



Cultural Partnership Initiative

Traditions of Pregnancy and Hot Bath Ceremonies in South
Korea and Palau

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Abstract

The practice of mother and child-healing and celebration is perhaps one of the intangible cultural heritages that has continued and survived through several nations and today's western influence. While others may argue that the practice has changed drastically, this is mostly witnessed at the superficial level particularly during the celebration. What was once a private and sacred moment for the mother and child has transformed into a huge celebration for the community and to the traditional women this is taboo. On the other hand, inter sacredness remains within the treatment and healing process as a secret heritage safeguarded by the lineage.

Introduction

Asia and the Pacific region is an area rich with various elements of intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage has been handed down from generation to generation and has contributed to the development of cultural diversity and the creativity of humanity. Intangible cultural heritage for social development is well recognized as it represents the evolvement of historical traditions and the cultural identity of a society embodied in creative expression.

In particular, the characteristics of the Pacific islands played a significant role for islanders in developing diverse and unique cultures in the process of adjusting to their environments. Maybe for this reason, the cultural heritage present in the Pacific is closely linked to nature. Especially, when you consider the characteristic of being surrounded by a seemingly endless ocean, it forms a long lasting cultural heritage where traditional cultures, such as the indigenous knowledge of different skills and methods of fishing, tools (weapon), and craft-making techniques, is transmitted to present generation.

As mentioned earlier that Pacific known for its richness of cultural heritage, and much of this heritage is still largely incorporated within the daily life of the people. However, social changes brought on by the influence of globalization and modernization is threatening the existence of this valuable intangible cultural heritage, leaving it exposed to the danger of disappearance or becoming extinction. In this regard, interest in ICHCAP and the UNESCO Office of the Pacific of ICH safeguarding effort have been increasing in the Pacific region, as well as my country of Palau and as our efforts have progressed, regional cooperation has become much needed. Bearing this in mind, ICHCAP has been moving forward with collaborative efforts with Pacific Member States.

Even today, despite the influence of generations of explorers, traders, soldiers, and administrators from several nations, Palauans still maintain the cultural traditions that make it unique in the Pacific. Unlike many other countries and their cultures, Palau and South Korea also maintain their unique traditional cultural practice of mother and child-healing process that has different way of practice and methods, but the concept are similar in a way of healing a body of birth mother that have being continues and survived through many colonialism and several dynasties until today.



**“Traditional Pregnancy and Hot Bath Ceremony in Palau”:
A Married Woman’s First Pregnancy (Buuldil¹ and Delsongel Beluu Ceremonies)**

When a mother misses her monthly period, it is the beginning of her pregnancy and she must

¹ **Buuldil** literally is the smell of the womb and rupturing or breaking of the womb. The term refers to the time before women learned to deliver babies naturally; at that time, the woman’s stomach was cut open to deliver the baby. Facing death, she was returned by her husband’s side to her mother’s side for their care and delivery of the child. Desongel is to @slice open@. The term again refers to the above legend. Desongel also can mean raw fish or other proteins (odoim) eaten, without starches (ongraol). This refers to the fact that her mother’s brother (okdemaol) alone is responsible to work, provide the food and the omebael and to receive the udoud from her husband’s side.

inform her mother. Her mother then gives her advice (llach) on pregnancy. Listed below are the traditional rules concerning pregnancy:

1. The pregnant woman should not walk or do anything in the rain. Should she do so, when she is undergoing the hot bath (omesurch) after delivery, it will rain frequently until the omesurch is complete.
2. She shouldn't stand in the evening sun's rays just before sunset; otherwise, her baby will be bothered by the sun and have a tendency to cry most of the time.
3. She shouldn't break a spider web when going for a walk, otherwise her labor will be protracted and difficult.
 - a) She must not walk by sacred places (tungl); otherwise her baby will be born abnormal.
 - b) She shouldn't be startled by an astonishing or frightening sight because she will deliver a baby with something on his body resembling the startling sight.
4. She shouldn't eat any food that has a strong or lasting odor because she will have that odor after the delivery of the child.
5. She shouldn't covet another's food or crops, nor take them, because she will deliver a baby who will grow to have an abnormally strong desire to take or steal others' food and crops.
6. She shouldn't eat fruit bat because after delivery, the placenta will move back into the uterus.

The pregnant woman shouldn't walk alone on the road. There must be a companion to watch and guide her so that she does not do restricted or prohibited things during her pregnancy.

The parents prepare for their daughter's pregnancy by making a new basket and setting it aside from the others. In the basket, they put a toluk, which is a women's udoud made of turtle shell, an chesiuch (pearl shell udoud), a spoon and betel nuts and leaves for her chew. The parents also look for nutritious foods to put in her basket such as kukau (taro) and other prestige foods.

The father or the maternal uncle (okdemelel) of the woman kills a pig for her and the pig's head goes to the husband's father. The pig is cut up and fired and preserved for her consumption. They also make syrup for her to drink, or purchase the services of specialists who prepared it. Her okdemaol (the maternal uncle) contacts people to provide hunting and fishing delicacies as her kerremelel. This traditional practice is done only for a married woman who is pregnant with her first child. All these special and loving treatments accorded a pregnant woman date back to the time before natural childbirth became known to Palauans. In the old days, when a woman got pregnant, people often assumed that the end was near, for her stomach would be opened with a piece of crude lild (thin bamboo strip), to make a way for the baby to be taken out of the womb. This practice usually was fatal to the woman giving birth.

As she approaches her fifth month, we say "ng mesumech el rrodel"² which means she returns to her place of birth (her mother's house). Her mother's brother (okdemaol) then hangs the

omebael (udoud [money] worn during a first pregnancy to ensure the healthy development of the baby) around her neck. Her mother prepares a fragrant ointment made of coconut oil mixed with turmeric, other fragrant herbs and all kinds of sweet smelling leaves. The ointment will be applied to the entire body of the expectant woman daily until birth. The mother then puts on her btekel (coconut husk fiber woven belt to hold up grass skirt) and weaves her stomach cover to wear for walks around the beluu (village). The pregnant woman remains in this state of

Preparedness until it is for seclusion. She continues to follow the advises on the taboos of pregnancy until the birth time arrives.

At seventh months, the husband's parents send words to the parents of their daughter-in-law to inform them of the date they will come to omuu er a diil-literally to rupture the womb. At the appointed day for the buu el dill, or rupture of the womb ceremony, the parents of the young husband and their relatives go to the young wife's parent's house for the ceremony. The okdemelel (maternal uncle) of the expectant mother and their relatives will have prepared foods for the buu el diil ceremony.

When the family of the young husband and their relatives arrive, they carry a husked mature coconut, which has barely sprouted through the husk. They will have cleaned off fiber and covered it with turmeric. This coconut is usually a madeldubech (matured coconut), which has been suspended off the ground so it is quite dry. The woman from husband's side who will crack open the coconut is usually not shy, but rather humorous and easygoing; one who easily make people laugh and feel at ease.

At the opportune time, this old woman brings forth the coconut with comical movements, and walks straight toward the pregnant young wife and her husband. She shakes her head in funny ways and makes funny facial expressions as she does this. As she approaches the couple she exclaims, "If you are born a male, you will be like your father who is industrious, hardworking, financially adept, and berkorkemall (attentive and careful in everything). If you are born a female; you will be like me, humorous, funny, beautiful, and lucky as well as possessing all the good qualities a female should have! As this taken place, everyone watching and predicts the gender of the baby which is still in the womb. When this part of the ceremony is over, a more serious discussion begins. The husband's father goes to take the duuschiau (money pieces, only klsuk); He takes them and examines them. If there are no small pieces among them, he holds a piece briefly and returns it to the father of the expecting wife, as osumech-ulitech.

At this juncture, the father of the young husband will put out a money piece, usually a precious kluk piece which will be then known as the buuldiil, payment for the rupture of the womb, and another piece known as dik (literally "a side support will be paid out"). Usually one dik is sufficient and appropriate, but where there are many pieces, and the family may want to

² **Ng mesumech el rrodel** means to return an adopted child to her mother's family. A daughter is under her father's care, but once she is pregnant with her first child, her mother's brother takes this responsibility. Even though she has a father and may live with him, she is considered as an adopted child to him. Her mother's brother or the mother's side is her true place.

show off their wealth, they may put a second dik, which means there will be two pieces for dik, one for each side of the pregnant woman. These pieces are to be received by the maternal uncle of the expecting young wife. However, if she does not have maternal uncle, her brother may receive the pieces and in the event that she does not have a brother, then her father can rightfully receive the pieces. This whole ceremonial process for the married woman on her first pregnancy is known as Del Songel Beluu.

“Mengidabrudkool is a Legendary Natural Childbirth in Palau”:

Mgendabrudkool was a spider-like a demi-god who lived in a breadfruit tree in Ngibtal, an ancient village which has since become extinct. The village was situated between Melkeok and Ngiwal State and is currently a reef with shallow shoals around it. From there he travelled to Ngermechmau village in Ngiwal, following his web strand which connected to the top of a mango tree. Eventually, he developed an amorous relationship with Turang; he transformed himself into human form, courted and finally married her.

In ancient Palau, the pregnancy and birth process was difficult and critical time for a family and clan. When a woman got pregnant, it was assumed she was getting closer to her death, for when she was ready to give birth, a midwife would performed crude surgery, opening her stomach with sharp sticks made of lild (*Schizostachyum Lima*), a thin bamboo, to take the baby out; and often the mother would die in the process. Delicate and critical, cheroll (birth) was an occasion which demanded the full and caring attention of the family and clan as well as the neighbours and the village. Kinswomen would gather with the family of the expectant mother.

When Mengidabrudkool married Turang, they lived separately in the Ulengang, a precinct of the house usually reserved for ancestral spirits. It was not too far from Ngeesechei house. Turang conceived soon after she married Mengidabrudkool and from there on, she began eating all the special foods from Ngeesechei house which her family prepared for her and the child growing inside her. Tradition dictated that special foods being prepared for a pregnant woman throughout the pregnancy period. Mengidabrudkool, who was reserved, quietly cared for his wife and attended to her needs until the birth time arrived. When time came for delivery, it was nearly dawn and all the people were still asleep. Being a demi-god, Mengidabrudkool ensured that Turang gave birth to a healthy and robust baby boy who uttered a loud cry. In addition, to the normal morning birds' calls and cries, a loud baby cry awakened all the women kin of the house who had congregated for the labour to show support and wait for the birth of the baby. They Exclaimed in fear and cried out, “Our child has died in Ulengang!” They all jumped out, grabbed whatever sharps sticks were at hand in the kitchen and rushed to Ulengang. Neighbors women did the same, all intended to beat Mengidabrudkool who was not supposed to assist in the birth. Traditionally, men were not allowed to be present when woman gave birth.

The women arrived in the Ulengang and found Turang alive and healthy, sitting with the baby. Their anger turned to joy and happiness, and they began singing and dancing, exclaiming, “A

chedalikikii, a delal a di koiei, me a ngalek a di koiei” (“Goodness gracious, the mother is alive and the child is alive”). This event marked the transformation of the birth process in Palau. No longer were pregnant women opened up crudely during labour. Rather, the natural childbirth process became the way birth occurred in Palau.

Traditional Birth Practices (Cheroll):

When a woman’s labor pains begin, her mother positions her so that she faces the tang (house post) of the rsel orengodel (corner of the house where cooking takes place) and gives her daughter instructions on birth techniques. On giving birth, her mother or a sister of the mother who is attending the birth holds the umbilical cord with her fingers and strips it to remove the blood, strips the outer surface of the lild (thin bamboo) [Schizostachyum Lima], snips the umbilical cord with lild and presses the back of the baby’s tongue (to ensure the baby does not grow up to be talkative or a gossip). She then takes a thin piece of string and ties the end of the cut umbilical cord. The mother then cleans the baby with water in a keai³ to remove birth fluids. After the baby is bathed, she places the baby to sleep in another keiai. The keai on which the baby was bathed is used to wrap the rached (placenta) and is buried in the yard. A plant is placed on top of this place.

The part of the umbilical cord that was cut and tied on the baby’s navel falls off in about three to seven days. When it does so, it is put away. Then they look for an astringent medicine for the healing of the navel. If the baby is a boy, the umbilical cord is firmly placed in the deep spot at the base of two coconut fronds (chesuchal)

which signifies that he will be good, skillful and courageous in all of the arts of men. If the baby is a girl, the cord is placed in the place between the leaves of the taro plants (chesuchal) which signifies she will be lucky and diligent in her womanly arts.

At birth, the husband’s family sends to the new mother’s family one basket of uncooked taro, to be roasted for her consumption. This is called “lkil a diil”-to hold the stomach or abdomen. In the meantime, she drinks the prescribed medicines to cleanse her and make her strong and healthy. When the baby’s navel has healed, she is ready to begin her Omesurch (Hot Water Baths).

The Hot Bath, Steaming and Presentation (Omesurech):

When a married woman has given birth to her first child, her mother, mother’s sister or a “sister” (merrengel or chudelel), will stay to care for the baby until the omesurch(hot baths) have been completed. The best foods are brought or prepared by the kin of the new mother (mlechell) to indicate how much she is loved. After all preparations for the hot baths have been completed and before the boiling of the osurech (water containing leaves of rebotel (wax apple tree), the

³ **Keai** is the bark of the betelnut tree. A newborn is swaddled in keai.

mother of the mlechell charcoals some cooked taro (Kukau) and brown coconut meat (ulechouch) and lets her eat this before the hot baths start. The mother or father of the mlechell obtains someone to give the hot baths. Before omesurech starts, the mother of the mlechell unties the omebael (Pregnancy Money). Chelsobel (food brought during omesurech) then begins, especially with raw food coming from the kin of the mother of the mlechell. The relatives of new mother bring raw taro to be roasted for her meal.

During the omesurech (hot bath), the new mother is bathed with the hot boiled leaves from wax apple tree. She drinks some of the liquid, and the woman giving baths uses some of this liquid to bathe the new mother. She eats dechedechomel (various herbal leaves to be chewed and swallowed with water. The number of days during which the new mother undergoes the hot baths depends on the number of days allotted either to her mother's kebliil (clan lineage) or her father's clan lineage. On the last day of hot bath, the kinswomen (the children of the house) collect especially frag rants herbs and prepared them for the medicinal pot for the next morning. The men build a bliukel (a dome frame made of stripped bamboo, bent and tied together). The bliukel will be covered with cloth to retain the heat from escaping. The next morning, the new mother undergoes her steaming in the bliukel. The female affine of the family (Buuch el Sechal) gather large taro (Brak) and boil them until next morning. This taro is used in the ongat. The morning of the omengat (hot bath ceremony) day is the time to stop the hot baths, but leave the pot of fragrant medicinal herbs on the fire. When the sun has passed midday, male kin build a chair to place in the steam hut (bliukel). The bliukel is covered heavily with blankets and mats woven of pandanus. First, new mother is covered heavily with turmeric oil and led into the bliukel (dome shaped like tent). She sits on a seat with a hole cut in 10 inches in diameter at centered. Close kinswomen by birth follow the new mother into the dome tent to act as guardians to ensure nothing happens to her. Next step, the medecinical hot bath water is placed under the seat beneath the center hole, followed by the ongat of giant taro. The door of the tent is closed. The blood relatives of the new mother maintain the required heat until they leave the bliuke⁴. They move the giant taro into the house, distributing it among the omeachel⁵ of the ceremony. Those who brought food as ongeseb⁶ during the omesurch(hot bath) period and those who are relatives of the mother of the new mother (mlechell) or relatives by kebliil(clan lineage) through the father of the new mother again prepare their share of food in baskets to bring home on the day of the steaming. The food is called ongat⁷.

⁴ **Bliukel** is a dome shaped like tent covered with heavy cloth with a temperature is as hot as possible, and the young mother must endure as much of the heat as she can. The heat helps to heal and is said to strengthen her work in the sun.

⁵ **Omeachel** are the kinswomen of the new mother who spent the entire period of omesirech in her parent's home, providing the mother of new mother with advised for hot bath procedures.

⁶ **Ongeseb** is generally consists of raw taro or tapioca (Cassava). It is brought by female kin and affines during the hot bath period to help the mother of the newly mother to feed those in attendance.

⁷ **Ongat** is a cooked assorted food in baskets, brought by female kin and affines (buuch el sechal) of the parents of the newly mother as their aid for the Hot Bath Ceremony.

Before emerging, the body and face of the new mother are rubbed with reng (turmeric oil). Her hair is fixed, and they put on the grass skirt that belongs to the kebliil (clan lineage) from which she obtained the number of days for her hot bath (omesurech), along with her woven belt (chelius). Word then is passed to the visiting family of the baby's father. This family is expected to place an udoud (Palauan money) around the new mother's neck. When they have done so, kinswomen of this family lay out the telutau (woven green coconut frons) on which she will stand, for her feet must be splashed with water and herbs on the telutau. They help her walk on other telutau which have been laid on the ground for her. Holding her hand, they walk her outside to stand on the mat (telutau) where the scented water is splashed on her feet. Then, the kinswomen of the baby's father splash the new mother's feet with water and herbs. Singing in joyous songs and dancing around the newly mother.



After this Hot Bath Ceremony, the mother and father of the newly mother say their farewell to the one who performed the hot bath. If there is udoud(money), they would give a small one; if not, then one toluk(women's money made out of turtle shell) is given, or a complete grass skirt(telechad). The specialist in the omesurech (hot bath) then packs her food into basket and returns home. The relatives of the baby's father give an udoud (money) to the okdemaol (the mother's brother of the newly mother), or her maternal uncle. This okdemaol is responsible for the pregnant woman, from the fifth month of pregnancy to the birth of the child. These ceremonies involving both sides of the family referred to as del songel beluu.

After the Hot Bath Ceremony, the newly mother continues to apply turmeric oil to keep her skin tender. She waits for a first child to be born to another house, family member, or neighbor. During this period, she still observes the things that are prohibited by taboo:

1. She should not have intercourse with her husband.
2. She should not eat any fatty foods.
3. She should not eat food with a strong, lasting odor.
4. She should not perform strenuous tasks.

5. She should not eat pounded taro, for it produces gas in the stomach, or other foods of this nature.

Should an omengat (hot bath) take place in another house within the next ten months, the new mother enters the bliukel (Steam Tent) a second time (mekesebech), as at her omengat (hot bath). However, if ten months elapse, but there is no other childbirth in the beluu (village), the mother of the mlechell (newly mother) goes on her own to pick fragrant herbs (ochod). She boils them, puts them in an osarch (wooden container) and gives to the mlechell (newly mother) which is her daughter. All the women at the birth of their first child should drink osau (a final medicine which as supposed to synergistically combine the effects of all birth medicine that have been consumed by this newly mother (mlechell). The mother of the new mother begins the preparations to end the restrictions of childbirth, which are called olebes. The new mother is given a cold bath under a shower but submersion in a steam is preferred. This completes the ritual; she no longer must observe the birth taboos. This is the practice of the omesurech and omengat by tradition. Variations in this practice exist in different parts of Palau.

Naming of a new born child:

Naming of a new born child is not treated differently whether it is a boy or a girl. It is responsibility of the father to choose a name for the baby, and the name should come from his family or clan lineage. If he cannot find a suitable name, but he likes the name of someone who is not related to him, he prepares food for the chosngakl (naming ceremony). At the time the father receives the udoud (money) from the owner of the name, he takes the name for his child.

The Traditional Unwed Mother's First Child Birth:

An unwed mother who gives birth to her first child is cared for by her father or her mother's brother. If her mother is unable to perform the hot bath, she will retain one of the specialists to give the hot baths to her daughter. This hot bath process for an unwed mlechell utilizes the given number of the days of the kebliil (clan lineage) of her mother's brother or of her father. She is entitled to the same treatment as a married newly mother, from her hot baths to the steaming, but she is not to be adorned for a presentation ceremony⁸. She does not go out to be viewed by the public because she is not married. All expenses of this event are absorbed by the unwed newly mother's father and her mother's brother. It is considered shameful to give birth without a father for her child. Such event is disgraceful for the mlechell (newly unwed mother) and to her family as well.

"Pregnancy and Child Birth from Korean Perspective":

⁸ The ceremony for an unmarried mother is called **Omengat er a ralm** (Hot Baths with just Water). This term stresses that the important factor, a husband to bring udoud (money), is missing.



Pregnancy in the Korean Culture:

Once the pregnant woman finds out she is pregnant there is a certain order of whom she tells first. She must tell the mother-in-law first. Then she tells her husband and then her own mother. It is believed that eating certain foods makes childbirth harder such as: crab, squid, eggs, and peaches. The Korean Preference is for male children to carry on the family lineage. It is important to remain clean during pregnant. Avoid touching urine, feces, dead things or the killing of animals. Pregnant woman often wear loose clothing because they want to keep the baby comfortable.

Prenatal Care:

Traditional prenatal care is given by the woman's mother, or mother-in-law. The pregnant woman may also go to the Chinese doctor for herbs and other traditional medicine.

Prenatal Determination of Baby's Gender:

Dreams-The baby will be a boy, if the tae mong shows a tiger, dragon, a fruit with a seed in it, or a strong, muscular animal. If the tae mong shows a bird, snake, ring, or a flower, the baby will be a girl. The kind of pulse the Chinese doctor feels is also indicative of the baby's gender.

Cravings-sour foods/fruits indicate the baby will be a girl; carvings for meat or sweet food indicate a boy.

Physiological signs-If the mother has a pointed stomach and no morning sickness it will be a girl; if the mother has rounded stomach with morning sickness then it will be a boy.

Other Restrictions:

In traditional settings, a pregnant woman's mother-in-law or sister has a dream; also the Chinese doctor can tell if you are pregnant by feeling your pulse (he can detect an extra heart beat). Dreams are very important traditional element of pregnancy. There will be a dream; a "tae

mong” by a sister, mother, or mother-in-law. The baby’s gender is determined by what is seen in the tae mong

Traditionally, pregnant women would not go to the funerals for fear the unborn child might be harmed by an evil spirit or ghost (cause miscarriage). The pregnant woman should not exercise—there is a fear that the baby may be not safe during exercise. This includes no heavy lifting. Eating healthy food is important. It was believed that if the mother was frightened during the day, she would have bad dreams at night. This would interfere with the mother’s ability to get enough rest and/or relax. The pregnant woman would also avoid Korean herbs at the beginning of the pregnancy, stay away from strong spices, don’t eat ugly food (i.e., irregular shaped fruit, etc...); Eat seaweed soup 1-2 weeks prior to birth (helps clean blood out). Foods with irregular shape, or surface are thought to cause similar characteristics in the baby (for example, if you ate chicken skin while pregnant, the baby will have bumpy skin when born; if you eat duck, the child will have webbed feet). Eating blemished or bruised fruit will cause the baby’s face to be ugly at birth. Traditionally, a pregnant woman would also keep her belly covered, and not wearing pants (abdominal restriction might cause harm to the baby).

In the Korean culture the laboring woman is expected to silent throughout the birth and not to make any noise. Being loud during the birth is viewed with shame. Silence is needed to focus the energy into the birth. It is customary to hang “kumchul” (twisted straw rope) across the gate of the house to frightened evil spirits away during the childbirth, also let people know that a child was born, and to stay away from the home. People were not allowed to cross the rope or come to the home (no visitors) for 100 days after the child is born. After that there is a celebration when they will present the baby to everyone else. It is believed the woman should not look at ugly things while in labor because the baby will be ugly. Usually the mother or a female relative is present during the labor and birth process. The baby is kept in the house and away from strangers for the first year.

Korean Postpartum:

In western countries, women take shower immediately after childbirth. They have a regular diet, start walking around, and go out in the cold weather. On the other hand, Korean women are advised not to take a shower for a week or more. They are not allowed to put their hands in cold water. For the first three weeks after childbirth, getting out of the house is strictly forbidden unless you dare to sneak out and not get caught by your own mother. Last but not least, seaweed soup will show up on the table of every meal for months.

When women are pregnant, the pelvic bones loosen up to make space for the babies to grow in. this does not happen overnight. Sight changes are gradually made over nine months as babies grow bigger. In labor, the pelvic bones extend at maximum so the babies can make their way down the birth canal. After babies abruptly leave, pelvic bones need some time to shrink to its pre-pregnancy size and adapt to the new bony structure. That is why “Saam (three)-Chil

(seven)-il (days),” the first three weeks after delivery are strongly emphasized in Korean postpartum care. During this period, new mothers should not be involved in any vigorous activities and try not to strain their loosened joints. It does not mean staying in bed the whole day. As long as you start from mild exercise, early ambulation has been proven to be beneficial for new mothers. It decreases bladder complications, constipations, and blood clotting. Make sure you have an attendant when you get out of bed for the first time after delivery in case you faint.

During those three weeks, visitors are prohibited, and new mothers and newborns are not allowed to go out. This is to avoid contact with a possible source of infection as new mothers and newborns are immunologically vulnerable. This provides an excellent excuse for new mothers to courteously decline visitors including family-in-laws who are eager to see the newborns. New mothers are exhausted from breastfeeding and sleepless nights. Moreover they do not want people to see their bloated faces. New mothers must appreciate “Saam-chil-il” although they have to handle the desperate desire for fresh air.

Korean women typically stay in a heated room after delivery. Even in the middle of the summer, you are not supposed to use fan or/ (today’s world as Air condition). You cannot wear short sleeves. Your mother will yell at you if you walk around in bare feet. You can only drink warm water. Koreans firmly believe exposing your body to cold would result in “Saan-hoo-poong” which is unexplained body ache. In fact, it is medically groundless to say being exposed to cold is the cause. “Saan-hoo-poong” could be from strenuous housework and care of babies when women are not fully recovered from childbirth. However, it is the cold winter, how you hunch your shoulders and shiver. As long as it is not sweating hot, pleasant warmth helps new mothers’ restoration of energy.

New mothers in Korea have a large bowl of seaweed soup three times a day. They say seaweed cleanses blood, detoxifies the body, helps the womb contract and increases breast milk. Not all of them are medically correct, but it is true that seaweed is a nutritiously enriched food for new mothers. First, breastfeeding women are required to take as much calcium as pregnant women. Second, fiber intake prevents constipation and helps the new mothers lose weight by its low calories. Third, new mothers are generally anemic from the delivery and need iron supplementation. One more great advantage of having seaweed soup is an easier way to get hydrated and it tastes better than plain water. Just be cautious not to take seaweed soup on every meal. Excessive amount of iodine in seaweed can result in thyroid dysfunction.

The “no shower” tradition was probably because of the absence of proper shower systems in the past. It must have been influenced by the inconvenience of not readily accessing hot water and of course the absence of hair dryers could have been another factor. New mothers could have easily gotten a cold after a shower back then. Nowadays, taking a shower is not a big deal. As long as your hair is completely dried afterwards and the temperature of the shower room is warm enough, washing off sweat and blood is essential not only for hygiene and health, but also for refreshment after a long agony. New mothers deserve extra care and attention. Korean postpartum care does its job.

Characteristics between South Korea and Republic of Palau:

The Traditional Pregnancy and Birth practices between these two nations of healing process in which mother undergoes hot bath, final steaming, and presentation of new mother and baby are very unique in a way that they may differ in a sense of methods and practicing of healing process of a mother, but the whole concept boils down to a mother being treated in extra cared along with her baby. Traditional pregnancy practices among women are essential part of life cycle from birth to death. It has developed cultural practices according to the life cycle. There are skilled women who attained their gifts for certain skills from their mothers and matriarchs in her lineage. Childbearing is very important aspect in life. Therefore, there was great emphasis and sustained to continue the reproduction system, strengths, and value of women in both South Korea and Republic of Palau. It brings together the family of new mother and father. /It is also a celebration of the success and joy of the first child.

Conclusion:

Palauan and Korean women, who live abroad in other countries of the world, remain to honor the practice as a women prestige and some continue to return home for the treatment after child birth elsewhere. While the medicine and the celebration captures most of what may seem to represent the practice and knowledge, it is the bonding and caretaking between the women members of the family that provides for the support a new mother needs as part of her psychological and spiritual healing. While mothers go through the healing process others provide care of her baby and relieve her from any work for the duration of the treatment which can last up to 2 weeks or longer, depending on the family. Female members of her family will remain with her as long as she needs the support. These are the unspoken and unrecognized value to the practice that continue to create special bond between women families and protect women from postnatal traumas experienced after giving birth in places where women give birth alone. This components to the maternal and child healing and celebration cultural practice referred to as “Traditions of Pregnancy and Birth Practices for both South Korea and Republic of Palau”. This is one practice that still holds strong, but can be compromised with the threat of changing natural habitats as development takes precedence. As mentioned earlier, it is a lineage property and passes on to the next wellness knowledge. It reflects the various ways the knowledge is expressed by different lineages.