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Welcome to Korea and Welcome to Jeju Island!

Jeju Isle was formed as a result of many volcanic eruptions for the past billion years. The last volcanic eruption occurred in 1925. The second latest eruption took place in the year 946, A.D., i.e., about one millennium years ago, and its scale was estimated as about 160 thousand times Hiroshima nuc. bomb (20 KT).

Since the time gap between these volcanic eruptions was about one thousand years, it may be logical to predict that the next Jeju volcanic eruption would occur probably in circa 3000 A.D. \pm .

As a charter member of the Korean Nuclear Society, therefore, I hereby guarantee your safety, security and comfortability during your stay in Jeju.

Jeju is known to the world as an island of three Manies and three Naughts: 3 Manies are wind, stone, and women; 3 Naughts are no beggar, no thief and consequently no need of installing gates (Fig. 1). This implies that all the Jeju islanders are diligent and honest.

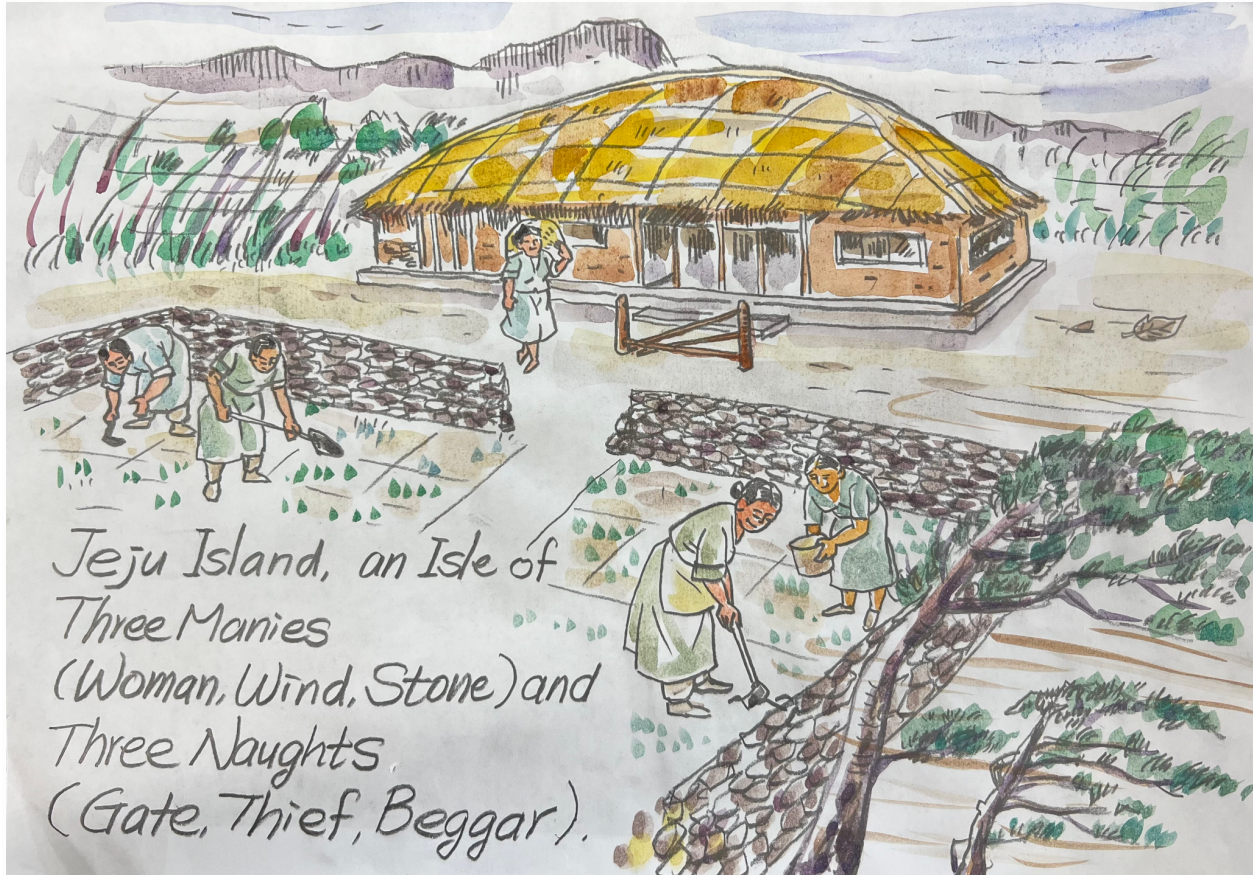


Fig.1. Characteristics of Jeju Island

On the contrary, their ancestors suffered from tyranny, and the island was a famous place of exile, as well as adequate ground for growing Mongolian horses.

The particular natural characteristics of this island are such that there are too much and too frequent rainfalls in the high land, whereas middle-altitudinal regions are extremely scarce of ground water due to high porosity of the soil, and the areas are very foggy, so that not adequate for an airport site.

I have a special connection with this island, inter alia, for its developmental scheme. I managed an R&D project for the development of groundwater in the water-scarce region of the island

by using nuclear technology, and it was supported by IAEA for 3 years in the long past.

The clue is to compare the tritium (H_3) contents of collected ground water from the island with those of ordinary surface water in the world that has been contaminated with tritium isotope since the hydrogen bomb tests by the big powers. Tritium isotope decays into Helium-3 with 0.019 Mev beta decay energy having half life of 12.33 years. If the tritium contents of the sampled water are 5% of those of ordinary surface water, we then can assume that there would be huge underground storage pool (95%) at nearby upstream. After this 3-year underground water development project, I became a self-claimed specialist in the field of underground water exploitation. There are many more technologies related to ground water investigation.

In the 14th century, Japan was a secluded nation but with one opening port “Nagasaki” located at the extreme west coast of her territory, being 300km to the east from Jeju. Naturally many western country’s ships from Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands visited the opened port. On way to Nagasaki, some of the ships approached Jeju Island for water, food and also for information on whereabouts of Nagasaki. Question was: “which way is leading to Nagasaki?” Answer from Jeju island was: “ ...Jer...pyun, Jer...pyun (way over there)”, saying so in Korean with fingers pointing toward the eastern direction. “Word of Jer...pyun was shrunken to Jerpyun, and finally into Japan.”

One Dutch ship (Sperawer) was wrecked near Jeju seashore on 15 August 1653, and 28 of 64 crew were drowned dead. The remaining 36 rescued by local people were sent to Seoul in May 1654 for investigation, The interpreter at that event was PARK Yeon, a high-ranking military officer who was originally a Dutch man. He had also been rescued from ship-wrecked accident earlier. The remaining crew were separated into three groups and sent to rural areas for living afterwards. 8 of them, however, successfully managed to escape to Nagasaki in September 1566 after 13-year's hard life in Korea. Upon returning home, Hendrik Hamel published two books:

- Dutch Ship's Wrecked Account on Jeju Island,
- A Country Record of Korea.

These books created a great sensation among the intellectuals in the western world. People commented that, as far as the introduction of Korea is concerned, these books are equivalent to the level of Marco Polo's book on China a few centuries ago.

Hamel's books were translated and published in 20 countries including Korea when we were under Japanese rule. The original version was translated into Korean by Professor KEE Byung-Do, father of my college senior, and then published by Dae-Dong Publishing company with good reputation in the 1930s. The owner of that publishing company was my father-in-law.

Jeju keeps a gloomy history of ideological conflict. It is called “4.3 Affair” that has been named so after its tragic event starting from April 3, 1948, some months before the establishment of the Korean government on August 15, 1948. It started with the total attack on all police stations in Jeju by the communist guerilla, that was plotted by Kim Dal-sam (former Japanese army captain).

The invaded communists killed policemen, their family members, government officials and intellectuals, claiming that those people are reactionists. They also set fire on nearly half of 24 police stations in Jeju. Rumours spread at that time was that it was instructed & financed by Moscow. Naturally, there was counterattack from the police plus anti-communist youths. As the attacks and subsequent counterattacks were repeated, there was a saying that Jeju is administered by the government in daytime, and controlled by the communists in night time. Such a situation with retaliative blows between the two continued for more years thereafter. Some of my former classmates in a North Korean school who participated in Jeju conflicts as members of Youth Association returned back to Seoul as ashes in wooden box. We received the ashes with tears.

In October 1948, the newly born Korean government finally ordered the 14th army regiment to rescue Jeju. At that time, the regiment was stationed in Yeosoo and Sooncheon area that is nearest from Jeju, being about 200 km apart across the sea. On October 19th of 1948, there was communist-led military coup in the 14th army regiment, and most of officers and sergeants in the army were assassinated by the communists just leaving for Jeju, and the nearby areas began to be put under the red flag.

There were still more than 60 communist activists during the Korean war (1950-53), and they were influential to the local residents using the mountain as their basis until 1958 thus having caused a great deal of suffering and damage to the local population. Many of the local people became the victim of the conflict by the police and the right wing youth, or by the leftwing faction.

SON Dong-in and SON Dong-shin, being high school kids in Sooncheon, were killed by a communist classmate KANG Cheol-min, because their father was a clergyman in Christian church. When the area was recovered by the government forces, KANG Cheol-min was arrested and was then sentenced to capital punishment at the court marshal. To that sentence, Rev. SON Yang-won appealed to the court for a special pardon in favour of his sons' killer. But the military court responded with the word of "Impossible". Yet, Rev. Son repeated the petitions. Finally he declared Kang to be his adopted son. His argument was that since he became sonless, he absolutely needs one, and Kang is the very one.

Thus Kang was released from captivity in the capacity of de jure son of Rev. Son. Then Kang became a student of theological seminary to inherit de facto father's mission.

Unfortunately, Yeosoo and Sooncheon area was occupied by the North Korean army during the Korean war, and Rev. Son who was taking care of many leprous patients in the region was massacred by the communists on 28 September 1950, thus becoming a martyr. The story ends with this martyrdom.

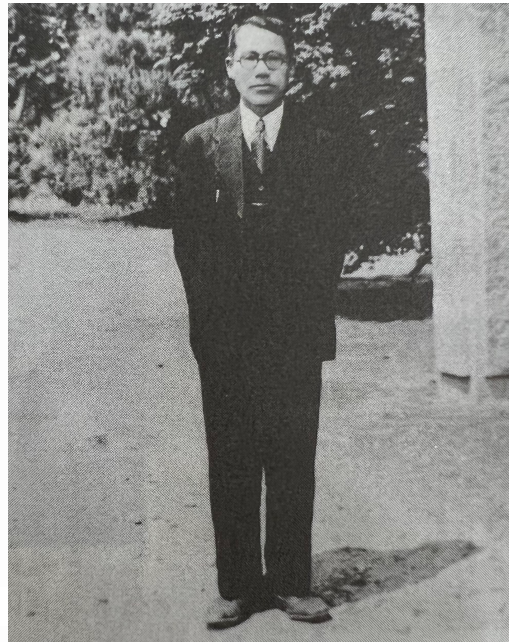


Fig 2. Rev. SON Yang-Won, Church Minister of Leprous Patients

However, my story continues. SON Dong-seung, the nephew of Rev. SON Yang-won, who got a Doctor-of-Science degree in material science from MIT, worked together with me. He is very prudent and a man of few words. One day he answered me about the recent situation regarding his adopted cousin Kang.

After the martyrdom event, Kang became persona non-grata to all his church members, relatives of Son's family and neighbours, simply because there was no more umbrella protecting him from severe storms. Yet the adopted cousin tried his best to be patient.

When he reached the critical point of mental endurance, he sneaked away to a deep mountain, meaning a Buddhist temple. After several years there, he got a job at an apartment complex in a different city as a guard. He must have been pretending to be an ordinary man. We must pretend not to be aware of his background. Pretence is very important for living in this complex & mixed society of the right and left.