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THE INFLUENCE OF HOLOCENE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE ON HUMAN ACTIVITIES IN THE DAEGU BASIN, KOREA, DURING PREHISTORIC AND ANCIENT TIMES

ABSTRACT: YOON S.O. & HWANG S.I., *The influence of Holocene environmental change on human activities in the Daegu basin, Korea, during prehistoric and ancient times.* (IT ISSN 1724-4757, 2003).

The strong influence of nature on human life during ancient times requires that people must have chosen their habitats based on the limits of their technology, especially of farming technology, and an understanding of natural conditions. To verify this assumption, the correlation between natural environment and habitat placement in the Daegu basin in Korea over the recent Holocene has been investigated. In this paper, we attempt to correlate various changes in the natural environment of the Daegu basin with the location of burial sites, cultivated fields, and residential areas during the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the proto-Three Kingdoms Age. We also compared the changes in location and extent of inhabited areas to the development of tools, soil characteristics, and to the climatic changes based on the sea level changes during the Holocene. We conclude that people probably did limit their habitats according to their understanding of their environment and their technology.

KEY WORD: Natural environment, Sea level change, Archeological Age, Tool, Daegu basin, Korea.

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological research on prehistoric and ancient times has been mostly based on excavated relics and remains, since documents from these times are rare at best. From the point of view of physical geography, to understand ancient human life it isn't enough to rely solely on archeological research. The better approach is to examine the archeological data on the interrelation between human life and nature, because people should have selected their living places based on their long-term experience with the natural environment.

The archaeological stages in Korea classified by Kim (1995) are The Neolithic Age (7,000 BP to 3,000 BP), the Bronze Age (3,000 BP to 2,300 BP), the pre-Iron Age (2,300 BP to the beginning of the Christian era) and the proto-Three Kingdoms Age (or Kimhae Age) from the beginning of the Christian era to 1,650 BP. These last two are together equivalent to the Iron Age (2,300 BP to 1,650 BP).

The Daegu basin was chosen for the study because the density of remains since the Bronze Age is very high compared with the deficiency of older remains during the Paleolithic and the Neolithic Ages, and also because before this paper there has been no study treating the spatial characteristics of the Daegu basin remains geomorphologically. Furthermore, the distribution of remains over time in the Daegu basin has not been well correlated with changes in the environment, and this study provided a good opportunity to do so. We attempted to relate the remains in the Daegu basin to the Bronze Age, the pre-Iron Age, and the proto-Three Kingdoms Age (fig. 6, 7, 8). We investigated the spatial changes of human activities in relation to the developments of tools, the characteristics of soils, and flood possibilities over the floodplain according to the climatic changes with the sea level change during the Holocene.

THE DAEGU BASIN

Kumho river is the largest river in the Daegu basin, flowing generally westward across it. It is joined by the river Sincheon flowing north from Mt Ap (659.0 m) and Mt Bisle (1,083.6 m). The Kumho then flows into the river Naktong (525.2 km), the longest river in Korea (fig. 1, 2). Mt Palgong (1,192.8 m), which is northern divide of Daegu basin, is located north of the Kumho river. It is composed of granitic rock, and surrounded by a ring-type mountain range of metamorphic sedimentary rock. Mt Ap and Mt

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