and find out that his ceremony is taking place in the biggest room, called the VIP room of this funeral home. As the eldest son of his family, his name is registered as the first mourner. Under Mr. Ma's name, the names of his siblings, their spouses, and the names of their children are listed as the mourners, too. I have never seen so many main mourners listed (almost 20 names) in a funeral ceremony. From the information on the monitor, I assume that this funeral ceremony expects many guests.

Soon, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi arrives at the funeral house. I greet him, but he looks busy. As soon as he enters the building, he finds a standing table near the entrance where many white envelopes for helping money are prepared. He picks a bunch of envelopes. Next, he finds a seat in the lobby and takes out a black calligraphy brush, one specially designed for portable use, and a piece of white paper from an inside pocket of his jacket. On this piece of paper, Mr. Pan made a note about who asked him to make their helping

money envelopes. In total, seven alumni asked Mr. Pan for the proxy payment of their helping money. Mr. Pan elaborately writes his friends' names on each envelope with the calligraphy brush and fills each of them with cash. On this day, the requested sums are uniformly 50,000 won, including Mr. Pan himself. While Mr. Pan is busy making envelopes for his friends, Mr. Son Han-Pin enters the building. Mr. Son, known as a wealthy member of the association, also brings an envelope from the table and makes his own helping money envelope. Unlike his friends, Mr. Son puts 100,000 won in his helping money envelope.

As soon as Mr. Pan and Mr. Son finish the preparation of their helping money, they go to the third floor, where Mr. Ma's mother's funeral ceremony is taking place. At the entrance to the third floor, I see many standing flower arrangements. More than 50 flower arrangements decorate the way from the corridor to Mr. Ma's mother's altar. The sender's names are visibly displayed on the ribbon attached to the standing flower arrangements. Many different individuals sent flower arrangements to the main mourners, such as the representatives of companies or associations. Mr. Ma's high school alumni association also sent one flower arrangement to his mother's funeral ceremony. On its ribbon, "The president Im Se-Hun of the 28th alumni association of the Hani high school in Seoul" is written.

When we arrive at the reception hall, which connects the altar room and the dining hall, there are already many people attending Mr. Ma's ceremony. As many people arrive at a similar time after work, a waiting line has formed in front of the altar room. While Mr. Pan and Mr. Son are standing in the waiting line, they find a number of their mutual high school friends and call them: "Hey, come here. Let's do the ritual together. There are too many people waiting now." After a person burns incense on the burner in the altar room, everyone bows together on their knees. After doing the ritual, the alumni head to the reception desk in front of the altar room. They put their prepared envelopes in the wooden box on the desk. Then they write their names in the guest book. However, not everyone writes down their names in this book as their envelope will prove their presence at this ceremony. Afterward, the alumni go to the dining hall. Mr. Sim Ho-Tong and Mr. Ta Nam-Ki from the alumni association are already sitting at a table and call their friends to join them. Soon, food and drinks are served at the table. Over time, more and more alumni find each other

in the dining hall and get together at the table. They join the conversation just like they are having another reunion at a funeral ceremony.

These two scenes describe the fast and dynamic atmosphere of about 30 minutes in a Korean wedding and funeral ceremony. Within this short time, cash turns into gift money. The emphasis of these scenes lies in the standardized sums of helping money in Korean weddings and funerals. Moreover, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi later explained to me that he always gives the same amount of helping money to all of his high school alumni. Even though he feels closer to some of his classmates than to others in his alumni association, he does not differentiate the sum of his helping money. This standardization of helping money sums seems to be common among his high school alumni. By the way, I also observed that some of the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School give far more than 50,000 or 100,000 won of helping money to other relationships, such as to their relatives and business associates: The alumni give up to 3,000,000 won to their family members or far relatives. Some of them, mostly those who are self-employed, usually give 300,000 won of helping money to their business associates. Why do the alumni give merely the standardized sums of helping money to each other, which is less than not only to their kin but also to their business associates? Aren't they close enough to give more helping money than to business associates since they have maintained their friendship over 40 years after their high school graduation in 1974? This indicates far more enigmatic rules of helping money practices than the common understanding of gift exchanges where the value of the gifts exchanged between individuals or groups depends on the strength of their relationship.

The practice of giving helping money further provokes several questions. Why is the sum of helping money among the members of the same high school alumni association standardized to 50,000 won or 100,000 won? What do the displayed flower arrangements in a ceremony imply? Why do the alumni send their helping money through Mr. Pan Tu-Hi when they are not able to attend their alumni's ceremonies? Some more questions can be directed to the social structure; is giving helping money something related to traditional values or customs of Korea, or is it a practice recently

introduced with capitalism? What is the significance of such relationships as high school graduates of the same year in Korean society? This study is about pujogŭm, helping money, in South Korea among high school graduates of the same year. It shows a pattern of monetary gift exchanges in a specific relationship which reveals the social structure of relationship and monetary gift exchanges in Korea. Foremost in the following section, I will approach the main research objectives theoretically from the gift and social capital in a Korean context.

A Gift without Spirit

What is a gift? Despite the extended discussion in social and cultural anthropology, there have been various approaches and definitions of what a gift is. In this study, I refer to the modest definition of gifts by Annamma Joy. According to Joy, gifts can be simply defined as "the circulation of goods to promote ties and bonding between individuals" (Joy 2001: 239). The announced definition of gifts indicates at least two fundamental elements of the study of gifts, which are reciprocity and social relationships. The circulation of goods indicates the continuous reciprocity between individuals, which strengthens their ties and bonding. In other words, reciprocity and social relationships are intertwined in the term 'gift' like a metonym. In this study, I will scrutinize this complex of reciprocity and social relationships in gift-giving regarding the object being exchanged. Before moving to this point, it is necessary to discuss the significant debates in gift studies and how they relate to this study.

Gift exchange has long been of central importance in human society. Mauss noticed early enough this importance of gifts and published his famous essay "Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques (The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies)" in 1925 (Mauss 1925; 1990). At the core, Mauss argued that it is the spirit of the gift, *hau*, which forces the object to circulate among the individuals and groups. If hau is not appropriately considered, and the gift is not reciprocated, it can bring severe damage to individuals. Mauss' work is a search for an economical alternative other than capitalism and entails a political manifestation to urge human solidarity. Nevertheless, his

study initiated fellow scholars to compare various societies based on their economic systems, such as market and non-market economies, thus the Western and the rest (cf. Hart and James 2014: 5). In particular, many studies in the late 19th and 20th century engaged with the exchange systems of non-market societies, such as those in the Polynesian and Melanesian regions and those of indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and the United States (Firth 1929; Strathern 2007; Malinowski 2014; Boas 2016). *Utu, Moka, Kula*, and *Potlatch* are only some examples of such exchange systems and gift economies. These findings have further advanced the debate on pure gifts and the comparison between gift and commodity in economic anthropology. I will further investigate how these two debates are related to the spirit of the gift, hau, and to the object being exchanged.

In contrast to the spirit of the gift, which enforces the reciprocation of the given things, many scholars have investigated the possibility of a pure gift or a genuinely free gift which is not inherently reciprocal and alienable but still influences relationships in one way or another. In many investigations, the results ended up in skeptical narratives, such as by Malinowski (1926), Parry (1986), and Derrida (1992). Malinowski retracted his assertion of pure gift between parents and children in his prior work (2014) because he argues that he did not correctly consider the reciprocal service in a long perspective (1926: 40-41). Parry insists that pure gift is "most likely to arise in highly differentiated societies with an advanced division of labour" (1986: 466-467). He further explains that only a particular type of society "has separated interest from disinterest in exchange" (Sanches et al. 2017: 580). Thus, the ideology of pure gift is somewhat a modern invention of industrialized societies. In his work "Given Time: Counterfeit Money", Derrida suggests a paradoxical point that a true gift would not be given and received as a gift so that it does not produce reciprocity (1992: 14). In other words, the receiver would receive a gift without noticing it as a gift. As soon as he recognizes it as a gift, the gift is annulled. In contrast to that, Laidlaw demonstrates that a type of free gift is found in the form of alms-giving of Shvetambar Jainism in India (2000). Jain families give food to renouncers without expecting a material return. This non-reciprocity is religiously prescribed in this gift-giving, called *dan*. This giving is given, even without using the word 'giving' (Laidlaw 2000: 622). Nevertheless, the individuals who donate and share

their food believe that fortune will return to them sometime in the future (Laidlaw 2000: 624). It is disputable whether this practice of dan can be identified as a pure gift in a genuine sense, or if it belongs instead to the realm of donation or sharing in religious practices. This requires further discussion in terms of giving in other religious practices as well. As the discussion of pure gift shows, it does not seem very easy to detach reciprocal expectations in gift-giving and exchanges. Here I can conclude that, independent from the spirit of the gift, gift-giving is predominantly entangled with reciprocity. Gift-giving is the dynamic of reciprocal exchanges that affect both donors and receivers. Whoever or whatever is identified as the donor or receiver, they are most likely to enter into a relationship of reciprocity. Therefore, without relating it to the spirit of hau, reciprocity is a fundamental value in various exchanges.

The following considerable discussion in gift studies is the contrast of gifts with commodities. Commodities in a market economic society are products that individuals purchase with cash based on economic calculation. Unlike gifts, commodities do not have the spirit or power to be returned to the place of their origin. This further relates to the assertion that a gift is personal and emotional, while a commodity is characterized by impersonality and rationality. In the same vein, it has been a dominating assumption that gifts have inalienability, but commodities do not (Gregory 1982: 43; Weiner 1992: 191). A gift has an innate obligation of reciprocity and the inalienable identity of the giver, which cannot be easily transferred to the receiver. Due to this character, a gift can hardly be replaced with another one. The obligation to reciprocate and the inalienable singularity of a gift ultimately creates the connectedness between the giver and the receiver, the social relations. In contrast to that, a commodity is an alienable object that does not carry the giver's identity (Carrier 1991: 125). Purchasing a commodity is a calculative and economic activity, and replacing it with another one is less complicated than replacing a gift. In a commodity exchange, the relationship between the giver and the receiver, or in other words, between the seller and the purchaser, is a temporarily attributed status. As soon as the transaction finishes, their relationship dissolves. If a gift connects individuals, commodity disconnects them (cf. Carrier 1991: 127-128). Commodities do not have the spirit, and this is substantially different from a gift. However, there has not been enough

discussion about what if a gift is a commodity. What if a gift is an alienable object which does not carry the giver's identity?

Many scholars have criticized the interpretation of hau by Mauss. For instance, Lévi-Strauss insists that Mauss was mystified by the indigenous people in understanding their theory (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 47-48). Firth and Sahlins indicate that Mauss misinterpreted the meaning of hau (Firth 1929: 412-413; Sahlins 1974: 157). Mauss merely focused on the circulation of the gift with personality but did not fully comprehend the process of social formation among the Maori (Firth 1929: 419). The understanding of the spirit of the gift is still disputable. Despite this debate on hau, the studies of gifts have continued, and new findings are situated in modern settings. In particular, the differentiation of two forms of exchange, gift and commodity, and the characterization of societies based on the types of frequently exchanged objects finds less and less assurance as multiple scholars have observed that the two forms of exchange coexist in a single society (Appadurai 1986; Parry 1989; Carrier 1991; Chevalier 2014). Moreover, anthropologists found that commodities and gifts are entangled in East Asian market economic societies, for instance (Yan 1996; Rupp 2003). There is hardly any pure commodity (Carrier 1995: 29) as there is no pure gift. Absolute impersonality in the market economy is not likely as Graeber expresses that "(e)ven in the most impersonal shopping mall or supermarket, clerks are expected to simulate at least personal warmth, patience, and other reassuring qualities" (Graeber 2011: 103). It is rather social settings that determine the value of objects and the interpersonal relationship bound to reciprocal expectations, not the object itself (Appadurai 1986: Cheal 1988: 11). Thus, commodities, or any objects exchanged, can be a gift without a particular spirit and promote relationships through reciprocity.

While anthropologists were concerned about the concepts in gift-giving practices, consumer researchers explored the commodity gift exchanges in capitalist and market-oriented settings (Belk 1976; Sherry 1983; Ruth et al. 1999; Giesler 2006). In these studies, the border between commodities and gifts is remarkably blurry; any commodity can be considered as a gift. Sherry demonstrates that "gift dimensions such as price or quality are used to create, maintain, modulate, or sever relationships with individuals or alliances within corporate groups. (Sherry 1983: 158)" Here, gifts are classified not only qualitatively, but also

as quantifiable objects. The price of a gift especially can have consequences for social relationships. What would it be like if the gift itself is cash, the price of which is visibly presented when it is given? This is a central question of this study as it will be further elaborated. Before moving to this point, I will review the debates in reciprocity and social relationships in more detail.

Due to its innate character, many studies of gifts have regarded reciprocity as taken for granted. Sahlins may be the most considerable scholar in the study of reciprocity. He emphasizes the accountability of reciprocity and suggests distinguishing the reciprocity from the spirit of a gift (Sahlins 1972; Yan 1996: 7). Sahlins further disentangles the types of reciprocity in primitive [1] societies: generalized, balanced, and negative reciprocities (Sahlins 1972: 193-196). Generalized reciprocity is altruistic giving, which indicates no expectation of a direct material return. In this reciprocity, what is to be given back is indefinite, and the failure to reciprocate does not stop the giver from giving. The second type of reciprocity is balanced reciprocity, which is close to the economic exchange. Sahlins describes it as perfectly balanced reciprocity due to two characteristics: an equivalent return and a relatively short time of the exchange (Sahlins 1972: 194-195). Nevertheless, the relationship, in this case, is less personal and easily vulnerable to failures. The third type, negative reciprocity, is the opposite concept of generalized reciprocity, "to get something for nothing with impunity" (Sahlins 1972: 195). This type of reciprocity concentrates on the unilateral advantage and is the most impersonal form of exchange. Negative reciprocity could be interpreted as the most economically oriented act as each participant tries to maximize their interests by giving less. Even though these three categories of reciprocity are solely theoretical distinctions and most empirical cases fall somewhere in between, Sahlins claims that kinship relationship is the key indicator of his model (1972: 196). However, in modern and industrialized society, the relationship is not merely focused on kinship but also extended to various social fields. Does this mean that generalized reciprocity is less frequently observed in the urban area, and balanced and negative reciprocity is more prevalent? How

[1] The term 'primitive' is used in this study to cite the original works by the announced scholars. The difference between primitive and modern should be understood in a relative context and the usage of the term does not mean any fixed conditions.

is reciprocity practiced differently in modern societies where kinship is not the only relationship which plays a significant role? In this study, a prototype of social relationships in Korea (school alumni associations) will be analyzed to answer this question.

Regarding Sahlins' model, the types of reciprocity closely relate to the types of relationships. However, the archetype of reciprocity is not necessarily gauged by a unilateral definition of relationships. In the study of the gift exchange in a Chinese rural village, Yan introduces two types of gift-giving practices, instrumental and expressive gift-giving (Yan 1996). Instrumental gifts are "offered for a utilitarian purpose and ordinarily indicate a short-term relationship between the two parties" and expressive gifts "are ends in themselves and often reflect a long-term relationship between a giver and a recipient" (Yan 2002: 69). As Yan admits, a clear distinction between instrumental and expressive gift-giving is not possible, and they often mingle in practice (1996: 45). What I will try to discover with the introduced typologies of gift-giving and reciprocity is rather how they are intertwined culturally and morally in the diverse dimensions of social relationships. Cheal mentioned that the leading economic system of the gift exchange is identified as a moral economy in which the practices are controlled by voluntary gift exchanges (1988). This type of economy, characterized by redundancy, is often observed in market economic societies, such as gift exchange at Christmas (Cheal 1988: 12). As it will be shown in the case of Korean helping money exchanges, gift exchange is nowhere in the scope of redundancy. It is a substantial part of social life that influences social networks and resources to a significant degree.

Mauss' work and his theory of gifts have recently been reviewed with great attention by not only economic anthropologists but also scholars of other fields. For instance, Fournier's biography of Mauss was published in 1994 (English translation in 2006, Fournier 2006), and Hart and James devoted a special edition in the Journal of Classical Sociology about Mauss in 2014 (Hart and James 2014). With Guyer's re-translation of the work, "The Gift, Essai sur le don" (Mauss 2016), Marcel Mauss and his work earned additional attention and importance in the discipline. With this recent revision or even earlier than this, Mauss has become a historical personality to a certain degree. In the late 2010s, almost 100 years after Mauss published his essai sur le don, one of the significant goals of this study is

to contribute the gift studies in terms of a monetary form of gift exchange in South Korea. This gift money, called pujogŭm, does not have the spirit of the given material, as it is cash, but influences social relationships through reciprocity. Further, I will review the studies of the monetary form of gift exchanges and social networks in Korea.

Money, Gifts, and Special Money

In this section, I will scrutinize money as a gift. It starts with the definition of money and discusses how numerous scholars have regarded money and its role in society. This section will set a theoretical frame of money that this study regards and introduce the main objective of this study, helping money. Graeber insists that there is neither a clear explanation of the origin of money nor the definition of it in the studies of money (2011). Money has existed in diverse forms in various societies throughout the development of human history. Its forms have changed variously depending on the political and technological conditions of each society. Carved stones, seashells, coins made of gold, silver, or nickel, paper, stocks, and cryptocurrency are only some examples. The introduction of the market economy represents a significant milestone for social and economic transformations and has also influenced the study of money. Some scholars have defined money before the market economy as primitive money and the money in the market economy as modern money (Dalton 1965; Einzig 1966).[2] In the following study, money implies primarily the currency which consists of banknotes and coins and is issued as legal tender in the modern state.

Economists often view money as a means of exchange, a unit of account, and a store of value in a very fundamental sense (Jevons 1876; Codere 1968: 558). This neoclassical definition of money, which is the mainstream definition at present, relates mainly to money's functions as a manageably flowing asset in the market system. This also presumes that all societies with a market economy have money with the same functions,

[2] In his work "Primitive money", Dalton continuously differentiates primitive economy from 'our' economy and primitive money from 'our' money, which he indicates the market economy and commercial money (Dalton 1965).

which is based on rationality, quantifiability, and objectivity, what Barber calls "the absolutization of the market" (Barber 1977). However, this view is based on a sharp separation of social spheres from economic spheres (Swedberg and Granovetter 1992: 1). Money's function cannot entirely be explained by the singular investigation of the economic sphere. Moreover, drawing such a strict separation is not possible in practice. Therefore, the previously mentioned functions of money seem not feasible for understanding the social and cultural dimensions of money, which is a significant part of our social life. In consequence, sociologists and anthropologists have analyzed the social embeddedness of economic practices and thus demonstrated the social meaning of money.

Several sociologists have studied money in market economy concerning its social function, and some of them insist on the impersonalizing effect of money. The market economy is based on profit-maximizing rationality and monetary calculation, which forces individuals to objectify social relationships. According to Weber and Simmel, for instance, money is the most abstract and impersonal form of calculation (Weber 1946: 331; Simmel 2001: 298). As one of the most significant consequences that modernity has brought, money is a form of the objectification of relationships (Simmel 2001: 398; Deutschmann 2000: 304). In other words, money not only objectifies the value of commodities but also the value of social relationships (Heinemann 1987: 333). Consequently, according to the view of these sociologists, money separates individuals from social dependency and provides them the fundamental condition to perform separately in the modern society (Deutschmann, 2000: 304; Maurer 2006: 19).

In line with impersonalization, money in market economy is often compared with money in preindustrial societies: "[O]ur money is impersonal and commercial, while primitive money frequently has pedigree and personality, sacred uses, or moral and emotional connotations (Dalton 1965: 44)." Interestingly enough, the contradiction between primitive and modern money by Dalton significantly assimilates the distinction between gift and commodity exchange, as discussed earlier: personal versus impersonal, and moral and emotional versus commercial. In terms of their influence on social relationships, gifts and primitive money seem to have many things in common. In particular, gifts exchanged in kula and potlatch are identified in some investigations as

primitive money with its symbolic value and reciprocity (Dalton 1965; Codere 1968). However, as explained in the previous section, the strict separation of gifts from commodities or the other way around is difficult as both forms of exchange can coexist in a single society. Graeber explains that money is "almost always something hovering between a commodity and a debt-token" (2011: 75). Thus, money as a commodity and as a gift can coexist in a society. Moreover, money's diverse roles in social relationships should also be considered. As it was discussed above by Weber and Simmel, money deeply relates to social relationships in a way or another. To give one more example, Marx earlier declared that money heavily influences social relations in a capitalist society in the mode of production and distribution (Marx 1887). According to Ingham, "all forms of money are social relations (Ingham 1996: 510)." But the featured forms of social relationships are not limited in the economic reproduction or the impersonal sphere. As Hart insists on the two-sided dimension of money, personal and impersonal, "Money's significance thus lies in the synthesis it promotes of impersonal abstraction and personal meaning, objectification and subjectivity..." (Hart 2007: 15). In sum, money and social relationships are deeply intertwined in everyday lives, and it is a hasty judgment to generalize merely the impersonalizing function of money in market society. Next, I will discuss money's personalized function as a gift in a specific social setting.

Numerous economic anthropologists have defined money variously and given it different names. For instance, Bohannan gives an example of the multi-centric economy of Tiv, a Nigerian tribe, and introduces their use of special purpose money (1959). In line with the varieties and functions of money, Bohannan introduces two types of money: general purpose money and special purpose money (1959).[3] Similar to the neoclassical definition, Bohannan clarifies three functions of money, which are "a means of exchange, a mode of payment, and a standard of value" (1959: 491). General purpose money means the type of money that fulfills all three functions. In comparison to that, special purpose money fulfills only one or two of these functions (Bohannan 1959: 492). In Tiv, general purpose money was used in a minimal range, while special purpose money was

[3] The terms general purpose money and special purpose money were previously suggested by Polanyi (Polanyi 1966: 174).

used in diverse domains, such as bride wealth and cattle exchanges. Bohannan concludes that the general purpose money unifies the market from a multi-centric to a unicentric economy. This conclusion is influenced by the contradiction between market and non-market economy and overshadowed by the distinction between Western and non-Western societies. In other words, primitive or special purpose money is introduced to explain the economic system of primitive societies (Zelizer 1989: 348). Moreover, Melitz declares that present money in Western countries is also not general purpose money. It is also a type of special purpose money because its functions are socially constructed and destined to change over time (Melitz 1970: 1021).

Zelizer further insists that money is not culturally neutral and morally invulnerable (1989: 347). According to her, "we assign different meanings and designate separate uses for particular kinds of monies" (Zelizer 1989: 343). She introduces the term 'special monies' that fulfill different purposes in a specific social context despite having the same features (Zelizer 1989: 348). To some degree, Zelizer's special monies can be understood as a type of special purpose money in a multi-centric economy in Bohannan's sense. Zelizer explains that special monies are "morally or ritually ranked" and can be "appropriate only for funeral gifts or marriage gifts" (Zelizer 1989: 348). This term is also appropriate to explain monetary interactions outside the market, as it focuses on its social quality, "a particular set of cultural and social factors" (Zelizer 1989: 351). In its essence, the social meaning of money is produced by the actors and by the social context for a specific purpose. Thus, special money can be found independently from the distinction of the market and non-market economy, which remarks a difference from Bohannan's special purpose money and Dalton's primitive and modern money. As indicated by Zelizer, one type of special monies is significantly observable when it becomes a gift.

As the most impersonal and rational form of calculation, money has often been identified as a bad gift among consumer researchers and sociologists as well as some economic anthropologists (Bohannan and Bohannan 1968; Sherry 1983; Sinardet and Mortelmans 2005). In other words, money has a bad reputation as a gift. Nevertheless, many studies of gift money have extensively approached dowry practices, the payment for the bride (Tenhunen 2008), or the exchange in other ceremonial

occasions in Polynesia, India, China, and Japan (Befu 1968; Cheal 1988; Yang 1994; Yan 1996; Karuppaiyan 1997; Rupp 2003; Lee Sari 2004; Addo 2009; Greenhill and Magnusson 2010). It is noticeable that the monetary gift exchanges are not always inevitably regarded as impersonal and inappropriate in some societies. Parry and Bloch indicate the embeddedness of the economy in society (1989). The meaning of money is socially and culturally constructed. Moreover, recent studies introduce developing trends of cash wedding gifts and their increasing social acceptance in Western societies. Cheal observed in the 1980s in Winnipeg, Canada, that money is increasingly exchanged as a gift at weddings (1988: 121-141). In this study, Cheal argues that the form of monetary gift is an extension of peasant tradition, which still maintains its relevance in contemporary capitalist society. Greenhill and Magnusson investigated the developing mode of wedding gifts from material to monetary, also in the same city as Cheal, Winnipeg, and its social acceptance (2010). In this study, the two authors discuss how the communication of giving cash gifts is accomplished between givers and receivers and how this process disrupts the 'capitalist' connotation of money as a non-gift (Greenhill and Magnusson 2010). Nevertheless, in this study, the reciprocal aspect of gift money is marginally concerned, as well as its interdependency with social relationships.

While the study of Greenhill and Magnusson describes the changing acceptance of gift money in Canadian society, gift money is already widely practiced in South Korea as an extension of pre-industrial peasant practice, similar to Cheal's observation. It is questionable whether money as a gift can be generalized as the remnant of capitalism and market societies. As I have discussed so far, the distinction between gift and commodity is not feasible, similarly with the distinction between primitive and modern money. Both forms are observed in a single society independent from the forms of the dominant economic system. Due to its social dimension and influence in social relationships, modern money can also be a type of gift. Next, the case of monetary gift exchanges in South Korea will be introduced in more detail.

As briefly illustrated earlier, the practice of monetary gift-giving in South Korea is called pujogŭm. It is hard to pinpoint precisely when the practice of pujogŭm or helping money was habituated in the Korean Peninsula. Pae

reports that *pujo* practice in the wedding ceremony existed as early as the 15th century in Korea (Pae Chae-Hong 1999). Pujogŭm is a Sino-Korean word that can be written in Chinese characters as many other Korean vocabularies. Pujogŭm consists of two words; *pujo* and *k(g)ŭm*, which mean help and money, respectively. Thus, pujogŭm can be literally translated as helping money into English, which this study will continuously use. In the Korean dictionary, the first definition of pujo is generally helping others (Sŏng Nak-Yang 2010: 1088). The second definition of pujo is helping others by giving material or money in festive or mourning occasions, or the given material or money itself (ibid.). Thereby, pujo can be historically divided into two categories; material and monetary pujo. Material pujo (*hyŏnmulpujo*) consisting of rice, alcohol, clothes, or anything which can be used for big celebrations, was bestowed to the host family (Kodaeminjongmunhwayŏ n'guso 1980: 400). For instance, raw fabric for making mourning clothes and food for the ritual ceremony were prevalent material pujo for funeral ceremonies. Bridal wear and home furniture were also often material pujo for wedding ceremonies. Monetary pujo (*hyŏngŭmpujo*) is also called pujogŭm and has been more prevalent since the 1960s (ibid.). Above all, there is a non-material form of pujo, called *mombujo*. That is physical aid in the ceremonies. In current Korean society, pujo mainly refers to monetary aid for wedding and funeral ceremonies.

In daily word usage, pujo and pujogŭm are often pronounced as *puju* and *pujugŭm*. This seems to be due to ease of articulation as the same vocal 'u' repeats in the second syllable. According to the Korean dictionary, people already pronounced pujo as puju as early as 1963 (I Hŭi-Sŭng 1963: 1300). Nevertheless, puju and pujugŭm are regarded as phonic mistakes and constantly re-directed to pujo and pujogŭm in the dictionaries (I Hŭi-Sŭng 1963: 1300; I Ki-Sŏp 2007: 315; Sŏng Nak-Yang 2010: 1088).[4] This study will mainly use pujo and pujogŭm, but the transcripts from the interviews will occasionally contain puju or pujugŭm as the interviewees pronounced it to reflect the daily usage of this word.

As pujogŭm is mainly exchanged in wedding and funeral ceremonies, there are specific terms indicating pujogŭm for each ceremony. Pujogŭm for wedding ceremonies is called *ch'ugŭigŭm*, which can be translated as celebratory or congratulatory money in English. Pujogŭm in

[4] A similar use of these words, pujo and pujogŭm, is observed in the North Korean dictionary as well (Chosŏnmal Sajŏn 1961: 254-255).

funeral ceremonies has two varieties, *choŭigŭm* and *puŭigŭm*, which mean condolence money. Pujogŭm, in general, is also referred to as *kyongjosabi*, the cost of celebration and condolence. The practice of helping money exchange in modern Korean weddings and funerals will be extensively discussed in Chapter 3. The next section will introduce the social network to explain how helping money exchange is related to social networks.

Social Capital of Tongch'ang

As introduced earlier, the main mechanisms of gift exchange are reciprocity and social relationships. In the previous section, helping money, the monetary gift exchange in Korean weddings and funerals, was introduced and identified as 'special money'. This section is devoted to social relationships that relate to social capital. In particular, the focus lies on the social network of alumni as an organized entity, called *tongch'ang-hoe* in Korean. This type of social relationship is of particular importance in South Korean society, and the exchange of helping money is usually quite active within this network. After shortly reviewing theories of social capital, this section will introduce the social network of *tongch'ang*, the tongch'ang-ship.

The definition of social capital is multidimensional. Many scholars have defined social capital in different levels and functions, but some of them also overlap. Coleman understands social capital in social relations or structures among individuals facilitating specific actions (Coleman 1988: 98). For Bourdieu, social capital is the aggregate of resources linking people in a more or less institutionalized form (Bourdieu 1986: 248). For both Coleman and Bourdieu, social capital means resources and functions of social networks of individuals, yet Bourdieu stresses more the membership of an association. Compared to that, Putnam defines social capital as civic engagement acting on trust, norms, and networks featured in social organizations such as a rotating credit association (Putnam 1993: 167; 2000: 18-19). For him, therefore, social capital exists in the communities rather than in individuals. To sum up, social capital is institutionalized or non-institutionalized social networks with shared norms of reciprocity and trust among the participants (Bhandari and Yasunobu 2009: 491). On top

of that, Lin identifies the term capital in social capital to particularly refer to the investment and expectation of returns (Lin 2001: 19-20). This is facilitated through information flow and social credentials, exercising an influence on the agents in decision making and reinforcing identity and recognition (ibid.). Thus, social capital is an essential agent of one's economic or social performance.

Some societies have their vocabularies for social capital, best known as *guanxi* in Chinese. In Korean, social capital is expressed in the terms *yŏn'go* and *inmaek*. These two terms are used in a slightly different context. Yŏn'go is ascribed or distinguished strong relationships by blood or affection (Han Seungwan 2004: 98; Kwŏn In-Sŏk 2011: 61). The ascribed status of yŏn'go often has a negative connotation, such as nepotism, cronyism, or corruption. Compared to that, inmaek is often used in a neutral sense and includes also social capital achieved by one's effort. The related networks of social capital are categorized conventionally into three fields as blood, regional, and school networks in Korea (Kim Sun-Up 1993; Kim Yong-Hak 2003; Han Seungwan 2004; Kwŏn In-Sŏk 2011). This means that members of the Korean society endorse the relationships of the specific contexts with the same blood, regional, or school origins. In this study, the focus lies on the network that relates to the same regional and school background. Yŏn'go often leads to discrimination among groups and group favoritism as it organizes individuals into smaller groups rather than integrating them into the society as a whole (Lee Hun-Gu 2003; Cho Eun-Kyung and Lee Chung-Joo 2006: 492). Many scholars argue that yŏn'go develops in a society with a lack of trust, thus has a strong relation to the rapid modernization and unstable legal system in the South Korean developmental context (Kim Sun-Up 1993; Kwŏn In-Sŏk 2011: 61-62). Therefore, yŏn'go is often interpreted as a symbol of low trust in social systems and avoidance of uncertainty (Han Seungwan 2004: 107; Cho Eun-Kyung and Lee Chung-Joo 2006).

Before the rapid industrialization and urbanization from the 1960s, South Korea was primarily an agricultural society. After industrialization and the rapid growth of cities, the number of city dwellers increased and the population in villages consequently decreased. Especially between the 1970s and 1990s, there was a noticeable transition in the population between urban and rural areas in South Korea. Lee Yunbok reports that 70% of the Korean population was living in the villages in the 1970s. In reverse,

the same percentage of the population was living in the cities in the 1990s (2013: 114). Seoul, as the capital city of South Korea, attracted many people during this period. During the transitional period, many young adults left their hometown. After their graduation from school, they moved to big cities to find jobs. Nevertheless, they still kept their strong ties, not only to their blood origin but also to their regional origin. The regional origin, in other words, hometown, represents neighbors and friends with whom people spent their childhood. As a result, associations based on the same regional and school root appeared in big cities. One representative example is school alumni associations of graduates of the same year, called tongch'ang-hoe. Through this network, the members utilize their social capital in order to reduce economic and social risk in a new dwelling environment, but also to strengthen their affective support.

Tongch'ang refers to graduates of the same year from the same school. Putting hoe at the end, tongch'ang-hoe means an alumni association of the same year graduates, an institutionalized network of tongch'ang. Tongch'ang is often the synonym with friends in Korean. Friend and friendship are culture-dependent terms and are defined differently depending on cultural and social conditions. In Korea, fellows at the same age are generally referred to as a friend, *ch'in'gu*. For instance, one's classmates in school are conventionally called friends regardless of the actual closeness. In this friendship, individuals regard their relationship in the aspect of a social unit. Friendship is understood as personal and affective relationships with a voluntary basis based on homophile (Uhl 1991: 90; Beer 1998: 192; Knecht and Schobin 2016: 117-118). It is widely believed that modernity influenced these types of social relationships. For instance, Schobin et al. demonstrate that individualization and pluralization of lifestyle diversified the formation of social relationships. In consequence, the demand for freely chosen friendship increased in Western societies (Schobin et al. 2016: 12). Unlike this definition of friendship, tongch'ang-ship is an involuntary and collective relation, which takes even more importance in modern Korean society.

As one of the most significant yŏn'go networks in Korean society, tongch'ang-ship correlates a negative indication of corruption and cronyism in politics and big corporations. Kang defines tongch'ang-hoe as a subculture in the informal sphere of social life (Kang Chun-Man 2008: 84).

According to him, tongch'ang is a beloved relation in private life but is often concealed in public due to its stigma. Kim Yong-Min and Park Ki-Seong have reported that alumni of the same high school year are preferably selected as chief executive officers in large corporations (Kim Yong-Min and Park Ki Seong 2004; Pak Kyŏng-Sŏ et al. 2008). At the same time, some scholars insist that this type of yŏn'go network positively influenced the development of the nation (Lew Seok-Choon and Wang Hey Suk 2008; Kwŏn In-Sŏk 2011). It relates to social capitalization. Even so, not all individuals attend the alumni association. How individuals utilize tongch'ang-ship as social capital will be one of the main discussions of this study. The precise discussion of tongch'ang-ship will be followed in Chapter 2. In the following, the present study and its structure will be introduced.

Overview of the Study

The research question of this study is as follows: how is the specific type of social relationship maintained through the standardized exchange of gift money? This study is about the monetary form of gift exchanges, helping money. It mainly focuses on the function of helping money in the context of an institutionalized network in South Korea, the alumni association of a high school. This study is an ethnography. The fieldwork was conducted for about 12 months in South Korea between 2014 and 2015. The high school of the investigated alumni association is located in Songwŏn, a rural and agricultural county in the southwest of the Korean peninsula. The investigated alumni association has existed for longer than 30 years and maintained its network with the active exchange of helping money. Thus, it is a study of the children of farmers who became city inhabitants and maintain their connections with their friends from the same high school with the medium of helping money. This study focuses mainly on male actors as the investigated high school used to be solely for boys when the study participants were in school. However, it also attempted to include female actors, such as the wives of the main protagonists.

The study consists of six chapters. The present chapter illustrates the practices of helping money in South Korean weddings and funerals and

contextualizes the research objectives in the studies on gifts, money, and social capital. In the following, the fieldwork and analysis methods will be explained.

Chapter 2 brings the central relationship of the study, tongch'ang-ship, into the discussion. The local conditions and historical backgrounds, such as the economic and social transition of the country, indicate the development of regional and school network-based relationships and the importance of tongch'ang-ship to a great extent. This chapter will describe the county of Songwŏn and Hani high school, where the members of the investigated alumni association grew up and spent a significant part of their youth together. On top of that, the chapter will introduce a number of other related relationships and associations, such as *tongmun* and *hyangwu*.

Chapter 3 illustrates the practice of helping money exchanges in South Korean weddings and funerals. This practice is identified as the extension of the practice of mutual help in pre-industrial rural communities. The alumni remember the practice of pujo in their childhood and reproduce it today as pujogŭm, helping money, in a distinct environment. This chapter also gives a detailed illustration of the process of 'making money into helping money'. The essence of this process lies in the manner of packing and delivering white envelopes. In particular, money becomes a gift through an agent at the registration desk. The symbolic value of flower arrangements, a parallel gift in the ceremonies, will also be discussed.

Chapter 4 will deepen the discussion about the standardized sum of helping money among the tongch'ang-ship. As the title of this study indicates, it will discover why the alumni identify each other as 50,000 won or 100,000 won friends. The first section of this chapter reviews the historical development of helping money sums in the last 40 to 50 years, which signifies the repeating patterns. The next three sections will discuss sums of helping money among the alumni in comparison to the business associates and kinship. The helping money sums of the latter two relationships often exceed the standard sums among the alumni. This chapter will provide a possible explanation for this phenomenon in terms of stable networks based on firm trust.

Chapter 5 investigates helping money exchanges regarding reciprocity. The alumni have several recording mechanisms for helping money exchanges to assist their memories. These records are used by the

alumni on the next occasion to return helping money or to evaluate received helping money and their relationships with each other. If they figure out that their exchange with some alumni is not balanced, they express disappointment or anger. Thus, their tongch'ang-ship is damaged. While the alumni cut down helping money exchanges with acquaintances or friends from other fields, they are more likely to maintain the exchanges with their alumni even after their retirement.

The last chapter will summarize the findings of this study and imply the understanding of the social roles of money in Korean society. It also argues for a specific relationship and its meaning in social networking, which can be identified as the generation, location, and class-specific practices. This chapter will also discuss that the intertwined practices of money, monetary gifts, maintaining social networks are dynamic and requires a multi-level understanding.

Fieldwork and Ethnographic Contexts

This section addresses the fieldwork and ethnographic contexts of the study. Knowledge is produced under certain conditions (situated knowledge, Haraway 1988), and a significant part of anthropological knowledge is dependent on the specific social settings in which the researcher is situated. Thus, it is necessary to explain the researcher's backgrounds as well as the social setting of the study.

The fieldwork was done in a place where I used to live: Seoul, the metropolis and the capital of South Korea. Also, it connected to a place that existed merely in my memory: Songwŏn, my father's natal county. I was born and went to schools in Seoul until I went to Germany for a university education in 2006. I returned to Seoul after about eight years of education in Germany. Indeed, I visited my home country intermittently before, but the purpose of the journey this time was far different. While I spent a short vacation in Seoul with my family, relatives, and close friends during the last visit, this time, my visit was to conduct a research study of this country and society. However, I was hesitant to say, "I know well how things work here." The main reason for this is that Seoul is a rapidly developing city. During my absence in the capital city, the subway ticket windows were

replaced by automatic ticket machines. KTX, the Korean high-speed railroad, was constructed, and one can travel from Seoul to Busan in less than 3 hours (going more than 400 km). Moreover, free Wi-Fi connection was installed in every metro station and train. Not only the technological development but also the not-participating in many social events and limited interaction with local Koreans made me 'a person without history' (Schütz 1972: 60) in my hometown. As soon as I started interviews, I felt something was wrong with my reaction towards the elder interviewees. For one reason or another, they corrected me on how younger people should usually behave to the elderly people in Korea. The vocabulary and honorific terms I used especially were improper for specific situations. It became one of the tasks on my to-do list to learn or to recall social background knowledge in my old but new motherland.

Luckily, I managed to conduct a preliminary investigation in Seoul before the official fieldwork started. This was to make a blueprint of gift-giving practices, especially the monetary one, in South Korea. At the same time, I tried to fill the gap in my lost history, between me and my significant others (Schütz 1972). In March, August, and September 2014, I visited several wedding and funeral ceremonies in and near Seoul. I also met possible participants for my study and listened to their experiences and opinions about pujogūm. I selected individuals for the pilot study extendedly from my network: my old neighbors, my relative's acquaintances, my parents' coworkers, and my high school friends' relatives. This period developed into overall findings. I became aware of my fragmentary assumptions that I involuntarily established from books and newspapers. The practice of helping money was more complicated than I thought. It was deeply integrated into daily interactions and challenging to separate and disentangle. In general, anthropologists face the field and adjust their research focus simultaneously, and my study was no exception.

Back in Berlin, I evaluated the pilot interviews and planned a more extended period of fieldwork. Due to the preliminary research, I could cut off suggestions and ideas which were not likely to be realized. Therefore, I was clear on whom to start the first interviews with once I was back in Seoul. However, as fieldwork usually depends upon the situation, a significant part of the whole process was unknown to me at that moment. I had merely developed a faint picture of the field; I could recognize the

contours of the big frame, but the picture itself was not sharp enough to read. The fieldwork was conducted then from January to October in 2015 in Seoul and Songwŏn.

Songwŏn is my father's natal village. I decided to do the fieldwork with my father's high school alumni association. It was not an easy decision to integrate one's relationship by blood into a research study. The first question raised in my mind was the neutral settings of the field. Nevertheless, I claim that it was a reasonable and considerate decision. Studying relationships within an association offers a different setting than studying a ritual or practice in a specified location. A network is scattered connections of individuals who share mutual interests and characteristics. For this reason, places where the members get together can vary considerably. The best method to conduct fieldwork is to become a member of the community. A local space, such as a village, naturally provides a researcher the opportunity to become a part of that community as a residence. Nevertheless, researchers do not naturally become members of an association if they do not fulfill the specific requirements for its membership. For instance, various alumni networks provided limited access to me because only alumni of the same school are accepted as members. Initially, I intended to find an alumni association of the informants I interviewed during the preliminary stay in Seoul. However, my position as an unrelated individual limited my access to their alumni associations. My attempts to continue the fieldwork with strangers failed.

A difficulty in developing a rapport with the stranger's alumni networks is consciously or unconsciously being excluded from their networks. The alumni association in South Korea can be identified as having strong ties. A network with strong ties is a closed community that strengthens its bond mainly among its members (Granovetter 1973). This leads to an intensive exchange of social capital among the members but results in less exchange and communication with externals (Haythornthwaite 1996: 336). Many informants whom I met in the preliminary stay refused to introduce me to their alumni association. An alumni network consists of strong comradeship among the members based on their mutual backgrounds. I was told that my consistent appearance in the community as a person who does not fulfill the right qualification for the membership would make other members feel uncomfortable. I was able to meet countless individuals through my first or second-hand

networks, but these individuals were not willing to integrate me into their association. The reason why they accepted my interview request was merely due to the relationship of the person who introduced me to them and that they were asked to do a favor for me by them. Between the interviewees and me existed a bridge, our co-acquaintance, but this bridge was not long enough to bring me further to the next bridge, which I expected to be their alumni networks. My fragmentary network could not be extended to a whole association, and I faced great difficulty conducting the fieldwork with scattered members of a single association.

Many anthropologists have reported similar difficulty while conducting fieldwork in South Korea (Yoon Taek-Lim 2004; Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin 2012; Park and Lunt 2015). Yoon T'aek-Lim demonstrates that Koreans have a high level of exclusion and wariness rate against strangers (Yoon Taek-Lim 2004: 50). This sense of difference can relate to distrust towards researchers in the field as well as cause limited and unstable accessibility to a community and its members. Park and Lunt claim that South Korea is a strongly homogeneous society within a Confucian setting (Park and Lunt 2015). This specific condition can be a challenge for researchers conducting qualitative research without having a first personal network. I question whether South Korean society can be understood with the singular concept of 'Confucian setting' adequately enough. Nevertheless, the problem I faced can be explained with their concept of homogeneity and the importance of personal connections. Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin conducted the study with a hometown alumni association in South Korea (Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin 2012). They could not approach any foreign association and thus decided to conduct the study within their own hometown alumni association. Conducting the study with my own alumni association was not possible as it does not exist yet. School alumni associations might be constructed within a specific generation and locational background in South Korea. For this reason, I needed to make use of my kinship network, a person who has a strong relationship with me as well as with the most members of an alumni association. In this way, other members of the network could accept me as familiar with less sense of difference in their network. In this sense, my father was carrying me on his back, and I could cross the bridge to reach his association and its various members for the fieldwork.

Even though it is my father's natal county, I visited Songwŏn only several times in my childhood to visit my relatives. Songwŏn was a known but also an unknown place to me before this study. For this reason, my memory of Songwŏn was fragmented. I remember that my grandparents' house was a small and shabby one with a cheap slate roof. Using the stinky pit toilet in the front yard of the house, the place also known as where my grandmother once gave birth to her child, was not a particularly pleasant experience. But I was excited as well to see an empty cowshed where cows used to be fed. The house was in a valley with some other neighboring houses which looked more or less similar. Nevertheless, I did not have much memory about the places in Songwŏn. I needed to widen my local knowledge of the field. To reconstruct or to newly gather the images of my field, where my study starts, I had an urge to drive to Songwŏn as soon as possible at the beginning of my field stay in South Korea.

After some months, I felt that many things in the field were quite familiar. The lost history was filled within a short period. Nevertheless, this was not a solely positive sign for the research project. I faced another problem as my environment became more and more familiar: to keep a certain distance from the field. This is defined as the problem of native anthropologists. Native anthropologists are researchers conducting research projects of their native cultural practice (Yoon Taek-Lim 2004). The number of native anthropologists is increasing globally. Many students from low and lower middle income countries get educated in high income countries and return home with their degree (Ghodsee 2016: 19). The native anthropologists certainly experience their society differently compared to the anthropologists who research another country where they do not belong. The boundary between field and home is so obscure for native anthropologists that it is not possible to realize the real fieldwork in some sense (Yoon Taek-Lim 2004). However, possessing insider knowledge of a country does not mean having complete access to the group to be investigated (Foster et al. 2005: 6). This indicates that a field should be understood in specific social, political, and historical contexts (Yoon Taek-Lim 2004: 200-201). And a native Korean can be a stranger in individual social settings (Yoon Taek-Lim 2004: 159). Thus, I was a significant outsider to the alumni association in this study despite being a native anthropologist of my own country.

I met almost all members of the investigated alumni association or the high school friends of my father for the first time in this study. From January to October 2015, I got to know more than 30 alumni members of the Songwŏn Hani High School and conducted my fieldwork with them. The fieldwork included attending numerous wedding and funeral ceremonies as well as their preparation and post-procedure. Many ceremonies, in which I participated, directly involved the association's members, but some of them were indirectly related to the association. This was because the alumni arranged a limited number of ceremonies during the fieldwork. To overcome this limited opportunity to investigate the detailed process of helping money practices, I visited the wedding and funeral ceremonies of external people. I also conducted interviews with managers of private wedding and funeral houses. As fieldwork often brings up what a researcher did not anticipate, I also experienced several remarkable moments. For instance, I worked as a part-time helper in the bride's waiting room at a wedding house. Five wedding ceremonies took place there on a Saturday, and I assisted the brides for their wedding ceremony. In another wedding ceremony, I took the role of a receptionist; I received helping money envelopes and registered them in the helping money book. Moreover, I managed to conduct in-depth interviews with several funeral directors and participated in a few funeral ceremonies to an extensive degree, such as accompanying family members during the casketing and cremation.

The residential areas of alumni are scattered in South Korea, and I conducted the fieldwork mainly with the association members living in Seoul and nearby areas. Due to the diverse meeting places in different cities and locations, the study was multi-sited ethnography. The wedding and funeral ceremonies took place in various cities in South Korea. Besides wedding and funeral ceremonies, the association organizes reunions three to four times a year. I participated in official and informal meetings as much as possible during the fieldwork. Besides that, I individually traveled to Songwŏn to gather information about their high school and towns.

Influenced by the Confucian culture, hierarchical rank according to age strongly influences relationships in Korea. Namely, one of the five Confucian moral disciplines in human relations is 'elders first'. My position as a young woman in her 20s brought certain expectations from my male participants, who were in their 60s. This was most significant in the use of

honorific terms and showing good manners to elders. The gender aspect cannot be ignored, as well. For instance, serving drinks to elders in the restaurant was expected of me. In response to it, the elders are expected to show a generous and respectful attitude to the youngers. Sometimes I even received a gift or gift money from them, which was a gesture of generosity and kindness by elders to younger people.

There was some contradictory expectation of my position in the field between being a researcher and the daughter of someone in the alumni association. I tried to find a balance between these two positions. Among the participants, I was called 'togil-ttal', which means German daughter in Korean. I was known as a student from Germany in the group. However, at the same time, I was the daughter of their friend. Sometimes they called me just 'ttalnaemi', which means a daughter. Koreans use kin terms to refer to people to whom they feel closely related. German daughter, in this sense, means the daughter of their close friend from Germany. In contrast to that, I called the main participants as casually as 'ajŏssi', which means uncle, but generally refers to Mr. or Sir in Korean. I used honorifics terms with them, and this is why I will continuously use honorifics in addressing the research participants in the following study as well, such as putting 'Mr.' before their names. Concerning the analysis methods and processes, it will be explained in the next section in more detail.

Analysis Methods

This study is mainly guided by grounded theory. Grounded theory intends to generate a theory from the collected materials through systematic analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967). It is the reverse process of analysis as verifying an existing theory. As the research question of this study directs understanding social phenomena, grounded theory was identified as the appropriate way to approach it. The analysis methods comprise two parts: material collection in the fieldwork and analysis of the collected materials with coding. The fieldwork methods were mainly qualitative research methods, such as interviews and participant observation. The type of conducted interviews was, to a great extent, narrative and partially semi-structured. Participant observations took place in diverse locations and

situations, as explained in the previous section. Research materials were also collected in the form of field notes, pictures, audio and video recordings, and research diaries. The research diary was recorded daily and kept records of my activities, meetings, interviews, etc. The main purpose of this diary was to keep the progress records of the fieldwork. I also used this diary to add memos on what to do next. Moreover, I made individual information cards of each informant, documented their characteristics, and noted questions to ask at the next meeting. Taking these cards with me in the field, I could react flexibly if I met some research participants unexpectedly. I tried to follow diverse communication channels of the alumni, not only the single interactions in the meetings. I tried to write down the information flow among the alumni, such as who contacts whom, when, and why. I named this as communication protocols. Based on the communication protocols, I drew networking maps of the members and figured out that the nodes of their networks are multiplex. Diverse types of publications, such as media reportage, local newspapers, information brochures of ceremony houses, online forums, text messages, and publications by the investigated associations were also collected.

All collected materials were evaluated in the data analysis. The first step of the analysis of the collected data was to transcribe the recorded interviews and to digitize other text materials. Next, all materials were sorted out into primary and secondary datasets. This was determined by the relevance of the investigated alumni association and the importance for the research question. For instance, the primary datasets are the interviews and participant observations with the 1974 alumni and the publications and the communication protocols of them. In contrast to that, the secondary datasets consist of interviews and conversations with other individuals, observations, and media reportage directly related to the research objectives, but indirectly related to the investigated alumni association. In the next step, the primary datasets are coded using the qualitative software program MAXQDA. Coding includes comparing and contextualizing the research materials, which can be identified as open and axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The circulative process of categorizing and contextualizing codes developed into the main analytical tools, which guide the further comparison and interpretation of datasets (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1998: 87-88).

The resulting main analytical tools from over 1,000 codes were things such as emotions, morals, calculation, reciprocity, and social relationships. These frames were again divided into subcategories, as seen in Figure 1. The analysis of these datasets will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. The datasets related to the process and the modes of helping money exchanges in the ceremonies are categorized separately as they build an individual analytical question: how the exchange of helping money takes place. The result of this question will be explained in Chapter 3.

Compared to the primary datasets, the secondary datasets were used to understand broader social contexts, such as the reflexivity of the analysis in the general social practice of helping money and its significance for understanding the social structure. For instance, the social significance of alumni association and other types of communities in South Korean society was investigated in the next chapter. This will start the analysis in Chapter 2.

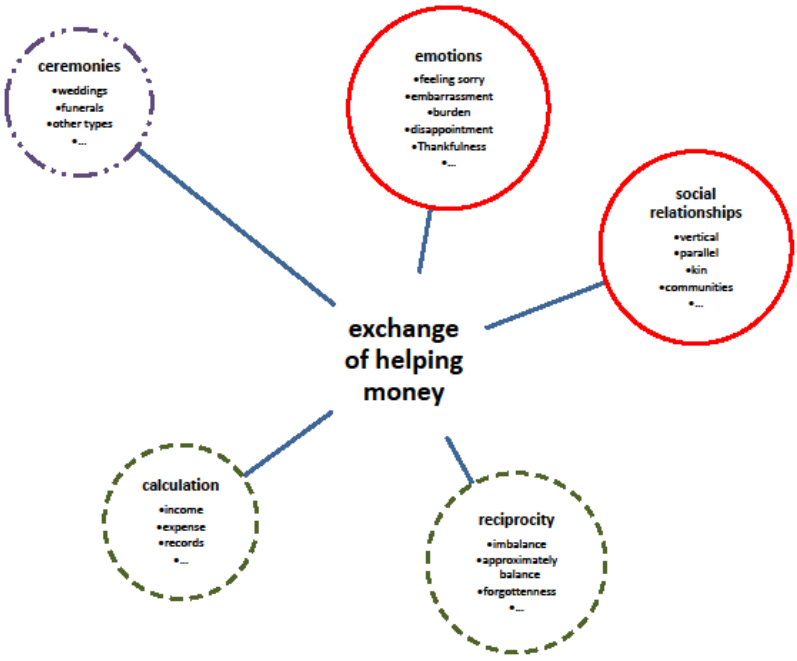

Figure 1: Illustration of code analysis

Two. The 1974 Alumni Association of the Songwŏn Hani High School in Seoul

KDI Research on Actual Participation in Social Capital:
50% attend tongch'ang-hoe. Thus, *yŏnjul* (social network) is still considered necessary.

Although the dependence on yŏnjul has been lowered than in the past, the traditional networks, such as tongch'ang-hoe, are still relevant. The rate of participation in the social network is the highest at 50.4% for tongch'ang-hoe, 24.7% for religious groups, 22.2% for clan gatherings, 22.0% for sports and outdoor leisure clubs, and 16.8% for hyangu-hoe.

(Ch'oe Kwang-Suk 2006, author's translation)

The newspaper article above is based on the research results of the KDI (Korea Development Institute) in 2006. As cited in the article, *tongch'ang-hoe* is the most popular type of networking amongst South Koreans. *Tongch'ang* refers to school alumni of the same year graduates, and adding *hoe* at the end, tongch'ang-hoe, means a school alumni association of such graduates. Tongch'ang reflects a collective status, which is retrospective and involuntary. Individuals are perforce tied to their past identity regardless of their actual closeness to those who graduated from the same school in the same year. Tongch'ang shares a strong sense of belonging and similarity through their past school identity. Moreover, the relationships of tongch'ang are built where the social stratification is solidly established in terms of an age hierarchy. Thus, *tongch'ang-ship* needs to be differentiated from the general English term 'alumni'. Fostered through associations, the tongch'ang-hoe, people in tongch'ang-ship often maintain strong lifelong ties. But not everyone is actively involved in these associations; individuals'

socioeconomic conditions influence the active membership. The central goal of this chapter is to clarify the conditions of this collective status and to introduce the main group of this study, the 1974 alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School in Seoul. Despite the subtle differences in meaning, for the sake of convenience, I will use the term 'alumni' to refer to tongch'ang, the graduates of the same school year in Korean.

In this chapter, the development of relationships from school friends to tongch'ang, as well as the institutionalization of this relationship into an alumni association, will be introduced. In this development, the locational change as part of urbanization of the country plays a crucial role, such as from the small hometown Songwŏn to the capital city Seoul. The first and second sections will introduce Songwŏn county and the Songwŏn Hani High School, where the class of 1974 was born and attended school. In the third section, some associations related to the regional and school origins, such as *hyangu-hoe* and *tongmun-hoe*, will be elaborated in line with tongch'ang-hoe. The fourth section will analyze the relationship of tongch'ang and the organization of tongch'ang-hoe.

Songwŏn County

Songwŏn is a Korean county (*gun* in Korean) in North Jeolla province, or Jeollabuk-do, located the southwestern edge of the Korean peninsula. Under the favorable driving condition, it takes about four hours by car to reach Songwŏn from the South Korean capital city Seoul (about 300 km north of Songwŏn). Gwangju, the third most densely populated city in South Korea (Korean Statistical Information Service 2017), is approximately 50 km from Songwŏn. Another nearby city is Jeonju, which is located 50 km to the north. As it will be described afterward, Songwŏn's habitats have close relationships with these two nearby cities.

Songwŏn is located in an agricultural region with a low population. When my sight is filled with rolling hills and curved streets, I know that I am close to Songwŏn. I once went atop a hill in Songwŏn county and saw that there were no tall buildings, but rather towering trees stretched towards the sky. Red and blue houses are tucked between the valleys and hills, which constitute tiny villages. In the valleys and hills, agricultural

lands are stitched next to each other. The land is mostly rice fields, but different vegetables and fruits can also be sparsely observed. Because Songwŏn is a mountainous district, it is rarely damaged by floods. Whenever I take a walk or a drive on the curvy streets alongside the fields, I sporadically find old farmers working in the paddies. Everything looks quite monotonous and calm to an outside observer.

Songwŏn must have been a livelier place in the 1960s and early 1970s than in the present day, as my study participants describe their hometown in the past. At the very least, this is how they remember their childhood and hometown. When I visited Songwŏn in 2015, many houses with mud-plastered walls were replaced with cement walls. The sheds, where cows and pigs used to be fed, have been converted into storage places. As Mr. Ch'a Chi-Wŏn stated: "Now [the county] is developed a lot, but it was much different when we were children." However, I could still observe the original structure of a neighborhood from some 'under-developed' houses. A few empty houses in the neighborhood stand close to each other. Many participants often used the phrase: "We used to know how many spoons our neighbors had (*yŏp'chip sutkaragi myŏtkaeinji anda*)." This expression reveals how they regularly shared private affairs with their neighbors. The walls between the houses were just high enough to allow kids to climb up and make fun of their peers in the houses next door.

Since many young people left Songwŏn in order to find a job in industrialized cities beginning in the 1970s, the county slowly transformed into a region of older people. Songwŏn is categorized as a typical population transfer region, where more people move out than move in, and where more elder people live than young people. The recent statistics of Songwŏn county confirm that two-third of its population is older than 65 years old. Moreover, the death rate of Songwŏn is more than twice of its birth rate. The lack of younger residents is addressed via foreign migrants from Southeast Asian countries. Consequently, the rate of families with migration backgrounds (*tamunhwa kajŏng*) has increased. Nowadays, the county office of Songwŏn cultivates tourist attractions for the sake of an economic revival, such as fruit farms and national parks. Moreover, the recent influx of people from the cities, a movement called 'return to the farm and village (*kwinonggwich'on*)', is also viewed as an opportunity to save the local economy.

Figure 2: A neighborhood in Songwŏn

Songwŏn county is comprised of eleven administrative units; one town, called *eup* in Korean, and ten townships, called *myeon*. Songwŏn-eup is the most populated unit among the eleven town and townships. More than 40% of the population of Songwŏn county lives in Songwŏn-eup.[5] Moreover, Songwŏn-eup is also the commercial and industrial center of Songwŏn: the main bus terminal, post office, hospitals, and financial institutions are all located there. The allocation of educational institutes in Songwŏn certifies the livelihood and concentration of resources in Songwŏn-eup as well. There were a total of fifteen elementary schools, seven middle schools, and three high schools in Songwŏn county in 2015. Among them, three elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools are located in Songwŏn-eup. The farthest township from Songwŏn-eup is Chinmu-myeon, which is approximately 25 km away. In their adolescence, my study participants used to commute to Songwŏn-eup because high schools were only located there.[6] I did not meet any alumnus from Chinmu-myeon during my fieldwork and can hardly imagine walking 50 km every day to go to school. However, I was told that some participants walked to school for three hours a day or lived apart from their

[5] The total population of Songwŏn was about 30,000 in about 13,000 households in 2015.
[6] In those days, it was common in South Korean rural areas to commute long distances to school as there was hardly any other public transportation.

family during the school year due to the long distance. Mr. Ch'a Chi-Wŏn was one of those students that lived far away from his high school, about 12 km distant from Songwŏn-eup. He visited home every weekend to pick up some rice and side dishes, which his mother prepared for him while he lived away from the family. As Mr. Ch'a explains:

> I did not have a refrigerator, so I went home every weekend and brought a pack of *kimch'i*[7] and rice and ate the same dish every day. When the situation was better, I also had something like stir-fried anchovies. I went to school every day with a lunch box like that.

Mr. Ch'a described, the memories of his adolescence are related mainly to school days. The following section will introduce the Songwŏn Hani High School, where the main participants of this study met, spent three years together, and continue to network even 40 years after graduation.

The Songwŏn Hani High School

The Songwŏn Hani High School is located at the northern end of Songwŏn-eup. Because the school is not in the downtown area, there are almost no shops and houses nearby. Vast fields and hills stand in the distance. My study participants reported that their school was a two-floor building. When I visited the Hani high school in 2015, the main building had three floors. The school has changed considerably since the graduation of the participants. I could not find the auditorium, where the alumni had their entrance and graduation ceremonies; instead, I found a huge technical practice room next to the schoolyard. Across the road, there is the Songwŏn Middle School, which previously belonged to the Hani high school. Many students from this middle school entered the neighboring high school in the 1970s, as Mr. Pan Tu-Hi stated. He further explained that this is also the reason for having one general alumni association for both schools. Taking a closer look at the school's history, it reveals that the Songwŏn middle and high schools were combined in the past.

[7] A traditional side dish in Korea usually made of spicy fermented Napa cabbage.

The Songwŏn Hani High School was established in 1942 when Korea was under Japanese rule. The school's historical documents indicate that the first dean of the school was required to be a Japanese. By the time of its establishment, the school aimed at teaching agricultural skills to young male students in Songwŏn. Its original name, therefore, was the Songwŏn Public Agricultural School. At that time, the separation of high schools and middle schools did not exist. Instead, regular education in the advanced school took five years. In 1942, 55 male students from the Songwŏn vicinity entered the newly established school. Because the Japanese were defeated in World War II, the school closed in 1945 but reopened later that year under the USMGIK (United States Army Military Government in Korea). Since then, the deans of the school have been only Koreans. In 1947, the school produced the first 50 graduates. However, the school closed again in 1950 due to the Korean War but was reopened the next year when the armistice status between the North and the South was discussed. In addition to these rapidly changing circumstances, the school was separated into a middle school and high school according to the new educational law. As a result, the names of the schools were changed to the Songwŏn Agricultural High School and the Songwŏn Middle School. Since then, the Songwŏn middle and high schools have been independent educational institutes that take three years each to complete but were still located in the same building.

As a result of South Korea's growing economy after recovering from the war, the Songwŏn Agricultural High School also began to flourish, with the number of new students steadily increasing. In consequence, the middle school moved out to a new building in 1976. The middle school is still located in the same place under the same name. In 1977, the high school started receiving female students as well, but the classes were separated by gender. The Songwŏn Agricultural High School produced 100 to 200 graduates per year until the mid-1980s. As the country underwent rapid urbanization and many young people left Songwŏn county, however, the total number of students gradually decreased. This was reflected in a steady reduction in the number of classes, as well as the number of graduates since 1984. For instance, the high school produced 121 graduates for the 28th graduation in 1974, while the 47th graduating class in 1993 had only 65 students. To help the high school flourish again, it underwent some changes in the early 1990s. In 1991, the high school became a co-ed school,

where male and female students started studying together in the same classes. By reorienting the educational direction to academic school instead of vocational school, the high school changed its name to the Songwŏn Hani High School in 1991. 'Agricultural' education no longer represented the school's purpose. In 1993, the Songwŏn Hani High School united with the neighboring Songwŏn Girls' High School because the number of first-year students dropped continually at both schools.

As mentioned in the previous section, two of the three high schools in Songwŏn county are currently located in Songwŏn-eup.[8] They are the Songwŏn Sari High School and the Songwŏn Hani High School. Putting *k(g)o* at the end, which refers high school in Korean, the alumni refer to these two schools in abbreviated form as Sari-*go* and Hani-*go*. Both schools are about 1 km from each other. This geographical proximity of two high schools in Songwŏn might have influenced the close networks of the students, as well as their mutual events later on, such as the joint alumni reunions. The third high school is the Inbyŏng High School, named after its location in Inbyŏng-myeon. Inbyŏng high school was established in 1984. Since my main participants went to high school in the 1970s, only two high schools in Songwŏn-eup, the Hani-go and the Sari-go, are in line for this study.

The Songwŏn Sari High School was established in 1960 and is a private academic school, which means graduates of this high school are qualified for applying to universities.[9] Sari high school is still a private and academic school. Compared to the Sari, the Hani high school had long been a vocational school, where students were taught more practical skills in order to find a job directly after graduation. As introduced earlier, the school's previous name was the Songwŏn Agricultural High School. As the name suggests, the skills taught in this school concentrated on agriculture, such as farming, forestry, and gardening. Many participants of the Hani high school agreed that their family favored the vocational high school

[8] The Songwŏn Girls' High School coexisted with the other two high schools in Songwŏn from the 1950s until it was integrated with the Songwŏn Hani High School in 1993.
[9] The university entrance policy in South Korea between 1969 and 1980 was comprised of two examinations. At the end of three years of education in an academic high school, students took the preliminary college entrance examination (*yebigosa*). Students who passed the preliminary examination were eligible to selectively apply for the entrance exam in each university (*pon'gosa*) (cf. Nam Ae-Ri. n.d.).

Figure 3: A school in Songwŏn

more than the academic one in their youth. As Mr. Pan Tu-Hi explained: "The competition was higher to enter the Hani-go than the Sari-go at that time. The students who failed the entrance exam to Hani went to Sari!"

As long as the study participants can remember, Songwŏn county has been a farmers' society. Families had rice and dry paddies, and they spent most of the day working in the fields. The alumni remember that their families lacked sufficient food during their childhood. As small children, they followed their elder siblings and climbed the mountains to collect edible plants or branches to make fire. It was common to have more than five children in a family. Nevertheless, families could not support all children for advanced education. This was also the period when the majority of female children were less encouraged to pursue advanced education. Many of them graduated merely from elementary school and were expected to engage in housework instead. Because the families had many children, ten to twenty-year age gaps between the eldest and the youngest were not unusual. Moreover, the elder children were expected to contribute to the household economy for their younger brothers and sisters. For this reason, vocational high schools were favored by the majority of the population in Songwŏn. In addition, the tuition fee at the Hani high school was lower than at the Sari high school. However, the preference for the vocational high school was not only due to the lower tuition fee and more immediate opportunity to earn an income upon graduation. Most of all,

few students or parents considered a university education as necessary, unlike the current population in South Korea. Not many male students went to high school either. Mr. Chang Man-Sik reported that he was the only boy among the same age children in his neighborhood to enter high school. As he explains:

> When we graduated from elementary school, many of us just went to Seoul and got a job at a factory. I had thirteen friends in my neighborhood, and I went to high school alone. We had to pass the entrance exam for high school at that time. And when I passed the exam, my whole neighborhood celebrated my high school entrance. "The son of this house!", as if I entered something like a prestigious university nowadays.

Mr. Chang explained that his family was in a slightly better economic condition than his neighbors. Moreover, he is the eldest son in his family, which is regarded as the second primary breadwinner after the father. This is why his parents supported him for his high school education. Despite the Songwŏn Agricultural High School's vocational orientation, some students pursued higher education. For instance, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi, Mr. Son Han-Pin, and Mr. O Chae-Sin prepared by themselves for the university entrance exam right after graduating from their high school. Each alumnus sought their fortune in unique ways and met again in Seoul. Before introducing the careers of the alumni after their high school graduation and their re-encounters in a different city, it is necessary to explain several key associations related to the regional and school origins in Korea.

Hometown Friends Association and School Alumni Associations

As introduced in Chapter 1, kinship, regional, and school networks are of central importance for cultivating social capital in Korea, represented as *inmaek* and *yŏn'go*. In this section, I shed light on three crucial networks related to the regional and school origins that constitute stable inmaek and yŏn'go networks. They are *hyangu*, *tongmun*, and *tongch'ang*. As Figure 4 shows, the three networks can be understood as a hierarchical order considering the fact that people of the same region have a high chance of

attending the same schools in the region. Hyangu is a general title for a person or people from the same hometown. Tongmun refers to students of the same school, while tongch'ang restricts its range to the students of the same graduation year in the same school. Each level of these networks can be institutionalized as an association: *hyangu-hoe*, *tongmun-hoe*, and *tongch'ang-hoe*. The associations at each tier reflect the patterns of social networking in South Korea, such as the belongingness and potential strong ties stratified by the age grades. In the following two sections, I will discuss the general character of the three networks and explore them in greater detail – that is, how the people of Songwŏn are involved in each hometown friends and school alumni associations. I will focus on hyangu and tongmun relationships in this section, then the investigation of tongch'ang and tongch'ang-hoe will be deepened in the next section.

Hyangu, translated literally as 'hometown friends', is the most general term among the three networks introduced above. Even though its literal meaning relates to a friendship, one does not need to be in a friendship with other members in order to have this title. While school alumni consist of students of the same school or the same year graduates, the title of hometown friends encompasses the whole population of a given location. The villagers could have been born, grown up, or spent only a certain period of their life there. Hyangu networks exercise substantial influence

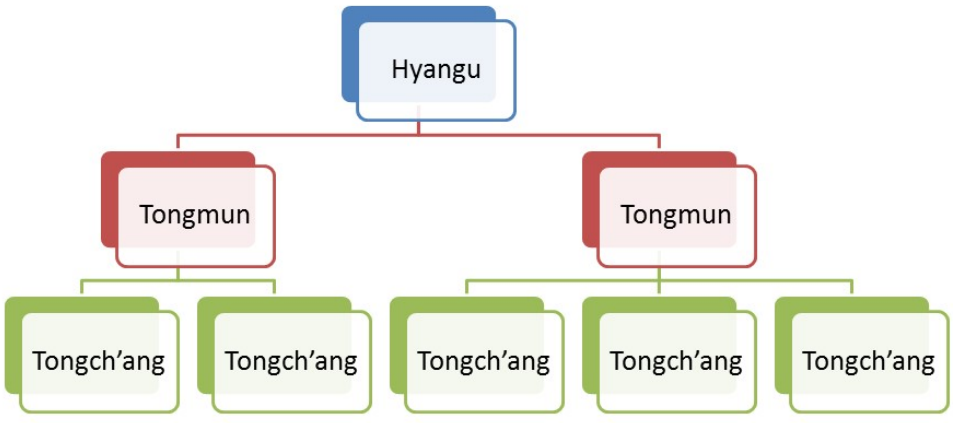

Figure 4: Diagram of three regional and school networks in a hierarchical order

on individuals outside the hometown as it develops into an organization, namely hyangu-hoe. Hyangu-hoe generally designates the associations of urban migrants, who were born in a rural area, but moved to the cities. These types of communities have been widely established as part of urbanization since the 1960s in South Korea (Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin 2012: 260). The two primary purposes of hometown friends associations are allegedly to promote friendship amongst people from the same regional origin in a new residential area and to contribute to the development of their hometown (ibid.).

As explained, hometown friends associations are established based on the new residency, mostly in cities. The hometown friends associations of Songwŏn are established in various cities of South Korea, where many people from Songwŏn live nowadays, such as Seoul, Gwangju, and Jeonju. As indicated before, the latter two cities are geographically close to Songwŏn and have much locational interaction with each other. About 1,100 previous Songwŏn inhabitants are officially registered in the hometown friends associations of Songwŏn across the country. Among the numerous hometown friends associations, the Seoul association is the biggest and the most influential group. This association of Seoul was firstly established in 1978 since many former Songwŏn people settled in the capital city. Moreover, the Seoul association also includes hometown friends living in the metropolitan area due to the convenience of its transportation system. Besides that, the Songwŏn hometown friends association of Seoul affiliates with two small local associations, which are the Songwŏn women's association of Seoul[10] and the Songwŏn young adults' association of Seoul, of which the members are mostly in their 40s.

There are a number of noticeable explanations accounting for the appearance of hometown friends associations among Korean urban migrants. One answer is that immigrants mobilize the information channels of people with the same regional origin in order to adapt and build existential stability in a new area of residence (Roberts 1995). This idea is also accepted by Korean scholars to comprehend hyangu-hoe, the hometown friends associations of the rural-urban migrants in South Korea (cf. Yeum Mi-Gyeung and Moon Soon-Deok 2016). In other words, mobilizing a hyangu network is understood as an adaptation process of

[10] The members of the Songwŏn hometown friends association of Seoul are mostly men. Female hyangu of Songwŏn are the members of the separate women's association.

urban migrants to new circumstances, in which individuals actively utilize their information channels (cf. Graves and Graves 1974: 117). Nevertheless, the mobilization of individual networks and the establishment of an association constituted of people from the same hometown should be differentiated in terms of organizational concerns. A hometown friends association is a social organization, which has the distribution of management tasks with the administrative entity and legislation (cf. Abraham and Büschges 2004: 21-25). For instance, the Songwŏn hometown friends association in Seoul has a formal division of roles and a status hierarchy, which is supported by its official website and communication channel. Therefore, the organizational elements should also be indicated in order to comprehend such networks' multifaceted character.

Hometown friends and school alumni associations appear when a decent number of potential members has already established a firm socioeconomic ground in the new settlement. However, many people do not join such associations even though they firmly settled down in a new residency. In fact, the number of urban migrants who actively maintain their networks with people from the same region appears to be limited. In other words, individual motivation and effort are also necessary to mobilize social capital (Bourdieu 1986: 249). I find an essential motivation for the mobilizing such regional and school networks in social and political prestige. I will elaborate this point in more detail in the discussion.

I also emphasize the attempt of urban migrants to (re-)establish their belongingness[11] in the new residency. In the pre-modern era[12], Korea was an agricultural society characterized by a strong sense of belongingness to kinship and village communities (cf. Choi Jae-sok 1976; Kim Pildong 2002). "The basic unit of Korean society is not the individual but the family (Choi Jae-sok 2011: 1)." This is referred to as familism, where the family is the most significant reference unit. In an extension of the family system, Koreans posit the individual self as part of a significant collective entity (Choi Jae-sok 1976: 175). This entity was usually the village peasant communities, which were relevant for their mutual production activities

[11] I apply the term 'belongingness', which was introduced by Lebra in her book "Japanese Patterns of Behavior" (1976).
[12] The pre-modern era of Korea in this context primarily refers to the Chosŏn period (from the late 14th to the late 19th century).

and social exchanges (cf. Kim Pildong 2002; Lee Hae-Jun 2005). In the pre-modern era, villages in rural regions often consisted of the same lineage families, in which the distinction between relatives and neighbors was ambiguous. In the process of urban migration, people from rural areas moved to a smaller unit, more often alone apart from their family. Moreover, the family structure shifted rapidly from the extended to nuclear form in recent decades in Korea (Chang Kyung-Sup 2009). As such, regional and school-related networks have been identified as the next closest reference group after their kin, which provided the urban migrants a collective identity and sense of belonging. Therefore, hometown friends and alumni associations can be viewed as an attempt to overcome the sense of cultural difference, while also reproducing a collective reference group in urban environments (Cho Sang-Hyun 2012: 276-277).

Moreover, regional stigmas could have influenced the cohesiveness of the people from Songwŏn. Since roughly the 1960s, regionalism (*chiyŏkkamjŏng* or *chiyŏkchuŭi*) has stigmatized the population from specific regions (Cho Sang-Hyun 2012). Regionalism appears primarily in the polarized political orientation between the South-West and South-East counties of South Korea (Honam and Yŏngnam regions). Thus, regionalism has a negative connotation in Korea in terms of the stigmatization and discrimination of the population from such regions (Kim Jin Ha 2010: 91). The people from Jeolla Province, equal to the Honam region, was the most representative group, which has been discriminated against in diverse ways due to this stigmatization (Chung Kiseon 2005; Cho Sang-Hyun 2012). For instance, people from Jeolla were not favored by the people from other regions for marriage, friendship, and business partnership during the 1970s (cf. Cho Sang-Hyun 2012: 279). From Songwŏn, a county of Jeolla Province as well, a high percentage of the younger population moved to Seoul in the 1970s and 1980s. Stigmatization and disadvantages were reported by a number of my study participants in terms of failing to be promoted within their companies in earlier days due to their regional origin.[13] In a sense, the members of Songwŏn hyangu-hoe sought prestige within the community, which was likely to be denied in other social fields,

[13] The preference for people with the same regional and school background in the political elite selection and promotion in companies of Korea has been reported by various scholars (Kim Yong-Hak and Lew Seok-Choon 1996; Kim Yong-Min and Park Ki Seong 2004).

and they reinforced the identity and cultural pride (cf. Graves and Graves 1974: 137). Moreover, Jeolla people are known for having secure networks outside their hometown through hometown friends associations.[14] In this context, the Songwŏn hometown friends association of Seoul can be understood as an attempt to overcome the persistence of negative regionalism, which led to a strengthened sense of belonging for Songwŏn people living in urban environments.

The sense of belonging was noticeable when I participated in a reunion organized by the Songwŏn hometown friends association of Seoul. This association has three to four reunions every year, including executive board meetings. One of the main participants, Mr. Su Ki-Ha, was the president of this association during my fieldwork period, and he invited me to their reunions. When I arrived at the event hall and greeted Mr. Su Ki-Ha, he started introducing me to a number of people sitting near him. I was surprised when he announced to other people that I am a hometown friend of Songwon-eup, where my father is from. He said, for instance, "Excuse me, let me introduce you to someone. Here is our alumnus from Songwŏn-eup," to which I replied, "Oh, I am not quite from Songwŏn-eup, but nice to meet you anyway." I was not born in Songwŏn and did not go to school there. I did not even know the geography of Songwŏn-eup very well at that time. Therefore, I officially denied Mr. Su's statement that I was a hometown friend. As he led me to the next table after this short introduction, though, he raised his voice and said to me: "Listen to me, here you have to listen to what I tell you. When I introduce you as a Songwŏn hyangu, surely you are, all right?" According to Mr. Su, I am also from Songwŏn because my father is from there. In other words, it was important for Mr. Su to emphasize officially during the reunion that I am also from the same region and a hyangu. Undoubtedly his authority as the president of the association and his being my senior by age played a role in his ability to control my identity during the gathering. Thus, I also became a member of the association, if only temporarily, and my presence in the reunion was legitimized. Whether Mr. Su believes that I am a hyangu or he intentionally gave me this temporary identity is not the point of this incident. Instead, he forcefully stressed my belongingness to the reference group in a place where merely hometown friends get together.

[14] I identified hometown friends associations of Jeolla region established in the USA and Germany as well.

To a certain extent, the sense of belongingness in Korean communities is comparable to belongingness in Japanese culture. When identifying a person in Japanese culture, locating someone in a social frame is regarded as more important than their individual attributes (Nakane 1970: 3). The frame is meant the sense of belonging to a particular group, such as the X university or Y company, and the attribute is understood as classification in the social stratification or situational positions, such as the executive of a company or in a landlord-tenant relationship (cf. Nakane 1970: 2). The attributes and frames "serve to identify the individuals in a certain group, which can then in its turn, be classified within the whole society" (Nakane 1970: 2). Of the frames that generate a strong sense of belonging in Japan, Lebra emphasizes blood ties (*ketsuen*), geographical ties (*chien*), and the company ties (*shaen*) (Lebra 1976: 22-23). It is more important where one belongs instead of what one does in the institution. It pronounces the value of the institution (Nakane 1970: 3).

Belongingness in the Japanese cultural context is equated by Yang (1994: 193-194) to the insider/outsider dichotomy in the Chinese cultural context. Insiders require a basis of familiarity, which is also a resource for building social capital, *guanxi*. Familiarity is established through shared identity, such as local origin, kinship, or the same school or company (ibid.). In this guanxi network, the insiders are easily trusted and helped when needed, while outsiders are likely to be ignored in similar situations.

In Korean society, which displays comparable characteristics of Japanese belongingness and Chinese insider/outsider dichotomy, the frames and familiarity based on blood, regional, and school networks are considered necessary. According to a study, hyangu networks maintain weak ties in everyday life but turn out to have strong ties on behalf of specific issues, usually those identified as threatening their community (Cheong Byeong-Eun 2007). For instance, these generally weak but potentially strong ties are observed in electoral behavior, the results of which can lead to benefits or disadvantages to the local community (ibid.). In other words, individuals in the hyangu network are quickly mobilized to vote for a candidate from a particular party that the community supports. This indicates that collective identity and belongingness usually convert weak ties to strong ties for the sake of mutual interests. Thus, hyangu-hoe has potentially strong ties, which influence the political orientation of the local people. These potential strong ties are not limited to political

orientation but extend to other fields such as mutual benefits to entrepreneurs. This aspect of potentially strong ties will be explored again later in the discussion of tongmun networks. In this study, school networks are the focus, of which the group identity is subdivided into more elaborate criteria, such as age. Belongingness in hyangu networks is similarly observed in tongmun and tongch'ang networks, but they are more strongly divided into age ranks.

Before moving to the discussion of the school alumni associations of the Songwŏn Hani High School, differences in membership status in the three associations should be outlined. Even though one status is theoretically a subdivision of the others (Figure 4), not all hyangu in a region outside the hometown is involved in hyangu-hoe, as not all tongmun and tongch'ang are active members of their school-related associations. For the same reason, diverse school alumni associations, both tongmun-hoe and tongch'ang-hoe, cannot be automatically considered as subgroups of the hometown friends association of the same region. Each association is organized separately, and active members in them are different, but their membership could overlap to a certain degree. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of members in each association. When I consider the 1974 graduating class of the Songwŏn Hani High School, almost all of the alumni are officially registered in their tongch'ang-hoe (105 of 121 graduates). Nevertheless, only a small number of them participate in the other two associations, while slightly more people join in hyangu-hoe (about five alumni) than in tongmun-hoe (about two alumni).

Unlike tongch'ang, tongmun encompasses all graduates of the same school regardless of age and year of graduation. In this sense, tongmun is a near term to 'alumni' in English. Thus, a tongmun-hoe can be identified as the general school alumni association. There can be as many tongmun-hoe as the number of schools in Songwŏn, such as elementary, middle, and high school tongmun-hoe. Despite their ubiquity, studies on tongmun and tongmun-hoe are scarce in Korea. In my opinion, the implications of tongmun-hoe in social networks have been neglected because a tongmun-hoe is located between the two notably significant associations, which are hyangu- and tongch'ang-hoe. This also means that tongmun-hoe involves fewer members than other associations; thus, it exercises an influence on

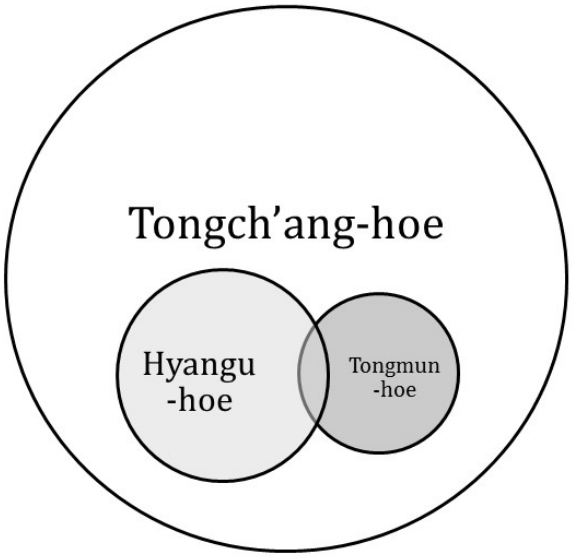

Figure 5: Membership distribution of the same year graduates
in three associations

the social network of a limited number of individuals. Nevertheless, the existence of tongmun-hoe should not be regarded as marginal due to its smaller size. Comparable to the other associations, tongmun-hoe also demonstrates senses of belongingness and potential advantage among the members. In the following, the tongmun-hoe of the Songwŏn Hani High School will be discussed in more detail.

Despite its changed name, the alumni of the Songwŏn Agricultural High School maintain a stable identity as graduates of the Hani high school. Moreover, the alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School also includes the graduates of the formal Songwŏn middle school and girls' high school, as these schools were, eventually is recently united in the Hani high school. Thus, the graduates of these schools have one joint alumni association, which is the general alumni association of the Songwŏn middle school, girls' high school, and the Hani high school. This general alumni association is also regionally divided in a similar way to the Songwŏn hometown friends associations, but it also has a local group in Songwŏn. Unlike the members of a hyangu-hoe, a member of the tongmun-hoe does not need to be living outside their hometown, and the tongmun-hoe is also

constructed in Songwŏn. Moreover, the main actors of a tongmun-hoe are the alumni of a school, not urban migrants. Even though the tongmun-hoe of the Hani high school is organized across diverse places, it often seems to have jointly organized reunions regardless of the geographical separation. This is due to the small size of the association but also implies its cohesiveness across diverse locations.

As Mr. Chang Man-Sik mentioned, he was the only child of the same age in his neighborhood who went to high school. High school education was regarded as prestigious during his childhood because it was often considered as the highest level of education that was affordable for peasant families. Many young people moved to big cities to find a job after their elementary or middle school graduation. For this reason, to have a general high school alumni association provides prestige to all graduates of the Hani high school. In addition, the members of the executive board enjoy an even higher level of fame among the tongmun.

Two alumni of each graduation year are selected for the executive board of the general alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School. These two chosen alumni represent the other graduates of the same year, as they attend the reunions organized by the general alumni association. Mr. Chi Ho-Yang, an alumnus of the 1974 graduating class, is the selected member for the executive board and regularly participates in the board meetings. He announced that those who are involved in the executive committee possess a high social and economic position in diverse fields of society; in other words, the selected alumni enjoy social prestige. In an email interview, Mr. Chi Ho-Yang explained that the members of the executive board are:

> mostly public officials in high-ranking positions, professionals, or businessmen. They are unbeaten in each field and contribute economically for the sake of the region. It is a community to serve the county and hometown friends (hyangu). If the conditions develop positively, some alumni enter the political world too. However, it starts from local patriotism, and it is also a place for self-actualization according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Mr. Chi Ho-Yang is a professor of sports science; therefore, he is in a respected social position with a high stable income. The alumni in the executive board are asked to make economic contributions to the general alumni association, a reason why the alumni with a stable income are

usually involved there. Financial contributions are collected through membership fees and donations for the development of their alma mater. Thus, the executive board members are in a position whereby they can afford to donate surplus capital to the development of their alma mater after gratifying their basic needs. This relates to the pursuit of self-actualization, as Mr. Chi Ho-Yang cited Maslow, a psychologist, the highest stage of human needs (Maslow 1954). In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, five needs are identified as the motivation of human desire and goals.[15] When the needs in the lower levels, such as nourishment and safety, are fulfilled, individuals seek to realize higher needs to become an ideal self (Maslow 1954; Gratton 1980). The highest need, self-actualization, indicates self-fulfillment "to become actualized in what he is potentially" (Maslow 1954: 46). This level of needs is developed by people who have already reached the esteem needs, such as reputation, status, and prestige in society. Mr. Chi Ho-Yang indicated that the alumni in the executive board seek the needs of self-actualization in the local community in terms of realizing the philanthropic self. Making donations for their school development represents an act of generosity for the public good, to be precisely for the junior students of their alma mater. In a sense, the tongmun-hoe of the Hani high school is a selective group of alumni, who have achieved a certain level of social esteem. The potential self they seek in the community might lead the executive board members even to local politics, as Mr. Chi Ho-Yang reported. Nevertheless, this also indicates why not all tongmun actively participate in the social networks of their general high school alumni association. Aside from those on the executive board, almost no other alumni join the reunions of the general alumni association. This was also similarly identified among the active members and executive board members in the hometown friends association of Songwŏn.

In 2016, Hani high school celebrated its 70th graduation ceremony, which makes a total of 9,835 graduates since its establishment in 1942. On my father's old bookshelf, I found a directory of all the graduates from the Songwŏn Hani High School from 1947 to 2012. Published in 2012 by the general alumni association, this book is like a living history from the past

[15] They are the physiological needs, the safety needs, the belongingness and love needs, the esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization (Maslow 1954: 35-47).

to the present. If I was a graduate of this school, I would feel connected to the other alumni, even those who already passed away before my birth. About 1,450 of almost 10,000 graduates listed their names, current address, and occupation in the directory. According to the directory, the eldest members of the general alumni association are the 7th graduates, who were over 80 years old in 2015. The youngest members registered in the book are the 44th graduating class, who were roughly in their mid-40s at the time of my fieldwork. Regardless of their graduation years and ages, the alumni of the Hani high school share a collective sense of belonging, and this turns into mutual aid in time of need.

Interestingly enough, the directory has a separate section that sorts alumni according to their occupation. With this directory, one can easily discern where individuals work, such as in public offices, big companies, broadcasting stations, and educational, financial, medical, or religious institutes. If one is not employed in such a prominent institute, there is the second section for self-employed alumni categorized by their field of work. When I asked why the directory contains a long list of occupations of the alumni, my father replied that it is to help self-employed alumni. This directory allows alumni to connect and facilitate their business. For instance, for individual companies, this network reduces the costs of potential risks since alumni are easily trusted and can provide help in time of need. This utilitarian aspect of tongmun networks can be compared with guanxi. Guanxi, personal networks in Chinese culture, is known to reduce the transaction costs and potential risks of entrepreneurs (Smart 1993: 404). In a study of foreign investors in Hong Kong, Smart insists that "a strategy used by many Hong Kong entrepreneurs is to utilize or construct social ties with individuals who can facilitate the process of investment" (1993: 397). In this process, gift exchange was identified as the primary strategy to establish and strengthen relationships between entrepreneurs and their business associates. While the Hong Kong entrepreneurs build trust with their business associates through gift exchanges, tongmun have already built trust based on the same school background. Moreover, this trust in tongmun networks is not limited to the field of business. It is flexibly mobilized in diverse contexts, such as for professional advice.

I experienced personally the flexibility of the alumni network and the reduction of costs and risks that it manages to achieve. When I needed to

investigate the history of Songwŏn at a local government office, my father called an alumnus from his graduation year. This alumnus, currently working in the local government office of Songwŏn, promised to help me with my investigation. The next time that I visited Songwŏn, I met him at the government office, and he introduced me to other tongmun who work in the department of culture and tourism. These alumni and my father are not in regular contact, mostly because their living location is different. They merely share the same tongmun and tongch'ang networks. Nevertheless, the mutual identity as the people from the same high school was reinforced in terms of helping someone in their network. Thus, similar to hyangu, tongmun networks possess potentially strong ties. Later I found out that this alumnus that my father called is also registered in the alumni directory with a detailed description of his position in the local government. Even though this anecdote does not certify how actively the alumni use this directory, I am convinced from my experience that this registry fundamentally supports the alumni network in general.

If the hometown friends association and the general alumni association of a school represent comprehensive regional or school communities, a micro-regional and school community is the elementary school network in the same neighborhood. Many study participants reported that they still maintain secure connections to the people of the same age and from the same district, with whom they also went to the same elementary school in their township. Because the alumni associations of the elementary schools do not always have an official organization, it was difficult for me to count their total number in the eleven town and townships of Songwŏn. This reflects the smaller size of such networks that are not institutionalized. But numerous participants reported to me that they are actively participating in their elementary school alumni reunions of the same year graduates. The activities that they involve in regularly include things such as hiking and picnicking, combined with joint lunch or dinner. Growing up in the same region and school develops a significant degree of belongingness, which individuals maintain throughout their life. In particular, the age hierarchy strengthens the belongingness and similarity of the graduates of the same year.

In the previous sections, it has been repeatedly mentioned that the school networks of Korea are stratified in a hierarchical order by age. The

tongmun relationships are subdivided into age-grades, which is represent senior and junior relationships that in Korean are called *sŏnhubae kwan'gye*. These relationships are also found in hyangu networks, as many hometown friends went to the same elementary, middle, or high schools. The tongch'ang-ship, which is the focus of this study, is in principle composed of alumni in the age homogeneity. Thus, understanding the age-grade system is central to making sense of the regional and school alumni networks. In his study of generations, Eisenstadt defines age homogeneity is the similarity of absolute age based on shared experience and fundamental equality (2009: 36). The age homogeneity is not an achieved, but an ascribed status. Age oriented society develops hierarchy according to age, and the seniority in age inherits respect (Eisenstadt 2009: 153). The age homogeneity promotes solidarity of the group members (Eisenstadt 2009: 154). This applies to the Korean age-grades and tongch'ang relationships as well. In this regard, the tongch'ang relationship promotes solidarity under egalitarian status.

However, unlike the age groups and age sets investigated in African and American tribes by numerous scholars (Eisenstadt 2009; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Whyte 1944; Hanson 1988), Korean age-grades show some substantial differences. Age sets of the previous studies are heavily gendered; men are the principal members of the sets, and they play a significant role in political, social, and warfare functions. Unlike these studies, Korean age-grades apply to both genders. It is not a social organization, which accomplish political and military functions as described in the previous studies. Korean age-grades are a social norm immanence in the social structure. Because it is a social norm, the roles of Korean age-grades are not specified. It indicates the hierarchy in social relationships.

In Korean, seniors are referred to as *sŏnbae*, while juniors are called *hubae*. The dictionary definition of sŏnbae is a person whose rank, age, or academic background in the same field is more advanced than others (P'yojun'gugŏdaesajŏn n.d.). By contrast, hubae means a person who is engaged in the same field or came to the same school later than others (ibid.). In sum, the senior and junior relationship is how social stratification occurs between two actors, as each designates each other's position in the same field by comparing their starting points. A similar social system of

senior and junior relationship is reported in Japan. *Sempai* (seniors) and *kōhai* (juniors) relationships put individuals with identical qualities into a ranking structure (Nakane 1970: 26). The criteria for seniority are such as one's relative age, entry year into the company, and graduation year from school (Nakane 1970: 25-2). The status addressing one as sempai remains unchanged for the rest of the life (Nakane 1970: 27).

The age hierarchy between juniors and seniors starts already when children enter elementary school. The children of the same age conventionally begin school in the same year and are considered to be friends, *ch'in'gu*, which represents a horizontal relationship. On the other hand, students in the lower or higher school years are not the same age; thus, they are in a vertical relationship. In other words, they are not considered as friends. As explained in Chapter 1, the concept of friend and friendship refers to a wide range of relationships between people of the same age in Korean society. This age-graded hierarchy is coherently maintained in the school system from elementary school entrance until high school graduation. It is quite common in Korea to ask someone's age or other age-related indicators, such as the entrance year of the university when two individuals first get to know each other. When individuals find out that they are the same age, they adjust their honorifics and start using more casual speech. At the same time, being the same age often initiates a stronger relationship than with others of different age grades, and the individuals quickly develop friendships. The senior and junior relationship is similarly applied in various fields of Korean society, such as in university, the army, and the workplace. However, these relationships can be affected by factors other than age for indicating one's position in the hierarchy, such as one's status or location in an organization. In the context of school alumni networks, the year of graduation is counted as the indicator for the senior and junior relationship. This number signifies the year of the graduation as well as the age of the alumni. Therefore, the 1974 alumni association puts the number of their graduation (28th) at the beginning of their official name to indicate in which hierarchical order they stand relative to the various alumni associations.

The senior-junior relationship in school networks is a relative indicator for the hierarchy. A single individual can be both senior and junior according to the age of each counterpart. But when the positions of individuals are recognized in the age stratification, the expected behavior

of each individual differs according to their positions. Cheong Soo Bok argues that these forms of hierarchy instill a sense of authority in Korean culture (2007: 142-144). The authority and power created in the age-graded system also explain that the members in the lower age rank are expected to show respect to and follow the decisions made by the members in the higher age rank in hometown friends associations (cf. Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin 2012: 277). This indicates the vertical stratification of relationships in Korean society and the power imbalances that exist according to the age grades. (Bott 1981: 10).

Conflicts within the age-graded system may arise when a younger person is promoted earlier than an older person in a company or when a classmate is not in the same age as other students. This was reported by Mr. Ha Cha-Min, who is the same age as other alumni of the 1974 association but started the same high school one year later than his peers. Mr. Ha told me that, as a result, he never developed a feeling of friendship with his classmates during the entire three years he spent at the Hani high school. In his words,

> I went to the same schools [as my peers] until graduation from middle school. Then I tried to enter a high school in Gwangju, but I failed the exam. So, I waited one year until the next school year [of the Hani high school] started. By the way, I am not so close to those tongch'ang. Even though we were in the same class, they knew that I was a senior [by age]. So, they still do not feel like my tongch'ang, even though they are only one-year juniors. This is strange.

Thus, Mr. Ha Cha-Min hardly ever participated in the reunions organized by the 1975 alumni association. Mr. Ha currently has more interactions with the alumni of the 1974 association, those with whom he went to the same elementary and middle schools and shares the same age. Mr. Ha also told me that he had about ten classmates in his high school year who were one or two years older than the other students, including himself. In other words, despite the substantial age-graded system of the school years, there have been a considerable number of students who were not in the same age. Mr. Kan Yo-Han, an alumnus of the 1974 alumni association, was also one of these older students in the same school year. He went to high school with his one-year juniors and graduated together with them. However, unlike Mr. Ha Cha-Min, Mr. Kan Yo-Han developed a sense of friendship

and belonging with his juniors and currently actively participates in the reunions organized by the 1974 alumni association.

To sum up this section, hometown friends and general school alumni associations are communities that reproduce or maintain a sense of belonging to a community despite the locational shift from a rural to an urban area. These networks do not always maintain strong ties among the members. The number of active members in each association is limited, and most individuals do not often interact with each other. Thus, there is a certain level of anonymity among hometown friends and school alumni. Moreover, the active members in both associations are identified as the people who achieved a high socioeconomic position in society. Thus, active membership in each association represents and emphasizes social prestige. In turn, there is a considerable number of hyangu and tongmun who do not participate in these networks actively due to their relatively lower socioeconomic positions. However, regardless of the degree of active membership, the hyangu and tongmun networks have potentially strong ties. Their mutual identity and belongingness as the (formal) Songwŏn people or Hani high school graduates are reinforced in terms of the members' shared interests. This is the benefit of maintaining such networks in different locations. In the alumni networks, age is considered as the decisive criterion determining vertical and horizontal relationships. Moreover, this age hierarchy creates a stronger sense of belonging and similarity between people of the same age, as it will be shown in the example of tongch'ang-ship in the next section.

Scene 3: The joint annual alumni reunion in September 2015

The graduates of 1974 of two high schools in Songwŏn, the Hani and Sari high schools, have a joint alumni reunion every year. In 2015, the joint annual alumni reunion of two high schools was postponed from June to September due to an unexpected outbreak in May of the acute disease 'MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)'. The uncertainty of infection routes and the anxiety regarding contagion caused people to avoid contact with others in public areas. When the number of MERS infected people came to a halt and citizens slowly returned to their regular routines, the

executive board of the two alumni associations decided to have their joint reunion in September instead, which took place in Gwangju this year. At the beginning of the reunion, one representative of the host group appeared on stage and delivered the official opening statement.

> Dear friends. We thank you all for coming today, especially the alumni from Seoul, as they traveled from Seoul early this morning. As of this year, 42 years have passed since we graduated from our high schools. As the typical baby boom generation, we were born in the 1950s after the Korean War, when our motherland was severely devastated. We contributed a lot to the re-development of our country. And we passed our 60th birthday this year or last year, as most of us, I guess up to 99 percent, were born in 1955. Now, as our children are married, and we are retired, we are about to start the second part of our life. In this second part, we should live without any external pressure, we should live our lives for ourselves. For this reason, let us take care of our health as well!

Big cheers and toasts followed the speech. This talk started with addressing the graduates of the same year in a historical context and stressed the importance of their accomplishments in the development of the motherland. The alumni were born and raised in the same era and are regarded as people who share a similar history. The speaker also commended the 1974 alumni's achievements as a father and a breadwinner of the family. In the last 42 years since their high school graduation, the alumni developed careers, got married, and raised children. Now many of their children have left their parents' homes and have their own family. With retirement, the alumni's duty as a breadwinner has come to an end. Now, the alumni are about to start 'the second half of their life'. The statement ended with a prospect for a healthy second life, a significant concern of people their age. Despite diverse personal achievements and financial situations, their mutual history forges the alumni into a cohesive group, the tongch'ang-hoe.

Tongch'ang-Ship: School Alumni of the Same Graduation Year

I start this section with the same sort of questions that guided my analysis of hyangu and tongmun networks in the previous section. That is, what motivates the high school alumni of the same graduation year from a rural region to construct their alumni association in a foreign city? Also, what allows their alumni network to survive in a foreign city even 40 years after their graduation? The reasons for the construction and the enduring nature of the network of the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School in Seoul are related to the shared experience and memory in their old school days and the organization of the community. In an earlier section, I investigated the hyangu and tongmun relationships, which were characterized by belongingness, potential strong ties, and stratification by age. Among the three regional and school networks, tongch'ang has the strongest belongingness and ties built on the similarity of the same age. The tongch'ang-hoe, the alumni association of the same-year graduates, ascribes certain prestige to its members in terms of its participation and organization similar to hyangu and tongmun-hoe. This section will discuss the background and the development of the 1974 alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School in Seoul from its official establishment.

Tongch'ang means the students who studied in the same school (P'yojun'gugŏdaesajŏn n.d.). In Korean, the term applies conventionally to the alumni of the same graduation year from elementary, middle, and high schools. The graduates of a university are occasionally called tongch'ang regardless of the entrance and graduation year.[16] For this study, tongch'ang refers mainly to the school alumni of the same graduation year. The status of tongch'ang indicates a collective status of the same-year graduates, which is conditioned, retrospective, and involuntary. It is established only after the graduation from a school with the schoolmates who were in the same school year. Moreover, tongch'ang is a broader term than classmates. While the term classmates refer to the students who are in the same class, all schoolmates of the same school year transform into

[16] I found that the general alumni associations of some universities call their associations tongch'ang-hoe instead of tongmun-hoe. Both titles are mixed for indicating university alumni associations.

tongch'ang after graduation. This connotes a certain degree of anonymity similar to the hyangu and tongmun relationships. For instance, I have more than 300 tongch'ang from my Korean high school, those who were in the same school year as me. Even though many of them remain virtual strangers to me, we are all in a tongch'ang relationship. Some alumni entered school in the same year but did not finish it together. Some alumni transferred to the school in the middle of a semester but graduated together with their new classmates. Generally, students become tongch'ang of the school in which they graduated. After graduation, the students can form an alumni association of their graduation year regardless of the class division, the tongch'ang-hoe. In this way, a new group of tongch'ang and tongch'ang-hoe of the Songwŏn Hani High School has been created every year. The number of their graduation identifies each alumni association. For this reason, the participants of this study are the 1974 graduating class of the Songwŏn Hani High School living in Seoul.

The relationship of tongch'ang and the network of tongch'ang-hoe are regarded as central to one's social life in Korea among the three types of regional and school networks. Similar to the newspaper article introduced at the beginning of this chapter, a study indicates that tongch'ang relationship comprises the most significant part of city dwellers' social networks in Korea, above kinship, colleagues, and neighbors (Kim Sun-Up 1993). In particular, it was observed that the traditional kinship network of the people in the higher socioeconomic positions is replaced by the tongch'ang network (ibid.). Among the diverse tongch'ang networks, the high school tongch'ang network was identified as the strongest one (ibid.). Because tongch'ang-hoe is a secure network, it is also the fundamental network for other types of regional and school networks. Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin discovered that the fundamental unit of hyangu-hoe is, in fact, tongch'ang-hoe (Lee Seungsoo and Lee Gyubin 2012). In their study of hyangu-hoe, an elementary school alumni association mobilized its networks to initiate a hometown friends association of their own (ibid.).

The fundamental difference between tongch'ang and other regional and school networks lies in the substantial similarity of the members. The similarity of tongch'ang develops from mutual experience and memories in a similar social and historical location. I will further explain what social and historical positions the alumni of the 1974 association find themselves.

This relates to the issue of a generation. As Mr. Ma Tong-Su explains, "Young people these days do not know the spirit of mutual help[17]. However, when we were kids, our generation grew up as an extended family, and we learned this tradition naturally from our grandparents." This man, an alumnus of the 1974 graduates, often took pains to explain to me Korean traditions whenever I asked him about helping money practice. In his opinion, I did not have the opportunity to learn the fine customs of traditional Korean communities. Unlike him, I was born in the city and grew up in a nuclear family. His friends, who were listening to our conversation, agreed with him. This indicates in essence that Mr. Ma and other alumni distinguish between their generation and the younger generations, which is reduced in the term 'our generation'. Mr. Ma added: "You have a lot to learn yet." Even though this might sound like a lament of older people, it is necessary to understand what Mr. Ma Tong-Su means by his use of the term 'our generation'.

As introduced in Scene 3 above, the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School were born during the baby boom period after the Korean War in the mid-1950s. The alumni grew up in an agricultural and rural community. In their childhood, they lived with many siblings in an extended family, with three generations living together. They also encountered many social exchanges with the neighbors in the village community. Moreover, in their youth, many of the 1974 alumni were the direct protagonists of the rapid transformation from the agricultural to the industrial society. As a leading group of the industrialization and urbanization of the country, they left their hometown for Seoul in order to work in the factories or offices instead of in the fields. In making this locational change, the alumni experienced an immense shift from rural to urban social structure. In addition to new types of job, the communities and social relationships were also different in the new environment. This experience was enough to instill in them a sense of nostalgia for the old days in their hometown. This was not an individual experience but was shared with other alumni who grew up in a similar social and historical context. This specific group sentiment can be explained by Mannheim's concepts of generation and generation unit.

'Generation' is a broader concept than a cohort or same-year graduates. In 'the problem of generations', Mannheim indicates two factors

[17] *Sangbusangjo*

that construct generations: social location and biological rhythm (1952). Social location refers to the specific position of individuals in the social structure, which binds the members together in a particular position in society. The second fact, the biological rhythm, relates to a specific point of life's development between birth and death (Mannheim 1952: 290). Above all, generations are shaped in the early age of one's life, because early experiences "tend to coalesce into a natural view of the world" of individuals (Mannheim 1952: 298). Therefore, the childhood and adolescent experiences, when the individuals develop their first contacts, play a crucial role in developing generations. In sum, a generation is the product of a social-historical location, which shapes the fundamental world view of its individuals at an early age. As Röttger-Rössler insists, culture shapes the specific way of how people feel in a particular situation (2009). In a society where the social structure is age-graded, people of the same age develop a stronger group sentiment by sharing mutual experiences within their parallel life development. Moreover, the 1974 alumni, most of them the children of peasants, shared similarities in their social location in childhood as well. This group sentiment shapes the specific sense of generation, the generation unit. A generation unit is "a much more concrete bond than the generation as such" (Mannheim 1952: 394). Therefore, the tongch'ang relationship can be understood as a generation unit with greater belongingness and similarity in the same social-historical process. This sense of similarity extends as a sincere and genuine relationship and the condition for strong ties of tongch'ang, as will be introduced below.

For a significant number of the 1974 alumni, the high school alumni association is one of their various associations and communities in which they regularly participate. Some alumni participate in other school alumni associations, such as the elementary school and the general high school alumni associations (tongmun-hoe). They also belong to numerous communities related to their work or hobbies. Nevertheless, most alumni agreed that their school friends are sincere, open, and candid compared to the other friends and acquaintances that they have met in the various social fields after their high school graduation. This type of friendship or relationship is called *sahoe ch'in'gu*, literally meaning society friends. Society friends refer to the relationships into which one enters in terms of

business, workplace, or hobby. Even though some alumni maintain strong friendships with many society friends, society friends are often compared to school friends, as equal to tongch'ang. Compared to society friends, school friends, *hakkyo ch'in'gu* in Korean, are believed to be less calculative and free from formalities, as three 1974 alumni, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, Mr. Pak Sang-Mun, and Mr. Kan Yo-Han explained. In their opinion, tongch'ang are friends who speak the same language, share the same sentiments, and therefore are easily trusted. In an interview, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong compared his tongch'ang-ship with the relationship with his business associates.

> Because friends (tongch'ang) are those with whom I speak the same language (*maŭmŭro t'onghanŭn sai*), it is not burdensome to meet them. I am informal and comfortable with them. However, the business associates are burdensome, because I need to entertain them. I need to invite them [to a meal] and talk with them. I need to be careful about what I say because I should not hurt their feelings. So, I always get nervous and uncomfortable with them.

Mr. Sim Ho-Tong is a publisher who owns a company and has many business associates, as well as clients, with whom he needs cultivate good relationships. He said that his income relies on his relationship with them. Therefore, Mr. Sim is careful and concerned about the responses of his clients while he can be more informal and comfortable with his alumni. For instance, Mr. Sim tries to please his clients in terms of playing golf together and inviting them for expensive meals. Due to its high expense, playing golf is a symbol of wealth in South Korea. He spends his weekends with his clients more than he does with his alumni. Mr. Sim said: "I am obliged to do it because I am doing business. When I play golf, my relationship with them improves." For the same reason, he is a less active member of the 1974 alumni association. In terms of time allocation, Mr. Sim prioritizes his business associates and clients to his high school friends: "Because friends are heart to heart, our relationship does not break if I do not participate in one or two reunions."

Mr. Sim Ho-Tong believes that the relationship with his high school alumni is secure, even if he skips a few alumni reunions. Mr. Sim can trust that his alumni will maintain their tongch'ang-ship even though he meets with them only intermittently. By contrast, his relationship with the business associates is not strong enough, and he needs to spend more time and money for the maintenance of these relationships. This indicates that

tongch'ang has already established strong ties regardless of the frequency of meeting. This is comparable with the potential strong ties in hyangu and tongmun networks. In these networks, the members have a higher chance of being strangers in the first meeting. Despite the anonymity, they possess the potential of building stronger ties than with someone from a different origin. However, the alumni in the same school year have a lower degree of anonymity, especially in a small rural school. In total, 121 alumni of the 1974 graduates of the Hani high school knew each other well during the three school years. Moreover, some students went to the same elementary and middle school as well. Compared to hyangu and tongmun relationships, the individuals in tongch'ang-ship share more direct mutual experience through their parallel life development, thus less anonymity. The low anonymity provides a condition for strong ties as well as trust in tongch'ang-ships. Therefore, the tongch'ang-ship maintains strong ties despite the low frequency of meeting. The quality of the tongch'ang-ship is also the reason why Mr. Pak Sang-Mun maintains social relationships only with his tongch'ang. Mr. Pak Sang-Mun does not maintain contacts with neighboring entrepreneurs even though his factory is located in a factory complex. However, Mr. Pak participates regularly in the school alumni associations of his elementary and high schools. As he put it,

> I do not participate in the communities here in the complex. There are mountaineering club and communities according to the regions of origin. However, I do not belong there at all. I neither maintain strong relationships with my old colleagues. I have merely individual contacts, but I do not participate in the meetings with them.

I asked him, "Why do you participate only in the alumni associations?" Mr. Pak explained, "Friends, such as in tongch'ang-hoe, elementary school tongch'ang-hoe and high school tongch'ang-hoe, they are sincere. So, I can be sincere with them too. It is a bit different from the friends that I meet in society." Mr. Pak used to work in a car factory for more than ten years before he and his wife opened their iron cutting factory. He maintains scattered connections with a number of formal colleagues in the car factory, but he spends more time with his alumni from elementary and high schools. He stated that he shares a higher degree of sincerity with the alumni than with his society friends: "They are sincere so that I can be sincere with them too." Speaking the same language, from the heart to

heart, sincerity, informality, and comfortableness are used by Mr. Sim Ho-Tong and Mr. Pak Sang-Mun to describe their tongch'ang-ship. Both alumni are entrepreneurs owning a small company and share a similar sentiment to illustrate their tongch'ang-ship that tongch'ang is trustworthy and close. However, Mr. Pak maintains his social networks exclusively with his school alumni, while Mr. Sim puts a higher priority on his business networks before the tongch'ang-ship for the sake of his successful entrepreneurship. Mr. Pak Sang-Mun added: "Society friends are in a totally different level of consensus than school alumni." This is because he values sincerity in social relationships more than having a wide inmaek (i.e. social network). As he explained: "If one lives right and honest, why would he need inmaek? If one lives hard, would not he? I think so, even though I do not have broad inmaek." Mr. Pak Sang-Mun places a high value on sincerity in social networking and believes that this would lead him to successful entrepreneurship. That is why he is less active in social networking with his business associates but maintains secure networks with his alumni. Similar to Mr. Pak Sang-Mun, Mr. Kan Yo-Han reported that the tongch'ang-ship has a strong level of sincerity, as well as belongingness.

> The concept of tongch'ang? I think it is like this: we went to school together, so we are tongch'ang. We maintain the relationship as long as one is not a really bad person. I do not think we would ignore one because he has a lousy personality or he does not have money. Our relationship as friends got into a groove (*t'ŭre pakhida*).

Mr. Kan Yo-Han stressed that their tongch'ang-ship is not dependent on bad personality or bad financial situation of the members. In terms of lousy personality, he specifically mentioned acts of fraud which someone takes his money and does not return it. As long as one does not damage him financially, the bad financial situation of the counterpart is not a reason to abandon their friendship. The bad or good financial situation of the counterpart is related to being profit-oriented, which Mr. Sim Ho-Tong mentioned regarding his business associates. For instance, Mr. Sim needs to maintain good relationships with selected business associates because his income relies on their good financial situation. Thus, in Mr. Kan's opinion, the tongch'ang-ship should be free from this calculation. When he states that their relationship 'got into a groove', the tongch'ang-ship

indicates a kinship like destiny being born in the same region and spending time in the same school. "We went to school together, so we are tongch'ang." This relationship cannot be changed against one's will and often remains lifelong. Therefore, tongch'ang-ship is a relationship based on the strong ties, belongingness, and similarity of the alumni of the same graduation year.

In order to trace the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School since their graduation in 1974, I compared the alumni lists in their school yearbook, the general directory of all alumni of the school, and the membership list of the 1974 alumni association. On the same bookshelf where I found the general directory of the alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School published by the general alumni association, I also found my father's yearbook of his graduation year. In his yearbook, I could identify the pictures of the alumni, whom I got to know for this study. They all looked younger than now, of course, without any wrinkles around the eyes or on the forehead. Without the names, I would not have been able to identify my father's picture. The 1974 alumni were divided into two classes; the forestry class and agricultural class consisted of more than 60 students each. As it was explained, the Hani high school was a vocational school in the 1970s, and the classes focused on teaching students practical skills for agriculture. The last page of the yearbook was a list of all the 1974's class graduates, in total 121, with their home addresses in Songwŏn. I wonder how many alumni still live in their old addresses. The addresses of most alumni must have changed by now, such as those who moved to other cities.

In the membership list of the 1974 alumni association, there are 126 alumni registered instead of 121. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi, the long-term administrator of the alumni association, explained that his association added five students who did not graduate, but went to middle school together. These students graduated only from the Songwŏn middle school and did not continue to the high school, because they failed the entrance exam to the high school, or their family did not have enough money to support their sons for high school education. While Mr. Ha Cha-Min is not accepted as the official member of the 1974 alumni association, the five students who did not go to high school at all are accepted as their official alumni. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi said that "He (Mr. Ha Cha-Min) belongs to the 1975

alumni association, not to us because he spent three years with them and graduated with them." Nevertheless, there is a subtle differentiation of the membership status between the 1974 graduates and the five alumni who did not graduate. Even though these five students are officially registered as the 1974 alumni, they are invited only to the significant events, such as the joint and general alumni reunions. Mr. Pan said that his association does not invite these alumni for casual meetings or local reunions, because they do not share high school memories with the other 1974 graduates.

Out of the 121 alumni that graduated in 1974, nine were dead and seven were missing their contact information in 2015. Thus, 105 alumni are registered with their address, partly with their occupation in the tongch'ang-hoe as well as tongmun-hoe. This means that 105 of 121 graduates are reachable, even if they do not actively participate in the reunions and events of the associations. Among them, 35 alumni live in Seoul, 23 in the Seoul metropolitan area, 13 in Songwŏn, 11 in Jeonju, and 7 in Gwangju. Therefore, 55 alumni are registered in the 1974 alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School in Seoul. In total, 89 alumni live in the four central locations, and the remaining 16 alumni are scattered in other cities. Because the alumni association is constructed based on the living area, the 1974 alumni association is separated into three groups, where the majority of the alumni live today: Songwŏn, Seoul, and Jeonju with Gwangju alumni associations. Similar to other regional and school-related associations of Songwŏn, the 1974 alumni association in Seoul is the biggest and the most influential group among the three groups. The general directory of all the alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School provided me a glimpse into the occupations of the 1974 alumni. Their current jobs were diverse: a farmer in Songwŏn, a bus driver, a hospital employee, a high school teacher, three police officials, three employees in the steel or construction industry, a judicial scrivener, a professional accountant, an owner of a wallpaper and linoleum store, a publisher of an internet newspaper, an owner of a publication company, an exclusive distributor of clothes, an elementary school principal, numerous public officials and employees of a big company. In total, 17 alumni are entrepreneurs and have their own companies. Some of them reached a high-ranking position within their respective organizations, while one has remained in Songwŏn as a farmer since graduation. However, many alumni are also registered without their occupation. Despite the high rate

of registration, the active members are far less than the registered number in the alumni associations. The active and inactive members will be discussed in the latter part of this section. Before doing so, it is necessary to explain the process of the official establishment of the association.

After the high school graduation, about three-fourths of the 1974 graduates left Songwŏn to live in other cities. Some others stayed in Songwŏn and helped their parents in the fields. Only a few alumni studied for the university entrance exam. Others prepared to become public officials. However, many of them directly looked for a job in the private sector. Above all, three years of military service was obligatory to all alumni to fulfill the obligation of all South Korean men. In the early 1980s, most of the 1974 alumni had finished the military service, found a job, and settled down, while some already also had a family. Despite the diversity of locations in which they settled, some alumni maintained connections to each other. These small networks developed to a single alumni association of the 1974 graduates. In this process, there was Mr. Na Sang-Kil, who initiated the alumni reunion for the first time. In a casual reunion in 2015, I got to know his story. He told me, "I was the first who arranged our alumni reunion." "Oh, you were the first," I asked; to which he replied, "Sure, I was the first!"

During dinner at a Korean barbeque restaurant with a number of the alumni, Mr. Na Sang-Kil declared in a loud voice that he was the first person who initiated their reunion. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi supported this by affirming, "Yes, Sang-Kil did it for the first time." I asked Mr. Na to tell me more about their first reunion, especially about the motivation for the construction of their alumni association. He frowned when recalling this old memory and said: "I think we first met together in Ŭljiro [of Seoul], probably in 1984. So, it has been 30 years so far." When the meat smelled ready on the grill, Mr. Na picked up a piece of it. He further explained to me why he wanted to reunite his high school alumni.

> There are no alumni who are not my friends. But, indeed, we got along in groups in old school days. Thus, I have some close classmates, with whom I got along more, and other classmates, to whom I was not close. And I had connections [only] with the close classmates [at the beginning in Seoul], and because I did not reach the not-so-close classmates, I first started getting together with my close classmates [in Seoul]. "Let us gather together, let us have dinner together." Then, at the dinner, exciting stories

> from old school days came up. We really had much fun that night, and we promised to meet again. That was the motivation.

The mutual memories and experience, which they shared in their old school days in hometown, connected them again in Seoul. The first casual meetings helped the alumni to hold their nostalgic memories together and reproduced the belongingness to the primary reference group in a new environment by recollecting all classmates regardless of the degrees of personal closeness. This resulted in extending their alumni network and promoting their alumni reunions. In the next few casual meetings, Mr. Na Sang-Kil encouraged his friends to call other high school alumni by second and third hand and collected more and more alumni who are from the Songwŏn Hani High School of his school year living in and near Seoul. Consequently, he organized an official alumni reunion with about 20 alumni on an autumn day in 1984. They met again in a Korean barbeque restaurant. They had greasy meat with *soju* [18]. On that night, the atmosphere became buoyant, and the bitter soju tasted like sweet water. It was probably not only Mr. Na's aspiration to meet old school friends again in this 'foreign' city. They agreed to continue having meetings after their first official alumni reunion in Seoul. Over the next few years, the group stretched its connections and reached almost all of the other alumni of their graduation year living in Seoul. Mr. Na further told me about his motivation for initiating the first reunion.

> I was a public official for about 20 years. In the beginning, when my friends and I were young, we did not have enough chances to meet because everyone was busy with their new job. But, as I was in the public office, my position was stable.

Mr. Na Sang-Kil began his military service right after high school graduation. When he moved to Seoul in 1978, he soon started working in a government office. According to other participants, they had less time to spare during the first ten years after their graduation. They were busy with settling down in Seoul: serving full time in the army, finding a job, getting married, and raising their newly born children. It was a series of decisions. This was a common pathway of the alumni for their first ten years in Seoul to be independent in a new city. Mr. Na, as a public official, secured his

[18] Korean distilled liquor.

position and income earlier than the others. As he claimed, this was one of his main reasons for initiating an alumni reunion by himself. Thus, his successful settlement and economic security in a new city were the main reasons for Mr. Na to extend his alumni network. This contradicts the study introduced earlier that urban migrants utilize their hometown network and its community to get information for successful settlement in a new city (cf. Yeum Mi-Gyeung and Moon Soon-Deok 2016). Thus, the high school alumni arrived at the idea to extend their alumni network and to have their first alumni reunion only after their successful settlement in a new environment. After all, it was Mr. Na Sang-Kil, who secured his social and economic position earlier than others and initiated their first reunion.

Despite the frequent reunions in Seoul, an official alumni association had not been established in 1984 and 1985. Mr. Na Sang-Kil reported that the alumni were not sure at the beginning how long they could maintain their reunions. A certain degree of uncertainty existed. Nevertheless, the reunion took place more or less regularly, such as three to four times a year. When the alumni were confidential with their continuing reunions, they decided to launch an official alumni association. The official establishment of the community was launched in 1986, two years after the first prominent alumni reunion in Seoul. They named their group the 28th alumni association of the Songwŏn agricultural high school in Seoul. In subsequent years, the association went through formal procedures, as well as selected the first president and an administrator of the association.

The president of the 1974 Hani alumni association has changed multiple times in the last 30 years. Nevertheless, the association has a long-term administrator from the beginning, namely Mr. Pan Tu-Hi. Some alumni commented that Mr. Pan is the actual president of their association. For instance, Mr. Im Se-Hun, the current president of the association said:

> I want to quit being the president of the alumni association, but Tu-Hi told me to keep doing. I've been [the president] over two years and now for three years. The role of the president is not really important, so it is not necessary. But, when the association sends a standing flower arrangement, we put the name of the president [on the ribbon], or when we have a joint reunion, the president is called to the front stage.

As Mr. Im Se-Hun explains, the president of the 1974 alumni association is a somewhat symbolic position. The president does not take on actual tasks but gives its name for official occasions, such as when the association sends a gift flower, the association needs an official reference name for the sake of formality. The president is also asked to give a speech once a year when the alumni have their joint alumni reunion with the Sari high school. The position of the president is a voluntary service for the community lacking any financial remuneration. The president is generally selected among the members, or Mr. Pan Tu-Hi asks a specific alumnus to take over the role for several years. Not many members want to take this position. As Mr. Im explained: "Because no one wants to be the president, we take the role in turns. We usually make excuses about being busy."

Even though this position does not require much work, Mr. Im feels burdensome due to the sense of responsibility. He feels guilty as the president of the association when he does not participate in the alumni reunions, wedding, or funeral ceremonies of other alumni, for instance. Mr. Im admitted: "Because I am the president, I feel responsible for visiting the alumni's ceremonies [more than others do]. But I do not make it always, because I am also busy. Then I feel embarrassed. Only this burdens me. But it does not cost more [than other usual membership fees]." The presidency has been taken on by the alumni of a high socioeconomic position. For instance, Mr. Im Se-Hun was a public official of high rank and is now the CEO of his own company. In practice, the president is a figurehead of the 1974 alumni association, who gives his name for public occasions. Moreover, the administrator seems to have more power in the 1974 alumni association. The administrator, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi fulfill the actual tasks. Mr. Pan is the actual operator of the association and fulfills more tasks for running the community, such as accounting for the association's money, communicating with the members and executive boards of other associations, including calling the next president of the 1974 alumni association. He has been the administrator since the official establishment of the association for all but one year, 1996, when he was nominated as the president. I asked why Mr. Pan Tu-Hi took the role of administrator from the beginning and why he continues this role. He answered that it is because he had free access to making phone calls at the beginning, and he still takes this role because no one else wants to do it. Mr. Pan said: "At that

time, I was working in a telephone company and was able to make many phone calls [for free]."

From the 1980s onward, the primary means of communication for the 1974 alumni association were the telephone and post. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi used to work in a telephone company and had the opportunity to make free phone calls to his alumni. Thus, he was selected as the administrator for the ease of communication among the members. When Mr. Pan was selected as the first administrator, he also made the first draft of the official regulations of the 1974 alumni association. He brought the regulations in the next reunion and let other alumni confirm the first draft. No one was against it. He said members did not care much about the official regulations. I had the opportunity to have a look at the regulations. The official demonstration of the association and its regulations was announced in November 1988. The regulations were typed using a typewriter on four single A4 pages. The white paper was worn out and became almost yellow.

The official regulations outline the general character of the 1974 alumni association. The first regulation discusses the two primary purposes of the association: to promote friendship amongst the alumni and to contribute to the development of their school. This is comparable with the general purpose of hometown friends associations as introduced earlier. The second regulation indicates the two requirements for membership – namely, that one must be a graduate of the Songwŏn Hani High School or a student who went to the same school for at least two years. The second requirement is that the alumni should be living in Seoul or the Seoul metropolitan area. The obligation of the membership is to pay the membership fee, which started at 10,000 won per year in 1988 and had increased to about 100,000 won in 2016. The increase and use of the membership fee will be explained later in detail. The next regulation deals with the diverse roles of the association. The association includes the following roles: one president, a maximum of seven vice presidents, one executive director, a maximum of fifty directors, two supervisors, and an unlimited number of advisors. At least 60 members are required to fulfill all of these positions. Nevertheless, the 1974 alumni association has not nominated its members for these positions. Moreover, the total number of registered alumni in the association is 55. As explained before, there has been only one administrator and one president since its official

establishment over 30 years ago. The customary tenure of the board members is written as two years. This was also contradictory to how long Mr. Pan Tu-Hi has held the role as the administrator and Mr. Im Se-Hun as the president. The regulations do not fully reflect the actual administration of the 1974 alumni association. This regulation is instead a matter of formality, as Mr. Pan Tu-Hi explained: "It was a widespread regulation at that time, and I copied it."

The rules of the 1974 alumni association are applied differently and flexible from situation to situation. Moreover, the regulations have not been updated since 1988. Besides the unchanged regulations of the association, the accounting books of the 1974 alumni association is managed actively. According to Mr. Ha Cha-Min, each community has its accounting book, which is managed by the administrator. When I visited Mr. Ha's flower shop in a busy district of Seoul, it was a drowsy afternoon. As the shop was not busy, he may have been a bit bored and liked to talk to someone; he allowed me to ask anything about his alumni association. He said that he was ready to answer any of my questions, so I began by asking him to tell me more about the role of administrators. Mr. Ha explained that the members select one person in a community who will be in charge of general affairs, the administrator, called *ch'ongmu* in Korean. Small communities often have only an administrator without a president. He then elaborated:

> The administrator manages the money for ceremonies and joint dinner, calculates, and accounts. There is always a person in the group who is suitable for being an administrator. That person is the administrator! Contacting [members] well, being precise and careful, such a person is the administrator. Each community has at least one person suitable for the administrator, and that person stays. Once he starts it, he has to do it for the next five to ten years. Attaching the receipts after meals into the accounting book, writing down collected membership fees, keeping track of how many people and how much, things like that.

Suddenly, Mr. Ha opened a drawer of his table and took out several books. He said: "I am also an administrator in a few communities. Also, I write down incredibly well!" The books that he took out were lined notebooks with black or dark brown covers made of materials similar to leather. As he explained, these notebooks were the accounting books of the communities where he holds the administrator's role. He placed those

books between us, opened them up one by one and said: "Look at this, look at this, I did it all." He skimmed the pages through to show me how he manages his role as an administrator in different communities. "This note is for the alumni golf group, and this one is for the community with local friends." As he thumbed through the pages of the books, white receipts were stuck to some pages and fluttered like wings.

Similar to Mr. Ha Cha-Min's accounting books, the 1974 Songwŏn Hani alumni association also has a general accounting book. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi has been taking care of this book over the past 30 years in his role as the administrator. The income and expenses documented in this book give clues as to how the alumni have maintained their association. With the agreement of Mr. Pan, I had an opportunity to examine their accounting book. It looked similar to Mr. Ha Cha-Min's accounting books, which he showed to me. The entries for each year are not much in the association's accounting book; one or two pages cover one year's entries. The first entry of this accounting book starts in May 1987, where twelve alumni had dinner together at a Chinese restaurant, and each person paid 3,000 won. The cost of the reunions and other events are covered mainly by the membership fee. The reunions have been taking place in diverse restaurants, but the cost is always moderate. One dinner at an expensive hotel restaurant was the lone exception to this trend, which was for the yearend party in 2012. The 1974 alumni meet mainly to dine together, but some other activities are also recorded in the accounting book, such as joint alumni reunions with the Sari high school, participation in athletic meetings organized by the hometown friends association, or casual picnics in diverse locations. The official reunions recorded in the accounting book have taken place between one to eight times per year. In 2012, even though only one official reunion is recorded in the accounting book, the alumni also met in four different funeral ceremonies, of which their alumni were the first mourners. During my fieldwork in 2015, the association had three reunions and five wedding and funeral ceremonies, in which the alumni also gathered together.

As explained above, the association's leading source of revenue is the membership fee. I identified two types of the membership fee, regular and irregular. There have been several years when the association collected the membership fee in a lump sum once a year. However, the fee was also collected from the participants irregularly in each reunion. The individual

contribution for each meeting was generally between 3,000 to 5,000 won in the 1980s and has slowly increased up to 30,000 or 40,000 won in 2015 due to inflation. Thus, only the alumni who participate in the reunion pay the fee, while those who do not participate do not pay it. However, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi told me that they would change the regulation to the yearly membership fee beginning next year (2016) and collect the fee in a lump sum (100,000 won). This was discussed between Mr. Pan Tu-Hi, the administrator, Mr. Im Se-Hun, the president of the 1974 alumni association, and Mr. Su Ki-Ha, the president of the hometown friends association. The reason for this change is because the number of participants in each reunion has decreased in recent years. They expect more alumni to appear in the reunions when the alumni are asked to pay the fee regardless of their participation in the reunions.

The price of the variable membership fee was allocated to pay the joint dinner divided by the number of the participants of each meeting. However, this fee was collected in a full sum, so that members do not handle coins. In other words, the fee has consisted of round numbers such as 1,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 30,000, or 40,000 won. They have intended to collect rather more money than the actual price of the dinner. The rest of the money is saved for the next occasions or for other uses, such as for gifts, donations, helping money, and flower arrangements for the 1974 alumni or other Songwŏn organizations. In what follows, I will introduce a couple of cases describing how the 1974 alumni association has spent their collected membership fee money. The association had given gifts when the 1974 alumni member had a crucial turning point in their career. For instance, when Mr. Su Ki-Ha opened a new office in 1989, where he started his own business as a book dealer, the association bought him a radio (36,000 won). When Mr. Sim Ho-Tong opened his publishing company in 1991, the association gave him a set of ashtrays (50,000 won). Moreover, when Mr. Son Han-Pin opened his own accounting office in 1994, the association gave him a refrigerator (250,000 won). More alumni received a set of toilet paper rolls and laundry detergent from the alumni association when they moved into a new apartment (around from 5,000 to 30,000 won). The association also donated money for several local events, such as athletic meetings organized by the hometown friends association of Songwŏn (around 1,000,000 won), as well as for the surgery of a son of their alumni who was suffering from the aplastic anemia (300,000 won).

Moreover, when Mr. Sim Ho-Tong's office suffered flood damage in 2011, the association sent some money to him to help his recovery (1,000,000 won). However, the largest sum of money that the 1974 alumni association has spent has been for helping money when the alumni were the host of the wedding or funeral ceremonies.

The collected fee was also used to send the invitation letters for the alumni reunions or events until 2006. In 2015, the alumni were using free text message applications via smartphone to communicate with each other. Sometimes, gambling for recreational purposes was another source of income. The alumni played a Korean card game, called *hwat'u*, after dinner, often visited one of their members' houses, and bet small amounts of money. The profits from this card game were donated to the association. The donated sum from this card game was recorded between 5,000 to 73,000 won. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi said that it was not the main purpose of individuals to earn money from the card game; rather, they wanted to have fun. Moreover, some wealthy alumni, mostly self-employed, occasionally donated a lump sum of money for their alumni association or invited their alumni for the joint dinner in the reunion. They were usually Mr. Sim Ho-Tong (the entrepreneur of a publishing company), Mr. Son Han-Pin (a professional accountant), Mr. Su Ki-Ha (the entrepreneur of a book delivery company), Mr. O Chae-Sin (the CEO of an insurance company), and Mr. Ch'a Chi-Wŏn (the entrepreneur of a construction developing company). The donated sums varied between 50,000 won in 1989, and 350,000 won in 2011.

Compared to the alumni, who can afford to donate money to their alumni association, some alumni of the 1974 graduates are supposedly not in a favorable financial situation, so that they neither participate in the reunions nor maintain an extensive alumni network through the alumni association. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi explained that the alumni who participate in the reunions are generally able to afford at least the cost of the membership fee. Those who have difficulty earning a living are not likely to appear at the reunions. Mr. Pan has allegedly called or sent messages repeatedly to the inactive members in order to promote the reunions and other events organized by the 1974 alumni association. He told them that if they are in a complicated financial situation to pay for the membership fee, they do not need to pay it; the alumni association will cover it. Nevertheless, many of the inactive

alumni still do not show up. For this reason, the number of active alumni in the alumni association is less than half of the total registration. This frustrates Mr. Pan. He guesses that most non-active alumni may face economic difficulties. Financial situation influences one's social network significantly, as Mr. Sim Ho-Tong once emphasized: "I think social relationships are the most important. It is more important than making money. However, in order to maintain relationships, it is necessary to have money. I need to be a part of communities, make relationships, and meet people."

According to Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, social relationships are more important than making money. However, in order to maintain good social relationships with others, one needs money. Mr. Sim is an entrepreneur and tries to maintain good relationships with his business associates, as explained above. He plays golf with his business associates on weekends and occasionally invites them for meals to entertain them. These activities cost money. Because his income depends on his relationship with them, spending money for his business relationship can be understood as an instrumental purpose. The fact that money acts as an instrument for maintaining relationships also applies to the relationships amongst the high school alumni, which are considered to be trustworthy and sincere relationships. Even if its cost is not as much as Mr. Sim would spend for his business associates, maintaining tongch'ang-ship also requires money. If one wishes to attend the reunion, one needs to pay the membership fee. When one is in the alumni association, they are also expected to participate in the wedding and funeral ceremonies of their fellow alumni and to exchange helping money with them. In other words, getting along with and maintaining relationships with business associates and tongch'ang both require the spending of money. Thus, economic capital is a requirement for maintaining social networks.

Economic stability is viewed as central for maintaining social networks. The establishment of the alumni association reminds us that it was not until the alumni had a stable social position and income that they initiated the alumni association. Similar to Mr. Na Sang-Kil, Mr. Im Se-Hun regards economic stability as the main reason for initiating their alumni association: "It was around the time when we could afford the membership fee by ourselves." The importance of material stability in maintaining tongch'ang-ship is reflected in helping money exchange as it will be

investigated in Chapter 4 and 5. In this sense, the alumni with substantial economic capital are more present than the alumni with low economic capital in the alumni association. Moreover, this creates a sort of unspoken hierarchy among the alumni. This point requires further elaboration.

Even though they are told that they are engaged in a horizontal hierarchy based on the similarity, the 1974 alumni developed a sense of superiority in terms of individuals' social position and income. Among the alumni, being successful in their career path indicates achieving high social position and income. Also, being successful creates a sense of prestige among the alumni of the same graduation year. In this way, Mr. Im Se-Hun asserts that the association in Seoul is the most successful group among the 1974 graduates of the Songwŏn Hani High School.

> I think about 10 percent of my tongch'ang, considering that we are about 150 graduates in total, then about 15 tongch'ang are successful. They have leading roles in social networks as well. So, this 10 percent mostly lives in the Seoul metropolitan area, I guess about 10 of them.

According to Mr. Im Se-Hun, the reason why the Seoul association is the most influential among the associations of the three different locations is that the successful alumni in terms of achieving high socioeconomic positions predominantly live in Seoul. Mr. Im made a rough estimate that about 10 to 15 successful alumni currently live in Seoul. He did not mention the names of those individuals that he believes to be successful, but he described as those who are self-employed and earn a high income. Mr. Im compared his alumni with the graduates of Sari high school of the same age. Because the Sari high school has continuously been an academic high school, its graduates were likely to find office jobs after graduation. According to Mr. Im Se-Hun, the Sari graduates of the same age found positions in the companies mostly as the white collars. Many of them have lived with their regular salary and are now retired according to the standard contract. However, his alumni from the Hani high school, which was a vocational school, instead founded a company as self-employed, have made a higher income than the Sari graduates, and are not retired yet. These wealthy self-employed alumni have been donating money for the Hani alumni association in Seoul as well.

Similar to the executive board members of the hometown friends and general alumni associations, being a member of the alumni association

symbolizes prestige, which relates to high socioeconomic position. Even though the majority of the Seoul alumni of the 1974 graduates can be identified as of an average level of the socioeconomic prosperity, many alumni with high income and social position hold a symbolic status as representing the association as a whole. Because the tongch'ang-ship consists of a smaller number of less anonymous individuals, the boundary between the 'successful' and 'less successful' alumni is more significant than in other hometown friends and alumni associations. This can evoke a feeling of inferiority to the alumni of a lower socioeconomic position, described as those who cannot afford the membership fee. This is identified as a reason why the alumni members facing financial difficulties do not appear at the alumni reunions, as well as give up maintaining their alumni network through the association, as Mr. Pan Tu-Hi explained. I met several alumni who earn a regular income and have reached a particular social position in their workplace but do not participate in the alumni reunions regularly. Therefore, this argument cannot be generalized. However, the financial situation seems to influence the activity of the alumni in the alumni association to a certain extent. Compared to that, the superiority of some 'successful' alumni influences the active alumni positively, who afford the membership fee and participate in the reunions and events more regularly. Thus, this also strengthens their sense of belonging to the alumni association. Before the intensive discussion on the influence of each alumnus' socioeconomic status in helping money exchange in Chapter 4, the next chapter will investigate the general practice of helping money exchange in Korean wedding and funeral ceremonies.

Three. Making Money into Gift

In the previous Chapter 2, I discussed the development of the *tongch'ang*-ship and the construction of the high school alumni association of the same year graduates, *tongch'ang-hoe*. In this development, the social transition from agricultural to industrial and the change of residence from rural to urban since the 1960s in South Korea were identified as the decisive factors for the organization of an alumni association in the foreign city. Helping money practice can also be understood in line with this shift in the social structure. Helping money, *pujogŭm* in Korean, is not a recent discovery, even though the introduction of a market economy and the excessive utilization of cash occurred relatively late in Korea. Current helping money practice builds on an extension of several historical practices. Related customs derive from the village communities (*kye*) of the agricultural society as forms of communal funds and mutual help (*pujo*). Nevertheless, helping money is not merely a reflection of past practices; instead, it is a reconstruction of related practices in developing social conditions. At its core, reciprocity is an important mechanism realizing the exchange. At the center of this transfer, the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School can be interpreted as the generation bridging kye and pujo practices in two different locations and environments. Accordingly, this chapter will introduce the mode of helping money exchanges during the childhood of the investigated alumni from rural areas and the present practice in an urban environment.

In the first section of Chapter 3, I will briefly review the historical development of the practices of the traditional community (kye). Communal fund and mutual help in the kye community will explain the continuity of exchanges in the modern association and enable us to find

comparable aspects with the current practice of helping money exchanges among the 1974 alumni. The following four sections will focus on the current mode of helping money exchanges. The second section will analyze the general process of making and giving helping money in South Korean weddings and funerals. The third section will focus on a specific mode of giving helping money, the proxy payment, as the general means of giving helping money. The fourth section will discuss the symbolic power of flower arrangements in the ceremonies and their active exchange between the alumni in high social and economic positions. The last section will illustrate the post-processing after the ceremony and its implication for a completed exchange circulation. To further illustrate the process of giving helping money, I will also introduce three excerpts from participant observation, which will describe helping money practices as an episode without interruptions (Scene 4, 5, and 6). One of these excerpts describes a funeral ceremony, while two other scenes were taken from wedding ceremonies.

Transmittal Tradition: Kye

Kye is a form of traditional community or organized communal practice of Korea. Kye in Korea has a long history in Korea, originating before the Chosŏn period[19], and remains prevalent today. Over this long period, the most basic form of kye has been adapted to the changing social structure and has ultimately developed into different types. In this study, kye will be differentiated in two types: the first type of kye is the traditional community, which is initiated by several individuals, who share a similar interest, to improve their group solidarity. Documents indicate that this type of kye was operated by a communal fund, which was collected by the members and used for mutual purposes (cf. Kim Pildong 1988a; 1990). The second type of kye is identified as a rotating credit association, in which the members mobilize their property, mostly in forms of money, as alternative banking. Unlike the first type, the latter type of kye is a relatively recent development in Korea.

[19] A.D. 1392-1897

The practice of traditional kye is significantly related to pujo practice and also comparable with *p'umasi* practice, which both indicate mutual help. The modern helping money practice (pujogŭm), which is the main subject of this study, relates to these three types of practices: traditional kye, pujo, and p'umasi. The current approaches to helping money show some similarities but also differences from the traditional practices. I argue that traditional practices are reinterpreted in different sets and structures of modern society. In this section, I will first explain the development of kye from the Chosŏn period of Korea and try to articulate the current helping money practice as it relates to the traditional kye and two other related practices of mutual help. In this context, the helping money practices which the 1974 graduating class of the Songwŏn Hani High School remembers from their childhood will also be introduced.

The early form of kye before the 15th century in Korea was known as a community of officials or academic colleagues (Kim Pildong 1990: 58-61, 74).[20] This form of kye was developed among people sharing similarities in terms of the residence, age, studying interest, and occupation in Chosŏn period (Kim Pildong 1990: 58-61). These types of communities were constructed to meet regularly merely for socializing purposes, and the members did not share other specific goals for organizing their community (ibid.). The initial form of socializing kye has developed into diverse forms with specific interests and goals in the broader social spheres and stratification. Kim Pildong, a Korean sociologist, categorizes kye of the Chosŏn period broadly in six types; the amity kye (*sagyogye*), kinship kye (*chokkye*), town kye (*tongkye*), funeral kye (*sanggye*), study kye (*hakkye*), and the pine tree kye (*songgye*) (Kim Pildong 1990). Moreover, the existence of *kapkye*, the kye of the people of the same age, indicates the existence of the age grades in the early development of Korean communities (cf. Kim Pildong 1988a: 187). These kye types are conceptual as the actual practices of kye often overlapped, albeit their names indicate a specific purpose (Kim Pildong 1988b; 1990). Kim Pildong also insists that helping each other in celebrating and condolence occasions, *kirhyungbujo*, was the general goal of the early kye communities (Kim Pildong 1990). Here I find the term

[20] Kim Pildong also finds the origin of town kye in *hyangyak* of Koryŏ (A.D. 918-1392) (Kim Pildong 1986; 1990: 64-66).

'p(b)ujo' and can assume that kye and helping practice, pujo, strongly relate to each other already at the early stage of kye development.

Among the diverse types of kye, the town kye fulfilled broad purposes in the village community (Kim Pildong 1990: 74-75). Town kye was comprised of villagers who shared the same residential area and operated a communal fund. However, the poor and servants were excluded from this association (Kim Kyŏng-Il 1984: 168-169). This is not unrelated to the ability to pay regular or irregular contributions to the communal fund (cf. Kim Kyŏng-Il 1984: 171). The communal fund was used for the everyday purposes of the town, such as for collective labor in the fields and paddies, relief from the natural disaster, and the annual town feasts (Kim Kyŏng-Il 1984: 171-176, 181). In a sense, town kye can be identified as social insurance, in which the members systematically contributed a certain amount and relied on rewards in case something occurred which would require an amount too large to cover alone. Town kye included diverse sub-associations, as the town and townships were the peasants' central sphere of life in traditional society, where various activities took place and were shared in the neighborhood. Moreover, the means of living was highly dependent on agriculture in a preindustrial society, which often necessitated collective labor. For instance, *ture*, an intensive collective labor exchange in the rice paddies organized among the villagers in the same township, is an example and was also called agriculture kye (*nonggye*) (Joo Kang-Hyun 2006: 41-42, 82, 84-85). In addition to that, funeral kye can also be identified as a subdivision of the town kye, as the funeral ceremony was generally prepared and processed among the same members of the village community together (Kim Pildong 1990: 66-67).

Besides the expense of the communal fund, individuals in the town kye were also expected to give mutual help in general areas of life to the villagers in their neighborhood. As the principle of helping each other, kirhyungbujo, sangbusangjo, or for short pujo, the villagers in the community were expected to assist in celebrating and condolence occasions, such as wedding and funeral ceremonies (cf. Kim Kyŏng-Il 1984: 173). Precisely, pujo can be differentiated into collective and individual types. These two types of pujo are identified in terms of how property is mobilized in the kye community. Collective pujo mobilizes the community's property to purchase expensive or costly materials. In

contrast, less costly materials and labor in individual pujo is rather brought and exchanged by individuals. For instance, historical documents indicate that funerals were a frequent case for enacting pujo, in which the members mobilized their communal fund to purchase boards for making coffins as well as hemp and cotton for clothes in town and funeral kye (Kim Pildong 1988a: 196; 1990: 67). Additionally, individual pujo was also frequently exchanged for funerals in material forms, such as money, grains, cotton cloth, food, and miscellaneous articles, as well as in physical labor (Kim Pildong 1988a: 196). A similar pujo practice was also reported by the class of 1974 from their childhood in the 1960s and 1970s, as will be described later.

In addition to pujo, mutual help is also called p'umasi in Korean. While pujo indicates generally helping someone for special occasions, p'umasi signifies certain types of reciprocal labor sharing between two individuals (Kim Joohee 1992: 86). P'umasi, in Korean traditional agricultural society, was individually exchanged for diverse tasks, especially for agricultural work in the busy farming season. Joo Kang-Hyun argues that p'umasi was widely practiced in the fields instead of in the rice paddies because fields demand less intensive and collective labor (2006: 661). Even though Yun Su-Jong insists that p'umasi can also be organized between up to 30 individuals, the diffusion and privacy of exchanged labor differentiates it from other organized labor exchanges, such as in kye (Yun Su-Jong 1992: 162-163). For this reason, the size of p'umasi depends on individuals' social networks. Thus, the active participation in p'umasi with others in the neighborhood is an indicator for the broad social networks of an individual. In her study of p'umasi in a rural area, Kim Joohee gives the examples of two families during a party for a hundred-day-old baby and explains that the different number of guests at each party relates to the number of previous p'umasi exchanges of each family (1992: 87-88). Here having many guests is the indicator of a successful party. While one family did not give much effort to exchange p'umasi with its neighbors, the other family has maintained extensive networks through p'umasi in the neighborhood. Thus, one family had significantly fewer guests than the other family despite their similar wealth status (ibid.). Nowadays, people understand mutual help with multiple individuals in a community also as p'umasi, such as giving free lessons and childcare (cf. Kim Jeonghee 2000).

Interestingly, some of the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School explained that exchanging helping money in modern weddings and funerals is also doing p'umasi as it will be explained in Chapter 4. Thus, the word 'p'umasi' is generally used in modern Korean society to explain the practice of general mutual help.

As introduced previously, diverse types of kye were developed from socializing kye over the centuries. In different types of kye, a communal fund is mutually observed, which is collected by the individual members and mobilized in the community. For instance, when a new kye was formed, members agreed on a number of principle regulations, such as the name of the association, the membership status, and the frequency and location of meetings. Moreover, the amount of the membership fee, the use of their communal fund, as well as the person responsible for the administration also belonged to the principle agreements (Kim Kyŏng-Il 1984: 168-171). The collected materials for the communal fund included commodities such as grain, farmland, or cotton cloth documented in the 16th century, but gradually altered to money from the mid-17th century (Kim Pildong 1988a: 193; 1990: 76-78). The expense of the communal fund is recorded in *kyech'ŏp*, the documentation of kye, which can be described as the accounting book of an association. In this book, the details can be found regarding how much each member contributed to the communal fund and what the community collectively purchased (Kim Pildong 1988a). Uniformity of the contribution was generally emphasized among the kye members, but differentiation according to social status or wealth was also intermittently observed (Kim Pildong 1988a: 195; 1988b: 135). The primary purpose of traditional kye was not accumulating interest but instead maintaining unity and solidarity in the neighborhood mobilized by their communal fund. However, individual members were aware of their contributed portion in the communal fund. This indicates the credit-debt relation between the members and communal fund (cf. Ardner 1964).[21] For this reason, if a member moved to another village, the membership fee was refunded in the case of town kye (Kim Pildong 1988b: 133). Similar

[21] Even though Ardener uses the terms 'creditors' and 'debtor' to explain the system of rotating credit associations (RCA) in his study (1964), I use these terms in the context of traditional kye, as I find the individual contribution for communal fund and the members' expectation for rewards in traditional kye are comparable with RCA in terms of debt and repayment.

practices of repayment in kye in rural areas were also reported in the 1970s and 1980s (Ahn Seung Taik 2014: 19). This indicates a calculative manner of allotting one's property in the communal fund and the right to ask for a reward. Thus, the communal fund was common property, but there was an awareness of individual portion and an expectation of rewards. This traditional kye for religious, ceremonial, mutual help, relief, solidarity, and amusement purposes (Kim Pildong 1988a: 204) changed in the late Chosŏn period. It was the period when a new type of kye appeared, that of rotating credit associations.

As introduced before, the fund of kye increasingly changed to money from the 17th century. This was in the late Chosŏn period when rice productivity increased due to technological innovation, and the population of Chosŏn rapidly grew. This resulted in the increase of farming area per person and the shortage of individuals' farmland (Lee Ho-Chol 1989). Consequently, many peasants lost their farmland and worked as tenants for wealthy farmers in the 19th century (Lee Ho-Chol 1992: 104-109). Around the same time, the number of merchants and commercial activities noticeably advanced (Ko Donghwan 2009). This social change is understood as the pursuit of profits for private property and often discussed as the growth of capitalism in late Chosŏn society (ibid.). This explains the increasingly prevalent use of commercial money at the time.

Between the late 19th century of Chosŏn and the Japanese colonial period in the early 20th century, the communal funds of town kye were often dissolved in line with the independent movement (cf. Kim Pildong 1990: 83). At the same time, a new type of profit-centered kye appeared in society. This was the turning point when kye began to be understood as a profit-making mechanism instead of solely maintaining group solidarity in village communities (Kim Pildong 1988b: 152). Examples of this shift are found in gambling kye, which became prevalent in the early 20th century (Kim Pildong 1990: 73, 84). They include *manin'gye*, *samsibyukkye*, and *chappakkye*, which ran similar to a lottery: several people collected money, drew a number, and the selected person took all the collected sum (Seo Ho-Chul 2010: 8-10). Even though the system behind this lottery kye was different from the traditional kye, they were still referred to as 'kye'. The other prevalent type of kye during this shift can be identified as a rotating credit association.

Rotating credit association (RCA) is defined as "an association formed upon a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation" (Ardener 1964: 201). The members of an RCA agree on the sum of regular contributions as well as the time of regular meetings, which are mostly hosted by the member who receives the sum in turn. RCAs are managed by organizers or officials who keep the records, similar to traditional kye. The system of RCA creates the debt creditors and debtors in circulation, who receives and pays the sum in rotation, and it circulates until everyone has contributed and received the same sum in the balance (cf. Ardener 1964: 201-202). Thus, rotation and regularity are two criteria for RCA (ibid.). In his definition of RCA, Ardener excludes the case, "in which all contributions are held by an official or 'banked' and are not distributed on a rotary principle …" (ibid.). With this understanding, he also suggests that giving wedding gifts is not included under RCA (Ardener 1964: 226). Thus, according to Ardener, the traditional kye, which held a communal fund managed by the association's administrator and exchanged mutual help in significant life events (pujo), is not defined as a RCA.

The traditional kye with pujo practices is different from RCA in terms of regularity of repayment. Traditional kye is related to the rites of passage which everyone encounters at least once in their life. Therefore, members expect that they will receive similar support in their ceremonies, but it is not precisely at equal intervals of time. Moreover, traditional kye does not have a definite end. Thus, the traditional kye and pujo are better represented by reciprocity instead of rotation and regularity. Unlike the traditional kye, which firstly aimed at maintaining the solidarity of a community, rotating credit association is alternative banking with profit-making as its principal purpose. However, scholars generally agree that RCAs serve the function of strengthening group solidarity (Geertz 1962; Ardener 1964; Wu 1974), which has also been reported among Korean immigrants abroad (Kim Byung-Soo 2007; Oh Joong-Hwan 2007). Thus, traditional kye and modern kye (RCA) can be compared in terms of solidarity but remain different in the primary purpose of profit orientation.

High school alumni associations in Korea can be identified as a traditional kye in many aspects. They aim to promote group solidarity and collect individual contributions, which composes their communal fund. Their communal fund is not for making a profit but is used for association events and for giving mutual gifts to the members, as explained in Chapter 2. Moreover, its expenditures are well documented in an accounting book similar to kyech'ŏp. The general exchange of mutual help in significant life events is expected in the 1974 alumni association. The main difference in the alumni association from the traditional kye is that helping each other (doing pujo) is practiced with money rather than materials or physical labor. Despite these similarities, when I asked the alumni whether their alumni association is similar to kye, they denied it: "Alumni association is not a kye." Many Koreans nowadays recognize kye dominantly as a financial practice, RCA, with a heavily gendered character, which is practiced often among women (cf. Song Jesook 2014: 51). Thus, the alumni see a clear difference between their alumni association and modern kye. Nevertheless, traditional kye practice has not entirely disappeared in modern Korea. For instance, Mr. Ma Tong-Su reported to me that he is doing a *nammaegye* (brother and sister kye)[22] with his 19 siblings and cousins, almost 40, including their spouses. They meet once annually and collect a yearly membership fee. However, the collected fee is not taken by a person in rotation. They distribute money when the relatives have a special occasion, such as weddings, funerals, serious illness, school or university entrance of their children, and finding their first employment. Therefore, Mr. Ma's brother and sister kye reinforcing solidarity through the communal fund can be identified as kinship kye (chokkye) of the traditional type. The fact that Mr. Ma and his relatives refer to their community as kye means that this traditional understanding still exists in society today, even though kye as RCA remains dominant. For this reason, it cannot be discounted the continuity of traditional kye in modern Korea. In line with this fact, pujo and p'umasi practice are still found in associations and communities throughout modern Korean society as it will be shown in helping money exchanges. Moreover, the 1974 graduating class of the Songwŏn Hani High School still remembers that the tradition of pujo and p'umasi were actively practiced in their childhood in the 1970s.

[22] This type of kye practiced among the friends or relatives is called *ch'inmok kye* (friendship kye) in modern practice (cf. Lee Sung-Hee 2011).

Songwŏn, as a region in the granary zone of the Korean Peninsula, much relied on rice farming and has been primarily a peasant society as well. When the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School were growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, Songwŏn was also heavily influenced by peasants' communities. The alumni often talked about the concept of pujo and p'umasi in their neighborhood, as well as the funeral kye practice in their town. When someone got married or died in their village, neighbors prepared food or carried the coffin together. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi explained that the essential ingredients for these shared meals, such as rice, were prepared by the host family. However, other dishes, such as kimch'i, pork, noodles, or *hongŏhoe*[23], were brought by neighbors or freshly prepared in the host family's house together. Thus, the ceremony was realized through the individual contributions of villagers. Mr. Ma Tong-Su reported similarly how pujo was practiced in ceremonies in his neighborhood of Songwŏn. In his words,

> When I was a kid, I remember the neighborhood did pujo with foods such as rice, eggs, meat, and *ttŏk* (rice cake). I also remember *samnyŏnsang* (three-year mourning). People put a small altar in the house's yard and brought a bowl of rice every morning as if that was for a living person.

Three-year mourning (samnyŏnsang) is a part of the Confucian tradition in which the children and the spouse of the deceased carry out daily ancestral rites for three years after the death (Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe 2005: 116-121). Korean funeral ceremonies following Confucian tradition consist of 18-21 processes, which take three years in total (Yoo Kwon-Jong 2004: 9-10; Kim Shi-Dug 2007: 339). Especially the process from death to the burial requires elaborate skills and experienced guidance. This can be argued as a reason why the neighborhood was mobilized for doing funeral pujo in the village community. This three-year funeral ritual was slowly simplified to a three-day funeral process with the intervention of the government in the late 1960s (Kim Shi-Dug 2007). [24] Moreover, the

[23] Hongŏhoe, sliced raw skate, earned and still earns a particular emphasis on the 1974 alumni's explanation, as it is their regional specialty in Jeolla province. The alumni explained that they consumed this fermented raw fish mainly on ceremonial occasions as it was a precious ingredient.

[24] The Park Chung-Hee regime proclaimed family rite standards (*kajŏngŭiryejunch'ik*) on March 5, 1969. These new standards were under the pretense of breaking empty formalities and vanity in terms of weddings, funerals, and ancestral rituals. A similar

dissolution of the village community in urban environments accelerated the increase of commercial funeral houses (Pak T'ae-Ho 2006: 198; Kim Shi-Dug 2007). A similar tendency is observed in wedding ceremonies, such as the change of location from private homes to commercial ceremony houses (cf. Lee Yeong-jae 2008). As weddings and funerals are implemented in specialized ceremony houses, the employed workers in such houses replaced the p'umasi labor in the neighborhood. These private ceremony houses provide facilities for the guests as well as for the host family, such as the reception location, food, and necessary items, which are paid with money. Therefore, guests do not need to bring materials to the ceremony (pujo), such as rice and meat, but money to help the host family (pujogŭm). Nowadays, having weddings and funerals at someone's house is also rare in rural areas.

The regional difference should not be forgotten. However, in the alumni's memories from their youth, helping money at weddings was the price for a bowl of noodles (*kuksu*), which is traditionally served in wedding ceremonies in Korea. [25] As they grew, the country was undergoing industrial turmoil, and they moved to Seoul. The alumni in this study can be understood as the generation that experienced pujo practices in village communities as well as in an urban environment. In this sense, they connect the helping money practices between the preindustrial and industrialized environments. Based on the principle of reciprocity, it is necessary to describe how the exchange takes place in the modern urban environment. To accomplish this, I will now illustrate a participant observation at the reception desk of a wedding ceremony. This will provide a glimpse into the practices of a modern wedding ceremony in South Korea. Moreover, it shows a couple of essential aspects in helping money exchanges, such as the process of making money into helping money.

proclamation was announced in 1934 by the Japanese Government-General of Korea as well (Song Hyun-Dong 2002: 201-203).

[25] For instance, questions related to noodle soup, such as "When do we eat your noodle soup?" or "Let us eat your noodle soup." are metaphors for someone's wedding ceremonies in Korea.

Scene 4: At the reception desk of a wedding ceremony in March 2015

Today, I have been allowed to observe a wedding ceremony next to the reception desk as an anonymous guest. I am anonymous because I am not directly related to the host family of today's ceremony (The mother of the groom is a close friend of my aunt in a local church of Seoul). In consideration of guests' convenience, most wedding ceremonies in South Korea take place on Saturdays, which are not official workdays and free from religious obligations on Sundays.[26] Also, today is no exception. The announced ceremony starts at 1:30 pm. One hour before the start of the ceremony, I arrived here at a wedding house in Gangnam district, a famous downtown area in Seoul. The exterior of this wedding house imitated the facade of an elegant European castle, and the interior is decorated with glamorous chandeliers. A wedding house in South Korea conventionally consists of several halls: the reception hall, ceremony hall, buffet hall, waiting room for the bride, and the *p'yebaek* room[27]. When guests arrive at the reception hall, they first greet the host of the ceremony, such as the parents of the bride and groom, and the groom. Then they hand in their helping money envelopes at the reception desk. Only the bride is not visible in the reception hall; she is in the bride's waiting room, a physically separated place from other halls. When the ceremony is about to start, the guests move to the ceremony hall. However, some guests go to the buffet hall directly after greeting the host and handing in their helping monies, or a short time after the ceremony started. They do not seem to be interested in the ceremony itself. The modern Korean wedding ceremony consists of two parts: the Western part of the ceremony and the traditional Korean part. The Western part of the ceremony takes place in the big ceremony hall, and any guest can attend it. However, only direct family members attend the p'yebaek ceremony, which follows the Western-style ceremony. This traditional ceremony does not take long so that the newlyweds can

[26] According to the Gallup poll results in 2014, 28% of South Koreans are Christian (Gallup Korea 2015: 19-20).

[27] P'yebaek is a traditional wedding custom practiced right after the Western wedding ceremony in modern Korean weddings. In this custom, the newlyweds greet the parents of the groom with a deep bow and share some dried snacks, such as jujubes and chestnuts, as well as alcohol. The parents respond with words of blessing and often give money in a white envelope (Hong Na-Young and Choi Hye-Kyung 2001: 215-217; Lee Yeong-jae 2008: 34-35).

come to the buffet hall afterward to personally greet their guests. In general, a Korean wedding ceremony takes no longer than two hours, and the guests also stay for less than two hours at the wedding house.

When I arrived at the wedding house, the reception hall was not busy yet. I found a couple of receptionists cleaning up their reception desks. Another wedding ceremony was running in the same ceremony hall before the one I am attending. Wedding ceremonies take place at two-hour intervals in the same wedding house. In the opposite corner, I saw a few more reception desks and recognized by the name tag that they are for the wedding ceremony in which I am participating. For each ceremony, two sets of reception desks are prepared: one for the groom's guests and another for the bride's guests. I turn to the reception desk on the groom's side. Two men are already sitting at the desk. They introduce themselves to me as relatives of the groom. The middle-aged man is a younger brother of the groom's mother, in other words, the groom's uncle. He said that he already has some experience as a helping money receptionist at weddings. The other receptionist is in his 20s and is the groom's cousin. This young cousin said that it is his first time being the receptionist in a wedding ceremony.

Yet the reception hall is serene, as there are not many guests. Two standing flower arrangements are displayed right next to the reception desk, and I am positioned somewhat behind them. I ask the receptionists when these arrangements were delivered. They answer that they do not know. The flowers were already here when they arrived. A registration book and a guest book are already open in front of each receptionist. The first page of the registration book is filled in already. I ask them what their task as receptionists is today. The elder uncle answers: "I am responsible for receiving the (helping money) envelopes, and he gives buffet coupons to guests." The uncle writes down guests' names and the amount of their helping money in the registration book. Next, to the elder uncle, the younger cousin advises guests to sign in the guest book and hands out the buffet coupons. In the interlude, the cousin is counting the number of buffet coupons and puts them in the drawer under the table. I ask him how much a buffet coupon costs. He answers: "I do not know exactly, but probably between 30,000 to 50,000 won." At the neighboring desk, the reception desk for the bride, three young men are sitting. "Who are they? Are they also relatives of the bride's family?" I ask the two receptionists at

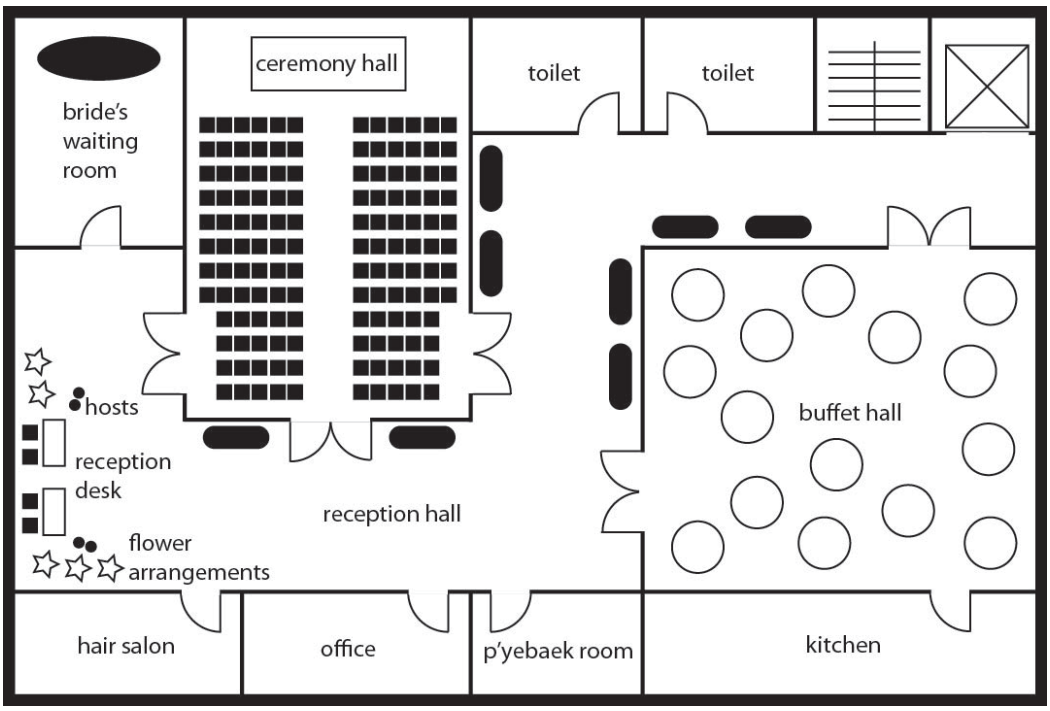

Figure 6: Floorplan of a wedding house

the groom's desk. Nevertheless, I do not receive any definite answer from them. As another wedding ceremony is proceeding in the same wedding hall before ours, the guests are mixed in the reception hall. In order to bring the helping money to the right reception desk, one needs to be careful about the name tags in front of the desk. Relatives of the groom's family recognize the receptionists sitting at the table. Some old ladies come together to the reception desk and looked delighted to see their relatives who are operating the reception desk.

As more guests arrive at the wedding house and find our reception desk, I pay sharp attention to the mode of giving helping money. As the main host, the groom's mother and father are standing next to the reception desk.[28] To be more specific, they stand next to the elder receptionist so that they can politely greet their guests and personally give thanks before guests hand in their helping money envelopes. With smiles on their faces, the two main hosts never glance at the reception desk and appear to be ignorant about the exchange of helping money envelopes. The groom in a

[28] The main host of the wedding ceremony is not the bride and groom in South Korea. It is their parents. For this reason, a more significant number of guests are expected from the parental side than from the newlyweds themselves.

black tuxedo is also standing next to his parents. Nevertheless, he is more mobile. When he finds his guests, he moves away to a corner in order to talk to them personally. The bride is not visible in the reception hall at all. She is in the bride's waiting room, a physically separated space near the reception hall.

The reception desk might be the most critical spot in the wedding house before the ceremony starts, as well as for the study of helping money exchanges. It is the place where guests hand in their helping money envelopes and receive the buffet coupons. As if it is the most primary duty in the ceremony, the guests come to the reception desk as soon as they arrive at the wedding house. They hand in their helping money envelopes, and the elder receptionist takes the envelopes and writes down their names in the registration book. After handing in their envelopes, guests turn towards the younger receptionist. The younger receptionist requests that the guests write down their names in the guest book. Moreover, he distributes them a buffet coupon. He asks each guest approaching him: "How many coupons do you need?" These coupons have a distinctive signature on them, which marks the affiliation of the guests. The coupons are collected at the entrance of the buffet hall, and the host pays the cost for the buffet in accordance with how many coupons are collected.

Most guests arrive at the wedding house about a half-hour before the ceremony starts. Around this time, a waiting line builds in front of the reception desk. The guests try to reach the elder receptionist to give their envelopes. A crowd gathers in front of the younger receptionist, as handing in their helping money envelopes takes much less time than signing the guest book and receiving the desired number of buffet coupons. As soon as they receive their chosen number of buffet coupons, guests leave the reception desk abruptly. By this time, a slight disorder overcomes the reception area, and the guest book is often ignored. Some guests still manage to sign the guest book in the crowd. Some of them even sign for other people, who could not make it to the ceremony today and asked to make payment by proxy. For this reason, the actual number of visited guests matches neither with the registered helping money envelopes nor the number of signatures in the guest book. In disarray, the elder receptionist gives up writing down the names of helping money givers in the registration book. He collects the envelopes and puts them in the drawer under the desk. He can do the recording later when the ceremony

starts, and fewer guests arrive at the reception desk. The situation is similar at the reception desk of the bride's family. However, luckily, they have three receptionists and manage the disorder quicker than the groom's.

The Traffic of White Envelopes

The mode of helping money exchanges varies in terms of preparation in the first instance. Helping money for weddings and funerals is prepared conventionally in a plain envelope. Helping money can be given in any simple white envelope. One puts banknotes in a clean-looking envelope and writes down their names lengthwise on the back of the envelope. One the same side, some donors also note their affiliation, such as company, church, or school name, which they want to emphasize to the recipient. Specially designed envelopes are purchasable in convenience stores or office supply shops too. In the middle of the front side of these envelopes, two or three Chinese characters are written longwise. 'Wedding celebration (*ch'ukkyŏrhon*)' is written on the envelopes for weddings and 'condolence goods (*puŭi*)' on the envelopes for funerals. These written characters are the only difference in helping money envelopes between weddings and funerals. This relatively simple process of preparing helping money envelopes underlines some practical aspects. Compared to comparable gift money envelopes of other societies, such as Chinese red package (*hong bao*) and more colorful and decorative Japanese gift money envelopes with a particular manner of wrapping and giving (*kaishi* and *furoshiki*) (cf. Yang 1994; Rupp 2003), white envelopes for Korean helping money are less expensive and complicated in terms of formality. In Japanese gift money, moreover, new banknotes are given for weddings and old banknote for funerals, and whether the banknotes are face up or down in the envelope also matters (Rupp 2003: 4-5, 23, 56-58, 64-66). However, these details are not considered in Korean helping money. Some entrepreneurs print their own helping money envelopes with the company's name, as Mr. O Chae-Sin (the CEO of an insurance company) and Mr. Sim Ho-Tong (an entrepreneur of a publishing company) do. On the back of these customized envelopes, their names with their position in the company are also imprinted. When guests prepared their envelopes

before their arrival at the wedding or funeral ceremony houses, they come to the reception desk and give their envelopes to the receptionist. They mostly carry their envelopes in their blazer pocket or handbags. Some of the envelopes are folded in the middle, but some of them still maintain their intact stiff form. Unlike these cases, many guests still make their helping money envelopes on the spot in the ceremony houses. For this reason, new white envelopes and pens are conventionally available at the reception desk or nearby in such houses.

In the wedding ceremony introduced in Scene 4, I was observing a man preparing his helping money envelope on the spot. The man in a light brown suit, probably in his 50s, takes an empty envelope and a pen from the reception desk as soon as he arrived. However, he does not prepare his envelope on the reception desk; he goes to a corner in the reception hall. There, he finds a seat on a couch and writes down his name on the envelope. Writing his name does not take long. Soon, he stands up and looks around as if he is wary of someone watching him. He moves a few steps closer to the wall and maintains his front torso towards the wall to hide the moment of putting his helping money in the envelope. Even though no one except me pays attention to him nor the amount of his helping money in a hectic wedding, he appears to be careful about making cash into helping money. Soon, the man comes back to the reception desk and submits his freshly made helping money envelope. It was not only this man in various weddings and funerals who enacted a similar process of making helping money envelopes; taking envelopes from the reception desk and adding money covertly. This indicates an intrinsic character of helping money. Unlike a simple payment for commodities, for which a price is fixed in public, it matters how much one puts in for helping money exchanges because it is an individual and private matter. Moreover, as the helping money recipient is also present in the reception hall, the givers try to hide packaging money in a way that they make the process invisible. Nevertheless, I also observed that very few people finished their envelopes right on the reception desk at the ceremonies. For instance, about 3 of 200 guests in the ceremony introduced above filled money in the envelopes right at the reception desk, while the receptionists and other guests were present near them. They cared less about the invisibility of making money into helping money. However, the receptionists and other guests at the reception desk are a third party, not the actual recipient of the gift.

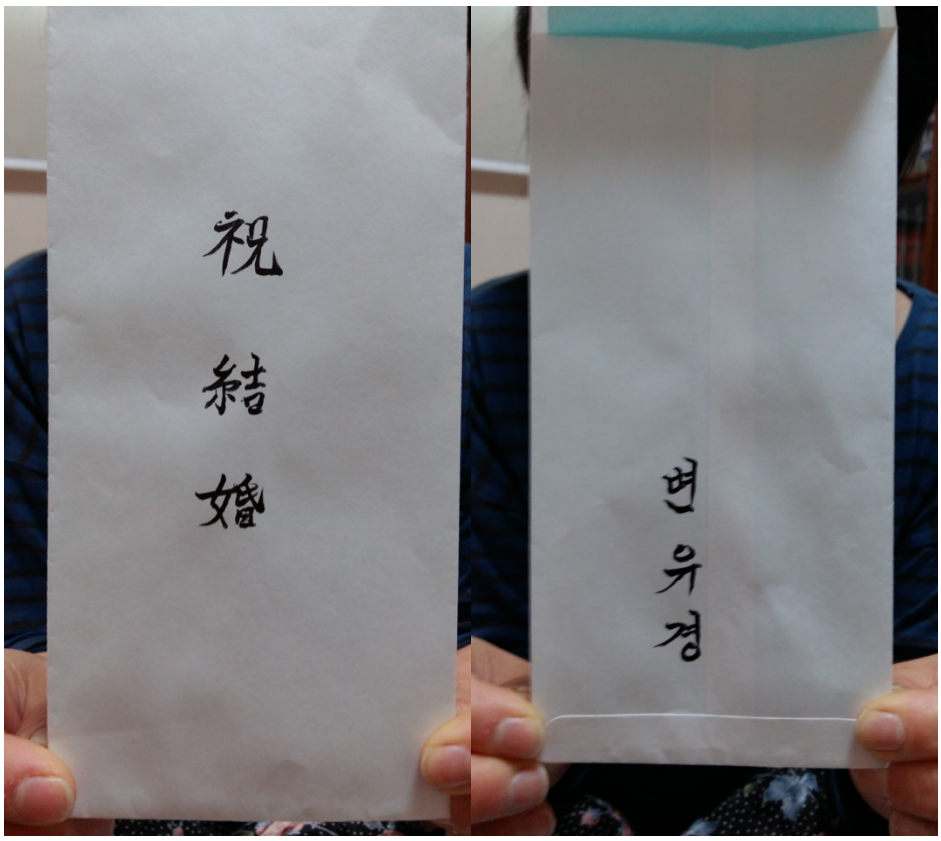

Figure 7: The front and back sides of the author's helping money envelope for a friend's wedding ceremony in 2015

In the same vein, giving helping money through the receptionists realizes a certain degree of sincerity and voluntariness between the giver and the actual recipient. During the wedding ceremony, the hosts greet the guests with a smile standing next to the reception desk. Sometimes they hold the guests' hands to show the gratitude that they personally appeared in the ceremony. It is a moment for giving unconditional appreciation for the response to the invitation before the hosts receive anything at all. In this way, the hosts seem uninterested in receiving helping money. However, as I will introduce later, the hosts already evaluate the relationship with their guests and the exchange of helping money from this point of the ceremony. For instance, they pay attention to how many children a family brought to the ceremony during greeting and later evaluate the sum of received helping money when the ceremony is finished. The guests also do not mention helping money when greeting the hosts. They give words of blessing to the hosts and continue their steps towards the reception desk after greeting. Through this staged absence of helping money exchanges

and the role of receptionists, the reception desk becomes the main venue of making relationships, as it will be shown further in this study.

The features of received helping money envelopes are diverse. Even though it is a plain white envelope, the modes of writing names and packaging cash are all different; what kind of pen they used, whether their names are written with Korean or Chinese characters, whether it is written in elaborate calligraphy or simply scrawled. Some envelopes have an extra paper inside, which wraps the cash so that the content is not seen through the thin paper envelope in traffic. A few people in my observations had a note with handwritten words of blessing inside the envelope as well. Moreover, one or two guests did not write anything on the outer envelope. Instead of that, they enclosed a small piece of paper indicating their names and the sum of helping money with cash. Guests generally do not indicate the amount of their helping money outside the envelope. I found only one guest in my entire fieldwork who wrote down the amount of his helping money visibly on the back flap of the envelope. He might have been worried that the receptionists would miscount his helping money. Additionally, he might have expected that his envelope would reach the receiver after the ceremony. In this way, he can assure that the receptionists do not miscount his helping money and seek direct approval from the recipient. Among the hundreds helping money envelopes, none of them were without the name of the giver. It was identifiable on every envelope who was responsible for giving it. Putting one's name on or in the envelope is crucial. This is because most envelopes do not differentiate from each other in terms of their shape and features. Moreover, the helping money is sent to the recipient through a third party, the receptionists. The receptionists are responsible for handling received envelopes and adequately placing the actors of this exchange in the relationship of creditor and debtor.

This third party, the receptionists, can be understood as a mediator of helping money exchanges. The receptionists are mostly well known and trustworthy persons of the host family, such as close relatives. In many other cases, receptionists are acquaintances of the father of the bride or groom, mostly younger colleagues from the workplace. The receptionists are often men, but I also have seen several women taking on this role, as I have done personally as well in Mr. Kong Ke-Sang's daughter's wedding

in March 2015. The main task of receptionists is the registration of helping money envelopes in a book and calculation of received money. As the role of receptionists is a voluntary service for the host family, receptionists do not expect immediate compensation. This service is often provided by a person in a lower hierarchy than the host family. Either a relative of the host family or a colleague in the workplace, the receptionists would recognize only part of the guests giving helping money envelopes. For instance, if the receptionist is one of the relatives, she/he would recognize the guests only of their relatives, but not those of other affiliations. This is similar when the receptionist is from the workplace. The colleagues would recognize the guests from the same workplace, but not the relatives. For this reason, the receptionists secure a certain degree of anonymity for the givers until the registration book and helping money envelopes are delivered to the host family after the ceremony. The host family gives them authority over helping money registration for one or two hours. However, not every guest gives their envelopes to the receptionists. This is not because they do not trust the receptionists but is due to building direct reciprocity with the host of the ceremony. For instance, I noticed that the guests who come to the reception desk are mostly older people and appeared to be guests of the parents of the bride or groom. Younger guests, who appeared to be friends of the newlyweds, have a different destination for handing in their helping money envelopes.

In the reception hall (Scene 4), I observed four to five young men taking multiple envelopes and pens from the reception desk. They sat on an empty desk in the reception hall and started preparing their helping money envelopes. Moreover, I expected them to return to the reception desk with their freshly made envelopes soon. However, after finishing their helping money envelopes, they left the reception hall. They disappeared with their envelopes. After a while, the groom, who was in the other room at the moment, came to the reception desk and asked his cousin for some buffet coupons. “Please give me some buffet coupons. My friends are here.” As the groom asked for extra buffet coupons multiple times in this way, the cousin gave the groom a bundle of buffet coupons later.

In fact, I did not see many young people bringing their helping money envelopes to the reception desk on this wedding day, so I tried to find out where the young guests bring their envelopes. The general process

I observed can be described as the following: when young guests arrived at the wedding house, they find the groom in the reception hall and approach him. Then the groom recognizes his guests, personally greets and thanks to them for coming. The helping money exchange happens at this moment instead of at the reception desk. In exchange for the envelopes, the groom personally gives a couple of buffet coupons to his guests. This is a difficult moment to follow as the envelopes are exchanged invisibly and quickly, from one hand to another and from one pocket to another. Therefore, I could not count exactly how many guests brought their envelopes directly to the groom in this way, nor the bride. Moreover, the bride is sitting in the waiting room during the reception and is not visible in the registration hall. I observed how the groom's friends individually deliver their helping money envelopes to him. However, how do the friends of the bride bring their own helping money to her?

After my first few observations at wedding ceremonies, I was curious enough to conduct more participant observation about the mode of helping money exchanges between the bride and her friends. In this context, I introduce one of my participant observations in a wedding house. One day, I worked as a bride assistant at a wedding house in Seoul. On a Saturday in March 2015, I escorted at five wedding ceremonies as an assistant in this wedding house. My task was to support the bride in the bride's waiting room before the ceremony starts. Supporting the bride means in this context helping her mobility as the bride in a dress is less flexible, but moreover, holding the long lacy wedding dress behind the bride, so that she takes good photos. In this regard, it was an excellent position to investigate the helping money exchange between the bride and her guests.

The bride enters the waiting room for about an hour before the ceremony starts. It is about the same time when the receptionists arrive and prepare the reception desk. The waiting room is also decorated with gorgeous accessories and cloth similar to other places in the wedding house. The bride receives her guests in this room, and they bring their helping money envelopes directly to her here. When friends bring envelopes, they ask the bride to whom to give theirs. Then the bride points at a person with her index finger and says: "There, to her." A female friend of hers collects the envelopes in her handbag, and she is expected to stand by the bride during the reception. One bride on this day was accompanied

by her younger sister, and friends gave all their envelopes to her. *Kabangsuni* is an informal term referring to the process in which an assistant collects helping money on behalf of the bride. Unlike a tuxedo, the bride's dress generally does not have pockets. Therefore, brides let her close friends or sister collect helping money envelopes instead of her. They also prepare buffet coupons in advance and distribute them to the guests who handed in the helping money envelopes. Except for opening the envelopes and calculating the received helping money, the female friends who do kabangsuni, are comparable to the formal receptionists sitting at the reception desk. They are a third person who bridges the gap between the recipient and giver in helping money exchanges. However, compared to the formal reception, this process is less anonymous. Moreover, this helping money exchange is expected and arranged beforehand.

According to my informants, they agreed previously with their parents to collect their helping money separately. The bride and the groom then informed their friends in advance that they want to receive their helping money directly from them. Thus, the bride asks a close female friend before the wedding day to do a favor for her and collect the helping money envelopes on her behalf. This informal, but direct way of giving ensures the delivery of helping money to the actual recipient, as well as the relationship of creditor and debtor in exchange. If the helping money given by their friends goes to the reception desk, it will be counted together with the other money given to their parents and therefore firstly end in their parents' hands after the ceremony. For this reason, many newlyweds prefer a direct exchange without using the parents' route. This informal exchange happens simultaneously in addition to the formal reception desk. Thus, the registration book does not cover all information about helping money exchanges in a ceremony.

When the newlyweds collected the envelopes together at the reception desk, many of them already agreed with their parents on how to sort their helping money out or how to distribute the collected money afterward. This is the possession of helping money because the helping money given by the newlyweds' networks needs to be repaid by the newlyweds themselves. These are their debts or rewards for what they have been giving and receiving in their social networks. The number of newlyweds' guests is much lower than that of their parents. For this reason, the direct receiving of envelopes remains in the terrain of informality and

does not interrupt the general process of receiving helping money at the reception desk. Perhaps because these direct transactions will not be documented in the parents' registration book, the couple makes a separate helping money list for themselves. Among the five ceremonies on this Saturday, three couples collected their envelopes in this way. Two other ceremonies collected all envelopes at the reception desk with their parents' helping money.

The process of making helping money for funerals is comparable to the process for weddings. A table with new helping money envelopes and pens is usually prepared at the entrance of the funeral home. However, the manner of preparing helping money envelopes is less concealed in funerals than in weddings, as the actual recipients of the envelopes are in a separate altar room at the funeral ceremonies, not near the reception desk. One more significant difference between the two types of ceremonies, nevertheless, is the duration of the reception. Funeral ceremonies in Korea receive the mourners for two to three days, while the reception desk in weddings is open for about one and a half hours. For this reason, the receptionists at funerals work in shifts. The role of receptionists in funerals is mostly taken by the younger relatives or colleagues of the host, similar to weddings. Many family members are involved in a funeral ceremony, such as all children of the deceased, and their spouses and children as well. Until the funeral ceremony closes to the end, helping money envelopes of numerous family members are collected in a box on the reception desk. However, there is also an informal way to give envelopes directly to the recipient at funerals as the 1974 alumni reported. For instance, some envelopes from their private communities are given directly to them much in the way that the groom receives his helping money from his guests. This mode of giving and distributing helping money envelopes in the family will be discussed in the last section of this chapter 'Post Processing'.

Payment by Proxy

During the wedding ceremony, when not many guests are handing in their helping money envelopes, the receptionists start counting received helping money at the reception desk. In total 213 envelopes were counted, but fewer than 200 buffet coupons were taken out in the wedding ceremony introduced in Scene 4. As these are the sums calculated only by the groom's side, the total number of received envelopes and distributed buffet coupons for this wedding would be almost double this amount. One buffet coupon is generally worth between 30,000 to 50,000 won.[29] In principle, one helping money envelope is equivalent to one buffet coupon in exchange. Thus, a person brings one helping money envelope and receives one buffet coupon. However, there are exceptions, such as children. In Korea, children are not fully counted as an independent unit of the family until they get married or have their own family. Especially when the children still attend school, they do not bring individual helping money envelopes but still receive a buffet coupon. Still, the question remains: why is the number of distributed buffet coupons less than the number of received envelopes? I expected the opposite result that the number of distributed coupons would be more than the number of received envelopes, as many individuals brought their family members and took multiple coupons. Moreover, I also received a buffet coupon without giving any helping money. Is there any gap between the number of guests who participated in the ceremony and the number of received envelopes?

Distributing buffet coupons is the receptionists' task. I observed at the reception desk that guests took different numbers of buffet coupons. Some guests come alone and give one helping money envelope but get two or more coupons. Some guests come alone and bring many helping money envelopes but take only one buffet coupon. This results in the gap between the numbers of received envelopes and distributed buffet coupons in a wedding. The number of distributed buffet coupons reflects more or less the number of guests present at the wedding. In my observations, therefore, the number of actual guests is far lower than that of the received envelopes.

[29] The price of the buffet per person varies by location. It is generally between 30,000 – 50,000 won (about 25 – 45 USD as of 2018) in a wedding house in the cities. The cost of a meal is more than double the price at a hotel. Moreover, a coupon for preschool children is generally less than the usual coupon.

This can be explained by the payment by proxy, called *taenap* in the helping money practice. Payment by proxy is an alternative means of helping money transfer. Helping money is brought personally to the receptionist during the ceremony by the standard procedure. If one is not able to carry out this procedure personally but is still willing to give their helping money, they ask someone else to prepare an envelope and hand it in on their behalf. These envelopes are registered in the registration book as if this person was at the ceremony. The proxy payment is observed in both weddings and funerals and is relatively standard. Nowadays, bank transfers are frequently used in helping money exchanges as well. Still, many people prefer to let someone bring their envelopes personally to the ceremony.

Payment by proxy in weddings and funerals involves an agent who personally participates the ceremony and brings the envelopes instead of others. This type of giving can be organized between two individuals or in a group. It is agreed a few days before the ceremony but also spontaneously during the ceremony by a phone call. The reasons why a person needs payment by proxy are diverse. It is often due to other parallel ceremonies, personal events, or the distance of the ceremony location. The agent receives the decided amount of helping money beforehand or after the ceremony via several modes. It can be transferred in cash or to the bank account. Even though the proxy payment is an additional task, there is conventionally no compensation for it. It is regarded as a favor.

Payment by proxy has almost equivalent value to the conventional means of giving helping money. This is because the exchange of helping money is accomplished through a third person, the receptionist, who is often a stranger to the guests. The envelopes by the proxy payment reach the actual recipient through the receptionists in the same way as other regular envelopes. As introduced before, the hosts of the weddings stand next to the reception desk and greet guests before they hand in their envelopes. Similarly, they stand in a line in front of the altar in funerals. Even if it is a short greeting, finding favor in the hosts' eyes is essential for the guests.[30] This can be interpreted as making sure that they participated in the ceremony and to distinguish themselves from other proxy payers. The guest book exists, but it does not list the guests who visited the ceremony as introduced before. Nevertheless, many of the 1974 alumni

[30] This practice is often explained as *nundojang tchikta*, finding favor in one's eyes.

insisted that the hosts remember the actual visitors of their ceremony and can recognize the proxy payers later in the registration book. Moreover, they are more grateful to the guests who personally visited their ceremony instead of only sending their helping money. Despite this fact, payment by proxy is to fulfill the duty of giving without visiting the ceremony personally.

When one pays their helping money by proxy, the amount sometimes decreases because one does not attend the banquet. For instance, some alumni told me that if they are invited to a hotel wedding, they would not participate and give 50,000 won[31] by proxy. The banquet in the hotel is more expensive (around 80,000 won per person) than in other wedding houses, and the guests are expected to give 100,000 won[32] at minimum. This higher amount can be burdensome to the guests, especially in the primary wedding season. However, by giving merely 50,000 won by proxy, one can still give enough helping money without being overwhelmed. In some cases, people make a direct bank transfer to the host. However, the preference varies as it gives the impression of a mere monetary transaction rather than a gift. If one did not manage to give helping money by either method, one could also deliver a material gift on the next occasion, but people seldom give helping money after the ceremony is finished. Moreover, belated helping money is regarded as an apologetic act, as it implies that the guest was not considerate enough to prepare the gift before the ceremony. This enhances the significance of the payment by proxy in helping money exchanges. In the following, the process of the proxy payment will be discussed in detail, as well as how the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School manage this procedure in their association.

The alumni often pay their helping money by proxy. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi, as the administrator of the alumni association, almost always participates in other members' ceremonies and is often asked to make payments by proxy. The debt of a proxy payment between the agent and the giver disappears as soon as the giver pays the amount to the agent. For this reason, Mr. Pan does not remember well when, how much, and who asked him for the proxy payment once he received the expected amount.

[31] About 45 USD as of 2018
[32] About 90 USD as of 2018

In March 2015 there was a wedding ceremony for an alumnus of the 1974 graduating class of the Songwŏn Hani High School. This alumnus lives in Songwŏn and is not frequently in touch with his fellow alumni in Seoul. However, his son's wedding took place in Seoul, and the local alumni were also invited to his ceremony. On this wedding day, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi was asked to make helping money envelopes and hand them in for four alumni from the Seoul association: Mr. Pak Sang-Mun, Mr. Na Sang-Kil, Mr. Kong Ke-Sang, and Mr. Sin Tae-Gi. As described in Scenes 1 and 2 in Chapter 1, his first duty after arriving at the ceremony house was making helping money envelopes for himself and his friends. He took many empty envelopes on the reception desk and took out a small piece of paper from an inside pocket of his jacket. On the piece of paper, the names and their expected sums of helping money were noted. He wrote the names on each envelope elaborately and filled them with cash according to the note. Except for Mr. Sin Tae-Gi, whom I did not get to meet during my fieldwork, the other three alumni asked to give 50,000 won. Mr. Sin asked to give 100,000 won.

Later in the buffet hall, I was sitting with about eight alumni at a round table together. While eating and drinking, the alumni chattered and reminisced about their childhood. They also argued about who is elder and younger in a few months difference and asked each other to call them older brother.[33] But at some point, the friends discussed how to deliver their helping money to the wedding ceremony of Mr. Kong Ke-Sang's younger daughter in two weeks. Because his ceremony is not taking place in Seoul, not many alumni were going to make it to his ceremony. Then Mr. Pan Tu-Hi announced that he would attend Mr. Kong's ceremony: "I am surely going to Daegu[34], Ke-Sang will travel with me and I am also going to take several alumni with me." Than one alumnus (Alumnus A[35]) answered: "Then, can you bring my pujogŭm? Here, please." Alumnus A took out his wallet and handed over 50,000 won in cash to Mr. Pan Tu-Hi. Some other alumni at the same table also took out their wallets and were going to give Mr. Pan their helping money for the proxy payment. However, then

[33] This was a frequent joke among the 1974 alumni. I consider that this joke indicates the hierarchy of the age and its importance even among people of the same age.
[34] The name of a region in South Korea, where the wedding ceremony of Mr. Kong Kye-Sang's second daughter took place.
[35] The alumni A and B live in Songwŏn. As they are not central to this study, I anonymize their identity in alphabetical order.

another alumnus (Alumnus B) announced that he is going to see Mr. Kong's sister next week, and he would be a better person to bring their helping money instead: "Wait, I need to see Ke-Sang's younger sister next week, and I can give your pujogŭm directly to her." Then other alumni agreed: "Let us see, to his sister. That way is closer." In this example, the alumni agreed on the fact that the relationship of Mr. Kong Ke-Sang is closer to his sister than with Mr. Pan Tu-Hi. Thus, they changed their mind and decided to hand in their helping money to his sister through Alumnus B. If they cannot make it personally to the ceremony, it is better to give their helping money through a person who is closer to the actual recipient. Consequently, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi was asked to return the 50,000 won bill which he received from Alumnus A. Then Alumnus A passed his money to Alumnus B instead. This demonstrates the wish to give helping money through the closest person to the actual recipient even in the proxy payment.

One day before Mr. Kong Ke-Sang's daughter's wedding ceremony, the 1974 alumni association of Seoul had their regular reunion. In the reunion, Mr. Na Sang-Kil asked Mr. Pan Tu-Hi affably to bring his 50,000 won to Mr. Kong's ceremony, but he soon noticed that he did not have enough cash at the time. After discussing, they agreed that Mr. Na would send his helping money directly to Mr. Kong by bank transfer. In this discussion, Mr. Su Ki-Ha's voice played a part that the alumni who wish to pay their helping money by proxy should give the amount to the deliverer in advance. When the alumni were leaving the reunion, Mr. Su Ki-Ha approached Mr. Pan Tu-Hi and told him:

> It would be better not to send a ceremony announcement when the host does not give you their bank account number. Also, it is better not to bring the proxy payment if they do not give you money before the ceremony. Otherwise, things get complicated.

Mr. Su Ki-Ha understands that receiving many requests for payment by proxy can be a burdensome task. As explained already, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi is often asked to make the proxy payment by his fellow alumni, and this sometimes puts him in an awkward position. Some alumni have transferred their money much later than promised or even forgotten to pay it. When Mr. Pan asked in such situations to be given the money, some alumni reacted aggressively, such as: "Do you think I will forget such a

small amount? Please do not behave shamefully." Mr. Pan expressed inconvenience over it, and Mr. Su is aware of this problem. Still, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi does not deny delivering the alumni's helping money for the proxy payment because he is the administrator of their alumni association, and he feels responsible for the helping money exchanges among the members. Moreover, such unfortunate cases are not common, and the proxy payment is usually successfully delivered to Mr. Pan before the ceremonies.

Scene 5: The funeral ceremony of Mr. Pak Sang-Mun's mother in April 2015

Early on a Saturday morning in April 2015, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi received a phone call. It was Mr. Pak Sang-Mun announcing the funeral ceremony of his mother. Mr. Pak already sent him a text message about an hour ago but also called Mr. Pan again to make sure of its delivery. His message was short but contained all the essential information.

> My mother passed away last night. The coffin will be carried out on the 12th in Songwŏn funeral home. Yours sincerely, Pak Sang-Mun.

The first sentence delivers the news of the death of Mr. Pak's mother. The second sentence indicates the date of travel to the burial site and implies when the visitors are expected to come to the funeral home. As the coffin will be carried out on the 12th of April from the funeral home, visitors are expected to come until late on the night of the 11th. The following information is about the location of the ceremony. After this essential information, Mr. Pak concludes the message with a formal closing and his name. Soon, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi called a number of his fellow alumni. First, he spoke to Mr. Su Ki-Ha, who has influential connections to other local associations. Mr. Su promised to forward the message to other related associations as well. After calling Mr. Su Ki-Ha, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi made more phone calls to other close friends, such as Mr. Im Se-Hun, Mr. Ma Tong-Su, Mr. Kong Ke-Sang, and Mr. Kan Yo-Han. Except for Mr. Kong, the other three alumni agreed on visiting the announced funeral ceremony together tonight. Mr. Pan also sent an official announcement via text message to all alumni of the association.

> Seoul friend Pak Sang-Mun lost his mother. The coffin will be carried out on the 12th in Songwŏn funeral home. Rest in peace.[36]

Subsequently, he sent a separate message to Mr. Ha Cha-Min to order a flower arrangement in the name of the 1974 alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School in Seoul to Mr. Pak's ceremony.

"You arrived at your destination." A clear but constrained female voice of the navigation system announces our arrival at the funeral home. It is almost 11 pm on the 11th. The alumni made it to Mr. Pak Sang-Mun's mother's funeral on the same day that the ceremony was announced. Despite the dinner break, it was a relatively quick drive from Seoul to Songwŏn. Soon, our car enters the parking lot, and a bright signboard comes into my view at the entrance: Songwŏn Funeral Home. The funeral home is small, in fact, smaller than I expected. It is a tiny two-story building. Mr. Pak's ceremony is the only ceremony proceeding currently in this funeral home. Near the entrance to the building, the information on the current funeral ceremonies is printed on a piece of paper. I read the information and find out that Mr. Pak is named as the first mourner. He is the second son, but his elder brother passed away many years ago. Thus, he is the eldest remaining son in his family and is the legitimate first mourner in his mother's funeral ceremony. His four sisters' names, as well as the names of three children of Mr. Pak's elder brother, are also included in the list as the mourners.[37] Mr. Pak's mother was 98 years old when she passed away last night. The alumni said that Mr. Pak's mother has been lying in bed for years and taken care of by his sister in law in Songwŏn. There are six flower arrangements near the entrance. One of them is from the alumni association that Mr. Pan ordered in the morning. I recognize one more flower arrangement from his elementary school alumni association.

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[36] The two messages introduced above show a typical funeral ceremony announcement. The message contains information about the sender's relationship with the deceased, the time and location of the funeral ceremony.

[37] This is comparable with Mr. Ma Tong-Su's mother's funeral ceremony in August 2015, when almost twenty related family members' names were listed as the official mourners of the ceremony (Scene 2).

As we enter the home, the wife of Mr. Pak, Ms. Kim Sun-Cha, receives us. First, she looks astonished, and I see some tears in her eyes. As it is late at night, there are not so many guests inside, and the host family is preparing to sleep. Ms. Kim told me later that their guests were mostly from their neighborhood in Songwŏn and relatives. It is not a big funeral ceremony. Mr. Pak Sang-Mun is sitting with some other men at a table. The altar is still empty. As soon as Mr. Pak sees his friends had arrived, he goes to the altar room and stands next to the altar to receive his guests. The alumni take off their shoes and enter the altar room, passing by the reception desk. Traditionally Korean mourners wear a white suit made of hemp in funerals. Mr. Pak is wearing a black suit and an armband on his arm to signal that he is the first mourners. The female mourners, including Mr. Pak's wife and his two daughters, are wearing traditional Korean dress (*hanbok*) in black. When I enter the altar, I glance at the reception desk, which stands near the entrance. It was a short time, but some alumni already signed in the guest book and handed in their helping money envelopes as well. I hurry to join the alumni in the ritual; burning incense and making two deep bows. After a short silent tribute, the alumni greet and offer condolences to Mr. Pak Sang-Mun, who is standing near the altar. Then they all go to the dining area, which is directly next to the altar room. While his friends move to the dining area, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi makes six helping money envelopes: 100,000 won each on behalf of Mr. O Chae-Sin and Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, and 50,000 won each on behalf of Mr. Chang Man-Sik, another two alumni, and one for himself.

In the dining area, the hosts invite friends to a meal. As they already had dinner in a rest area on the expressway, the alumni deny the meal. They say only a short drink is enough. Soon, Mr. Pak's two daughters bring some snacks and drinks to the table. Ms. Kim Sun-Cha says to me: "I knew that they might have had dinner already. These friends are not those who will ask for dinner at this time." Calling for food late night, when the mourners are tired and getting ready to go to sleep, might be an inconvenient request. Therefore, not having a meal in the funeral ceremony too late is regarded as being respectful. They have some meat and drink, but they do not drink much alcohol as some of them will soon take turns driving the car on the way back to Seoul. During the conversation, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi receives a phone call and makes one more helping money envelope for another alumnus.

While the friends have some snacks and talk, I talk to Ms. Kim Sun-Cha. She explains to me that she and her husband were waiting for his tongch'ang from Seoul. She believed that they would surely come to their ceremony tonight. The coffin will be carried out tomorrow morning, so it is the last night staying in the funeral home. As time closes to midnight, she has almost given up for waiting for them. Only after 11 pm, when Mr. Pak's tongch'ang entered the ceremony hall, she was very touched. This explains why I saw some tears in her eyes when we entered the funeral home. Ms. Kim talks about Mr. Pak's fellow alumni, who she also knows well. She has most of them as guests in their factory. She expresses praise, especially to Mr. Su Ki-Ha. In her words,

> He is very helpful to us. Last time he sent us a gift box of pears, those expensive pears. What is more surprising is that he asks me about the death anniversary of my father-in-law and what it (the annual ancestral ritual) was like. I was astonished that he remembered the death anniversary last time. So, I answered him affably that his stomach has gotten bigger (laughter).

It reminds me that Mr. Su Ki-Ha saved the date of Mr. Pak's mother's funeral in his phone address book on the way to the Songwŏn funeral home. He told me that his friends appreciate it if he remembers the death anniversary of their parents, and this is the way he can impress his friends as well as maintain his social networks. While chatting with me, Ms. Kim lets her daughters serve some more sliced boiled pork and raw skate for the alumni. Even though the alumni did not ask for a meal as they already had dinner, the table is filled with many dishes in the end.

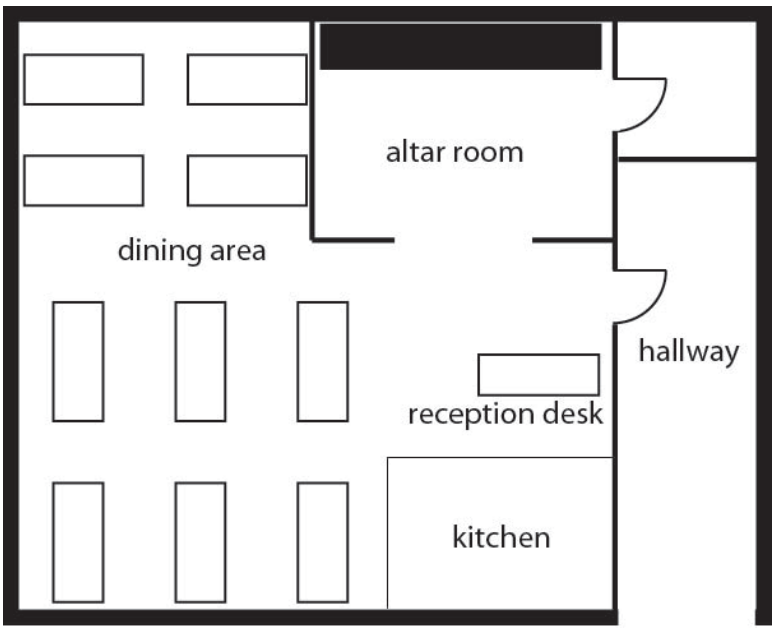

Figure 8: Floorplan of a funeral home

Standing Flower Arrangements

Shortly before the wedding ceremony starts in Scene 4, a bright and soft female voice announces: "Dear guests, the wedding ceremony will start in about ten minutes. Please come into the ceremony hall and take your seats." Despite its gentle tone, the voice is strong enough to make hundreds of guests move towards the ceremony hall. Slowly, the reception hall is emptying. A stillness finally prevails at the reception desk after the bustle. But still, some belated guests arrive at the wedding house and bring their helping money envelopes to the desk. As soon as the door of the ceremony hall closes, and the wedding ceremony starts, the accounting process of received helping money starts at the reception desk. At the same time, a few service employees of the ceremony house prepare the next ceremony, which will start in about one hour in the same hall. One or two deliverymen take their standing flower arrangements away. Before they take them away, the deliverymen cut off the left side of the ribbons on the flower arrangements with a pair of scissors. Then they pass the bundle of ribbons to the receptionists and quickly disappear with the flower arrangements to a separate staircase for internal employees. The elder receptionist reads the ribbons and writes down the giver's names of the flower arrangements in the backside of the registration book. Then he throws the ribbons in the

garbage. He says: "Only the names are important to know who sent them." He adds: "These flowers are collected and recycled. They only change the ribbons. But it is very expensive." Despite that the standing flower arrangements are known to be recycled and overpriced, they are continuously ordered and sent to the weddings and funerals. Why are people obsessed with having flower arrangements in their ceremonies? Moreover, what is the significance of the names on the ribbons of the standing flower arrangements?

Standing flower arrangements for wedding and funeral ceremonies have individual names, such as *hwahwan* for weddings and *kŭnjohwa* or *chohwa* for funerals. Nevertheless, it is often referred to only as flowers, *kkot* in Korean. These standing flower arrangements are about two meters tall and a mixture of a half artificial and a half real flowers. In the distance, however, people would not notice that some of the flowers are artificial. It is noticeable only if one looks at them closely. While hwahwan is decorated with different colorful flowers, such as yellow and pink gerberas, chohwa consists of mainly white flowers, such as white lily and chrysanthemum. This symbolizes the character of each ceremony as well. These flowers are encircled by big and broad green leaves, which draw to mind large palm leaves. The whole arrangement is stuck to a wooden supporter so that it can stand alone. Flowers in these arrangements are arrayed in a quite similar way regardless of which flower shops delivered them. In addition to their similar shapes, standing flower arrangements typically have a ribbon that stretches in two straps from top to bottom. The form of these ribbons is identical in each flower arrangement as well; they are pink and have a star-shaped decoration on the top. In principle, the written letters on these two straps make each of the similar-looking flower arrangements different. The right strap has a short message from the sender, such as congratulations or condolences. The left side indicates the sender's name with their affiliation and position. Sometimes it indicates only the name of an institute if the arrangement is sent from an association or community. For example, the 1974 alumni association of the Songwŏn Hani High School conventionally puts its official name with the name of the president on the left side of the ribbon. While helping money is concealed and covered in exchange, standing flower arrangements are visibly displayed in the reception hall. Despite this difference, one standing flower arrangement is similar in price to one helping money envelope.

The actual cost of one standing flower arrangement is the same as a helping money envelope of 100,000 won. Mr. Ha Cha-Min, who owns a flower shop and is responsible for sending flower arrangements to the 1974 alumni's ceremonies, reported that the price of standing flower arrangements has remained steady since he started his business in 1986. He said that it was 100,000 won 30 years ago as well. At that time, all flowers in a flower arrangement were real instead of being partly artificial. Nevertheless, due to the inflation over the last 30 years, the flower shops gradually reduced the number of real flowers and replaced them with artificial flowers to meet the profit. As Mr. Ha reported in an interview, flower arrangements are consumable articles, which lose their value over time. Moreover, they lose their symbolic value displayed in the ceremony when the ceremony ends. No one takes them home afterward, as the flower arrangements are collected or often recycled by the flower shopkeepers. Thus, there is a low demand for more expensive variations. Mr. Ha Cha-Min explains:

> Hwahwan is mostly mixed with real and artificial flowers. This is probably because the price has not increased. If we make a hwahwan with all real flowers, the net price is about 80,000 won. Then we do not earn [a profit].

One can order flower arrangements in a distinctive form and quality at different prices. Nevertheless, the 100,000 won model is the most ordered in the flower shops. Because the preferable price for a standing flower arrangement is 100,000 won, which is also equivalent to a helping money envelope of 100,000 won, the flower shopkeepers do not necessarily increase the price. Instead, they substitute quality with cheaper materials. This phenomenon is the same as for chohwa in funerals, Mr. Ha added. The accounting book of the 1974 alumni association supports Mr. Ha's argument. I identified that the association spent 100,000 won already in the 1990s for flower arrangements to their members' ceremonies.

Figure 9: A standing flower arrangement in the wedding ceremony

Figure 10: Standing flower arrangements in a funeral ceremony

The number of received standing flower arrangements differs depending on the type of ceremony. Funerals generally receive more flower arrangements than weddings. In a wedding ceremony, for instance, many families received three to five flower arrangements in my observation. However, the number can be far more than that depending on the host's social networks. For instance, Mr. Kong Ke-Sang, who works in the advertisement business and is known for having an extensive social network, received 17 standing flower arrangements for his younger daughter's wedding in March 2015. The number of received flower arrangements far exceeds this in funerals. I counted nearly 80 flower arrangements in Mr. Ma Tong-Su's mother's funeral ceremony, for instance. Mr. Ma is self-employed and is also known as a person with an extensive social network. However, it is also necessary to take into account that this reflects the character of the funeral ceremony in which multiple family units are involved as the hosts and chief mourners. Because too many flower arrangements block the floor in the funeral homes, some ceremony houses restrict the number of chohwa in the hallway to no more than ten. Some other funeral homes request to hang merely the ribbons at the entrance to the altar room instead of placing bulky flower arrangements in the hallway. This signifies the importance of the ribbons instead of the flower arrangement itself, on which the sender's name, affiliation, as well as their position, are visibly displayed. However, these regulations for limiting the number of displayed flower arrangements are often ignored by the host families.

According to the manager of a wedding house[38], if one family's side receives far more standing flower arrangements than the other, e.g., if the bride's family received 15 flower arrangements and the groom's family about three, the staff of the wedding house asks to share them, so that the reception desk can be equally decorated. However, many families do not want to share the received flower arrangements with the other side of the family. The manager in the interview remembers an incident in which a family received too many flower arrangements but refused to share their hwahwan with the parents of their son- or daughter-in-law. Instead of sharing, "The family made a kind of fort with their hwahwan", she said. If the purpose of flower arrangements is to decorate the reception area, the family would have shared their arrangements with their counterpart. If it

[38] Interviewed in February 2015

is so, the arrangements also would not look so alike either. They would have more varied shapes and colors. The reason why the family does not prefer to share their received flower arrangements is related to their symbolic value. This was reflected in the alumni's opinions as well, such as Mr. Im Se-Hun explained:

> There are some people reading hwahwan who sent them because they have names written on them. By the way, when we go to the funerals, some people receive [chohwa] mainly from tongch'ang-hoe. Moreover, those who have much power, receive [chohwa] mainly from influential people, even if not from the president.

From this interview segment, it can be assumed that the symbolic value of flower arrangements is strongly connected to one's power in social networks. One's social capital is represented in the sender of received flower arrangements. Thus, the flower arrangements from the 'powerful people' increase one's social prestige, according to Mr. Im Se-Hun's opinion. Moreover, through the number of received flower arrangements in the ceremonies, one's ambiguous social capital hitherto becomes obvious. If one does not have a big social network, it will be indicated by the small number of the displayed flower arrangements in the ceremonies. People understand weddings and funerals as events in which their social connections are inevitably presented through the flower arrangements. Mr. Im Se-Hun continued explaining more about his experience in his father's funeral ceremony.

> I received chohwa from the minister and the chief of the police in my most recent ceremony. So, my guests might have thought, 'Ah, Se-Hun has quite a lot [of power] in this regard'. I do not know the minister well personally, but he sent me one because he was my senior [in the same department]. Also, in the case of the chief of police, we started working together [in the same department] before, but he changed his career path to police, and he was promoted there. These cases are good examples, which I am very proud of.

As a high-ranked public official, Mr. Im Se-Hun received a flower arrangement from his senior colleague, who is the minister of his department. Moreover, he received another one from a former colleague, who reached a high position as the chief of police. Through the flower arrangements sent by these two influential persons, Mr. Im insists that he

increased the acknowledgment of his social networks. He also believes that his guests would have paid attention to his flower arrangements, or more specifically, to the ribbons on the arrangements which displayed the sender's social status. For the same reason, the 1974 alumni in high-ranking positions are often asked to send hwahwan and chohwa for their tongch'ang's ceremonies. As the CEO of his own company, Mr. O Chae-Sin receives such requests a lot. In his words,

> Many friends ask me to send them a standing flower arrangement. They ask me to send one with my company's name. I do not know well, but it has something to do with the face (*ch'emyŏn*). For instance, when one's daughter or son gets married, the ceremony has both sides (two family parties). When one side receives 20 [hwahwan], then it is not good to have nothing in the counter side. It is the parents' pride that they also want to have 20 to 30.

The concept of face, ch'emyŏn in Korean, relates to social prestige and can be compared with *mianzi* or *mien-tzŭ* in Chinese, which is established through high social position, wealth, and power (Hu 1944; Yan 1996: 133-138). Thus, standing flower arrangements in weddings and funerals demonstrate one's social prestige. As Mr. O Chae-Sin explained, the hosts of the ceremonies are impliedly put to the test of their social power in terms of the number of received flower arrangements and do not want to 'lose' as if it were a competition. This competition is more relevant when the ceremony has a significant counterpart for comparison, such as the parents of the other side in weddings. To save face, some people prefer receiving hwahwan or chohwa instead of receiving helping money in such ceremonies. In this sense, Mr. O Chae-Sin is often asked to send a standing flower arrangement with his company's name and his position on the ribbons. As Mr. O indicates further, the 1974 alumni are not exceptions to flower arrangement exchanges among each other. However, this exchange mostly appears between the alumni with high income or in high-ranking positions than the alumni who earn a more modest living. Mr. O Chae-Sin explains:

> Of course, people who are not active in social networking receive less [flower arrangements]. I send one [hwahwan] on top of *ch'ugŭigŭm* (helping money for weddings) because I receive phone calls asking me to send one. I have received such phone calls a lot. So, I sent one, such as to Chi-Wŏn, when he asked me to send one last time.

I identified this type of flower arrangement exchange occurs often between Mr. O Chae-Sin (the CEO of an insurance company), Mr. Ch'a Chi-Wŏn (the entrepreneur of a construction developing company), Mr. Im Se-Hun (the CEO of a company for environment preservation), Mr. Son Han-Pin (a professional accountant), Mr. Kong Ke-Sang (an advertising agent), Mr. Ma Tong-Su (an entrepreneur producing oil refinery tools), Mr. Sim Ho-Tong (the entrepreneur of a publishing company), and Mr. Su Ki-Ha (the entrepreneur of a book delivery company). These alumni have already reached a high degree of social power in terms of their position and wealth, and they generally receive many flower arrangements for their families' weddings and funerals. Nevertheless, behind the presentation of the numerous flower arrangements in their ceremonies lies the preparation of asking their potential guests to send them a standing flower arrangement. Thus, they care about the number of received arrangements and prepare to receive enough so that they do not lose their symbolic power during the ceremony. These alumni call each other before the ceremony and send one to each other with the names of their company and title in the request. In this way, they exchange flower arrangements and mutually help in saving face. Even though people complain about the quality and recycling of the flower arrangements, and the ceremony houses have difficulty dealing with a high number of them on the floor, the demand of flower arrangements does not decrease. Mr. Sim Ho-Tong reported that he received almost 80 chohwa for his mother's funeral ceremony in Songwŏn. His explanation reaffirms the importance of receiving many flower arrangements in ceremonies for saving face.

> At that time, I received chohwa in Songwŏn, and the flower shops in Songwŏn ran out of flowers because there were too many orders for my ceremony. Also, some of them were delivered even from Gwangju. We received in total about 80 [chohwa]. All of them was from my business associates and friends from Seoul.

Mr. Sim Ho-Tong is the third son among his eight siblings. In his family, he is the most influential son as an entrepreneur running his own company. Mr. Sim insisted that his other family members do not have such extensive social networks like him, and this was represented in the number of the flower arrangements in his mother's funeral ceremony in 2004. His mother's funeral ceremony took place in Songwŏn. In the interview, Mr.

Sim Ho-Tong compared the number of received flower arrangements with his nephew. His nephew is a public official in the neighborhood of Songwŏn and accordingly received many helping money envelopes from his colleagues in their funeral ceremony. However, Mr. Sim asserted that his guests from Seoul gave more money as well as a higher number of flower arrangements in their funeral ceremony. Emphasizing the fact that the flower arrangements were even delivered to him from nearby cities, Mr. Sim appeared to be proud of his extensive social network, similar to Mr. Im Se-Hun.

As Mr. Im Se-Hun and Mr. Sim Ho-Tong reported, receiving many flower arrangements from influential people is something which they are proud of. However, there has been a movement against extravagant ceremonies and towards displaying no or only a few flower arrangements in wedding and funeral ceremonies. This trend is especially popular among those who criticize the unnecessarily high cost and scale of a ceremony. For instance, some hosts put a word in the invitation letter that they will refuse flower arrangements for their ceremony. Mr. An Mu-Se said that he also wanted to put this remark in the invitation letter when his two sons were getting married in 2012 and 2014. However, he and his wife decided not to do that. He said:

> I received a few hwahwan, one from my work and some from my friends. However, I do not prefer hwahwan to be honest. It is better to receive it as money instead. However, we did not put the message in the wedding invitation letter that we do not welcome hwahwan. Initially, we thought about putting the message that we prefer rice instead of hwahwan. But my potential guests appeared not to like it. There is a phrase such as 'We politely decline hwahwan. If you give rice instead, we will help unfortunate neighbors.' But people appeared not to like it. So, we decided to follow the masses.

Mr. An Mu-Se received a couple of flower arrangements for his two son's wedding ceremonies. He initially thought about announcing that people should not send them a flower arrangement. However, he and his wife decided not to do this because he thought that his potential guests would not like to see such a negative phrase in the invitation letter. He told me that he did not expect many flower arrangements. For this reason, he thought it was not bad to have a few in his sons' weddings. Some alternatives to flower arrangements or helping money include sending rice

of a similar value for donation to the poor or a potted orchid to decorate the newlyweds' new house. In this case, the host puts the message in the invitation letter. However, such donation is rarely practiced.

In comparison to Mr. An Mu-Se, Mr. Son Han-Pin wrote the message 'We politely decline hwahwan'. in his elder daughter's wedding invitation letter in 2015. When I visited Mr. Son's daughter's wedding ceremony, there were only two hwahwan displayed near the reception desk of the bride's side. These flower arrangements were from Mr. Son's business associates but not from his high school alumni association. Even though Mr. Son Han-Pin asked his friends not to send him a flower arrangement, he received a few from the 1974 alumni, such as Mr. Su Ki-Ha and Mr. Pan Tu-Hi in the name of their alumni association. When they arrived at the ceremony house, Mr. Su Ki-Ha and Mr. Pan Tu-Hi were surprised that their flower arrangements had not been delivered. Mr. Son Han-Pin told his high school alumni that he asked the delivery man to bring them back to the flower shop because he does not want to display many flower arrangements in the reception hall. However, Mr. Son also emphasized that he took the ribbons and will remember who sent them to him. Mr. Son explained to me later that he previously agreed with the father of his son-in-law to have no more than two or three flower arrangements in their children's wedding. The father of the son-in-law is known as a successful entrepreneur who migrated to the USA early in the 1980s. As the majority of his business associates are in the USA, he did not expect many guests in his son's wedding in Seoul, therefore also few flower arrangements. They wanted to avoid the situation that Mr. Son receives far more flower arrangements than the groom's family. This indicates that they also wanted to avoid that the groom's family loses face. For this reason, they previously agreed to follow the alternative movement and not to have many flower arrangements in their ceremony. The groom's family displayed three flower arrangements from people in high-ranking positions of big conglomerates for this wedding ceremony.

Scene 6: The wedding ceremony of Mr. Kong Ke-Sang's daughter in March 2015

Early on a Saturday morning in March 2015, I traveled with several alumni to Daegu, a city in southeastern South Korea, to participate in Mr. Kong Ke-Sang's younger daughter's wedding ceremony. The designated receptionist for Mr. Kong, his younger sister, arrived late to the wedding house due to heavy traffic on the highway. For this reason, I spontaneously took on the role of the receptionist on this day. As I received this abrupt assignment, I quickly reminded myself of my previous observations near the reception desk in wedding ceremonies; the important thing is to collect envelopes together and to distribute buffet coupons to the guests. Luckily, Mr. Mun Pae-Ru, who had been watching the scene restlessly nearby, took the initiative and jumped into the reception desk as well. He received helping money envelopes and put numbers on them. My task was distributing buffet coupons similar to the younger receptionist in a previous wedding ceremony (Scene 4). When the ceremony was about to start, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi came to the reception desk and handed in ten helping money envelopes. Not many alumni made it today to this location far from either Seoul or Songwŏn, but they wanted to give Mr. Kong their helping money.

After people had gone by and when the ceremony was about to start, Mr. Kong approached the reception desk and asked Mr. Mun: "Please make me 1,000,000 won in cash. I need that for p'yebaek." Mr. Mun agreed and opened some envelopes to make 1,000,000 won. Opening envelopes means counting the amount of helping money in each envelope. Mr. Mun opened a few envelopes and soon collected 1,000,000 won. After giving the cash to Mr. Kong, Mr. Mun further told me: "Let us calculate all envelopes, as we already opened some." Mr. Mun Pae-Ru opened envelopes and wrote down how much money is inside on the flap of each envelope. He collected cash in the drawer and passed me the empty envelopes. My task was to document the names, perhaps their affiliation as well, and the amount in the registration book based on the numbers written on these envelopes. In this process, the packed helping money transforms cash again. The sums of helping money I registered were different, such as 30,000 won, 50,000 won, 100,000 won, or 300,000 won. However, most of them were either 30,000 or 50,000 won. Only one envelope had 70,000 won,

while two envelopes had 300,000 won. Once I finished writing down the amounts of each donor's name, I returned the empty envelopes to Mr. Mun. We counted 100 envelopes in total. Among them, 21 envelopes were from Mr. Kong's elementary school alumni association as indicated by the affiliation. The envelopes from the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School did not put their affiliation on the envelope, so I could not identify them all. In the following, we calculated the whole sum of cash and compared it with the sum documented in the registration book. Suddenly a friend of Mr. Kong standing by also joined in counting as it is a sensitive matter. Money creates certain uncomfortable feelings when it comes to accuracy. I would have felt horrible if the sums did not match up. Mr. Mun counted cash quickly as he used to work in a bank. The total amount of helping money on this day was almost 8,000,000 won[39]. As many people did not drive to this small city today, and they sent their helping money directly to Mr. Kong by different methods, such as Mr. Na Sang-Kil who made a bank transfer to him, this sum is probably less than what he received. I also observed later that some people gave him envelopes directly. Moreover, his wife and daughter collected their helping money separately.

Next, Mr. Mun Pae-Ru counted the number of flower arrangements. There were 17 flower arrangements in total. However, it could be mixed with those for the groom's family. Several alumni insisted that Mr. Kong received many more flower arrangements than the groom's family. Even though they were mixed, the alumni recognized many names on the ribbon and admitted: "80 to 90 percent of these arrangements is to Ke-Sang." Also, one alumnus added: "The flower arrangements are mixed, they should be arranged separately!" When the ceremony was proceeding, and we were almost done with the counting helping money envelopes, a flower delivery man came and cut off the ribbons. I was asked to write down the names and their affiliations in the back page of the registration book. In the following, Mr. Mun collected empty envelopes together and put cash in one of the blank envelopes. He packed the envelopes, registration book, and the guest book in a paper bag and carried the bag with him until he handed it over to Mr. Kong after the ceremony.

[39] About 7,100 USD as of 2018

Figure 11: An example of the registration book in funerals

Post Processing

The accounting process of received helping money envelopes in funeral ceremonies happens mostly the night before the departure to the burial site. This is because the hosts prefer to do accounting openly when all the involved relatives are in the same place. They pursue transparency and fairness of calculating and distributing helping money, which is collected from multiple family units in one box. Ms. Kim Sun-Cha, the wife of Mr. Pak Sang-Mun, told me that her family-in-law counted the received helping money envelopes in her mother-in-law's funeral when the alumni left the funeral home (Scene 5). Ms. Kim explains:

> In the night before the departure to the burial site, after all the guests left, we put everything together and paid for funeral expenses. We did it intentionally there when the sisters-in-law were there too to make things sure. Moreover, we had to come up to Seoul soon, so we finished everything there. We let the kids do it (opening the envelopes), and we did it ourselves too. First, we sat at the desk and wrote down the list and sorted the envelopes. The one who opened the envelopes wrote the names and sums in the note, then we checked the whole amount whether it is counted correctly and put it separately. Then we sorted the (empty) envelopes to each of us, such as these are from the mutual relatives, and these are from the people I know. Then each of us took our envelopes. It

> is individual responsibility whether to note them or to keep them in their minds.

On this night before the departure to the burial site, Ms. Kim Sun-Cha asked her two daughters to start counting envelopes on the spot because she and her husband wanted to ensure the transparency and fairness about money issues while other family members and relatives are present at the same place and can mutually observe the process. This was similar when I participated in a distant cousin's funeral ceremony during my fieldwork. The accounting was conducted overnight. After the general counting of all received envelopes was finished, each of my relatives involved in the ceremony picked up the empty envelopes from their guests. This is because they will have to return what they received from the guests of their social networks. Ms. Kim Sun-Cha also described this process of sorting empty envelopes in the interview above. Despite the distribution of the empty envelopes, the collected helping money is spent mutually for the funeral expenses. In this way, all involved family members are acknowledged for having contributed money for the funeral ceremony regardless of the amount. After the payment to the funeral home, however, it depends how the rest of the helping money is used; it is either saved in a mutual account or distributed to the involved family units. In Mr. Pak's mother's funeral, the remaining helping money was given to Mr. Pak's sister-in-law, who cared her mother-in-law alone for many years even after her husband, Mr. Pak's elder brother, passed away. Mr. Pak Sang-Mun argued that she deserved to receive the rest of the helping money for bearing this difficulty. Ms. Kim Sun-Cha added that the original registration book and guest book were also delivered to the wife of Mr. Pak's elder brother. According to Mr. Ma Tong-Su, who had his mother's funeral ceremony in August 2015 (Scene 2), he let his young nephews count their helping money envelopes in the night before the departure to the burial site as well. After the payment for the funeral cost (about 23,000,000 won[40]), Mr. Ma's family members agreed on saving a certain amount of the remaining sum in a mutual bank account and equally distributed the rest of the helping money regardless of the amount of individual contribution. Because Mr. Ma is the eldest son in his family, his younger brothers and sisters followed his decision on the distribution, he said. However, there was an exception in

[40] Around 20,400 USD as of 2018

helping money distribution, which was returned to individual recipients without being counted together for the funeral payment and equal distribution. This helping money was a lump sum of money given by specific communities to their members. In Mr. Ma Tong-Su's words,

> We had in total more than 700 guests, based on only what is registered in *chomunrok* (the registration book for funerals). So, I think between 600 and 650 people came as guests of my six siblings. About 50 to 100 people would not have made it to the ceremony and did taenap (paid by proxy) through another person. Also, I belong to several communities, such as with my friends and business associates. These communities also gave me [helping money] from the [collected] membership fee, which is not counted together [in the formal record]. So, this was the same as my other younger brothers and sisters. When I found *choŭigŭm* (helping money for funerals) from such communities [among other helping money envelopes], I returned those to my brothers and sisters because each of us needs to invite the community members to a gratitude greeting [after the ceremony]. I did not even open those envelopes from the communities and just gave them back to my brothers and sisters. I also received about five to six envelopes from my communities.

Mr. Ma Tong-Su and his five siblings received more than 700 guests at their mother's funeral ceremony. This number is significant, particularly compared with Mr. Pak's mother's funeral (about 100 guests). Mr. Ma reported that his first younger brother and he received the most guests among his six siblings. He counted that almost 70% of the total visitors recorded in the registration book were his and his first younger brother's guests. As both of them are independent entrepreneurs, they have many acquaintances related to their businesses and belong to various communities. Moreover, Mr. Ma is commonly acknowledged as a person with a broad social network. Despite this unequal amount of individual contribution to the mutual helping money, Mr. Ma decided to distribute a part of the remaining helping money after the funeral cost payment equally (3,000,000 won[41]) among his six siblings. However, he also insisted on saving a significant amount of the remaining money (more than 15,000,000 won[42]) in their mutual bank account for other occasions in the future.

In a sense, Mr. Ma Tong-Su and his younger brother contributed more helping money for the funeral cost than other siblings but received

[41] About 2,700 USD as of 2018
[42] About 13,300 USD as of 2018

less of the distribution than what they contributed. However, they found some compensation in terms of directly returned helping money envelopes from their communities. In the interview above, Mr. Ma indicated helping money from his communities, which he collected separately from the formal reception. This helping money is given from the communal fund of the communities, which he indicated as 'from the membership fee' in the interview. In these communities, the members regularly contribute a membership fee and receive a lump sum of money in the case of significant life events, such as weddings, funerals, and sicknesses. This community and helping money from their communal fund are comparable to the 1974 alumni association. The alumni association also collects a regular membership fee and gives a gift in cases of its members' significant life events. As introduced in Chapter 2, the gift has been commodities but also cash and recently standing flower arrangements for weddings and funerals. Thus, I find some similarities of these communities in the principle of collecting regular contributions and returning it for significant life events.

As discussed previously, this type of modern community is similar to the practice of traditional kye and giving collective pujo. Unlike the individual helping money envelopes, this helping money is a reward for the contribution to the community's collective fund, which has been paid as part of the membership. For the principle of reciprocity, the members of such communities are expected to return the gesture in the next occasion, such as by inviting the members to dinner or drinks. For this reason, Mr. Ma Tong-Su returned such envelopes to the direct recipient instead of using them for the funeral costs. Such envelopes are often delivered directly to the receiver as well, rather than through the formal reception process. This indicates direct reciprocity between the individual member and the community. This separate domain of collecting or distributing helping money is similar to that in which the newlyweds collect their helping money separately from their parents in wedding ceremonies. Nevertheless, such separate calculation was not observed in Mr. Pak Sang-Mun's mother's funeral. Mr. Pak Sang-Mun does not belong to many communities except his two school alumni associations. Neither his four sisters nor his brother's widow received much helping money. Thus, there was no need to concern themselves about the distribution of helping money from the communities in his mother's funeral ceremony.

When the general accounting of received helping money is finished after the funerals or weddings, the host opens the registration book or checks the sorted empty envelopes. In this process, they evaluate the individual helping money and the relationship with each giver. In the evaluation, the received helping money transforms into money again, and the calculation of debts becomes obvious. In this process, the host can develop various emotions, such as disappointment or gratefulness. For instance, when the sum of helping money is less than expected, the recipient can be disappointed. However, they can also be surprised when the sum is more than they expected or if they received helping money from an unexpected person. Independently from the evaluation, the host sends a message of gratitude within a week after the ceremony. Mr. Chang Man-Sik explains this as the following:

> After the host received pujo and the ceremony is over, he needs to send a thank you message within a week. It confirms then. If the host does not send a message, the guests could have a misunderstanding.

Mr. Chang Man-Sik indicates that a misunderstanding can develop if the host does not send a thank you message after the ceremony. This message is not only for giving thanks but also to confirm having received their helping money. This message is especially crucial for those who paid their helping money by proxy. Thus, the message completes helping money delivery. There are different ways to send a thank you message, such as making a phone call, sending a text message, or inviting the guests to a meal. Mr. Ma Tong-Su, for instance, made a distinction between his guests in terms of giving a thank you message and reciprocating what he received. In his words,

> After the funeral ceremony finished, I sent a text message of gratitude to the guests who are on the same level as me or younger than me. Moreover, then, I called each guest personally who is older than me or my senior and told them thanks for coming. I have not had a chance to dine and drink with all my guests yet. However, when I went to the meetings, for instance, I have a few communities, and we have a regular meeting once a month, and there all members meet together, and I said, "Thanks for coming to my mother's funeral, and I will pay for meals today." To individual guests, I will invite them to a cup of coffee if I have a chance, but I do not have pressure to do that.

In return for helping money, the host usually invites his guests to dinner or drinks after the ceremony. Similar to what Mr. Ma Tong-Su explained, Mr. Kong Ke-Sang and Mr. Pak Sang-Mun invited their fellow alumni to dinner after their wedding and funeral ceremonies. These invitations took place in the name of the official reunion of the 1974 alumni association. In this way, the host reciprocates a particular portion of the received helping money to the guests. Nevertheless, as Mr. Ma Tong-Su added, it is not obligatory to invite individual visitors after the ceremony. The reciprocation of the received helping money happens usually in the communities. Through this invitation after a funeral or wedding ceremony, one incident of helping money exchanges is completed. Nevertheless, an unofficial process of helping money practice might still be ongoing even after that, as both giver and receiver of helping money develop their evaluation and adjust their relationships after the ceremonies. This point will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Before moving to this point, I will elaborate on why people give helping money in the standardized amounts in Chapter 4.

Four. The Price for Friendship

I have discussed so far the relationship of tongch'ang and the mode of exchanging helping money in the previous chapters. However, the standardized sums of helping money remain in an enigmatic terrain. Next, I will introduce two examples from the media, which describe the public perception of the standardized sums of helping money in South Korea.

> **The Abolishable Practice: Wedding Invitation**
>
> A wedding house is like a marketplace, displeased faces about giving envelopes, a reception desk calculating wads of cash, watchmen's sharp eyes to catch the cake troops[43], and standing flower arrangements that will be chucked out soon. Worse are the invitation letters to two wedding ceremonies in one day. Over-issuing wedding invitations cause these crooked wedding customs. People know all too well the bitter taste of these suspicious bills and the tremendous cost of wedding ceremonies. However, they lack the courage to turn away the invitation letters and resent having a small wedding ceremony due to their invested money.
>
> The situation has turned out to be a severe problem that cannot be laughed at when giving helping money. The wedding invitations that should be welcomed have become burdensome and uncomfortable bills. The amount of helping money varies greatly depending on the region, such as cities and rural villages. However, in Seoul, it was only 500 won for saving one's face, now it has suddenly jumped up to 1,000 won or 3,000 won. If a salaryman gives less than 1,000 won, he will be ashamed. Without money, people could not even celebrate their friends' marriage.
>
> (Kwŏn Kŭn-Sul 1972, author's translation)

[43] The cake troops indicate those who collect innumerable return gifts in wedding ceremonies to resell them in the market.

This newspaper article was written in 1972. The scene described in a wedding ceremony is dramatized a bit, such as "the watchmen's sharp eyes to catch the cake troops". The cake troops might not be found often in the wedding ceremonies of the 2000s and 2010s. However, giving envelopes, counting wads of cash at the reception desk, and wasteful standing flower arrangements do not sound unfamiliar even after more than 45 years since the article above was published. Moreover, the wedding invitation is compared with bills, *kojisŏ* in Korean, indicating a certain degree of obligation for the payment of helping money. The next illustration is a vignette from the famous Korean comedy show '*Kaegŭ k'onsŏt'ŭ*' (gag concert) and demonstrates how one decides on the sum of helping money to give to friends.

> ***Ae-Jŏng-Nam*: a man who determines ambiguous things**[44]
>
> At the beginning of this vignette, an expert for determining ambiguous things appears on the stage with two bystanders. They are all sitting or standing at a table on the stage. The expert in the middle speaks most, and the bystanders to each side of him echo his words. The expert speaks with an exaggeratedly ridiculous tone, probably to make it clear that his words are in jest. In today's episode, the expert gives a lesson about how much helping money to give for friends' wedding ceremonies.
>
> The expert: "Oh yeah, now the seasons of hell are back in September and October. It is ambiguous, very ambiguous. 30,000 won is the basic charge as we promised. This is like the basic fare for a taxi. There is no one paying only 15,000 won. Then it is ambiguous how to distinguish between 30,000 won and 50,000 won. I determine it now for you. When one gets married in April, May, September, or in October, these are the peak seasons, and we give only 30,000 won. It is 30,000 won for the high season of marriage. If one gets married in the low season, it is 50,000 won. I make things clear for you because during these months we spend much money. You must understand [getting less helping money] when you get married [during the high season]. If you want to get 50,000 won [from your guests], marry in the low season. Now, there is another ambiguity, either 50,000 won or 100,000 won is ambiguous. 50,000 won is for a close friend, and 100,000 won is for a very close friend. You'll be worried about this [how to judge the closeness to your friends]. So, I'll fix it for you now. If the parents of your marrying friend know your name, then it is 100,000 won. It means we are so close. If they do not know your name, it is 50,000 won. However, if you have much money, you can give 300,000 won or 400,000 won too.

[44] broadcasted on September 4. 2011, on KBS 2TV.

> This is not a law. You do not go to jail. There will be no police coming. It is just our promise."

The expert in this show repeats at the end of the vignette: "The reason society is beautiful is that people keep invisible promises, such as helping money exchanges." By clarifying invisible promises, the expert, as he insists, helps people avoid discord in their social life. As it is introduced in the example, giving helping money is not a formal regulation. Abstaining from giving it does not break the law. Nevertheless, people harmoniously maintain giving and returning helping money in a highly standardized manner. Both examples indicate how often individuals in South Korean society are exposed to the practice of helping money exchanges and how burdensome it can be in one's social relationships.[45] While the first example criticizes the exaggerated circulation of helping money practice, the second example advises mastering the ambiguities involved in giving it. Interestingly enough, the amount of helping money has been increasing at regular intervals. In the first example, the range of helping money is 500-1,000-3,000 won in the early 1970s. In the second example, the mentioned sums are 30,000-50,000-100,000 won in the early 2010s. Even though there could be a slight regional difference, this standard seems to be a general social agreement. However, as introduced in Chapter 1, the sums of helping money for kinship and business relationships are not included in this standard; they generally far exceed the regular sums.

A prevalent position in the study of the gift is that the closer the relationship, the more valuable the gifts exchanged. If I apply this position in helping money practice, I could say: the closer the relationship, the higher the amount of helping money. Nevertheless, I observed that the amount of helping money does not increase in tongch'ang-ship regarding personal intimacy. Unlike kinship and relationships with business associates, which can be up to 3,000,000 won, helping money among the tongch'ang often remains merely either 50,000 or 100,000 won. Some alumni always give 100,000 to their tongch'ang, while some others consistently give 50,000 won to others. Why do they not give as much helping money as to their relatives or business associates even though the

[45] In 2014, the average income of about 16 million South Koreans was around 2,640,000 won (about 2,400 USD as of 2018) a month. However, the polarization of income distribution is tremendous, and three-fifth of the investigated population earn less than this average sum (I Yŏng-Ch'ang 2015).

high school alumni are thought to be a lifelong relationship? Why do some tongch'ang give merely 50,000 won, while some others consistently give 100,000 won? Does it not develop an imbalance in helping money exchanges among the alumni? The central questions of Chapter 4 challenge two theoretical considerations. First, the coherence between the closeness of the relationship and the quantity of exchanged gift. Second, the (im)balanced reciprocity to maintain the relationship. It will reveal that tongch'ang-ship is already a stable relationship, which is not entirely dependent on the exchange of gifts.

In Chapter 4, the analysis is dedicated to explaining the standardized manner of helping money exchange in the tongch'ang-ship. The first section of this chapter will shed light on the puzzle of the standardized numbers in helping money practice. In the following section, the tongch'ang-ship will be investigated in terms of the amount of helping money. In the third and fourth sections, kinship and relationships in the workplace will be regarded as reference points for the tongch'ang-ship and helping money exchanges.

Standardization of Helping Money

> I visited five weddings in one day in October last year or the year before. I was invited to ten weddings on that day – ten! But I could visit only five of them: One at 11 am, 1 pm, 2 pm, 3 pm, and at 5 pm. I was too tired to visit weddings. So, I did not join the banquet, but just greeted the host, gave my ch'ugŭigŭm (the helping money for wedding ceremonies), then moved again.

Mr. Mun Pae-Ru said that he once visited five wedding ceremonies on a Saturday, most of which he merely handed in his helping money envelopes and left the wedding house without participating in order to visit the other ones. The alumni often complained about excessive spending for helping money when they are invited to multiple ceremonies, including funerals. "I have two 50,000 won ceremonies this weekend." I frequently heard such a complaint during my fieldwork. The ceremony is casually referred to by the sum of expected helping money, such as a '50,000 won ceremony' or '100,000 won ceremony'. This reference also extends to one's social relationships, such as a '50,000 won colleague' or '100,000 won friend'. Due

to its standardized manner, the reference of someone's social relationship to the sum of helping money does not sound entirely strange.

Gallup Korea has conducted surveys on the amount of ch'uguigŭm since 1994. According to the 2013 results, the sums of helping money were mostly 30,000, 50,000, or 100,000 won (Gallup Korea 2013). Among these sums, 50,000 won was the most frequent amount given by 70% of the respondents (in total 1,224 Koreans). 19% of the respondents said they generally gave 100,000 won or more, and only 8% answered with 30,000 won. The difference between 30,000 and 50,000 won is 20,000 won, but the gap between 50,000 and 100,000 won is 50,000 won. Despite these irregular intervals, people are habitually asked to decide on one of the three options. Moreover, this is not an exception for funerals. It is worth questioning what makes the guests in South Korean weddings and funerals consistently give these specific amounts of helping money.

As explained in Chapter 3, it dates back to relatively recent times since money became the primary medium of exchange in pujo practices of Korea. The amounts of helping money have continuously increased with inflation in living costs. As long-term helping money performers since the 1970s or 1980s, the 1974 alumni of the Songwŏn Hani High School experienced the increase of helping money rates as well. For instance, Mr. Ch'a Chi-Won said: "I used to give 3,000 won or 5,000 won 30 to 40 years ago." Thus, the amounts of helping money gradually increased from 3,000 won or 5,000 won in the 1970s and 1980s to 50,000 or 100,000 won in the 2010s. The following newspaper article illustrates a periodic change of helping money amounts from the 1970s until the late 1990s.

> **Ch'ugigŭm at weddings is also in the era of restructuring (second series): Economics of ch'ugigŭm**
>
> The following is the periodic change of the amount of ch'ugigŭm that Mr. Pae (56) remembers, who has been working at KEPCO (Korea Electric Power Corporation) for 37 years: 50,000, 30,000, and 20,000 won since 1995. 30,000, 20,000, and 10,000 won in the early 1990s. 20,000, 10,000, and 5,000 won in the 1980s. 5,000, 3,000, and 2,000 won in the 1970s.
>
> (Pak Chung-Hyŏn 1998, author's translation)

From the newspaper article above, it is interesting to notice that the sums of helping money for weddings have maintained a regular order, such as 1-2-3, 1-2-5, 2-3-5, or 3-5-10. Recently 30,000, 50,000, and 100,000 won became the standard sums, while 30,000 won is not given very often. When I asked the 1974 alumni why they give helping money in such a standardized manner, many of them answered that they do not know, but follow what others do. Mr. Pan Tu-Hi, who is familiar with numbers as the administrator of his alumni association, answered that Koreans prefer giving helping money in odd numbers because odd numbers are traditionally considered positive compared to even numbers. Similar explanations that odd numbers are favorable is found in numerous resources (I Ch'ang-Il 2008: 83-86; Kim Hag-Yong 2013). In traditional Korean cosmology, odd numbers represent *yang*: the light, positivity, and auspiciousness. In comparison to that, even numbers indicate the opposite, *ŭm*: the darkness, negativity, and inauspiciousness (I Ch'ang-Il 2008: 84-85). Moreover, odd numbers are regarded as incomplete because one number is always left when numbers are paired. For this reason, odd numbers are called single numbers (*holssu*), and even numbers are pair numbers (*tchaksu*) in Korean. The incompleteness of odd numbers symbolizes infinite auspiciousness. For instance, helping money is given in odd numbers with the prospect that the happiness will endure in celebrating occasions (I Ch'ang-Il 2008: 83-86). However, this explanation has limitations when it comes to helping money sums beginning with 2 or 10. In other words, this does not explain the helping money sums starting with an even number, such as 2,000 and 20,000 won. Moreover, it is disputable whether 10,000 and 100,000 won should be considered as 1 or 10; thus, whether they are odd or even numbers. Moreover, there is no evidence of whether people gave material pujo in odd numbers as well before the introduction of money. In addition, it does not indicate why helping money for funerals is also given in odd numbers. When it comes to the amount, helping money in funerals is not often discussed publicly. I assume that this is related to the ethical aspect that people are cautious about talking about material issues in public in cases of death. According to my investigation, nevertheless, the amount of helping money in funerals is similar to that in weddings. Thus, I can assume that the positivity and auspiciousness of odd numbers also apply in the case of funerals. One comparable point concerning odd numbers and death is reflected in the number of dishes in

the Korean ancestral rites, which is also prepared in odd numbers (Yun Chin-Ho 2012).

A similar pattern of giving gift money in odd numbers is reported in Japanese cash gifts. In Japanese cash gift-giving, the sums are conventionally in odd numbers, such as 10,000 yen, 30,000 yen, 50,000 yen, 70,000 yen, and 100,000 yen (Rupp 2003: 4). In Japanese cosmology, Rupp further demonstrates that the odd numbers symbolize superiority because "[e]very odd number greater than one contains within it both an odd and an even number" (Rupp 2003: 62). This means that "the inferior becomes a member of the superior; the even is subsumed within the odd" (Rupp 2003: 62). This cosmology is also indicated in the number of cords used to tie the cash gift envelopes (ibid.).

The sums of helping money are almost always given in full amounts, which do not entail coins and small change. Moreover, people prefer giving helping money in the same kind of banknotes, such as putting only 10,000 won or 50,000 won banknotes. Giving helping money in banknotes smaller than 10,000 won, such as 1,000 and 5,000 won notes, is unusual. If the given sum is a significant anomaly, it is rather regarded to a joke. For instance, Mr. An Mu-Se explained that a friend of his elder son put a 1,000 won banknote in addition to 100,000 won helping money. Mr. An believes it was a joke. Even if the sum is in a full amount and does not include small change, giving and receiving helping money in sums other than 30,000, 50,000, and 100,000 won is still considered exceptional and inconsiderate. For instance, Mr. An Mu-Se reported that he once received a 70,000 won helping money from a married couple when his elder son got married. He explains this sum confused him:

> When my first son got married, there was a couple who gave me 70,000 won. But they put 100,000 won when my second son got married. I think they did not even think about how much money I would spend on meals for two people on the first occasion.

As explained in Chapter 3, the amount of helping money is related to the buffet coupons at weddings. Also, this was indicated by Mr. An Mu-Se when he criticized the couple for giving only 70,000 won helping money. He reported that this couple was inconsiderate because their helping money did not cover the cost of the meal they consumed in the ceremony. However, this couple gave 100,000 won when Mr. An's second son got

married two years later. Mr. An Mu-Se believes that they corrected the impropriety of their first helping money by giving a higher sum for the next occasion. In line with this, it is widely believed that the buffet or banquet is the reciprocal gift of the given helping money in weddings (Korea Consumer Agency 1991: 6; 1997: 11; Ch'oe Yun-Sŏn 2003: 13). Thus, the current price of meals is an indicator of how much one should give as helping money. In line with this, giving less helping money than the cost of a meal can evoke uncomfortable feelings. Also, this general understanding of the suitable sum of helping money was similar when the alumni were children. Mr. An Mu-Se says further:

> We used to give 3,000 won or 5,000 won in the countryside because a bowl of noodles was 3,000 won, and we gave 5,000 won. Now the cost of food or buffet is about 30,000 won, so we give 50,000 won.

Mr. An Mu-Se added that even though he received 30,000 won helping money years ago, he would give 50,000 won nowadays because the price of the buffet has increased. In Chapter 3, it was indicated that a buffet coupon at weddings cost about 30,000 to 50,000 won in 2015. If one gives 50,000 won helping money, the host will receive the price of one person's buffet cost, or 20,000 won more than that. This is the reason why people give 100,000 won for weddings in a hotel, in which the meal for a single person costs around 80,000 won. In other words, people give slightly more than the cost of the buffet or food which they are expected to consume. If the guests cannot afford to give 100,000 won helping money for the wedding in a hotel, they do not go to the ceremony but pay 50,000 won by proxy or in other methods. In this way, they can still give enough helping money without participating and consuming the meal. In the case of funerals, the meal per person costs slightly less than for weddings. Thus, the host would receive more than the cost of the meal per person in funerals as well. By contributing to the cost of the meal in terms of bringing helping money, each individual invited to the ceremony supports their portion. This, in turn, enables the host to hold a big ceremony. This aspect is comparable with the traditional practice of pujo in village communities, as introduced in Chapter 3.

As previously stated, the standard amounts of helping money have continuously increased over time. For instance, Mr. Mun Pae-Ru reported that people started giving 50,000 won for helping money instead of 30,000 won when a new banknote of 50,000 won was introduced in 2009. Mr. Sim Ho-Tong also remembers the last increase when he started giving 100,000 won instead of 50,000 won. In his words:

> Only a few years ago, I generally used to give 50,000 won. At some point, however, I thought that 50,000 won is not enough. For this reason, I started giving between 100,000 and 200,000 won [helping money] three to four years ago. Even though there is no fixed standard, I felt embarrassed to give only 50,000 won.

Mr. Sim Ho-Tong reported that it is only since the last few years that he started giving 100,000 won instead of 50,000 won. This was because he noticed that other people, such as his business associates and customers, give 100,000 instead of 50,000 won. He explained that he was embarrassed to give only 50,000 won compared to his peers. When I asked him to clarify the feeling that he had described as embarrassment, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong answered:

> Okay, it is not entirely embarrassment, but considering other business associates, they all give 100,000 won. So, I did not want to be an exception, who gives only 50,000 won. I listened to the discourse in my network and found out that people in the same horizontal relationship as me give such amount.

Mr. Sim explained that his business associates, in particular, those 'in the same hierarchical status as himself' in his words, started giving 100,000 won instead of 50,000 won to others at some point in the past. Thus, he decided to give 100,000 won too because he did not want to be an exception. A hierarchical evaluation of oneself and the effort not to be an exception in the same hierarchy are reflected here. One is continuously testing his position in the hierarchy and tries to behave accordingly.

Mr. Sim gives 100,000 won helping money at minimum to his business associates and friends. This amount of helping money is far more than the cost of a meal in typical ceremonies. By giving 100,000 won, helping money is not merely supporting the host family by contributing to the cost of the

meal, but also giving a gift. Mr. Ma Tong-Su also conventionally gives 100,000 won to his fellow alumni to give more than the price for their participation in the ceremonies. Mr. Ma Tong-Su explains:

> Before I used to give 50,000 won. But now 50,000 won cover only the cost of my meal. So, nowadays I give 100,000 won. I give 100,000 won as a little gift to the person when I am in the same community with him.

It is noticeable that the sum of helping money in tongch'ang is diverse between 50,000 and 100,000 won. In the same relationship, one gives 50,000 won, and others give 100,000 won. Why does one give merely the cost for the holding the ceremony, while the other gives much more within the same relationship? This can cause an imbalance of the reciprocity in gift exchanges. This aspect will be investigated in more detail in the next section.

100,000 Won Tongch'ang and 50,000 Won Tongch'ang

As emphasized already, the exchanged helping money among the tongch'ang-ship is maintained at either 50,000 won or 100,000 won. In other words, those who give 100,000 won, give 100,000 won consistently to their tongch'ang; and those who give 50,000 won, do so to all alumni. This might reduce the concern of how much to give. The reason why one decides for one sum over the other greatly depends on individual economic situations. Nevertheless, continuous exchanges of such different helping money sums will result in imbalance. Does the imbalance of helping money exchanges matter to the alumni for maintaining their relationship?

Mr. Sim Ho-Tong explains that he gives conventionally 100,000 won to his fellow alumni because: "In general, it is a burden to give much pujogŭm to friends. So, I give 100,000 won to ordinary friends. If I give them 200,000 or 300,000 won, it is burdensome to them. This should not happen." Mr. Sim explains that giving more than 100,000 won can burden his friends, even if he could afford it. 100,000 won is the highest sum among the three standards of helping money. To my question of why he gives 100,000 won instead of 50,000 won to every tongch'ang, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong answered as follows:

> The people who receive 50,000 won might feel our relationships were underestimated. So, I give 100,000 won equally to everyone. Someone told me that someone else gave him 50,000 won pujo. He told me that he was disappointed (at this). So, this suggests to me that if I give 50,000 won to some friends, they might feel the same way.

Mr. Sim gives 100,000 won uniformly to his fellow alumni, and his decision is based on the reference of his friends. Not to make exceptions in his tongch'ang-ship, and to avoid the possible consequence of hurting someone, he always gives 100,000 won to his fellow alumni instead of 50,000 won. In this way, he enforces the equality of the relationships among his fellow alumni. The tongch'ang-ship refers to status equals regardless of personal closeness. In this sense, giving 100,000 won to everyone also demonstrates that their relationship is part of a linear hierarchy. Nevertheless, it is mostly the wealthy alumni who can afford to give 100,000 won to all their tongch'ang. They are mostly self-employed with high income, essential officials, or employed in the high ranks of large corporations. They include alumni such as Mr. Sim Ho-Tong (an entrepreneur of a publishing company), Mr. O Chae-Sin (the CEO of an insurance company), Mr. Son Han-Pin (a professional accountant), Mr. Ma Tong-Su (an entrepreneur producing oil refinery tools), Mr. Su Ki-Ha (the entrepreneur of a book delivery company), and Mr. Im Se-Hun (the CEO of a company for environment preservation). Unlike them, many other alumni give merely 50,000 won too. For instance, Mr. Ha Cha-Min (the entrepreneur of a small flower shop), Mr. Pak Sang-Mun (the entrepreneur of an iron cutting factory), Mr. An Mu-Se (a public officer), Mr. Na Sang-Kil (a retiree), Mr. Pan Tu-Hi (a retiree), and Mr. Chang Man-Sik (a retiree) conventionally give 50,000 won to their tongch'ang. They are small-scale businessmen, public officials in the middle ranks, and retirees without a steady income. However, the potential imbalance in helping money exchanges seems to be an accepted imbalance among the tongch'ang. Mr. Na Sang-Kil explains his position about the imbalance in helping money exchanges among his group of alumni:

> There may be some differences even though we do pujo similarly. But it is the way we are. Our basic unit is 100,000 won. 100,000 won is a sum which is not disappointing and not burdensome. But some people give only 50,000 won, such as me.

Mr. Na Sang-Kil, who used to work as a public official but later changed his job and became self-employed, has been retired since 2014. Unlike other self-employed alumni, who still have high incomes, Mr. Na lives mostly from his savings and pension. Mr. Na gives 50,000 won helping money to his tongch'ang and claims that giving 100,000 won is a burden for him. However, he declared that 100,000 won is the basic unit among his alumni group. He further explained, 100,000 won is the sum which is not burdensome but still contributes enough for one's ceremony. Mr. Na has concerns about his financial condition as well as excessive spending for helping money. He reported that he generally spends 3,000,000 won[46] a year for helping money including his relatives' weddings and funerals and tries not to exceed this budget. For this reason, he can afford to give 50,000 won to his fellow alumni. Between 50,000 won givers and 100,000 won givers, there seems to be an unspoken agreement. Mr. Ma Tong-Su explains that he understands his friends who can only afford to give 50,000 won helping money. He says:

> It is hard to spend much money when one is a salaryman and barely makes a living with the salary. So, we understand them giving [only] 50,000 won. When one does business and can afford more financially, just like me, then we give 100,000 won.

Mr. Ma's words indicate that the equal sum is not crucial in helping money exchanges among the tongch'ang-ship. That the standard sum differs individually is accepted. In one way or another, the socially standardized sums of helping money, 50,000 and 100,000 won, are understood as the basic unit of helping money among the tongch'ang-ship. While rich alumni give 100,000 won, less wealthy alumni give 50,000 won. The imbalance, which arises from the different sums of helping money exchanged, tends to be accepted or ignored. In this way, their tongch'ang relationship is protected from the imbalance. The other reason for the acceptance of the imbalance is because tongch'ang-ship is not strengthened by giving more helping money, as Mr. Kan Yo-Han insists. In his words:

> Pujogŭm does not make friendship stronger. The fact that it comes and goes in ceremonies, that there is correspondence with each other, means we have a certain degree of trust. But it does not mean that I get closer to

[46] About 2,700 USD as of 2018

> him because I did pujo to him. Anyway, it is p'umasi; when I go to his, he will come to mine too. Because of that, I do not thank him extra [for receiving helping money]. However, I might feel disappointed if he does not give me (pujogŭm). This might cause a misunderstanding between us because I did it [to him], or I thought we are close enough, but he did not come [to my ceremony].

Mr. Kan said that giving and returning helping money is a conventional custom for maintaining the friendship. Because it is a custom, he does not thank his friends extra for receiving helping money. He knows that he will have to return the same. However, if he does not receive helping money from his friends, the friendship can be weakened by disappointment. This is despite that there is no law or rule to blame friends for not giving him helping money. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The tongch'ang needs to exchange helping money to symbolize their long-lasting friendship. This aspect becomes more significant when it is compared with helping money exchanges in the workplace, especially those among the business associates.

Helping Money in the Workplace

When deciding the sum of helping money in the workplace, alumni often mentioned the hierarchy in relationships. As previously explained, social relationships in South Korea are often divided into hierarchical orders, such as senior and junior, sŏnbae and hubae in Korean (Chapter 2). The primary indicator of this hierarchy is age. For the same reason, the age homogeneity is particularly pronounced in the tongch'ang-ship, a symbol for the horizontal relationship. As discussed in Chapter 3 as well, the senior and junior relationships in the workplace are also regarded differently in the method of invitation and sending gratitude messages after the ceremonies. As Mr. Ma Tong-Su reported, he regards his older business associates as seniors and makes individual phone calls when inviting them to his ceremonies. However, he sends group text messages to his younger business associates. He also expects his juniors to treat him as a senior and to give him an individual phone call when inviting him to their ceremonies. A similar difference in the hierarchy is also reflected in the amount of helping money. Next, Mr. Mun Pae-Ru explains how the hierarchy of age

in the workplace was mirrored in the sums of helping money until his retirement: "When I was working, I used to give 100,000 won instead of 50,000 won to my seniors. But not to those who were going to retire soon." As a bank clerk, Mr. Mun Pae-Ru had senior colleagues who were older, started working in the same bank before him, and therefore were mostly in a higher rank than him – thus, his seniors. Mr. Mun admitted that he tended to give more helping money to his seniors than to other colleagues in the same or younger age. However, his seniors, who were going to retire in the near future, lost their superiority in receiving more helping money from Mr. Mun. His intention behind this is that his relationship to most of his seniors is weak and likely to break after their retirement. Thus, Mr. Mun will not receive his helping money or some benefit in return. As long as they were to hold their superior positions in the workplace in the expected future, they earned 100,000 won helping money instead of 50,000 won from Mr. Mun Pae-Ru. On the contrary, the higher hierarchy in the workplace can also result in giving more to colleagues at lower ranks, as Mr. Im Se-Hun explains in his experience with a junior colleague. In his words:

> He is younger than me, and his 30,000 won is worth as much as my 50,000 won. In this regard, I gave more [pujogŭm] to him. I do not have strict criteria [about the sums], and it depends on situations.

Mr. Im Se-Hun worked as a public official for almost 30 years, where differences in rank and income are clearly distinguished by grades in Korea. He said that the 30,000 won helping money of his junior colleague was as much as his 50,000 won helping money. Thus, he returned the 30,000 won helping money from his junior with 50,000 won helping money. This indicates that his superior position in the workplace, as well as his apparent better economic circumstances, can result in giving more to the junior than he received.

It can be concluded from these two examples that the amounts of helping money in the workplace follow the regular sums, such as 30,000-50,000-100,000 won. Even though the alumni decide to give more helping money occasionally to their seniors or juniors than they received or expected to receive, the sum varies merely among these three amounts; their helping money does not exceed 100,000 won. Nevertheless, the sum increases dramatically for the alumni who have their own business. For

instance, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, the CEO of a publisher, gives up to 300,000 won to his business associates. Mr. Sim said:

> I want to give more to my business partners, and I do it actually. Even if they do not return to me as much as I gave to them, I give it anyway in order to show them my sincerity. However, I cannot deny that there is some calculation behind it. For this reason, I usually give 200,000 won to my business partners and up to 300,000 won to important business partners. Moreover, I give 100,000 won when the relationship is in a parallel line.

Unlike the previous cases of Mr. Mun Pae-Ru and Mr. Im Se-Hun, who were employees of a big bank and the government respectively, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong is self-employed and runs his own business. This means that he alone is responsible for the relationships with his business associates, who directly make relevant decisions for his profits. His business associates include his clients, who order from him, and business partners, who work in related fields and help each other. Mr. Sim added that giving a lot to his business associates has some strategic calculation behind it. As described in Chapter 2, Mr. Sim indicated that he needs to spend more time and money for the maintenance of his business relationships. This helping money can be understood as instrumental giving (Yan 1996). Moreover, he straightly declared: "I am doing this to show my sincerity to them (my business associates). And the sum of pujogŭm openly relates to the sincerity." According to Mr. Sim, the higher the sum of helping money, the greater the sincerity when it comes to his business relationship. Moreover, to maintain this sincerity, Mr. Sim spends nearly 1,000,000 won[47] per month:

> I have about 30 to 40 clients. So, I am invited to their weddings and funerals almost every week, about one to three ceremonies per week. Among them, some are 100,000 won ceremonies, and some are 200,000 won ceremonies. When I am invited to many ceremonies, such as in the peak season, I also spend a lot, about 1,000,000 won a month.

As Mr. Sim stresses, giving more than usual sums symbolizes sincerity and strengthens the trust between Mr. Sim and his business associates. Also, he aims to maintain his relationship with the business associates by giving

[47] About 890 USD as of 2018

more helping money despite its excessive amount. Mr. Sim gives between 200,000 to 300,000 won helping money to his business associates depending on their status in reference to his business. However, he also gives merely 100,000 won to his business associates when their relationships are in a parallel line. However, the sincerity and trust built by higher sums of helping money also have a predicted end. Mr. Sim Ho-Tong further explained:

> If I quit my business, I will not get it (the given pujogŭm). Now I am the boss [of my own company], and for this reason we have to exchange [pujogŭm] with each other. But if I am not the boss anymore, there will be no one among them who comes [to my ceremonies and gives me helping money]. And I will neither ask for it. I am doing this currently for my business, my business associates are in business relationships, and my friends in a fellowship.

Because the business relations are oriented toward conditions and profits, they are maintained as long as the relationship is relevant to them. In the same way, helping money is exchanged as long as they need to maintain their relationships. In Mr. Sim's words, business relationships are more expensive than friendships when it comes to giving helping money. On top of that, his high helping money has lower security to be paid back in kind in the future than lesser helping money to his fellow alumni. In some sense, he invests higher helping money to his business associations at higher risk than to his fellow alumni in order to maintain his business relationships. Thus, in his opinion, business relationships and friendships are strictly separated.

However, not every entrepreneur spends so much on helping money like Mr. Sim Ho-Tong. Compared to Mr. Sim, Mr. Pak Sang-Mun does not give more helping money to his business associates even though he is also an entrepreneur. He explains:

> I am doing puju generally. It is not good to give it a lot because it can be a burden on the other party. Many people do it a lot for their business, but I do not want to do that. I do not give a lot of puuigŭm and ch'ugigŭm to my customers for business purposes. If I pay a lot, I could give 200,000 or 300,000 won, but I generally give 100,000 won. If I want to give more, I send a flower arrangement.

Mr. Pak Sang-Mun does not actively participate in helping money exchanges with his fellow entrepreneurs and clients, as described previously (Chapter 2). Even though his factory is located in a complex, and he also has many neighboring entrepreneurs, he did not seem overly concerned about taking care of his communities. I wondered why Mr. Pak does not give more helping money to his business associates, like other alumni who own their company. It comes down to Mr. Pak's personal opinion, in which he does not see an actual profit for utilizing superficial social networks. When it comes to building sincerity and trust in business relationships, he puts more value in diligence and trust independent from instrumental helping money. Mr. Pak said:

> People who need inmaek think it essential. It really depends. People who weigh inmaek a lot, are influential. But powerless people do not have inmaek at all. So, I think people who abuse inmaek have contradictions in their lives.

For him, the social network, inmaek, is not for gaining through helping money. It cannot be purchased with higher sums of helping money. It has an inherent value in it, and one should pursue a righteous and honest life to earn it as he explained previously (Chapter 2). Then the followers will praise his sincere value, thus the social network as well. This is comparable with Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, who gives more helping money to show his sincerity to his business associates. For the same reason, Mr. Pak does not often give 200,000 or 300,000 won helping money to his business associates and maintains giving a maximum of 100,000 won to them as well. In this sense, there is no difference for Mr. Pak in giving helping money between tongch'ang and business relationships.

Some alumni give more helping money to their business associates to maintain their instrumental relationships. The business relationships are breakable due to underlying conditions in the workplace and business networks. For this reason, some alumni give higher sums of helping money to maintain their relationships. However, tongch'ang-ship is a relationship which is not fundamentally based on making profits. The institutionalized setting of their friendship ensures that their relationship would not break or improve as Mr. Kan Yo-Han emphasized previously. Within these more or less stable relationships, the sum of helping money does not need to be more than 100,000 won among the tongch'ang-ship. In the next section, I

will discuss the amount of helping money in kinship and compare it with the amount among the alumni.

Expensive Kinship

In this section, the exchanged sums of helping money among the tongch'ang-ship will be compared with the sums given to kin, such as to family members and relatives. It has already been mentioned that the sums of helping money given to kinship far exceed the sums to other relationships, such as tongch'ang-ship and business relationships. The maximum amount to kinship differs depending on each individual's economic situation, but it is generally far more than 100,000 won, which is regarded as the highest sum to tongch'ang. Mr. O Chae-Sin reported that he made a guideline for himself regarding how much helping money to give to his relatives:

> I always give 3,000,000 won[48] helping money to my brothers and sisters, and between 500,000 to 1,000,000 won[49] to my wife's brothers and sisters, she has ten siblings, because I do not want to make differences [in sums of helping money] among the siblings, such as I give more to someone and I give less to others. Moreover, I give 300,000 won to my cousins. But they do not return 300,000 won to me when I give them 300,000 won. They often return merely 100,000 won or 200,000 won to me. In fact, they do not need to return as much as I gave them because it is my gesture of sincerity. Even if I give 200,000 won to one relative and he returns 100,000 won to me, I would not feel bad about it.

In his guideline, Mr. O Chae-Sin draws a clear distinction between his lineal family members and other kin relations. He gives 3,000,000 won to his six sisters and brothers. Because the main host of wedding ceremonies in South Korea is the parents of the bride or groom, Mr. O has been giving 3,000,000 won to his brothers and sisters when his nephews or nieces get married. Considering the number of children his siblings have, 3,000,000 won helping money to each wedding ceremony of his lineal family members makes a huge total sum. In the case of funeral ceremonies, such

[48] About 2,700 USD as of 2018
[49] About 450 and 890 USD as of 2018

as his parents', he does not need to give such a high sum of helping money to his lineal family members, as they will be all the first mourners. The sum in his guideline decreases to a third (1,000,000 won) or even to a sixth (500,000 won) of his highest sum to the brothers and sisters of his wife. However, these sums are still more than to his relatives, such as his aunts, uncles, and cousins. He gives 300,000 won to his regular and more distant relatives. Mr. O made this guideline so as not to make mistakes in giving the same sum to his kin of a similar distance. These sums are given regardless of how much he would receive back in the future. Even to the distant relatives, the sum of helping money is three times more than that which he would give to his fellow alumni. However, 300,000 won is also the sum which he gives to his business partners as well, he said. Because he is the eldest son in his family, Mr. O Chae-Sin is expected to give higher helping money to his family members and relatives. As he explained, his father and his grandfather were also the eldest sons in their families. That is why Mr. O also tries to fulfill the responsibility of his father and grandfather as well, and this is represented in giving helping money to his father's and grandfather's cousins. He also maintains giving helping money to the relatives on the maternal side, as well as his wife's uncles and aunts. On top of that, because he has a high income in general, he is able to manage to give excessive helping money to his relatives. Mr. O Chae-Sin's position is comparable to Mr. Chang Man-Sik. Mr. Chang is also the eldest son in his family and tries to fulfill his duty in giving helping money to his relatives. He explains:

> In my case, I am the eldest son in my family, and my parents are all dead. So, I need to repay the debts, which my parents owe my relatives. Often, I do not know them well, but I have to give because my parents received [pujogŭm] before. Sometimes it is suggested to me by my relatives to give in regard to how much they gave to my father. I have given pujogŭm quite a lot in the last one to two years since my father's death. For instance, I spent about 1,300,000 to 1,400,000 won[50] on pujogŭm last year. In cases of other relationships, I give 50,000 or 100,000 won depending on how much I received before. But the sums are quite different in kinship. For instance, I could give 500,000 won to my brothers or cousins. The sum is immensely different.

[50] About 1,150 and 1,240 USD as of 2018

As the eldest son in the family, Mr. Chang is asked to continue helping money exchanges with his relatives instead of his father. In other words, the eldest sons in the family inherit debts of helping money from their parents. Mr. Chang expresses the burden of this duty because the sum of helping money for kinship far exceeds the general sums. For instance, Mr. Chang would give 500,000 won to his brother and close relatives, but this sum is smaller than the maximum sum in Mr. O's guideline. This reflects Mr. Chang's economic circumstances. Mr. O Chae-Sin's and Mr. Chang Man-Sik's guidelines can also be compared with that of Mr. Mun Pae-Ru. Mr. Mun is also the eldest son in his family and inherited the debts of his parents. He explained:

> I do pujo to my relatives instead of my father. I give 1,000,000 won to my brothers and 300,000 won to first cousins[51] and other relatives. And I give 200,000 won to more distant relatives. But I give only 100,000 won to the third cousins.

Mr. Mun gives 1,000,000 won to his brothers, but his sum reduces to 300,000 won to his more distant relatives. Thus, his distant relatives receive as much as his tongch'ang. Individuals' guidelines differ depending on their financial condition. However, as a general rule, it can be summarized that the sums of helping money given to kin relations are far higher than that given in other relationships. Also, within families, the sum varies depending on the degree of kinship. To the distant relatives, the sum of helping money can be compared to that given to tongch'ang. Mr. Na Sang-Kil similarly reports how he decides on the sum of helping money to his kinship. He said:

> There is no rule for how much pujogŭm I give to whom. However, for example, who is closer to me between my brothers and my cousins? Of course, my brothers, right? Then I give more weight on the pujogŭm to my brother and less weight on the cousins. And lesser to other relatives, and lesser than them to other people. Following this concept, I decide the sum of puuigŭm and ch'ugigŭm. There is no reason to give 200,000 won to someone whom I do not know well.

[51] First cousins indicate in South Korea the children of one's parents' siblings, with whom s/he shares the same grandparents.

Kinship is regarded as a part of their decisive relations. In the interview, Mr. Na refers to other people as strangers (*nam*) who do not belong to the kin relations. In a strict sense, tongch'ang is also comprised of strangers, and that is why he does not give more than 100,000 won to his tongch'ang, unlike kinship. A similar tendency was observed from almost all alumni. In this sense, kinship is regarded as the most substantial and most important social ties in an individual's social life. The general closeness can be identified here that the brothers and sisters are the closest kin relationships, and cousins are the next closest kin relationships. For this reason, the sum of helping money is up to 3,000,000 won to the kin, as I discussed in the case of Mr. O Chae-Sin. This explains the general theory of gift exchange that the closer the relationship, the more gift one gives. The alumni who are not the eldest son in their family also give more helping money to their family members and relatives than to their fellow alumni. However, they do not feel obligated to give distinctively high amounts to their kinship as their elder brothers do.

The difference in amounts between kinship and non-kinship is significantly high in Korean helping money compared to other neighboring countries. Referring to Rupp's study of the Japanese cash gift, the relatives gave mostly 20,000, 30,000, or 50,000 yen[52] in Mrs. Ueda's daughter's wedding (Rupp 2003: 37). The siblings of Mr. and Mrs. Ueda and their parents gave 100,000 yen, while half a dozen of the daughter's friends also gave 20,000 yen (Rupp 2003: 5). In other words, the difference between relatives and friends are five times the sum at most, such as 20,000 and 100,000 yen. However, this gap was 30 times as much in Mr. O Chae-Sin's case – 100,000 and 3,000,000 won. This difference was also observed as ten times the amount in Mr. Mun Pae-Ru's case and five times as much in Mr. Chang Man-Sik's. It is not clear in Rupp's study, who is the real recipient of such monetary gifts. However, it is significant that the sum of gift money in a Japanese wedding ceremony does not differentiate so immensely between friends and relatives. In the case of funeral ceremonies, the sum of *kōden* (incense money) within the relatives was also in the range of 20,000, 30,000, and 50,000 yen as reported in Mr. Ishiyama's father's funeral ceremony (Rupp 2003: 23, 37). However, other acquaintances and friends of the family gave 2,000 (4 guests), 3,000 (22 guests), 5,000 (421 guests), and 10,000 yen (310 guests). Accordingly, the sum of gift money is

[52] About 180, 270, and 440 USD as of 2018

smaller in funerals than at weddings. Thus, the difference of the sum between the kinship and friendship is at maximum 25 times as much.

However, not everyone has strong helping money exchanges with their relatives. For instance, Mr. Pak Sang-Mun has neither stable relationships nor many helping money exchanges with his relatives. He claims that the role of the eldest son is vital in maintaining good relationships among relatives. But his elder uncle, who is the eldest son among his father's siblings, failed in his duty. When his mother passed away in 2015 (Scene 5), he expected his relatives to come to the funeral, but only one cousin appeared. This disappointed him. In his words:

> The role of the eldest son is important when it comes to maintaining good relationships among siblings and relatives. However, this was not carried out enough among my relatives, and our relationships got worse. It is partly because my elder brother passed away early. But still, when my father was alive, the role of my uncle and cousins, and the role of the eldest son [in each family] were not appropriately fulfilled. It is essential to see each other often to maintain good relationships. But because this was not realized well, we drifted apart. So, my cousins live in Seoul too, but we rarely get in touch with each other.

Studies have discussed that kinship is socially constructed (Carsten 2000; Sahlins 2011). For instance, addressing someone in genealogical terms does not necessarily reflect the actual blood ties. Kinship is a process and can be adjusted after birth, such as adaption has long produced a new kinship equivalent to the actual blood ties in diverse cultures. Moreover, the recent technologies realizing external fertilization and the legalization of marriage of LGBTQ couples have endorsed that the understanding of kinship needs to be widened from what kinship has traditionally believed to be (cf. Strathern 1992). If the kinship is constructed through everyday practice, the practice of kinship can be disrupted in the process as well. Mark Nuttall's study of Kangersuatsiaq of Greenland, which indicates that kinship is independent of genealogical sense and is socially selected, insists that kinship can be destructed in practice as well (2000: 34). This also demonstrates the dynamic alteration in kinship. The kinship by birth can modify its significance over the life course, even if the fact of blood ties does not change.

Unlike other alumni, Mr. Pak's relatives have lost their significance in his social life. The interaction between them has diminished even before his father passed away. He complained about this uncomfortable status between him and his uncles and cousins. Mr. Pak considers inviting and visiting each other's weddings and funerals are essential, which also contains exchanging helping money. However, this has not continued. For this reason, Mr. Pak and his sisters did not expect their relatives to come to their mother's funerals. Even though they remain as relatives in terms of actual blood ties, the broken interactions do not realize the expected significance. Mr. Pak's case indicates that the relatives are not necessarily reliable and stable, as it has demonstrated in other alumni's examples. The relevance of kinship can shift over the life course. In this sense, kinship does not necessarily mean the mutuality of being (cf. Sahlins 2011). Thus, for Mr. Pak, friendship, or tongch'ang-ship, is regarded more important than kinship to his relatives. Furthermore, this also reflects that his social networks and activities are concentrated within his school alumni associations.

I summarize the findings of this chapter. Kinship generally reflects a strong relationship and a high amount of helping money exchanges (up to 3 million won as demonstrated by the case of Mr. O Chae-Sin). Business relationships are not considered strong enough, and entrepreneurs exchange high amounts of helping money to secure these weak relationships. Tongch'ang relationship is conventionally evaluated strong and stable. However, it is not blood ties and is considered weaker than kinship. Thus, the tongch'ang-ship stands on the similar level of strangeness as the business relationship. However, as tongch'ang-ship has strong ties, they do not need to exchange high amount of helping money. This results in giving less helping money to tongch'ang than to the business associates. This is reflected in the amounts of helping money, and it explains why helping money among the alumni does not necessarily increase more than 100,000 won, which is the higher sum in the domain. The next chapter will focus on the mechanism of helping money in maintaining the tongch'ang-ship, which relates to reciprocal exchanges.

Five. Circulation of Helping Money and Maintenance of Tongch'ang-Ship

In the previous chapters, it was discussed that helping money exchanges follow certain formalities and patterns. Through them, individuals contingently reveal the type of social relationships and the degree of trust. In other words, helping money is intertwined with social relationships not only in terms of the closeness but also the expected consequences of such exchanges. Then, how does the exchange of helping money influence the maintenance of relationships in the long run? In this chapter, the analysis will deepen in the circulation of helping money among the 1974 alumni and its relation to the maintenance of their network. This relates to the notion of reciprocity, the obligation to return. This type of obligation is often compared with debt, and failing this duty is related to losing credits in social relationships. In an interview, Mr. An Mu-Se described that exchanges of helping money create debts comparable to those in an economic sense.

> It (helping money) is a debt (*ch'aemu*) because I have to repay it someday when I receive it. But I do not repay it in a lump sum. I repay it only when there is an occasion. If there is no occasion, I could not repay it, and it could end like that. The debt is mostly repaid. But if we have nothing to do with each other anymore or we are not close enough anymore, there is no need to return it either.

Mr. An defines helping money as a creator of debts. Helping money creates debts because one is expected to repay it. However, helping money debts differ from the debts of formalized financial activities, such as loans. Unlike a loan, the debts of helping money are created from numerous people

without a precise interest rate and date of repayment. Helping money is a collective asset; thus, the total sum of debts is dispersed to multiple individuals in smaller amounts. Because one's helping money debts result from numerous reciprocal exchanges concurrently with multiple individuals, neither the total sum nor the status of debtor and creditor is precise. In other words, an individual has given his helping money to numerous people and expects to collect his helping money from them in his ceremony. Thus, the date of repayment is typically the next ceremony. If there is no ceremony, the debt probably will not be repaid. In this sense, the debt created by helping money can be repaid only as helping money. Moreover, the repayment is based on the closeness of the respective social relationships. The debt of helping money is endangered when two individuals are not close enough anymore at the time of repayment. Consequently, the debt of helping money can be unreciprocated. Therefore, this type of debt embodies and reflects social relationships.

The following four sections will analyze the interlinkages between debt, reciprocity, and social relationships within helping money exchanges. The first section of this chapter will shed light on the helping money book, the recording mechanism of helping money exchanges. It will discuss how actively or passively this book is utilized in helping money exchanges by the 1974 alumni. The second section will focus on the forgotten helping money among the alumni. This will demonstrate how the alumni overcome any awkward feelings and disappointment despite their unreciprocated helping money. Some alumni are criticized for not exchanging helping money with their tongch'ang, and this can threaten their tongch'ang-ship. In the third section, the negative responses among the alumni and their endangered relationship will be examined. Finally, the fourth section will discuss the 1974 alumni's concerns relating to the reciprocation of the debts produced from their previous helping money after their retirement. Once they have reduced income after their retirement, they have difficulty repaying their helping money debts, and this is often the reason for scaling down the scope of their helping money exchanges and social networks.

Recording Helping Money: Pujoch'aek

Many alumni record incomes and expenses of their helping money exchanges in a book, called *pujoch'aek*. Pujoch'aek can be translated as 'a book of helping money' in English. Interestingly, no dictionary definition of pujoch'aek can be found, even though this term is widely used in daily life to refer to a list of exchanged helping money amounts. In this study, at least two different types of pujoch'aek are identified concerning helping money exchanges. The first type of pujoch'aek refers to the practice of recording names of the donors and the amounts of received helping money during the ceremony, which was extensively introduced in Chapter 3. The receptionists of each ceremony produce this book and hand in it to the main hosts or mourners after the ceremony ends. There are several synonyms for the first type of pujoch'aek in practice. In the wedding ceremony, the term *pangmyŏngrok*, meaning a 'guest book' in Korean, is occasionally mixed with pujoch'aek. However, pangmyŏngrok also refers to the book in which the visitors sign in by themselves to indicate that they were physically present in the ceremony. In funerals, people also call such a gift list *puŭirok*, the list of *puŭi* (condolence gift) or *chomunrok*, the list of *chomun* (condolence visit). However, ch'ugirok, which would mean the list of ch'ugi (congratulatory gift), is not often used.

The second type of pujoch'aek is a helping money list in which a person or a family records helping money exchanges from multiple ceremonies together in one book. The first type of pujoch'aek introduced above is a significant resource for the second type of pujoch'aek. The host of the ceremony produces this second type of pujoch'aek individually after each ceremony, based on the first type of pujoch'aek. The second type of pujoch'aek is close to an account book of helping money exchanges, as the primary purpose of such a book is to record both incomes and expenses of helping money, while the first type merely records incomes. Some alumni reported that they use the first type of pujoch'aek for the purpose of the second type. They refer to the first type who gave them how much helping money in their ceremonies. Thus, two types of pujoch'aek are practically mixed and are often not differentiated. Similar documenting systems of cash money exchanges have also been reported in various societies, such as in China and Japan (Kipnis 1997: 65, 68; Rupp 2003: 4). This section will

focus on the second type of pujoch'aek and discuss how the 1974 alumni utilize the recorded contents for their reciprocal helping money exchanges.

Individual helping money books share many similarities in terms of their contents. A page of a helping money book is conventionally divided into about four to five columns. In each column, the date, the name of the donor or the recipient, the occasion, and the amount of helping money received or given are recorded. Sometimes people also note the affiliation of each individual in the fifth column. This simple format of contents serves the reciprocal exchange of helping money. At least four alumni, such as Mr. Ha Cha-Min, Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, Mr. Kan Yo-Han, and Mr. O Chae-Sin, admitted that they have a notebook, where they manually record their helping money exchanges. However, pujoch'aek is not always in the form of written paper. Some other alumni, such as Mr. An Mu-Se, Mr. Chang Man-Sik, and Mr. Na Sang-Kil, use a computer file to manage their receiving and returns easily.

Despite the prevalence of pujoch'aek, the 1974 alumni often indirectly confirmed recording helping money exchanges in a book. Some alumni told me that they do not record helping money exchanges, but they know some people who utilize such a list. Moreover, they criticized the pujoch'aek writers for being too calculative. Thus, actively documenting helping money exchanges has a negative connotation as being calculative. This is why many alumni hesitated to talk about their recording practice of helping money exchanges in public. Only two alumni, Mr. Ha Cha-Min and Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, agreed to present their pujoch'aek for this study. Mr. Sim Ho-Tong's pujoch'aek was a simple black notebook. When he showed me his helping money book, he skimmed the pages through and explained:

> This is what I wrote a few days ago, such as the date, the content, and the amount. Here I write down the receivers of the flower arrangements: the names, whom I sent one to, and the type of the ceremony. And look here, in July 2014, Ha Cha-Min's sons got married, and this is to the son of my business associate. Here to a funeral ceremony in Busan, I spent 300,000 won for this ceremony and also sent a flower arrangement. There were six ceremonies in May (2015), but there are also many that I did not manage to write down. Seven in August, but I was busy in September [and did not manage to write the exchanges down]. And this part is the guests who came to my ceremony when my mother passed away (in 2004). This is the

> list of flower arrangements I received [for my mother's funeral ceremony]. Look, I have three pages only for the flower arrangements. And here is the list of people who gave me both money and flower arrangements [on this occasion].

Mr. Sim started writing down his helping money exchanges a long time ago when he started his own business. He actively writes down the given and received helping money, but he also fails sometimes to record his exchanges. He has documented in general six to seven giving occasions a month. He proudly explained how many flower arrangements he received, for instance, in his mother's funeral ceremony. However, Mr. Sim also emphasized that he does not document his exchanges of helping money in order to be calculative: "I made it only for reference, so this is not very important." In this way, he actively refused to appear calculative. As described in Mr. Sim's words, recording helping money exchanges exposes a twofold attitude: He is proud of the proof of his high number of received gifts. However, at the same time, he feels morally incorrect and shameful about the act of actively recording. In one way or another, the helping money book will surely help Mr. Sim to remember to whom he gave helping money and how much each time, as well as from whom and how much he received one. Even the extra gift, flower arrangements, whether he received or sent them, is all documented in his helping money book. Independently from how often he uses his book to reciprocate helping money, the act of recording signifies the act of memorizing.

Mr. Ha Cha-Min also provided his pujoch'aek for the study. Once, he emphasized: "I always keep this (pujoch'aek) with me." He emphasizes the importance of his helping money book for his social networks in daily life. Mr. Ha further explained when he started recording helping money exchanges in his pujoch'aek. He said: "I started writing pujoch'aek for my two sons' [joint] wedding ceremony. This was my first ceremony [as a host]; therefore, it was also the first incident [for me] to make a pujoch'aek." Before making his helping money book, Mr. Ha also made a shortlist after his father's funeral ceremony about ten years ago. As he is the youngest son in his family rather than the eldest, he did not have many guests from this ceremony. Therefore, the list of helping money to him in this funeral was somewhat limited, and Mr. Ha did not realize the necessity to make his helping money book. He does not possess this list anymore, but he believes that he has already repaid the debts from his father's funeral

ceremony. He became aware of the necessity to make his pujoch'aek after the joint wedding of his two sons because he was faced with a greater responsibility to return the received helping money. Similar to Mr. Sim Ho-Tong, Mr. Ha is also a relatively active user of his helping money book. Mr. Sim and Mr. Ha are both self-employed and have relatively many helping money exchanges with their business associates. Nevertheless, Mr. Ha started writing down the book only after his two sons celebrated their wedding ceremony. This is similar to other alumni's cases. The alumni mostly started writing down their exchanged helping money from the ceremony in which they are the main host or mourner, such as their children's wedding or their parent's funeral. Before that, not so many alumni recorded their given helping money. Mr. Ha Cha-Min explained that he also notes the repayments of his helping money debts in his pujoch'aek. When the debt is repaid, he said, he deletes the name in the list. For instance, some names were marked with a line in his helping money book, which symbolizes his repayment to this person. In this way, Mr. Ha Cha-Min manages whose helping money is repaid and whose is yet to pay. When the name is underlined, the reciprocity is completed.

However, I discovered that Mr. Ha Cha-Min had started the documentation of helping money exchanges far earlier than he reported. In a separate notebook, Mr. Ha also records the names and the addresses of received invitation letters. Moreover, he has been doing this even before his sons' wedding ceremonies. When he is invited to a wedding or a funeral ceremony of his friends or acquaintances, he usually participates. For this reason, the invitation letters symbolize paid helping money for him. He explains: "Because I will need their addresses to send my invitation letters too, I collect the addresses here and send my invitation to all of them on this list." Mr. Ha expects to receive back when he gives helping money. In this way, Mr. Ha sent his invitation letters to the addresses he collected on this list when his sons got married. For the same reason, some other alumni collect the invitation letters instead of writing a helping money book to remember their given helping money. Mr. Ha insists that his first helping money book appeared only after his sons' weddings. However, he has been collecting the information about the exchanges earlier than these weddings in a way or another. This way of documentation earns less moral criticism to be calculative, as it will be discussed again. To sum up, helping money

exchanges are documented in diverse ways to fulfill the reciprocity and the actors might not be necessarily aware of the practice of memorizing.

As it shows, the recording modes of helping money exchanges vary individually. Some people keep the empty helping money envelopes, on which the name and the amount of each helping money envelope are written. Some others keep merely the first type of pujoch'aek, which is produced during the ceremony by the receptionists but does not process the content into the second type of pujoch'aek. Some methods of recording helping money exchanges are less systematic but still function as remembering mechanism. In a sense, the received invitation letters, opened envelopes, and the first type of helping money books can be identified as the unprocessed first materials, which still give information on paid and received helping money. However, these modes of documenting earn less moral stigma in terms of being too calculative, as the receiver does not count the contents again in a separate book.

Mr. Kan Yo-Han also records the helping money exchanges in a book. Nevertheless, his opinion of the recording system is somewhat controversial. In the interview, Mr. Kan insisted that he does not need to make a list because he can guess almost correctly who would attend his ceremony and how much each individual would give him based on his previous exchanges. This might indicate that his scope of helping money exchanges is somewhat limited, and he remembers his previous exchanges quite well. Despite this opinion, Mr. Kan records his helping money exchanges in a book to return it properly. Mr. An Mu-Se shares Mr. Kan's opinion to some degree when it comes to recording helping money exchanges. Mr. An explains:

> My wife always records it (helping money exchanges), also the sum. But in my opinion, we only need to record the people who exchanged [helping money with us], but not the amount of money. If we were close at the time, they could give us even 200,000 won, but also 100,000 won or 50,000 won. I do not think we need to record the sum. It is cold-hearted as if it is a debt. But we still write down the sum to refer it [in the future]. Because when it comes to time to return, we should not give less than what we have received.

Mr. An Mu-Se and his wife keep a helping money book together as a family unit. Even though Mr. An does not think it necessary to record the sum of received and given helping money, his wife insists on it. Mr. An suggested that actively recording given and received helping money sums is a cold-hearted behavior. Cold-hearted behavior here describes computational financial activity represented as debt. However, as introduced at the beginning of this chapter, Mr. An described helping money exchange also as debt. In line with this, he admitted that it is also essential to record the received sums. That is because he and his wife do not want to make mistakes by giving less helping money than they once received. Even though Mr. An Mu-Se prefers exchanging helping money without being too calculative, the counterpart might not think of it in the same way. In other words, they keep recording exchanges in order to reciprocate carefully. And they actively refer to the records when they are invited to weddings and funerals.

As illustrated, the concept and practice of helping money books and recording mechanisms expose some contradiction to the idea of gift-giving. Even though many people have their pujoch'aek, others criticize it as blatantly calculative. Some alumni define helping money as debt or bill; others think it as a gift. Some other alumni express both positions, as Mr. An Mu-Se implied; it is both gift and debt. In the following, Mr. Ma Tong-Su explains his negative position toward recording exchanged helping money and his understanding of helping money close to a pure gift:

> We (Mr. Ma and his wife) do not record how much we give to whom. We do not write it down. However, I know that there are unexpectedly many people who record how much they give. In our case, we forget the sum after giving. We do not want to think about how much we gave last time and so on, because we have a different concept [of helping money exchange]. We celebrate when we are invited to a celebration, and we give condolence when we receive a call of condolence. That is it. But I do not like at all the concept of 'give and take', such as 'I receive because I gave before'. I'm not too fond of such kinds of communities and relationships too. I'm not too fond of such kinds of relationships, which are centered only on me. I think it is more convenient to give a little concession and affirm that I could receive less. I would feel comfortable when I give up [receiving].

Mr. Ma explained how he and his wife generally give helping money to other people. They aim at a non-calculative giving. For this reason, they do not record any helping money exchanges in a pujoch'aek. He also criticized people who record their helping money exchanges. For him, actively recording means being actively calculative, and he wants to avoid it. In his opinion, the act of giving is more important than the sum of helping money. Furthermore, this should lead to a sincere and benevolent relationship with the counterpart. Mr. Ma's concept of giving helping money as a gift was discussed in Chapter 4. He gives 100,000 won instead of 50,000 won in order to give more than the cost of the meal in a ceremony because he wants his helping money to be a gift. Mr. Ma especially praises the relationship, which is free from the profit-oriented calculation. He said that he once quit a contract, as well as the partnership with a business associate despite the high reliance of Mr. Ma's income on him because this associate was heavily profit-oriented instead of maintaining a harmonious relationship with Mr. Ma. He further explained that he values the relationship with people who speak the same language (*maŭmŭro t'onghanŭn sai*) or share the same view as he does. Moreover, such relationships would be independent of reciprocal helping money exchanges. In his words:

> People who write in their notebooks do not go to the ceremonies of those who did not come to their ceremonies. I had a call of condolence recently, and I could not go to the funeral ceremony, so I only sent my choŭigŭm [by proxy]. But one friend rejected going to this ceremony because the host did not come to the funeral ceremony of his mother-in-law and this is documented in his pujoch'aek. He said he does not have reason to see him again.

For Mr. Ma, the pujoch'aek is a symbol of insincerity in giving helping money. Because of the act of recording and remembering, the relationship can break. More fundamentally, remembering the previous exchanges is not regarded as virtuous in his view. In this sense, Mr. Ma insists on uncounted giving regardless of reciprocal exchanges, which is close to the concept of pure gift in his understanding. However, in order to maintain the relationship free from calculative giving, Mr. Ma premises certain degrees of social exchanges. As it will be presented in Scene 7, he calls the alumni who do not participate in their alumni reunions and ceremonies, which however includes helping money exchanges, as strongly self-willed

people. For Mr. Ma, maintaining relationships is more important than the sum of helping money, and helping money is instead a symbol for their persisting relationship. This reflects that Mr. Ma places more importance on the sincerity instead of the sum, and this is the reason why he does not record the helping money book.

Some alumni share the concept of pure gift with Mr. Ma, such as Mr. Pak Sang-Mun and Mr. Mun Pae-Ru. Mr. Pak explains his passive use of helping money books. He said: "I have made a record of attendance at the funeral ceremonies of my parents, and I will probably do the same for my children's wedding ceremonies. Nevertheless, I do not check the sum of how much I received from each person." Mr. Pak's understanding of reciprocity will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. Mr. Mun Pae-Ru is known for having numerous helping money exchanges. However, he admitted that he does not have a helping money book yet. He said:

> I do not write down who gave me how much, neither for ch'ugigŭm and puŭigŭm. I decided not to consider the sum for whoever gave me how much. I would go to their ceremonies regardless of the amount if they visited my ceremonies. Even if they did not come to my ceremonies because we got to know each other only recently, I would go to their ceremonies. It depends on the situation. So, I would rather throw away the thought that 'because you gave me 50,000 won, I also give you 50,000 won'.

Mr. Mun has a guideline for helping money exchanges, which does not rely on the sum of received helping money. His guideline was partly introduced in Chapter 4. In his helping money exchanges, the temporal circumstances are counted as well. Mr. Mun explains that social relationships are continuously changing, and the temporal closeness can influence the sum of helping money as well as the exchange of helping money at all. This reflects conditional balance and reciprocity in exchanges, and the alumni are aware of it.

The cases of the 1974 alumni demonstrate the motivations and ideas behind the recording of helping money exchanges. Recording the amount of helping money contradicts ideas of helping money as giving a gift and as being calculative. For this reason, many alumni criticize having a helping money book or are hesitant about showing their books to others. On the contrary, some alumni stress the necessity to write down the sums

in order to avoid causing a misunderstanding with others by returning a lesser sum than they received. Despite the contradiction between helping money books and helping money exchanges, some alumni actively make use of their books. However, helping money exchange also depends on the developing situation, as explained above. It can be given without any previous exchange or cannot be returned because the relationship is drifting apart. Even though the alumni insist on the morality of helping money exchanges and on not relying on the exchange records which they produced, the actual use can vary. The further use of helping money books, which is related to emotional consequences, will be introduced in the next section.

Unreciprocated Helping Money

The following section will investigate the use of the helping money book in exchanges and its influence on the tongch'ang-ship, in particular when a given helping money is not reciprocated. The most crucial role of a helping money book is to manage the balance in helping money exchanges, as explained in the previous section. They count on a certain amount of helping money from each individual, and the documentation is a method to maintain the circulation. Nevertheless, if the expected helping money is not returned, the host of the ceremony can be disappointed. It is not only the matter of repayment but also of maintaining relationships. In this regard, a receptionist in a wedding ceremony (Scene 4) reported: "Opening pujogŭm envelopes is not merely an enjoyable event. It can bring sadness and disappointment, as well." The calculation of given and received helping money is referred to as checking helping money by Mr. Chang Man-Sik. Checking means here to examine or to test the balance of helping money exchanges. Mr. Chang explains:

> I do check pujo. You know that I have checked it twice already when my mother and father passed away. Because I did it twice, I have some cases such as, 'this guy should have done it (pujo), but he did not. Did he not know about it? But it is not possible that he did not receive my message!' But I cannot complain about it. I cannot contact him personally and ask whether he knew about it (my parents' funeral ceremonies) or not.

> Anyway, I am sure that the message is delivered to him. I felt disappointed then, but I tried to forget about it. I just make sure of the fact [that he did not return my pujogŭm], but at the same time, I try to forget it. When I meet him somewhere in the future, I should pretend as if I do not care about it. I do not want to discuss [with him] whether he did it or not.

Mr. Chang explained that he 'checked' the balance of his helping money exchanges twice already when each of his parents passed away. In doing so, he discovered some friends did not repay him helping money, which made him feel disappointed at them. However, he instead sucks up his disappointment and pretends as if there is no issue about his forgotten helping money and their relationships. Similar experience with checking the balance of helping money exchanges was reported by Mr. Na Sang-Kil. Mr. Na explained when he was most disappointed after the wedding of his daughter:

> When I experienced funeral and wedding ceremonies, I affirmed at whom I was the most disappointed. It is the person who did not come to my ceremony, even though I visited his. This was the most disappointing case. They might have been busy, and I could ignore it, but my psychology does not work like that. And the second [disappointing] case was, for instance, I gave them 100,000 won, but they gave me 50,000 won. I know this is nothing significant, and they might be in a difficult financial situation. However, my psychology does not work like that. So, now I pay back merely as much as I received. This is the easiest way [not to get disappointed].

Mr. Na Sang-Kil was the most disappointed at his friends who ignored his invitation letter and thus did not appear in his daughter's wedding. The other disappointing experience refers to the friends who returned to him less than he previously gave them. Mr. Na explains the emotional challenge that he tries to ignore his disappointment at such friends. Mr. Na's solution to this disappointment is to return to the alumni as much as he received recently. Thus, if he did not receive in his last ceremonies, he does not have anything to return. However, this disappointment does not break their tongch'ang-ship. Even though he is disappointed by some alumni, this does not influence the status of tongch'ang, similar to what Mr. Chang indicated above. Mr. Na further said, he will not point out to the person that he made a mistake in returning his helping money. In his words: "When you count ch'ugigum, it is not real friends. I have that idea

(disappointment), and I will return on the next occasion as much as I received. But just a little bit I feel disappointed. Maybe I am not generous enough." Mr. Na points out that human feelings are dependent at least a little bit on some calculative manner in terms of reciprocity. However, because he knows that this should not influence his relationship with the fellow alumni, their tongch'ang-ship continues despite the imbalance. If he expresses his disappointment, this will influence his reputation as being too calculative for a similar reason introduced in the previous section: counting on money or gift often earns a negative connotation. Thus, he is careful to express his disappointment that could influence his reputation and relationship with others in the alumni association as well. As it shows, the individual's relationships are constantly tested with the exchange of helping money, and the alumni face different situations to deal with in terms of reciprocity, reputation, and its influence in the tongch'ang-ship. Nevertheless, he will recover this imbalance next time by giving less or even by not giving his helping money to those, who broke the balanced reciprocity with him.

The reason why some alumni forgot their friends' ceremony varies. For instance, Mr. O Chae-Sin reported that he forgot one of his alumni's ceremony because he was busy with his business. Nevertheless, he recovered his imbalance by giving double on the next occasion. This is a way to compensate for the forgotten gift, and it appears that the relationship is not damaged by such single incidents. However, if such mistakes happen continuously, it can influence the tongch'ang-ship as it will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Unreciprocated helping money also appears with colleagues in the workplace. When his two sons married two years apart, Mr. An Mu-Se was able to make a comparison of visitors and helping money amounts between the first and the second ceremonies. Based on his helping money book, Mr. An Mu-Se figured out that the number of guests for the first son's wedding ceremony was 10 to 20% higher than that of his second son's. This amounted to about 50 fewer guests at the second son's wedding. He confessed that the people who did not appear in the second ceremony did not interact with him often in the workplace. Mr. An said: "For the second time, close friends came even though I did not send them the invitation letter. However, the colleagues whom I once worked together with in the

same building but not anymore, they fall out." Mr. An Mu-Se admitted that mostly his close friends (tongch'ang) visited his first and second son's weddings. Some of them visited his ceremony even without receiving an invitation letter. Nevertheless, the colleagues who are not close enough to him did not give him helping money twice. Mr. An also admitted that he felt conflicted to invite those people for his younger son's wedding ceremony because inviting implies asking for helping money (Chapter 3). This would mean that he is asking for helping money twice in a short interval and he felt uncomfortable to do it again when his second son married.

Based on the records in his helping money book, Mr. Na Sang-Kil said that 30 to 40 percent of his helping money is unreciprocated. He said: "Let's say that I gave (helping money) to 100 people, then I count on 60 people who will pay me back. It's about 60 or 70 percent." Mr. Na affirms that not all given helping money is returned. However, in the same way, he will not return his received helping money to a similar degree. In his opinion, it will make a balanced exchange in the end. Because the alumni have been giving and receiving helping money for their entire social life since the 1970s, the total balance of helping money is challenging to calculate accurately, even in their tongch'ang-ship. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the debt in helping money is obscure in terms of the ambiguous status between creditors and debtors, as well as the occasions to return. The total exchange might be maintained in similar amounts considering the long-term gains and losses, as Mr. Na Sang-Kil said.

As indicated by multiple alumni, the tongch'ang-ship does not break due to the occasionally forgotten helping money. Moreover, the individuals try to overcome their mistakes by giving more for the next occasion. This is because the balanced helping money exchange is not the ultimate purpose of their relationship. However, continuous imbalance in helping money exchange can influence tongcha'ng-ship, as it will be discussed in the next section.

Scene 7: In the bus to the annual joint reunion in Gwangju in September 2015

The annual joint reunion in 2015 took place in Gwangju city. An express bus was ordered from Seoul to the event location in Gwangju to transfer dozens of tongch'ang living in and around Seoul collectively. The bus had in total of 45 seats, but only about half of them were taken. Using this ample space on the bus, some alumni took two seats and had a nap or changed their seats from one to another in order to be in conversation with various tongch'ang, such as Mr. Ma Tong-Su. We were getting close to the destination in Gwangju when Mr. Ma sat spontaneously next to me. I liked to talk to him not only because he was an active participant in my study, but also because he is a warm and friendly person. Suddenly, Mr. Ma asked me how my research is proceeding. I gave him several replies about what I found interesting in their alumni reunions and helping money exchanges. But soon, I noticed that he expected another answer to his question. He asked me again: "What have you learned so far while accompanying my friends and me to different events and ceremonies?" I could not catch quickly enough his intention behind the question and mumbled. Then he asked me again: "Did you not notice that we are always the same members who participate in various events?" Mr. Ma insisted that the alumni who actively show up for their reunions and ceremonies are limited. There are also many alumni who seldom or never participate in their events. He further explained to me that the alumni who do not maintain relationships with other tongch'ang are strongly self-willed (*tokbuljanggun*). Mr. Ma counts on a lasting and stable relationship with his fellow alumni. It was him on other occasions as well who insisted on a great value for sincerity and loyalty in his social relationships. Mr. Ma said: "You know, social relationships do not follow any fixed rules. You just need to be sincere." Sincere friends are those who come to ceremonies and reunions and actively maintain their tongch'ang-ship, in his opinion. Furthermore, this naturally leads to helping money exchanges. In his opinion, helping money is a part of the sincerity, but not the ultimate purpose.

Tongch'ang at the Edge

It has been continuously argued that the exchange of helping money supports the alumni network. However, helping money can also be a reason for making their tongch'ang-ship weaker and more distant. For instance, repeated negative experiences of the alumni in helping money exchanges are shared in the alumni association and can negatively affect someone's reputation. The individual experience becomes a collective verdict in the alumni association or the other way around. As Mr. Ma Tong-Su explained, the alumni who maintain a strong tongch'ang-ship are limited to a number among the same year of graduates (Scene 7). The reciprocal exchanges of helping money are also generally among these active alumni. To describe the alumni who do not participate in the alumni reunions and other tongch'ang's funerals and weddings, Mr. Ma Tong-Su used the term tokbuljanggun (Scene 7). This idiom describes an exceptionally self-willed person who does not compromise with others and, therefore, is isolated. In Mr. Ma's term, the alumni, who do not participate the reunions and ceremonies, are not harmonious with others in terms of getting along with each other. And this is a self-willed behavior. This judgment may sound exaggerated and biased, but such reputation of each other circulates among the alumni. This shows how individual actors relate to their experience and relationship with others in a collective entity. In particular, helping money exchanges stand as a parameter to judge someone's loyalty and trust in their tongch'ang-ship.

In this section, I will investigate responses among the alumni towards their relationship and its correlation with their helping money exchanges. Through this, the shared understanding about network maintenance among the 1974 alumni will be demonstrated. It is noticeable that helping money books contribute to the production of such responses as proof.

The first example is a positive reputation of Mr. Kong Kye-Sang reflected in his second daughter's wedding ceremony in March 2015. In an interview after this wedding ceremony, Mr. O Chae-Sin told me that Mr. Kong deserved his helping money. The main reason for his opinion is that Mr. O has observed Mr. Kong participating diligently in other friends' ceremonies. In Mr. O's words:

> Kye-Sang did his ceremony in Daegu. He has visited others' ceremonies diligently. The reason why I went to his ceremony at any cost was that he always went to others' ceremonies. It is not only because he came to my ceremony, but to others too. I remember who is usually good [in taking care of friendships] and decide whether I will participate in his ceremony or not.

Mr. O Chae-Sin insists that Mr. Kong Kye-Sang has a generally positive reputation when it comes to participating in celebrations and condolences of other tongch'ang, as well as exchanging helping money. This was one of the main reasons why Mr. O opted to participate in Mr. Kong's ceremony personally. Because Mr. Kong's ceremony took place in another city distant from Seoul, Mr. O could have given Mr. Kong his helping money by proxy, similar to many other friends. Mr. O was traveling on this day from Seoul to another city in the South to visit his son. However, he made a stop on purpose in Daegu to personally participate in Mr. Kong's ceremony. Moreover, Mr. O added that he observes in general, who is visiting others' ceremonies diligently. Based on his observation, Mr. O tries to respond to other alumni's previous efforts. Similarly, the alumni's participation in their ceremonies is observed by each other, and some alumni are blamed for their poorly received demeanor, as we will see in another example.

While some alumni are praised for their active and regular participation in the alumni's ceremonies as well as giving helping money, some others are blamed for sudden participation in the alumni reunions and an invitation to their ceremony. Many alumni explained to me that some of their tongch'ang are criticized because they did not participate in friends' ceremonies before, but they invite others to their ceremonies. This is interpreted as being selfish and arrogant as it indicates failure in some duties, such as the duty of participating in the friends' ceremonies, the duty of giving them helping money, and the duty of maintaining a stable relationship. This is contextualized with what Mr. Kan once mentioned (Chapter 2) that the wicked personality of an alumnus does not influence their tongch'ang-ship as long as he does not financially harm them, such as cheating them and making away with their money. The status of tongch'ang may be undamaged by broken communication. However, a sudden invitation to the ceremony, including a one-time helping money expectation, can be understood as financial harm to a certain degree. Thus, it influences someone's reputation among the alumni. The following

example signifies that even tongch'ang-ship is not entirely free from the calculation in terms of exchanging helping money. The long-term tongch'ang-ship is fundamentally based on reciprocity of various services and interactions, and this is also reflected in helping money. Mr. Chang Man-Sik describes his opinion on such a case:

> An alumnus from my elementary school, of whom both parents passed away, had not given any pujogŭm for a while. But suddenly, one day, he came to the reunion and gave us the wedding invitation letter of his child. If you were in such a situation, you would accept his invitation letter, but at the same time, you would feel bad. He had not come to other alumni's ceremonies but appeared suddenly at the reunion only when he was going to have his ceremony. I received his invitation letter and checked my pujoch'aek later. And I found nothing [from him]!

Mr. Chang was attending his elementary school alumni reunion when he received an unexpected invitation letter from one alumnus. This alumnus had not visited the reunions and the ceremonies of others since his both parents passed away. However, he suddenly participated in the alumni reunion and gave the tongch'ang his son's wedding invitation letter. As explained before, giving an invitation letter also indicates helping money exchange. When he received the invitation letter, Mr. Chang felt uncomfortable because he could not remember any helping money exchange with this alumnus before. He later checked his pujoch'aek at home and found out that his memory was right; this alumnus neither visited his previous ceremonies nor gave him any helping money before. His disrespectful behavior made Mr. Chang upset. He described other alumni's reaction to this alumnus at the reunion: "Some alumni told him at that moment, 'hey, you jerk, you are shameless to give us this'." Some alumni criticized him offensively. Apparently, the majority of other alumni shared this opinion too, and none of them attended this alumnus' ceremony. This episode shows how helping money exchanges, calculative manners, and maintaining social networks are all intertwined in an individual actor's reputation. Because the alumni found this behavior untrustworthy that he merely wants his alumni's helping money, none of them attended the wedding ceremony of his child. This might influence his future tongch'ang-ship too.

The solitary counting on helping money is reported by Mr. Pak Sang-Mun as well, which he also criticized. He said: "Some tongch'ang

come to the reunions only when they are going to celebrate their children's wedding ceremony." Mr. Pak Sang-Mun shares similar opinions as Mr. Chang Man-Sik in this regard. Mr. Pak explained further:

> Some friends make a profit from it. For instance, they do not participate in my ceremony even though I participated in theirs. How should I express this situation, they are smart in a way, but they know their own interest in a wicked sense, and they are impudent. They only play their own game and do not contact other friends whenever they are invited. There are some friends like that.

Mr. Pak Sang-Mun insists that the alumni who only received his helping money, but did not return any to him, utilized their ceremonies to collect helping money from more alumni. This is a tricky behavior to fulfill their interests, said Mr. Pak. Even though Mr. Pak is skeptical about this demeanor, he tends to participate and give helping money to these friends as well. In his words: "I tend to participate in the ceremony and to give pujogŭm, even though the host is not close to me. I feel being obliged to participate because they are my tongch'ang." Even though Mr. Pak knows that some alumni utilize the ceremonies to collect money, he still gives his helping money to them. He explains: "In my case, I do not participate in my tongch'ang's ceremonies with the expectation that they will also come to my weddings or funerals. I am going there to do my best for them." I assume that as Mr. Pak's social network is concentrated in the alumni network, he puts significance in maintaining the tongch'ang relationship instead of failing them. Alternatively, this might be the way how Mr. Pak expects the sincerity in his social relationships as he stressed multiple times previously. In a way or another, this demonstrates that Mr. Pak pursues more sincerity with his alumni than calculation in helping money exchanges.

Similar cases were identified multiple times during the fieldwork. For instance, a son of a 1974 alumnus living in Songwŏn was getting married in Seoul in March 2015. An invitation message was sent to all alumni living in Seoul. Despite his status as a 1974 graduate of the Hani high school, many fellow alumni of Seoul did not remember him well. This alumnus has not participated in the joint alumni reunion often. Mr. Im Se-Hun told me in an interview that he does not remember him well. Mr. Im said: "I

suddenly received the message of his [son's] wedding, but I could not remember who he was. So, I did not go to his wedding ceremony."

In the wedding ceremony, I found only three alumni from the Seoul association participating: Mr. Ma Tong-Su, Mr. Pan Tu-Hi, and Mr. Ta Nam-Gi. I also found some alumni from Songwŏn, but they were less than five people. Compared to other ceremonies, there were significantly fewer alumni participating in this wedding ceremony. Despite the unpopularity of this alumnus, the 1974 alumni association of Seoul sent him a floral arrangement. It was visibly standing near the reception desk. Interestingly enough, Mr. Im's name was on the ribbon of the flower arrangement as the president of the 1974 alumni association, even though he does not remember this alumnus at all. Despite the introduced individual imbalance in helping money exchanges, the 1974 alumni association collectively sends a flower arrangement of the same price to each member's ceremony. This does not rely on the individual contribution to the association or the individual helping money exchange. In this way, some alumni who have not participated in the reunions also received a flower arrangement for their ceremony. By doing this, the alumni association remains as a united entity and an official institute that supports all 1974 alumni. The association promotes solidarity among the 1974 alumni, also with the alumni who do not actively participate in their reunions.

Never-ending Helping Money

> Pujogŭm exchange will not disappear unless it is regulated by law. This is because it has been like that since we were young. Already as college students, we exchanged it when friends married or when their parents passed away. It has already come and gone [since then].

As Mr. Ha Cha-Min said above, people are born into the circulation of helping money as a substantial part of social life in South Korea. Does the circulation of helping money have an end? When helping money is defined as a medium for maintaining social relationships, what happens if one does not need to maintain a relationship with someone or cannot afford to give it for various reasons? The changing environment influences the exchange of helping money with colleagues or business associates, as I already

discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Moreover, retirement, which most alumni participating in this study confronted around 2015, brought a considerable change in their economic situations.[53] In this process, relationships are re-evaluated, and some previous helping money exchanges are brought to an end. In this section, I will shed light on the endangered circulation of helping money exchanges and its influence in the tongch'ang-ship.

As introduced before, some helping money is exchanged in the interest of present statuses, such as in the workplace or in the context of business relationships. For instance, Mr. Mun Pae-Ru gave less helping money than usual to his senior colleagues when they were about to retire soon (Chapter 4). This is because his helping money is not likely to be reciprocated after his senior colleague left their workplace. This is especially the case if their relationship is not close enough. For this reason, after they retire, people resent having given helping money to other colleagues if it has not been returned. Mr. Ha Cha-Min explains this situation:

> Suppose one has worked in a company for 30 years and has given much helping money to his colleagues. If he retires, it will be difficult to invite his former colleagues to any of his ceremonies. Therefore, office workers should encourage their children to get married while the parents still hold positions in the company. The death you cannot control, but weddings can be planned, so you know when you will receive helping money. It is one's right to receive helping money back. But if one retires after having only given helping money for 30 years, that is a huge overall loss, right?

Mr. Ha Cha-Min is self-employed and does not have colleagues in the workplace. He used to work in a company for several years in the 1980s when he had just moved to Seoul. However, he quickly started his flower shop, and the helping money exchanges with his former colleagues stopped after his resignation. Currently, he has helping money exchanges mainly with his business associates and school alumni. In the interview, he speaks about his tonch'ang, who worked in a company for many years and have only given helping money but did not get the chance to receive any back. For this reason, a wedding ceremony is favored while the parents still hold a position in a company if they work in a company. However, the marriage age among the Youngs has postponed in South Korea, and the

[53] The conventional retirement age in the private sector is 60 years old in South Korea.

parents often already retired when the children get married. As such, retirement influences one's helping money exchanges to a significant extent. Mr. Mun Pae-Ru retired in 2014, but his two sons did not get married before his retirement. He reported:

> When I had a position at work, many junior and senior colleagues would come to my ceremonies, and I would expect them to come too. But now I am retired, and fewer people will come when my children get married. People say, when a dog of the minister dies, many people come to the dog's funeral ceremony. But when the minister dies, no one comes to his funeral ceremony.

Mr. Mun cited a famous saying in Korea to explain how people seek favor by visiting ceremonies of an influential person. When a dog of the minister dies, many people come to his pet's funeral ceremony to gain favor with the minister. However, when the minister dies, people do not need to maintain a good relationship with the minister, and thus do not come to his funeral ceremony. This symbolizes the instrumental relationship concerning someone's profit. For this reason, Mr. Mun expects fewer guests for his sons' wedding ceremonies, especially in terms of his previous colleagues. Retirement is a frequent way to end helping money circulation with the retirement.

In retirement, some alumni still find it burdensome due to excessive expenses for helping money because not all of the alumni have a regular pension. In the following, Mr. Na Sang-Kil explains his position and strategy to overcome this problem after retirement.

> That's the hardest thing for retired people. My income is not enough to exchange [pujogŭm], but I receive too many invitations, and I cannot simply ignore them. I think this is the general opinion of retired people. We have to do it because we cannot ignore it. I cannot say something like, "I am not going to do it because I do not have income." I have my children [who are not married yet], and my parents [are still alive]. … So, I need to earn money.

Even in retirement, Mr. Na Sang-Kil is concerned about his helping money expenses and tries to earn some money with a part-time job to maintain the income. He could give up exchanging helping money, but he finds it is not realistic in anticipation of his future ceremonies, such as his children's weddings and his parents' funerals. If he stops exchanging helping money

by now, his relationship with others will be damaged, and he would not receive helping money for his ceremonies. He does not want it to happen. The number of children and the number of parents alive are indicators of how many times one could expect to receive helping money. One's duty to host a funeral or wedding ceremony finishes as soon as their parents are all dead and their children have gotten married. At this point, some people start reducing their debts in helping money by stopping helping money exchanges with others. The selfish alumnus introduced in section three of this chapter, who stopped giving helping money to his school alumni because both his parents passed away, reflects this way of thinking.

Some people intentionally invite fewer guests to their ceremonies in order to reduce helping money debts. Mr. An Mu-Se explains:

> There is a person who intentionally does not inform people [about the occasions to exchange helping money]. 'When he comes to my ceremony, I have to return it someday. But when I have to repay it in the future, I might not have a job, and it will be a burden.' Because they think they have debts, which they have to repay someday, they do not invite people.

By inviting fewer people to the ceremonies, one creates less debt, and this is a preparation for future occasions not to feel guilty when they are not able to return the received helping money. This kind of sentiment also relates to saving face. Mr. Im Se-Hun is not retired yet but is concerned about giving helping money after his retirement. He compared the harmonious exchanges of helping money with the cogwheel chain that is intertwined with keeping the face in social relationships.

> I see helping money as an axis of social relationships. And if I'm too attached to it, like a cogwheel effect, it is difficult. For instance, I have [high] income now, so if anyone has ceremonies, I can give him as much as I want. But if I do not have income [after retirement] and do not have much savings, I suddenly have to reduce my spending. It is complicated to practice the same as before. The cogwheel size is different now. So, I think I should keep giving as much as they have given to me, but not think of keeping face [by giving much now].

Mr. Im said that suddenly giving less helping money after retirement might damage a person's ability to save face as it signifies one's deteriorated economic situation. As a trick not to lose face, Mr. Im tries to develop a low expectation during his employment and gives as much as

he received from the counterpart even though he is known as a wealthy alumnus. In this way, he can maintain giving less after retirement as well and let his cogwheel roll further. In contrary to Mr. Im, Mr. O Chae-Sin said that he could not give less than his standard because he has been giving like that for years to everyone. Nevertheless, after his retirement, he will reduce the amount slowly. He also insists on a small wedding or funeral ceremony merely with close family members and friends. In his words: "As we see it, we have to cut down many relatives coming to the ceremonies, just like developed countries. We also should only invite close colleagues at work. But it has not changed yet." A big wedding or funeral ceremony is associated with the pre-modern practice, in which all village neighbors are invited and celebrate together. That is why Mr. O referred to having a small wedding ceremony which is practiced in some western countries. In fact, having a small wedding ceremony has been increasingly favored in South Korea in recent years, in which only close family members and friends are invited.

Many alumni referred to this type of small wedding ceremonies as an American wedding. I often heard: "I want to celebrate my children's wedding ceremony like Americans." In American weddings, the number of invited guests is significantly smaller than at Korean weddings. For instance, Mr. Su Ki-Ha's elder daughter's wedding ceremony had almost 1000 guests, who are known to be mostly Mr. Su's guests, and Mr. O Chae-Sin reported that he also had far more than 500 guests in his elder daughter's wedding ceremony. The number of wedding guests in Korea is often more than 200. Due to the burden to host many people and to repay helping money in the future, some alumni want to invite only close people and want their children to have a small wedding ceremony. In this sense, the alumni's intention behind having American weddings is to exchange less helping money with selective individuals. In doing so, however, they also ignore the fact that people do not often give money as a gift in American weddings. Americans typically have a list of desired gift items, which are called bridal registries. And the amount of spending on a wedding gift could be more than a casual 50,000 or 100,000 won helping money in Korea. Moreover, this type of small wedding ceremony in Korea can be quite expensive, as they usually take place in a luxurious hotel. None of the alumni, whom I interviewed, had experienced an actual American wedding. Mr. Son Han-Bin said:

> Nowadays, countries, such as the United States and other advanced nations, have name tags (for the invited guests) in the wedding ceremonies. They do a simple and small wedding ceremony with only invited people. That is good. But now that is not the culture in South Korea. If you do that, you will be criticized.

Mr. Son celebrated his elder daughter's wedding ceremony in a luxurious hotel, which is close to 'the American wedding' in his understanding. His son-in-law is a Korean American, and his family preferred having a small wedding ceremony in Korea as they do live in the USA and have only a few guests to invite in Korea. Even though his apparent preference for a small wedding ceremony had been announced, he could not anticipate the exact number of expected guests. He reported that this was due to his tongch'ang, whom he did not invite individually to his daughter's wedding, but through the administrator of the association. In his wedding ceremony, in total of 180 guests appeared, which can be considered smaller than the usual wedding ceremonies in Korea. To meet this number, Mr. Son asked his relatives not to come to his daughter's wedding and left more unexpected guests from his alumni association. He had difficulty telling his alumni not to come to his daughter's wedding as he expected to be criticized for it. Instead, he sacrificed his relatives to reduce the expected guests and relatives followed his advice.

Mr. Son indicated in the interview that a small wedding is still an exception in Korea. A big wedding ceremony with more than 200 guests is still favored. The preference for a small ceremony is similar in funerals. Nevertheless, small ceremonies seem complicated in practice. For instance, Mr. O Chae-Sin's father-in-law passed away a few years ago. Before his death, the father-in-law told his ten children not to receive helping money in his funeral ceremony. He also provided them with enough money for his funeral ceremony, which he saved for years. This was his last wish not to be beholden with helping money to his family, children, relatives, as well as the guests who should come to his own funeral ceremony. Nevertheless, his children disregarded their father's last will and received helping money at their father's funeral ceremony.

> When my father-in-law passed away, he had more than 20,000,000 won[54] in his bank account and told his children to hold his funeral ceremony with his money without receiving any puuigŭm. But after he passed away, his children all took his money. He prepared the cost of his funeral ceremony so as not to burden anyone. But the children received pujogŭm anyway. Because everyone had been exchanging actively [pujogŭm], they could not give up. So, they all received it.

Mr. O's father-in-law wanted to end the circulations of helping money in his funeral ceremony by not accepting helping money. He announced that he wanted the guests in his funeral ceremony to be able to give condolences without the burden of giving helping money. However, his wish was not realized as the actual host of his funeral ceremony is his children, not himself, and they expected their guests to act following helping money exchanges. As they have given to their friends and acquaintances helping money, they practiced their right to collect their given money on this occasion.

Helping money exchange does not seem to finish easily. However, there are contrary opinions and movements against extravagant helping money exchanges in funerals and weddings. For some incidents, giving up receiving helping money also becomes a symbol of wealth. However, for many Koreans, helping money exchange is necessary to get financial aid for hosting big ceremonies. Moreover, it is also a matter of maintaining relationships. Mr. Kan Yo-Han thinks in this regard:

> If I celebrate the wedding ceremony with a few close people, it breaks [relationships]. By the way, some celebrities have small wedding ceremonies. But it is not usual yet. For instance, presidents of large companies or government ministers, they do it, celebrating with only their close family members. However, that is not general.

Accordingly, many alumni anticipated that helping money exchanges will not disappear in the near future. No one believed that helping money practice will dissipate ever. This is because helping money is a medium for maintaining relationships. Thus, it also seems to be challenging to quit helping money exchanges so long as they maintain their tongch'ang relationship.

[54] About 17,700 USA as of 2018

As explained before, a complete reciprocal exchange is an ambiguous matter in helping money practices. In consequence, individuals try to remember and to appropriately reciprocate helping money debts using various mechanisms, such as helping money books. Despite this effort, some helping money debts are unreciprocated and can endanger the relationship. However, a steady tongch'ang-ship is not influenced by a single occurrence of forgotten helping money. It appears that helping money exchange continues in the alumni association even after their retirement, while their relationship to colleagues or other business partners is severed. Tongch'ang is their last trier to keep as they have maintained their relationship for so long. As the sum of helping money exchanged in their relationship is not high, it does not burden to exchange further after their retirement. Tongch'ang also gives pastime activity after retirement and is more likely to last. As I have discussed in this chapter, the 1974 alumni practice helping money exchanges to maintain their network. In the process, diverse emotional and practical perspectives are regarded, such as imbalanced reciprocity and the almost psychological challenge to deal with uncomfortable feelings. Among the 1974 alumni who have been participating in the association and are known as firm members, the standard sum symbolizes casual but lasting relationships. This signifies the various meanings of the same amount of monetary gift. In the next concluding chapter, this perspective will be elaborated in more detail.

Six. Conclusion: Money connects People

This study started with curiosity about the significance of a relatively smaller amount of gift money for maintaining a strong social network. The investigation has reflected the intertwined natures of the gift, money, and social relationship. This study discussed a particular type of monetary gifts in Korean weddings and funerals, called helping money (*pujogŭm* in Korean). This exchange was intensively observed among the members of a high school alumni association that have maintained their network since the graduation in 1974 (hereafter the 1974 alumni). This relationship of the same year graduates of the same school is called *tongch'ang* in Korean and has particular importance in one's social capital. In the maintenance of the 1974 alumni network, helping money has been exchanged in standardized manners, such as the sum and the payment by proxy. This study relates to a society that is heavily influenced by networking with ascribed attributes and where people have no hesitation in exchanging cash as a gift. In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the findings of the study and prospect the significance in understanding money's social functions in the market society. The findings together indicate what the numbers in helping money sums refer to in the tongch'ang relationship (hereafter tongch'ang-ship).

Tongch'ang-ship is a popular type of networking among Koreans and is often maintained for life. This relationship is based on a number of mutual social backgrounds, such as having the same regional and school origins stratified by the age grades. Moreover, a great majority of the investigated 1974 alumni experienced a local transition from a rural to an urban area in their youth in line with the industrialization of the country in the 1970s and 1980s. As new urban migrants, the high school alumni

association provided the 1974 alumni a reference group as well as a strong sense of belongingness in an unfamiliar city. The similarity of language, sincerity, informality, and comfortability is used to describe their tongch'ang-ship. Even though their daily exchange and communication are not intensive, their alumni network supports the members to exchange their resources and get mutual benefits when in need. Thus, the network of tongch'ang gives individuals potentially strong ties as they are easily trusted based on the common backgrounds regardless of the frequency of meeting and actual closeness.

The alumni association is a prestigious network of graduates. As the head and the main bread-earner of the household, men were more frequently entitled to higher education and responsibility for social networking than women in the traditional family structure. With this background, boys commonly received a prestigious opportunity in education and were more encouraged than girls to enter high school in the 1974 alumni's youth. With this prestige and belonging to the high school alumni association, they differentiate themselves from other groups and people in a similar or distinct social location.

By pursuing individual careers, each of the 1974 alumni, despite their mutual social status as new urban migrants from the same rural region and school, developed into different social and economic positions. Some alumni reached high-ranking positions in a company or public office, and some others established their own company and secured a high income. In comparison to that, some other alumni were average employees of a company and recently retired as they reached 60 years old. Some others live in more impoverished conditions with unstable income. The difference in social and economic positions can result in the superiority of some alumni over others even though they are believed to be in a linear hierarchy based on their similar backgrounds. The different socioeconomic conditions also influence the degree of individual participation in the alumni association as well as the exchange of helping money with the alumni. The alumni actively participating in the reunions and events are mostly in a relatively stable financial condition. They afford to pay the membership fee for their association and to give helping money to their friends. In summation, one's socioeconomic position is an essential factor for the social capitalization of their tongch'ang-ship.

Due to its closed and strong character of networking, the school alumni associations earn many criticisms for group favoritism. Comparable networks are also known in other societies, such as the Studentenverbindungen in Germany and the fraternities in the U.S. The significant difference of the Korean alumni association from other examples is that tongch'ang is a quite prevalent and common type of networking in the society. This is also what signifies a difference of tongch'ang relationship from *guanxi*, a well-known term for social networking from China. Guanxi can be built at any point in one's life independently from one's natal or school background. Thus, guanxi is explained in a broader sense, including not only family and close friends, but also acquaintances in the village, who can be asked for a favor (cf. Yan 1996: 99-100).

A shift in such association and networking is observed in recent social development. As the intensive rural-urban migration has lessened, and many people have been born in big cities, networking through the school alumni association earns less importance in younger generations. Instead, the university alumni associations appear to be prestigious in Korean society. Already for decades, high school education became universal, and most middle school students enter high schools without an exam. Nevertheless, universities, in particular, the highly renowned ones, are difficult to enter, which require a high score at the entrance exam. As it was difficult to enter a high school when the 1974 alumni were youth, the university is difficult to enter in current Korean society. Thus, instead of local and high school origin, university entrance became one of the prestige measurements. However, as some students enter the university after multiple tries of the entrance exam, the ages of the students in the same year usually differ. Thus, the homogeneity in the age of the same year is not cohesive in the universities. We still discover a similar pattern in both high school and university alumni associations; the more resources one has, the more likely one enters a prestigious educational institute.

Previous studies of the gift have insisted on its spirit and inalienability. According to this position, the innate power of gifts destines the reciprocation of the given object as well as one's social relationships. In comparison to that, the practice of helping money does not reflect the spirit and inalienability of gifts as cash circulates anonymously in society.

However, helping money is identified as a gift in this study as it influences social relationships through reciprocity. In order to understand the function of money as it pertains to wedding and funeral gifts, the concept of special money is applied. Special money indicates diverse functions and social meanings of money in various social contexts despite the same features (Zelizer 1989). For instance, a one-dollar bill for purchasing a banana in the supermarket is not the same as parents giving pocket money to their children. Regarding the social and cultural contexts, money can also fulfill the function of gifts that connect individuals to individuals through reciprocity. In helping money exchanges, the standard value of money is rigorously utilized to express the emotions and indications in the relationships. In particular, the same amount of gift money varies its meaning depending on whom it is bestowed. Moreover, different sums are returned to the same category of social relationships to refer to the same indication. These findings contribute to the discussion of the standardized value of market money and its various meanings regarding not only cultural and social but also human-relational contexts.

In the 2010s, the standard sums of helping money in Korea were 30,000 won, 50,000 won, and 100,000 won, although 30,000 won helping money is exchanged less and less. Some of the 1974 alumni identify helping money as a pure gift that is free from any reciprocal expectation. Nevertheless, the individual understanding of a pure gift and their actual practice differed. Some others explain helping money as creating debts that have to be repaid, but it can be repaid only in the announced occasions, such as weddings and funerals. Thus, helping money can be repaid only as helping money. In the study of tongch'ang-ship and gift exchanges, unbalanced reciprocity appeared, but this imbalance can produce solidarity among the members in the association. This imbalance is created by the different sums of helping money among the 1974 alumni. While major alumni generally give 50,000 won to their tongch'ang, some wealthy alumni consistently give 100,000 won. The individuals' socioeconomic condition influences which of the two sums they continuously give to their alumni. The 1974 alumni consistently give the same amount of helping money to their alumni in order to symbolize their uniform closeness based on their tongch'ang status. Concerning that, the imbalance of exchanged helping money tends to be accepted or ignored among the alumni. The reason for the acceptance of the imbalance is because the alumni consider

the different financial situations of each alumnus. Those who have a high income are self-evidently willing to contribute more to their friends, while the others provide the lower sum of helping money. In this way, the 1974 alumni strengthen their network and solidarity of their association, not being burdened by costly helping money. However, the imbalance caused by an unexpected intention can bring emotional damage, such as when an alumnus forgets to give helping money on occasion. A more significant conflict is caused by the imbalance when an alumnus has not exchanged helping money with other alumni for years but suddenly invites them to a ceremony. In this case, the alumnus was heavily criticized for being selfish by other alumni and also did not receive any helping money from them.

Thus, the majority of the investigated alumni relies basically on balanced reciprocity and accounts for the general balance of helping money exchanges. In line with this, they conduct a recording system of exchanges (helping money books) and examine their helping money incomes and expenses. This process also includes evaluating their relationships with each other based on the balanced or unbalanced exchanges. In other words, helping money exchanges are an indicator for evaluating relationships. Despite this fact, being calculative in terms of evaluating exchanged sums earns a negative criticism among the alumni. Thus, helping money is identified as a gift in the ceremonies, but it informally functions as the standard for evaluating relationships and for calculating reciprocity.

The findings of previous studies indicate that people tend to give a higher value of gifts according to their closeness. In case of cash gifts, for instance, Rupp insists that "generally, the closer the relationship (in terms of kinship distance, friendship, place of residence, and historical connection) the higher the cash value of the gift (2003: 50)." Despite their strong and lifelong friendship, however, tongch'ang-ship is not maintained through a high sum of helping money exchanges. As explained, the helping money sums exchanged among the 1974 alumni are predominantly either 50,000 won or 100,000 won. Compared to this, the sum of helping money increases up to 3,000,000 to kin and up to 300,000 won to business associates. The sum of helping money for kinship is high because it is regarded as the closest relationship by the vast majority of the 1974 alumni. The alumni, especially those who have their own business, give more helping money to their business associates than to their

tongch'ang in order to signify sincerity and trust and to strengthen their business relationships. Tongch'ang-ship is not as close as kinship but has a strong trust established since their youth, unlike the business associates, who get to know each other relatively recently for instrumental purposes. In this sense, tongch'ang is not a relationship of generalized reciprocity in Sahlins' term (1972: 193-196). Even though tongch'ang is compared with kinship as having descriptive characters, this relationship is still differentiated from kinship as the sum of helping money also indicates. This also explains why this relationship is not entirely free from the reciprocal exchange of helping money. Nevertheless, tongch'ang is not found in the instrumental relationship such as business relations. It is a collective friendship with descriptive characters that is not strengthened through a high sum of helping money. Thus, helping money among the tongch'ang does not need to be higher than the standard sums. Their helping money is a symbol of their lasting relationship. In this sense, the high value of the gifts does not always indicate a strong relationship.

Helping money exchanges among the 1974 alumni reflect how the ambiguity in gift exchange is gauged in monetary values and in what ways it is correlated with social relationships. What this study has emphasized is that the same amount of money has different meanings and roles depending on the social and cultural contexts. I also discovered that the coalescence of expressive and instrumental gift exchanges in helping money (cf. Yan 1996; 2002). While helping money to business associates is close to instrumental gift exchanges, helping money to tongch'ang and kinship is close to expressive ones. However, regarding the fact that merely affordable alumni remain in the association, and some alumni utilize the tongch'ang network to promote their own business, it can also be an instrumental gift. Furthermore, this type of gift money follows highly standardized manners. Through the exchanges of the standardized sums, the relationships are reassured and maintained. Giving helping money as a gift becomes taking care of someone promoting moral and normative values. In this way, the alumni remake the sense of helping money exchanges and reproduce the meaning of 50,000 won. Moreover, the nature of money provides the fluidity and liquidity of such exchanges and gives financial aid holding the ceremonies too. Thus, money is both gifts and commodities in this study. In this regard, money becomes the most versatile and convenient tool to make the social network in the market

economy. Helping money as a gift and a commodity remakes the sense of money and monetary exchanges in a community. Therefore, materiality and social relationships are closely linked to each other (Sahlins 1972: 186).

The process of exchange, reevaluation, and redefinition of relationships circulates in the society in different contexts, within the generations, and over the generations. Generations are politically and economically consumed in Korea (Chun Sangchin 2018), and the 1974 alumni stipulate the generation narrative that also extends to a particular type of social networking. This is also the reason why the high school alumni network becomes not only gender- but also generation-specific experience. As the continuous chain of helping money is burdensome, some alumni seek an exit of the chain and referring to have an American style wedding ceremony. The 'American wedding' indicates how global reference becomes an indication to stop the chain. But as their relationships are tied to the local people, they do not dare to break the chain and to practice an American wedding. As this demonstrates, gift exchange in the market and industrial societies is nowhere in the redundancy, against what Cheal insisted (1988: 12).

This study should be considered as an example of monetary gift exchanges, which has some limitations. Most of all, the gendered sphere is not considered enough in this study. In Confucian tradition, women are regarded as being highly subordinated and obedient by men in the family, and this perspective is reflected stronger in the generation of the investigated alumni than the younger generation. However, the actual role of women in the economic sphere has been reported in studies, although it is not widely perceived (Lee Eun-Jeung 1994). As other scholars have mentioned, the selection of gifts is substantially the women's responsibility in a household (Carrier 1995: 36-37, 116-119; Rupp 2003: 158-162). It was also significantly observed in this study that many 1974 alumni discuss with their wives how much helping money to give to their friends and acquaintances.

Since September 28. 2016, the South Korean government prohibits gift giving to employees in public offices, education, and press institutes of the value of more than 50,000 won. According to this law, often called Kim, Yŏng-Ran law, following the name of the proposer, there is a limit on paying for a meal over 30,000 won, giving a gift over 50,000 won, or giving

helping money over 50,000 won for a person in such a position. This legislation indicates the significance and extensive practice of helping money exchanges in Korean society. It has been more than two years since this law was put into force, and I have heard a lot of positive responses from people in different positions. This is because people have a legitimate reason not to give more helping money than the limited sum (50,000 won) and are less burdened. However, this law has not influenced the practice of exchanging helping money itself. In its essence, this reflects the indispensability of helping money in maintaining social relationships, and merely suppressive regulations can influence its exchange.

In this study, I have struggled to decompose the intertwined practices of monetary gift exchanges within a specific social network. It also indicates how a scattered connection got together as a united network based on similar attributes belonging to school alumni. And in what ways the network is related to gift exchanges. This study also was an approach to evaluate the money's quality instead of quantity and how the various elements are correlated with each other. As I have shown, people assign different meanings to money, and, when it becomes a gift, money can produce a sense of belongingness and trust, and generate diverse emotions. Thus, money, like other types of gifts, also embodies social relationships. For the 1974 alumni who actively participate in helping money exchanges and maintain their strong tongch'ang-ship, helping money reinforces their identity as the graduates of the same school and the same year. Moreover, the organized frames and structured manner of helping money exchanges make it easier for the alumni to maintain their network. This also contributes to the solidarity of their association as well as strengthens their social capital. Through the study of helping money, the social significance of alumni relationships in Korean society and their relevance in gift exchange is demonstrated. Thus, 50,000 won friends stand for a lifelong relationship that has a strong sense of belongingness and has strong enough trust to be maintained even by the lower sum of gift money. We have long ignored the social and cultural dimensions of money and its potentially diverse meanings in contexts. Individuals give different meanings and purposes to cash, and this indicates that we should broaden the understanding of market money. Money is no less emotional and moral than other types of material gifts.

Appendix

Summary

This study is about monetary gift exchanges in a high school alumni association of South Korea. It seeks to answer the research question: how is the specific type of social relationship maintained through the standardized exchange of gift money? The monetary gifts, called helping money (*pujogŭm*), are intensively exchanged in Korean weddings and funerals. The particular character of helping money is that it circulates in standardized manners in terms of the amounts (mostly either 50,000 won or 100,000 won as of 2018). Furthermore, the high school alumni are called *tongch'ang* and have pivotal relevance in one's social capital in Korea. This study explores how these two elements interact together and what social meanings and functions of money it reveals.

This study is an ethnography and was conducted with ethnographic research methods. The fieldwork was conducted for about a year in various cities in South Korea between 2014 and 2015. The high school of the investigated alumni association is located in Songwŏn, a rural and agricultural county. This alumni association has existed for longer than 30 years and maintained its network with the active exchange of helping money among the members. In the investigation, the following is discussed in four chapters.

Chapter 2 brought the central relationship of the study, tongch'ang-ship, into the discussion. The rapid economic development and rural-urban migration of the country fostered the development of regional and school-based associations in the big cities. One typical example of such associations is the alumni network. This type of relationship often considered lifelong friends based on mutual origin and shared memories

in the youth. However, the participation in such association often limits to individuals, who make use of such a network.

Chapter 3 illustrated the practice of helping money exchanges in South Korean weddings and funerals. This practice is identified as the extension of the practice of mutual help in pre-industrial rural communities. This chapter also gave a detailed illustration of the process of 'making money into helping money'. The essence of this process lies in the manner of packing and delivering white envelopes. In particular, money becomes a gift through an agent at the registration desk. The symbolic value of flower arrangements, a parallel gift in the ceremonies, was also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 discussed the standardized sums of helping money among the tongch'ang-ship. As the title of this study indicates, it elaborated why the alumni identify each other as 50,000 won or 100,000 won friends. These sums are compared with their helping money to other social relationships, such as kin and business associates. The helping money sums of the latter two relationships often exceed the standard sums among the alumni. This chapter concluded that a relatively smaller amount of helping money among the alumni is a symbol of their established trust and lasting relationship.

Chapter 5 investigated the circulation of helping money among the tongch'ang regarding reciprocity. This chapter deals with the cycles of gift exchanges in a group and the relevance of reciprocity for maintaining a social network. Through the standardized manner of giving helping money in terms of the sums and the modes of exchange, the investigated alumni maintain their network and reinforce their mutual identity. In other words, the investigated alumni assign a social meaning to money, depending on the relationship and the purpose of giving the gift.

Altogether, this study implies the understanding of the social roles of money in Korean society. It also argues for a specific relationship and its meaning in social networking, which can be identified as a generation, location, and class specific. The study of helping money shows intertwined practices of money, monetary gifts, maintaining social networks, and requires a multi-level understanding. To sum, money, similar to other types of gifts, also embodies social relationships. Thus, the 50,000 won friends stand for a lifelong friendship with strong belongingness.

Zusammenfassung

Neben den gängigen Funktionen von Geld als Tausch-, Zahlungs- und Wertaufbewahrungsmittel betrachten viele aktuelle Studien auch die soziale Bedeutung. Dabei wird die Rolle des Geldes als Geschenk jedoch nur am Rande diskutiert. Diese Studie untersucht den Austausch von Geldgeschenken bei südkoreanischen Hochzeiten und Beerdigungen, genannt Hilfsgeld (*pujogŭm*). Der Austausch dieses Hilfsgeldes wurde intensiv unter den Mitgliedern einer Ehemaligenvereinigung, die alle vor 30 Jahren dieselbe Oberschule absolviert haben. Diese Alumni-Beziehung wird auf Koreanisch *Tongch'ang* genannt und hat eine zentrale Bedeutung für die Bestimmung von sozialem Kapital in Korea. Durch eine ritualisierte Art des Hilfsgeldes in Bezug auf die Summen und die Art des Austausches stärken die untersuchten Alumni ihr Netzwerk sowie ihre gemeinsame Identität. Die Summe des Hilfsgeldes unter den Alumni ist häufig 50.000 Won oder 100.000 Won, was weniger im Vergleich zu ähnlichen Zahlungen von Hilfsgeld zwischen Verwandten oder Geschäftspartnern ist. Laut den Alumni muss das Hilfsgeld unter den Tongch'ang nicht hoch sein, weil ihre Tongch'ang-Beziehung nicht durch eine hohe Summe von Hilfsgeldern gestärkt wird, sondern weil bereits zu ihrer Schulzeit starke Bindungen, gegenseitiges Vertrauen und Solidarität aufgebaut worden sind. Aus dieser Fallstudie ergibt sich, dass die untersuchten Alumni dem Geld verschiedene soziale Bedeutungen zuweisen, wenn es als Geschenk gegeben wird. Folglich erzeugt Geld das Gefühl von Zugehörigkeit, Vertrauen sowie vielfältige Emotionen. Geld, ähnlich wie andere Arten von Geschenken, verkörpert vielfältige soziale Beziehungen. So stehen die 50.000 Won für eine lebenslange Freundschaft mit starker Gruppenzugehörigkeit.

Korean Character List

ch′aemu	채무 (債務)*
chappakkye	자빡계 (--契)**
ch′emyŏn	체면 (體面)
ch′in′gu	친구 (親舊)
ch′inmokkye	친목계 (親睦契)
chiyŏkchuŭi	지역주의 (地域主義)
chiyŏkkamjŏng	지역감정 (地域感情)
chohwa	조화 (弔花)
chokkye	족계 (族契)
chomun	조문 (弔問)
chomunrok	조문록 (弔問錄)
ch′ongmu	총무 (總務)
choŭigŭm	조의금 (弔意金)
ch′ugi	축의 (祝儀)
ch′ugŭigŭm	축의금 (祝儀金)
ch′ukkyŏrhon	축결혼 (祝結婚)
eup	읍 (邑)
hakkye	학계 (學契)

hakkyo ch'in'gu	학교 친구 (學校 親舊)
holssu	홀수 (-數)
hubae	후배 (後輩)
hwahwan	화환 (花環)
hyangu	향우 (鄕友)
hyangu-hoe	향우회 (鄕友會)
hyŏngŭmpujo	현금부조 (現金扶助)
hyŏnmulpujo	현물부조 (現物扶助)
inmaek	인맥 (人脈)
kabangsuni	가방순이
kapkye	갑계(甲契)
kirhyungbujo	길흉부조 (吉凶扶助)
kkot	꽃
kojisŏ	고지서 (告知書)
kŭm	금 (金)
kŭnjohwa	근조화 (謹弔花)
kwinonggwich'on	귀농귀촌 (歸農歸村)
kye	계 (契)
kyech'ŏp	계첩 (契帖)
kyongjosabi	경조사비 (慶弔事費)
manin'gye	만인계 (萬人契)
maŭmŭro t'onghanŭn sai	마음으로 통하는 사이
mombujo	몸부조 (-扶助)
myeon	면 (面)
nam	남
nammaegye	남매계 (男妹契)

nonggye	농계 (農契)
nundojang tchikta	눈도장 찍다
pangmyŏngrok	방명록 (芳名錄)
pon'gosa	본고사 (本考査)
pujo	부조 (扶助)
pujoch’aek	부조책 (扶助冊)
pujogŭm	부조금 (扶助金)
p’umasi	품앗이
puŭi	부의 (賻儀)
puŭigŭm	부의금 (賻儀金)
puŭirok	부의록 (賻儀錄)
sagyogye	사교계 (社交契)
sahoe ch’in’gu	사회 친구 (社會 親舊)
samsibyukkye	삼십육계 (三十六契)
sangbusangjo	상부상조 (相扶相助)
sanggye	상계 (喪契)
sŏnbae	선배 (先輩)
songgye	송계 (松契)
sŏnhubae kwan’gye	선후배 관계 (先後輩 關係)
taenap	대납 (代納)
tamunhwa kajŏng	다문화 가정 (多文化 家庭)
tchaksu	짝수(-數)
tokbuljanggun	독불장군 (獨不將軍)
tongch’ang	동창 (同窓)
tongch’ang-hoe	동창회 (同窓會)
tongkye	동계 (洞契)

tongmun	동문 (同門)
tongmun-hoe	동문회 (同門會)
t'ŭre pakhida	틀에 박히다
ture	두레
ŭm	음 (陰)
yang	양 (陽)
yebigosa	예비고사 (豫備考査)
yŏn'go	연고 (緣故)
yŏnjul	연줄 (緣-)
yŏp'chip sutkaragi myŏtkaeinji anda	옆집 숟가락이 몇개인지 안다

* The Chinese characters in the parenthesis are shown only if the translation is possible.
** (-) indicates the words of Korean origin, thus no Chinese writing is available.

Main Informants

An Mu-Se (안무세)

Mr. An Mu-Se moved to Seoul and started working as a public official in the tax department since 1979. In 2015, he was expecting to retire soon. Mr. An has stronger ties with his elementary school alumni than to his high school alumni. Mr. An had wedding ceremonies of his two sons: his elder son got married in 2012 and the younger son in 2014. Mr. An and his wife manage a mutual helping money book in which they document helping money exchanges with their colleagues and friends.

Ch'a Chi-Wŏn (차지원)

Mr. Ch'a Chi-Wŏn is one year older than other 1974 alumni. Despite the different ages, he is an active member of the 1974 alumni association of Seoul. He is an entrepreneur and owns a construction developing company. Thus, Mr. Ch'a is regarded as one of the successful and wealthy alumni among the class of 1974. He also belongs to the golf club of the 1974 alumni, in which mostly wealthy alumni participate. According to Mr. Ch'a, he personally does not prefer helping money exchanges. However, he wants to receive back what he has already given. Thus, he wants his children to have a big wedding ceremony.

Chang Man-Sik (장만식)

Mr. Chang Man-Sik worked in a telecommunication company and has been retired since 2014. He has two children, and his elder daughter was married a few years ago. Mr. Chang is the eldest son among his five siblings and has a responsibility when it comes to exchanging helping money, such as giving helping money in the name of his dead parents. In order to do this responsibility efficiently, he manages a helping money book. He also attends his elementary school alumni association.

Ha Cha-Min (하자민)

Mr. Ha Cha-Min is the owner of a flower shop in the center of Seoul and is responsible for sending standing flower arrangements to the ceremonies of the 1974 alumni of the Hani high school in Seoul. He is a member of various associations and communities with his alumni or business associates. As Mr. Ha entered the Hani high school one year later than his peers, he is officially in the 1975 alumni association. Despite this fact, he declares that he does not feel close to his official high school tongch'ang and gets along with his peers more than with them.

Im Se-Hun (임세훈)

Mr. Im Se-Hun was the president of the 1974 alumni association in Seoul during the fieldwork. When he moved to Seoul, he started working in an auto repair shop. However, he wanted to have a recognized job, and this spurred him to study for the university entrance exam. After graduation from university, he started his career as a public official. He worked as a public official for about 30 years and reached a high-ranking position. After retirement, he was provided the presidential position of a development organization. Mr. Im does not want to spend much money on helping money unless they are close.

Kan Yo-Han (간요한)

Mr. Kan Yo-Han worked as a public official for about 20 years until he became a real estate agent. Despite his being one year older than other 1974 alumni, he is an active member of his alumni association. He has especially close relationships with Mr. Ma Tong-Su and Mr. Pak Sang-Mun, who live nearby his office. Mr. Kan has two children: a daughter and a son. His daughter was preparing for her wedding ceremony in 2015. Mr. Kan described himself as a quiet person. He does not like to meet many new people. Nevertheless, he is a member of at least five different communities. These communities are with his neighbors, previous colleagues from the public office, people with whom he plays badminton, his hometown friends, and high school alumni.

Kong Ke-Sang (공게상)

Mr. Kong Ke-Sang works in an advertisement agency. Due to his profession, he is known for having extensive networks, in particular with the CEOs of various companies. In 2015, his second daughter got married, a wedding in which I also participated.

Ma Tong-Su (마동수)

Mr. Ma Tong-Su is self-employed and has a factory producing oil refinery tools. After graduation from Hani high school, he moved to Seoul and worked in several factories until he opened one by himself about 30 years ago. Now, his wife and their eldest son are also working in his factory together. He is also a member of diverse communities (more than ten) besides the alumni associations and is known as a person with broad social networks. He said that if he had saved money without spending too much on going out with his friends, he would be more luxurious than now. However, maintaining good social relationships is more important for him than being rich. Mr. Ma defines helping money similar to a pure gift free from reciprocity, which is also the reason why he does not document his helping money exchanges.

Mun Pae-Ru (문배루)

Mr. Mun Pae-Ru is an alumnus of the Songwŏn Sari High School. However, as he went to Songwŏn middle school with many of the alumni of Hani high school, he is actively involved in the alumni association of the class of 1974. Mr. Mun worked as a bank clerk in Seoul for almost 40 years and was promoted up to branch manager. By 2015, he was retired and spending time with his former colleagues and alumni. With his active and careful character, he is involved in various communities. He said that about 60% of these networks are related to his previous workplaces. Only 30% are related to the school or hometown alumni associations. The other 10% are with people whom he got to know from his hobby or sports clubs.

Na Sang-Kil (나상길)

Mr. Na Sang-Kil started working as a public official in 1978. He was an administrator in the department of civil engineering. After 20 years of working there, Mr. Na decided to leave his position and to start a business of his own. Mr. Na expected to make more money by doing his own business. He continued his business for about 20 years. Nevertheless, under changing business environments and economic situations, Mr. Na decided to quit his business in 2014. After retirement, playing golf became the major activity in his daily schedule. He has two children, a son, and a daughter. His daughter got married about four years ago.

O Chae-Sin (오재신)

Mr. O Chae-Sin is the CEO of an insurance company. He started his career as a clerk at the lowest level of a conglomerate. Mr. O was a hard worker in the company and was promoted further. After 27 years, he even became an executive member of that conglomerate. A few years ago, he retired from the conglomerate and now runs his own company. Among the alumni, Mr. O is regarded as one of the successful friends. He is invited to many ceremonies for his business partners and formal colleagues, and his expense for helping money is enormous. With a number of wealthy 1974

alumni, he also belongs to the golf club and regularly meets them to play. Mr. O Chae-Sin is the eldest son among his seven siblings and fulfills his duty in terms of giving helping money to his relatives in the name of his parents.

Pak Sang-Mun (박상문)

Mr. Pak Sang-Mun owns an iron cutting factory in a complex near Seoul. He runs this factory with his wife, Mrs. Kim Sun-Cha. Before he started his own business, Mr. Pak worked in a big automobile production company. He quit his job when the automobile industry did not make much profit. Neither he nor his wife maintains strong relationships with the neighboring entrepreneurs and their relatives. His main social networks are with his elementary and high school alumni. His helping money exchanges are also within these networks.

Pan Tu-Hi (반두히)

Mr. Pan Tu-Hi is the longtime administrator of the 1974 alumni association. By the alumni, he is often identified as the actual operator of the alumni association in administration and maintaining the alumni association. He worked as a salesman in a telecommunication company in Seoul until the end of 2014. As one key member of the 1974 alumni association, Mr. Pan mostly participates in the reunions and ceremonies. For this reason, he is often asked for the payment by proxy of helping money. For this reason, Mr. Pan is especially welcomed in the ceremonies, as he brings five to ten envelopes at once to the reception desk.

Son Han-Pin (손한빈)

Mr. Son Han-Pin is a professional accountant having his office in Gangnam, a prosperous district of Seoul, and is recognized as a wealthy alumnus. His mother passed away in 2014, and his elder daughter got married in 2015. I

participated in his two ceremonies in 2014 and 2015. He prefers having a small wedding ceremony rather than a big one with extensive helping money exchanges. Mr. Son wishes to invite-only 50 guests when his second daughter marries. Thus, he would give up receiving helping money that he has given.

Sim Ho-Tong (심호동)

Mr. Sim Ho-Dong is an entrepreneur owning a small publishing company. Mr. Sim is regarded as one of the wealthy alumni in the 1974 alumni association and also belongs to the golf club of the 1974 alumni. However, he said that he plays golf more with his business partners to maintain good relationships with them: "If you play golf, your relationship gets better." He is a less active member of his alumni association as he mostly spends his time cultivating relationships with his business associates.

Su Ki-Ha (수기하)

Mr. Su Ki-Ha is one of the most active alumni in the 1974 alumni association. He is an influential entrepreneur owning a book delivery company. He was the president of the hometown friends association of Seoul during my fieldwork and is also known as a wealthy alumnus with broad social networks. For instance, he is a member of the advisory committee of a local politician. As a key member of the 1974 association, he is also remarked for the way he takes care of his networks. For instance, he notes the death anniversary of his alumni's parents and sends a message on this day every year. Mr. Su mentioned that success means for him being in an influential position and helping his friends and acquaintances with his prominent position.

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Declaration of Authorship

Hereby, I declare that I have composed the presented paper independently on my own and without any other resources than the ones indicated. All thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources are properly denoted as such.

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