

Why do the Korean Women dive?

~From a viewpoint of the gender~

Sun-Ae Ii

Miyazaki Municipal University

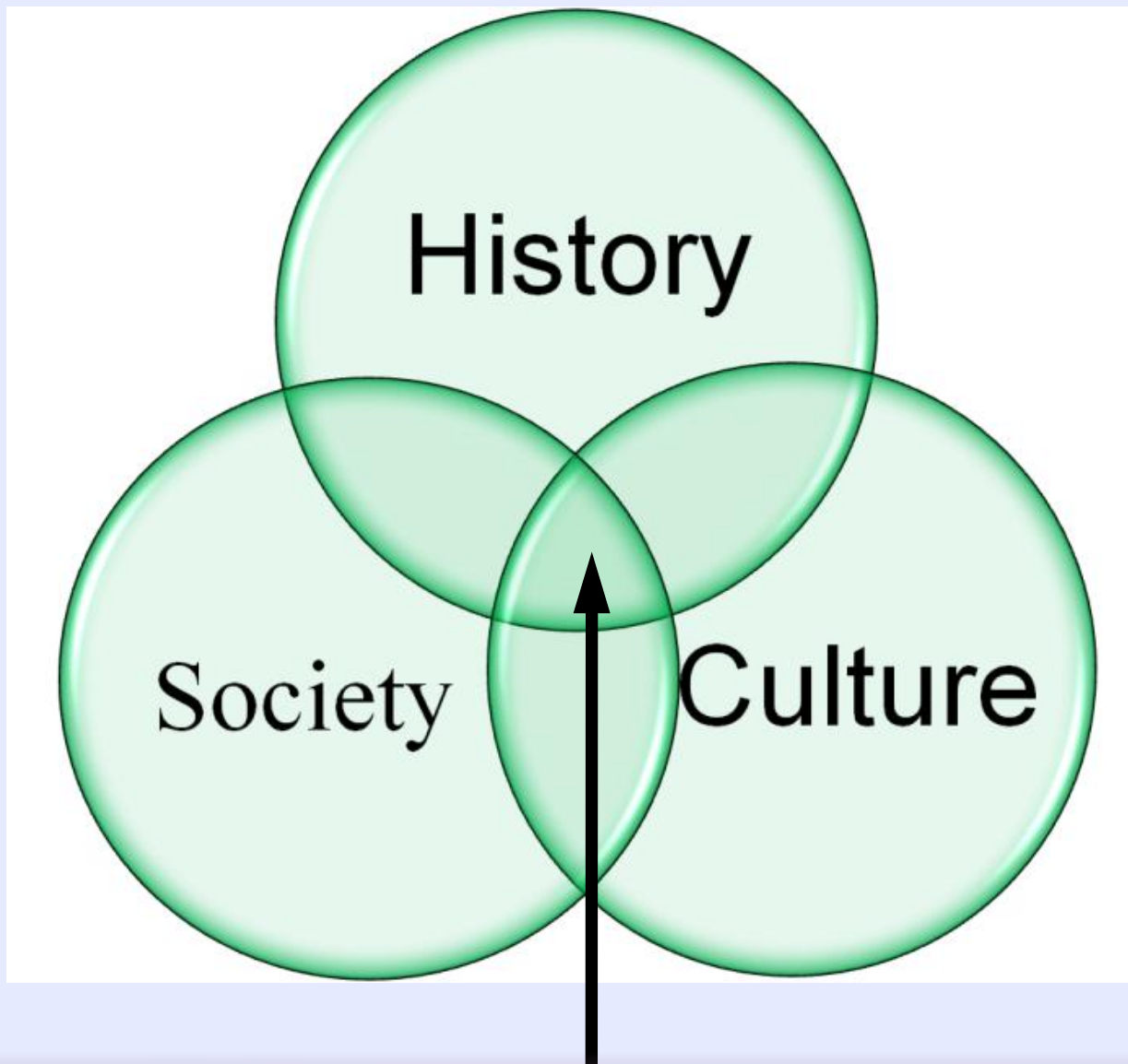


Fig.1 Gender recognition background about the Korean woman divers

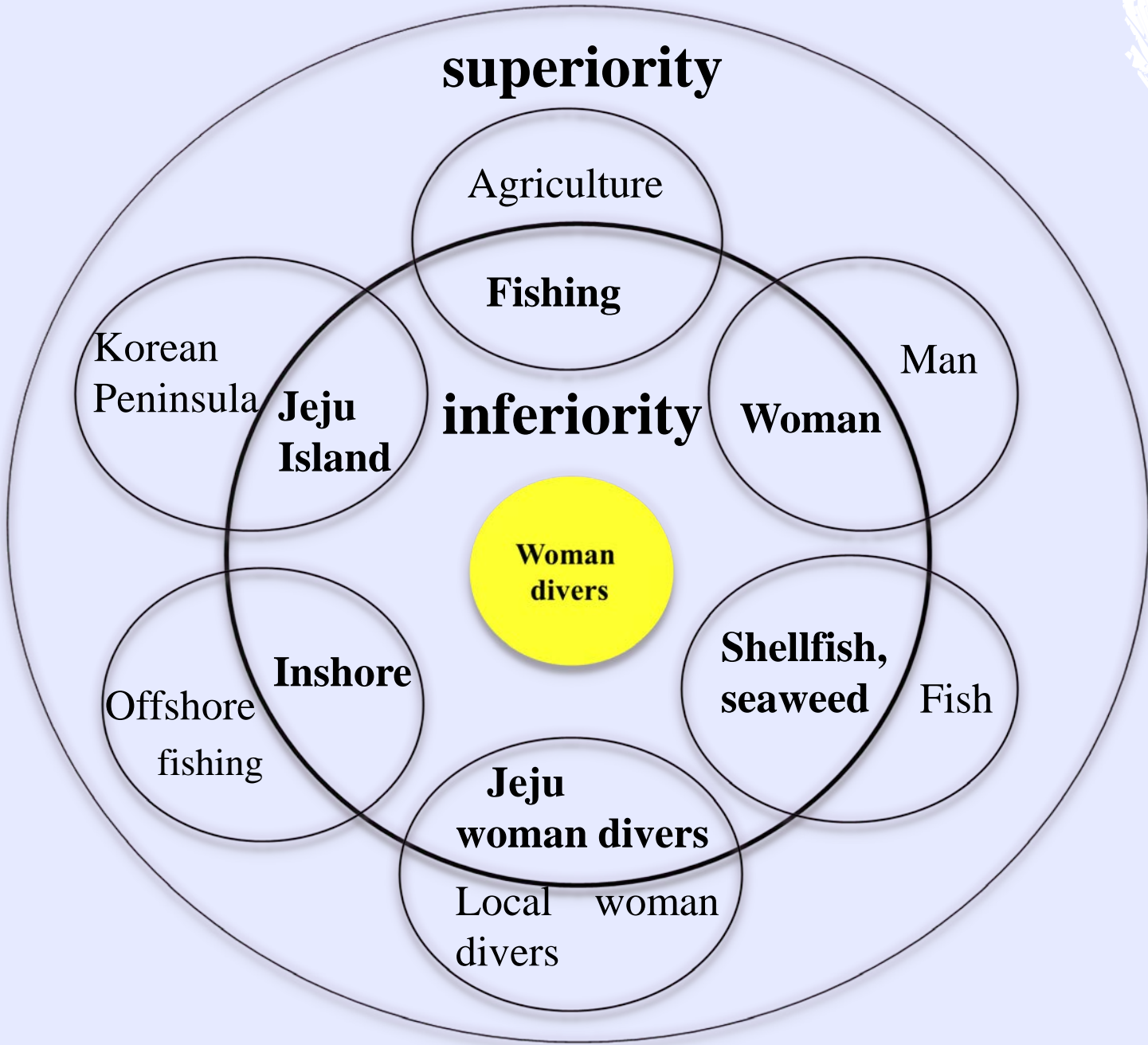
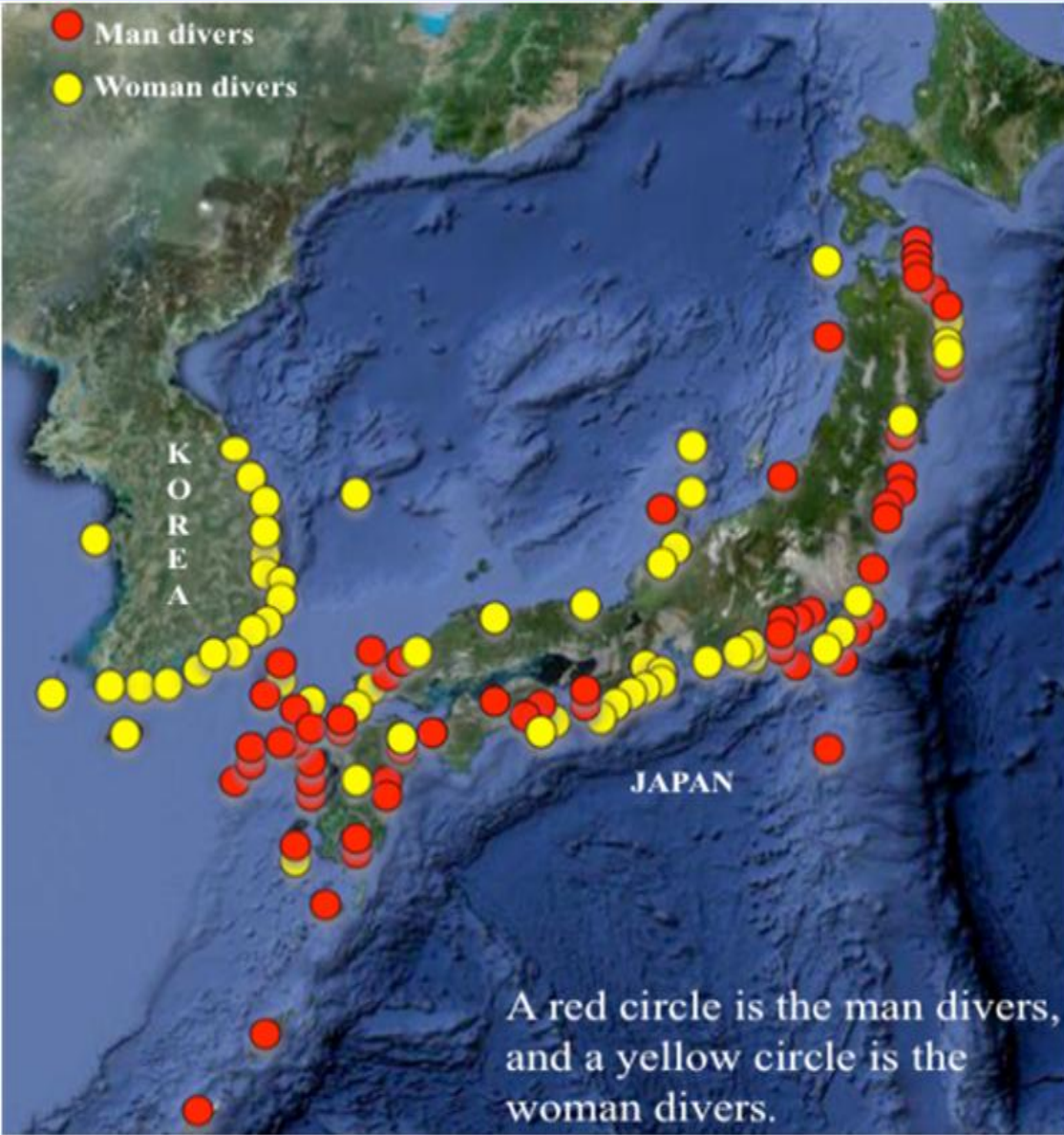


Fig.2 Social structure and gender recognition



The number of the Korean woman divers of 1993 is 11,108 people.

The number of the Japanese woman divers of 1977 is 9,134 people, and the number of the man divers is 14,501 people.

There are few successors, and the diver in Korea and Japan is going to aging.

By the way, Korea has only the woman divers.

What will the reason be in?

Fig.3 Distribution of the man and woman divers in Korea and Japan

The social position of Korean fishermen

According to “Goryeo Dogyeong”, King and nobles ate a sheep or a pig, and the person who had low social status ate marine products for Koryeo Dynasty period.

However, both nobles and the slaves ate the abalone, the oyster, the seaweed willingly without relations in social status. “Koryeo Dogyeong” is written by the messenger SuJing of Chinese Soong in 1123.

However, the fishery was occupation of the people who had low social status from the old times until recently.

Confucianism and Jeju Island woman divers

The administrative head of Jeju Island commanded that the man divers and woman divers do not dive by the naked body together (by “History of Koryeo”, 1105).

The administrative head of Jeju Island saw man divers and woman divers gathered abalone together in winter in December, and he did not eat an abalone until he left Jeju Island (by “Annals of the Joseon Dynasty”, 1443).

The woman divers are called Jamnyo. They gather seaweed and abalone. Though man divers and woman divers mingle, they do not feel ashamed. They paid to the Government their gathered abalone and seaweeds make a living by selling the remainder (by “Jeju Island topographical record”, 1692).

The administration continued prohibiting the naked body act of woman divers strictly, and he devised underwater working clothes, and Jamnyo encouraged it to wear it by the sea (by “Tamna Sunryeodo”, 1703).

Until the early 18th century, man and woman divers dived together. However, Confucianism is incoming to Jeju Island as the basis of daily life since then. And it is demanded that the man and woman observe the proprieties together, and the man and woman makes the same sex world each. The men did not gradually dive by it, only women dived.

The history of Korean woman divers

Today's the Korean woman divers originate in migrant woman divers from Jeju Island in 1895. Then, seaweeds were developed for industrial use and food, so that their value as merchandise appreciated.



Space of the men (in the room)



Space of the women (in the kitchen)

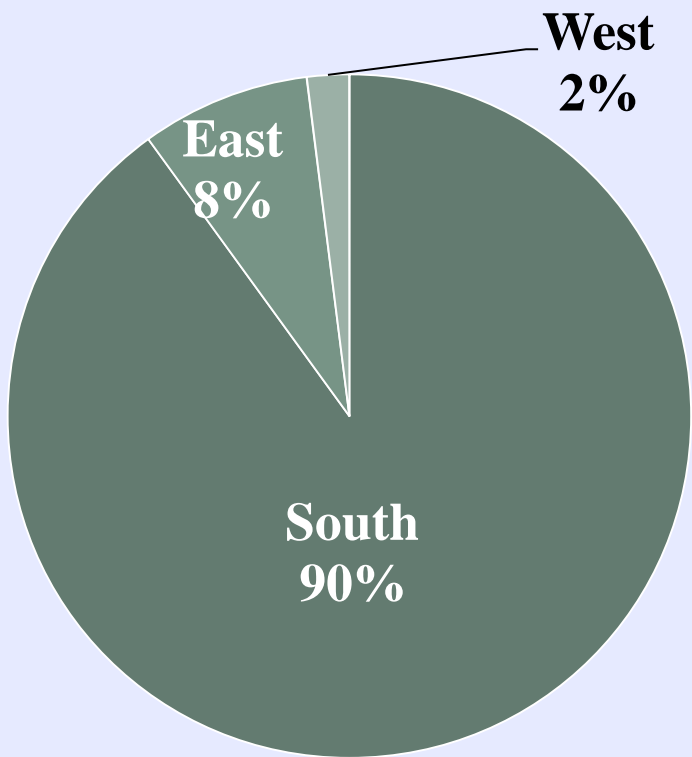
As woman divers from Jeju Island began to work in mainland Korea, Japanese woman divers gradually decreased in number under the pressure of their longer working hours and lower wages. Around 1929 Japanese women divers' visiting Korea for fishing ended totally. In 1945, the area of Jeju women's activities ranged from entire Japan through Chingtao and Talien of China to Vladivostok of Russia. They returned in Jeju Island every year in autumn in spring to dive on Korean Peninsula and Japan as a migrant worker. They are to gather shellfish and seaweeds necessary to make the canned food of an abalone and the turban shell, a button made by a shellfish, iodo.

Fig.4 Space of a divided men and women

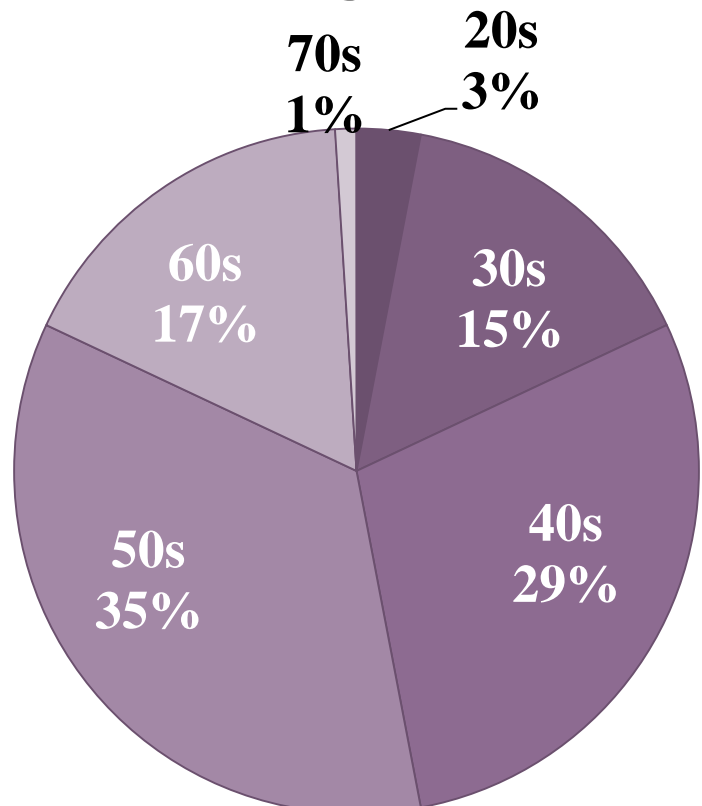
Tab.1 The Korean woman divers native place and age (1993)

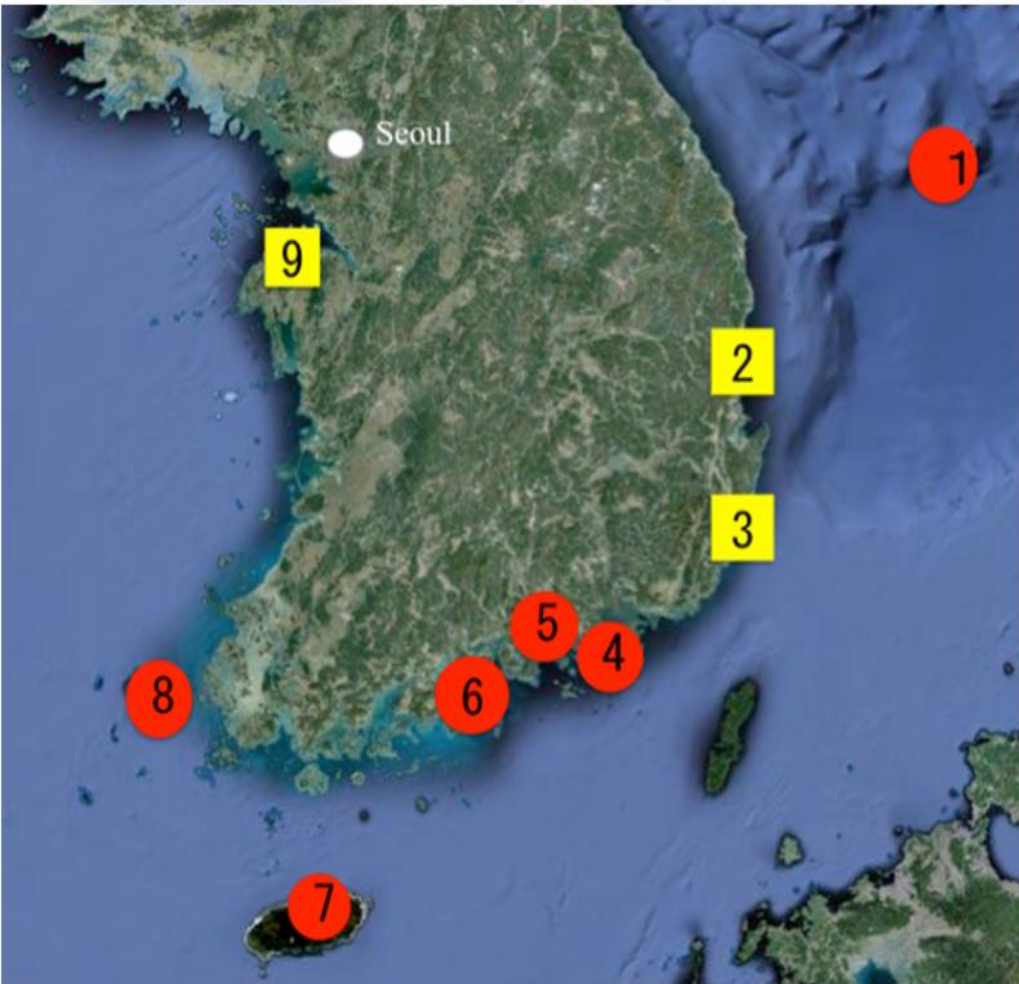
Coast name	Province name	Native place		Age						Unknown	Total
		Jeju	Native	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s		
East coast	Gangwondo	269	351	25	74	165	248	23	0	85	620
	Gyeongsangbukdo	53	224	0	30	122	92	31	2	0	277
West coast	Chungcheongnamdo	154	22	12	50	64	34	16	0	0	176
	Jullabukdo	7	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	7
South coast	Jullanamdo	105	115	3	64	98	43	11	1	0	220
	Gyeongsangnamdo	1,536	1,545	88	303	407	347	147	42	1,747	3,081
	Jejudo	6,727	0	143	850	1,855	2,490	1,323	66	0	6,727
Total		8,851	2,257	271	1,371	2,713	3,259	1,551	111	1,832	11,108

Distribution



Age





Korean woman divers differ in qualification for fishing. With one of the four types of qualifications, namely member of a village as a community (Fig.5-1,8), contractor of a village as the fishermen union (Fig.5-2,3,7), employee of an individually owned company ((Fig.5-4,6,9) and employee of a joint-stock corporation ((Fig.5-5), they engage in diving. The type of qualification is determined by natural environment and location of a village, social status, fishing methods, and so on.

Fig. 5 Difference qualification for fishing

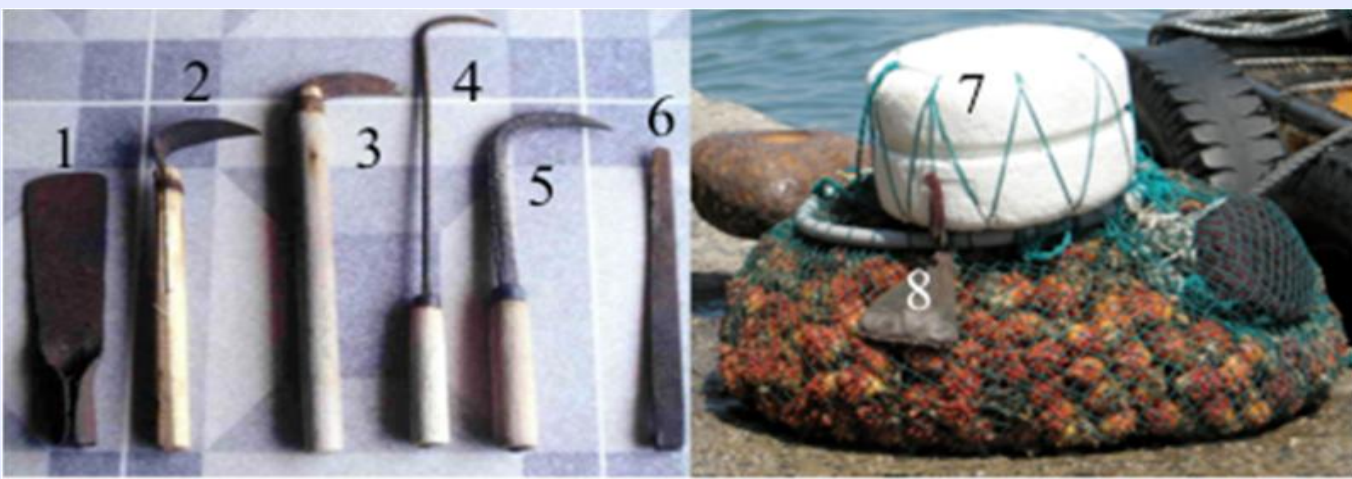


Woman divers of only using the ship (Fig.5-4,5,6)



Woman divers of using or not using the ship (Fig.5-1,2,3,7,8)

Fig.6 Fishing forms



Abalones and that tool (6)



Sea urchins
and that tool (4)

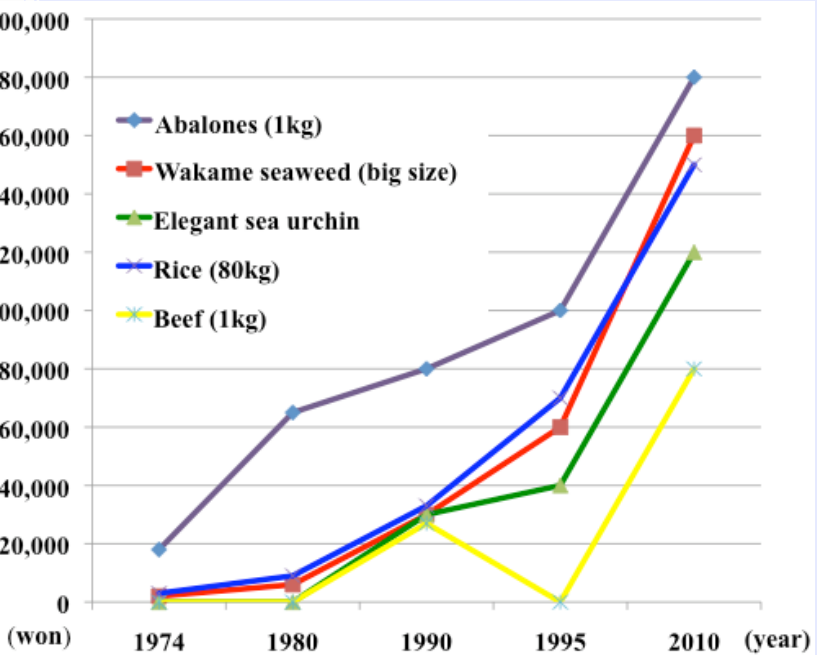


Wakame seaweeds
and that tool
(1,2,3)

Fig.7 The fishing captures and tools of the divers fishery

Tab.2 The selling price of the farm and marine products(1974~2010, won)

Product \ Year	1974	1980	1990	1995	2010
Abalones (1kg)	18,000	65,000	80,000	100,000	180,000
Wakame seaweed (big size)	2,000	6,000	30,000	60,000	160,000
Elegant sea urchin	—	—	30,000	40,000	120,000
Rice (80kg)	3,000	9,000	33,000	70,000	150,000
Beef (1kg)	—	—	27,000	—	80,000



The dried abalone, the sea cucumber, the seaweeds have been exported to China for a long time. Besides, in the Joseon Dynasty, these were used as not only the export but also the votive offering of the royal protocol, medicine materials. The economic value of an abalone and the seaweed is high now.

The price of 1 kilogram of the cultured abalone is approximately about 52,000 won in 2010.

A price of the natural product abalone is an approximately 3.5 times high price than the price of the cultured abalone.

Tab.3 Occupation of husbands and another jobs forms of the woman divers

	Farming	Self-employed	Fishing	Retail	Gainful worker	Person
Gainful worker (5 forms)	×	×	×	×	×	8
	×	×	×	○	×	1
	×	○	×	×	×	1
	○	×	×	×	×	1 8
	○	○	×	×	×	2
	○	×	×	○	×	2
Fisherman (3 forms)	○	×	×	○	×	1
	○	○	○	×	×	1
	×	○	○	×	×	2
Widow (7 forms)	×	○	×	×	×	1
	×	×	×	○	×	5
	×	×	×	×	○	5
	○	×	×	×	×	8
	○	×	×	○	×	1 2
	○	○	×	×	×	2
	○	×	×	×	○	1
Self-employer (3 forms)	×	×	○	×	×	3
	×	×	×	×	×	1
	○	×	×	×	×	4
Farmer (2 forms)	×	○	×	×	×	1
	×	×	×	×	×	1
Unemployed (2 forms)	○	×	×	○	×	3
	○	×	×	×	×	7

Husbands occupations and side jobs of woman divers

(the case of fishing village of Ulsan, 1995)

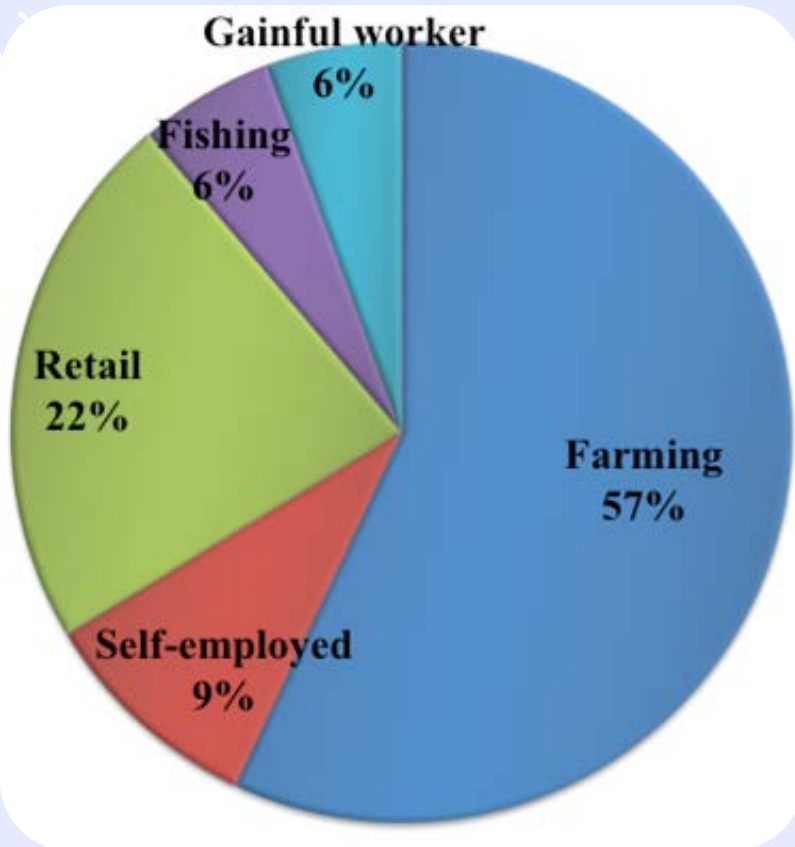


Fig.8 Side jobs of woman divers

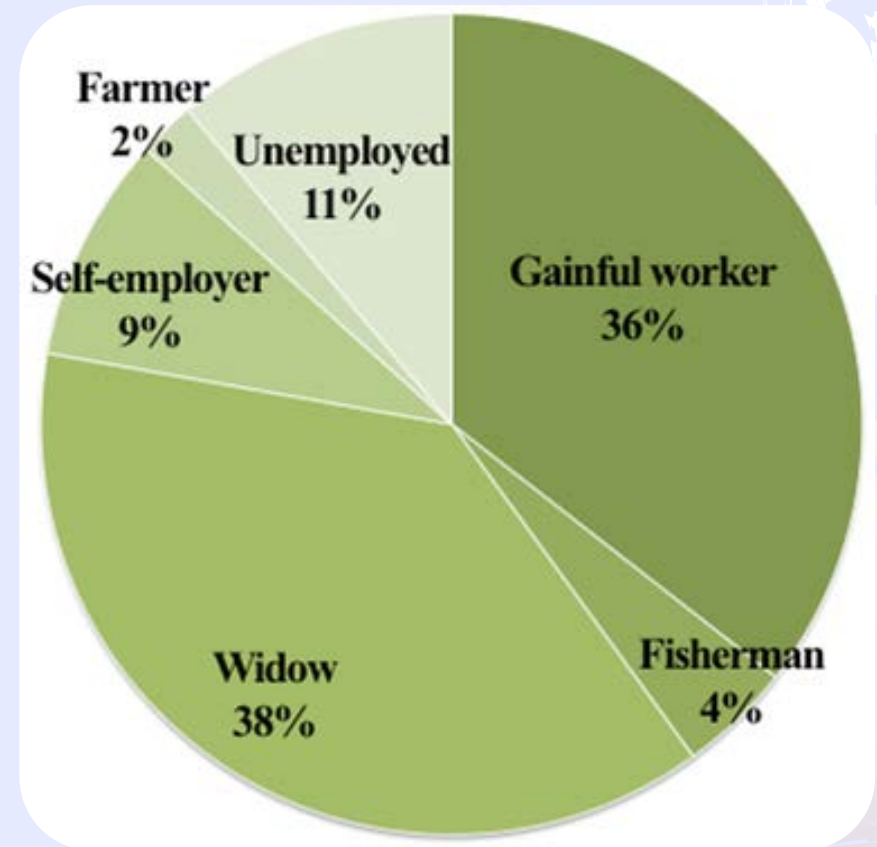


Fig.9 Occupations of woman divers husbands

Gross earnings according to the month of 40's and 50's woman diver(1995)

Woman divers earnings	40's (won,%)	50's (won, %)
Salary of the husband	1,785,810 (56.38)	2,678,570 (52.89)
Diving fishing	714,290 (22.55)	714,290 (14.10)
Farming	71,430 (2.26)	242,850 (4.80)
Summer fish food restaurant	595,710 (18.81)	0 (00.00)
Rent of the building	0 (00.00)	1,428,570 (28.21)
Total	3,167,240 (100.00)	5,064,280 (100.00)

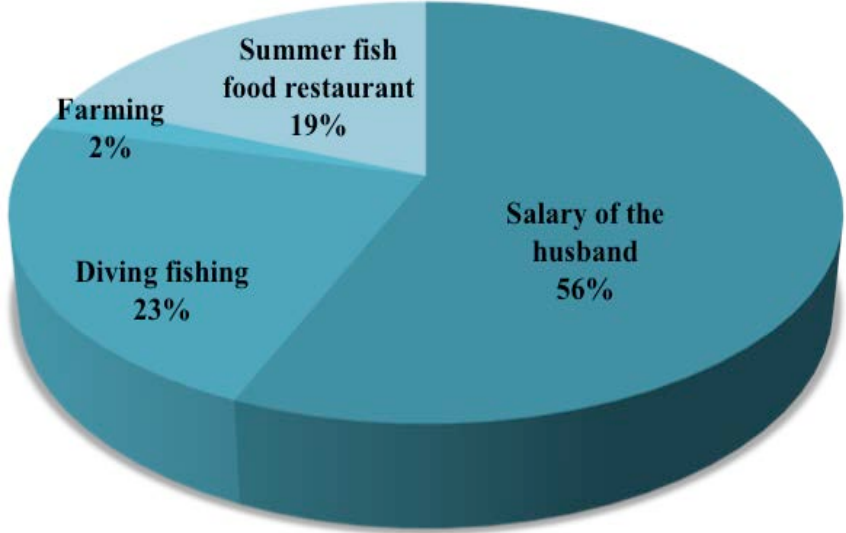


Fig.10 Earning of the 40's woman diver

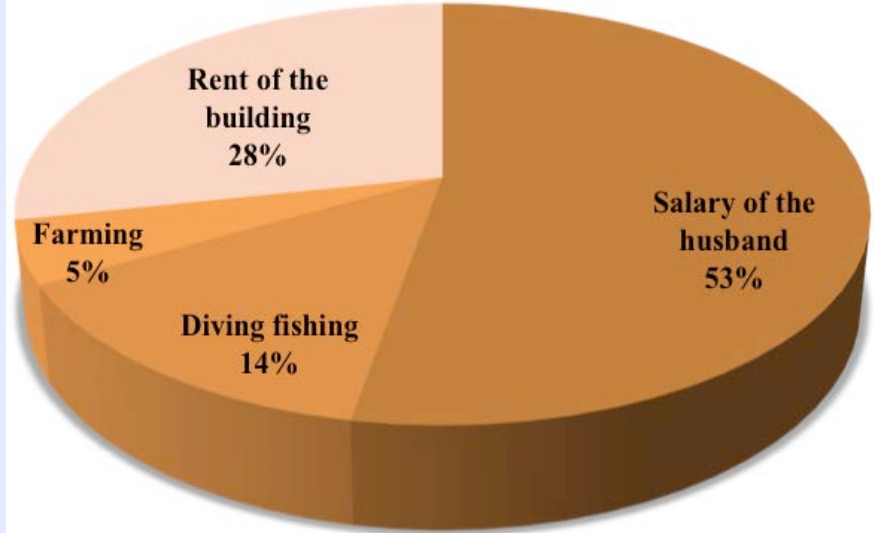


Fig.11 Earning of the 50's woman diver

Conclusion

Prejudice and discrimination woman divers from Jeju Island have faced since they moved to the coasts of mainland Korea 100 years ago also confront local woman divers, just as they inherited diving techniques from Jeju divers. What encouraged local women to participate in diving in spite of sociological and cultural prejudice and discrimination may be financial advantages to secure cash income and the introduction of wet suits. Those background factors enhanced the division of roles between men and women and the concept of genders concerning woman divers, and restrained local men from joining diving fishery, thus leading to a firm belief that diving fishery is a women's job.

There are many woman divers along the coasts of the Korean Peninsula as the main players in fishing grounds and the use of marine resources, but they attract little attention, so that their opinions and fishing activities are hardly reflected in the administration and policies concerning fishery. Those woman divers play important roles in household economy, maintenance of communities, and with long experience in marine environment and a good knowledge about the ecology of their target creatures, woman divers are significant as experts in sustainable use of marine resources.

By making a comparative study the situations in Korea with those in Japan where both men and women engage in diving, I pursue solutions to various problems Korean woman divers currently face.