

**Essay Writing 2**

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**The Power of Police**

In our society, there are many people like firemen or soldiers who work for other people rather than their success. They normally receive low salary relatively to the risk of their work. Instead of high salary, they have pride about their job and respect from other people. Another kind of these important people is police. Police are responsible for watching who is disobeying the laws and for catching them in order to protect the law-abiding people. They deserve respect. However, their position is unbelievably low in Korea. It seems that Korean policemen are not held in enough respect by their citizens. This essay is about the reasons why Koreans are not afraid of police and do not have trust or respect for them by contrasting our views on the police to Americans' views.

In order to see general idea of the police in Korea and the United States, I looked through some police characters in movies because movies well reflect our life. I could find out some stereotypes which represent general ideas of the public. In many Korean movies such as "Memories of Murder," "Two Cops," "The Chaser," and "Public Enemy," it seems that the policemen are not physically strong and that people look down on them. They usually cannot run fast when they are chasing criminals. People often call them as "jjab-sae" which is a term that is used for making fun of the police. Also, we can see people are questioning about police investigation whether it is illogical and careless or not. Do we usually see these stereotypes in the Hollywood movies?

In contrast to the stereotypes of the police in the Korean movies, we can see different stereotypes in the Hollywood movies such as "Die Hard," "The Silence of the Lambs," and "Seven,Se7en." In these movies, the policemen are usually described as physically strong and intelligent. They do not have difficulty in fighting with criminals. They look

into the computer and files before they go to look for the evidence. People feel rather relieved than doubtful when the policemen start their investigation. We can see that people trust their investigation. Also, people call them as "officer" or "sir" and have respect to them. If the police ask people to stop their car and tell them what to do, people follow their instructions without objection.

In Korea, some people think that they cannot trust police because police do not have enough power to protect people from criminals and to solve the crimes. People can easily see the police who miss criminals and fail to solve the crimes. Then, people think that police are so weaker than criminals that many criminals succeed in committing crimes and running away. We heard about many unsolved murder cases like the serial killer case in Hwa-sung in 1980's. This is famous for the subject of the movie, "Memories of Murder," and of the play, "Come to See Me." This case is the first unsolved murder case in our history. Nine women were murdered around Hwa-sung area from 1986 to 1991. Police tried hard to find out who the

murderer is but failed. This case was so shocking for most people that many people watched the investigation with the hope that police would manage to solve it. Although the investigation lasts for fifteen years, police failed to solve the case after all. This case maintains unsolved for ever because fifteen years of statute of limitations has finished. This case was so famous and scary that the failure affected on people to have faith in police. As police failed to get faith from people, people started to look down on them and the media helped it.

People come up with the idea of "jjab-sae" to make fun of them. Then, the media used this term and it became famous. Many criminal movies describe the idea of "jjab-sae" as the policemen who do not have ability to solve crimes and take a bribe from illegal businessmen in return for keeping their business secret. In the past, it was common that a lot of policemen took a bribe as an exchange for helping illegal business like prostitution. It was an open secret that everyone knows but anyone talks about it. People did not say

it was wrong but the police lost trust from people. As the media started to talk about this open secret, people began to make sarcastic jokes of these police and to look down on them. The term "jjab-sae" was used for making fun of the corrupted policemen or of the incompetent policemen. Then, this word is generally used by normal citizens from kids to adults and this word becomes a kind of nickname of the police.

In the United States, people also make fun of police by calling them as "pigs" or "the fuzz." We can hear these words in many movies. Aggressive criminals use these words when they talk to each other or when they call the police. However, these words are said not by citizens but only by criminals. Criminals use these words as slang but normal citizens of the United States generally do not use these words as much as Korean citizens do. That is the difference.

One big reason why people look down on the police is about how they are seen. In Korea, the image of the police that people might think at first when they hear the word "police" is probably a police officer who is a middle-aged man

sitting in a police station. This policeman looks as ordinary as salesman. He deals with problems of civil petitions rather than crimes and does not have many muscles to make him look strong. Even though this man is wearing a uniform which is the symbol of authority, there is an ordinary man inside of the uniform. This man mainly looks around his district or stops cars to check whether drivers are drunk or not. This man comes always late when people call to help. This is the police we see every day in our life.

In contrast, the image of the police in the United States is a big strong guy with sunglasses. This man looks as professional as doctors. He looks powerful even though he has fat rather than a firm body and he deals with a minor offense. This man wears a uniform that makes him look even stronger. In addition, there is another image of the police in American's minds. That is FBI. The FBI is a government agency in the United States. The FBI agents investigate serious crimes that are connected with national laws or security. They are not only the police but also heroes. They deal with the most

dangerous criminals so they look powerful and strong. When a serious crime happens, they show up and people are relieved. The appearance of the FBI gives people the idea that they are going to solve the problem and that everything is going to be fine. People trust them.

Another reason why Koreans look down on the police comes from the weapons of the police. As I mentioned, Korean police do not have a strong impression. In addition, they do not have useful weapons that are enough to fight against criminals. In fact, they carry a truncheon and a gun. However, there are so many rules when they use their weapons that they cannot use them efficiently. They have to give at least two times of warnings to criminals before they use the gun even though they are in danger. Moreover, the first and the second cartridges of their guns are blank cartridges. While they are warning, criminals can run away from the police or attack them. Therefore, criminals consider their gun as an unavailable gun like a toy gun. Then, is it possible for these policemen to arrest criminals who are armed with knives and guns?

They not only have a difficulty in fighting against criminals but also have lack of self-confidence because of the restriction in using guns. If they use their gun of necessity in a dangerous situation, they are often criticized as overacting in the process of arrest. Criminals claim that the police have abused their authority by using a gun in the process of arrest. Sometimes, it brings the case to the court and criminals win. There is a fine line between the necessity of using a gun and the misuse of police power because having a gun is illegal in Korea with an exception of police and soldiers.

In contrast, it seems that the police of the United States have less restriction in using guns. The biggest difference between Korea and the United States is legalization of the gun ownership in the United States. Because anyone can have a gun according to the United States Constitution, there are more homicides in the United States than Korea. Therefore, the police of the United States can more frequently use their guns than Korean police. It is natural for the American police



to have less restriction in using guns than the Korean police but it is also true that it gives more power to the American police than to the Korean police. As they can use their guns, criminals are afraid of the police and the police themselves also have self-confidence. If people have self-confidence, it makes them braver than truly they are.

Another reason why Koreans look down on the police is connected to the working condition of the Korean police. In Korea, people consider that policemen are public servants rather than public officials in professional post. It means that people consider the police officers as same as municipal officers who sit at the desk and look through papers. However, they work in the difficult conditions which are the difficulty from a shortage of hands, the increase of atrocious crimes, and facing dangerous situations. According to *The Police Daily News*, the Korean police have to pass a physical examination, five written examinations, an examination of physical strength, an aptitude test, and an interview. After they have passed all these tests, they start to work day and night with

out holidays. Under these hard working conditions, they work for the security of the citizen even though they receive lower salary than bank clerks.

However, citizens do not know how hard they work because people can only hear about their failure to solve crimes. No one is interested in how hard they are fighting against criminals or how bad their working conditions are unless he or she knows someone whose job is a policeman. In addition, the media always reports about their fault and bad memories usually last for a long time. If we think about their working conditions, we cannot blame them for their failures on solving crimes.

The police in the United States also have difficult working conditions. They have to work day and night without holidays but they receive higher salary than the Korean police. Also, they have more efficient system of investigation than the Korean police. The United States divides the police into different groups such as the FBI, the CSI, the SWAT, marshals, sheriffs, and police. There is a system of

cooperation between them and they cooperate well with each other for investigations. This well developed cooperation system not only helps investigations but also eliminates wastes of time and efforts.

In addition, there are some television shows like "Monk" or "CSI series" that show people the life of the police. These famous television shows help people to know what the police do and how the investigations go on even though these shows are not realistic. As people watch these shows, they become interested in the police and start to look the police in the different ways to the past. This is very different from Korean media that only shows failed stories of the police investigations to the people.

The police system in Korea has many differences in contrast to the system in the United States. Also, the way of look or think of Korean is very different from Americans' because Korea and the United States have different history and different culture. As a result, it is natural to have different views on the same thing. However, I had a wonder

about the fact that Koreans have unbelievably low respect for the police in contrast to the high respect of Americans. I wanted to know why we do not have faith or respect for the police even though they work for us and they protect us from crimes under difficult conditions. I wanted to know why we are not afraid of them even though they have power and authority.

I tried to find out the reasons of these wonders by looking at different approaches to the police. I considered the media, citizens, the system, and the police themselves. After looking through all these different point of views, I have reached the conclusion that all these problems come from our misunderstanding about the police and from our indifferent attitudes to the police. I hope people to think about their attitudes to the police and to concern about them. I hope that this essay will help the police to have the pride of them and to get respect from people at least from some of the readers of this essay.

## **Bibliography**

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