

Jeju (Korea) culture seen by an outsider

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Abstract

This article is the narrative of Jeju people as a collectivity and of their quest for future directions. It is a story of a small island people, but at the same time, it is not unique to Jeju people, but applies to all humanity. There are many different visions and stories about what Jeju identity is and what its future should be. It appears that not one of the stories told by different groups can be left out, although they seem to compete with each other, and there are different audiences for different stories. I was very much moved and touched, when I learned about Jeju people's narratives and quest and wanted to tell the story to the outside world. My story is that of an outsider.

Key words: Jeju identity, indigenous culture, women divers, compromise, Confucian imprint

Jeju¹ (Korea) culture seen by an outsider

1. Introduction

A well known Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor (1989), has the following to say about the human identity:

"....In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going.... What I am has to be understood as what I have become..... Thus making sense of my present action..... requires a narrative understanding of my life, a sense of what I have become which can only be given in a story.And as I project my life forward and endorse the existing direction or give it a new

¹ In this paper, Jeju & Cheju, Tamna & Tamla are used interchangeably

one, I project a future story, not just a state of the momentary future but a bent for my whole life to come. This sense of my life as having a directions towards what I am not yet is what Alasdair MacIntyre captures in his notionthat life is seen as a 'quest'.....(Taylor, 1980: 47- 48).

This article is the narrative of Jeju people as a collectivity and of their quest for future directions. I was very much moved and touched, when I learned² about Jeju people's narratives and quest and wanted to tell the story to the outside world. It is a story of a small island people, but at the same time, it

² I learned about Jeju, when I was preparing summer lectures on Jeju (in comparison with the island of West Sumatra, Indonesia, which is my specialized field) at the National University of Jeju in 2011.

is not unique to Jeju people, but applies to all humanity. My story is that of an outsider. It is worth hearing both versions. Below is my story as I understood their stories.

Jeju is often perceived as an island at the periphery of the Korean Peninsula, which is absorbed by a larger nation state like many other collectivities, and poses many challenges to be recognized for its cultural idiosyncrasies. Not necessarily being a separatist, these peripheral groups need a certain minimum degree of autonomy to be able to assert their identity and contribute their best. This article proposes to rethink (or synthesize) “self images” or identities of Jeju formulated by Jeju intellectuals since 1950s.

2. Location

Jeju lies about 100 km southwest of the Korean Peninsula. China lies west (of Jeju) across 500km of open sea and Japan is about 200 km to the East. Jeju is the largest island, lying at the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula. It is the sole island province in present South Korea (land size: 73x31km), which became a Special Autonomous province in 2006.³⁴ Its population size is 550,000 (210), about one tenth of the Korean peninsula (referred as “the mainland” by Jeju people).

3. Context and history

Jeju is one of the most popular tourist spot, domestically as well as internationally in North East Asia. With its beautiful tropical scenery of palm and tangerine trees, blue sea and wind, far from the hustle of the mainland, many young Korean couples visit the island

for their honeymoon and by now it attracts a huge crowd of Chinese tourists. Merrill (1980) describes what lies beneath the haunting beauty of Jeju as follows: “It is hard to imagine that so violent an event once swept over the now peaceful tourist spot. But one is also left with the feeling that the same potential for violence will continue to exist in Korea so long as it remains in its present hostile and divided state”.

Although the violent “April Third Event” (1947-53) mentioned above by Merrill occurred in the 20th century and involved a civilian massacre of an estimated 30,000 people, this was not the only violence Jeju people endured in history. In fact, since the fall of Tamna Kingdom (1105AD), lasted for about 1000 years, Jeju has endured prolonged chains of oppression and exploitation by the Korean mainland’s different kingdoms - the Koryo Dynasty, the Yi Dynasty and colonizing foreign powers (the Mongols in 1280-1390, the Japanese in 1905-45, the Americans 1945-present). Yet, history text books (2011, 2013) show none of these historical events, as they do not mention the existence of the island of Jeju and its people, as a part of the Korean nation. This long historical experience of hardship and omission form the basis of some of Jeju people’s characteristics: anti-mainlanders/outsideers, inferiority complex, depression, deep psychological wounds of “rejection”⁵ (Kim Hyang-Won, 2003).

4. Different intellectual debates on Jeju identity

⁵ Deuchler (1992) distinguishes the pre-Confucian kinship system of Koryo and Neo-Confucian system of the Yi Dynasty. Much of Jeju custom resembles that of Koryo or the early Yi Dynasty, as described by Deuchler, before Neo-Confucianism solidified.

³

⁴ Jeju used to be a part of Cholla Namdo Province until 1946

“If we suppose that “identity” has its own relations of uncertainty, the faith we put into might only be a reflection of a state of the civilization might be limited to the few centuries” (Lévi-Strauss 1977:10, my translation).

Following the French anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1977), the concept of “Identity” is presented here as an accumulation of different layers of experience of people throughout the history of their society, which is characteristics layers \slices of different groups within society, and necessarily evolves (transforms) with time.

This article discusses three major intellectual trends in interpreting Jeju Identity or cultural traits: (1) focussng on roots in Chinese civilization (either via mainland or directly from China), particularly in the form of Confucian philosophy (Nemeth, 1987); (2) Jeju culture as a “compromise” of the mixed mainland influences (Confucian principle) and Jeju reality (Kim, Chang-Min, 1922; 2010), and (3) tracing its roots in Jeju indigenous and/or pre-chinese influence (Chun, Kyung-Soo, 2010). Most of the literature debating these trends is in Korean.

4.1 Confucian imprint in Jeju

According to Nemeth, Confucianism dominating Yi Dynasty’s political and social life, was deeply implanted in Jeju Island, particularly the plains, where rice cultivation was practiced like on the mainland. Nemeth writes: “Neo-Confucian ideology has left its indelible mark on Chinese and Chinese-influenced societies, including Korea and Cheju Island... During the Yi Dynasty, the plains-dwelling villagers (in Cheju) were principally subsistence farmers hewing to the Neo-Confucian dogma propagated by the Yi state and its local representatives. The peasant landscape they created under this state-supported male-dominated, Neo-

Confucian system was an extension of peninsular Yi dynasty environmental planning into Cheju’s rather different physical and cultural milieu. Cheju island plains society successfully developed this Neo-Confucian imprint as a frontier outpost of the expanding Chinese and Korean civilizations.” (Nemeth, 1987:62).

However, Nemeth admits that there is another reality in Cheju, as described in Cho’s thesis of the coastal areas of Cheju, by saying that the Neo-Confucian ideology never fully expanded seaward into the ancient coastal settlement, where subsistence farming was combined of necessity with fisheries, and where woman divers historically wielded economic power independent of their menfolk. Nemeth dismisses the need of discussing this different aspect of Cheju, by saying that it was already dealt with in Cho’s thesis.

Nemeth’s systematic analysis of the penetration of Confucian principles in Jeju life and people’s cognitive world is fascinating and a major contribution to understanding many aspects of Jeju culture. However, Nemeth’s writing over-emphasized the Yi Dynasty’s Confucian imprint in Jeju, when it omitted possible remains of Koryo customs⁶ and Jeju’s indigenous cultures\ reality.

Let us first look at the extent and nature of the influence of Neo-Confucian influence on Jeju during the Yi Dynasty, founded after the Fall of the Koryo Dynasty (935-1392). An ambitious Koryo general (Yi Song-gye) turned his back on the northern campaigns and marched onto the Koryo capital at Kaesong. He installed himself as “founding father” of the Yi dynasty, which lasted for 500 years (1392-1910).

⁶See Jeju National Museum (2006), History and Culture of Jeju; Jeong, In-Bong (1999), Korean History encountered at the Land of Exile.

The principal preoccupation of the Yi dynasty was to ensure the flow of exotic tribute items desired and taxes to Seoul Peking. Tribute items in demand were sea products, horses, fruits, medicinal herbs....The need for Jeju's exotic resources spurred the rapid integration of Jeju island into the Yi Dynasty state organigram. Ways employed to ensure the collection of tribute items and taxes included the administrative restructuring of Jeju in 1413, by creating three castles - centers of Neo-Confucian civilization. The three towns were walled and protected against both local insurgency and foreign incursions and piracy. Furthermore a position of governor (Moksa) was created, which lasted until 1914.

Integration of the island and people within the Yi Dynasty was achieved through formal and informal education of Neo-Confucian philosophy. Neo-Confucian scholar officials exiled in Jeju played an important role in creating "Jeju exile literature"⁷ and transforming the local culture. Virtue was identified with "leadership", and virtuous leaders had to be properly educated according to Neo-Confucian principles. Education rather than force was the ideal means to achieve physical, social ideological transformation of the island. Government supported and staffed Confucian temples and academies of learning to shape the island according to their ideals of propriety.

⁷According to some Jeju scholars, Jeju women do not occupy the same level of dominance as men. They wrote: "History has been written from men's point of view...the traditional history writing has denied women's active participation in history....In this experience of history, women have been always below men, and oppressed by the weight of tradition.....(Jeju Women's History (2011): 11-12). These scholars seem to have missed considering "lived life" of Jeju women, especially lives of women divers.

A basic premise of Neo-Confucian philosophy is to observe the natural order. To achieve harmony and happiness, man must adjust the social order to the cosmic order of which he is a part. Natural law prevailed in the universal order that subordinated man to earth, and earth to heaven; and heaven; and heaven's munificence flowed to man through earth. In short, nature's law was observed to be hierarchical and elitist. The social consequences of these interpretations of the natural order legitimized an arrangement in which classes of men were deliberately structured hierarchically by the state, whereupon heaven's blessing could be distributed inequitably yet humanely among them.

The organizational centre of the state resided in the Emperor, whose dwelling was situated at the fairest terrestrial forefront of heaven's blessings. Proximity to the Emperor meant proximity to the primary effluence of heaven's blessings, and distance from him had the opposite effect. The isolation of Jeju island located at great distance from the Yi sovereign's residence in Seoul had profound social implications. In this world view, Jeju was a cosmological non-entity.

During the Later Yi Dynasty (18th-19th C), Jeju saw an intensification of Neo-Confucianism. During the purification campaign of 1702 ("spiritual colonization"), One hundred twenty nine (129) shrines hundreds of buddhist temples were burnt by the governor, Yi Hyung-sang; 400 shamans were forced to become farmers. This event was named burning of "the 500 shamanic shrines 500 Buddhist temples". There are many legends (forms of resistance) relating to the governor on whom malediction fell as the result of what he did.

Western contact with Jeju was the beginning of the end of Neo-Confucian supremacy. The first recorded contact was in 1653 (a Dutch ship). The initial contacts had no significant impact, until the arrival of the Christian missionaries late 19th C. These missionaries noted a “deliberate policy of enlightened underdevelopment”, enhanced by the law inhibiting the islanders from going to the mainland. For 200 year (1629-1839) during the Yi Dynasty, this prohibition was maintained for jeju people to enter the mainland. This oppression of the population and prohibition of fishing activity) continued until the Jeju economy was in a complete isolation and hit the bottom, leading to chains of rebellions (1813, 1862, 1893, 1901).

4.2 Jeju culture as a compromise between confucian values Jeju realities

The second school of thought on Jeju identity argues that the characteristic of Jeju culture is a “compromise” between two distinctive elements - Confucianism from the mainland and local perseverance of jeju reality - “lived life.” Jeju caught between the island reality (harsh environment of wind, sea, volcanic stone , scarce drinking water, scarce land, isolation for centuries) and Confucian ideology (external centre of authority, ideology of control rule) developed its own unique culture.

Some scholars call this compromise “double reality” (Han Sam-In, 1998) of “ideal culture” and “real culture” (Kim Chang-min, 1992; Kim Chang-Min 2011). This “compromise” or “double reality” is seen in the Jeju kinship system and marriage (Kim Chang-min, 2011; Yi Chang-Ki 1999; Han Sam-In 1998), the funeral rites (Kim Chang-Min 1992), the architecture (Kim, Tae-II, 2008), and the gender relations

(Cho, Hae-Jong, 1979).

Few examples are discussed below: the marriage, the funeral rites, the architecture and the gender relations.

Jeju kinship system and marriage pattern

According to Han, Sam-In (1998), Jeju society is dominated by a “double reality” - the realistic Jeju lifestyle and Confucian ideologies were projected jointly in the family customs. There is Written law (in law books) and Customary law (living, active law, like our friend who shares our grief and therefore has common grounds in our thoughts). Customary laws play a very important role in family relations. Marriage practice (village endogamy or marriage with nearby villages) indicates that Confucian family values were not strong.

Other examples of transgression of Confucian principles in Jeju marriage are: non-respect for generation; “double marriage” (giving women more than once to the same family to strengthen the relationship between families); give and receive women between two families; marriage between families with the same sir-name; consanguineous marriage (the same sir-name and the same place of birth), until the beginning of the 18th century.

Other than marriage customs transgressing Confucian principles, married women bring their own gods and goddesses and continue their own family history in their husbands' house, which is not heard of in Confucian principles and rituals. In Jeju villages, there are usually two shrines, but people usually have more than four goddess. Married women bring their own gods\goddesses and worship 3 times a year. Women go to the village shrine to worship and visit their ancestors - recompose family history and justify the history (Kim, Chang-Min, 1992: 106). The village shrine is a place where an individual's continuing identity as a woman is clearly expressed and reproduced, inherited from mother to daughter or daughter-in-law. People who worship the same gods meet at the same place (shrine) and thus share continuity and feel one-ness. This practice, which is a part of Jeju bilateral kinship system - "kwendang", (discussed in detail below in section. 4.3) is an ideological means for the village to function as a continuing collective body.

This practice definitely defies Confucian principle of worshipping patrilineal ancestors by men in Confucian ceremonial place ("Pojae"). In confucian principle based patrilineal mainland, women cannot bring her own ancestor or goddess to her husband's house.

Funeral rites also reveal a compromise between "ideal culture" (envy for confucian \ mainland culture) and "real culture" (adaptation to the island environment). In jeju, a dead body was not buried - the corpse was thrown away near the stream or in the valley. The first Burial of a dead body, according to Confucian principle, took place in 1406. But in general, the funeral is performed not by the lineage group, but by area groups -" gol". A village is divided into several "gol" and the gol manages the funeral unit.

It often happens that for the discussion of the funeral procedure, patrilineage based on Confucian ideology provides the standard of judgement (called "ideal culture") but the actual funeral process ("real culture") is managed by kinsmen (kwendang) mobilizing people and distributing the work, irrespective of the confucian ideology. Description of one funeral (Kim, Chang-Min, 1992: 108) shows that daughters-in-laws' families (of a dead woman) brought "sweet bean porridge" (Jeju custom). The funeral expense was divided by her three sons: before the funeral, the dead woman's first son, in the morning of the funeral day, her second son, for the funeral day lunch, her youngest son. Each son entertained the guests in his house, by killing a pig, and guests (village men) paid contribution to the house where the funeral was held. Guests (village women) visited each of the house of the three sons, paid contributions..... (Kim Chang-Min 1992:109).

Jeju architecture - space division

Traditionally, the Jeju house roof is made of grass and root plants such as grass, turf, eulalia, reed or bulrush. During the Yi Dynasty, the first house with a tiled roof was built by a few government bureaucrats. This style (waga) was brought to Jeju by Confucian culture. Scarcity of this type of house was due to difficulties in manufacturing tiles and also its weakness in resisting severe wind and rain.

A Jeju residence has one principal courtyard in the centre, and two dwelling units facing each other. One is called “the inner house”, the other “the outer house”. The distance between them is about 7-8 meters, to allow privacy. Unlike in the mainland, Jeju dwelling units divide the occupants by generation, not by sex - the parents occupy the inner house; the married child and family occupy the outer house (Kim, Tae-II, 2008; Kim, Hae-Sook, 1999). The family size occupying one dwelling unit is small (two generation). Each house has a kitchen and cook separately. This two generation family lives under one roof. Each small family is a separate production and consumption unit. When old parents move to the outer house, due to the decrease in the size of the unit, the key to the grain storage room is handed over from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law. There is no strong hierarchy between generations and no strong hierarchy between sexes. All this responds to environmental constraints. But, here and there, Confucian ideals are adopted, where possible.

Jeju gender relations

Jeju gender relations is another sphere where such a compromise is seen producing “neither sex dominant” (Cho, 1978), from the situation of “female dominant reality” and “male superiority ideology”. This model does not contradict other interpretations⁸ of jeju scholars on Jeju women’s position, but synthesize them.

⁸ According to some Jeju scholars, Jeju women do not occupy the same level of dominance as men. They wrote: “History has been written from men’s point of view...the traditional history writing has denied women’s active participation in history....In this experience of history, women have been always below men, and oppressed by the weight of tradition.....(Jeju Women’s History (2011): 11-12). These scholars seem to have missed considering “lived life” of Jeju women, especially lives of women divers.

According to Cho, the diver’s village is a female-centred, if not female dominant, society with a peculiar form of an independent control sphere of men to “rule” women under the name of Confucianism. In order to understand “the balance of power between the sexes,” we need to examine the selective adoption of Confucianism by the female diver’s villagers. The female dominant society in terms of economy and family relations is counter-balanced by the ritual world which men exclusively control. (see section 4.3 below for a detailed discussion on this). While Jeju resists the grip of control and rule of external ideological forces (confucianism), many people have been indoctrinated by it - especially in the plains area - particularly men benefited from it through education and a position in central bureaucracy. It is women divers who were at forefront in coping with the harsh island reality supported the island economy, in spite of the fact that confucian scholars despised women women divers. Uneducated women had nothing to gain from confucian ideology. Yet, they accepted Confucian patriarchal ideology and man’s monopoly of funeral rites, allowing male superiority at the ritual level. Jeju gender relation is an example, par excellence, of Jeju “compromise,” although no Jeju scholars saw it.

4.3 Finding back indigenous elements (decolonization): giant goddess as Jeju people’s ancestor and the spirit of the sea kingdom

There is a group of jeju intellectuals who see the need of Jeju identity, based on indigenous elements and self knowledge, away from colonial legacy. The representative school of this thought is Chun Kyung-Soo (2010), a professor at Seoul national university and Baek Un-chul, Managing Director of Jeju Stone Park.

Chun (2010) proposes 4 elements in formulating Jeju identity. They are: (1) reproducing the great spirit of Jeju indigenous goddess (Grandmother Seolmundae) - her love and hope of her 500 sons and humanity. According to Chun, her greatness is reincarnated in Jeju women divers; (2) recalling and reviving “women centeredness of jeju” - the philosophy and spirit of women divers’ community life value system, mutual help, self reliance, respect of the nature and environment; (3) remembering and reviving the glory of past autonomy over a 1000 year of the Tamna kingdom (if it was possible then, it is possible now and in future); (3) developing a holistic “Jeju Science” to accumulate knowledge and information on Jeju to be able “to see self in the mirror” and also to be able to present “self” to outside world.

4.3.1 Creation myth - giant goddess Seolmundae Halmang (SH):

The greatness of this giant goddess, ancestress of Jeju people is the theme of Jeju Stone Park, created and managed by Baek Un -Chul in collaboraiton with Jeju government. The park celebrates every year, on May the 15th - the memorial day of Seolmundae Halmang, retells the story reenacting the ritual, to remind Jeju people of their ancestress’ message of “love and hope.”

The story contains the five legends of SH: (1) Origin of Jeju Island, (2) Washing laundry, (3) One hundred bundles of silk and a bridge connecting to the mainland, (4) The very tall grandmother...(5) Five hundred generals. Legend 1 tells the origin and geography of Jeju Island. Legend 3 tells Jeju people’s desire to connect to the mainland. Legend 5 tells SH’s love for her children.

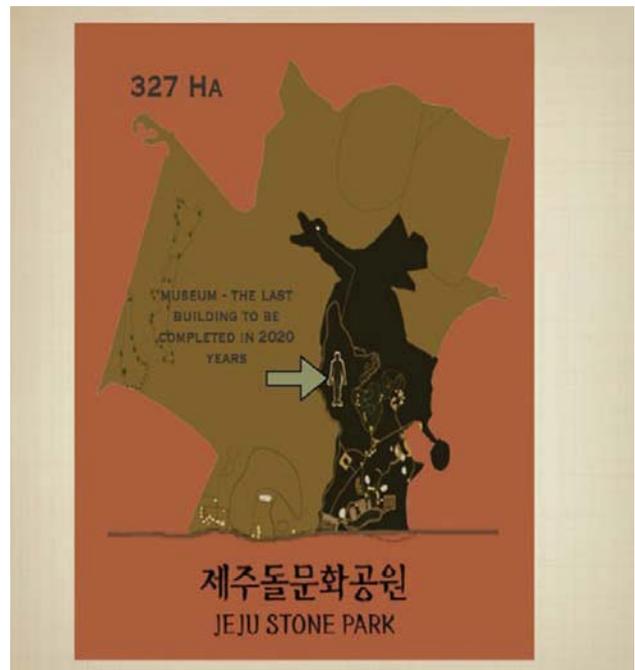


figure1: map of Jeju Stone Park (from Jeju Stone Park website)

Our discussion will be limited to legend 5 due to lack of space. The story goes as follows:

“Once upon a time, there lived Grandmother Seolmundae with her five hundred sons. One year, a severe famine struck. Then one day, all the sons were away searching for food. The mother was making gruel for her sons to eat on their return. Unfortunately she misstepped, fell into the cauldron and died. Without knowing what had happened, her sons came home starving and ate the gruel. The gruel was unusually good.....The youngest son returned late and, stirring the gruel before eating, found big bones.He then realized that his mother had fallen into the cauldron and died. He said that he could not live with brothers who ate the gruel without realizing their mother was dead. He ran, in overwhelming grief for his mother, to Chagui islet in Gosan-ri village, Hankyeong-Myeon, in the northern part of the island, and he turned into a rock. Day after day, the other brothers grieved over their mother’s

death and eventually they all turned into the rocks of Youngsil. this is the story of Five Hundred Generals.”

This story of SH's love and hope has been interpreted by a well known Jeju literary critic (Song, Sang-Hee) and in a performance as below⁹ on the Memorial day of SH in 2008:

“Today, here, the descendants of Tamna are gathered to tell you

We will comply with your great will and widely spread your message

We heard that...

you are the mother of creation and love,
your body is the container of your heart
in order to contain such a big love as your,
your body had to be big

My sons, I love you.

Mother, we love you

.....

we love ourselves

we love Tamna kingdom

we love Korea

we love everything on the earth, sun, moon,
heaven, earth

and we love Seoulmundae Halmang, who
aroused the love in our heart

....” (my translation from Korean)

This poet interprets the significance of story telling (of the legend) as follows:

“ SH is the founder of the collectivity of Tamna - a messenger of love,

the unspoken question is in what direction the Jeju people's life should go,

the answer is sought through SH,

rediscovering SH is to reconstruct a new history symbolized by SH,

to seek the meaning of life in this process of search.”

⁹Jeju Stone Park (2011), Seolmundae Halmang Memorial Service - Collection of Photos :2004-2010: 41

4.3.2 Women centeredness of Jeju

In addition to the Jeju creation myth of the Giant Goddess, there are many other elements which symbolize “women centeredness” of Jeju, according to different Jeju scholars. They offer: (i) strong, assertive image of women in Jeju myth (Yang, Young-Ja, 2007); (ii) Jeju bilateral kinship system (called” kwendang”) and local residence pattern of quasi village endogamy, which gives a central place to women in daily life compared to the patrilineal kinship system and virilocal residence pattern of the mainland; and (iii) women divers (Jamnyo) who reincarnate the creative energy and love of the giant goddess SH. Each of these 3 elements revealing “women centeredness” of Jeju are briefly discussed below.

Strong female characteristics in Jeju myth, folk songs:

There are numerous collections and analyses of Jeju myth. According to Kim, Yong-Sook (2002)¹⁰, the collection of myths has reached its limit and the next step should be to develop a meaningful theoretical framework through the analysis of existing data. Perhaps one possible framework is “women centered theory” of Jeju myth. Jo Hyun-Seol (2011)¹¹ supports this position when he says Jeju shamanic myth is goddess myth.

A random reading of the Jeju myth and analysis

¹⁰ Yang, Young-Ja (2007) Background of Jeju Folksongs, Minokwon.

¹¹Jo, Hyun-Seol (2011) ‘Meaning and transformation of Jeju Goddess Myths’, *Jejudo Study*, vol 36; Yang, young-soo (2011) “Feminine characteristics in Jeju mythology”, *Tamla Culture*, no.38.

by scholars reveal the central quality of Jeju women, their autonomy and their strong character - they are tenacious, autonomous, throwing a young husband over to top of the roof or throwing a father-in-law (who beating his wife) over the top of the roof¹². Female heroines in Jeju myth are often very assertive in their search for a partner and in sex life, active in their search for livelihood, and autonomous economically, even when they are freed from their husbands. They prefer to share an intelligent husband rather than having an incapable husband. Divers' rowing songs again reveal women's tenacity:

"rowing together,
the paddle and rope are broken,
by the over-flowing force..
Blow, oh wind,
let us see who wins,
Will the paddle break first?
or will it be the wind.... "

Jeju is the home of 18,000 gods\goddesses. The majority of Jeju myths are about goddesses - they are self assured, active, autonomous (eg. in songdang bonpuri - Baekju proposes to divorce her husband who ate the cow used for plowing the field - she tells him: "let us divide our property -the field and the water". In another myth, the goddess is divorced by her husband, because she ate pork while she was pregnant and needed to eat well for the baby to be born. There are 346 (or 270) shrines in Jeju (depending on the authors) - 68% of them are for worship of the goddesses. When Jeju people go to a shrine, they say that they go to the shrine of Halmang (grandmother).

¹²Yang, Young-Ja (2007) Background of Jeju Folksongs, Misokwon.

Jeju kinship system and women's centrality

Jeju kinship system is a compromise between the patrilineal lineage system (Confucian ideal) of the mainland (the Yi dynasty) and the need to adapt to harsh Island environment. Unlike the patrilineal kinship system of the Korean mainland, which is based on the blood relationship between lineage members (hence excluding affines and uterine kins). The island's kinship system tends to be bilateral and inheritance for

daughters and sons tend to be egalitarian, which is very different from that of the Yi Dynasty¹³.

In Jeju, village members are called either "kwendang" (relationship created through parents-children or siblings) or "sadon" (affines-relationship created through marriage). Kwendang and Sadon include most of the village people, since village endogamy was often practiced. Kinship terminology is egalitarian for affines (female and male) and blood relationship (female and male), only distinguishing generations.

In Jeju kinship system, women are placed in the central place as men. Their labour and the link through women in the village are crucial for survival in a harsh environment. Kwendang

¹³Deuchler (2002) points out, in her comparison between the kinship systems of the Yi Dynasty and the Koryo Dynasty (which preceded the Yi Dynasty) that the Koryo kinship system included patrilineal, matrilineal affinal relatives\ a group traced its descent through male female links (pp.38-39); uxori-local residence was common in Koryo. There were no apparent restrictions on the choice of residence. (pp.77); Koryo man was surrounded by a bilateral kindred, and from this pool of consanguines his partners allies in life - often even his bride- emerged(pp.80). I note that there is a strong resemblance between Jeju kinship system and that of Koryo Dynasty (in 1196). It is difficult to say whether Jeju kinship system is the remains of the Koryo system or independent from it

is an important resource for mobilization and exchange of labour. Ensuring labour force is more important in Jeju than owning the land (e.g. the ratio of the distribution of agricultural products is 1:2:: landowner: tenant (when tenant provides the fertilizer). Even during the ancestor worship ritual (an important Confucian ceremony), kwendang members divide the work.

Women divers' world and their value system

Divers are collectively the owners of the sea, and whatever is collected from the sea should therefore be redistributed to all, because they are descendants of one ancestor (Goddess Yowang Halmang) for whose honour a shamanic ritual is held every year "to return the seeds". Women divers resorted to goddesses and shamans to protect their lives in dangerous seas, and to protect their sea harvest, their family fortune and health. Women divers were guardians of century old Jeju myths. Shamans were interlocutors between themselves and the gods/goddesses. They fed and nurtured the gods/ goddesses of the indigenous Jeju belief system in village temples of which they were guardians. It is not surprising that the Yi Dynasty governors stationed in Jeju burned village shamanic temples and forced shamans to convert to farmers.

Diving is dangerous, therefore it is a collective activity. The divers' association is an economic occupational group, but also a moral occupational group. They show respect

for the convenience of elderly divers, by leaving them areas near the shore in Bultuk¹⁴ where the smoke from the fires doesn't blow. Sea

territory is a collective property and divers have a collective right and duty to manage it. They must refrain from diving for a certain period and offers a shamanic ritual, whenever a fellow diver drowns. When a diver leaves the village to marry, she loses the right to dive in her village. When a new diver arrives in a village, she has to pay a membership fee, which varies depending on her capacity. When a rule is transgressed, membership is taken away or the culprit must

pay a fine (eg, by weeding in the sea, or by dealing with a dead body). The status of diver depends on ability and the number of years of experience. There are low level, middle level, high level or very high level. Legal activity below sea level (activity conforming with Jeju jamnyo rules) is granted only to women living in the village, who have a house of their own. Periods of legal entry to the sea are pre-determined, following the pattern of the tides (e.g. the Kimnyung ri jamsoo group is allowed 2 entries per day and 8 entries per month).

These women are "social adults" supporting their families and dominating the socio-economic sphere of village life. They are competent and dedicated social actors full of self-respect. Mutual assistance among women is the basic form of village collaboration. In reality, women's enhanced collaboration even brings about modifications to the ideals of patriarchal society at the institutional and behavioral levels. Compared with these hard-working women, their husbands suffer from

¹⁴ "Bultuk" is a symbol of women divers' life and spirit, a place at the shore, where divers changed their clothes and warmed themselves, coming out from the sea. It is a place for exchange of information, for rest, discussion decision making on when to dive, when to stop or the market price of sea products collected, etc. It is also a place for divers's professional training for young women, education about rules of the divers' community

work-deprivation. An important socio-religious activity, ancestor worship (chesa) has been created for these husbands but it seems unsatisfactory. (Cho, 1978)

On the Korean mainland, rice cultivation was the major economic activity. Male solidarity was the most important collaboration for the irrigation farming on the limited rice paddies. This was the social condition where Confucianism had emerged. In contrast Jeju has a totally different ecological economic bases. The patriarchal ideology and ethics of Confucianism cannot be compatible with a social system where women are the

primary economic actors. In Jeju (the data from village Yong Dong, Island of Udo, Cho, 1978) what is adhered is not the ethical aspect (filial piety lineage solidarity) of the Confucianism. It is the patriarchal ideology with a heavy emphasis on the patrilineal ancestral memorial rituals - Chesa. In other words, Confucianism has been transformed from ethics into a dogmatic ideology in Jeju village life.

To men, chesa is the most important, if not the only, male activity in Young Dong. To men, chesa means a vocation. To women, chesa means more as a memorial service to "dead spirits" of immediate ancestors including parents and grandparents. Chesa has a profound meaning to diving women as well but in a different way; it is something to be performed by all means since it provides them with a system of ideas which makes the incomprehensible (death) comprehensible. Rather than "offering" services for ancestors, "receiving" the memorial service (for women) and "being fed" after their death has more meanings to these women.

Ironically, diving women are strictly excluded from participating in chesa, although a daughter's economic contributions for her parents' chesa is accepted. Women need men (sons) to perform chesa to be fed by chesa, when they are dead!! "Exclusion of women" from chesa serves as the basis of the power structure. Male superiority is claimed and reinforced through chesa performances - the most important social and religious activity in the village life. Women have a vague expectation that they will be taken care of by their male children when they get old. This vague hope, in addition to chesa - attributes to the value of male children.

In other words, Confucian ideology (patrilineal inheritance virilocality) is adopted to claim male superiority in Jeju, but these practices are diluted. A study of "superstructure" of Yong Dong may present a picture of a male-dominant society with a heavy emphasis on the patriarchal ideology and rituals. Women's life may be seen as hard labor doomed to a humiliation in a world of male superiority. But a totally different picture is presented, when the sphere of women's life (the diver's society) sets up its own sphere of economic contribution to the community's basic value system, and to women's self esteem. It appears that Cho is the first scholar who shed light on this aspect of Jeju.

In summary, Confucian influence on women divers' coastal villages was restricted to a certain aspect of ritual life in the village, such as the funeral ceremony. To uneducated women divers, whose livelihood depends on the sea, Confucianism meant little and offered little opportunities or support. Central government, controlling hierarchical political and social system, offered little to women divers who relied on their knowledge of the sea, their individual skills, and mutual help with other divers. Every time, they enter the sea, there is a chance that they will not come out alive. Self-reliance and hard work, respecting the cycle of nature characterised the divers' world. In these coastal villages, women divers were the main economic and social actors. This aspect of community life and values is at the basis of what is known as "matriarchy of Jeju Island" and women dominance, which survived in contrast to the "patriarchy of the Confucian mainland" and its philosophical minorisation of women.

Cho's concluding remark is worth noting: An interesting asymmetry is noted: privilege, including permissive care and freedom are bestowed on men when women control the economic and social life. On the other hand, when men control social life, as found in most of patriarchal societies, restrictions and submission are inflicted on women. The study of women does not just mean "studying women". It is the study of men and women and their relations... and the study of problems of humanity arising in these relations. There are no easy solutions to the inequality problem. We can only hope to find an alternative value system to guide the future society of equality, likely to be found among yet-to-be explored feminine value systems.

4.3.3. Remembering and reviving the glory of tamna kingdom

Jeju celebrates "Tamna Cultural Festival" every year. The year 2011 marked its 50th anniversary. The celebration lasted 2 weeks with all kinds of jeju's indigenous cultural activities.



figure 2: Tamna Cultural Festival banner, photo taken by the author in 2011

It is conjectured that 6-7th century was the climax of Tamna Kingdom. Tamna was the centre of East Asia, at the cross roads of trade between China (Tang), Japan, Taiwan and Okinawa in the south. It was also in trade and diplomatic relations with small kingdoms in the southern portion of the Korean peninsula, and then later, with larger kingdoms of Paekche (AD 18-660), then Silla (57-935), and United Silla (660-935). In 316AD Tamna paid tributes to China (Han Dynasty), and in 476AD paid tributes to Baekche. The map below (figure 3) is used by Jeju scholars to show the glory of Tamna as the center of East Asia trade at its climax. This map shows Jeju people's self image.

The fame and power of Tamna reached to such an extent that Silla considered Tamna the 4th strongest enemy to fear. The 9 story pagoda built during the Silla period, where each story representing enemies of Silla should be careful, Tamna occupied the 4th story/enemy (see figure 4 below).

figure3: map illustrating the climax of Tamna trade routes and autonomy

figure 4: 9 - story pagoda built during Silla period

4.3.4 Developing a holistic Jeju (island) science



Other than the three elements mentioned above (remembering the Jeju Indigenous Giant Goddess, Women centeredness of Jeju and the

glory of Tamna Kingdom), the fourth element in construction of Jeju identity is Jeju Science.

According to Chun (2010), developing Jeju Science (the knowledge on Jeju people's history, reality, experience and aspirations) is important in the context of global systems of resources and relations. Chun continues: the world outside is asking: "What is Jeju?" There is no centre which can answer this question. The centre (mainland) only caused difficulties to Jeju and destroyed us. Two studies were conducted by the centre (in 1946,1959), but no written records of the findings remain. Jeju needs a mirror to see itself in it - Jeju Science (a Regional Science).

Thus, Chun develops a theory of Jeju Science, which has 4 components:

- (i) A holistic approach with a Unity of Science - early phase of "regional (province) study" focussed on humanities social science only;
- (ii) Building data base (information collection on Jeju) - English version should be available, so that outside world can read about Jeju;
- (iii) Science for people, by people and it should contribute to the quality of life of people;
- (9v) Jeju science should expand horizon, incorporating "others" - Jeju people should acknowledge their heterogeneous nature.

In 1978 Jeju Island Research Assoc. was found and Many questions were raised: Why island (do) study?, not province(do)? \Why Jeju is the object of the study? Since then, many research centers and academic journals have been created¹⁵. The dream of Jeju Science is in full process of being developed.

¹⁵ Some examples are: Jeju Development Institute (JDI), Society for Jeju Studies, Tamna Culture Research Centre, Jeju Traditional culture Research Centre, jeju 4.3 study centre. Some examples of scholarly journals are: The Islanders, Tamna Culture, Jejudo Reserch, World Environment and Island Studies (in English).

Conclusion

As promised in the beginning of this article, I have presented the narrative of Jeju people as a collectivity and their quest for future directions. We have seen many different visions and stories about what Jeju identity is and what its future should be. Jeju people's quest. As stated by Taylor, "....In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going....What I am has to be understood as what I have become....that life is seen as a 'quest'...."

It appears that not one of the stories told above can be left out, although they seem to compete with each other, and there are different audiences for different stories. As Lévi-Strauss (1977) and Héritier (1977) pointed out, the concept of "Identity" is an accumulation of different layers of experience of people throughout the history in their society, which is taken by layers \slices by different groups, and necessarily evolves (transforms) with time .

It should be pointed out that this way of presenting Jeju identity or culture raised most enthusiasm, when it was presented to a group of high school teachers in Jeju (2012 summer). They said: my story of Jeju identity gave them a sense of dignity, and hope. It gave them a coherent image of self which they could work on with their young students for the future of Jeju - a society in which they would like to live and would be proud of. It is this image of Jeju I would like to mirror back to the youth of Jeju with a project of book writing, to give a sense of one possible future direction.

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