

Perception of Koreans by Tamils in India



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Divine Relationship through wedlock



The relationship between India and Korea dates back to mythological age. Cordial relationship between the two countries extends back to 48AD, when Princess Sri Ratna travelled from the kingdom of Ayodhya in North India to Korea to marry her dream Prince – Kim Suro .(Tale in a nutshell – King Padmasen, Ayodhya -Tiger – Satyamuni’s Prophecy-IlJin’ – crane -)

commercial engagement between India and Korea



- Archeologists discovered a stone with two fish kissing each other, a symbol of the Gaya Kingdom that is unique to the Mishra royal family in Ayodhya, India.



Similar mythological stories



- God's way – YI RIUK - Vs Shravana 's Curse to King Dasaratha



Stories on the theme of true love -



- “Ambikapathy and Amaravathy” is the most popular love story in Tamil Literature. The love blooms between a poet and the daughter of a king.
- An acid test- To compose 100 poems on immortal divine love.
- Amaravathy by mistake counts the invocation to the muses as one and hence while reaching 99 ,she comes out from behind the screen.
- Against the condition laid by Ottakoothar , the 100th song is about Amaravathi’s beauty. He is beheaded and Amaravathi too dies on the spot at the shock of seeing her beloved beheaded.

A Korean story during King Sung-jong's period (AD1488-1495) Charan and Keydong



- Pyong-an Province is one of the eight provinces of Korea noted even today for its erudition and scholarship
- In the past during 1488-1495, this story did happen in Korea
- Charan, charming dancer with mastery in classical litt
- Governor's son –allowed to be friends as she is the most beautiful girl in the province
- Six year term comes to an end. Girl is left behind(Shocked)....narrate the rest ...Keydong's dad now a Chief magistrate

Cheung-Puck Chang -the Seer



- Versatile genius with mastery in Astronomy, medicine, Math, fortune telling, and skill in decoding the communication between birds and animals . A Taoist with strange revelations
- Could see what was happening 300 km away and tell people around exactly what is happening there like a TV telecast commentary.Spiritual – eye –distant vision(Divya Dhristi)
- In Meditation a fellow sage namely Whattamn, chuckled to himself- Disciples surprised-Manastery of Ha-in, a monk had fallen into a huge bean gruel pot. Others were drinking the soup not knowing the plight of the monk inside the huge pot.
- Cheung –Puck-Chang once visited paternal aunt-she was concerned over safety of a servant gone to collect harvest-Divya Dhristy- Servant crossing Bird Pass in Mun-Kyong country and is being beaten for not respecting the head of office by his servants with straw boots. Later verified and found correct(Sanjaya in Mahabharatha)

Calendars of Tamil Nadu and Korea



- Our calendar observes 12 lunar months. In Tamil we call a month as “*MADHAM*” and each month is divided into two halves
- Krishna paksha for the *dark half* and Shukla Paksha for the *light half* lasting 15 days each.
- All Hindu festivals and traditional activities are as per this calendar
- All the festivals of Korea are as per their lunar calendar dates.

Linguistic similarity



- ✓ Korean words for mother is “*Amma*” and that of father is “*Appa*”. What a strange, these are the same words for father and mother in my mother tongue Tamil
- ✓ Also the grammar structure of Tamil/Dravidian languages and Korean Language is quite similar!

The inside story



- How a Korean scholar came to present a research paper on Korean and Tamil similarity in the world Tamil conference makes an interesting story.
- Jung Nam Kim was travelling way back in 2003 in a train in Canada. He overheard a child calling its mom as “Amma” .He looked for someone from Korea but found none .Again he heard the word spoken by the child .She was from Tamil Nadu.

Story of the Scholar



- As he analysed the conversations within themselves, he could not help but notice how similar the dialect was to Korean. He decided to dig deeper. He went to a book store and bought two standard dictionaries- one Tamil-English and another English-Tamil. He has found like 500 words in Tamil having same pronunciation and meaning in Korean.
- So that's it! He did a research and presented his paper "Similarities between Tamil and Korean languages" in the Conference.

Sacred Sixty celebrated



- ✓ The lunar calendar of Koreans has 60 years with different names. 60 years marks the completion of one full zodiac cycle. In the olden days many people did not live upto 60.
- ✓ At that time if a person completed 60 years, it was observed as a special event because he has seen the full Zodiac cycle.
- ✓ It was compulsory for children to celebrate his birthday with a large feast and merrymaking.
- ✓ Many relatives and friends were invited to extend congratulations to the parents. This is exactly similar to our Indian tradition.

Korean Traditional Marriages



- ✓ It is surprising that the marriage customs of India prevailed in Korea from the ancient past till recent times
- ✓ Korean traditional marriage, the explanation was as follows: *“In ancient times, weddings were held in the bride's yard or house.*
- ✓ *The groom traveled by horse to the bride's house and after the wedding ceremony took his wife in a palanquin (sedan chair) to his parents' house to live.*

Agriculture and food Habits



- ✓ Rice was and still is their staple food. Even in South India rice is the staple food.
- ✓ The agricultural practice was similar to that of ours. In the sowing season, farmers used to help each other to planting the rice paddies.
- ✓ The plowing or sowing was carried out singing traditional songs, telling folktales etc...
- ✓ After the crop is harvested, before consuming that farmers used to offer the crop to the divine nature and gods, pray for the good crop and then used to consume it. In Tamil Nadu, We have a harvest Festival in January every year.

Thanking for the Harvest



- Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu
- SURYA Pongal, Mattupongal



Bullfighting – A traditional game now under Ban – Embracing the bull



Ancestral marriage customs



The bride and groom wore formal court costumes for the wedding ceremony. Ordinary people were permitted to wear the luxurious clothes only on their wedding day.

Hand lanterns were used for lighting the way from the groom's home to the bride's home on the night before the wedding.

Going to bride's home in India



Wedding Procession with light on Heads



Bride taken in a palanquin



Ancestral marriages alike



This is exactly similar to India way of wedding. Even in our custom usually the marriage will take place at the bride's place.

On the day before the marriage, groom travelled to bride's place in a procession. After the marriage ceremony got over, groom returns to his place along with bride in a similar palanquin.

So much common. Though these days this tradition almost no more exists in Korea, in India it still exists with some modification!

Marrying from the same blood line – A taboo



- ✓ The famous family names found in Korea are Kim, Lee, Park, Kang, Choi, Yu etc...
- ✓ The very interesting fact of this tradition is that in the past it was generally considered a taboo for a man and a woman to marry if they both have the same family name from the same ancestor.
- ✓ This tradition is still being followed by majority of Koreans though there may be some exceptions.

Same taboo in Tamil Nadu



- Again this is in a very similar way to our Indian tradition. The family name in Korean can be compared to '**Gotram**' of a Tamil equivalent.
- In our tradition also boy and girl belong to the same Gotra are not supposed to marry each other as they are from the same blood line and are of the same family. What a coincidence!

Desire for a male Child



- Historically, the Korean family has been patrilineal. The most important concern for the family group was producing a male heir to carry on the family line and to perform ancestor rituals in the household and at the family gravesite.
- Even in India it was everyone's dream to have at least one son even though he may have a number of daughters. (Krishnan, The Goldsmith story) We also do have a well-defined nomenclature for relationships within the family.

Modernization through Education

- South Korea's spectacular progress in modernization and economic growth since the Korean War is largely attributable to the willingness of individuals to invest a large amount of resources in education: the improvement of "human capital."
- The traditional esteem for the educated man, now extends to scientists, technicians, and others working with specialized knowledge.
- Highly educated technocrats and economic planners could claim much of the credit for their country's economic successes since the 1960s. Scientific professions have been generally regarded as the most prestigious by South Koreans in the 1980s.

Science Stream Vs Vocational stream at Secondary level



- Similar to Korea, there is a strong dislike for Vocational stream at School level in Tamil Nadu also among good students who usually score well
- It is stranger still in Korea, that students aim at SKY(Seoul National University, Korea University and Yonsei University)even when large number of vacancies go unfilled which need Vocational skills.
- Even when 3.3 million graduates were jobless in 2013,the parents' urging their wards to pursue degree course in prestigious Universities (SKY) continued.

Parental perception on Education



- Today, Korea boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world. An emphasis on school education is often cited as a foundation for Korea's rapid economic growth over the past four decades as it has produced an educated labour force as well as the scientists, engineers and specialists needed for various professional fields.
- When it comes to education, quality education for children is priority number one for every parent. There is a strong tradition in Tamil Nadu, like in Korea, the parents are very keen on education for their children.

Similarity in pre-independence Struggle



Learning from abroad

Hwang Yundŏk a minor central bureaucrat (in 1906-1907, a sixth-seventh rank official at the Ministry of Court) published Bismarck's biography as a separate volume. Hwang's biography, a bestseller in its day, made "Bismarck" a household name among Korea's modernists and popularized the expression *ch'ŏrhyŏl chŏngch'aek* (Steel and Blood Policy) – which Hwang defined as "seeking peace and prosperity by expanding state's might"

Bismarck –the inspiration



- the foremost interest of Korean readers of Bismarck's biographies being to save their country from impending doom than to rebuild it into a Germany-like military power. Both Japanese and Koreans had reasons to admire the centralized system of popular education in Bismarckian Germany, with its potential to instil patriotism in people's minds. Bismarck, with his image of the modern-day "sage founder of a state", became an icon of "model" statehood in early modern Korea.

Lessons from America



Another famed Japanese biography of a “modern hero” that captured the imagination of Korea’s educated youth in the early twentieth century, was Fukuyama Yoshiharu’s 1900 biography of George Washington (1732-1799). Both Chinese and Korean translators of the texts are assumed to have been interested in the more revolutionary version of political modernity that George Washington’s “righteous uprising against British king’s greed and oppression” was understood to represent.

Heroes who inspired including Kim Namju ,A poet like Barathiyar



Solidarity in suffering



- India, seen by modernist authors of the early twentieth century as the very symbol of colonial enslavement, came by the 1920s-1930s to be perceived as the epitome of the anti-colonial struggle. As such, it was a beacon of hope for Koreans – to be celebrated in poems like this one by Kim Tongmyŏng (1900-1968)

Poem on Independence- Kim Tongmyŏng (1900-1968):



O, how glorious!
Are you rising up at last?
Clenching two fists
Prepared to play the part of iron
hammers in the bloody struggle.
The chains on your feet –
Thousands, tens of thousands of
them.
But who can change your mind
Directed towards your lover,
[independence]?

March forward,
The brave fighter of the East
Won't the Red Sea divide
Everywhere you put your gallant
steps?
How can you hesitate at the sight
of high mountains
Or deep waters?
On that hill, under colourful
clouds.
The lover, [independence], is
waiting.
Go quickly to meet him!

Lessons from India



- The petitioning of moderates during the British for “British Raj” for “Home Rule ” in the early stages of the freedom struggle was not desirable for the radical thinkers of Korea
- But they admired Quit India movement which paralyzed the British administration which resounded all over the country as a single demand
- They understood the pain of Indians and the great sacrifices of Tamil Patriots in the freedom struggle as they were also struggling to free themselves from their colonial boss Japan.

Celebrate Independence on the same day



Finally to end the biggest co-incidence is in the Independence Day. India got Independence from Great Britain on August 15th 1947. Similarly Korea got liberated from Japan's colonial rule on 15th August 1945. Both the countries celebrate their Independence day every year on August 15th!

A troubling Question



Did the political culture of anti-imperialist solidarity which inspired pre-colonial and colonial-period Korean intellectuals to look at the trials, tribulations and desperate struggles of faraway Indians, Poles, Vietnamese or Filipinos as continuation of or parallel to Korea's own distressed attempts to stay afloat and sail further in the troubled seas of the modern world, die with the end of the colonial period?

We want Korea to sustain the pre-colonial relationship it held with India and other friendly nations



Thankyou!

