

The Moments

in Jeju



Spirited Garden



A Haven of Tranquil Reflection Where Nature and Life Unite

Spirited Garden, the first private garden nationally designated by the Korea Tourism Organization, is a truly unique travel destination. Unveiled in 1992, it transformed a once barren rocky terrain spanning 56,000 m² in Jeoji-ri, Hangyeong-myeon. Comprising eight themed gardens interconnected by waterfalls, ponds, and stone bridges, it provides an enchanting escape for any visitor. Versatile spaces are also available for hosting international conferences, garden parties, and various events.

For Marcel Proust, captivated by the art of bonsai, the three bonsai trees he commissioned symbolized his quest for lost time. Nietzsche cherished his favorite *gedankenbaum*, or “thought tree,” which gave him the strength and courage to forget the past and continue creating and destroying. In gardens, where the enigmas of nature and humanity intertwine, countless philosophers and artists have pondered their deepest musings. A garden is a human recreation from nature, while also representing something beyond human existence. The Spirited Garden invites you to immerse yourself in quiet contemplation within a space where nature

and human nature are mysteriously combined.

The garden's promenade is lined with meticulously nurtured bonsai and other trees, bearing evidence of the dedicated care they are given. Hundreds of species of bonsai are sure to catch your eye, including sea pines reaching up to the sky and land pines stretching their limbs along the ground. Uniquely shaped stones and *suseok* (or viewing stones) evoke the mystery of life and the ceaseless flow of time, leaving visitors pondering. Beyond Korea's borders, the Spirited Garden has garnered much acclaim for its fusion of art and philosophy, dubbed one of the world's most exquisite gardens. It has welcomed dignitaries from around the world, including former Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang, the first Mongolian President Punsalmaagiin-Ochirbat, former New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger, and former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. China has shown particular interest, hosting numerous former and current presidents such as Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. Chinese social studies textbooks even depict Seong Bum-young, the founder of the garden, as a symbol of Korean spiritual culture.

Reviving a Gravel-Strewn Expanse, Embracing the Label of ‘Madness’



The journey through the Spirited Garden follows a path that unfolds through the Welcome Garden, Soul Garden, Inspiration Garden, Philosophy Garden, Mandarin Garden, Secret Garden, Peace Garden, and Relaxation Garden. Even without precise planning at the beginning of its conception, the harmony of the junipers and bonsai trees that dot the gentle hillside exude an organic harmony akin to flowing water. This naturalness reflects Mr. Seong's tireless contemplation in shaping the garden—deciding each tree's optimal placement, the height of every bonsai stand, which broadleaf or evergreen variety to use, and even the color of the fruit. Originally from Yongin-si, Gyeonggi-do, Seong initially arrived in Jeju in 1963



to visit a military comrade. Enamored by Jeju's landscape while discovering it by boat, he dreamed of a life of tending trees. Later, with the money he saved from running a shirt factory, he acquired a piece of land, where he began cultivating bonsai and mandarin groves in 1968. This marked the inception of his garden endeavor. He thought he could endure any hardship if he could just grow trees and live peacefully in Jeju, but cultivating the wasteland with his bare hands and a pickaxe in the middle of nowhere, without running water or electricity, proved near impossible. He was often labeled *duruoe* (the Jeju dialect for "crazy") by others as he traversed back and forth across the island, planting trees, shaping stones, and building walls from dawn to dusk. In total, he has hauled more than 150,000 tons of stones and soil, enduring injuries and surgeries, driven solely by his deep devotion to his saplings.



"Sometimes I was so tired of tending to the trees and carrying stones that I often looked up at the trees, their whispers urging me to do all I could to abide by nature's laws. In moments of disillusionment, their unique and exquisite transformations provided me with solace."

In 1992, his life's work emerged as the Bonsai Art Center, rechristened the Spirited Garden in 2007. Sprouting purely from Seong's imagination, bereft of elaborate funding or plans, the garden has now become a place where visitors can have a moment to rejuvenate their thoughts.

TOUR INFORMATION
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Bonsai Art Center: A Basalt-Enshrouded Retreat

Veiled by towering stone walls, the Spirited Garden cannot be seen outside. In fact, the elaborate stone walls were built to safeguard trees from Jeju's fierce winds, forming a fortress-like haven. The main gate and boundary wall are made of volcanic stone, which can only be found in Jeju. For this reason, the garden is considered to be the most quintessential Jeju garden in existence. However, its design isn't purely natural. The basalt stone walls and the hill that mirrors the shape of Jeju's famed dormant volcanic cones, the Jeju *oreum*, are Seong's own representations and a form of tribute to the island. Seong views gardens and bonsai as nature-representing artworks, transcending nature itself. Through works like these, humans are able to expand on the very meaning of nature.

"Thin the foliage, prune the roots, and trim the branches for sunlight and airflow, and the tree will learn to thrive in a confined space and grow stronger. A beautiful bonsai is one that has endured trials throughout its lifetime, meriting its status as an artwork-nature's emulation, elevated to exquisite beauty."



Seong's commitment to bonsai was recognized early on in China. Following a visit in October 1995, Fan Jingyi, then chief editor of *China's People's Daily*, wrote that having once read a book entitled *Xinbingmeiguanji*, which criticized the Qing emperor's tyranny and uniform cultivation of human talent by comparing it to artificially deforming bonsai trees, he previously perceived the artform as a form of defiling nature. Yet, after visiting the Thinking Garden, his perspective shifted as he discovered the artistry in shaping trees to enhance their beauty. The same day his piece was published in the *People's Daily*, Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited the garden.

The Spirited Garden, inspired by the nature and spirit of Jeju, stands as an ever-growing and evolving masterpiece. It has transformed minds and stirred hearts, fostering ongoing refinement through global dialogue, and will continue to do so for years to come.

Black Waves Teeming with Life



Jeju *Batdam* Theme Park

Heading toward Woljeongri Beach from Gimnyeong Beach, you will stumble upon the captivating Jeju *Batdam* Theme Park. Overlooking a clear and stunning seascape, this park offers an opportunity to explore and experience the *batdam*, or volcanic stone walls used in agriculture native to Jeju Island. This agricultural marvel was deemed a World Important Agricultural Heritage System by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2014. In particular, the area around Gujwa-eup, where the park is located, has been designated a key area for agricultural heritage due to the preserved original form of Jeju's *batdam*. The signature stones of Jeju greet visitors at the entrance. It is said that "Jeju people are born from stone, grow amid stone, and eventually return to stone." As fate would have it, the ancient inhabitants of the volcanic island of Jeju had to utilize the stones scattered throughout the land as resources for their daily needs.



Jeju Batdam: A Blessing and a Curse

The origin of the stone walls found throughout Jeju remains shrouded in mystery. The earliest record of the *batdam* appears in the *Shinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungram*, which states that Jeju's judge Kim Gu ordered a wall to be built to mark the boundaries of a field, suggesting the formation of the *batdam* began around 800 years ago. However, it is believed that the history of the *batdam* actually coincides with the beginning of agriculture in Jeju. As a volcanic island, cultivating even modest crops necessitated the removal of stones. This encompassed not only small stones but the bedrock anchoring

entire fields. Even today, covering an entire field with stones would be a formidable task for an individual or family. However, the people of Jeju had no choice but to forge ahead in the demanding environment they found themselves in, so they raised the stones and created vast columns and walls of volcanic rock called *batdam*. The stones stand not only as a testament to the harsh environment and the labor required to move them, but also alternated between functioning as strongholds and for farming and harvesting. The *batdam* served as boundaries separating fields from each other and protected crops from grazing horses and cattle. They also prevented the loose soil from eroding, allowed seeds to take root, and most importantly, protected crops from the strong winds of Jeju Island to prevent them from collapsing. The stones, which at first must have seemed to be a sort of punishment, were actually a gift from nature, protecting the farms and farmers.

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Beyond Just Walls: A Pathway to Nature and Neighbors

The Jeju *Batdam* Theme Park has various types of stone wall on display. These *batdam* do not follow a specific format or method of construction but are built according to the terrain and soil, giving them a variety of shapes. They mainly comprise *oedam* (or outer rocks), which are built in a single row with large stones at the bottom and smaller stones in between. In places with many stones, you can also observe what is known as a *gyeopdam* (or double wall), which is built in two rows. What is known as a *japgumdam* (or layered wall) is built by first putting a uniform layer of small stones at the bottom, and then placing larger stones on top. It was made to prevent the borders of a field from collapsing, because the land became lower than the surrounding land as it was cleared, allowing rainwater to drain into the field. *Jatbekdam*, also known as *jatdam*, is a wall made of large and small stones stacked thickly together like a castle wall. It is built by lining both sides with large stones and putting small stones in between. It is also called a *jatgil* (or stone path) because it is constructed to provide easy access to the stones from two adjacent fields, enabling you to walk on top of it. Built to allow people to go in and out of the fields next to their own, it is a type of *batdam* that showcases the Jeju people's reverence and concern for their neighbors.



Jinbille Batdam-gil: the Archetype of Jeju Batdam

The Jeju *Batdam* Theme Park leads to the enchanting *Jinbille Batdam-gil*. Following a basic introduction to the *batdam*, you'll traverse an authentic *batdam* path that still retains its original appearance. The 2.5 km *Jinbille* trail — *jinbille* means 'long bedrock' in Jeju dialect — leads close to the sea and can be completed in about 40 minutes. The distinguishing feature of the *Jinbille Batdam-gil* is the presence of lava caves beneath the fields. When the lava cools and solidifies, it forms a cave. Over time, sand and soil from the sea envelop the rocks and form the terrain upon which the field walls were erected to commence farming. Initially, the fields here were stony, with more sand than soil. Today, the fields and silver sand still shimmer in the sunlight. At the end of the road, a distinctive *batdam* emerges with a dual wall and a trench excavated below field level. It is built alongside the trench to channel the



stagnant water into the ditch and prevent the soil from being eroded by the rain. Some fields were intentionally double-walled to prevent water from pooling in the lower areas of the field. Walk a little further and you'll come across piles of stones called *mudle*. These mounds of volcanic rock in and around the fields evoke the struggle involved in their construction, also serving as storage for those needing additional material for their walls. The double *batdam* and the *mudle* epitomize the ingenuity of Jeju's inhabitants, who thrived amidst a challenging natural environment while exhibiting a strong sense of community and caring for one's neighbors.

The *batdam* represent the timeworn legacy of the island's people against the harsh natural environment. The curves following the flow of the wind and the black, obsidian hues of the basalt encapsulate the contours and colors of the island. Yet, as a permanent feature of the landscape and something as unassuming as a silent rock wall, we often take its existence for granted, treating it as we do the air we breathe.

The Jeju *Batdam* Theme Park not only preserves and manages the *batdam* as a "heritage resource" to be passed onto future generations; it also ensures its place as a desirable travel destination for visitors from all walks of life today.



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Odujej's Dream

of a Quintessential Jeju Museum



Finding a Use for Otherwise Useless *Mudle*

The name Odujej is the inverted spelling of Jeju-do, or Jeju Island in English, and it is illustrated in the logo by stacking the letters. This logo immediately invokes the ubiquitous stone mounds of Jeju. Odujej's CEO, Jeong Ji-sol is a young entrepreneur who came to the island three years ago and was selected for the second batch of Next Local, a program run by Seoul Metropolitan Government. He started his business in Jeju with no ties to the island because he wanted to create products utilizing Jeju's resources while promoting its unique culture. However, upon arriving, he didn't know where to start, so he simply thought, "Why don't I study stones since there are so many of them?" This led him to realize that Jeju's entire culture was intertwined with stones, so much so that Jeju Island itself looks like a giant boulder. This revelation prompted him to forge new design products based on these stones.

"Even though they have no function, I thought that the mounds of stones piled up all over Jeju Island were important objects that could tell the story of the island. These haphazardly shaped mounds offered glimpses into the lives of Jeju people, reflecting their interconnectedness. Once I realized that, I became even more fascinated with the stone mounds and was inspired to create a way to remember Jeju Island in stone."



A *mudle* is a Jeju word for a pile of stones and is as common as the characteristic volcanic stone walls of Jeju. However, they don't serve any particular function like stone walls do. While a stone wall (or *batdam* in the Jeju dialect) divides one field from another, and other rock formations like the *jeongnang* serve as an entryway or gate, the purpose of a *mudle* is unclear. However, there are more than five names



Odujej is a design company that creates goods that encapsulate the distinctiveness of Jeju through objects and imagery. Natural crayons made with *mudle*, a type of stone pile found in Jeju, are Odujej's signature souvenir item representing Jeju artistically and commercially. Additionally, the company offers a new way of appreciating Jeju by introducing the most authentic Jeju objects, like basalt-made *dongjaseok* incense holders and ceramic cups or *heobeok* made of Jeju soil.

for these apparently useless stones, including the word *veke*, revealing the Jeju people's endearing affinity for these seemingly nonfunctional stones. To the island's inhabitants, these stones were a resource for constructing walls when they lacked adequate materials, sites of worship, and crucially, symbols that acknowledged the toil and dedication of both themselves and their neighbors in cultivating the land.



Jeong deemed the *mudle* to be one of the most Jeju-esque objects. Despite their apparent purposelessness, they are cherished and symbolically rich objects scattered throughout Jeju, embodying diverse meanings. Through the mudle crayon, he sought to add another meaning to the mudle as a means of remembering the island.

"I didn't want a souvenir that would just sit on the wall as an ornamental piece. I wanted to figure out how to make the *mudle* something someone could interact with and experience. That's when crayons came to mind, and the Mudle Crayon was born. I was happy to find an appropriate use for them."

Crafted from authentic Jeju *mudle*, these crayons employ 100% naturally derived pigments, mimicking the stones' colors and textures. Mudle Crayons can be stacked in a variety of ways, just like the *mudle* of Jeju, and as they wear down, they can form new shapes. They don't just look like the stones but also recreate the way the stones of Jeju have been carved by the wind over time, offering a tactile and auditory connection to the stories that the stones tell.



Rebranding Jeju Island Through Creativity

Monetizing Jeju's stones might seem like a bold endeavor for a young entrepreneur, but the Mudle Crayon has resonated with those seeking souvenirs encapsulating the essence of Jeju. The crayons achieved remarkable sales success, appealing to individuals yearning for items that reflect the island's spirit. The introduction of Mudle Crayons facilitated the global recognition of the beautiful word *mudle*. In 2021, Odujej's Mudle Crayons received recognition as Asia's most beautifully packaged brand and were exported to twelve countries through the Maison & Objet Paris fair. Although the product is deeply rooted in the particular colors of Jeju Island, people from all over the world were not only interested in their unique charm but also the cultural similarities found within them. This success underscored the potential of Mudle Crayons to serve as a cultural product resonating worldwide by promoting a universal concept.



As the market enthusiastically embraced the Mudle Crayon, Odujej garnered recognition as a specialty crayon manufacturer. Although the company could have launched additional types of crayons and capitalized on the success of the Mudle Crayon, Jeong decided to expand his business by introducing a *dongjaseok* incense holder made of basalt as the company's next item. Realizing that there were only 250 *dongjaseok* left in Jeju, he felt an urgency to help people remember the original form of the *dongjaseok*, which are human figurines carved in stone. He also recently crowdfunded products that reinterpret the Jeju *heobeok*, which is a special ceramic vessel carried on one's back, in collaboration with elderly Jeju locals who carry on this ancient tradition. The resulting product is Odujej's New Heobeok, which is a multipurpose tumbler made of CXP (thermoplastic wood), and the *Melmangtengi*, a traditional Jeju handicraft made of recycled fiber from plastic bottles. Although the items after the Mudle Crayon haven't enjoyed the same fanfare, Jeong says the experience served to confirm Odujej and his identity as a local creator rather than an entrepreneur.



"The Jeju that I came to know as a resident was far more wonderful than the place I knew as a tourist. I discovered aspects of the culture that you never come across as a mere visitor. I wanted to change the image of Jeju that up until now has been largely built around tourism. I wanted to tell the story of the *dongjaseok* and the hard work of the Jeju people behind the *mudle*. I wanted to create an object that symbolizes the very life story of Jeju and share how beautifully the people of Jeju have integrated life, nature, and community even in such difficult and harsh conditions. That's the life I dreamed of creating for myself and others in Jeju."

Jeong is currently working on several new projects, including a design for what is known as a *tosinbam*, which is used locally as an instrument of worship, and another for the *bae-bangseon*, which is used to make offerings on straw boats. Jeong also dreams of one day creating a "small Jeju museum". He aims to fill the museum, which he plans to call Odujej, with different aspects of the people of Jeju and the quintessential objects of Jeju culture. Jeong is another creator proving that the story of Jeju is infinite, and its size is immeasurable.

Institute: Bejigeun



Sharing the Essence of Jeju Through Flavor

In Jeju Island, the term "to eat" takes on unique connotations and is used to describe customary rituals and community events that take place throughout the year. When going to a wedding, the people of Jeju say, "I'm going to eat a feast." When attending a ritual, they say, "I'm going to eat a rite." Even during times of mourning, they say, "I'm going to eat a funeral." The frequent use of this expression might lead people to wonder whether they were so desperate for food on a daily basis. But the tradition of sharing a meal on important occasions without leaving anyone out reflects a deep-seated sense of community and togetherness. Consequently, Jeju's cuisine serves not only as a medium for savoring distinctive flavors but also as a conduit uniting people through cultural ties. The Bejigeun Institute is a place to experience, study, and talk about the rarely experienced beverages and foods of Jeju, reimagining the humanistic power and heritage of Jeju's traditional food in a contemporary light. It is a place where the past and present of Jeju harmoniously coexist.

Delving into the Stories Behind Jeju's Culinary Traditions

Food is a symbol of the times, the core of culture, and a reflection of a locale's history and way of life. But the cultural value of Jeju's cuisine wasn't something Kim Jin-kyung, the director of the Bejigeun Institute, was initially drawn to. When she was in her twenties, a skin condition called atopic dermatitis forced her to give up instant food and teach herself how to make healthier alternatives, including *tteok* (or Korean rice cakes). She set out to create her own traditional *tteok* enterprise

using locally sourced Jeju ingredients. Although several notable experts recognized the potential of the business, inadequate market analysis and planning soon posed challenges. Amidst this setback, "Jeju Food" became her lifeline. Her Jeju food catering and lunch box business grew rapidly as she succeeded in infusing her recipes with a unique twist. Customers were satisfied and the business continued to expand. But that didn't sit well with Kim Jin-kyung.

"Strangely, I felt somewhat restricted in making lunch boxes with traditional Jeju food. I realized that merely preparing and refining the flavors of traditional Jeju food wouldn't be enough. I wondered why the people of Jeju had been eating this food for generations. I couldn't help but think about the history of the food and the stories behind it."



The food that came to her mind was a dish that her mother used to make for her, called *memiljobaegi* – a traditional Jeju soup eaten after a woman gives birth and made by kneading buckwheat as thinly as possible and scooping it with a spoon.

Similar to *sujebi* (or hand-torn noodle soup), it was said to make the blood run clear. After keeping the recipe hidden for more than thirty years, her mother finally served it to Kim upon her return after giving birth to her first child. The warm memories that were evoked as she drank the broth sparked Kim's interest in the stories behind Jeju's food. Since then, *memiljobaegi*, accompanied by its captivating backstory, has become a signature menu item as part of her catering for small weddings. While attending Jeju National University's Korean Studies Cooperative Program, she collected the everyday food anecdotes of Jeju's elderly residents and published them in a local newspaper. To preserve these narratives, she opened the Bejigeun Institute, systematically organizing programs to share them with the community. Jeju locals say "it's *bejigeun*" when savoring hearty and fatty dishes or after eating a satisfying warm meal. Elderly people also use the expression when experiencing moments of happiness and delight. As its name suggests, the Bejigeun Institute has been creating diverse content such as the "Grandma's Food Workshop" and "Market Tour Cooking



Class" to capture the emotions of Jeju through food. Its signature program, the Grandma's Food Workshop, is a talk-show-style program where you can sample ordinary Jeju grandmothers' homemade liquor, share Jeju food, and listen to the stories of their era in their own words. Participants are invited to listen to these stories while also cooking together, often contributing their own narratives to the mix. The Market Tour Cooking Class is a program that takes participants to Jeju's Dongmun Market and the Five-Day Market to learn about ingredients and share Jeju's traditions and history while cooking. The program is popular not only among tourists but also among local young people who rarely have the opportunity to experience traditional Jeju food. The program enables anyone to enjoy the sort of authentic home-cooked meals unavailable in regular restaurants. In addition to the delicious flavors, many visitors are impressed by the stories of the vendors' lives and ingredients that have remained unchanged for generations. Kim says that markets like these serve as the foremost barometer of seasonal shifts, and that's what makes Jeju's traditional markets so appealing.

"Among the treasures within the Five-day Market is a corner called *Halmangjang*, where grandmothers over 65 years old gather offers a medley of produce from the mountains, fields, and gardens of Jeju. The presence of items like *umi* (agar-agar), *saeri* (chives), and *konggaeyeok* (roasted bean flour) signifies summer, heralding dishes like *umi-naengguk*, while the availability of *galchi* (cutlassfish) and aged pumpkins indicates autumn, ushering in *galchitguk* (cutlassfish soup)."

Bridging Past and Future through Jeju Cuisine



Kim says she is now busy crafting the menu for Pulgore, the Bejigeun Institute's restaurant that combines traditional Jeju spirits and cuisine. *Pulgore* is the Jeju word for a millstone used to grind ingredients like soybeans for tofu. While initially conceived as a platform to share the tales and culinary heritage of Jeju's grandmothers, the restaurant has evolved to champion Jeju cuisine. Kim believes that the flavors and memories



must be handed down through the generations to ensure these meaningful stories continue to inspire. The cuisine at Pulgore embraces

innovation while preserving the quintessential aspects of traditional dishes. Pulgore's signature dish, *Galchi Sokjeot Teokbokki* with *Konssam* (meat wrapped in bean leaves), was intended to popularize the culture of Jeju's *Konssam*, which is served with salted fish in the springtime. The restaurant's philosophy is to make traditional Jeju food more accessible to the younger generation without compromising the essence of the food.

Kim Jin-kyung acknowledges that she's not an expert on traditional Jeju food and says she never will be. Instead, she aims to be a messenger through food, intent on documenting today's Jeju food culture. We're looking forward to the Bejigeun Institute's next project, which undoubtedly will be *bejigeun* itself, delving into the exploration and preservation of Jeju food's value, ensuring its adoration across generations.

A Journey in Search of
the 'Rapture of Instance',
with Jeju Photographer

Kim Young-gap



Capturing the Winds of Jeju

Kim Young-gap, born in Buyeo, Chungcheongnam-do, is renowned for an affection for Jeju that often surpasses that of its native inhabitants. He began traveling up and down the Island with his camera in 1982, developing a deep love for its landscapes and eventually settling here three years later. Taking up residence in a modest hut nestled in the mountains, he traveled all over the uplands to get the shots he wanted. His main subject was the *oreum*, or small dormant volcanic cones, and the winds that blew across them. It's hard to believe that wind can be captured in a photograph, but those who have seen his work can clearly recall how the movement of the wind is brought to life in his images.



© KIMYOUNGGAP GALLERY DUMOAK

Kim Young-gap, a photographer who lived on Jeju, was so captivated by the island's natural beauty that he dedicated his life to capturing its wind through his camera lens. Despite Lou Gehrig's disease progressively weakening his muscles, he persisted in using his last ounce of strength to press the shutter, documenting the euphoric moments of Jeju's ever-shifting light without relying on any photographic techniques.



His photos capture the very moment the wind rustles through the landscape and the waves crashing against the shores of Jeju, allowing the viewer to experience the melody of the wind and the rhythm of the waves. This vitality resonating in Kim's work emanates from his aspiration for limitless freedom rather than fixating narrowly on his own artistic achievements. In order to be free to focus on photography away from critical eyes, he cut ties with his family and fellow artists, refused to make any new connections, and dedicated himself solely to the art of photography. Jeju provided an ideal backdrop for his work and afforded the seclusion he sought. He often had to sacrifice food to buy film, eating carrots and sweet potatoes from the fields, but none of that mattered as long as he could capture images he felt proud of. The unbridled freedom he felt as an artist paralleled the untamed winds of Jeju.

"I was alone all day, with nothing but photography on my mind. I didn't leave the uplands for a whole year and surrendered



© KIMYOUNGGAPGALLERY DUMOAK

myself entirely to my art. With no visitors and no wasted time, I was able to immerse myself in it. Still, I have nothing to show for it, even though I have been taking pictures all my life. When people ask me to show them my work, I tell them I have glimpsed the world and experienced life as it is. This response is usually baffling. What people desire to see is simply wealth or fame.”

Kim’s desire to capture the nature of Jeju went beyond merely depicting a landscape. Through his camera lens, he endeavored to encapsulate and fathom the dance of the wind up the mountains within his heart. Like Ansel Adams, who said that photography is not something to “take” but rather something to “make”, Kim aimed to create genuine moments of emotion that resonate deeply within the soul, transcending the role of a taxidermist of natural beauty. Even in landscape photography rooted in nature, where the position of the sun or shifts in the weather are beyond his control, Kim believed that the desired moment could be seized when his imagination was actively engaged. This is because the moment the shutter is pressed is an extension of the photographer’s will. For this reason, Kim was interested in the stories behind Jeju’s landscapes, which in turn led to the lives of the island’s inhabitants and how they are connected to nature. The fierce winds battering Jeju Island represented a life of resilience. It was the fate of Jeju’s elders to work all day in winds that made it difficult to breathe, striving to overcome poverty. To surmount the challenges of eking out a living in a barren land, the elders of Jeju envisioned a utopia locally dubbed “*Ieodo*”. While searching for tombs in order to understand this particular worldview of the inhabitants, Kim became interested in the *sandam*, traditional grave walls, and *dongjaseok*, stone totems and figurines that protect certain places. To learn more about them, Kim would traverse the *oreum* to find them. Tracing the lives of people who had overcome various fears and anxieties but also lived in accordance with nature, his artistic direction became clear. The conclusion he came to was that you can’t see Jeju without understanding the wind, and that stepping into his photographs entailed acknowledging these winds.

“For there is life in the wind, and there is freedom in conformity. There is no one who can go against the flow. There exists a profound beauty in surrendering to the wind and embracing its freedom.”

The wind captured in Kim’s photos didn’t just depict the swaying of grass and trees. Rather, it represented a gaze turned introspectively upon existence itself. During his lifetime, he coined the term “the rapture of the instance” to describe the

landscapes he discovered on Jeju.

“For me, Jeju Island, and photos of Jeju’s nature, are a refuge for souls weary of life’s struggles. People talk about Jeju as a blessed natural tourist destination, but that’s just the surface. The sea is still humble, even with its seven-colored bands, exuding the enduring spirit of the Jeju people who have clung tenaciously to life for millennia. The aesthetic harmony you discover when climbing a common gentle *oreum*, observing the grass or wildflowers that can barely hold themselves up against the strong wind, is uniquely Jeju. Even the graves that lie in the middle of the stony fields, convey not death or despair, but motivation and hope for life. This Jeju is different, an aspect previously unseen. And I yearned to uncover it. I wanted to capture the subtle ecstasy of Jeju that no one can categorize, that fleeting illusion which doesn’t come unless you feel it in your heart. I’m not trying to create a processed image of Jeju, I’m trying to seize it for what it is, so I just wait. For all these years, my purpose has been not to capture pictures but to uncover images and let them linger with me. That’s why I am free.”

Kim Young-gap Gallery, Dumoak

In Dumoak, the works of Kim Young-gap, who loved Jeju very much and fell asleep in Dumoak, are exhibited over 20 years. The internal exhibition halls include Dumoak Hall and Hanal Oreum Hall, where you can see the old appearance of Jeju that has disappeared and the flesh that is not easily revealed. There are works called Yongnuni Oreum, Snow, Rain, Fog, and Wind Fantasia, The Happiness Clouds Bring Me, A Dream Over the Horizon, Wind, Love in the Forest, Oreum, and Marado.

TOUR INFORMATION
GALLERY DUMOAK # #

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Interview

A Philosopher in the Garden

Kim Bong-chan
CEO of VEKE



Something feels different. It's not the usual trees and flowers that are ubiquitous on Jeju Island, nor is it the familiar carefully curated garden scene. The café building came into view as I strolled along the path, through the wild grass and sporadically blooming flowers. Upon entering through the massive door, my eyes were drawn to the inscription on the wall: "Veke is the Jeju word for a pile of stones stacked roughly on the border of a field". Immediately after stepping inside, I was dazzled by the sudden view of the garden through the large window facing us. The moss-covered stones of the *veke* and the profound garden landscape beyond instantly caught my eye. The experience was overwhelming. As I sat down at a table, the ground outside the window was now at eye level. It was an unfamiliar feeling to witness the land that I had always looked down upon from above now meeting my gaze. It was an entirely novel and unexpectedly beautiful sight. It was raining gently at the time, providing a serene backdrop as I engaged in a conversation with Kim Bong-chan, the CEO of VEKE eco-garden. The rain made the greenery of the garden outside all the more vibrant.

Q_ This feeling of being intricately woven into the landscape while sitting inside the building is partly due to the fact that the landscape beyond the window is framed so close as to almost be able to reach out and touch it. This effect is also achieved due to the height of the ground, which rises to your eye level. Was that your intention when you built it?

A_ From the outset, I thought that the elevation of the ground and that of the human gaze should coincide. So, we excavated and then lowered the entire floor of the café. My aim was for people to look at the lowest part of the garden with a humble attitude when they sat in these chairs. People usually like to behold a view from a distance or look down at it from a height. In my opinion, that's not a very humble way to appreciate nature.



Q_ Perhaps due to the rain, the garden seems more mysterious and secretive.

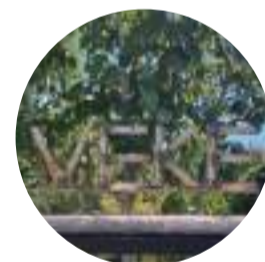
A_ Viewed from this vantage point, the garden is the "plane" and the rain falling on it forms a sort of "line". When the plane and the line meet, the space changes, heightening its beauty and depth. Even a garbage pile or littered marketplace becomes beautiful when it snows. As the dots descend into the previously unnoticed emptiness, space becomes palpable, and the accumulation of these dots imparts depth onto the void. Especially in cities, it's all about artificial 'faces', so when you get into a space where there are trees between buildings, the leaves that move in the wind also play the role of small dots. What you really need in a barren city is those small dots that move in the wind.

Q_ Traditionally, gardens evoke images of meticulously pruned trees and blossoms as the primary focus, with stones and moss serving merely as accents to accentuate their presence. The Veke garden possesses a distinctive quality wherein the stones, rather than the plants, take center stage.

A_ My parents have been farming here since I was a kid. Whenever I went into the fields, our family's *veke* – a collection of stones my parents had randomly piled up – served as my playground. I would climb on it and play, sit

down and enjoy the cool breeze, and watch my mother work in the field. Much like Okinawa or Hawaii, Jeju Island's volcanic terrain presents challenges in cultivation due to an excess of stones. That's why the stones had to be moved to one side in order to cultivate the field. I discovered strikingly similar *veke* in Okinawa. It made me realize how the way people live in similar environments is pretty much the same after all. The kinds of plants that thrive in the *veke* also differ from the generic weeds in the field, housing various desirable plants like day lilies, tiger lilies, and chocolate vines. Essentially, the *veke* represented a distinct habitat within the landscape.

When I started my landscaping company here on my parent's farm, I had no idea that I would eventually cultivate a garden like this. During the preparatory phases, I acquired a parcel of land adjacent to my parents' plot. It was here that I stumbled upon the *veke*, a forgotten memory from my adult life. This discovery marked the inception of the entire garden project. So it's no surprise that the *veke* you see there is the heart and soul of this garden.



“I mean, this land has been under cultivation for around 400 years, so this veke wasn’t built by my father, it was built by his father, and his father’s father. So, when I look at this garden, I realize that I didn’t build it alone, it was built by all those grandfathers and grandmothers from 400 years back, and I’m just putting the finishing touches on it. It moves me to think that all those years ago someone was here piling these stones in place.”



Q_ The words “ecology” and “garden” seem a bit incongruous. The premise of a garden is that it is basically artificially created, but ecology implies a state of nature without human intervention. I’m curious about your perspective on what constitutes an “eco-garden” and its purpose.

Why does it exist?

A_ What sets an ecological garden apart from a conventional one is that it is not a human-centered garden where nature is consumed. In an eco-garden, trees and flowers are not used as mere decoration. I think a garden should be a home for earthworms, a habitat for butterflies to pupate and overwinter. It should be more than a transient avian stopover; it should be a home for birds and earthworms alike. In human-developed cities, there are fewer and fewer wildlife habitats, so we need to think about how to create more spaces where diverse creatures can thrive. Even in a bustling city, if you just tend a simple flower pot, butterflies will eventually fly up to it when it blooms. We need to build and connect more such spaces in every house and park to increase wildlife habitats.

Q_ After all, we were the ones who robbed them of their habitats due to our human desires. The least we can do is give them a home to live in again, right?

A_ What brought us to Earth? What defines nature? What responsibilities do we bear for this planet? If you keep asking yourself these questions, your thoughts will change gradually, and your attitude towards nature will change. What I want to do through this garden is to reshape our outlook as co-inhabitants of our planet. If I can change even one person’s perception through this garden, that is reason enough for this eco-garden to exist.

Q_ Your commitment to catalyzing an ecological awakening through the garden is inspiring. I’m curious to know how you came to have such a strong ecological perspective compared to other gardeners. What was your starting point?

A_ During my sophomore year of high school, I went to a temple to concentrate on my studies. The temple was deep in the mountains with no electricity or running water, so I was extremely bored on weekends. Since I had nothing to do, I started to observe the wild plants around me and found myself fascinated just by looking at them. As a result of this experience, I ended up majoring in ecology in college and remained engrossed in the field even after graduating. My professor once questioned my prolonged presence: “It’s been over a year since you graduated; why don’t you leave already?” After that, I worked at the Pyeonggang Botanical Garden, the Yeomiji Garden, and so on. In truth, I wasn’t interested in anything but plants. Delving into a single plant can captivate you for hours on end, and as there are so many plant varieties, it is nearly impossible to ever see the top of that mountain. Everybody thought I was crazy, but it helped me think even deeper about nature; looking at it from the perspective of a tree or from a blade of grass, and not merely from a human point of view. Through relentless study, experimentation, and practice, I concluded that the cornerstone of the garden I envisioned was ecology, life, and an arena of coexistence and symbiosis.



Q_ Listening to you, it becomes evident that your distinctive ecological sensibility, intertwined with deep philosophical reflections, culminated in the creation of Veke Garden. It consists of nine thematic gardens, including the Stone Wall Garden, the Bracken Garden, the Moss Garden, the Rainwater Garden, and the Ruins Garden. I am personally curious about the story of the Ruins Garden; can you tell us about it?

A_ My father died the year I graduated from elementary school, so I don’t have many memories about him from my childhood. Hyodon, where I am from, though impoverished and devoid of electricity, transformed into a prosperous village through the farming of mandarin oranges. When I was in the first grade, my father bought me a pair of rubber shoes. They were so precious to me, I used to hold them tightly in my arms and walk to school barefoot. By middle school, I could afford everything from Prospects to Nike – practically anything seen on TV. After my dad died, my mom took over the mandarin farm and sent me to college, giving me full support. I enjoyed those privileges thanks to the mandarin oranges, yet I cut down the trees to create a garden. The sole relic of my father was a decrepit shed in the abandoned garden. Removing that shed seemed to erase my memories of him, so I chose to leave it. Still, I was unsure whether that ruin could become a garden. Trying to figure out what to do with it, I began to realize something beautiful about it. The ruins were beautiful even without grass. That was my conclusion. I’m now extending the garden’s boundaries through construction, envisioning my very own garden of ruins. My father’s ruins alongside my own. Who knows, perhaps one day, my son will establish his own garden of ruins within this continuum.

“That’s a beautiful story. Somehow I feel like the story of Veke Garden could go on forever, from father to son to grandson.”

Born and raised in Jeju, Kim majored in ecology at university and worked at Jeju Yeomiji Botanical Garden and Pyeonggang Botanical Garden before opening Veke Garden in Seogwipo City, Jeju in 2018. He is considered one of the top experts in the field of ecological gardens in Korea, and his works include the Pyeonggang Botanical Garden in Pocheon, Gyeonggi-do, the Stone Garden in Hwadam Forest in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do, Pinx Biotopia in Seogwipo, Jeju, and Amore Seongsu Garden in Seongsu-dong, Seoul.

Jeju's ESG Challenge: Embracing its Unique Identity

ESG has become one of the most hotly debated topics on the global stage. The initialism stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance and refers to environmentally friendly management, social responsibility, and transparent governance. ESG serves as a cornerstone of sustainable enterprises and is often a prerequisite for something even to be considered "sustainable" in the first place.

On June 2nd, the 18th Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity, held at the International Convention Center Jeju, hosted a session on tourism entitled, "Leap to Sustainable Tourism in the India-Pacific Region". In it, Professor Moon Sung-jong of Jeju Halla University presented "ESG-based low-carbon strategies for Jeju tourism companies" and discussed ways to build a win-win model for creating a low-carbon tourism environment. Participants agreed that "ESG management has recently emerged as an important topic across industries, and it is time for the tourism industry to consider ESG-centered strategies and concrete action plans for sustainable tourism."

ESG shares a lot in common with the unique identity of Jeju, which is blessed with its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, including the *haenyeo*, or women divers. The island is truly a place where nature and neighbors coexist together. Thanks to this environment, more than any other local government, it intuitively understands and actively embraces ESG and is already well on its way to meeting the challenge of a more sustainable future.

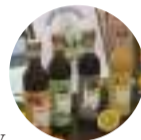


Challenges Beyond Business ESG: A Solution to Global

The term ESG first appeared in late 2004 in a report entitled, "Who Cares Wins" by the United Nations Global Compact. The concept was conceived as a non-financial value that should be considered when investing for sustainable growth. Two years later, in April 2006, the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) were established based on this report. ESG began to have a tangible impact on companies as a specific investment principle. Since then, ESG management has emerged as an essential element for sustainable growth.

Especially in recent years, it is not only global companies and large corporations but also small and medium-sized enterprises that are rapidly adopting ESG management. This shift marks the importance of ESG-related reporting and information disclosure and its increasing emphasis in the international community. In the case of the European Union, which has proactively mandated the disclosure of data on sustainability, it has taken the lead in creating an ESG ecosystem by

establishing the "EU Taxonomy" on sustainability. The United States, meanwhile, has focused on strengthening its disclosure regulations, especially for climate data, and other Asian countries such as Japan, China, and India have subsequently begun introducing regulations and disclosure guidelines for ESG sustainability reports. As collective global challenges like the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic mount, the number of different actors concerned with ESG continues to expand. It is notable that not only companies but other stakeholders including governments, local governments, and consumers, understand ESG as an essential element of sustainability. Just as the concept of "sustainability" now extends beyond corporate confines, ESG has transcended the realm of business management and investment. In particular, reducing carbon emissions and low-carbon green growth are considered the most urgent and critical ESG issues for the sustainability and survival of humanity. Jeju Island is also taking steps to build a more robust ESG ecosystem, with local governments, businesses, and civil society taking responsibility, boldly reducing carbon emissions, and ultimately aiming for a carbon-neutral future.



ESG Practices Inherited from Jeju *Haenyeo*: A UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Fleur Pellerin, the former French Minister of Culture and Tourism, who happens to be a Korean adoptee and France's first Asian minister, visited Jeju in 2016. She is quoted as saying during her trip, "Jeju, with its beautiful sea and *haenyeo*, has always been a treasure."

She strongly advised that Jeju should focus on capitalizing on its unique identity and natural beauty. These words have continued to resonate over the past seven years. ESG is not an entirely new concept. The ideas of going green, protecting workers' rights, and corporate social responsibility share a common thread. The enduring lifestyle of Jeju's *haenyeo* can also be seen as a prototype for ESG. Harvesting seafood with their bare hands, without the use of machinery, is a form of sustainable and environmentally friendly aquaculture. At the same time, participating in decision-making and making monetary contributions within their community are good examples of the highly social aspects of the *haenyeo* culture. Lastly, the exemplary leadership of the *daesanggun*, or the leader of the *haenyeo*, and the democratic discussion practices that she employs are excellent illustrations of effective governance. The recognition of Jeju Haenyeo Culture as a "UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" in 2016 is a testament to the value placed on their sustainable diving practices, consideration for the vulnerable, and ecological awareness. It indeed serves as an ancestral ESG prototype.

Jeju is actively promoting efforts to build a sustainable future while protecting Jeju's values and natural environment. It achieves this by combining the core elements of



ESG management that are required by the international community with the long-established Jeju *haenyeo* culture. Initiatives include the launch of the "2040 Zero Plastic Jeju Basic Plan" to combat marine plastic waste and support for innovative startups enhancing the value of Jeju's environment, resources, and agriculture. Jeju's efforts have garnered high praise from other local governments. In an ESG evaluation of seventeen metropolitan local governments released by the ESG Happiness Economy Research Institute this year, Jeju Island ranked first with an overall score of 82.52. Global forums and events related to ESG continue to be held at the International Convention Center Jeju (ICC JEJU). From August 3rd to the 5th, the 12th Green LOHAS Expo was centered around the theme of "Connecting and Sharing for Sustainability" with over 200 outstanding eco-friendly companies participating. Around the same time, the 2023 ESG Korea Festa also convened, with public and private Jeju entities delving into domestic and international ESG management trends, discussing directions for their implementation. On December 6th, the Global ESG Jeju Forum 2023, hosted by ICC JEJU, is set to take place at the same venue. It will feature domestic and international ESG experts, including Dr. Lee Il-cheong, one of the developers of the UN Sustainable Development Indicators and a research coordinator at the UN Institute for Social Development. The forum is an opportunity to spread the basic spirit of ESG and corporate culture as sustainable educational and environmental values. Its occurrence in Jeju, a trailblazing city in executing diverse ESG policies, only heightens anticipation around the event. Jeju's drive to emerge as a global ESG leader extends beyond Korea, as it continues to take the steps necessary for it – and the rest of the world – to get there.

World Congress of the WFD

Ensuring the Rights
of All Humanity:



The 19th World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), which kicked off on July 1st on Jeju Island, concluded its fifteen-day journey with more than 2,000 participants from 130 countries. This year saw the return of this global festival for deaf people after four years since the last one was held in Paris in 2019. A noteworthy side event during the convention was the Korea-Canada Diplomatic Relations 60th Anniversary Exhibition titled “Intense Difference of Its Own,” featuring artwork by disabled artists from both countries. This exhibition, held in the 3rd floor gallery of the International Convention Center Jeju (ICC JEJU), garnered significant attention. A barrier-free tour program was organized for the participants, further emphasizing the significance of Jeju’s role as the host.

The First Event in Asia in Thirty-three Years

Organized by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) every four years, the World Congress is the world’s largest celebration of the deaf and a prestigious international event since 1951. Hosted for the second time in Asia in thirty-three years and the first time in Korea, the congress was themed “Securing Human Rights in Times of Crisis”. They sought collaborative solutions to the problems faced by deaf people around the world, including language barriers, socioeconomic discrimination, and audism, especially in times of crisis, including pandemics, climate crisis, natural disasters, or wars. Preceding the main event and concluding on July 10th, a youth camp facilitated networking activities for more than 200 individuals representing forty-two countries. This event also provided an opportunity to delve into the culture and environment of Jeju Island. In addition, the WFD board of directors, general meeting, and workshops were held to foster interaction, communication, and deliberation on topics of global significance. Commencing on the 11th at the ICC JEJU, the event spanned five days, featuring presentations and discussions on matters directly impacting the lives of the deaf. These discussions encompassed deaf rights, education, culture, art, sign language, and collaborative proposals. “The diversity of languages, including



sign languages, must be respected and promoted, and barriers to communication eliminated,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his opening congratulatory video. The session entitled ‘Sign Languages and Deaf Studies’ emphasized that sign languages are a fundamental human right for all deaf people, especially as deaf communities around the world are going through a period of upheaval. As free access to sign languages can increase social access for deaf people, it was suggested that measures be taken to promote communication in sign languages and improve their legal status. The session on “Achieving Quality Multilingual Inclusive Education” highlighted the need to create an educational environment that ensures full access for deaf children by providing curricula in their native languages. The “Human Rights during Humanitarian Emergencies and Crisis” presentation addressed the diverse consequences of demanding access to information and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, discussions were held on various international issues such as access to technology and employment, international cooperation and development, and intersectionality in farming communities, as well as a special lecture on “Human Rights and the Lives of the Disadvantaged” by Mr. Park Jun-yeong, a trial lawyer. The closing ceremony culminated in the adoption of a resolution outlining key areas of focus, including free access to sign languages; quality sign language education; integration of sign languages across society and technology; enhanced international cooperation, reinforced human rights during crises; and advocacy for diverse identities among the deaf community. Participants concluded the event by expressing their commitment to reconvene in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the following host country.

Exhibition: “Intense Difference of Its Own” - A World Without Discrimination

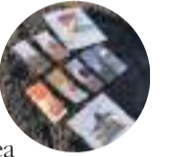


Korea Foundation (KF), was held from July 11th to the 23rd in the 3rd floor gallery of the ICC JEJU. The exhibition featured forty-seven works by eight Korean and Canadian artists with disabilities, including the work of the late Korean-Canadian sculptor Won Lee, who overcame his polio disability to become a world-renowned artist. Pixel Kim, a developmentally disabled pixel drawing artist who has garnered public attention for his work in the presidential office, presented part of his signature math drawing series in the exhibition. The exhibition also included Brian Ehnis, a famous Canadian painter who is deaf and esteemed by collectors.

Other artists included Michelle Bennie, whose thousands of paintings depict children, animals, social events, and architecture, and the ensemble “Conference of the Birds,” a collaborative group of four artists with disabilities belonging to the National accessArts Centre. The more than fifty works by the eight artists explore the value of artistic “difference” in the context of disability through their unique sensibilities, perspectives, and aesthetic styles, focusing on the message that discrimination and difference should be distinguished.

During the 19th World Congress of the WFD, an exhibition entitled “Intense Difference of Its Own,” co-organized by ICC JEJU and the

Barrier-Free Tourism: Collaborative Initiatives by Local Communities and Businesses



On June 13th, ahead of the World Congress, leaders of the Korea Association of the Deaf visited the Seogwipo Forest of Healing in Jeju to experience barrier-free tourism. The Forest of Healing features wheelchair-accessible trails and visually impaired-friendly signage, allowing easy navigation through the dense forest. Participants enjoyed the forest’s phytoncides and relaxed in forest hammocks, even walking barefoot through the natural surroundings. The term barrier-free generally refers to movements or policies that break down social and physical barriers faced by socially disadvantaged people, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Jeju Island has UNESCO World Natural Heritage Sites, is designated an eco-friendly island, and has taken the lead in practicing barrier-free tourism as a leading tourist destination in South Korea. Through Jeju’s barrier-free tourism brand, “Together Valued Jeju,” the island has been developing travel experiences accessible to all, including people with and without disabilities, and training travel assistants to support those with disabilities and elderly travelers. Since 2022, private companies specializing in this field have actively participated in the barrier-free tour program. Notable examples include ColorLab Jeju’s color tour for the deaf and hard of hearing, as well as Sleeping Lion’s Mind Sound Walking for the visually impaired. These private startup companies in Jeju have demonstrated that individuals with disabilities can indeed appreciate the charm of the island.

The 19th World Congress of the WFD was an excellent opportunity to address the challenges faced by deaf people around the world and to explore ways to collaborate in times of global crisis. The “Intense Difference of Its Own” exhibition presented the work of artists from Korea and Canada, reminding us of the important messages of diversity, inclusion, and human rights that we must all strive for. These events have also left a profound impact on Jeju Island, which aspires to embrace not only individuals with disabilities but also visitors from across the globe. Jeju, acknowledged for its excellence in disability welfare, remains committed to fostering a harmonious community where individuals with and without disabilities can thrive.

Lee You-jung, the Youngest *Haenyeo* in Iho-dong, Jeju

“I’m urging for increased international attention to protect the environment of the sea, the home of the haenyeo.”



The beautiful waters surrounding Jeju Island have long been the home of the *haenyeo*, or the women divers of Jeju, and the identity of their culture. For centuries, they have lived in harmony with the sea, becoming an integral part of its ecosystem. However, ever-increasing marine pollution is seriously threatening their livelihoods and the very existence of their communities. “I think we’ve already exceeded the limits of what the ocean can take,” says Lee You-jung, a *haenyeo* and environmental activist working under the waters of Iho-dong.

>> The day after a typhoon, you go to the beach, and there’s all this marine debris that the ocean has spit out as a warning. It floats up to the surface and washes up on the shore. We’re trying to clean it up, but we can’t get rid of it all.

Jeju native Lee grew up observing elder *haenyeo* from an early age. She is the youngest *haenyeo* in Iho-dong and has been a full-fledged *haenyeo* for three years, having attended *haenyeo* school for one year and an intern *haenyeo* for one year.

>> The kids are curious when I tell them I’m a working haenyeo. I explain to them that when we throw trash away, almost all of it goes into the ocean. “As I am inexperienced, I end up drinking a lot of sea water. I must be eating a credit card’s amount of microplastics every week,” and the first thing they say is, “Maybe we shouldn’t throw our trash away like that anymore.”

>> Last year, there was a lot of wakame kelp, but this year there was no wakame at all. Sea urchin and agar-agar are also scarce. Seasoned haenyeo veterans who have been diving for over fifty years recall a time when abalone was as abundant as fruit on an orchard tree. Nowadays, they barely spot abalone for an entire year.

Pollution in the oceans is rapidly reducing the amount of seafood that can be harvested by *haenyeo*. In particular, “sea desertification,” where large patches of seaweed and kelp disappear, and calcareous algae cling to the rocks, turning them white, is a serious problem facing all of Jeju Island’s coasts. When sea plants like wakame, hijiki, and agar-agar disappear, the abalone and conch that feed on them can no longer survive. The *haenyeo* community has devoted a great deal of time and effort to preventing the desertification of the sea. They turn over stones whenever they go out, and on their days off, they scrape lime off the rocks with hoes. There are even studies showing that their regular harvesting of sea urchins contributes to the prevention of ocean desertification. However, once the sea loses its resilience, it is hard to get it back. The central government and Jeju Island have been promoting a large-scale sea reforestation project for over a decade, but tangible results remain modest.

Given these circumstances, it’s no surprise that Lee became an environmentalist and spearheaded the ocean cleanup movement. “One day, I realized I had become an environmentalist, picking up litter every time I went out, ensuring a safer tomorrow,” she reveals. In addition to the sea cleanup activities within the *haenyeo* community, Lee also tries to attend plogging (picking up trash while jogging) and ploving (picking up litter while diving) events centered around Jeju’s beaches. She also gives special lectures to young people to help them become more aware of the importance of the sea and the unique *haenyeo* culture of Jeju.

Her lectures consistently stress that actions bear consequences and implore people to safeguard the *haenyeo*’s tradition of diving for generations to come. Harmful chemicals and microplastics absorbed by marine life can end up in the seafood collected by *haenyeo*, threatening their health and consumer’s health. The *egi* hooks used to catch octopus or swordtip squid can easily get stuck in the cracks of the stones, stabbing and hurting the fingertips of a *haenyeo* out hunting for sea urchin. “There is no greater value than the life of a living being,” said Lee, urging greater international attention.

>> Despite the many challenges, I’m not going to slow down. I’ll continue to pick up trash to make the sea cleaner, and I’ll continue to defend the haenyeo culture alongside the elder haenyeo in my community. Yet, without the sea, there can be no haenyeo. I urge for greater international support to clean up our ocean environment, which is the home of marine life and the haenyeo. I hope you will also cherish the proud haenyeo culture as part of our shared global heritage.



Jeju Forum Expands with the 18th Jeju Forum Successfully Concluded

The 18th Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity concluded successfully from May 31st to June 2nd at the International Convention Center Jeju (ICC JEJU). Under the theme “Working together for Sustainable Peace and Prosperity in the Indo-Pacific,” the event brought together 4,182 politicians, scholars, and experts from sixty-five countries

in fifty-eight sessions to explore avenues of cooperation across domains such as peace (diplomacy and security), economy and management, and energy and the environment. Notably, the 18th Jeju Forum earned acclaim for extending its reach through collaboration with the National Assembly.



Jeju’s Bid for the APEC Summit 2025 Gains Momentum

With the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit scheduled to be held in the Republic of Korea in 2025, Jeju Island is stepping up its bid to host the APEC Summit 2025. As the formal bid process is slated



to commence in the latter half of the year, Jeju has elevated the leader of the APEC Jeju Bid Preparation Team to a vice governor role, concentrating efforts on formulating a policy framework for Jeju in line with APEC principles. Moreover, the island is actively promoting its candidacy through various PR initiatives utilizing character ambassadors and in cooperation with the Jeju Office in Singapore, where the APEC Office is located.



Jeju Governor Oh Young Hun attends ASEAN Mayors Forum to “Share Jeju’s Experience for Common Prosperity with ASEAN”



On August 1st, Governor Oh Young Hun of Jeju Province attended the ASEAN Mayors’ Forum (AMF) 2023 in Jakarta,

Indonesia, using the platform to introduce Jeju’s ASEAN + α policy, which emphasizes the importance of increased solidarity

for shared prosperity. The ASEAN Mayors Forum is a high-level international meeting held annually to discuss cooperation and capacity building in the ASEAN region. Speaking at the “Inclusive Economic Growth” session, Governor Oh introduced Jeju’s vision to build a global hub for green hydrogen and shared the island’s experience and achievements in leading Korea’s carbon-neutral policy in collaboration with ASEAN, aiming to foster collective prosperity.

ICC JEJU Presents Global MICE Forum to Celebrate 26th Anniversary



To celebrate its 26th anniversary, ICC JEJU hosted the 2nd Global MICE Forum on July 28th under the theme, “Jeju MICE Industry Enters the ASEAN + α Era.” Kicking off with a keynote lecture by Mr. Yunju Ko, Ambassador

for International Relations of Jeju, the event brought together experts from Korea and Singapore’s travel sectors to strategize the growth of Jeju’s MICE industry, aligned with Jeju’s ASEAN + α policy. The event also held a ceremony to launch the Jeju-Singapore MICE Alliance to foster cooperation. Meanwhile, ICC JEJU successfully hosted more than 200 exhibition and convention events last year, generating an annual economic impact amounting to KRW 239.5 billion.



Jeju Secures Hosting Rights for ICBIC 2029

ICC JEJU and the Jeju Convention & Visitors Bureau (JCVB) have teamed up to successfully bid for the International Conference on Biological Inorganic Chemistry 2029 (ICBIC 2029). ICC JEJU attended the conference in Adelaide, Australia, from July 16th to the 21st and conducted intense

bidding and promotional activities alongside other candidate destinations such as Japan and India, resulting in Jeju being selected as the ultimate choice to host the event. The ICBIC 2029 is expected to be the largest ever, with 1,200 participants.

Toward the Future Together, Shining Jeju JEJU is the Ideal Location for APEC Summit 2025

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