

A Small World

My first encounter with a Korean happened a few months ago when Sejong Hakdang started to operate in the University where I work. I used to see Korea and its people from my tiny window of limited knowledge. I did some research on Korean culture and people and was blinded by stereotypes until there came the Korean lady who now becomes a teacher at Sejong Hakdang Surabaya. From her I learn that we exist in the same world.

First of all, we share the same value of family life. Traditionally in their interactions with others, Indonesians and Koreans take great care to show respect to those of higher status, whether due to age, nobler ancestry, superior educational attainment, or higher organizational rank. When they pass older people or higher status people, they will bow low. They will not let older or higher status people bring heavy things alone unhelpt. Young people will give up their seats for an aged person in a crowded bus. Although nowadays some young people do not do it, most of them still do. This has been inserted in their daily life from the early age. Besides, Indonesian and Koreans tend to be family-oriented. That does not mean that we have to spend all of our time with our parents, brothers and sisters. Being a family-oriented, we want to spend time with each other and look forward to each other's company. We appreciate our relationship and are committed to each other. In other words, we are devoted to our family.

Interestingly, I also see that Indonesians and Koreans have the same ethos in working together. Indonesian people are well-known for their '*gotong-royong*' which means cooperation. They work together to the same end to benefit the group. For example, a few days before the Indonesian Independence Day every year, they always decorate the villages, clean the neighbourhood, and prepare foods for the day together. They do that cooperatively. Similar concept of "*gotong-royong*" is owned by Korean people. They call the culture of working hand-in-hand "*hyeop-dong*". This is shown, for example, during the celebration of Hangeul Day in Sejong Hakdang Surabaya. They put so much effort to prepare for the celebration. From young to old people, men and women, everybody took part in aiming at the same goal, to make the Hangeul Day successful. I was amazed, witnessing the cooperation among the Korean people in Surabaya to make the Indonesians understand the importance of Hangeul day for the people of Korea. Besides, the culture of working together of the two nations is also supported by the culture of working hard. While the former Korean President Park Chung-He (1963) says to his people: "Let's work harder and harder. Let's work much harder not to make our sons and daughters sold to foreign countries", the present Indonesian President Joko Widodo (2014) also has a slogan for his people: "work, "work, "work".

Last but not least, Indonesians and Koreans almost have the same politeness in addressing other people. They use different terms of address when they are talking to people who have higher status, and to those who are older than the speakers. Indonesian people never use "aku" which means "I" to address themselves when they talk to older people, or to those they respect such as teachers, community leaders. They use "saya" which also mean "I" as a subject or "me" as an object. When addressing older people, they cannot use "kamu" which means "you". Instead, they have to use "anda" which also means "you" as politeness. The word "kamu" is used for the same level of speakers or younger people. These terms of address are also applied when they want to say something they possess. For example, when they want to say "my book", they say "buku saya" or "bukuku", and they say "bukumu" or "buku anda" which means "your book", depending on whom they are talking to. These terms of address have been educated in the early age. Indonesian parents always make sure that their children talk politely to older people, although nowadays some children may not apply those terms of address because they are raised in western culture as their parents

adopt the culture. Similar to Indonesian terms of address, Koreans also differentiate the terms of addressing respected people or people of higher status than the speakers. They will use "*jeo*" instead of "*na*" which means "I" when they are talking to older people. They will also use "*dangsin*" instead of "*neo*" which means "you" when they address people they respect. I believe that this politeness has also been taught from the old generation to the young generation from time to time.

To conclude, despite the differences of seasons and geographic areas, Indonesians and Koreans share the same values such as respecting other people, working hard cooperatively, and politeness in addressing people. What a small world!