

Becoming a "Legitimate" Ancestor: A Sociocultural Understanding of a Sonless *Jamnyeo's* Life Story

Gui-Young Hong

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Abstract: The retrospective reflections of a sixty two year old sonless widow *jamnyeo* (traditional career ocean diving woman on Jeju Island, South Korea) on her experiences as a marginal figure in her late husband's family are examined from sociocultural perspectives. This paper presents sociocultural interpretative analyses of the *jamnyeo's* life events and her experiences lived in the island's historical and sociocultural contexts. Analyses focus on three theoretical notions: sociocultural embeddedness, continuity and discontinuity between collective and personal cultures, and joint constructions. The *jamnyeo's* storytelling and life story, from the perspective of sociocultural theory, reveals active, goal-oriented attempts to transform her marginal social position into a culturally virtuous one of "legitimate" ancestor. On an individual plane, the *jamnyeo* subjectively transformed sociocultural voices demanding virtuous womanhood into mediational tools catalyzing and facilitating her life-long struggle to transform her social position from the margins to the center of her husband's family. On a sociocultural plane, her story reveals the dualistic nature of sociocultural voices both as forces; guiding, influencing, and structuring the ways individuals construct and reconstruct their lives; and as products which active social agents construct and transform.

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1. Introduction

In a society where oral tradition is valued as a means of constructing and transmitting collective or personal messages, storytelling and story listening are active parts of people's everyday lives. A cultural group develops its own culture-bound storytelling genres, formal and informal (e.g., myths, folktale, folklore, or other culture-specific storytelling media), to foster direct physical contact and close psychological connections among storytelling and story-listening participants (c.f., PROPP, 1984; VANSINA, 1985). [1]

Storytelling is a collaborative social performance by both storytellers and story listeners through which culturally designed interpersonal relationships are built. As a story is presented, the listener plays an active role in the storytelling process by providing the storyteller with verbal and nonverbal feedback, questions, assurances, suggestions, redirections, criticisms, etc. that arise out of his/her understanding. A listener's understanding is based on collective cultural meanings that (s)he selectively adopts, and his/her own idiosyncratic perspectives and experiences. Through a collaborative social performance, a storyteller reconstructs his/her remembered experience, re-lives the experience with the listener, and calls for understanding and social support in defending, justifying, or glorifying his/her actions (or lack thereof) as well as recruiting social comradeship for re-claiming rights—real or imagined. [2]

A social scientific approach to a person's life story involves at least three interrelated phases of understanding: immediate understanding of the story as it is told by the storyteller within a specific storytelling ("original") context; remote understanding as it is retold by a story listener projecting the story in various contexts other than original ones; and interpretative understanding as it is analyzed with specific (theoretical) reference frames and reflected by story listener social scientists. [3]

The current paper presents an analysis of the life story told by a sixty two year old¹ sonless widow *jamnyeo*², a traditional career ocean diving woman on Jeju

- 1 All ages reported in this paper refer to Korean ages, which are counted from conception. In Korean age, a newborn baby is one year old.
- 2 The best English translation of *jamnyeo* is (a) diving (*jam*) woman/women (*nyeo*), female diver(s), or female ocean diver(s). However, neither of these English translations accurately conveys sociocultural meanings attached to *jamnyeo* and their activities. In brief, *jamnyeo* are culturally constructed career women who dive in the ocean to catch various kinds of sea crops and seaweed, develop self identities, and derive self-satisfaction from their diving activities. *Jamnyeo* have also been referred to as "*haenyeo*" [ocean (*hae*) women (*nyeo*)]. Some nationalistic or sociopolitically-oriented scholars have vehemently argued against using "*haenyeo*" due to its origins in Japanese imperialistic subjugations of Korea (1919-1945). The argument, however, requires greater elaboration based on more accurate historical evidence and verification. When I personally asked individual diving women in the village about their preference between the two terms, roughly half of them chose *jamnyeo*, citing dislike for the vestiges of Japanese imperialism. Those who chose *haenyeo*, explained their preference by saying that it had been used for a long time. In this paper, I chose the word of *jamnyeo* instead of *haenyeo* because it is a better representation of their activities. The literal meaning of *jam* is "to submerge" while that of *hae* simply indicates "the ocean." The former conveys a meaning which is closer to what a diving woman actually *does* in the ocean. In everyday-life contexts, however, the diving women in the village as well as other villagers used the two interchangeably (see CHO, 1979 for her ethnographic work on *jamnyeo*; KIM, 1992 for names of Jeju diving

(or Cheju) Island, South Korea. First, I will present iterative processes of reconstructing her life story in the macro-level social contexts in which her life events were rooted, evolved, and changed, while attempting to maintain the content of the story as it was told. Next, I will discuss my interpretative understanding of her life story from sociocultural theoretical perspectives focusing on the interconnected relationships between the storyteller and her sociocultural contexts. In doing so, I will elaborate on ways of listening to the unspoken, undercurrents of her life story and storytelling by examining them from the perspectives of sociocultural theories—particularly in terms of the: (1) sociocultural embeddedness of individual lives, (2) continuity and discontinuity between collective and personal cultures, and (3) joint construction of collective and personal cultures. [4]

2. Storytelling Context

This study was conducted as part of a larger sociocultural project on traditional ocean diving women's work and lives in a small coastal village on JejuDo. As indicated by its Korean nickname, *samdado* (island of three abundances), JejuDo has long been renowned for its abundance of (1) its traditional ocean diving "career" women (called *jamnyeo* or *haenyeo*), (2) wind, and (3) rocks. In coastal villages on the island, *muljil* (water activity meaning ocean-diving) is traditionally a female-exclusive activity and a major income source. Through their *muljil*, *jamnyeo*³ have become well known for their physical strength, financial independence, autonomy, industriousness, cooperation among themselves, and social visibility (see CHO, 1979, 1983; KIM, 1990c). [5]

Beginning in the 1970s, however, Korean governmental policies promoting modernization have dramatically changed the island's sociocultural landscape. Among the casualties of the island's social changes, the number of *jamnyeo* has sharply decreased; and the pattern, structure, content, and meaning of *jamnyeo*'s diving activities have been transformed. Whereas diving activities used to be organized around small, autonomous, cooperative, informal, friendship-based groups; now they are controlled by *eochoongye* (Village Association of Fishery), with larger-scale, more formally-structured, less friendship-based, and more individually-oriented activities (HONG, 1998b). [6]

2.1 The island—ecological environments

JejuDo (Jeju island) is the main island of JejuDo⁴ (Jeju province), one of nine provinces of South Korea and is composed of 9 inhabited and 54 uninhabited islands off the southern coast of the Korean peninsula. The island itself is

women; SEO & KIM, 1990 for photographic and narrative description of *jamnyeo*'s work).

3 Korean language is more context-dependent than English. For example, singular and plural forms of nouns are not explicitly marked. The word *jamnyeo*, therefore, may refer to one or multiple diving women depending on context.

4 The names of the main island (*Jeju-do*) and of Jeju province (*Jeju-Do*) are homophones. The meaning of "do" versus "Do" are different and must be inferred from context. The former refers to the island while the latter refers to the province.

situated about 80 miles south of the tip of the Korean peninsula to the north, and about twice that distance from Tsushima, Japan to the northeast. It is the largest island in the country, with a size of 1,825 km² (700 mile²) and a population is about 500,000 (CHEJUDO, 1999). Islanders typically live in three types of villages located along the coasts or among the hills, crowns, valleys, and spurs of the island's centrally located inactive volcano, Mt. Halla. The *haean maeul* (coastal villages) are the most densely inhabited and in them, most villagers combine diving, fishing, and farming for their livelihood. The *jungsangan maeul* (middle mountain villages) are located on plateaus at elevations of 100-200 meters (about 330-650 feet). The *sangan maeul* (mountain villages) are scattered among the hills and crowns of Mt. Halla that rise above 200 meters (approximately 650 feet). Middle mountain and mountain villagers live by farming and raising livestock such as cows, sheep, and horses (JEJU MBC, 1991). [7]

Ecological conditions on Jeju Island are not suitable for growing rice, the dietary staple of most Koreans, thus the island's agricultural patterns have contrasted sharply with those on the Korean mainland. Traditional agricultural crops on the island must be drought-resistant and include barley, millet, sweet potatoes, soy beans, and some vegetables. Its climate is semi-tropical with four distinct seasons and has an average annual temperature of about 15° C (60° F). Extreme temperatures range from about 5° C (40° F) in the winter to 29° C (80° F) in the summer, making the island suitable for semi-tropical farming of products such as mandarin oranges and pineapples (CHO, 1979; NEMETH, 1987; see also JEJU MBC, 1991; KANG, 1992). [8]

The island's mild temperature is ideal for the year-round ocean diving to catch shellfish (e.g., abalone, sea-urchins), octopi, sea-cucumbers, and various kinds of seaweed. Its rough tides and strong winds, however, are not conducive to year-round commercial fishing. In coastal villages, while most men fish, their fishing has never been a reliable or profitable source of income. Instead, it is considered a man's spring- and summer-time hobby, and any fish caught are usually consumed by his family. [9]

2.2 H village

I arrived on Jeju Island in the early summer of 1993. Prior to my arrival on the island, I had chosen H village as an observational site based on personal knowledge of the island gleaned from previous personal visits, and in consultation with native Jeju Island colleagues. H village was selected because its diving territory still maintained abundant ocean resources, because diving still provided a major source of income to village families and because the village was geographically close to Jeju City, the provincial capital. The geographical proximity between H village and Jeju City was important because my overall research questions were about changes in individual *jamnyeo's* work and lives in contexts at the crossroads between traditional and modern ways of life. At the time I visited, about 1,200 residents lived in H village, including 300 total and 200 active *jamnyeo*. I stayed with a *jamnyeo's* family in the village for about two months. [10]

2.3 Storyteller and the outset of storytelling

The second evening after my arrival, my landlady, who was an active *jamnyeo*, informed me that the next day was scheduled as one of the village's collective diving days. She advised me, however, not to join them since I had just arrived and no one knew me yet. Early the next morning, a procession of small farming trucks parked along the narrow street in front of my landlady's house. Approximately 10 *jamnyeo* in black rubber diving suits, along with all of their nets and other diving gear were packed into each truck awaiting the command to proceed to the diving site of the day given by a male leader from the *eachongye*. The *jamnyeo* on the trucks were chatting, laughing, clapping, and joking with one another so loudly that it was difficult to understand what they were saying. They also fearlessly challenged and mercilessly teased the *eachongye* leader and other male staff. While I stood next to the truck in which my landlady was sitting with other *jamnyeo*, she introduced me to her friends. After more than an hour, a diving expedition group of approximately 70 people including about 40 *jamnyeo*, their family members, and *eachongye* staff departed for the diving site under the *eachongye* leader's watchful eye and bull-horned instructions. Most *jamnyeo* were accompanied by at least one family member, often male, who followed the trucks on foot. These family members would wait on the shore for the *jamnyeo* to emerge from the water with their catch. When a *jamnyeo* surfaced and approached the shore, her family member would assist her in hauling heavy, salt-water and catch laden bags onto land. [11]

A *jamnyeo* (hereafter "M"), the mother of my landlady on the island, visited me shortly after the diving expedition group left. She wore a cast on her right arm from her wrist to her elbow, a hat, and a "dry field" (farming) worksuit. She introduced herself as the maternal grandmother to my landlady's youngest child, and I greeted her, in Korean tradition, with a 90-degree bow, customary for showing respect to older people. When I asked what happened to her arm, she looked pleased with the attention to her injury. M told that about two month ago, she hurt her wrist while diving. She had tried to catch a large abalone worth over 50,000 won (about US \$60 at the time) which was trying to escape between two undersea boulders. By squeezing her hand between the rocks and attempting to pull the abalone out, she crushed her wrist and badly abraded her arm, which now prevented her from diving. The abalone got away. [12]

With the diving expedition en route to the diving site, the village was nearly deserted. Older children were at school, and younger children were cared for by villagers who did not dive. M said that her injury not only kept her from diving, but also prevented her from properly tending her dry fields (vegetable and herb gardens). She asked whether I would be interested in helping her weed her *bangpung* (an Oriental medicinal herb) fields. I was thrilled by her invitation because, as an outsider, most villagers treated me well, but maintained interpersonal distance. Without hesitation—and unconstrained by lack of knowledge about weeding *bangpung* fields—I agreed to help. [13]

As we walked toward her fields, she described *bangpung* as a precious raw ingredient for a kind of Oriental medicine. It only grows in sandy soil and takes three years to mature. After harvest, *bangpung* is dried in the sun. At market, dried *bangpung* is worth about 10,000 won (approximately US \$13) per *keun* (approximately one and a third pounds). We reached her three *bangpung* fields after a 20 minute walk. At the *bangpung* field, M first showed me what to do, assuring me that she did not expect I had any previous experience with *bangpung*. (Actually, I have never even been a serious gardener.) During our first weeding excursion to her herb field, I followed and exactly imitated what she did, pulling weeds for more than three hours. That evening, and for the next several days, I paid for the initial thrill with real body aches. [14]

At the beginning of the weeding session, M showed a great deal of interest in me and curiosity about why I visited her village. I told her that I had been interested in *jamnyeo* diving ever since I saw it for the first time as a college student, and I wanted to learn more about it. She seemed surprised at my interest and asked why a professor from America wanted to learn about diving, and what I would do with what I learned. She rhetorically asked whether I would like to dive like a *jamnyeo*, then quickly answered, saying that I could learn how to dive, but could never become a *jamnyeo*. According to M, as well as most other *jamnyeo* to whom I spoke, *jamnyeo* must be born—or at least grow up—in the coastal villages. As her curiosity about my presence in the village abated, she began to inquire about my personal life⁵. During this phase of our interactions, M was the "interviewer" while I was the "interviewee." [15]

As M became comfortable with me, like many older Korean women do, she began mildly criticizing me for being away from my family. She seriously advised me that it would not be worth doing whatever I was doing there "alone." I softly giggled without responding verbally, which is the appropriate response of a younger Korean woman in the context. Our first encounter, which opened in this fashion, led to her successive *sinsetaryeong*⁶ (a Korean informal storytelling genre) sessions during future interactions as we did things together—weeding; trimming; cleaning; drying garlic, green-onion garlic, and seaweed; baby-sitting; and sometimes simply sharing snacks and fruit sitting on the wooden floor of her

5 In Korean interpersonal contexts, it is considered "normal" and perfectly appropriate to ask about personal background. Casual social conversations among Korean acquaintances—or even perfect strangers—typically begin with exchange of such personal information as age, marital status, number of children and their sexes, family background, school background and graduation year, hometown, etc. This practice is helpful for quickly calibrating social relationships, which determine how Koreans speak with, to, and about each other.

6 *Sinsetaryeong* is one of most informal storytelling genres in Korea. It consists of narration by a storyteller, bewailing his/her own misfortune or grief about his/her own hard life. It usually takes place in a small interpersonally close, everyday-life setting (YOO, 1993). When Koreans engage in *sinsetaryeong*, they usually address their autobiographical life histories to the storytelling partner(s) in an emotionally charged fashion. The storytelling partners are recruited as supporters who not only listen to the life stories, but also actively facilitate and participate in it by reciprocating their emotions and by providing verbal and nonverbal feedback to the storyteller. A storyteller's personal gauge of success in *sinsetaryeong* is his/her own transient feeling of "relief" and perception of transmitted, contagious emotions and thoughts among his/her storytelling participants. As members of a culture where the boundaries of privacy are smaller and more diffuse than in many Western societies, Koreans, in general, and rural Koreans, in particular, do not consider personal life events private matters.

daughter's house. During these excursions and other daily interactions, which numbered about 8 and lasted an hour or so each (except two occasions which lasted about three hours each), M voluntarily described her life at her own pace and convenience. Despite my pre-trip preparation with modern audio recording equipment, it was not used because it would have disrupted the natural flow of the *sinsetaryeong*, and because the sessions spontaneously arose during casual interactions or manual labor excursions—often some distance from the house. Therefore, the details she described were transcribed from memory as soon as possible after each meeting⁷. Whenever I had difficulty recalling or encountered inconsistencies in her stories, I tried to verify details during subsequent meetings. In doing so, I tried to incorporate my questions as her storytelling evolved, rather than interrupting her accounts with my questions. [16]

3. Retelling M's Life Story

The major story-storing media used for recreating M's life story were my field notes⁸. Since I decided not to use audio tape recorder with M due to its contextual inappropriateness, my "raw data" contains my hand-written memos on the content of M's life story as I remembered it, verified as described above. The raw data was then processed through numerous iterative analytic cycles of listening-retelling-reflecting. Retelling a told life story inevitably involves reconstructing the story by transforming it in a number of different ways. Here, I retell her life story by transforming it into a life history by chronologically rearranging the order of life events and projecting them onto larger sociocultural and historical contexts of the island in an attempt to maximally sustain the content of individual life events as she told them (see HONG, 1998b for a retelling without chronological rearrangement). [17]

3.1 Transformation of life story to life history: a retelling

M described her life events and lived experiences at times and in sequences of her own choice that suited her storytelling goals. She began her *sinsetaryeong* by describing the events associated with her husband's illness that happened during her young adulthood rather than with her own childhood. While the order in which she broached the topics is important for understanding her underlying motivations and the meaning of her tales, it is also necessary to view her life events as they were embedded in Jeju's sociocultural contexts in historical time. To help understand her life events as they occurred in relation to contemporaneous

7 When I left for H village, I was well-armed with data collection equipment including tape-recorders and cameras. I thought they would help me gather the most accurate possible information on *jamnyeo* stories about their work and lives. Upon arrival in the village and after interacting with villagers; however, I used the equipment far less than planned because it was impractical as well as intrusive.

8 With American academic concern with "written informed consent and usage permission," I encountered bewilderment at my initial attempts to obtain written informed consent. Ultimately, with the advice of local social intermediaries, I opted to accept verbal consent instead (see HONG, 1998c for the need for tailoring research logistics). For example, when I initially asked M whether it would be O.K. with her if I would tell and write about her life story in various professional media. She gave verbal consent with considerable excitement and repeatedly asked whether I would really tell her story to other "professors" in America.

sociocultural and historical-political contexts on Jeju, I iteratively cycled through her story segments, culling them for details and relating the events to one another physically, spatially, temporally, and conceptually. In the iterative cycles, I employed three major reconstruction processes: (1) contextualization, (2) decontextualization, and (3) recontextualization. Within the story retelling process, "context" refers to the immediate, local storytelling situation used as a reference frame for the decontextualization and recontextualization processes. Thus, decontextualization does not imply analysis of the life story sans context. Rather, it refers to taking the story out of the micro-level, local storytelling context where it was told, and placing it in other micro- or macro-level environments where the life events were constructed, developed, and transformed. Similarly, re-contextualization means re-projecting the life story, as more fully understood through contextualization and decontextualization, back into relevant local storytelling contexts for further interpretative analyses. [18]

3.1.1 Contextualizing

The primary goal of contextualizing the already-told life story is to listen to the storyteller's main points (personal voices) as he/she presents the story within the context of a particular storytelling session. The order of storytelling, rather than chronological or developmental time is the most important sequencing factor. Fidelity in contextualizing the life story depends on how closely a story is understood not only as it was told, but also as it was absorbed by a story listener during a session. Thus, contextualization processes are approximations to reliving the life story by putting it back into its storytelling context. [19]

In contextualizing M's story, I reviewed it in the order that she presented her life events as recorded in my field notes. First, the story sequence of major life events was listed. Next, major themes in her experiences were identified through a cycle of iterative thematic extraction (see Appendix A for examples of the story sequence, content, and extracted themes; see Hong, 1998b for all major recurring themes). [20]

3.1.2 Decontextualizing

Re-telling the life story subjects it to a story re-teller's understanding and interpretation, which are affected by his/her own perspectives, including theoretical and methodological frames of reference. The primary goal of decontextualization is to position the told life story in contexts other than the ones in which it was initially told in order to help the story re-teller discover and interpret interconnected relationships among the storyteller's life events, lived experiences, and his/her life environments. [21]

During decontextualization, I treated M's multiple life events as independent "facts" by stripping them from the storytelling contexts. I, then, chronologically reorganized them into culturally-defined Korean life stages accompanied with specific "tasks"—i.e., birth and childhood, adolescence, young adulthood (from marriageable age through early marriage with young children), middle adulthood

(post-marriage with adolescent/adult children), and older adulthood (post-marriage with married children and grandchildren). Next, after an extensive literature and archival search, I chronologically organized major historical, political, and sociocultural events on Jeju and mainland Korea. Finally, I generated a list of local and national historical and sociocultural events which affected most Koreans' lives during the period spanned by M's story on the basis of the literature search, discussions with Jeju natives, and M's life story. Without making any linkages other than chronological timelines, two side-by-side columns of events—personal and sociocultural—were created (see Appendix B). [22]

3.1.3 Recontextualizing

The primary goal of recontextualization is to understand and interpret a life story by repositioning and linking individual life events revealed in the course of storytelling to chronologically-organized multiple contexts—familial, historical, and sociocultural contexts in which the events occurred, developed, or were transformed. Historical or sociocultural contexts include not only specific events but also collective memories, emotions, and interpretations regarding facts, rumors, or even fictitious events. This is particularly evident during chaotic episodes such as war, governmental oppression, colonization, revolution, coup, emancipation, independence, and so on. With the two sets of events, reorganized through decontextualization, I reconstructed M's expressed lived experiences by re-placing her life events in historical-political (national and local) as well as concurrent sociocultural and familial contexts simultaneously. The purpose of the recontextualization process was to recreate M's expressed lived experiences in broader contexts elaborated with multiple voices from the sociocultural/historical-political contexts in an attempt to hear the streams of voices—M's personal and those of her local sociocultural contexts—simultaneously. Through the process of recontextualizing, I changed neither the substance of her life events nor her expressions per se, but relocated them by taking them back to the periods in which they occurred and re-projecting them backward and forward onto the storytelling contexts as needed. [23]

During recontextualization, I iterated through a cycle of two sub-processes: (1) identifying major collective voices which were present during the course of M' life; and (2) linking the collective voices and M's personal voices expressed in her storytelling. Inferences about M's ultimate voices were primarily stimulated by omnipresent questions about why M did (or did not do) what she did (or did not do). Since products of the two sub-processes were interconnected, I will present them together with my interpretative understanding. But first, an abridged version of M's life history as a product of the reconstruction processes needs to be told. [24]

M's Life Story Retold

Birth and Childhood. M was born in 1932 in Busan, the second largest city in Korea, at the height of the Japanese annexation (1910-1945). She was the sixth child to her father, a Jeju native, and her mother, a non-Jeju native, who was her father's fourth "little wife" (mistress). At the time when she was born, M's father was already married to his first wife (the lawful wife) who was living with him on Jejudo with her own children. When she was age 4, her father moved M to Jejudo to live in the first wife's house along with 4 other "little wives" and their children. When she was 13 years old, her father brought M's biological mother to Jejudo. Thus, when M was young, she grew up in a home with one "big mother" (the first, lawful wife), five other "little mothers," and 12 children. She remembered them all living together without serious arguments and working together for one shared husband and their children. All of the six mothers were presented as good women in her stories with a special emphasis on her big mother's virtuousness, status, rights, and deservingness for respect. As a young girl, she played with other children on the shore observing and imitating adult *jamnyeo*'s diving including her older siblings, mothers and other women from the village. Through their play and competition with one another in demonstrating their growing prowess at diving and catching ocean products, M learned how to dive and what to catch. As a young girl, she also enjoyed helping her mothers on dry field as well as watching them work together with her father whom she liked to be around very much. In her memory, her father and all five mothers were good parents who were kind and nurturing to her and her siblings. [25]

Adolescence. In 1948, when M was an adolescent, the April Third Event, a bloody ideological clash between right and left wing political and military forces erupted on Jejudo. Around the time of the April Third Event, early adolescent marriage of teenage girls was common on Jejudo in order to protect the girls from potential rapes by Korean soldiers. This practice was based on rumors that Korean soldiers were less likely to rape married women than unmarried girls. Although her family recommended M to marry quickly, she refused to marry just "any" man, choosing instead to remain unmarried until she was 24 years old. For almost a whole year around the Event, therefore, M was kept confined by her family to a small inner room in her house under the ever vigilant watch of her father and brothers. When M described what she heard and

4. Collective Cultures of the Island

A fundamental tenet of sociocultural theories is that individuals' lives are intimately and inextricably embedded in their contexts. From a sociocultural perspective, understanding M's life events requires comprehending the island's larger contexts, including the historical, political, and sociocultural milieu in which M's personal life events were rooted and developed. [37]

4.1 Historical-political backdrop of the island

The history of Jejudo is replete with invasions from Mongolia, Japan, and mainland Korea, and the islanders are well known for numerous successful and unsuccessful rebellions against occupying powers (MERRILL, 1980). At the beginning of the 15th century, Jejudo came under the strong control of the Confucianism-oriented Chosun dynasty (1392-1910) of mainland Korea. It imbued the island's indigenous sociocultural structure with elements of male-dominated neo-Confucian ideology, especially in domains related to moral "virtues" (see NEMETH,

experienced as an adolescent girl during the April Third Event (i.e., kidnappings, murders, torture, rapes, etc.), her eyes became red and welled with tears. She explained, just thinking about those times still sent chills up her spine and pierced her heart with pain. During the confinement, what she most missed was diving with her friends and their companionship (traditionally, *jamnyeo* never dive alone). After the turmoil surrounding the April Third Event subsided, she resumed her diving and formally joined the *Jamnyeo* Association of the village and became a *hagun* (lowest, entry-level career *jamnyeo*) at age 18. [26]

Young Adulthood. While memories of the April Third Event were still vivid among Jeju Islanders, the Korean War (1950-1953) exploded on the mainland. Although Jeju never became a battleground due to its location, it was not spared the impact of social instability and unexpectedly rapid change induced by the war. As an unmarried young woman in her early twenties, M began to be considered an "old miss" who was past her prime as a bridal candidate. As the Korean War ended, M finally found an "ideal" man through "*jungmae*," (cultural match-making) and, at age 23, became engaged to marry. In the following year (1955) at the age of 24, M married H, her ideal man. [27]

By Jeju custom, each nuclear family unit lives in separate houses within a common housing compound owned by the husband's family. Traditionally each house has its own kitchen, and each nuclear family prepares and eats its own meals separately. Following Jeju housing customs, M and her husband lived in a separate house near H's parents' house, where his unmarried younger siblings lived with his parents. Unlike common Jeju practice, however, M's in-laws ate meals all together at her house. During this time, M attempted to faithfully satisfy her roles and duties as a virtuous wife and daughter-in-law by diving more frequently (in order to make more money) and tending to housework and daily routines for her in-laws. Although the labor was difficult, she was sustained by the happiness and joy she experienced in her loving relationship with her husband. As she said, she would have done anything for him. When M was 25, she delivered her first baby girl. She dived throughout her pregnancy and returned to the ocean only eight days after delivering the baby⁹. [28]

In 1958, after three years of marriage (when M was 27 years old), H went to Busan on the mainland for a steady

1987 for an elaborated discussion of neo-Confucian impacts on JejuDo). Later, in the early 20th century, JejuDo like the rest of Korea was annexed by Japan (1910-1945). [38]

Following the Korea's Independence in 1945, JejuDo and surrounding small islands were united as JejuDo (Jeju province). In the immediate post-Independence era, sociopolitical chaos between right-wing government police, military, and American "advisors;" and left wing "communists" marked daily life for JejuDo residents. The conflict continued for about seven years (1947-1953). On April 3rd, 1948, the violence organized by leftists erupted into one of the most tragic, terrifying, and although it is rarely discussed in official accounts of Korean history, virtually no Jeju family escaped the April Third Event unscathed. At the time, as well as today, many Jeju residents see the conflict as one between Jeju citizens and the South Korean police and their American backers; rather than between left and right wing forces (MERILL, 1980;

9 Typically, *jamnyeo* dive during their menstrual period and pregnancy. They dive up to the very date of delivery, and resume diving 1 to 2 weeks afterwards. They spent 4 to 8 hours a day diving for an average of 15 days a month year round (CHO, 1979).

job at a handbag factory. Although a trip between Jujodo and Busan required about a 50 mile boat ride, H returned as often as he could. Throughout the time they were apart, M and H remained faithful to each other. In 1960, when M was 29 years old, she gave birth to their first son, which was a momentous occasion in H's family because he was the first son of the first son. Ultimately, M had two sons and two daughters with H. [29]

Despite the initial relief brought by the cease-fire in 1953, South Korea in the late 1950s and early 1960s remained plagued by postwar uncertainty, corruption, political crisis, and authoritarian governmental policies. On 15 March 1960, students in Masan, (a town west of Busan) demonstrated against the fraudulent presidential election that gave President Seung-Man Rhee a fourth term in office. On 11 April, after the body of a high school student was found in Masan harbor, students and citizens of Masan again arose in demonstrations against police brutality and the government. As news of the Masan demonstrations spread around Korea, they helped ignite the April Nineteenth Revolution (1960), in which university students, many high school students, intellectuals, political activists, and citizens joined in massive demonstrations around the country (LEE, 1984), eventually resulting in President Rhee's resignation. A year later, on 16 May 1961, General Chung-Hee Park led a military coup that overturned the interim government. The next two decades (1961-1979) of rule by General Park were marked by political intrigue, violent encounters between student/ordinary citizen demonstrators and police or army units, as well as rapid economic growth. During this chaotic period in Korean history, news and rumors of threats, kidnappings, torture, disappearances, and death against (mostly male) activists abounded—often in gruesome detail. Even ordinary people lived with varying degrees of constant fear and anxiety from their government. [30]

Against this backdrop, in 1961, M's first son died of an unknown illness at 2 years of age. M was 30 years old at the time. At the same time that M and H and their family were mourning the loss of their first son, H faced an unbearably frightening incident at work. One of his very young colleagues committed suicide by hanging himself inside the company's only restroom. M believed that the young colleague "returned" as a *mongdal gwisin* (a frightening kind of Korean ghost). As a result of his fear, H could not use the restroom as frequently as he needed. To make matters worse, his boss ordered him to clean the

YANG, 1988). It remains even today, nearly 60 years later, a live wound in Jeju islanders' individual, collective, and historical consciousness (c.f., KIM, 1989). [39]

Economically, following the Korean War which ended in 1953, JejuDo began a slow journey toward modernization. In 1971, the Korean government launched the *saemaul undong* (new village movement) nationwide in order to ameliorate economic and living condition imbalances between rural and urban communities (LEE, 1984). As a part of the new village movement, the central government planned to develop JejuDo into an international tourist destination, as well as Korea's only semi-tropical agricultural province. Reacting against the ideology of compulsory change, Jeju islanders initially resisted the *saemaul undong's* highly centralized patterns of authority. If implemented, the movement would undermine traditional, Confucian-based, local authoritarian institutions that existed in many Jeju villages (NEMETH, 1987). Despite the initial resistance to the *saemaul undong* policies, over the past 30 years, they helped JejuDo become the

restroom every day after work. Although H already hallucinated or believed that he saw the *mongdal gwisin*, for the sake of his job, he could not refuse his boss's order. As he cleaned the restroom every evening, his fear increased. Eventually, his mental condition began to affect his physical health until he could no longer continue working at the company. His boss advised him to resign. In 1965 (when she was 34 years old), M went to Busan to bring her husband back home to Jeju with her. [31]

Middle-Age Adulthood. On Jejudo, M tried to restore her husband's health by taking him to numerous Western and Oriental medicine doctors. With little help from her brother-in-law (B) or other male in-laws, she often carried her husband on her back to the doctors by herself. She also consulted with several *simbang* (native Jeju shamans) in an attempt to appease the *mongdal gwisin*. Nothing helped, and in 1967 H died, leaving M, a 36 year old widow with three young children, one son and two daughters. As a widowed *jamnyeo*, she supported her children with her ocean diving. A year later, in 1968, tragedy struck again and M lost her second and only remaining son when he too was two years old. [32]

While M was coping with the loss of all three male family members, in the eyes of her in-laws, her status changed from a first son's one and only lawful first wife with two sons, to a sonless widow. Accompanying her changed status was mistreatment and discrimination from her in-laws. Her brother-in-law, in particular, held M responsible for breaking the first son's family line. Moreover, the brother-in-law forbade M and her daughters to serve food for her husband at *jesa* performed by the brother-in-law's family. On a regular basis, B verbally and physically assaulted M in an attempt to force her to leave his family by remarrying any man. His verbal abuse in calling M names like *nampyeongwa jasik apsewun nyeon* ("bitch who killed her own husband and sons") was particularly hurtful and difficult for M to bear. [33]

In order to have a son, M decided to have one night stand with a man from a neighboring village. Her exact expression was "I lent ONLY my body JUST ONCE to have a son!" holding up her right index finger and pointing her groin with her left palm. She then emphasized that her loyalty toward her husband was more important than her body, which would rot after she died anyway. As a result of the one night stand, she conceived and bore another daughter, after which her brother-in-law's treatment became even worse. M later attempted another one-night

Korean province with highest per capita income in the country. [40]

4.2 Sociocultural landscape of the island

Throughout the island's history, people on Jejudo have been exposed to numerous novel forms of life brought by traders, foreign invaders, and imposed by mainland authorities; while struggling to maintain their "indigenous" culture. During the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910), the Korean state's ideological orientation shifted to Neo-Confucianism from Buddhism of the preceding Shilla Dynasty. This change altered ordinary Korean people's lives on both the mainland and Jejudo (NEMETH, 1987). Under Confucianism, the most valued virtue is the maintenance of social order through hierarchically organized social structure: the self, the family, the country, and the world. In particular, discipline and moral training of self and the balanced management and preservation of family are considered foundations in the maintenance of Confucian social order. [41]

stand, which also resulted in another daughter. For many years, she and her four daughters had no chance to honor her husband through *jesa*, nor were they even allowed to join her brother-in-law's family in preparing *jesa* food. Through the years, the mother *jamnyeo* always told her daughters that someday B would beg her to take charge of her husband's *jesa* by preparing food as well as performing the ceremony in her own house. [34]

In time, her brother-in-law became very ill and his family tried all possible means, both Western and Oriental, to cure him. Since nothing worked, his family consulted a *simbang* in a village far from their home about his illness. M accompanied them. During the consultation, the *simbang* spontaneously told the family that the brother-in-law should permit the mother *jamnyeo* to perform *jesa* for her husband because H's spirit did not eat *jesa* food prepared by his brother's family. According to Korean cultural belief, a hungry ghost can cause illness or misfortune among its descendants to draw their attention to its needs. [35]

Older Adulthood. Despite of the *simbang's* advice, M's brother-in-law still did not allow M to serve her husband's hungry spirit by preparing his *jesa* food for another couple of years. As B's condition worsened, he finally relented, and allowed M to serve her husband by preparing his *jesa* food and observing his *jesa* in her own house. In recent years, she has continued serving her husband's *jesa* in her own house accompanied by her four daughters and two sons-in-law. Serving *jesa* for her husband at her own house with her children, as well as sharing *jesa* food with her friends and neighbors makes her very happy. More importantly, M is comforted by the belief that her sons-in-law will continue the practice, serving her *jesa*, along with that of her husband, after she passes away. At the same time, referring to the Korean maxim, "A son-in-law is a guest for 100 years (meaning forever)," M could not help thinking that sons-in-law are not exactly the same as her own sons. Within the past two years (1992-1993), M prepared her own *sueui* (traditional Korean burial dress), despite a Korean custom that parents' *sueui* are supposed to be made or prepared by adult children. M, however, prepared it herself because she wanted to minimize the financial burden on her daughters as much as possible, and she wanted to be able to show her friends and neighbors that her *sueui* was already prepared, even though she had only daughters. [36]

4.2.1 Family continuity, son preference, & ancestor worship

The locus of Neo-Confucian maintenance of family continuity is patriarchal, patrilineal, and partrilocal. In Neo-Confucian traditions, family lineage refers to "an organized group of persons linked through exclusively male ties (agnatic ties) to an ancestor who lived at least four generations ago" (JANELLI & JANELLI, 1982, p.2). Ideally, a family's continuity is maintained by successive generations of first sons and documented in their *jokbo* (an official family lineage record). Sons—particularly first sons—are culturally valued as critical media for preserving family continuity; thus having sons is considered not only a blessing, but also a married couple's social and familial duty. Females are officially included in a *jokbo* as unmarried daughters and as lawful wives (LEE, 1977; JANELLI & JANELLI, 1982). Once a daughter marries, her name is erased from the *jokbo* of her biological family and recorded in that of her husband's family. Normative symbolic and material practices for maintaining social order and family continuity consist of numerous prescribed rituals such as *kwan-hon-sang-je* [ceremonies of coming of age-marriage-funeral-ancestral memorial services (*jesa*)] and associated normative standards. [42]

Among the Neo-Confucian rituals and norms, *jesa* is among the most significant for maintaining family continuity by commemorating ancestors, through which the ancestors' eternal lives continue. Traditionally *jesa* is supposed to be performed for all patrilineal ancestors for four or five generations prior to the primary performer's generation at midnight at the *jongga* ("main" house—usually a first son's house). The primary *jesa* performer is the first son of the oldest living generation within a family, accompanied by all male family members. Accordingly, *jesa* in Neo-Confucian family systems is tightly intertwined with son preference because the formal obligations to perform *jesa* is inherited by the first son, but the obligation can be transferred to other sons when the first dies or is ill. A first son without a son can adopt a son from his kin in order to maintain continuity of *jesa* obligation within *jongga* (the first son's family line). Although the first son and his lawful wife are officially legitimate ancestors, the consistency and quality of *jesa* offered by adopted sons and their sons cannot be assumed. CHO (1979) described *jesa* on Jeju as one of "the most elaborated rituals and the center of social activities" exclusively for males (p.44). If a family is not fortunate to have a son, they often adopt a male child (or adult) to continue the practice, even when the family has daughters. People on Jeju, especially males are often boastful of the quantity and quality of their *jesa* participations or performances (CHO, 1979; CHOE, 1979). [43]

4.2.2 Ancestor legitimacy

Neo-Confucian prescripts dictate which family members are considered legitimate ancestors; qualify for respect, honor, and remembrance expressed through *jesa*; and therefore eternal life. Consanguineous ties are a formal criterion of ancestor entitlement for *jesa*. While legitimacy of ancestors is related to family lineage systems that vary by family and community, in general, all patrilineal male ancestors and their lawful wives by marriage are legitimate. All legitimate

ancestors are served through *ki-jesa* (individual *jesa*) on the anniversaries of their deaths, as well as *si-jesa* (communal *jesa*) on days such as holidays. Both *ki-jesa* and *si-jesa* are offered for all legitimate ancestors while only *si-jesa* is served for "less legitimate" dead people, and may even be offered for people outside the range of family or kin. Less legitimate dead people can include "little wives" and twice-married women (JANELLI & JANELLI, 1982). [44]

On Jejudo, a widow who doesn't have a son to perform *jesa* usually adopts a son from among her husband's patrilineal kin and gives him her property. The adopted son does not have an ethical obligation to care for his foster mother (or parents) in their old age but only to serve *jesa* for them after their deaths (CHO, 1979). In this sense, having a son—either biological or adopted—is considered afterlife "insurance" for the continuity of existence by becoming a legitimate ancestor and securing *jesa*. Many older women on Jejudo reveal their concern about how they will be served after death (see CHO, 1979; KIM, 1989)¹⁰. [45]

4.2.3 *Unhappy spirits and simbang*

Traditional Jejudo folklore and folktales describe the posthumous world in terms of culturally-constructed symbolic entities like spirits and ghosts, as well as interconnected relationships between dead ancestors' and living offspring's well-being. Ideally, the privileges and benefits that legitimate ancestors receive (and demand) should be proportional to the roles they play as senior members in the family. According to Confucian beliefs, they should be benign and protective of living generations for the sake of the family's honor. Yet, they can be unhappy, punitive, and hostile, particularly when the living is not faithful in discharging their responsibilities and satisfying the needs of the dead. Both are recognized in folktales and ordinary people's experience on Jejudo. [46]

In Korean collective culture, it is believed that unmarried ghosts are "hungry" and unhappy from wandering between this world and the next without receiving *jesa*, because they do not have offspring who can offer it. Unhappy spirits try to communicate with living people in order to express their needs, but their attempts often fail because they appear as scary shapes, voices, or events in the chosen people's dreams or hallucinations. Unhappy or hungry spirits' voices can also be manifest in unexplainable family misfortune (e.g., sudden physical or mental illness or consecutive deaths of young family members) even without scary manifestations to living people. With these cultural beliefs, unhappy spirits are feared by Jeju people because of their potential malice that can result from their unfulfilled needs. Without culturally devised professional interventions through shamans, shamanistic rituals, or other folk mediations, family misfortune can be difficult to stop. [47]

Compare to mainland Korea, the sociocultural position of shamanism on Jejudo is more profound. Jeju shamanism is a Jeju folk religion with healing, through *simbang* (local, native Jeju shaman) mediation as a central focus. *Simbang* are

¹⁰ During my time in H village, I also observed similar conversations between a mother and a daughter as well as among other village women.

indigenous healers and shrine priests who can connect *i sesang* (literally "this world," but referring to the tangible world of life) and *jeo sesang* (literally "that world," meaning the spirit, afterlife world) and mediate between the two. When a family experiences an unexplainable misfortune, they often consult a *simbang*. The *simbang*, in turn, often advises the family to let her/him to perform kut (a shamanistic ritual) through which the *simbang* hears a spirit's the message and advises the relatives about it (CHO, LEE, & HA, 2003; CHOI, 1989; HYEON, 1965, 1982; KIM, 1989). [48]

4.2.4 Jamnyeo & women's virtuousness

All traditional career *jamnyeo* in coastal villages on Jeju become members of the female-exclusive *Jamnyeo* Association of their villages at age of 18. Prerequisites include proper abilities of swimming, diving, and ocean harvesting skills. Each coastal village organizes its own *Jamnyeo* Association and individual members are expected to faithfully follow its rules and regulations. The diving territory is communally owned by the village with boundaries determined by customary, long-standing agreements with neighboring villages. A girl's right to dive within the village diving territory is acquired through her communally recognized residence (e.g., birth and marriage ties). When a young woman marries and moves to her husband's village, she acquires diving rights in her husband's village's territory, but loses the rights in the village of her birth. Career *jamnyeo* are traditionally classified into three groups based on their experiences and skills in diving, as well as knowledge of underwater geography and current movement—*sanggun* (top-class *jamnyeo*), *junggun* (middle-class *jamnyeo*), and *hagun* (low-class *jamnyeo*). On average, *jamnyeo* dive to depths of 5 to 10 meters and can hold their breath from 30 seconds to 2 minutes for each dive. *Sanggun*, however, can dive up to 20 meters and hold their breath for almost 3 minutes (see CHO, 1979, pp.29-42; KIM, 1990a). [49]

Most *jamnyeo* support their family by diving as well as farming and tending pigs. They are well known for physical strength, mental endurance, financial independence, and autonomy. Traditionally, *jamnyeo* have considered their ocean diving activities as a source of "pride, autonomy, and freedom" and enjoyed unusually high degrees of financial independence and personal autonomy through their roles as primary family rice earners (CHO, 1979). They were also socially active during the Japanese annexation with an organized *jamnyeo* resistance movement on the island in 1932 (KIM, 1993). Due to their group activities outside of their homes and unusual gender roles, collective images of *jamnyeo* have been culturally constructed as socially visible, active, assertive, hardworking, autonomous, financially independent, and self-sufficient women. Nevertheless, *jamnyeo* have never been considered members of upper class society on the island (KWON, 1998). [50]

Many characteristics considered essential and desirable within Jeju's traditional *jamnyeo* culture have clashed with mainland Korean cultural norms and ethical codes for women. For example, the Neo-Confucian ideology imposed on Jeju during the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910) segregated the worlds of men and

women into domains of symbolic power, with the female domains markedly subordinate to the male domains. For the *jamnyeo* on Jeju, the discrepancy between Neo-Confucian sociocultural collective messages (demanding women's subordinate place) and the island's *jamnyeo* society's sociocultural voices (valuing women's autonomy and independence) lays down conflicting demands that must be resolved in the *jamnyeo*'s everyday lives. Day to day, a stream of traditional *jamnyeo* sociocultural voices cultivating sense of belongingness, coexistence, self-reliance, and self-improvement in diving skills are delivered to individual *jamnyeo*. They include: (1) diving as an exclusively women's activity (ingroup membership privilege), (2) satisfaction of work in the ocean with other *jamnyeo* (social visibility, communal relationship), and (3) pursuit of excellence in becoming a *sanggun* (top-class *jamnyeo*) by developing physical strength and risk-taking skills (financial independence and self-reliance) (CHO, 1979). At the same time, *jamnyeo* also hear a stream of collective cultural voices rooted in Neo-Confucian ideology designed to promote virtues among all women on the island. These include demands for:

1. *budeok* (females' proper attitude and moral conduct) which includes social invisibility, other-reliance, loyalty to three generations of males—father, husband, and sons—filial piety and respect for elders as well as remaining chaste and jealousy free;
2. *bueon* (females' proper speech) which refers to speaking with contextually proper verbal and nonverbal communication styles such as addressing older people with proper respect, speaking softly and at an appropriate speed, and prematurely terminating a conversation without insuring that an older person is finished speaking;
3. *buyong* (females' proper appearance) which includes a clean face, well-groomed hair, and well-covered body with contextually appropriate clean and well maintained dresses; and
4. *bukong* (females' proper tasks) which represent ideal achievements such as becoming a lawful wife, producing sons, and performing good home management in large extended family contexts including proper preparation of *jesa*¹¹. [51]

These Neo-Confucian cultural voices about virtuous women are crystallized in the term of *hyeonmo-yangcheo* (wise mother-good wife) representing a collective cultural motto for all women and *hisaeng* (self-sacrifice) is considered individual means of achieving the collective cultural ideal. [52]

Jamnyeo society has maintained its own culture of social visibility with *jamnyeo*'s confrontational manners and loud and outspoken ways of talking in public, walking and diving half naked all of which are violations of Neo-Confucian ideals of female virtuousness. At the same time, *jamnyeo* have also selectively adopted

11 The origin of these collective cultural voices for virtuous women is a textbook for women entitled *Naehun* (Instruction for Women), compiled in 1475 by Queen-consort Sohye during the Chosun dynasty. It was based on Confucian educational materials such as the *Sohak* (small learning) for children by Chu Hsi, a Chinese Confucian scholar (DEUCHLER, 1977). It was directed to all Korean women, but particularly upper-class women.

partial components of the imported cultural messages—respect for elders, becoming a lawful wife, having sons, serving and receiving *jesa* (e.g., CHO, 1979; KIM, 1989). Some coastal villages, for example, have a designated area called *halmang badang* (granny ocean) which is safer and easier to dive. Only *jamnyeo* who are older than 60 years old are allowed to dive in this area without sharing limited ocean resources with younger, more physically capable *jamnyeo* (KIM, 1990b). [53]

The collective and personal meanings associated with being a *jamnyeo* on contemporary Jeju Island have been changing with the island's socioeconomic fortunes. Traditional female-exclusive *Jamnyeo Association* still exists and all *jamnyeo* are required to register as members of the association. Yet, contemporary *jamnyeo*'s diving activities are now governed by *eochoongye* that are village-level subdivisions of the JejuDo Department of Fisheries. *Eochoongye*, which are largely staffed by males, serve several major roles. They (1) *inform jamnyeo* of weather and ocean resource conditions, (2) they schedule collective diving dates for all registered village *jamnyeo*, and (3) they control the type and the volume of ocean crops harvested on particular diving dates. During my visit, a group of *jamnyeo* reported that compared to diving 30 or even 20 years ago, contemporary *jamnyeo*'s diving activities have become less autonomous, personal, friendship-based, and liberating. The divers have become more competitive and view diving as a difficult life, to be avoided by young women if possible. If a *jamnyeo* violates *eochoongye* rules (i.e., catches a seasonally prohibited sea crop or exceeds catch limits), she is subject to hefty fines and penalties set by the *eochoongye*. When they have good weather but cannot dive because the day is a non-diving day, *jamnyeo* feel anxiety and psychological distress (CHO, 1992; HONG, 1998b). [54]

5. Interpretative Understanding of M's Life Story

An interpretative understanding of M's life story needs to respect the storytelling plots and rhetorical structures that M used throughout her storytelling. In addition to my initial thematic analysis of her life story (HONG, 1998b), I performed further analyses of M's life events, linking them to the island's sociocultural contexts. In this attempt, I tried to hear the implicit voices that M did not explicitly express in words, but intended to convey by nuance, context, or background to herself and her storytelling partner. [55]

A set of five chronologically successive events were selected for interpretative understanding of undercurrents in M's life story: (1) her childhood memories of her big mother, (2) her adolescence plan not to marry "any man," (3) her young adulthood life of caring for her ill husband and coping with the deaths of both sons, (4) her middle adulthood intention and strategies to remain a lawful wife in her late husband's family despite her in-laws' mistreatment, and (5) her older adulthood achievement of permission to prepare her husband's *jesa* food and serve his *jesa* at her house. In the course of interpretative analyses, I initially heard three major, interrelated, implicit voices underlying M's storytelling:

1. I'm a virtuous woman because I took good care of my ill husband, didn't abandon him, and kept my place in his family despite their mistreatment and even physical abuse. I even sacrificed myself by ruining my reputation in the village for lending my body to have a son. If only I had had a son, he could have maintained family continuity by producing sons and serving jesa for all family ancestors. My life is full of proof that I am a virtuous woman.
2. I'm a lawful wife to a first son who always loved me. My husband's spirit is not happy because of the way his family treated me, and he spoke, as an unhappy spirit, to his brother. For this, I have proof through my brother-in-law's illness and validated by the simbang. I am the only one who can make my husband's unhappy spirit happy and content. Without my intervention, the family will continue to be haunted by my husband's unhappy spirit; and, even though they have not been kind to me, I am helping them by calming my husband's unhappy spirit.
3. *Because I'm a lawful and virtuous wife, I'm entitled, as a legitimate ancestor, to have my jesa served along with my husband's. Although I don't have a son, I have secured my place in my (his) family and community. My sueui is prepared. I am closer than ever before to attaining the permanent and publicly-recognized niche in the family and community that I have always been seeking. [56]*

5.1 Virtuous woman, lawful wife, and legitimate ancestor

I interpret M's storytelling as an intentional effort to redeem her life events and actions by explaining and casting them as a series of personally virtuous choices. Her in-laws and other community members who positioned themselves in righteousness derived from extant sociocultural values and norms on the island, considered M's actions morally reprehensible and felt fully justified in reproaching her. Through her stories, M was crying out to justify her actions, which contradicted the island's collective norms, to defend herself and to secure her future place as a legitimate ancestor. [57]

5.1.1 Sociocultural embeddedness

Within Jeju island's Neo-Confucian sociocultural landscape, women's *hisaeng* (self-sacrificing attitudes and behaviors) are considered the most appropriate way for a virtuous woman to obey all socioculturally constructed voices directed to women (e.g., serving parents, being an obedient and dutiful wife, and being a wise and caring mother). This collective cultural means for becoming a virtuous woman was readily apparent to M as she grew up as a child to a fourth little wife in her father's household. [58]

Throughout her story segments, M mentioned her "big mother" (the only lawful wife to M's father) far more frequently than her own biological mother and spoke highly of her saying "She was never jealous of any other mothers. Rather, she was very kind to them and did not differentiate their children from her own." To M, her big mother was a living example of a virtuous woman. Within the family, the

big mother was recognized as an important person and respected by other family members, including the cohabitating "little wives" with whom she shared her husband. M liked and respected her big mother a great deal, repeatedly telling me how much she wanted to be like her big mother when she was young. At the same time, M made it clear that she could (and would) not live with other "little wives" like her big mother did. [59]

Living through the island's recent bloody historical-political contexts such as the Japanese annexation, April Third Event, Korean War, postwar regimes, etc., M, like many Jeju islanders, has learned that moral/ethical yardsticks, normative standards for "good and bad," and relevant judgments are only transient and depend on the specific power-holder. She witnessed numerous political, social, or local occasions on which allies and enemies, loyalty and disloyalty, and even life and death were arbitrarily determined and sanctioned. When she told me about her "one-night" affairs intended to produce a son, she compared her conduct with the atrocities committed by powerful authorities—crimes her affairs could never match. By Neo-Confucian standards of women's virtuousness, even events over which M had no control such as losing her husband (the first son of a *jongga*) and her two sons before her own death, are considered cardinal sins. Secular pejorative Korean phrases, "*nampyeon apsewun*" or "*jasik apsewun*" woman (a wife who *lets* her husband or a mother who *lets* her children—particularly sons—die before herself), connotes the meanings of the "sins"—as socioculturally deplorable, derogatory, blameworthy behaviors. While socioculturally constructed beliefs, values, and norms are intended to guide individual members to behave in culturally defined proper ways and to treat other people in pro-social manners, they overtly favor individuals whose behaviors are congruent with the messages and sanction those whose behaviors do not. M, whose life has evolved in the context of a *jamnyeo* culture that encouraged strength, endurance, and independence, had difficulty blindly accepting her in-laws' unfair judgment and abusive treatment. Particularly offensive was their unidirectional application of Neo-Confucian norms to M's vulnerable condition of a sonless widowhood. Consequently, she spent a large portion of her widowhood fighting against the unfairness. [60]

As an active *junggun* (middle-class *jamnyeo*), M seldom mentioned either her diving activities or what it meant to be a *jamnyeo*. When asked about diving, M did not enthusiastically express pride, excitement, or pleasure as the *jamnyeo* in earlier ethnographic studies on Jeju did (e.g., CHO, 1979; YOON, 1977). Rather, M's opinion about being a *jamnyeo* and diving activities was congruent with more recent literature on *jamnyeo* (e.g., KWON, 1998). M considered diving hard and dangerous work, and she did not want to see any of her granddaughters grow up to become *jamnyeo*. To most women in the coastal villages of the island, until the New Village Movement of the 1970s opened tourism-related service jobs, diving was their only career option. Although it is not clear when and why M developed her less passionate attitude toward diving, she certainly did not express the romanticized voices about *jamnyeo* activities recorded in the earlier literature. [61]

5.1.2 Continuity and discontinuity between collective and personal cultures

Application of sociocultural theory also opens opportunities to explore continuities and discontinuities between collective and personal cultures. This theoretical notion underlies ways in which collective cultures are transmitted to individual or subgroup members through collaborative symbolic and material practices among the members; as well as how individuals interpret collective cultures and transform them into their own personal cultures (e.g., VALSINER, 1989, 1997, 1998). Defining culture as symbolic and material ways of life, collective culture is considered a "communal tool kit" (BRUNER, 1990) filled with symbolic and material tools that are largely shared among majority members of a cultural group. Examples of symbolic instruments include culture-specific language, signs, common cultural meaning and values, social norms, rituals, and everyday life practices (e.g., greeting style, parenting, table manners, gift-giving, etc.). Material tools are culture-specific, ecologically bound, physical accoutrements of everyday life such as staples, costumes, counting and mechanical tools, transportation, and so on. [62]

Personal cultures are created as individuals internalize, idiosyncratically transform, then re-express or externalize selected aspects of collective cultures (HONG, 1998a; LAWRENCE & VALSINER, 1993; VALSINER, 1997). As a person thinks, feels, and acts *through* culture, he/she sometimes uses extant cultural symbols and tools, other times changes them, and still other times invents new ones. Even though a person may transform or invent cultural symbols or tools privately and "alone," as soon as he/she uses them in the context of social interactions, they become public and are available for incorporation into collective culture, possibly changing it (BRUNER, 1990). When personalized cultural symbols and tools are re-expressed in social contexts, they are added to or incorporated into the extant collective cultural tool kit, altering the collective culture that initially spawned them. In this way, personal and collective cultures are mutually constitutive, maintaining continuity and discontinuity between the two. A person's life unfolds in and through collective cultural forms of life by utilizing and modifying already available cultural tools as well as inventing novel ones; while collective forms of life exist in and emanate from its individual members' personalized forms of life. [63]

M personally chose to weigh Neo-Confucian voices over traditional *jamnyeo* voices of virtue, but only along selective dimensions. For example, M valued her role as a lawful first wife with sons, but rejected the prospect of sharing her husband with any other women (subjectively-selected aspects of *budeok*). Growing up in a family environment where six mothers lived and worked together without serious conflict (by her father's strict command) showed her what it meant to be a self-sacrificing woman and how one can achieve it. Through ongoing exposure to examples of self-sacrifice, young M developed a particular understanding of the meaning of the ideal and an image of herself as a female in the realm of domestic relations as they were construed on Jejudo and in her family. During the course of her childhood relationship with her big mother, she seemed to hear at least two different voices about being a self-sacrificing first

wife. One contained overtones about being a self-sacrificing virtuous woman by being kind, generous, accepting, and nurturing; while the other contained undertones about the socioculturally endowed desirability, privilege, respect, recognition, and power of the lawful first wife. The overtone of self-sacrifice as a collective cultural virtue was delivered through M's big mother's way of managing her life in a household that included other wives and their children. M gradually incorporated them into her own personal culture as she witnessed sociocultural endorsement and personal benefits of self-sacrifice. Through daily routines in her family culture, over which her father exerted strong control, he established an unquestionably higher and more privileged place for his first wife than the other five "little wives." From this preference, M absorbed the collective cultural voice expounding the desirability of being the lawful first wife. [64]

There is a commonly shared opinion among ordinary Korean women that a husband with little wives stereotypically enjoys the company of his little wives more than his first, lawful wife and spends more time with them. Consequently, first wives are not only deserted by their husbands in intimate relationships, but they also often lose power and status vis-a-vis the other wives. In M's family, however, her father treated her big mother with the greatest respect and preference. M stated that her father made it clear that all of his little wives were expected to obey his first wife. M perceived her big mother, who had two sons of her own, as the only wife in charge of raising and educating all twelve children, and running the household. Only the first wife's name would be recorded in her husband's family *jokbo* and only she would be qualified to be served *jesa* by her sons after she passed away. This image became M's picture of her ideal self, one who belonged at the center of her husband's family. [65]

5.1.3 Joint construction

Sociocultural theories emphasize ways that individuals and their sociocultural contexts are interrelated, exerting mutual influence on each other as active agents. In doing so, the two jointly construct new meanings and interpretations of extant collective and personal cultures together—joint construction. Joint construction (a.k.a. co-construction, VALSINER, 1994), is defined as collaborative symbolic and material activities between a person and his/her life environments, through which the two exert mutual influences on each other. Not only does joint construction maintain collective cultural forms of life, but it also transforms them through the cycle of internalization and externalization, and can invent novel personal/collective cultural forms or materials (see VALSINER, 1994, 1998 for theoretical elaboration on co-construction). [66]

M's life story is full of joint constructions between her intention to maintain her place with her qualifications and her sociocultural contexts. These are manifested in her series of strategies and (un)successful attempts to remain in her late husband's family and eventually become a legitimate ancestor. M's attempts to maintain her place as a lawful first wife was repeatedly reflected in her storytelling. She was the first wife of a loving husband who did not have interest in any other women. After the death of her husband and sons, she suffered her

brother-in-law's mistreatment due to her sonless status (PETERSON, 1983). That alone would have been a legitimate reason to dismiss her from her husband's family during the Chosun dynasty, but it is neither a legal basis nor a socially desirable practice to do so in modern Korea. Her in-laws, however, did not wish to keep her in their family. Her brother-in-law (B), the younger brother to her late husband, was particularly eager to force her out by not only verbally and physically abusing her, but also pushing her to remarry. In his abuse, B personally externalized anachronistic Neo-Confucian ideals about virtuous women by abusively dramatizing M's "sin" of breaking her husband's family line as a sonless "*cheongsang kwabu*" (a young widow) of the *jongga*. [67]

As her conflict with her brother-in-law escalated, M personally began to transform B's habitual accusations into a source of strategic plans for beating them. The absence of a son for maintaining family unity and continuity by performing *jesa* for her husband and other family ancestors was frequently used by B as his justification for his abuse, repeatedly calling M, "*nampyeongwa jasik apsewun nyeon*" ("a bitch who *killed* her own husband and sons"). B's verbal abuse is a transformation of the phrase, "*nampyeon [jasik] apsewun na ...*" ("I am a woman who let my own husband [or child] die before me ..." or even "I killed my husband [or child]"). This expression is frequently used by distraught, grieving Korean women who lose their husbands or children. It expresses a Korean wife's or mother's self-reproach for failing to protect her husband or child, regardless of whether it actually could have been possible or not. B's misuse of the phrase was intended to continuously (and unnecessarily) remind M of her unbearable guilt and sorrow. [68]

Although the two expressions sound similar, the two deliver vastly different connotations and describe different sentiments to the griever. In conventional usage, the expression is self-blaming and the griever attempts to push herself to the bottom of despair, which is a culturally appropriate way of responding to the situation. It is also a plea for social rescue including emotional assistance (e.g., comfort, sympathy, and empathy) or for public negation of her internal attribution of the adverse event. By being harsher on herself than others, a woman who blames herself for the death is, in fact, accepted by her social others more easily than those who do not. Consequently, the griever is communally encouraged not to blame herself too much, reducing the magnitude of self-recrimination or even lifting it entirely. A woman's initially harsh self-blaming action is socially transformed into lesser degree of self-blaming or even other-blaming through collaborations between the actor and her social others. In these culturally invented collaborations, the two parties take quite different roles. The former plays an actively passive or pessimistic role while the latter takes an actively active or optimistic role in the process of jointly constructing the transformation. [69]

B's use of the expression, on the other hand, is other-blaming, designed to externally impose shame and guilt on the addressee and to provoke her emotions including sorrow, remorse, anger, or withdrawal. Like the conventional usage of the expression, using it as a medium of other-blaming can be transformed to self-blaming through joint construction by the addresser and the addressee. In M's

case, she vehemently refused to accept B's other-blaming expressions or to transform them into self-blame. Her intense refusal motivated her to devise strategies to counteract them. [70]

While adoption of a male child or adult was a common cultural practice on Jeju Island as a way of maintaining continuity of a family lineage and insuring service of *jesa* to ancestors, M, a lawful first wife who was rejected by her in-laws, chose to have an affair in an attempt to bear her own son. Her justification was that it is better to have her own son, than an adopted son who did not share her flesh and blood. In the context of Neo-Confucian ideals on women's virtue, the former was considered culturally appropriate, while the latter was sanctioned and frowned on by family and community alike. Both on the island and in mainland Korea, Neo-Confucian collective culture recognized an adopted son as a legitimate offspring; while designating a son born out of wedlock an illegitimate child. M personally chose the latter by twisting B's blame into motivation. M explicitly told me that she was determined to prove B wrong in terms of her ability to have a son. A more implicit motivation, however, can be understood by considering her marginalized social position. [71]

From Neo-Confucian normative standpoints, the most appropriate way for M to behave as a virtuous woman, to preserve her husband's families' continuity, to maintain her place as a lawful first wife, and to guarantee her place as a legitimate ancestor would have been to have adopted a boy or man. In general, most Korean lawful first wives in similar circumstances would probably pursue this option both because it is collective culturally appropriate, as well as personally "safe." M, on the other hand, chose to follow the riskier strategy of bearing a biological son out of wedlock, even while fully recognizing that her actions could give her brother-in-law a more legitimate reason to dismiss her from the family. [72]

Within Neo-Confucian extended family systems on Jeju island and mainland Korea, adopting a son is a family's choice, not the personal choice of a lawful first wife. In the context of rejection and abuse by her in-laws, M probably (and justifiably) suspected that her husband's family, led by B, would choose a male member from his extended family as her adopted son. It is not unreasonable to suspect that the adopted son would be more closely allied with B than with M. In this situation, she was concerned about the possibility that her in-laws' exclusion and abuse could increase. In this hypothetical situation, M could end up even more harshly bullied than before. In the worst case scenario, she probably even imagined being pushed beyond her tolerance threshold and acquiescing to their demands that she "voluntarily" leave the family. As a consequence of her speculations on "what-if," M chose to attempt having a son out of wedlock, rather than risking her in-laws choice of an adopted son. [73]

In M's words, she had the affair not in surrender to B's forceful demands, but because she was determined to resist them. She invented a new internal voice saying "why not stay in the family with my own son" (even though the attempt was in vain, and only produced two more daughters). Without B's intention, M's

attempt to have a son and the way she chose to do it was a joint construction between M's desires and intentions and B's unfair demands, which were ostensibly justified under the Confucian ideology of women's virtue. M stressed that having a son through extramarital affairs was not initially in her mind, but B provided her with the idea during the course of his abuse. [74]

Her transformation of B's demands ironically played a crucial role in maintaining M's self-image as a self-sacrificing, virtuous woman. Because the affairs were precipitated and mediated by someone else's voice, M attributed her behavior to the external force—"I did it because I was forced to do so." While committing adultery in violation of her dead husband's memory would be inconceivable under Neo-Confucian definitions of women's virtuousness, with the external attribution, she amplified her self-image as a self-sacrificing woman because the affairs vividly demonstrated how much she would sacrifice—even her public face—in order to preserve her husband's family. [75]

Under the Neo-Confucian umbrella of virtuousness, each prescription for moral conduct is intended to function as a means in service of the overall culturally-defined goal of "being a virtuous woman." As a means to this goal, both producing sons and remaining a faithful wife are equally important. Similarly, performing *jesa* is a type of symbolic cultural mediations serving to promote and preserve family-oriented kinship and family lineage. As collective cultural goals, both "being a virtuous woman" and "maintaining family continuity" are of hierarchically equal importance for lawful first wives. In her action, M personally reinterpreted the two intentional collective cultural goals as well as the various symbolic and material means intended to help women attain them. She adopted the two collective cultural goals as personal ones; yet, as a failure in collective cultural eyes, the typical routes to successful achievement were blocked by M's circumstances. In her mind, she wanted to remain faithful to her loving husband to serve his *jesa*, and to stay in his family despite B's abuses. [76]

To her, leaving was not an option. She made a choice among different ways of being faithful to her husband by differentially weighing the possibility of staying in the family with her own son over not committing adultery. In doing so, M personally reshuffled the structure of collective cultural goals and means imposed on all Korean women. On collective cultural level, they are equally important, yet she temporarily subordinated one over the other. To her at that time of her life, having an one night affair was not morally "wrong" conduct, but a necessary instrumental means for fulfilling her duty to be faithful to her husband by staying in his family and serving his *jesa* (indirect participation in *jesa* by preparing *jesa* food). M tried hard to convey to me her pure intentions in trying to have a son, during which the affairs only served as technical means. Shedding tear, she added that her affairs were nothing immoral in comparison to what those "*gogwandaejak*" (high rank officials, but here meaning political and military commanders) involved in the April Third Event did on the island. Under the Neo-Confucian family system, it was not rare for a married man to take a mistress(es) in order to ensure continuation of his family line with a son. M simply shifted the direction of a socioculturally endorsed means often used by men and applied it to

her situation in order to achieve her personally transformed version of culturally important goal. [77]

The series of life events associated with B's illness also vividly illustrate other aspects of joint constructions. In her storytelling, M included four male deaths: one non-family member (a work colleague of her husband) and three intimate family members—her husband and two sons. While M did not describe much about her sons' deaths, she extensively elaborated on her husband's coworker's suicide and her husband's death, and offered her own interpretations of the events and their consequences. Her interpretations largely repeated typical Korean collective sociocultural voices about unhappy spirits. [78]

According to M, the ghost of her husband's coworker was not only a *mongdal-gwisin* (young, unmarried male ghost), but also a *gek-sa-gwisin* (literally "street-dead ghost," meaning the ghost of a person who died outside of his/her home). According to traditional Korean cultural belief, these ghosts are unhappy and "homeless" spirits in a purgatory stuck between the world of the living and that of the dead. An unhappy homeless spirit has difficulty in making the necessary journey to the world of the dead. Therefore, it tries to convey its dilemma to a living person. M believed that her husband was chosen because he was kind-hearted. Yet, the co-worker ghost, as an unhappy spirit, was unsuccessful in communicating with her husband and made him afraid. It is culturally believed that miscommunication between unhappy spirits and living people often results in dreadful consequences for the living and no repose for the dead. Many traditional folktales suggest being kind to all spirits and courageous in facing fearful encounter in order to understand their voices. On Jeju and elsewhere, rural and coastal communities still continue to perform collective *jesa-like* or *kut* rituals for homeless, unhappy spirits (e.g., CHO, LEE, & HA, 2003). [79]

M believed that in her husband's case, after death he joined the spirit world, but his brother's (B) mistreatment of his wife made him unhappy. Therefore, according to the *simbang*, he tried to communicate his unhappiness to his brother. Instead of appearing as a scary ghost in his brother's dreams or hallucinations, the husband's spirit expressed himself by making his brother ill. After several years of suffering, B's family consulted the (female) *simbang* and the *simbang* chose one of the most frequently used, culturally constructed means to heal B's illness—an unhappy ancestral spirit. She claimed that M's husband spirit was hungry because he could not take *jesa* food prepared by B's family, and that the hungry spirit had been trying to tell B this all along. M, then, introjected a well-known fact about her late husband's picky eating habits—not enjoying food prepared by anyone other than his wife—into the *simbang's* explanation. M's introjection amplified the meaning and impact of the *simbang's* explanation. It also enhanced the *simbang's* public credibility. With the *simbang's* recommendation that M serve her husband's *jesa* in the future, after many years of discrimination, maltreatment, and abuse, M finally achieved her dream despite the absence of sons. [80]

This transformation of cultural beliefs and norms was jointly constructed through the collaboration of M, the *simbang*, B, and his family using collective sociocultural beliefs familiar to all of them. The *simbang's* advice and practices (the *kut* ritual) as collective cultural inventions were recognized as "legitimate" by all participants. In Jeju cultural contexts, a *simbang* and her(his) ritual activities serve an important social function, especially for women. With the *simbang's* diagnosis and recommendations, not only could M achieve her life-long dream, but B could also more easily accept the recommendations because neither party wanted to disobey the wishes of M's husband's spirit. The sequence of externalized actions described by M provide an example of a sequence of sociocultural products that M continuously modified (in conjunction with her social partners) by orchestrating multiple sociocultural voices from both inside and outside her family, even borrowing her dead husband's voice to represent her own. When M told me about the events surrounding her husband's *jesa*, she was excited, confident, and proud as expressed in a louder voice and more physically extended nonverbal gestures. [81]

6. Closing Thoughts

The sixty two year old *jamnyeo's* story is not very different from many other autobiographical stories of endurance. The themes, turns of circumstance, personal events, and larger social/political/historical contexts are unique of course; but the story is common. What is unusual about M's story, however, is the clarity with which it illustrates power of joint constructions in individual's lives. At an individual level, M subjectively transformed collective sociocultural voices demanding virtuous womanhood into mediational tools catalyzing and facilitating her life-long struggle to transform her social position from the margin to the center of her husband's family. At a collective sociocultural level, her story reveals the dualistic nature of sociocultural voices as both sociocultural forces (guiding, influencing, and structuring the ways individuals construct and reconstruct their lives) and as sociocultural products (which active social agents construct and transform). [82]

Her life story is also intriguing because it highlights her way of living in the margins of her family and constantly attempting to reposition her place toward the center, where she believed she belonged. In the margins, she internalized the collective cultural motto of *yangcheo* (good wife) as her ideal self through her vicarious learning from her big mother, struggled to maintain her self image as a virtuous woman in her husband's family's context, and eventually achieved substantial progress toward her life-long, ultimate goal of becoming a legitimate ancestor. In the later stages of her life, she became comfortable with her negotiations in the margins by creating virtuousness *within* the marginality and discovering a center in a margin, rather than superficially migrating from the margin to the center of the family. M certainly demonstrated, at numerous junctures, that she is a survivor, adept at negotiating with contextually available means, and creative in inventing novel personal strategies. In these senses, she exemplifies the collective reputation of Jeju women, in general and *jamnyeo*, in specific (KIM, 1990a). [83]

At the end of her storytelling, M emphasized that she was happy with the negotiation that she made with her brother-in-law by serving *jesa* only for her husband, but not all of his family ancestors. In the negotiation, M accepted a modified place as the lawful first wife to her husband, but not THE lawful first wife of the *jongga* (her husband's family). Within the family context, she is still not regarded as a central figure, yet she managed to carve out a domain in which she could legitimately claim a central role. Most meaningful to M seems to be the hope or promise that her daughters and their families will serve *jesa* for their father and eventually for her. In this sense, M is close to achieving her lifelong goal of becoming a "legitimate" ancestor. [84]

At the same time, it is only partially assured because of ongoing, dramatic social changes in contemporary Korea. The number of families serving *jesa* is decreasing and M will not have much control over her daughters and their families' decision to stop serving *jesa* after she dies unless she becomes another unhappy spirit and a kindred *simbang* remains available to interpret and communicate her unhappiness. [85]

As a very intelligent and shrewd strategist who was skillful in utilizing contextually available resources and means, it is difficult to imagine that M did not think about this possibility. In most of her storytelling, M presented herself as a *yangcheo* (good wife) rather than a *hyeonmo* (wise mother). Yet, at the end of her storytelling, she boastfully told me that she prepared her own *sueui* and that sharing *jesa* food with her friends and neighbors made her extremely happy. These statements suggest mixed motives in making herself comfortable and secure (as most Korean elders feel) in the knowledge that her *sueui* is prepared. At the same time, *sueui* preparation could mean saving her daughters' social faces in the community and attempting to improve her daughters' social and familial places, particularly for the two who were born out of wedlock. If this is the case, *hyeonmo* in addition to *yangcheo*, needs to be added to the list of the M's unspoken voices I heard. Paradoxically, M may have become a virtuous woman as a *hyeonmo yangcheo* through her actions, which are least virtuous by conventional Neo-Confucian standards. [86]

6.1 My place in M's storytelling

While I was flattered by M's openness with me and tremendously enjoyed her storytelling, I could not help wondering why she told her life story to me, a Korean stranger from America with such passion and emotion. Gradually, I have come to realize that my dual status as a researcher and as an ordinary Korean woman who was much younger than M facilitated our interactions. As a qualitative researcher, I wanted her to direct her own storytelling. As a younger Korean woman, I was bound by social decorum to listen to M's story in a culturally appropriate way by letting her lead the *sinsetaryeong*. This combination opened the chance and gave M a stage on which she could make herself the central actor in the storytelling segments. M seemed to enjoy being in charge and was diligent to find time when she could be alone with me. [87]

In Korean traditional cultural communication contexts, young listeners are trained by older storytellers to be attentive politely responding to the storyteller if needed. Interjection of questions, reactions, or challenges by young listeners are only tolerated when they match subtle openings in the storyteller's story or rhythm. *Nun-chi* (literally "eye-sensing") is an essential, nonverbal element of Korean communication that story listeners use to guide insertion of comments, questions, reactions, challenges, etc. (CHOI & CHOI, 1992). More generally, *nunchi* refers to perceptual antennae—the multitude of ways that Koreans sense, perceive, detect, and instantaneously integrate and appropriately react to verbal, nonverbal, and contextual cues available during social interactions. I certainly utilized my *nunchi* as much as possible while serving as an audience to M's *sinsetaryeong*. [88]

Note that not only do story listeners use *nunchi* to guide the feedback they provide to storytellers, but storytellers also use *nunchi* to read their audience, gauge their responsiveness, tailor their storytelling presentations, and offer cues to appropriate times for interjection of comments and questions. From the time that M came to my room asking whether I would like to accompany her to her *bangpung* field, it is likely that she was evaluating my "potential" as her storytelling partner. I am humbly grateful for her choice. [89]

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Appendix A: An Example of Major Theme Extraction Through Contextualizing Processes

[PDF file](#) (68 kb)

Appendix B: M's Life Event Timeline in Historical-Political and Sociocultural Contexts

[PDF file](#) (76 kb)

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Author

Gui-Young HONG is Director of the Sumter Children and Families Study. Her research interests include systemic approaches to understanding marginalized people's work and lives in historical and sociocultural contexts. She is particularly interested in advancing sociocultural and ethnographic methodologies to explore interplays between collective and personal cultures.

Contact:

Gui-Young Hong

Sumter Children and Families Study
52 Courtney Street
Charleston, SC. 29425
U.S.A.

E-mail: honggy@musc.edu

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