

The Role of Government and Teachers for Raising Transparency of School Community

학교공동체의 투명성 향상을 위한 정부와 교사의 역할

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ABSTRACT

본 논문의 주요 내용은 한국의 학교공동체에서 가장 전통적인 의미의 부패중 하나인 촌지를 다루고 있다. 그동안 학교내 촌지 수수가 학부모의 학교교육에 대한 불만 중 가장 큰 부분을 차지했으며 아직도 학교에서 촌지 관행이 근절되었다고 보는 사람은 없다. 촌지 관련 교육부패는 여전하다.

논문의 연구의 목적은 학교조직의 투명성을 위하여 학교조직의 부패중 하나인 촌지(Chonji)의 개념과 한국사회와 촌지문화를 개괄하고, 학교촌지에 대한 학부모의 입장과 실제로 부모와 교사 사이에 촌지를 주고 받은 사실을 각종 통계자료를 근거하여 분석하고 제시하였다. 아울러 학교공동체의 건강성과 교육적 발전을 위하여 촌지를 근본적으로 근절하기 위한 정책적 대안 제시와 촌지 없는 학교공동체를 위한 실천적 과제를 교사, 학부모, 정부 입장에 실천할 수 있는 구체적인 과제를 제시하였다.

Key words: Transparency(투명성), School community(학교공동체), Chonji(촌지), Trust between teachers and parents(교사와 학부모의 신뢰)

I. Introduction

The corruption of most conventional sense in education circles is the 'individual Chonji' which is an 'illegal bribery' that the teachers receive from parents. The abuse of Chonji by parents had reached a quite serious level until 1990's and the practice of accepting Chonji has started being discouraged as the education authorities have introduced several strong policies such as the 'accusation on accepting Chonji'. Although this was not caused by self-purification effort of the teachers, it is clear that these policies had put a brake on the trend of Chonji practice until then. The acceptance of Chonji had taken up the greatest part among

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the complaints of parents toward school so far and there is still no one who considers that Chonji practice is eliminated in schools. The corruption related to Chonji is still the same.

Our educational situation today appears to very difficult. The reason for this and a problem for this is that despite the continued efforts for long periods, corruption in the education system and bribery Chonji to teachers have not yet been eradicated. The Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission conducted a survey on the national concept of teacher Chonji for 1,660 parents of students in elementary, middle and high schools for five days from March 4, 2009. According to this study¹⁾, 18.6% of responding parents stated that they have offered Chonji to teachers in the past year. The reasons for such gifts were token of appreciation (70.5%) and requesting to take better care of their children (14.2%). Chonji was provided as presents (63.1%), tickets and gift certificates (26.4%), cash (7.8%) and meals (1.4%). Chonji was given on Teacher's Day (39.8%), end of the school year (30.5%) and end of the school year (14.8%). Furthermore, 46.8% of the parents replied that Chonji was bribes, while 46.8% answered that though it is not a bribe, it is a practice that needs to be done with. On questions about the graveness of the practice of Chonji in our education system, 55.0% of parents answered that it was serious, while only 14.4% answered that it was not severe. This kind of gift-giving culture aimed at receiving something in return not only is unhelpful for all students, but it also severely reduces the quality of education and distorts education. There are different tasks at hand for teachers, parents and the government to stop Chonji to teachers, which is an aspect of widespread corruption throughout our society.

The purpose of study is to introduce the concept of Chonji which is one of corruptions of school organization, the Korean society and Chonji culture and the motive for giving and receiving Chonji in school community along with presenting practical themes for a school community which is free from Chonji for the transparency of school organization.

1) Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission of Korea. www.acrc.go.kr

II. Chonji and Korean Society

The Korean word for gift-giving Chonji means showing a small token of appreciation to another. The concept of this kind of gift-giving is a concept that can be commonly used within all social life, and this concept is the mostly commonly used in the education sector.

The form of gift-giving, which expects something in return or which the strong takes advantage of the weak through the use of their position, is at a level that it has become a problem that impedes on the wholesome develop of a community. There is no need to get rid of this gift-giving culture all together or to perceive it from an excessively negative standpoint, and the issue on how to make this a healthy culture for teachers, parents and the press should be addressed. Furthermore, all members and organizations of the society will have to make efforts for this.

If we look at the result of a survey performed by a domestic press media and parents' organization related to Chonji, we can see the reality of Chonji in schools. This survey was planned in order to research and analyze the awareness and actual conditions on Chonji and illegal contributions in schools to perform a survey in May of 2006 for the awareness and actual conditions on Chonji in schools targeting 1,300 parents of elementary-middle-high school children. The results of survey are as follows.²⁾

In the question of 'have you ever given more than 10,000 won's worth of goods or cash to your child's teacher in last 3 years?', 600 respondents which is 46.2% of 1,300 respondents have replied that they had offered more than 10,000 won's worth of goods or cash in last 3 years while 521 people which is 87% of these 600 people have replied that they had offered more than 30,000 won's worth of goods or cash in last 3 years. Eventually, 40% of 1,300 respondents were shown as offering more than 30,000 won's worth of goods or cash in last 3 years.

In the question of the time when parents had given Chonji such as goods or cash to the teachers of their children, on the 'Teacher's Day' was 51.6% so that the teacher's day is becoming a burden for parents as expected. In case of offering Chonji during end of school year/end of semester/graduation ceremony, 26.9% of respondents (17.7%) have replied that they have offered Chonji as a token of

2) The report on the analysis of survey results related to Chonji by MBC PD Notebook·Nationwide Parents' Association for Whole-Rounded Education (www.hakbumo.or.kr). 2006

appreciation. 26.0% of parents with their children in high school have replied that they have offered Chonji during the interview of parents. This also can be considered as not being irrelevant with college entrance. 23.4% of respondents have replied that they have offered Chonji at the beginning of school year and 60% among them have replied that they have offered Chonji because of direct or indirect demand from the teacher. Meeting the teacher during new semester or the day of general meeting for parents at the beginning of semester can only become a burden for the parents. 8.7% in national/public schools and 23.1% in private schools have replied that they have offered Chonji during the interview of parents.

In the question about the reason for giving Chonji to teachers, 59.2% of respondents have offered Chonji 'simply as a token of appreciation' based on 600 respondents who have experience of offering Chonji of 10,000 won's worth or more while 54.9% of respondents have offered Chonji 'simply as a token of appreciation' based on 521 respondents who have experience of offering Chonji of 30,000 won's worth or more. The 40% who have offered Chonji despite the fact that it wasn't simply as a token of appreciation could be identified as the parents not being able to trust school while the relationship between teachers and parents was not in an equal relationship as the selfishness based on their children of clearly wanting benefits and the wariness toward teachers to avoid disadvantages are acted on at the same time.

In the question of whether the child had any disadvantage from that teacher because of not giving Chonji, the reply that the child had disadvantage was 8.4% so that more than 90% said that they did not have any disadvantage from the reason of whether they offered Chonji or not. Since 50% of respondents have replied that they have offered Chonji from direct or indirect demand of the teacher, a disadvantage is expected in case of refusing the demand to offer Chonji. In this case, the 'Chonji effect' becomes accustomed between the teacher and the parent in case the parent has not prepared a clear identity or confident psychological ownership.

In the question about the sense of burden that one gets to have related to Chonji, 45.5% of respondents said that they 'don't feel any particular sense of burden' while 47.6% of response was 'somewhat burdening', 4.0% of response was 'feel much sense of burden' and 1.9% of response was 'very stressed out'. In fact, 54% of parents have replied that Chonji is becoming a burden beyond its original intention of simple token of appreciation. Analyzed by the reasons for offering Chonji, 65.2% of respondents who said they 'offered Chonji expecting concern

toward my child' have replied 'somewhat burdening' while 48.6% of respondents who said they offered Chonji 'because other parents do it also' and 40% of respondents who said they 'offered Chonji after getting direct or indirect demand of the teacher' have also replied 'somewhat burdening'. 40% of 1,300 respondents have experience of offering more than 30,000 won's worth of Chonji in last 3 years and more than 54% among them are offering Chonji as they feel burden.

Finally, in the question of how they feel about exchanging Chonji between parents and teachers, 52.6% of respondents answered that 'it wouldn't become a problem as a simple token of appreciation' while as much as 26.7% of responses were 'both teachers and parents must be punished'. In addition, 'punishing the teacher who received Chonji' was 10.2% and 'responsibility of the parent who offered Chonji' was shown as 9.6%. Analyzed by the reason for offering Chonji, 35% of respondents who said that they 'offered Chonji after getting direct or indirect demand of the teacher' and 47.2% of respondents who said that they offered Chonji 'because other parents do it also' replied that 'both teachers and parents must be punished'. 30% of respondents who said that they 'offered Chonji after getting direct or indirect demand of the teacher' and 19.1% of respondents who said that they offered Chonji 'expecting concern toward my child' replied that 'the teacher who received Chonji should be punished'. Although 34.7% of respondents who said that they offered Chonji 'because other parents do it also', looking from the fact that more respondents of 47.2% have replied that 'both teachers and parents must be punished', we can see that the exchange of Chonji is not a voluntary token of appreciation.

In conclusion, we can see that Chonji is being offered even after knowing that it is a wrongful conduct and furthermore, that the unhealthy selfishness of parents is also perceived as problem beyond one-sided accusation of the teachers for responsibility.

III. Motivation for Exchanging Chonji in School Communities ³⁾

1. Common motives for parents giving Chonji to teachers

- 1) Worries that their child may be neglected or receive unfair treatment because they did not give Chonji
- 2) Solution when child complains that they receive unfair treatment at school
- 3) Token of appreciation for taking care of their child
- 4) Because child makes a lot of mischief
- 5) Teacher took extra care of the child and to repay the teacher

2. Common motives for teachers to receive Chonji from parents

- 1) Financial reasons (Relative poverty)
- 2) To appropriate for operating costs of class
- 3) Understood as a token of appreciation for guiding the student
- 4) Do not want to be misunderstood when refusing the gift

3. Reasons why Chonji is unethical for parents

- 1) Can cause biased student guidance by teachers.
- 2) Not good for children's education.
- 3) Even with good intentions, it can be of non-educational burdens to the teacher.

4. Reasons why Chonji is unethical for teachers

- 1) Accumulation of wealth not from labor is improper.
- 2) Cannot exercise authority in student guidance.
- 3) Cannot teach fairly according to their conscience.
- 4) Weakens assertiveness for improving teacher treatment, teaching society and for improving the unethical environments of the system.

3) goodteacher policy seminar. www.goodteacher.org

IV. Empirical Issues for School Community without Chonji

Let's examine the effort of Korea Federation of Teachers' Association and Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption for eliminating Chonji in last several years.

First of all, while the Korea Federation of Teachers' Association(KFTA) had requested 400,000 teachers for the entreaty and cooperation on the prevention of teacher's authority and privileges such as refraining from excessive control on Chonji, the details are as follows⁴⁾. The deep-rooted wrong practices such as accepting Chonji must be eliminated from the society of teaching profession. KFTA continues to spread the 'movement for the practice of teaching ethics' in the society of teaching profession such as declaring the internal and external 'charter of teaching ethics and our pledge' on May 13, 2005 as a part of effort for making a transparent society of teaching profession as well as eliminating the acceptance of Chonji which has been pointed out as a chronic evil practice in the society of teaching profession until now. We ask for the active cooperation of your agency to prevent undermining the pride of teachers at the scene due to the violation of teacher's authority and privileges such as excessive control on Chonji around the coming teacher's day.

This is an essential prerequisite for cultivating proper emotions and values for growing next generation rather than being a privilege on our 400,000 teachers. From now on, KFTA promises not to spare a hard-working effort in continuing to spread the self-purification movement of teacher's society and the movement for the practice of teaching ethics so that 400,000 teachers can be respected by the nation and the trust toward the society of teaching profession can be improved.

Facing the teacher's day in May of 2006, Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC) had made a request for the self-regulated elimination of Chonji by the educational circles⁵⁾. Independent Commission Against Corruption is planning to spread 『Not giving • not receiving Chonji movement』 independently by each office of education and each school sometime around coming teacher's day to demand severe punishment such as taking disciplinary actions in case the violations are confirmed after submitting reports on the code of conduct like accepting Chonji. According to KICAC's official document on the 'request for cooperation on guidance and checkup of actual conditions on fulfillment of the code of conduct', each office

4) Korea Federation of Teachers' Association. www.kfta.or.kr

5) Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption

of education is to inform the active-duty teachers as well as parents on the fact that "the collection and offering of all sorts of contributions are not allowed while the action of accepting Chonji from parents is also prohibited in accordance with the public worker's code of conduct".

It also requested various parents' associations such as mothers' association or parents to refrain from the action of offering by forming illegal contributions or offering them on individual basis while having each school to perform inspection on the actual conditions on fulfillment of the code of conduct such as accepting Chonji on independent basis and take disciplinary actions according to related regulations in case of being confirmed as someone who accepted Chonji.

1. Introspection and Recovery of Confidence

1) Introspection and practice for issues on Chonji

The issue with Chonji is caused from the completely wrongful selfishness of parents who want special treatment only for their child, and from anxiety that their child may received relatively biased treatment, as well as a sense of urgency caused by being compared with other parents. Another reason that bribery Chonji is not completely stopped is due to the ethical standards of teachers who are unable to refuse such Chonji.

So what is the essence of the Chonji problem in schools? In order to solve this problem, teachers, parents and social members that creates a 'society that promotes Chonji' need to make deep introspection and put it into practical behavior to resolve the issue.

2) Restoration of trust between parents and teachers

At the core of the issue with Chonji is 'mistrust between teachers and parents'. The first step in solving this issue is to restore the trust between parents and teachers. In order for this kind of gift-giving to disappear, there needs to be a resolute determination in the ethics of both parents and teachers. Clearly, the reason why Chonji do not disappear is because of the parents. This practice of Chonji can disappear if the parents do not give them even if teachers ask for them. Meanwhile, even if teachers do not ask for them, but teachers give them, this kind of

gift-giving will continue. If parents report teachers that ask for Chonji, it would be impossible for it to exist. The eradication of the Chonji problem in schools depend upon the ethical standards of teachers and parents, as well as restoring the trust between them that they could have faith in each for the education of the children.

2. Detailed practice plans for teachers (school) and parents

In order to resolve the issue of Chonji, the plans for the development of a healthy school, which both the teachers(school) and parents should be responsible for, are as seen below.

1) Roles for teachers and the school

Though most teachers strive to fulfill their mission as teachers while quietly teaching their students as true teachers, it is a fact that there are still cases in which educators implicitly or assertively request Chonji, which is seen through repeated case reports of the press media. Teachers must train themselves to have an attitude that is free from wanting Chonji, and for this have regular ethics training sessions. In addition, each individual teacher should realize the severity of this and participate in campaigns such as for not receiving Chonji.

(1) Empirical roles for teachers:

- Need ethical determination
- Clearly state that he/she will refuse Chonji at parent-teacher meetings at the start of the semester
- Manifest intent to refuse Chonji through class letters under the name of the teacher
- Block opportunities to offer Chonji in advance by diligently teaching and guiding students

(2) Countermeasures for school :

- Explicate as 'No-Chonji School' through leadership of the principal and participation of teachers
- Open operation of schools and classes, while expanding parent participation, as well as disclosing school information so that parents can easily access school

information

- Explicate that no Chonji will be received through letters to parents at the beginning of the school year, beginning of the semester, and whenever needed
- Enact joint liability system for principals and parents – explore plans to charge principals and parents for their responsibility of giving and receiving bribes

2) Roles for parents

In order for Chonji culture to become a healthy educational culture, the parents' excessive passion for education and their selfish attitude must first be resolved. The action of requesting more interest and consideration to one's child using gifts to teachers may be the one thing that excessively distorts the healthy Chonji culture, and parents should realize that this is what actually destroys the children, who are our future. An organization composed of voluntary parents need to provide the opportunity to reflect on the embarrassment of the practice of Chonji, and this social climate needs to be made by parent groups.

(1) Empirical roles for parents

- Need ethical determination (must understand that education is not for their child alone).
- Trust and delegate education for their child to teachers (school).
- Recognize that these kinds of gifts are actually poison to their child and be confident in their child's education that they do not have to give Chonji.
- Help with their child's education through diverse and healthy methods aside from Chonji.

3. Roles for the government

My personal opinion is that the older generation, including the educational administration, has the most fundamental responsibility for making the healthy Chonji culture into the source of contamination as corruption and bribery.

It is now time for strict regulation and control on Chonji. At the least, cash should be forbidden regardless of its amount and strict laws that punish both those who give and receive gift certificates and gifts should be created. Teachers and parents need to be receptive of such strict regulations and controls, and for the government it is also worth considering the limitations and meanings of legal

intervention on the unethical issue of giving and receiving Chonji. The government that legislates education policies need to identify the source of the problem and establish/enforce appropriate policies for this.

1) Detailed roles for the government

- Strengthen teacher ethics education during teacher training courses (strengthened studies on teacher subjects at colleges of education)
- Provide supporting funds to block off Chonji atmospheres in schools in advance
- Need comprehensive and continuous policy development and enforcement for stopping school Chonji
- Clearly notify teachers (schools) of policies for stopping Chonji in schools and continuously examine observance of Chonji giving and receiving code of conducts. When one is found for giving or receiving Chonji, punish according to related regulations
- Install and operate exclusive education corruption booth at the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission and within the city/provincial office of education.

V. Conclusion

One of the reasons why the abuse of Chonji is not being eliminated is because there is no instrument for the communication between teachers and parents. The traditional view of education used to be an absolute obedience toward the teacher and none of the education bodies are trained on the method of smooth communication for the equal relationship required by the modern society. A democratic communication of each education body must be guaranteed by legalizing teachers' association, parents' association and students' association to organize a school operation committee by resolution. The parents must take initiative for the self-purification effort of the resolution on not offering Chonji. As the effort of principal is most important for the elimination and prevention of Chonji, the training on management of educational finances must be improved during the appointment of principals and vice-principals. Furthermore, the chain of corruption in the educational circles such as Chonji cannot be eliminated with the inspection system of education authorities or the disciplinary action standards of teachers. In order to

solve the problem of this chronic evil practice, the improvement of overall system related to the inspection and the disciplinary action plan on unqualified teachers concerning the teachers who accept bribery should be consolidated.

But despite the fact that education should be fairly managed by a teacher's teaching method and style through the system, Chonji is becoming a problem by acting as a variable of performing education by discriminating some students. In other words, while this could be called a small and trivial problem between some parents and teachers, the effect is enormous and seriously distorting the scene of education.

Stopping Chonji in schools is a deeply-rooted anti-educational issue in our society that cannot be resolved with the efforts of teachers or schools, or efforts of students alone. In order to stop Chonji in schools, not only efforts through reflection on those who give and those who accept, but also the environmental factors of schools that promote such Chonji need to be eradicated in advance. Furthermore, it cannot be stopped by one-time and partial policies by the government. Therefore, in order to eradicate school Chonji, expected effects can be attained through simultaneous and continuous execution of reforming the entrance-exam system, testing and support for no-Chonji schools, education and training to prevent Chonji in school from an education-wide aspect of our society such as in transparent society pacts.

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