



Where chance discovery
meets insight

Understanding Serendipity

The power to turn
chance into success



Creating unexpected
value



Reinterpreting failure and
opportunity

What is serendipity?



The power to turn
chance into success



The power to seize chance and turn it
into fortune



The ability to make fortunate
discoveries by chance



The ability to find valuable things one
was not looking for

*"This discovery is almost of that kind which I call
Serendipity..."*

- Horace Walpole, 1754

The Origin and History of Serendipity

● Origin: a Persian fable

The Three Princes of Serendip

A tale in which three princes of Serendip (present-day Sri Lanka) travel and make various discoveries through chance and wisdom

📍 Serendip: the Persian name for ancient Sri Lanka

● 1754: Horace Walpole's letter

The first use of the term

First used by the English novelist Horace Walpole in a letter to his friend Sir Horace Mann

"This discovery is almost of that kind which I call Serendipity, a very expressive word... I once read a silly fairy tale, called The Three Princes of Serendip. As their highnesses travelled, they were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of."

● Modern meaning

Expansion of the concept

Expanded beyond mere chance to mean discovery in which a 'prepared mind' and 'insight' combine



Attracting attention as a principle of innovation across diverse fields such as

The Modern Meaning of Serendipity

Rediscovering contingency

Serendipity gives significant weight to unexpected, contingent events that have previously been left unaddressed or could not be addressed. In our society, accustomed to handling matters through rational sensibility, this becomes an occasion to consider what appears to lie beyond reason.



Rational treatment of the non-rational

While encompassing cases from the non-rational domain, serendipity offers rational alternatives that can be reasonably understood. It acknowledges intuition and chance while presenting a way to harness them systematically.



The potential for ordinary people to succeed

The figures discussed in serendipity are ordinary people who worked diligently at their own tasks. They show that a prepared attitude and the ability to seize chance, rather than special talent, are the keys to success.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves" - serendipity is a fortune that comes only to the prepared.

The Key to Serendipity: Contingency

Serendipity means 'an unexpected discovery or invention,' and its essence lies in contingency. Chance has always existed as an important element of life; it was merely left unexplained within the existing framework of rationality. Philosophically it is defined as "a property not grounded in causality," but in serendipity it is reinterpreted through the lens of "necessary contingency" and "engineered contingency."



Waiting by the Stump (守株待兔)

The tale of a farmer who found a rabbit that had died after colliding with a tree stump by chance, then abandoned farming and waited only for more rabbits. As a case of failing to make use of a chance event, it suggests that true serendipity lies in the ability to connect chance to success.



Heinrich's Law

The ratio of 1 major accident : 29 minor accidents : 300 near-misses. Just as small signs precede a major accident, serendipity too does not occur without preparation and effort. Many attempts are needed before a single success.



Adding the Finishing Touch (畫龍點睛)

The tale in which, once the pupils were painted into a picture of a dragon at the very end, the dragon flew away. It signifies the transformation of a decisive moment: just as water at 99 degrees turns to vapor when one more degree is added, serendipity too occurs when a decisive element is added to an already prepared state.

Cases of Serendipity in the History of Science

Discoverer	Discovery or invention	Year	Features of the chance discovery
 Columbus	The New World	1492	Discovered the Americas by chance while searching for a sea route to India
 Newton	The law of universal gravitation	1687	Gained insight into gravity from watching a falling apple
 Röntgen	X-rays	1895	Discovered by chance that a fluorescent screen glowed during a cathode-ray tube experiment
 Fleming	Penicillin	1928	Discovered that mold had formed on a bacterial culture dish and killed the surrounding bacteria
 Pasteur	Vaccination	1878	Discovered by chance that a weakened pathogen builds immunity
 Plunkett	Teflon	1938	Discovered a slippery substance that had formed inside a gas cylinder during a refrigerant gas experiment

"The history of scientific discovery is full of chance moments that came to the prepared."

Serendipity in Modern Corporations

Starbucks

Howard Schultz drew inspiration from the coffee culture (a place of rest and exchange) he happened to experience while traveling in Italy, and developed the Starbucks business model

G

Google

Co-founder Sergey Brin stated that "the number one factor in success is luck." Google's innovative products were born from chance discoveries enabled by its '20% time' policy

f

Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg: "Facebook embodies the concept of serendipity, an unexpected stroke of fortune." A campus network service evolved into a global social medium

BMW

BMW

Established a 'Most Creative Mistake of the Month Award' to encourage creative mistakes and turn failure into an opportunity for innovation

Uniqlo

Uniqlo

With a '1 win, 9 losses' management philosophy, it encourages employees to take on challenges and emphasizes learning through failure and an entrepreneurial spirit

The Three Features of Serendipity



Emphasis on the long-term process and structure

Moving away from a focus on short-term results, it centers on the 'process' and 'structure' that lead to long-term effort and success. Serendipity occurs in situations like adding the finishing touch (畫龍點睛), emerging when sustained effort reaches a critical point.



Multilateral and multidimensional thinking

It offers multifaceted thinking that departs from dualistic thought. Rather than a binary structure of angel and devil, good and evil, multidimensional thinking allows chance to be interpreted as another form of necessity. This aligns with the traditional Eastern spirit of 'harmony without uniformity' (和而不同).



A spirit of continual challenge

It views success not as a single event judged within a limited time, but as a continuous process. It frees those who strive from evaluation by momentary joy and sorrow (一喜一悲), and encourages sustained preparation and challenge. This is in line with the Silicon Valley philosophy that regards even failure as a precious asset.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves"

Conclusion and Implications



The value of serendipity

Serendipity is an important source of insight in a complex modern society that cannot be resolved by rational judgment alone. By reappraising the value created by chance and intuition, it opens the door to innovation.



Its impact on our lives

Through a challenging attitude unafraid of failure, a long-term perspective on the potential for success, and a multidimensional way of thinking, we can achieve meaningful discoveries and accomplishments in everyday life as well.



Practical Steps for Serendipity

1. Record and reinterpret mistakes and failures
2. Explore diverse knowledge across disciplines
3. Meet 'prepared contingency' through sustained effort and preparation

"Heaven helps those who help themselves"

Serendipity is never mere luck simply handed to you, but another form of necessity that comes to those who are prepared.

The Expansion of Serendipity

Integrating Eastern and Western philosophy, science, and
theories of creativity

Serendipity Viewed Through the Paradigm of
'I, Here, Now'

Academic
Presentation

July 7, 2025

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1. Introducing the Concept of Serendipity
2. Serendipity's Connections to Other Theories
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Space, and the Human

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What Is Serendipity?

Serendipity: an accidental discovery, an unexpected solution

- A key role across diverse domains such as science, art, culture, and love
- More than mere luck—the foundation for creating new order and innovation
- Discovering, out of chaos, a new circular order not previously perceived
- A mechanism of creative discovery, essential and highly effective for survival today

Serendipity's Connections to Other Theories

Serendipity is closely connected to diverse academic fields and theories

- Connection to complexity theory—discovering a new circular order out of chaos
- Deeply connected to the circular order of time, space, and the human
- In culture and the arts, expressed as resistance to positivist modern theory

Found in both Eastern thought (yin–yang, the five phases, li–qi, heaven–earth–human) and Western science (Newton–Einstein–quantum mechanics)

Functioning as a key mechanism in the development of creativity and in innovation

Gaining attention as a shared principle of creative discovery across diverse fields

Hiroshi Miyanaga's Seven Laws of Serendipity

The laws for discovering circular order out of chaos,
as presented in The Laws of Serendipity

1. Serendipity comes to everyone

3. Conceive like a novice, execute like an expert

5. Induce chance inspiration to arise

7. Cultivate a sense of solidarity within the organization

2. Seek to connect the seemingly unrelated

4. Think the unexpected

6. Think logically, but broaden your scope

Source: Hiroshi Miyanaga, The Laws of Serendipity

An Integrative Understanding of Eastern and Western Thought

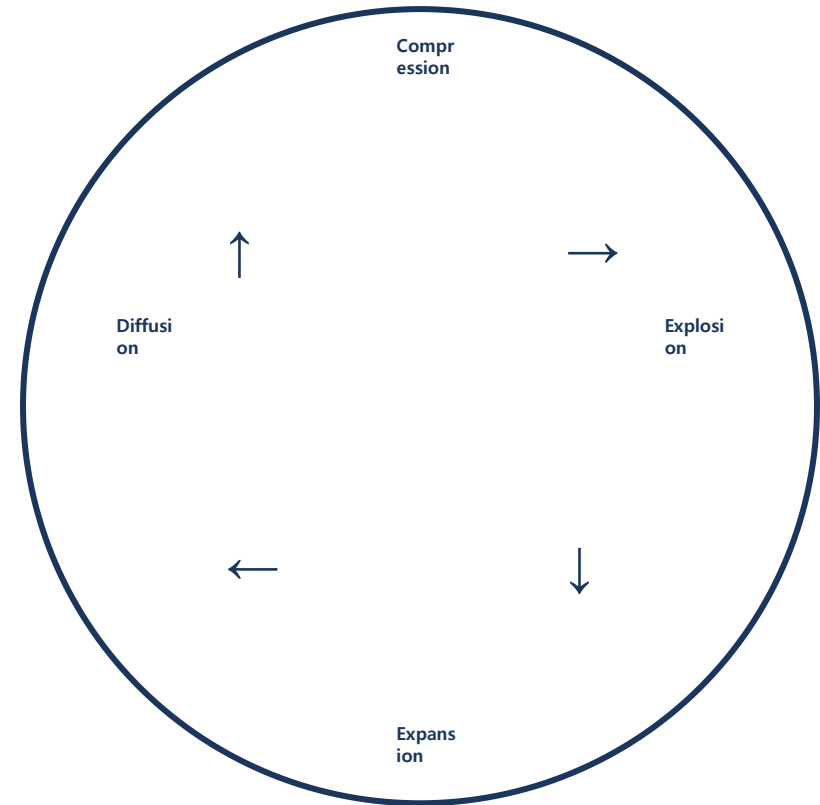


Key Theoretical Connections

- East: emphasis on circular patterns and harmony in yin-yang, the five phases, li-qi, heaven-earth-human, and the three teachings
- West: the developmental course of Newtonian mechanics (absoluteness), relativity theory (relativity), and quantum mechanics (compatibility)
- Integration: the theories can be unified through the tripartite structure of time (now), space (here), and the human (I)
- A similar structure recurs even within the broader frame of

Theory of Creativity: The Law of Circulation

- Natural-scientific/philosophical principle: the circular pattern found in common between the East's yin-yang and five phases, earth-water-fire-wind, and Western scientific theory
- Fractal structure: from atoms to galaxies, from visible matter to the invisible realm of the mind, the same circular pattern repeats
- Basic mechanism: the cycle of compression-explosion-expansion-diffusion is the fundamental principle of all natural phenomena and creative processes
- Relation to creativity: creative solutions can be derived by discovering the common pattern
- Contemporary application: used as a tool for innovation across diverse fields such as engineering, art, and management



The Basic Pattern of the
Circulation of All Things

Theory of Creativity: TRIZ

TRIZ: a systematic theory for innovative problem-solving

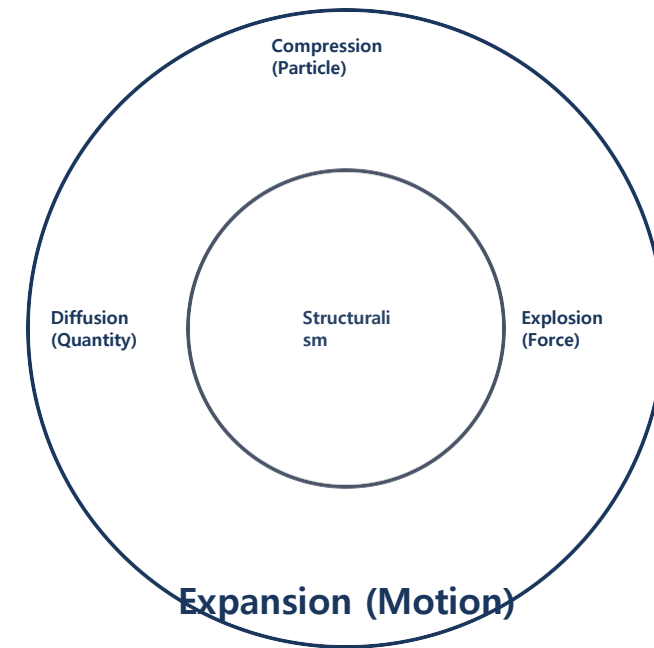
- Developed by Russia's Genrich Altshuller
 - Derived 40 creative problem-solving patterns from analyzing patents worldwide
 - **TRIZ is the acronym of the Russian 'Teoriya Resheniya Izobretatelskih Zadach'**
 - Creating innovation through 'resolving contradictions' rather than compromise or either-or choices
- The foundation of innovation at Korean high-tech firms such as Samsung and POSCO
 - Discovering the contradiction hidden within a problem and resolving it creatively
 - Contradictions arise from the symmetry (time-space) within circulation

Features of Korean-Style TRIZ

- **Focus on resolving contradictions through the separation of time and space**
- Example (time separation): intermittent water supply enabling the cleaning of electrified subway tracks
- Example (space separation): a manhole design with a conical structure that lets

Theory of Creativity: Structuralism

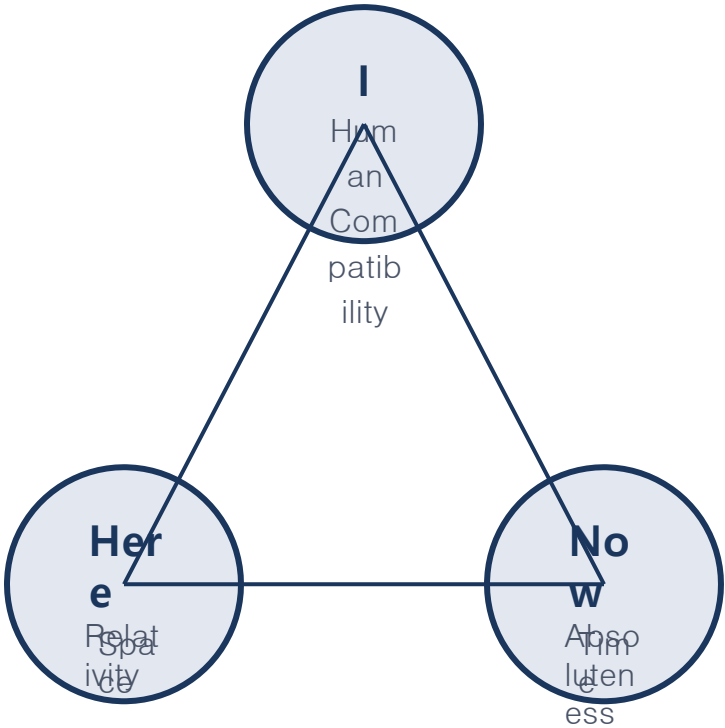
- A theory integrating the strengths of the Law of Circulation and TRIZ
- Unifying the cyclical process of compression–explosion–expansion–diffusion under the single concept of structure
- Clarifying, in mechanical–engineering terms, the forces expressed in the Law of Circulation as wood–fire–metal–water–earth or as compression and explosion
- Enabling a structural–historical interpretation of things and events (e.g., the successes of Alexander, Qin Shi Huang, and Napoleon)
- Generating compatibility as a structure that achieves balance through the double symmetry of inside and outside



The Cyclical Mechanism of
Structure Theory

The 'I, Here, Now' Paradigm

The Core Structure of Serendipity: The Triadic Framework of Human (I), Space (Here), and Time (Now)



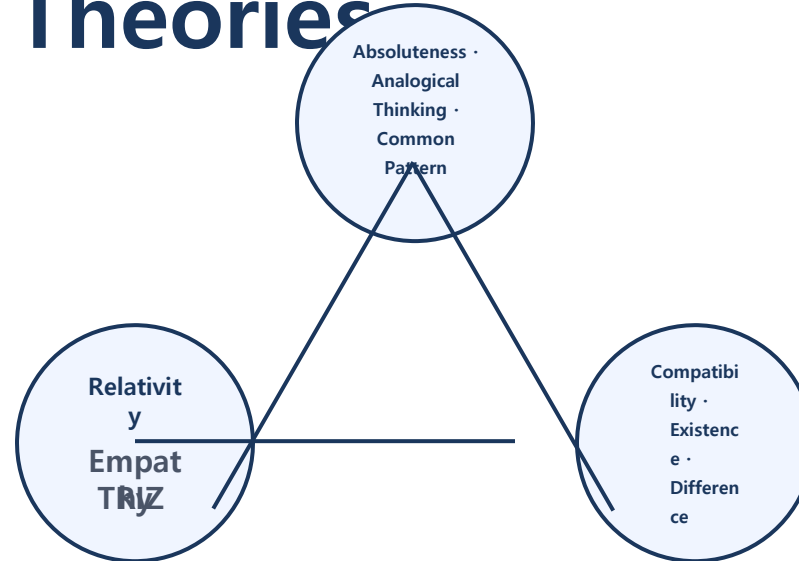
An Integrated System of Time, Space, and the Human

"I, Here, Now" constitutes a triadic structure of human, space, and time that corresponds to a variety of theoretical systems

Category	Now (Time)	Here (Space)	I (Human)
Dimension	One Dimension	Two Dimensions	Three Dimensions
Figure	Line	Plane	Solid
Characteristic	Absoluteness	Relativity	Compatibility
Creativity	Law of Circulation	TRIZ	Structuralism
Science	Newtonian Physics	Theory of Relativity	Quantum Mechanics
Mechanics	Five Elements	Yin–Yang	Three Powers (Heaven–Earth–Human)
Serendipity	Common Pattern	Empathy	Existence

※ Eastern theoretical systems (Five Elements, Yin–Yang, Three Powers) and Western ones (Newton, Einstein, quantum mechanics) correspond in an integrated manner

Analysis of the Interconnections Among Theories



- These can be integrated into a triangular structure of Absoluteness (analogical thinking/common patterns), Relativity (empathy), and Compatibility (existence/difference)
- All theories of creativity and all Eastern and Western thought cross-reference and converge within this structure

Conclusion and Contemporary Implications

Conclusion of the Study

- Serendipity is the foundational basis of creativity that encompasses diverse frameworks and theories
- The paradigm of "I, Here, Now" is the foundation of every innovative discovery
- Eastern and Western thought, scientific theories, and theories of creativity are integrated into a triangular structure (Absoluteness–Relativity–Compatibility)

Contemporary Implications

- Individual: Enhanced creative problem-solving through existential self-awareness, environmental context, and focus on the present
- Organization: Sustainable growth enabled by building a serendipity-based culture and system of innovation
- Society: A new evolutionary direction for civilization through an integrated understanding of time, space, and humanity

Serendipity appears to be chance, but it is in fact a new cyclical order discovered within chaos. Creative innovation is realized through the mechanisms of analogical thinking (common patterns), empathy (relativity), and existence (compatibility).

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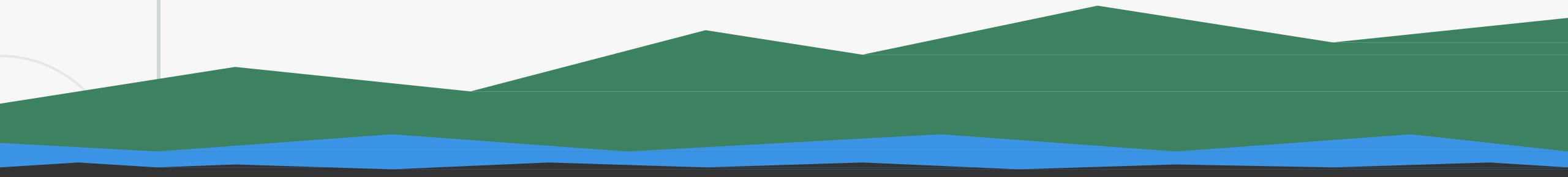
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Academic Research and Contemporary Theory

Serendipity as I, Here, Now and Local Culture

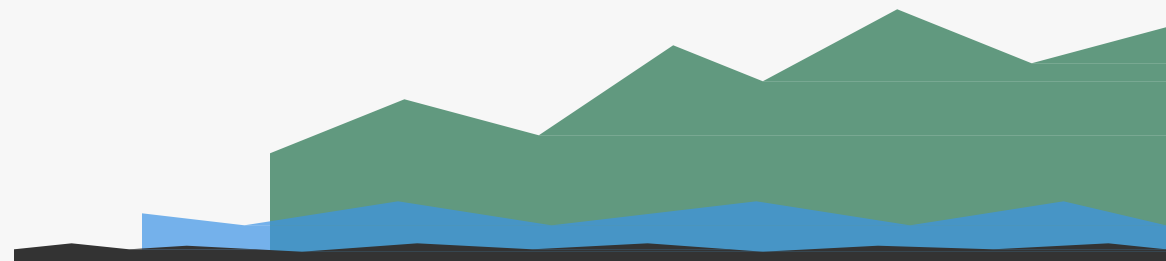
An academic presentation on serendipity theory and the study of local culture, centered on Jeju Culture

July 7, 2025



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- 5 Analyzing Jeju Culture: Common Patterns of Serendipity
- 6 Analyzing Jeju Culture: Empathy and I, Here, Now
- 7 Conclusion and Implications



What is serendipity?

- Defining Serendipity: The Creative Discovery That Captures Order Within Chance

A creative process of chance discovery that reveals hidden order out of chaos

- Analyzing the Relationality of Time, Space, and Humanity in 'I, Here, Now'

A perspective that views local culture anew through the framework of time (now), space (here), and humanity (I)

- Emphasizing Creativity, Responsiveness, and Contingency in Cultural Studies

"Serendipity is a new perspective for discovering a region's unique value through the creative contingency inherent in culture."

Unlike conventional deductive methods, the serendipity approach values the contingency and responsiveness of culture

Serendipity, the Blue Ocean of Local Culture Studies: Theoretical Background

- Why Serendipity Can Become the 'Blue Ocean' of Cultural Innovation

A new approach that can expand creative character and clearly reveal and extend the strengths of culture

- The Background of the Shift in Cultural Theory and Local Culture Research Methods

Cultural theory, a crisis in the academy yet emerging as a blue ocean in the market; after the collapse of Marxism, cultural theory diverged into postmodernism and poststructuralism

- Reinterpreting Cultural Theory as a Product of Empathy

Culture is a serendipity-like third-party presence that emerged by chance to mediate the tensions and conflicts among various forces; emphasizing an understanding of culture through empathy

"The universality of local culture begins, like serendipity, with an approach that eschews statistical methods and uses deductive ones while incorporating contingency."

An Integrative Approach to Cultural Theory

- The Law of Cycles: The Stages of Social Development and the Place of Culture

Analyzing culture through a cyclical structure: economy (Stage 1) → politics (Stage 2) → culture (Stage 3, the expansion stage) → religion

- TRIZ: Culture as Problem–Solving

Culture is a process of resolving contradictions—a creative mode of problem–solving through the separation of time, space, and condition

- Structural Theory: Analyzing Culture at the Level of Meaning

Culture is a pivotal process that realizes principles and concepts at the individual, social, and cultural levels

Law of Circulation

Macroscopic cultural positioning

TRIZ

Microscopic problem–solving

Structuralism

Multifaceted cultural analysis

An Integrative Cultural–Theory Approach to Serendipity

An 'I, Here, Now' analysis of local culture that incorporates contingency and responsiveness

A New Hope for Jeju Culture Discourse

— The Three Strengths of Serendipity

Clarity

RATHER THAN THE VAGUE NOTION OF 'MYSTERY,' A RESPONSIVE WORLDVIEW CLEARLY EXPLAINS THE VALUE OF JEJU CULTURE. SERENDIPITY ILLUMINATES THE UNIQUENESS OF JEJU CULTURE SCIENTIFICALLY WHILE PRESERVING ITS MYSTIQUE.

Scalability

Grounded in the fractal principle of infinite repetition, serendipity readily allows for boundless expansion. It provides the theoretical basis for extending Jeju's cultural elements into diverse products and content.

Efficiency

The efficiency of serendipity—delivering great effect with little effort—conveys Jeju's cultural value more effectively and forms memories that endure over time.

"To analyze Jeju culture through serendipity is to evaluate Jeju culture through serendipity's three elements—empathy, analogical thinking, and 'I, Here, Now'—and to expand the serendipity that Jeju culture possesses."

Serendipity Analysis of Jeju Culture: Common Patterns

- The Cyclical Law of Nature: Jeju's Topographical Features

Mt. Hallasan, 360 oreum (volcanic cones), and the island's galaxy-like structure—the cosmic cycle manifested in nature

- Contrast and Harmony of Yin and Yang: North Jeju/South Jeju, Jeju City/Seogwipo City

The contrast of mountain and sea, 36 km north-south and 72 km east-west, 360 oreum—a natural embodiment of yin-yang and the five elements

- The Automatic Cycle of Water and Fire: The Fire of Mt. Hallasan and the Water of the Pacific

Born as a volcanic island, Jeju is a natural textbook demonstrating the interaction and cycle of water and fire

- Connecting Culture, Science, and Creativity: The Harmony of

"Jeju Island shows that the cosmos consists of the infinite repetition of water and fire, yin and yang, while also revealing humanity's place in a cosmos that mediates water and fire, yin and yang."

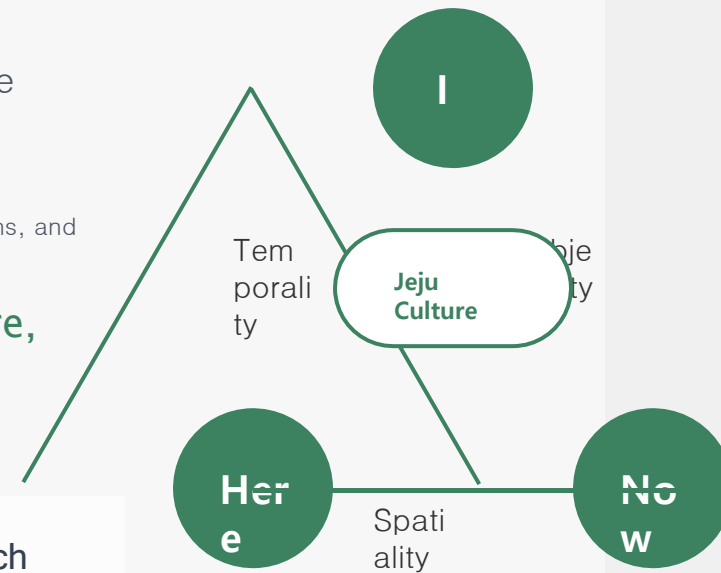
Jeju's Three Abundances (samda) and Five Abundances (oda) are natural expressions of earth-water-fire-wind and yin-yang and the five elements



Serendipity Analysis of Jeju Culture: Empathy and 'I, Here, Now'

- **A Culture Where Jeju's Nature, Humanity, Time, and Space Commune**
Jeju's nature has always required human mediation, forming a culture that resonates with the changing of the four seasons
- **Traditional Houses, Olle, Shamanic Beliefs, and Community**
The house structure divided into an inner quarter (angeori) and an outer quarter (bakgeori), the olle paths, and shamanic beliefs such as Yeongdeung Halmang express Jeju's distinctive culture of empathy
- **The Subjective and Practical Meaning Represented by 'I, Here, Now'**
Jeju culture pursues the harmony of nature and humanity through the fractal structure embedded in Maitreya faith and ancestor worship

"Jeju culture possesses its own distinctive culture while also retaining much of Korea's indigenous culture—a treasure trove of serendipity."



Conclusion and Implications

- **Serendipity as the Core of Identity Formation and Industrialization**
Serendipity-based research resolves the identity crisis of Jeju culture and presents a new paradigm for turning local culture into tourism resources.
- **Emphasizing Universality, Creativity, and Connectivity**
Through creative interpretation that connects to universal values beyond local uniqueness, we discover new competitiveness for local culture.
- **Charting a Future Direction for Local Culture**
The serendipity approach grounded in responsiveness theory offers a new methodology not only for Jeju culture but for the study and utilization of all local cultures.

"Serendipity is not mere chance but a creative order discovered in the context of 'I, Here, Now.' Jeju culture reveals its true value when it is reinterpreted through such serendipity."

Jeju Serendipity and Jeju Culture

Introducing the beauty of chance and creativity found in Jeju, where nature, myth, society, science, and culture come together.



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What Is Serendipity?

Serendipity refers to creative discovery arising from an unexpected occasion or chance, or a fateful encounter.

In Jeju, serendipity emerges across various dimensions (nature, myth, culture, and more). The cyclical order of nature, the symbols of love and fortune, and the process of creative discovery are woven into Jeju's culture and landscape.



Jeju, the Island of Chance
and Discovery

Overview of Jeju Serendipity

Jeju serendipity manifests practically in nature, love, fortune, creativity, science, and culture, each with its own distinctive mode of chance, discovery, law of cycles, and innovativeness.

In Jeju, love, fortune, creativity, science, and culture—grounded in nature— influence one another and form a cyclical structure.



Nature — The Cosmic Cycle of Hallasan and the Oreum



Fortune — An Island of Peace and Opportunity



Science — Environmental Adaptation and Sustainability



Love — The Legends of Samseonghyeol and Honinji



Creativity — Jeju Folk Traditions and Everyday Wisdom



Culture — Community and the Jeju Spirit



 Jeju
Landsc
ape

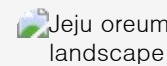
Jeju's Serendipity as I, Here,
Now

Jeju Serendipity in Nature

Jeju's nature reveals the law of cosmic cycles. Its galaxy-shaped terrain and the 360 oreum spread around Hallasan resemble a miniature of the universe.

Jeju has a 'Path of Water' and a 'Path of Fire' that embody the harmony of yin and yang. The Path of Water evokes analogical thinking and the Path of Fire evokes warm empathy, symbolizing the harmonious relationship between nature and humankind.

In the serendipity of Jeju's nature—Hyeopjaegul Cave, Cheonjeyeon Falls, Seongsan Ilchulbong, and more—geographic features combine with mythic imagination to create distinctive cultural value.



Path of Water

Hallim Park →
Sanbangsan →
Yongmeori →
Cheonjeyeon Falls →
Jeongbang Falls



Path of Fire

Jeju Folklore and Natural History Museum →
Manjanggul Cave
→ Seongsan Ilchulbong →
Sangumburi

the principles of cycle and the analogical patterns found in Jeju's nature

Jeju's Serendipity as Love

Jeju combines symbols of love—mythic legends, Samseonghyeol, Honinji, and the dol hareubang—with its appeal as a honeymoon destination.

The very topography of Jeju, where the fire of Hallasan and the water of the Pacific, and the yin and yang of North and South Jeju form a harmony, holds the serendipity of love. The stories of Samseonghyeol and Honinji, tied to the legend of Xu Fu, have been passed down as a beautiful love story of Northeast Asia.



 Jeju dol
hareubang

The dol hareubang, symbol of
Jeju's love and fortune

Jeju's Serendipity as Fortune

Jeju Island is known as an island of fortune and peace. Visits by Gorbachev, Bush, and Yang Shangkun made Jeju the wellspring of the Cold War's thaw.



The Legend of Xu Fu and Samseonghyeol — the story of Xu Fu, who came in search of the elixir of immortality



Horse culture — the historical value of the Jeju horse, called the heavenly



horse; Haenyeo culture — a symbol of managerial skill and high income; Dol



hareubang and Seolmundae Halmang — the guardian deities of Jeju



 Jeju
haenyeo

Haenyeo culture, a symbol of Jeju's
fortune and opportunity

Jeju's Serendipity as Creativity

Every great discovery or problem-solving begins with finding a common pattern among things that seem unrelated. Jeju is a treasure trove of such analogical thinking and creativity.



Neo-Confucian creativity found in the culture of stone, wind, and women



Problem-solving wisdom embedded in traditional structures such as the dottongsi, sandam, and deureumdol



A cultural tradition of community-based collaboration and knowledge sharing



Innovative solutions seen in the Olle trails, thatched houses, and horse culture

 Jeju stone-wall path

 Jeju thatched house

 Jeju haenyeo

Traces of creativity embedded in Jeju's everyday life

Jeju Serendipity as Science

Jeju Island's mode of environmental adaptation reveals a distinctive scientific reasoning and sustainable solutions. The principles of yin–yang and the five phases, and of earth, water, fire, and wind, are deeply woven into Jeju's natural environment and daily life.

The yin–yang and five–phases system — the scientific link between the Three Abundances (stone, wind, women) and the Five Abundances (Three Abundances + drought + horses)



Hallasan and the dol hareubang — the central axis of cosmic creation and its astronomical meaning

Stone walls and water management — sustainable science and technology such as wind gaps



and rainwater use; the everyday scientific wisdom of galot (persimmon–dyed clothing), baryeong, batbolligi, and silkworms



 Jeju stone wall

"Drawing on Neo-Confucian thought, Jeju early on possessed a scientific reasoning that regarded the island as a symbol of the universe."

Jeju Serendipity as Culture

Through folk traditions and community—myths, gememassim, sunureum, and the Chilmeoridang Gut—Jeju's cyclical, openness, and cosmopolitanism have merged with a modern creative culture.

Jeju's culture connects nature, myth, and communal wisdom into one, forming a distinctive serendipity. The contemporary meaning of the halmang and the haenyeo, and the value of collective creativity, are being newly illuminated.

Seolmundae
Halmang

Chilmeoridan
g Gut

Geme
massi

Sunureu
m

Modeumbeolc
ho
(communal
grave-
tending)

Pumasi
(labor
exchange)

Haenyeo
culture

Openne
ss



 Jeju
haenyeo

The Jeju haenyeo, symbol of
community culture

Seven Methods Created Through Creative

Seven Steps to Realizing Jeju's Serendipity

1

Perceptual Training

Training in doubt and in shifting perspectives to view things from diverse angles

2

Leeway

A foundation for new attempts and creation through temporal, mental, and material leeway

3

Open Thinking

Respect for diversity, exchange with the outside, and communal inclusiveness

4

Command of High-Quality Information

Seeking out meaningful information amid the flood of data and analyzing it independently

5

Learning

The process of reaching mature wisdom through study and repeated practice

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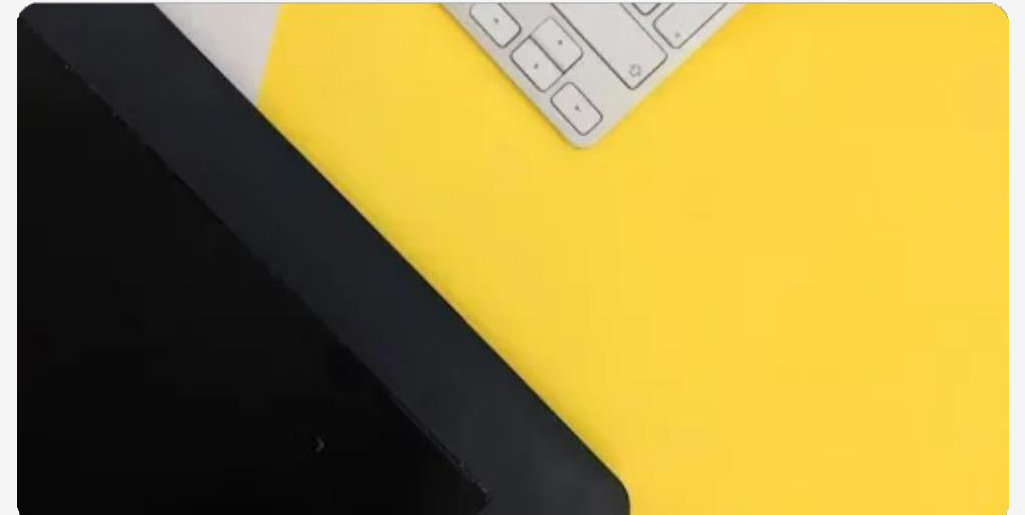
Focus

Creation and innovation through selection and focus, passion and immersion

7

Logical Thinking

The logical systematization and structuring of diverse ideas and conceptions



Conclu sion

Jeju is an island of serendipity that turns chance into opportunity. Here, where nature's laws of cycle, the symbols of love and fortune, and the source of creative thinking come together, we discover new possibilities.

Its diverse values and experiences show that Jeju is a leading model for the future creative ecosystem. Through the seven modes of creative thinking, we can all realize serendipity in everyday life.



"Jeju's serendipity is the cycle of chance and creativity found in the common patterns of nature and culture."

A Serendipitous Reappraisal of Jeju Culture

Serendipity as I, Here, Now, and the
Creation of Jeju Culture

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Research Background and Objectives

This study reexamines the distinctiveness and transformation of Jeju culture, along with the possibility of cultural creation from the perspective of 'Serendipity.'
Approaching Jeju Island's unique social and historical context through existential and structural analysis, it seeks to propose approaches to cultural expansion applicable to contemporary society.



The Defining Features of 21st-Century Culture

- The 21st century is the age of culture: creating new cultures through encounters among diverse cultures
- Huntington's thesis that "culture matters" is now deeply embedded in our lives
- The essence of culture is a reflection of identity: only when one's own identity is fully expressed does it rise to a truly distinguished culture
- Cultural diversity and creativity are emphasized amid globalization, informatization, and advances in science and technology
- Jeju Culture: a distinctive identity that is both the same as and different from Korea, and different yet the same



Existential and Structural Analysis of Jeju Culture — The Island's Character

Jeju Island bears the characteristics of insular isolation and voluntary disconnection. Once a place of exile, in the modern era a place to leave, it has now shifted in meaning to a "paradise" where people actively seek out culture.

Isolation

Passive character, an attitude of complaint and misfortune, the Jeju of the past

Disconnection

Active character, an attitude of gratitude and happiness, the Jeju of today

Once isolated like the Galapagos, Jeju is now reinterpreted in modern society as a valuable space where its natural environment and cultural distinctiveness have been preserved



Existential and Structural Analysis of Jeju Culture — Natural Conditions

Distinctive natural features such as Mt. Hallasan, the oreum, and lava caves have shifted in perception from disaster to blessing. A harsh natural environment became the driving force behind communal spirit, self-reliance, and unique cultural assets.

- On a small island measuring 73 km east-to-west and 31 km north-to-south are distributed 368 oreum and some 160 lava caves
- Centered on Mt. Hallasan, diverse climate zones form with altitude, yielding a mild climate with an annual average of 14°C
- The harsh environment of dark-brown volcanic soil strengthened residents' ceaseless efforts and communal spirit

Mt. Hallasan

Mt.
Halla
san

Oreum

Ore
um

Lava cave

Lava
cave



Existential and Structural Analysis of Jeju Culture — Geopolitical Position

Jeju Island lies at the center of Korea, China, and Japan, and sits at the hub of East Asia's maritime routes.

- A strategic point connecting Russia and China with Japan and Southeast Asia
- Historically subject to the influence of various external powers (the Yuan dynasty, Japan, etc.)
- During the Japanese colonial period, it was used as a last line of defense to protect the Japanese mainland
- The geopolitical particularity of being the southernmost point of the Korean Peninsula became an important driver of Jeju's cultural development

 The geopolitical location of
Jeju Island



The Historical Transformation of Jeju Culture

Jeju Island has forged a distinctive cultural identity through a range of historical events. A history of hardship and ordeal is being reinterpreted today as a cultural asset.

Ancient-Medieval

From the era of the Tamna Kingdom to rule by the Yuan dynasty

Joseon period

Jeju as a place of exile; the Yi Jae-su Rebellion

Japanese colonial period

Japanese military base; forced relocation of residents

Modern era

The April 3 Incident; development of the tourism industry

Past

- An identity as an isolated island and a place of exile
- Perceived as a place abandoned by the outside world
- A place of pain and wounds
- An object of dark tourism

Present and future

- Rediscovery of its value as a world-class tourist destination
- Recognition of cultural distinctiveness and diversity
- Reborn as a place of healing and hope
- Cultural creation through stories of overcoming hardship



Cultural Expansion through Empathy and Analogical Thinking

Empathy

A value that modern society urgently needs, empirically supported by the discovery of mirror neurons in neuroscience

- A basis for grasping existence and structure
- A foundation for moral theory
- The central moral culture of Jeju's mutual harmony

Analogical thinking

Similar to correlative thinking in Chinese philosophy, a mode of thought through association and comparison

- Connected to Eastern modes of thought
- The parable (yuyan) mode of the Zhuangzi
- Analogical contrast between Jeju's nature and history

Storytelling and cultural expansion: empathy and analogical thinking play a central role in producing storytelling grounded in Jeju's history and geography, through which Jeju Culture can be expanded and shared



Serendipity and the Creation of Jeju Culture

What is Serendipity?

- A phenomenon that creates new value through unexpected discoveries different from what one was seeking
- A creative process combining chance discovery with insight
- In Jeju Culture, the process of sublimating historical ordeals and external influences into positive change



Key elements in the creation of Jeju Culture

- 1 Autonomous adoption of foreign cultures: creatively transforming historical external influences and sublimating them into a culture uniquely Jeju's own
- 2 Creative transformation of adversity: turning the disadvantageous conditions of isolation and barrenness into cultural assets
- 3 Reconstruction of identity: maintaining and developing Jeju's own distinctiveness and identity amid diverse external influences
- 4 Contemporary application: harnessing the serendipitous character of Jeju Culture as a model for creating new value in modern society



Conclusion and Implications

Rediscovering the value of Jeju Culture

- Jeju's existential characteristics (island, nature, geopolitical location) form its cultural distinctiveness
- A process of structural change that sublimated historical hardship into an asset
- The healing elements of Jeju Culture and the potential for contemporary use of its communal spirit

Directions for serendipitous creation

- Developing strategies for cultural expansion through empathy and analogical thinking
- Jeju Culture as a model of the autonomous adoption and creative transformation of foreign cultures
- The potential for sustainable growth as a global cultural heritage

"Jeju Culture can become a cultural model that, through serendipity from the perspective of I, Here, Now, sublimates the wounds of the past into assets of the present"



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