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AN IMPLICATION OF CANNIBALISM MOTIF IN "THE MYTH OF *SEOLMUNDAE-HALMANG"* OF KOREA*

Kore'nin "Seolmundae-halmang Miti"ndeki Yamyamlık Motifine Bir Bakış

Hongyoun CHO**

ABSTRACT

"Cannibalism" is widely regarded as an absolute taboo for cultivated humanity. Not only does the bare citation of the word" cannibalism" and encountering images about this subject make utmost people extremely uncomfortable. Nonetheless, the " cannibal motif " exists in humanities folk literature, and why is it being repeated in modern literature, media, and culture? If humanity can achieve a sense of spiritual satisfaction or there's a universal idea that desperately wishes to partake through such a horrifying motif, what kind of content can it be? When trying to address this curiosity, there's an interesting text which is worth noting. It's " the myth of Seolmundae- halmang(Grandma Seolmundae) ", which is being passed down on South Korea's Jeju Island. Seolmundae- halmang was worshipped as the creator goddess of Jeju Island, yet in the stories about her death, she's eaten by her own sons. Why did this goddess have to experience such a terrible death? Also, if " myth " contains motifs of universal human life, what was the content that Jeju Island's mythology group wanted to share through the death and devouring of the goddess? To find answers to these questions, several former studies on the conception of cannibalism were examined, thereby the aspects of cannibalism that was in human life was verified. As a result, the cannibalistic motif of this myth confirmed that the endo-cannibalism concept of the primordial mythology enthusiasts group was the result of the divine succession process from Seolmundae-halmang to her sons. Furthermore, when interpreted in the context of symbolism for human reality, it is also revealed that children who have grown up at the expense of their parents have embodied the universal and real-world principle of human life in which they realized their parent's sacrifices and inherited their lives. The significance of such research results can be recognized for investigating the mythological meaning and value of cannibalistic elements of the Seolmundae-halmang myth. This allowed us to reveal the meaning and value of one of Korea's major mythological materials more fully, as well as confirm the universal value of Korea's mythological materials.

Keywords

Korean mythology, Seolmundae-halmang, Cannibalism motif, Symbol of Cannibalism, Taboo.

ÖZ

Uygarlaşmış insanlık için "yamyamlık" kavramı mutlak bir tabu olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu davranışı uygulamak bir kenara dursun, sadece yamyamlık kelimesini dile getirmek ya da konuyla alakalı görsellerle karşılaşmak bile birçok insanı son derece rahatsız etmektedir. Buna rağmen, "yamyam motifi" insanlığın halk edebiyatında mevcuttur ve bu motifin modern edebiyat, medya ve kültürde devamlı olarak dile getirilmesinin sebebi ne olabilir? Şayet insanlığın bu kadar korkunç motif aracılığıyla elde edebileceği manevi yollu bir tatmin ya da umutsuzca paylaşmak istediği evrensel bir fikir varsa, bu nasıl bir içeriğe sahip olabilir? Bunun gibi merak ettiğimiz konuları çözmeye çalışırken dikkatimizi çeken bir metin bulunmaktadır ve bu metin, Kore'nin Jeju Adası'nda nesilden nesle aktarılmakta olan Seolmundae-halmang ve Obaek-janggun mitidir. 'Seolmundae-halmang' Jeju Adası'nda 'yaratılış tanrıçası' olarak hâlen saygı görmektedir, ancak ölümü hakkındaki hikâyeye bakıldığında, kendi oğulları tarafından yenilmiştir. Bu tanrıça neden bu kadar korkunç bir şekilde ölmek zorunda kalmıştır? Ayrıca eğer "mit" evrensel insan yaşamına dair konuları içeriyorsa, Jeju Adası mitoloji grubunun bu tanrıçanın ölümü ve oğulları tarafından yenmesi aracılığıyla paylaşmak istediği konu ne olabilir? Bu sorulara cevap bulmak için yamyamlık kavramıyla ilgili daha önce yapılmış birkaç çalışma incelenmiş ve böylece yamyamlığın insan yaşamında var olan yönleri kontrol edilmiştir. Bunun sonucu olarak; bu mitte yer alan yamyamlık motifinin ilkel mitoloji severlerin endo-yamyamlık kavramının, Seolmundae-halmang'dan oğullarına yansıtılan, ondan oğlunun nesline geçen ilahi ardıllık sonucu olduğu kanıtlanmaktadır. Aynı zamanda insan gerçekliğine ilişkin semboller bağlamında düşündüğümüzde, ebeveynlerinin fedakarlığıyla büyüyen çocukların, ebeveynlerinin kendileri için yaptıkları fedakarlıkların farkına varıp onların hayatlarını miras aldıkları evrensel ve gerçek insan yaşamının nesiller arası miras ilkesini somutlaştırdıklarını da ortaya

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koymaktadır. Bu ve bunun benzeri araştırmaların, bahsi geçen Seolmundae-halmang mitinde yer alan yamyam motifinin mitolojik anlamını ve işlevini ortaya koyması noktasındaki önemi kabul edilebilir. Bu, Kore'nin temel mitolojik materyallerinden birinin anlamını ve değerini tam olarak ortaya çıkarmamıza ve aynı zamanda Kore'nin mitolojik materyallerinin evrensel değerini doğrulamamıza olanak sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler
Kore mitolojisi, Seolmundae-halmang, Yamyamlık motifi, Yamyamlığın Sembolü, tabu.

I. Introduction

"Cannibalism" is the practice of eating the flesh of one's own species. (Sagan, 1974, p. 2) It's a taboo that evokes instinctual disgust in most civilized modern humans. Not only doing such an act but also depicting it, and even the mere mention of cannibalism is a powerful taboo that incites the disapproval of many people. Nevertheless, paradoxically, such taboos continue to be reproduced and enjoyed through the form of literature to the present, suggesting that the cruel and repugnant figures of cannibalistic motifs meet some aesthetic pleasure. Is such aesthetic pleasure, then, simply due to deviant fantasies humans harbor about something that is simply forbidden from civilization, or is it because in the depth of the figure, there is an archetype image that can inspire universal human beings and contribute to their spiritual lives? In the midst of these worries, one can't help but notice the Korean mythological material that centers around the narrative of the cannibalistic motifs in question.

"The myth of *Seolmundae-halmang"* is being handed down in Jejudo island in Korea. The *Seolmundae-halmang* who appears in the myth, refers to a giant female divinity who is said to have created Jejudo island, and *Obaek-janggun* refer to the 500 sons she is said to have given birth to. Why is this story about the divine creator *Seolmundae-halmang*, the *Obaek-janggun* that are her sons and the main characters who can be considered to have started the mythical era of Jejudo island, centered on cannibalism? If myths contain hard answers for humans who were thrown into the vast universe to find their own reasons for existence and the meaning of life(Nakazawa, 2002, p. 14), and if myths are the key to find the spiritual potential of human life(Campbell & Moyers, 2006, p. 29), why did the group that enjoyed mythology in ancient Korea's Jejudo island have to capture the meaning and possibility of life they have pondered in the violent form of cannibalism? The purpose of this study is to find answers to these questions.

Until now, the studies on "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang*" have been done to a considerable extent. However, in most cases, the studies either focused on the divine personality of "the giant *Seolmundae-halmang*" (Kweon, 2010, p. 223-260; Kim, 2010, p. 287-315; Park, 2010, p. 235-268), or pursued the paradigm shift to a male-dominated society in the light of the tragedy of the story (Cho, 2009, p. 140-173). In addition to that, a study was conducted to discuss the authenticity of the relevant mythological materials collected (Hyeon, 2012, p. 91-118) or to explain the storytelling aspects of it (Jeong, 2009, p. 229-254). Currently, there is no active analysis for the cannibalistic motifs that centers the narrative. Therefore it is not possible to say that the entire meaning of "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang*" was revealed through prior researches.[1] The aim of this study is to explain the mythical meaning of the narrative, which is embellished with strong and unpleasant images, to re-explain the meaning of the cannibalistic motifs that make up the core of the narrative through the context of human life's reality and to find out its specific meaning.

II. The Concept of Endocannibalism Reflected on the Cannibalistic Motifs in "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang"*

As mentioned earlier, *Seolmundae-halmang* is a giant goddess who is said to have created the geographical features of Jejudo island. Depending on the materials, the names are referred to as in various ways such as "*Seolmundae-halmang*", "*Seonmundae-halmang*", "*Seonmundu-i halmang*" and "*Dangke-Semyeongju-halmang*", but among them, *Seolmundae-halmang* is commonly used.[2] A total of 66 materials (Kim, 2017, p. 11-18) have been confirmed to be related to *Seolmundae-halmang* myth. Considering the fact that researches are actively being conducted, the number is expected to continue to increase. It is not effective to look at all of the data one by one, so it is decided to take a look at *Seolmundae-halmang*'s appearance in the mythical data.

She's described as a huge giant. It is said that as the youngest daughter of the Jade Emperor, she used her height to separete the sky from the earth in the beginning of the world. (Chin, 2001, p. 14). Then it is said that when the dirt that fell from her skirt, Hallasan mountain was formed. At that time, the soil that fell from the hole in her skirt became a scattered *Oruem*[3] in Jejudo island. It is also said that after she ate an enormous amount of food and excreted, it became a mountain. There's another story that mentions a typhoon in the deep sea that caused a tidal wave, which made people suffer greatly. Later, the sea was filled overnight and made people live comfortably by building a large sandy beach (Chang, 1961, p. 5-8). Stories like these describe *Seolmundae-halmang*'s enormous presence as a common motif of giant myths while explaining that she was a creator deity that created the living environment of Jejudo island at the beginning of the world. And the story that she gave birth to the *Obaek-janggun*,[4] who are her sons, also represents her great motherhood as the goddess of abundance and fertility (Kweon, 2002, p. 57). The following table outlines the key points shown in the transmission of *Seolmundae-halmang*.

Table 1. Core Contents of the Transmissions about *Seolmundae-halmang*

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Core Contents</th><th colspan="2">Concrete Act or Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Creation</td><td rowspan="6">Success</td><td colspan="2">The Division of Sky and Land</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Creation of the Land</td><td>Creation of an island with urine and excretion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Creation of seawater and spring from urine</td></tr>
<tr><td>Creation of Hallasan Mountain</td></tr>
<tr><td>Creation of the Oruems</td></tr>
<tr><td>Creation of toponym</td></tr>
<tr><td>Failure</td><td>Creation of the Land</td><td>Building a bridge</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">The Aspects of Being a Giant God</td><td colspan="2">Setting foot on two islands and wash in the sea water</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Hunting by using a giant body</td></tr>
</table>

		A huge rock used as a brazier
		Gamtu (Horsehair cap formerly worn by gentry or officials), *Jokduri* (Bride's headpiece worn at a Korean traditional wedding), Huge rock used as a *Badukpan* (Go board)
Conclusion	Becoming a God	Became *Dangsin*
	Death	Death by drowning
		Died in a porridge pot and was eaten by *Obaek-janggun*

Source: Took Table 2. of (Kim, 2017) as a reference and organized it.

One of the most eye-catching aspects of the myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* is about her failure and death. Her body was too big for her to dress herself up. So she promised to build a bridge to the main land if the islanders made her a pair of underwear with 100 *tong* (1 *tong* = 50 *Pil,* 1 *Pil* = approximately 60 cm × 1,200 cm) of silk. However, the islanders could only collect 99 *tong* of silk, which was not enough to produce a complete piece of underwear. Hence, she left the bridge unfinished. The vestige of the bridge is said to be rocks extending to the land of the offshore of Jocheon-myeon in Jeju-si (Hyeon, 1996, p. 36-37). Regarding the failure of *Seolmundae-halmang*, some say that the set of circumstances in which she relied on humans for the absence of her clothes reflect the loss of her status as a creator deity. In other words, the paradigm shift to a male-dominated society provides a glimpse into the process of the divinity of the giant goddess being denied and losing her status as a deity. With regard to *Seolmundae-halmang*'s death, some pointed out that the motifs of death intervened in the story of the goddess of creation and it reflected the perception of a group of people who enjoy mythology that no longer recognized her creative status (Cho, 2009, p. 148-150).

If that is the case, how is *Seolmundae-halmang*'s death being talked specifically? In this regard, there is a particular type of narrative that is independent, and it is "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek- janggun*", the type of material that I would like to address as the main topic of discussion in this study. Some of these types of materials are suspected of secondary processıng by researchers, hence care must be taken when quoting them as research materials (Hyoen, 2012). Therefore, four materials recognized as raw materials by many researchers, were selected and summarized in the table below.

Table 2. **Materials of "the Myth of Seolmundae-halmang"**

No	Title	Reference	Characteristics of Content
1	The Story of Heaven and Earth	Chang 1961, 8	· The substance is short and the detailed content is missing · *Seolmundae-halmang* fell into the pot and died while cooking porridge for *Obaek-janggun* ·*Obaek-janggun* also died after finding out the truth · If someone makes a loud noise there, fog and clouds cover the place.

2	*Seolmundae-halmang*	Chin 1970, 105-106	· It delivers the story of *Obaek-janggun* with the transmission of *Seolmundae-halmang*'s giant divine character · *Seolmundae-halbang*, the husband of *Seolmundae-halmang*, died while boiling porridge for his sons, *Obaek-janggun*. · The sons came home and ate porridge, and they admired the taste of it · The son, who came home the last, found his father's skull while looking at the pot because he thought it was strange. · When *Obaek-janggun* found out that they had eaten their father, they cried everyday and turned into stones. · *Seolmundae-halmang*, who had lost her husband and sons, would always go into deep water to show off her tall height and measure the depth of the water with her body, but she drowned in *Muljangori*, a bottomless pond.
3	*Obaek-janggun*	Chin 1970, 154-155	· *Seolmundae-halmang* fell into the pot and died while cooking porridge for *Obaek-janggun* · The sons came home and ate porridge, and they admired the taste of it · The youngest son found his mother's skull while looking at the pot because he thought it was strange. · The youngest son said he can't live with his dirty brothers who ate their mother and went to another island. He and his brothers turned into stones after crying · Later, when a geomancer axed the youngest *Obaek-janggun* that was in front of his father's grave,blood flowed down, and the stone that the youngest *Obaek-janggun* turned into was marked with a flowing blood · If someone makes a loud noise in Youngsil, where the other brothers are located, *Seolmundae-halmang* gets mad and the place gets covered with clouds and fog.
4	*Obaek-janggun*	Hyeon 1976, 52-53	· It is almost no different from the data numbered 3 · It refers to the dead mother as "a mother", instead of *Seolmundae-halmang*

As you can see the organized content shown in the table above, in some cases, it was *Seolmundae-halmang*'s husband who fell into the pot and died while cooking the porridge, and sometimes *Seolmundae-halmang* was passed down as "some mother".

However, the researchers have no doubts that it is *Seolmundae-halmang* who dies in the story. Also, according to the table, only in number 3 tells the story of another island's youngest Obaek Janngun who was axed. In fact, in Hangyeong-myeon, Gosan-ri and Chaguido island, there is a legend about the rock the youngest *Obaek-janggun* turned into. Therefore, the story of the youngest Obaek Janngun should also be included in the core content of this type of story. Taking these points into consideration, the narrative paragraphs of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun* are organized as follows

a. Once upon a time, *Seolmundae-halmang* lived with her 500 sons.
b. One day, when the poor harvest made it difficult to make ends meet, the mother told her sons to find food.
c. While they were out to find food, the mother made porridge in a large pot for her sons, but fell into the pot and died.
d. The 500 brothers, who did not know their mother died in a pot after falling in it, returned home and ate the porridge, and thought that the porridge tasted better than before.
e. When the youngest was stirring the pot with a ladle to eat porridge, he found a human bone and realized that his mother was drowned in it.
f. The youngest said he cannot be with his unfilial brothers who ate their mother and went to Hangyeong-myeon, Gosan-ri and Chaguido island. Then he became a rock after crying.
g. His brothers also cried and became rocks after finding out the truth.
h. Later, someone called a geomancer to the *oruem* located at other side of Chaguido island tosecure a gravesite for his or her father. But the geomancer said it's not a good place since the rocks of *Obaek-janggun* can be seen.
i. As he axed the rock to get rid of it, the blood flowed down the spot. It is said that there are still bloodstains on the rocks of *Obaek-janggun* in Chaguido island.
j. Currently, there's a rocky terrain that was made by the rocks of *Obaek-janggun* after they changed except for the youngestin a place called Yeongsil on the mid-slope of Hallasan mountain. If someone makes a loud noise there, fog and clouds cover the place. This is because *Seolmundae-halmang* is angry.

According to the paragraphs between *a – d* above, *Seolmundae-halmang* was accidentally drowned in a pot while making porridge to feed her sons, and her corpse was eaten by them. The fact that she died as a consequence of a ridiculous mistake seems to be very incongruous for the death of a divine being. Even the story of her children eating her body is quite shocking and repugnant to those who were exposed to it. Given the circumstances, it seems reasonable to say that the similar stories were formed by the desolation of the divinity she had.

However, there are some points be considered before hypothesizing about such a thing. These narratives can be classified into the type "A192.1.2. *God-killed and eaten*" in *Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature,* which is believed to be related to the Easter Is. (Thompson, 2016, p. 37). Considering this, it seems that the death of *Seolmundae-halmang* in the narrative does not mean the complete extinction of its existence.

The paragraph j should also be paid attention to. In the materials that convey her death, she continues to exist even after that. She died and even the body was eaten by her sons, yet her existence was not annihilated. It is believed that she still maintains her existence in Yeongsil, Hallasan mountain, guarded by *Obaek-janggun* who turned into

rocks. Moreover, to maintain her divinity, she sends warnings with fog and clouds to those who make noise in the sacred place.

In fact, many shamanistic rituals around Jejudo island still call out the names of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun*. In Jejudo island, for example, in the second month of the lunar calendar, each village holds a shamanic rite called *Yeongdueng gut*. The seven gods, *Yeongdueng-harbang*, *Yeongdueng-halmang*, *Yeongdueng-daewang*, *Yeongdueng-hojang*, *Yeongdueng-wujang*, *Yeongdueng-byeolgam* and *Yeongdueng-jwasu*, are said to be the first ones to come to Jejudo island from the *Jiangnan* 江南 region of China[5] to greet *Obaek-janggun* and sow grains and seafood in the rice fields and the sea for the sake of Jejudo island's affluence (Mun, 1996, p. 244). The fact that the gods from outside visit and greet only *Obaek-janggun* among the countless gods of Jejudo island shows that the status of the *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun* still remain as representative figures of Jejudo island.

In Pyoseon-ri, Jejudo island, people invite *Dangke-Semyeongju-halmang* as the *Dangsin*, and each year, they hold a D*anggut*[6] to pray for the welfare of the village and ask for the protection of fishermen and woman divers (Namjeju-gun, 2006, p. 855). As mentioned earlier, *Dangke-Semyeongju-halmang* is another name for *Seolmundae-halmang*. In this case, the status may have been reduced to the guardian deity of a village rather than the entire Jejudo island. But on the contrary, it can be seen as an example of *Seolmundae-halmang*, who is worshipped across Jejudo island, being accepted as the guardian deity of a village. The important point is that in either case, she is maintaining her presence as a sacred being and showing a situation in which she is now an object of worship.

Given those points, the story of *Seolmundae-halmang*'s death is not intended to explain the process by which her divinity is dissipating, but rather to depict the process of her divinity which is being passed on to the *Obaek-janggun*. It is the cannibalism that is presented as a way of conveying the divinity.

It is reported that cannibalism was naturally practiced in human history as an act of primordial rites and was carried out to this day by some uncivilized human groups.[7] Undoubtedly, for the majority of people who are modernized and civilized, cannibalism is only a bizarre and repugnant practice of barbarism, but from a cultural and anthropological point of view, tracing the essential meaning of cannibalism shows that it is not necessarily a violent or destructive act. Human cannibalism can be largely divided into two types: exocannibalism and endocannibalism. The former aims to strengthen the solidarity of the group by eating the members of the other groups, while the latter is a ritualistic practice to inherit the existence of the dead and assimilate it into the subject's character and soul (Shipman, 1987, p. 70-76).

Originally, cannibalism was usually performed in accordance with religious rules or customs for a certain ceremony. In some cases, cannibalism is based on the affection for those who are eaten as a funeral rite. There was a custom in many primitive tribes in Amazon basin and New Guinea, in which elderly people near death would ask to be killed. As a result of such a request, their bodies were eaten by their descendants or close friends. This was due to the idea that it is better to keep the deceased in a warm human womb than to bury them in the cold land. In this case, there are differences in the method of funeral, but the intention is to be understood to be based on affection (Askenasy, 1994, p. 144-145). By integrating the deceased subject of affection into one's own flesh, the deceased can sustain its existence through the life of the living acquaintance. In addition, if such cannibalistic funerals continue within the society, the existence of the dead members

will continue over and over with the surviving members, and their relationship will consequently continue to last forever as long as the society is still there.

In the end, eating the object would ultimately mean integration of the object and the subject, and most primitive societies that actually performed cannibalism believed that cannibalism would acquire the physical or mental abilities, and character of the object. Especially, if the object is considered sacred, it was believed that the divine nature of the object could be acquired by eating the deceased, as well as the object's material substance, and thus the object's flesh and blood were eaten to obtain courage, wisdom and divinity. In the case of a civilized society, it was also practiced as a universal religious rite with a symbolically modified form (Frazer, 1985, p. 578-601).

Therefore, *Obaek-janggun*'s situation in which they ate *Seolmundae-halmang*, may be considered as a process of unity, as such endocannibalism implies. As a matter of fact, the notion that a soul turning into a deity after death is not unfamiliar in the Korean mythological system. Many shamanistic myths in Korea show that the main character of the myth can gain the divine status only if he or she overcome his or her hardships after faithfully completing his or her life as a human being (Cho, 2015, p. 185-196). Thus, *Seolmundae-halmang*'s death could also be perceived as a natural and inevitable process. The process of changing from a terrestrial being to a spiritual being through death, and then being reborn as a higher-level being beyond the limits of the body was needed to be told. By doing so, *Seolmundae-halmang* was able to overcome the existential limitations of being physically tied to the ground and gain the supreme deity status encompassing the sky, the land, and the sea of Jejudo island.[8] By eating the body that contained the spirit of *Seolmundae-halmang*, *Obaek-janggun* succeeded her and became guardian deities to protect the land of Jejudo island. Also, by becoming a rock that enshrines the spirit, they remained as a permanent symbol of *Seolmundae-halmang*'s spirit. As presented in *f – j*, the older brothers who ate the body of *Seolmundae-halmang* have become the object of worship in Yeongsil, Hallasan mountain. The youngest who refused to eat his mother's body had to be axed for becoming a corrupted being. It is thought to imply a situation in which only the youngest failed to inherit *Seolmundae-halmang*'s divinity into his own existence.

In "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek- janggun*", the cannibalistic motifs appear ostensibly to depict the tragedy caused by taboo violations of the protagonists, however, deeply in the context of affection-based integration, it portrays the process of *Seolmundae-halmang*'s divinity being inherited by her sons. Undoubtedly, the story that is being told now may have passed through a moment of great change in the course of the transmission. Mythology enthusiasts in Jejudo Island must have been aware that *Obaek-janggun* who ate their mother violated the Confucian ideology of filial piety. It would have been necessary to add to the existing story a taboo on such conduct. This is why the great narrative about the history of divine succession has the appearance of a tragic story of an immoral taboo violation. Nevertheless, the deep consciousness of the primitive mythology enthusiast group that depicted this myth in its early days has continued to stay intact and the myth still does its part as a narrative that supports the divinity of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun*.

III. The Issue of Human Life in Reality As a Mythical Symbol of Cannibalism

Although the cannibalistic motif in "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun*" is an embodiment of the divine succession process that reflects the primitive human concept of endocannibalism, the act of cannibalism of the *Obaek-janggun* who ate their mother's body is hardly considered positive in an already civilized society. Then,

why was the narrative handed down to the modern age and why can the concept of the divinity of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun* exert a present influence? The story of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun*, which uses cannibalism as a key motif, can still maintain its function as a myth without being rejected by modern enthusiasts because cannibalism in the story is accepted as a mythical symbol rather than as an actual act.

Mircea Eliade said, "mythological symbols present images of profound aspects of human reality that cannot be captured by conscious means of perception." According to this, the bizarre images that make the interpretation of myth difficult were not created and deployed in any way to disclose the speciality of the mythical world that is out of touch with the real world. It is clearly in response to the needs of the human mind, and functions to reveal the innermost aspects of real human life in a mythical system (Eliade, 1991, p. 15). Thus it is right to assume that bizarre events or images in myths are not representative of actual events or the objects of the real world, but rather are functionally responsible for implicitly conveying the Issue of human reality that can be associated with it as a symbol of reality.

Therefore, the cannibalistic motif that appears on this myth isn't a real event about the sons who ate the mother's body, but a realistic aspect of human life that such images represent. Based on this view, we will examine what the specific human reality problem this cannibalistic motif in the myth represents and discover what it ultimately means. For this purpose, the narrative of this myth is summarized as follows by focusing on the cannibalistic motifs in question.

a'. *Seolmundae-halmang* fell into the pot and died while making porridge for her sons.

b'. *Obaek-janggun* ate the porridge that contained their mother's body.

c'. They cried and turned into rocks after they realized they ate their mother.

If the main character's name is replaced with a normal noun and the main character's behavior is expressed more abstractly, it can be rearranged as follows:

a". Parents die working for their children.

b". The children feed on their parents who died working for them.

c". The children who realized that they had fed on their parents remain stuck in an endless grieving.

When examining the context in *a" – c"*, one can guess what kind of human reality this narrative implies. Just as *Seolmundae-halmang* dies while trying to feed her sons, real parents give up on their own lives to support their children. In the end, the image of *Obaek-janggun* eating their own mother who fell into the pot she was making porridge in is not different from the children in the real world who are growing up and living at the expense of their parents' lives. Also, just as the *Obaek-janggun* who ate the porridge and filled their stomachs are shocked by the fact that they ate their own mother, children are shocked and saddened when they realize that they have lived through the sacrifice of their parents.

The sadness lasts for a long time. *Obaek-janggun* cry in sorrow and turn into dozens of rocks. They themselves became tombstones to symbolize their mother's death. Likewise, the realization of parental sacrifice leaves an indelible sadness inside the children in the real world. If *Obaek-janggun* turned into tombstones for their mother, the children in real life build a tombstone that records the noble lives of their parents inside their hearts.

As such, the life of the parent keeps existing within the child, so the child inherits the life of the parent, just like how the *Obaek-janggun* had inherited the mother's divinity and were ordained as the guardians of Jejudo island. The values, beliefs, and ways of life pursued by their parents in their lifetime are the guidelines for them to live their lives. Furthermore, as their parents sacrificed themselves for their children's lives just like how their own parents did, and as their children realized their sacrifices and inherited their lives, the lives of the older generations are repeatedly carried on to the newer generations.

In fact, it is not difficult to find such a figure if you look back on human life. Except for a particularly thoughtful minority or some that are immature, the average children are insensitive to the sacrifices of parents who protect and bring them up to be mature human beings until they have had enough life experience to grow mature. They take the things their parents pay with their own lives and offer them for granted and only enjoy the sweetness of life. Like the *Obaek-janggun*, who said the porridge which their mother fell in was appetizing.

The epiphany strikes without warning. One day, the children realize that the faces of their parents have become full of wrinkles. Their parents' strong arms which kept them safe have lost their strenght. And then the children think, 'How come they've gotten so old?' when they see their parents in that condition. There are other moments of enlightenment. After working hard for their children, the parents look at their exhausted selves and find the reflection of their own parents in their eyes. Or as they reflect on their memories of their parents that already have passed away, they realize that most of their parents' young days are spent on them. As soon as they realize that their parents willingly became nutriments to raise them, the children think, 'Oh, I have lived on the flesh and blood of my parents!'. Just like how the *Obaek-janggun* who found the bones of their mother at the bottom of the pot did.

Such enlightenment shocks the children. They shed tears, blaming themselves for living without paying attention to the sacrifices of their parents. Then the children promise to repay their sacrifices and love for the rest of their parents' lives. However, they forget their promise as they live a busy life. The parents pass away after the constant realization and forgetfulness. There are also cases where the moment of enlightenment comes to the children after their parents have already passed away. There is no way to repay the parents anymore, and the child's regrets and sorrow remain forever. The children think of their parents' lives whenever they feel sad and regretful. They dwell on the sacrifices and the love they gave them. They start recalling their parents' words and habits and start mimicking their ways of doing things. They recall the beliefs and values that their parents have shown through life and promise that they will never forget what their parents left behind. So the life of the parent is engraved and inherited in the body and spirit of the child. Eventually, the image of the *Obaek-janggun* who became engravings of their mother's spirit and succeeded her as the guardians of Jejudo island, mirrors none other than the image of us living here.

As such, the cannibalistic motif in "the myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun*" functions as a mythical symbol that embodies the principle of the generational inheritance of human reality. In fact, cannibalism as a symbol of the generational inheritance in the world of myths and religions is not unfamiliar. In many religions, a symbolically modified form of cannibalism is being performed as a rite for the succession of religious ideologies. As a typical example, the Eucharist of Christianity is widely practiced around the world. The purpose of this rite is to remind people of the death and resurrection of Jesus to save mankind by consuming unleavened bread and wine that

symbolizes the flesh and blood of Jesus. Christians think of his sacrifices by participating in the Eucharist and eating Jesus, which is symbolized by bread and wine. They reaffirm what Jesus has shown and the doctrines he has asked for as indicators of their lives. In addition, a ritual where people purchase a food that symbolizes God's body and eat it to unite with him, can be confirmed through customs of various people around the world.[9]

Now, let's move on to the story about "the myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun.*" It has already been shown in this myth that the image of the *Obaek-janggun* who ate their mother and turned into rocks, represents the principle of the generational inheritance of human reality. If so, what kind of religious function does it have for Jejudo island's mythology enthusiasts to ascertain the principle of generational inheritance of human reality through this myth? The residents of Jejudo island reaffirmed that *Seolmundae-halmang*'s spirit was inherited by her sons who are in Yeongsil through mythology. This makes people realize that *Seolmundae-halmang*'s will is exerting influence through her sons. Eventually, as the family of Jejudo island that the *Obaek-janggun* protect, they realize that they have the mission of inheriting *Seolmundae-halmang*.

Then, what is *Seolmundae-halmang*'s will that Jejudo residents should inherit? We already know what she wanted to achieve but couldn't. It's the connection with the land. Jejudo island, which has geographical limitations of an island, cannot achieve material and cultural development if it does not interact with mainland. Looking back at the aforementioned stories, the image of *Seolmundae-halmang* who couldn't wear the underwear represented the limits of Jejudo island as an isolated island as she failed due to lack of materials even though she wanted to make the underwear with the help of the entire people of Jejudo island. In order to escape the limitations of being tied to the land, and to encompass the sky, land and sea of Jejudo island, *Seoulmundae-halmang* chose to die and turned into a spiritual being. In the end, her will is to actively interact with mainland and develop the culture of Jejudo island.

Her will was successfully inherited by the people of Jejudo island. Throughout its long history, the people of Jejudo island have constantly interacted with the surrounding countries, accepting various cultures and developing their own culture. It is the presence of foreign gods who have been ordained as the gods of Jejudo island that show such traces in a single way. As mentioned earlier, the gods who are the subjects of the ritual in *Yeongdueng gut* are the seven gods who came from the *Jiangnan* 江南 region of China. In addition, various foreign gods from the Korean Peninsula and Japan, etc that can be found in various mythological materials are accepted as Jejudo island's gods (Heo, 2016, p. 7-41). Considering that the influx of foreign religious beliefs means the influx of foreign cultural assets, it is understandable how the residents in Jejudo island were trying to develop Jejudo island's products and culture by interacting with various cultures around them. In this regard, not only does "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek-janggun*" convey the principle of generational inheritance through the cannibalistic motifs, but also displays a strong mythic power in its religious function that makes people of Jejudo island inherit the will of the *Seolmundae-halmang*.

IV. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find the meaning of cannibalism, which is the main motif of the narrative, through "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek- janggun*" of Jejudo island in Korea. This is about the question of why *Seolmundae-halmang*, the goddess of creation of Jejudo island, died in a mysterious way, and the shocking story of her sons eating the body was created and passed on. As a result of a anthropological study, it was confirmed that the cannibalistic motif in this myth is the result of the primitive

mythology enthusiast group's endocannibalism concept being reflected in the process of generational inheritance from *Seolmundae-halmang* to *Obaek-janggun*. Furthermore, through the process of analyzing the narrative as a context of being a mythical symbol, it was revealed that the cannibalistic motif in this myth embodies the principle of inheriting the generation of human life in real life, in which a child who grew up and led a life based on the sacrifices of his parents and inherited the lives of them after becoming aware of the sacrifices of his parents for him at some point. It was also confirmed that such a principle of succession of the archetypal generation ensured the religious function of Jeju people who enjoyed "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek- janggun*" to inherit the will of *Seolmundae-halmang*

Although many studies have been conducted on "the Myth of *Seolmundae-halmang* and *Obaek- janggun*" in Korea, there has been no proper discussion on what the cannibalistic motif in the myth means. Hence, this study is highly significant as it is the first product to get the bottom of the function and meaning of the cannibalistic motif in the myth. This fully reveals the meaning and value of *Seolmundae-halmang* myth, which is of great value in folklore, culture, anthropology and literature, as the major myth of Korea.

In fact, while Korea has abundant mythological materials to match its 5,000-year-old history, Korean mythologists are not yet very interested in contributing to the field of international academic exchanges with their materials or research results. As a result, Korea's mythological materials, which are quantitatively and qualitatively abundant and valuable, are not receiving the attention they deserve internationally. Feeling sorry for such a situation, I sincerely hope that this study can serve as a stepping stone for the internationalization of Korean mythology researches.

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NOTES

1. "Gubi seolhwa-e natanan sikin motif-ui yangsang-gwa uimi yeongu" (A Study of the Aspect and Meaning of Cannibalism Motif in Korean Folktales). Master's thesis, Konkuk University. It explains the nature of cannibalistic motifs in various Korean tales and some analyses were made on the cannibalistic motifs in the transmission of Seolmundae-halmang and Obaek-janggun. However, it is regrettable that the meaning of cannibalism was perceived here as an abstract concept of `energy exchange` and there was no in-depth analysis of the mythological meaning. (Lee, 2017).
2. The term "halmang" used in the name refers to "grandmother" or "elderly woman", as a common Korean noun. In mythology, however, "halmeoni" or "halmang" usually refers to a woman with divine existence. Although there has been no discussion on what the name " Seolmundae " means, assuming that the name is made up of Chinese characters in accordance with Korea's general naming conventions, it is possible to guess that Seolmundae(設文大) means "the great goddess of civilization."
3. "Oruem" is a term that is a part of the dialect of Jejudo Island that refers to a parasitic volcano located near Hallasan mountain. There are 368 Oruems in Jeju Island.
4. The word "janggun" in "Obaek- janggun" is a common noun in Korean language and it means "the commander of the military". However, in the system of Korean Shamanism, it is also used as an honorific title for the divine man.
5. It refers to the southern part of the changjiang 揚子江 (yangtze river) in China.
6. Jejudo island has sanctums named Dang in each village and they hold a memorial service for the village's guardian deity called Dangsin. Such shamanistic rituals are called Danggut.
7. It was only about ritual cannibalism, hunger in disaster situations or cannibalism as a crime were not discussed.
8. It's the failure of bridge motif that raises the need for Seolmundae-halmang to break away from the constraints as a terrestrial being. The lack of clothing and silk, for example, is indicative of her existential deficiency. Her inability to connect with the Korean Peninsula, which is the main land, indicates her existential limitations that were tied to Jejudo island. As a result, she was able to escape the limitations of her body and became a high-level being, subjugating the sea that connects the mainland with Jejudo island.

9. Refer to James George Frazer. 1985. The Golden Bough. New York: Collier Books: 578-593 for the information about cannibalism in the rites of the people all around the world.

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