

# Folklore and Folk Implements of Discharge :

## A Comparison of Discharge Habits of Zhoushan Island, Cheju Island and the Korean Peninsula

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### 1. Introduction

Living things take in nutrients, digest them and discharge waste from the body. Behavior related to human beings' partaking of nutrients through drinking and eating is known as eating habits or dietary patterns. Their regional diversity has long intrigued researchers, and in some studies, food utensils are classified based on their function<sup>1</sup>. After nutrients are absorbed from food, waste matter is excreted. Although the way excreta are recycled or disposed of varies from region to region, researchers have paid little attention to discharge folklore, to say nothing of discharge habits or discharge patterns.<sup>2</sup> This report explores the prospect of discharge folklore research<sup>3</sup> through a comparative study of three regions: Cheju Island of Korea, the Korean Peninsula and Zhoushan Island of China.

### 2. Discharge folklore of Cheju Island

An ancient record of Cheju Island appears in the chapter of Dongyizhuan of Sanguo Zhi, a chronicle of China's Three Kingdoms compiled in the third century. In its section describing the Mahan confederation, which spanned the southwestern part of the Korean Peninsula, people of Juho (present-day Cheju Island) are said to have favored the breeding of cattle and pigs.

A census report on Cheju Island published in 1937 also illustrates the prevalence of pig farming in the region. The census shows that at the end of 1936, the island had 48,100 households, classified as follows:

Classification	Cheju natives	Japanese	Manchus and Chinese	Other foreigners
Number of households	47,682	384	32	2

Table1

The pig farming section of the census report says that of all households on the island, 46,657, or 97%, raised pigs – implying that every native Cheju family kept pigs.<sup>4</sup>

Pigs, however, were not the predominant livestock in other parts of Korea, as indicated in a report issued by the Japanese governor-general of Korea in 1934. The colonial government studied the lifestyle of people in Gyeongju County, which is located in the southeastern part of the Korean Peninsula and was the capital of the ancient Silla Kingdom. The report's livestock farming section notes that of 13,223 households raising livestock, a paltry 1,839, or 13.9%, bred pigs.<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted that although Dongyizhuan covers articles on various regions, only the people of Juho are portrayed as favoring the breeding of pigs. Yet, the island's tradition of pig farming had died out by the 1970s due to a national policy pursued by President Park Chung Hee. Park seized power in a military coup on May 16, 1961, and became the fifth president of South Korea in 1963. In 1970, he mounted the New Community Movement (Saemaul Undong) in a bid to ameliorate the farm village environment and boost

agricultural income. Toilet facilities were modernized in tandem with this campaign, and as a consequence, Cheju's traditional outhouses – which doubled as pigpens – gradually vanished.

What did a classic privy look like? A good glimpse is afforded by a record of the house of the Yoo family in Napeup-ri, Aewol-eup, North Cheju County, Cheju Province from around 1970:

Encircled by a stone wall, the property contained the main house and annex. The outhouse stood to the left of the annex, relatively far from the main house – an old adage says, “Live far afield from the wife's hometown and the privy.”

On Cheju Island, pigs were kept in a hut called a *tongsi* or *dotdong*, which was a combination pigpen and privy.

Furnished with a stone wall, a *dotdong* (which literally means “pigpen”) measured approximately 30 square meters and was built one meter lower than the surrounding yard. A considerable amount of manure was accumulated there.

The weight of manure was measured in *da*. One *da* is the weight that an ox can carry at one time – roughly 60 kilograms. An average household produced about 80 *da* of manure, whereas in an affluent household the volume exceeded 100 *da*. People referred to pigpens as “80-*da-dotdong*” or “100-*da-dotdong*,” according to the amount of manure accumulated there.

The *dotdong* included a covered shed in which pigs slept and stayed when it rained. A feed bowl made of stone was placed on the side opposite from the shed.<sup>6</sup> The latrine was annexed to the *dotdong*. It consisted of *jiteulpang*, a pair of stone slabs arranged in parallel. As people straddled and squatted over the *jiteulpang*, grunting pigs gathered underneath to feed.

Baby pigs grew in the shed of the *dotdong*, nursing for 30 to 40 days after birth. A piglet was called a *jaridosaege*, which meant a pig (*dosaegi*) as small as a damselfish (*jari*). After being raised for one year in the pen, a *jaridosaege* was regarded as mature and called a “one-year-old pig.”

The *dotdong* acted as a manure factory: from time to time, seaweed and the droppings of cattle and horses were brought there and mixed with pig excrement to make fertilizer.

The combination of pigpen, toilet and manure facility was the hallmark of the discharge space on Cheju Island.

Figure1 Cheju Island house

Photo1 Toilet and pigpen

### 3. Discharge folklore of the Korean Peninsula

As part of his agricultural survey, Noboru Takahashi visited Namhae Island at the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula and studied the house of the Park family in November 1940.<sup>7</sup> Living in Budong-ri, Changseon-myeon, Namhae County, the Parks were a wealthy farming family famous in the district. According to the floor plan of the property which Takahashi sketched, the pigpen (*toyajisiri*), outhouse (*tongsi*) and manure shed – where waste from the pigpen and cowshed was stored – were all separated,<sup>8</sup> unlike on Cheju Island, where these three functions were integrated in one facility.

On the Korean Peninsula, people had used pit latrines.<sup>9</sup> Two wooden boards were laid side by side over a hole in the ground, and human waste was accumulated in the pit. When feces decompose, they ooze water

and may contaminate the surrounding soil. Thus, ash and rice chaff were spread over the waste. They not only absorbed moisture but also decayed along with excreta to form fertilizer<sup>10</sup>.

The produced manure was carried in a cask called a *tongjanggun* and was applied to wheat as basal and additional fertilizer.

Figure2 Park's house

Photo2,3 Tongjaggun

#### 4. Discharge folklore of Zhoushan Island<sup>11</sup>

On China's Zhoushan Island, which lies to the south of Shanghai, pail latrines were the norm. A privy of about three to seven square meters stood in the back of the house. The wooden latrine, called a waste pail, was cylindrical and had a wooden handle. The handle, which consisted of two upright posts and a grip connecting them, served as a backrest. In shape, the waste pail resembled a water pail, which was used to carry drinking water, but the handle of the water pail was shorter than that of the waste pail.<sup>12</sup> There were two types of waste pails, one for adults and one for children.

At night, people used a chamber pot called a night pail that had a lid and was placed on a chair in the bedroom. Some chairs had backrests. In the morning, the contents were emptied into the waste pail in the privy.

When the pails were full, they were carried on a pole to the field. As with water buckets, one person shouldered two pails at a time, or two people moved one container together. Waste pots, which were probably the same as water pots, were buried at the entrance to the field. The waste was poured into the pot, subjected to fermentation, and from time to time stirred with a stick to speed up maturation. The pot had a lid to protect the manure from precipitation.<sup>13</sup>

The manure in the pot was scooped out with a *liúzi* scoop and used as additional fertilizer.<sup>14</sup>

Photo4 Privy in the back of the house

Photo5 Night Pail

Photo6 Carrying / distribution of pail

Photo7 Waste Pot

#### 5. Conclusions

The three regions studied can be divided into two groups based on their discharge folklore. Cheju Island, where human waste was fed to pigs, falls into the first category. The second consists of the Korean Peninsula and Zhoushan Island, where human excreta was recycled as fertilizer.

That said, the Korean Peninsula and Zhoushan Island featured very different methods for producing manure. On the Korean Peninsula, human waste was matured in a pit latrine for almost a year, carried to the field in a *tongjanggun* and applied to wheat as basal and additional fertilizer. By contrast, on Zhoushan Island, when a waste pail was full, its contents were transferred into a pot in the field and fermented. The manure served as additional fertilizer.

On Zhoushan Island, whose discharge folklore is marked by the pail latrine, various vessels for kitchen use

and for treating human waste are found. They are categorized as follows:

<b>Vessels for kitchen use</b>	Water pail	Water pot	<i>Shuǐāodǒu</i> (Wooden bucket)
<b>Vessels for treating human waste</b>	Waste pail	Waste pot	<i>Liúzi</i> (Scoop)

Table2

Further studies are required to gain clearer insight into the uniformity and diversity of discharge folklore, which mirrors the culture of each region.

- 1 In Zuroku Mingu Nyumon Jiten (Illustrated Introduction to Folk Implements) by Keitaro Miyamoto (Kashiwashobo Publishing), food utensils are categorized into six groups: “food storage equipment,” “cookware,” “tools for food preparation,” “tea, alcohol and tobacco tools,” “dinnerware” and “food manufacturing tools.”
- 2 While studies of discharge folklore are rare, Habakari Nagara Toire to Bunka Ko (Toilet and Culture) by Henry Stewart (Bungeishunju, 1993) is a landmark work on this topic.
- 3 Nutrient intake and excretion – or metabolism – occur in farmlands, too. Drainage in fields is equivalent to excretion in animals. Korean farmers dig ditches with a *salpo* spade to drain paddies where rice is likely to be infected with bacteria. *Salpos* are used in both fields and rice paddies. Meanwhile, as furrows of fields help drain water, hoes and spades, as well as *salpos*, are used as draining tools. Each region has unique tools and methods for draining fields, and these tools are intertwined with discharge folklore discussed in this report.
- 4 Taguchi, Zojiro (1937) Saishu-tosei Yorán (Census Brief on Cheju Island). Cheju Island Municipality.
- 5 Governor-General of Korea (1934) Seikatsu Jotai Chosa (Survey of the Korean Lifestyle).
- 6 This bowl (*dottogori*) was used to feed scraps to pigs. The word *dottogori* means a pig (*do*) bowl (*togori*) in the Cheju dialect. A *dottogori* was made of a single piece of stone, with its inside hollowed out into a circular or square shape. In olden days, a *dottogori* had a capacity of 18 liters. However, as people started raising crossbred pigs instead of domestic species, larger *dottogori* became more common. Meanwhile, since a *dottogori* was made of heavy stone, it tended to sink in the straw covering the floor. Consequently, liquid manure and decomposing straw gathered in the *dottogori*. In order to clean the bowl, people tilted it with an iron hoe and shoved straw under it.
- 7 Noboru Takahashi (1998) Chosen Hanto no Noho to Nomin (Farmers and Farming Methods in the Korean Peninsula). Mirai-sha Publishers.
- 8 Kim Ji Min (Professor of Architecture, Mokpo National University) studied the outhouse at the residence of Park Hyung Shim, which was built in 1797 in Dae-ri, Haeui-myeon, Sinan County, South Jeolla Province – a district on Haeui Island, which is perched at the southern end of the Korean Peninsula. Kim showed that the privy doubled as a manure shed. (Mokpo National University Museum (1989) Traditional Houses and Villages in the Southwestern Archipelago of Korea.)
- 9 Murakami, Tadayoshi (1916) Chosen-jin no Ishokuju (Korean Lifestyle).
- 10 Around 1920, the Japanese governor-general of Korea promoted the modernization of toilets in Korea. Subsidized by the government, farmers replaced traditional toilets with cement pit latrines that measured approximately 240x120x180 centimeters. As a result, water no longer exuded from excreta into the soil, and the custom of sprinkling ash and chaff in the latrine disappeared. (Information provided by Jung Bok Hyun, a man who was born in 1926 and lives at 401 Chopyeong-dong, Uiwang City, Gyeonggi Province.)
- 11 The author joined the Folklore Study of China’s Zhoushan Archipelago (Research No. 2004-1072-AS3020), a project supported by the Korea Research Foundation. Section 4 of this report encapsulates the results of fieldwork carried out on Zhoushan and its surrounding islands January 17-27, 2005.
- 12 This difference in length stems from two reasons. First, the longer the backrest, the more comfortable people feel. Second, waste hardly splash on people shouldering the waste pail, when the handle is long.
- 13 The author saw a number of waste pots scattered around the fields from the bus from Zhoushan Island to Shanghai.
- 14 On Iki Island, southwestern Japan, people used various vessels, including a water pail (*mizuoke*), waste pail (*koetago*) and night soil reservoir (*koedame*). With a *mizuoke*, human excrement in a latrine was transferred into a *koetago*, a wooden container. *Koetago* pails were carried on a pole to the field, and their contents were poured into a *koedame* for maturation. Farmers spread the manure as additional fertilizer using a *mizuoke*. These implements are showcased at the Kominkaen (Open-air Museum of Folk Houses) in the Iki Fudoki no Oka (Iki Folk Village). (Information provided by Hitoshi Ichiyama, president of the Iki Kyodo-kan (Iki Folklore Museum))