

Food Storytelling of Gangwon Province, Korea¹

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Abstract. Gangwon Province, located in the mid-eastern part of the Korean Peninsula, is blessed with beautiful mountains and beaches that offer some of the best sceneries and vacation spots throughout the year. It also provides a wide variety of food that embraces local identity. The mountainous region in the west and the seaside region of the east both add more colors to its local food in terms of recipes and ingredients. In addition, this study focuses on its renowned novelist Kim Yu-jeong, developing food contents through storytelling which was reflected on his works.

Keywords: Gangwon Province, Chuncheon-si, Kim Yu-jeong, storytelling, local food

1 Introduction

The consumers in the present times intend to get style, story, experience and even sensibility embedded in the products when they purchase goods. Considering this, storytelling is likely to play a role to expand the space in which the consumers experience by influencing their way of thinking, leading the consumers' change in terms of related activities and aspects. That is, story is to connect the consumers to products; storytelling is essential to stimulate consumers' sensibility. Such storytelling method in marketing is actively utilized in the recent years, adopted in the promotion of local brands or even a certain region.

In this study, among many fields of storytelling, food storytelling is chosen. The existing food storytelling can be classified into three categories according to the topic: First, the story is adopted from a human resource; it is a method in which a certain person and his/her related food are connected with each other. Secondly, the story based on a certain place, for instance, a local food which represents a local identity and culture. A local food differentiates its own locality from that of other regions. Lastly, it is a story that emphasizes food ingredients of local food. According to the climate and geography, the ingredients have developed differently. The characteristics that every ingredient has function differently behind the story of their own.

Like this, in general, one out of the three existed storytelling methods has been chosen to utilize so far, this study focuses on a certain region and finds out about a representative local character and his/her related materials. Furthermore, the local

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food implied in a sense of place is introduced to develop a sophisticated storytelling through a comprehensive survey man through a comprehensive survey considering nutritional function combined with general information of the food.

These days, many local governments try to promote their local food in order to revitalize the economy; developing original and unique food of their own becomes one of the most important agendas in the administration. In this context, the purpose of this paper is to promote visitors' interest in local food on the aspect of marketing and to expand the tourism to revitalize local economy.

Gangwon Province is chosen to study on this research. It accounts for almost half of the eastern part of the nation with its north bordered with North Korea. Its east is surrounded by 300km long coast. Gangwon Province is divided into two parts according to geography. The eastside called Yeongdong is abundant in seafood, so, the preserved food like jeotgal and sikhae developed in the region [1]. On the contrary, the westside of heavily forested Yeongseo exuberates in many sorts of herbs and crops. Such characteristics of the province provide a very good example for food storytelling utilizing colorful food contents. The stories in the food are chosen by analysis of documents regarding its cultural characteristic and historical figures. Through this process, Kim Yu-jeong, a famous novelist of Gangwon Province and the local food reflected on his works were selected in this study.

2 Study Method

2.1 Subject of Storytelling

Storytelling is defined as a new term combined story with telling, meaning that 'telling' signifies 'expanding' through a wide variety of media. Storytelling is basically carried out on the premise of mutual interaction. It is an activity that passes the information that can be very private and subjective to others turning into interesting and lively stories. In this regard, Gangwon Province-born Kim Yu-jeong represents local culture, a way of life in the region as well as local food, reflected on his novels.

2.2 Food and Kim Yu-jeong's Cultural Contents

Among the food contents that symbolize Gangwon Province and Kim Yu-jeong, simple but nutritional ingredients such as herbs of Yeongseo and fresh seafood of Yeongdong region are chosen for the study. The local food of Gangwon Province generally has plain taste of nature. Even though recipes may differ the taste of food, most of food from Yeongseo, which is located in the mountainous area, is cooked without using meat while that of Yeongdong in the seaside uses anchovy or shells for seasoning food. In Yeongseo, it is easy to find the food using potatoes, corn, and buckwheat rather than rice. For example, ongsimi noodle soup whose main ingredient is potatoes, oksusubumbeok of corn porridge, gangnaeng-i sujebi or hand-pulled dough soup with dried corn, and makguksu of buckwheat noodle are considered local foods of Gangwon Province. With simple ingredients, Gangwon Province has

developed one-dish meal unlike other regions. As a result, the recipe is simple and seasoning or spicing is not in favor. Rather, food was perceived as medicine. So-called 'yaksikdongwon(藥食同源).' That is, this term was coined by ancient Chinese thought, which means 'Medicine and food lie at the same root.' Thus, in Gangwon region people prioritize fresh ingredient cooking seafood dishes and 'steaming' recipe is preferred to frying or pan-frying [2]. In conclusion, the recipetries to keep the natural condition of ingredients as they are and make the best use of natural flavors, gaining popularity among our contemporaries who value health above anything else.

3 Kim Yu-jeong's Life and His Novels

3.1 Novelist Kim Yu-jeong's dramatic life

Kim Yu-jeong was born in the village of Chung-ni in Gangwon Province on January 11, 1908. Even though he was raised in a wealthy family, the family fortunes, however, were whittled away by his older brother, and Kim spent much of his adolescent and adult life in penury. Kim left for Seoul to attend what is now Yonsei University. He made his literary debut with the publication of *Wayfarer of the Hills (Sangolnageune)* in 1933 and won short fiction contests held by a major newspaper company such as ChosunDaily and ChosunJoong-angDaily.

In 1935, he became a member of the literary coterie, The Society of Nine, which included leading poets and fiction writers of the era. He has left thirty novels and short stories, most of them published in 1935 and 1936. Until he died of pulmonary tuberculosis on March 29, 1937, he stayed in his hometown, Sille Village in Chuncheon-si, Gangwon Province. The backgrounds in most of his novels introduce rural scenes of Sille Village in Gangwon Province [3].

3.2 Food Contents in Kim's Works

In Kim's works, many foods and crops appear as a means of explaining the characters or setting of the story. And they are interrelated with well-known local crops such as potatoes, corn or buckwheat. As mentioned earlier, in his 1936 story *The Camellias*, the heroine main character Jeomsun secretly gave a new potato to the hero to express her affection toward him, but he turned her down.

In the novel, there are lines: *I took a sip of red pepper paste from the pot; the three large potatoes, still hot and steaming, proudly lie on my hand.*

'Potato and red pepper paste' introduced in the novel can be most likely to be the most Korean foods of all with conceiving locality of Gangwon Province as well. Cognitively, potatoes remind readers of hometown and local lyricism.

There are also lines in the story of *the Camellias*: *I did not know what blew me away. I fell to the full blown yellow camellias.* On the contrary popular belief, the color of flowers signified yellow, not red camellias. The reason is that the camellias described in the novel are 'ginger trees' which were grown in Sille Village at that

time. In the Gangwon dialect, camellia refers to ginger tree, which smells like ginger. The locals used the leaves of the tree as green tea and the flowers and the bark as medicine. Jeomsun has a resilient, shrewd character that is similar to tingling nature of ginger. Her way of expressing her affection naturally connects the readers with ginger tree. The characters' purity and indigenous beauty lyrically approach readers. It is not overstated that the local foods resemble the characters in the story. In Kim's another work, *Plucking Gold in a Field of Beans (Geumttaneunkongbat)* the background is the bean field as reflected on the title. His 1935 novel *Rice Cake (Tteok)* described a scene of the main character's eating rice cake coated with mashed red beans. In the story there is another rice cake made of potatoes. Rice cake, potatoes, and red beans all symbolize rural lyricism.

4Development of Food Contents through Storytelling

In Kim's major work *Scoundrels (Manmubang)*, the main character Eung-chil earned a living by picking and selling pine mushrooms. He often exchanges them for some rice wine at the tavern. Actually, every region presents its own wine. Gangwon Province produces rice wine fermenting crops such as mushrooms, potatoes and corn. That is, it is named after 'The traditional Gangwon set of three.' These three kinds of wine require much care and take quite a long time to get fermented. Yet, their racy flavor stays true to the original ingredients [4].

Most of Koreans regard wine as a functional beverage, which plays a role of relationship buffer. Korea is one of the most competitive societies in the world. Under the circumstance, many people try to relieve their mind when drinking. Thus, wine is, more often than not, the most popular food at mealtimes. In this regard, the Kim Yu-jeong menu including wine is suggested. The traditional Gangwon wine set of three includes natural pine mushroom wine, potato wine, rice and corn wine. First, 'natural pine mushroom wine' made the best of the natural mushroom boasts its indigenous taste. The second brand is 'potato wine' or seaju. As already mentioned above, potatoes are typical crop in Gangwon region. Seaju represents its own local culture. Lastly, fine quality corn and rice fermented together is distilled liquor, 'OKseonju.' These three kinds of local wine all need a great deal of care. The process of fermentation is also very complicating.

In his 1935 'Rain Shower,' Chunho's wife barely sustained a living by digging out deodeok, a mountain herb whose roots have restorative properties, instead of him. In the early 20th century at the rural region, planting crops or digging herbs are a major means of living for poor people. Gangwon-originated deodeok is very popular because of its good quality. Korean eat deodeok, stirred up with hot red pepper paste, and sesame oil. Like this, Kim Yu-jeong menu consists of assorted crops and herbs that typically grow well in Gangwon.



Fig. 2.Kim Yu-jeong menu with deodeok and wine

5 Conclusion

The existing local foods simply represent dishes that use local ingredients. However, this study suggested combining a local figure which represents local culture and food which is related to him/her. In the height of well-being trends, healthful foods as well as tasty ones are also paid attention to. Food storytelling on the various aspects attracts tourists and promotes the city brand boosting consumers' interest in local foods, which naturally leads to local revitalization. In addition, well-organized and unique food contents efficiently connected to other local tourism contents are a stepping stone to successful and sustainable local cultural development.

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