

INTERNATIONALIZING CHEJU ISLAND

A View From Abroad

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I. Introduction

Cheju has, from the earliest times, asserted its unique identity in National and international affairs. The first visitors to the Island during the Paleolithic era are believed to have been dependent on marine resources, while the first hunters concentrated along the northern Cheju coast some 50,000 years ago. (The Archeology of Idology by David J. Nemeth, pp. 76-77). There were sporadic Neolithic contacts between Japan, China and Korea which also contributed to Cheju's earliest settlers. In fact, the earliest mariners throughout East Asia and Southeast Asia most likely had contact with Cheju, it would be a fundamental mistake to regard Cheju as "isolated." A current map of the region with Cheju at its center would indicate that within 1500 kilometers of Cheju are Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, Okinawa, Pyongyang and Seoul. As of 1982, fully 803 million people lived within that radius.

Even in the mythological past of Cheju, when The Three Founders legend appears, the Yang family records speak of an Island King who indicates he is "an ambassador from the Blue Wave Nation" (presumably Japan); thus, a travelling diplomat! (Nemeth, page 78.)

Some scholars believe that in the 5th century B.C. Chinese writers referred to Cheju as "Yongju," "The Blessed Isle." Certainly in the Later Han dynasties Cheju

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kept showing up in Chinese records as Yongju, Dong Yongju (Eastern Blessed Isle), Do I (Isle of Barbarous Tribes), T'ammura (Barley Kingdom of T'am), and Chuho. (Nemeth, pp. 79-83) Cheju really come into its historical own during the Koryo dynasty as T'amna in the 12th century, when the Mongols used the island to stage an invasion of Japan.

The important point here is that the ocean was never an isolating barrier for Cheju, and its central location guaranteed that visitors would always come.

The future of Cheju in part lies in the way the people of Korea and the people of Cheju view this island. It would be a mistake to focus only on the land based agriculture, for agriculture tends to be an isolating influence. It would be more in tune with Cheju's historical past to focus on Cheju as a maritime community situated on the crossroads of international travel.

II. Cheju As A Free Trade Area?

Cheju is already on the minds of economists. In 1983 the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements commissioned a report by the Bechtel Corporation to investigate Cheju's potential and an International Free Trade Area. In its executive summary, Bechtel noted the following favorable attributes of Cheju:

- * It is a clean, attractive, and a pleasant place for both Koreans and foreigners to visit;
- * The island is large enough so that, with careful planning and control, this superior environment can be maintained even when significant development occurs;
- * There is an established tourist industry and a broad range of hotels and visitor accommodations;
- * There is an international airport with a new passenger terminal...
- * The Korean telecommunications system will be upgraded to meet the highest international standards... and Cheju Island will be included in this system;
- * Cheju has a population of 500,000 people and a culture with a strong work ethic;
- * A small University, two junior colleges, and several trade schools are located on the island."

Cheju Island : International Free Trade Area,

Bechtel Eastern Ltd. November 1983

The Bechtel assessment included in its specific recommendations the following resources which would need to be developed if Cheju were to be a successful International Foreign Trade Area :

- 1) meaningful incentive programs.
- 2) well-defined banking legislation.
- 3) A favorable, well-defined tax code.
- 4) Lawyers, accountants, financial experts, computer programmers, and other professionals.
- 5) High-quality, readily available clerical labor.
- 6) Effective capability in the English language among the work force.
- 7) Excellent air service and telex and telephone communications.
- 8) High-quality industrial infrastructure.
- 9) High-quality housing, office and hotel space.

The suggested needs provide some insight as to how the outside world sees a place like Cheju. A place that possesses these attributes is considered a serious venue for international affairs, be it economic or diplomatic.

III. The north wind blow the rain across my way...

Without a "user-friendly" environment, to use computer language, Cheju could miss many an opportunity. The myth of isolation could continue to haunt the islanders and visitors alike.

We should be mindful that while Cheju has always been a place to visit, it has not always been seen as hospitable. In the early 17th century, Kwanghae-g. exiled to Cheju by his nephew Injo, wrote on the wall of his Cheju prison :

The north wind blows the rain across my way,
And mists hang deep upon the city wall;
The sea roars in upon the evening tide,

And all the hills are wrapped in anxious gloom,
My homesick heart hangs by each blade of grass,
And in my dreams I wander by the shore,
I know not how my state goes, up or down,
And passing boats speak not nor give a sign.

(The History of the Korean People, Richard Rutt, page 266)

Cheju cannot simply wait for the outside world to beat a path to its door. Like Hawaii, many have the impression Cheju is a nice place to visit but not a place to do business. The only real business Cheju has gotten a reputation for is land speculation. Everybody ELSE owns a part of Cheju.

Even if Cheju were to acquire a reputation for serious business, this is not the same as having an international business center image. There is very little industry currently on the island. It lacks warehouses and container yards for transshipment of goods. It also lacks the support facilities for business and manufacturing, and only domestic banks may set up branches on the island.

Of primary importance is the "international community" on Cheju. When I was a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching English in the early 1970's, I was aware of a small group of foreign missionaries, one or two Americans who chose to live on Cheju, the small American base at Moseipo, and other volunteers. In fact, the American Peace Corps group, which numbered no more than ten, seemed to be the most prominent "international" community.

I'm sure the growth of tourism has brought many more foreigners to Cheju in the subsequent 20 years, yet is there really a foreign residential community on Cheju? Apart from a few of Cheju University's faculty, the answer is NO. Not only is it difficult to find an international context to Cheju life, it is even harder to find it among the professionals who are needed to attract others.

Let me contrast Cheju with Hawaii. In Hawaii we have, like Cheju, a vigorous tourist industry which is rapidly becoming bilingual to accommodate Japanese visitors. It is common for small businesses to require their employees in Waikiki to speak Japanese. The stores themselves cater to Japanese tastes in food, clothing, and recreation. Occasionally popular Japanese entertainers come to Hawaii. Residents and

visitors alike can be exposed to a non-American culture by exploring Waikiki.

At the University, we have many programs and institutions which are explicitly geared to international affairs. We have the East West Center, which has its own dormitories. If you look around at the political leadership through Asia, you will find many a graduate of the East West Center. We have colleges of Tropical Agriculture, Health, and Medicine with strong international exchange and research programs. Professors in these schools are often travelling elsewhere delivering papers, conducting research, helping with training. A special report must be assembled each year in an attempt to identify all the international activities of the University Faculty.

Of special importance is the existence of the Spark Matsunaga Institute for Peace which is building a reputation for the exploration of peace throughout the world. We also have a special Ethnomusicology department which helps to attract artists from all over Asia.

For building an international reputation, the role of the university cannot be overemphasized. This means the ability to attract internationally known faculty, which implies good housing, clerical support, and assistance in conducting research. In Hawaii we have a serious housing crisis: too few homes and too high prices. This makes it very difficult to attract faculty members.

Also in Hawaii we have a number of ethnic groups which have migrated to our shores and which have brought with them their culture, their language, their religion, their music, and their newspapers. It is now possible to read about the Japanese community, the Chinese community, the Filipino community, the Korean community, the Vietnamese community, etc., all in their own language. Perhaps the most enjoyable reflection of this international mixture is the wide variety of restaurants available for local residents. My family is used to choosing between Thai, Korean, Japanese, Laotian, Vietnamese, Chinese, French, German, etc., restaurants. This is what makes Hawaii so attractive a place to live to the foreigner.

For those who enjoy art, we have a fine internationally oriented Art Academy which not only provides us with a constant flow of interesting international exhibits, but also sponsors the performing arts. One recent example involved a group to which I belong. My wife and I play in a Gagaku music ensemble. Gagaku is Japanese Court

music (the Korean version is A'ak). This music is very strange to the western ear, and yet we are regularly called upon to perform, just to provide a genuine flavor of another culture. The Art Academy sponsors some of our events, but our "home" is the University of Hawaii's School of Music, which, incidentally, is famous for its staging of Chinese Beijing Operas. The Beijing Opera teachers come to Hawaii, train our performers, and then we go to China and the U.S. mainland. The music department, in conjunction with our drama department at the University of Hawaii is also known for its performances of Japanese Kabuki, sometimes done in Japanese, sometimes done in English.

The main point is that internationally oriented business people, professors, teachers, students, etc., are drawn to Hawaii because we offer a wide range of international experiences. It is part of a life style that values other cultures. If Cheju is to become international, leaders here on the Island need to develop incentives to attract individuals and activities. This cannot be done overnight, but it can be done.

I recently read through the Cheju Statistical Yearbook: 1990. The following are some random observations that relate to Cheju's international potential:

a) The Structure of Cheju Government. While tourism has its own department, there is little to suggest an interest in the Environment. Environmental protection is a growing concern of many professionals and tourists alike. Investors want to know that Cheju's beauty and resources will not be ruined. Foreigners will be keenly interested in the policies which attempt to protect beauty, viewscapes, groundwater, near shore waters, recreational areas, etc. As more people come, there will be an increasing interest in how environmental protection relates to the common resident of Cheju, and whether or not their lives and homes and children are protected from pollution. Many Koreans are no doubt believe that one of Cheju's weaknesses is that it is NOT Seoul or Pusan. I can tell you that from a foreign point of view, that is one of its strengths. When I travel to Korea, I try to avoid the major cities if possible. People want to visit and live in places which are clean, pollution free, quiet, and a pleasant departure from their usual busy lives in big cities.

I also noticed that the structure of government does not single out parks as a special administrative concern. This is understandable, for Cheju people are used to

looking up at Halla San and feeling they really live in a country environment. But you must remember that Cheju increasingly offers an urban life experience, and urban areas need quiet, still, beautiful places to help residents rest from their stressful lives. Cheju City and Sogwipo need to carefully plan more public parks, and mini parks, while it is still possible. Once Cities get too big and busy, it is almost impossible to find the political will to set aside park space. In the United States, the best parks are those planned and developed more than fifty or sixty years ago, when land was not too valuable or expensive. Since Cheju has a waterfront, promenades along the shoreline and a "greenbelt" make good sense. But without a department of the environment, I wonder how high a priority this could be.

b) As a proponent of environmental protection AND marine affairs, I was curious about the recent significant decline in harvests of seaweeds and molluscs. Both of these could be indications of near shore pollution and run off. I know that Cheju's sewage system is not all that well developed, and recent feedback from Cheju friends indicates that shoreline fishing has declined recently.

c) It is clear that the overwhelming number of tourists to Cheju are from the Korean mainland. This means that even the visitor industry has yet to become primarily international. A greater emphasis on international marketing should positively affect the overall international environment.

IV. A Possible Program to Internationalize Cheju

It is always presumptuous for a foreigner to suggest how others should conduct their affairs. We often don't know all the facts, all the factions, and all the rules. Nevertheless, I've been asked to explore a preferred future, and I hope these modest suggestions are taken in the spirit they are offered: with respect, and with great affection for Cheju's people.

A. International Institutions

Since the much publicized summit between the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Soviet Union, Cheju is now on the diplomatic map. But that is not enough. One time is just a fluke. The question is: How can Cheju build on its young reputation

and become a common meeting place for world leaders?

I would respectfully suggest that Cheju University, in conjunction with the private sector, establish its own Institute of Peace and Diplomacy. Such an institute could sponsor workshops, conferences, and summits to resolve disputes in Asia. Certainly in the arena of ocean law there continue to be many disputes that cry out for mediation. Such mediation would naturally need to have an Asian sensibility, which western institutions may be unable to provide.

The private sector would need to help raise funds for such an institute, and to provide incentives for prominent foreign diplomats and professionals to reside in Cheju for extended periods of time. It would need a building, a conference center with high tech capabilities for simultaneous translation, and a comfortable housing development for visiting faculty and professionals.

Cheju needs an international, academic magnet. The institute, working in conjunction with Cheju University's faculty, could provide that magnet.

B. Planning and Design of Cheju's Environment

There are a number of planning issues which will tell a foreigner whether Cheju is serious about protecting its environment. These include :

- * Though urban design laws which prevent ugly and inappropriate construction, especially in the tourist industry.
- * Protection of unique and sensitive areas like Cow Island near SongsanP'o. This might require a legal mechanism to designate and enforce tougher laws, including stiff daily fines for violations.
- * Comprehensive, publically oriented planning program for Cheju's mid-mountain areas. These areas are now the subject of a new initiative for development, and investors are lining up to make their profits.
- * The establishment of a number of public advisory committees where average residents can meaningfully participate in the planning and decision making of Cheju government. This is especially crucial in the next few years as electoral politics is likely to be an unfamiliar and unsettling media for public participation and confidence.

Foreign residents are going to want to participate in some way in the governance of Cheju. Advisory committees could be one vehicle for this.

* The involvement of the private sector in modeling democratic processes. This could take the form of idealized public hearings where genuine input was sought from villagers and residents directly affected by future decisions. Perhaps the Cheju International Council could conduct such public meetings. Recent feedback about some of Korea's explorations of public hearings indicates that sometimes these are no more than another opportunity for the Yangbans to tell the commoners what is good for them.

You may legitimately ask what public hearings have to do with internationalizing Cheju. My answer is that Cheju's rational future must rest with the empowerment of Cheju's people. Outside investors are not interested in preserving traditional village life, or in the scale of wages paid in a hotel, or dumps its sewage in the ocean untreated. Only the people of Cheju will truly care about Cheju. They must be brought into the process, a process they can respect.

C. Cheju's Geopolitical Role

Traditional tells us that Cheju is a place without beggars, thieves or gates. In other words, poverty and crime give way to trust and openness. These are not bad attributes in a post cold war era. Perhaps Cheju should assert that it wants not to be another military base of operations, but rather a refuge from violence - a place of peace. Cheju's role could be more than another Hawaii, more than an isolated island where political exiles were sent. It could be the center of a Pacific and Asian movement to create zones of Peace and mediation. Perhaps in twenty years, the highest honor that could be bestowed on a diplomate would be to be awarded a year's fellowship at the Halla San Institute of Peace and Diplomacy. I look forward to watching Cheju develop its home grown vision of the future, and pray that we all may gather again and again in Cheju to serve the cause of peace.

Aloha.

외국인이 보는 제주도의 국제화 방안

제임스 손

역사적으로 제주도가 고립된 섬이라는 인식은 기본적으로 잘못된 생각이다. 제주도는 이미 오래전부터 일본 중국들의 동아시아 국가들과 교류해왔고 특히 지정학적 위치에서 볼 때 제주의 중요성은 더욱 새롭게 인식될 수 있다. 예를 들어 제주를 중심으로 약 1,500킬로미터의 반경에는 동경, 북경, 상해, 대만, 오키나와, 평양 및 서울의 약 8억3백만의 인구가 살고 있다.

제주를 자유무역지역으로 개발하자는 논의는 여러번 있었다. 특히 1983년에는 미국의 다국적 기업인 백텔이 한국의 연구소로부터 연구용역을 받아 조사한 바에 의하면 제주는 세계의 어느 지역 못지않게 국제화된 도시로서의 잠재성을 지니고 있다고 평가했다. 특히 백텔은 제주가 국제무역지대로 성공하기 위해서는 훌륭한 기업유치계획, 금융제도, 세제혜택, 전문가 양성, 양질의 인력, 영어사용인력, 통신시설, 산업시설, 호텔 및 주거환경이 개발되어야 한다고 보았다.

지금까지의 제주도는 관광을 하기는 좋은 지역이나 기타 산업 및 기업들의 경제활동을 위해서는 좋은 곳이 아니라는 인식이 팽배하다. 제주가 이러한 지역이 되기 위해서는 단순히 비즈니스만을 위한 「국제비즈니스센터」와 같은 것만이 되어서는 안된다. 예를 들어 하와이는 제주처럼 관광산업이 잘 발달되어 있지만 여러인종이 모여사는데 아무런 불편이 없다. 특히 「마츠나가 평화연구소」 같은 훌륭한 연구기관이 있어서 국제화에 기여하고 있다. 사실상 국제화에 이러한 대학연구기관의 역할은 매우 중요하다고 말할 수 있다.

제주가 국제화될려는 노력은 기울이면서도 간과해서는 안될 것이 바로 환경문제이다. 이것을 위해서는 제주도청에 「환경과」같은 것을 두어 실제적으로 관심을 가져야 한다. 특히 개발계획은 극도로 계획적이어야 한다.

마지막으로 제주국제화의 실질적 방안으로 다음의 것을 제시한다.

첫째, 국제연구소의 설립필요성, 이것은 제주대학교 부설 가칭 「평화의교연구소」같은 것을 통해서 실현시킬 수 있다. 이것을 통해서 아시아지역의 분쟁을 해결, 중재하는 월샷, 국제회의를 개최할 수 있다. 이를 위해서 이 연구소는 회의장 시설 거주지를 제공할 수 있어야 한다. 둘째, 제주발전은 환경을 중요시하는 계획으로 나가야 한다. 이것을 위해서 엄격

한 도시 계획법시행, 특정지역(예를들어 성산포 인근지역)의 개발제한, 제주민들을 위한 종합적이고 합리적인 개발계획, 제주도의 개발을 자문하는 공정한 기구의 구성 및 민주적 절차가 중요시되는 제주민들의 참여가 중요하다.