

Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore and Traditional Culture Vol. II

# Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Beliefs

한국민속대백과사전 II 한국민속신앙사전

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## Foreword

Today more than ever we are seeing an increasing interest in the intangible cultural properties of humanity from around the world. UNESCO has been compiling its Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage aiming at preserving and protecting the invaluable legacies of each traditional ethnic culture. It was within this exciting environment of renewed awareness of humanity's cultural treasures that the National Folk Museum of Korea completed 2011, the publication of its six-volume Korean-language edition of the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Beliefs in a vast compilation of the legacy that makes up the roots of the Korean spirit.

The museum had embarked on a comprehensive project to compile a massive Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture, beginning in 2004, with the first volume of the Encyclopedia of Korean Seasonal Customs dedicated to the first lunar month of the year. The inaugural publication was soon followed by five additional volumes, on spring, summer, fall and winter customs, and index, respectively. The publication project for the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Beliefs began in 2009, divided into three individual sets, on shamanism (2009), village gods worship (2010) and household gods worship (2011), respectively. The Korean-language publications were followed by ambitious English-language editions, of the Encyclopedia of Korean Seasonal Customs in 2010 and now of the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Beliefs.

The museum will continue its efforts toward compiling the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture with the scheduled publications: the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Literature; the Encyclopedia of Korean Rites of Passage; the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Arts; the Encyclopedia of Food, Clothing and Housing in Korea; the Encyclopedia of Occupations and Skills in Korea; and the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Society. The English editions will continue as well with the completion of each publication in the series. We anticipate that the project will culminate in a complete and far-reaching survey of Korea's folk heritage, a rich legacy that has been passed down over thousands of years.

Lastly, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the editorial staff at the museum and many others who contributed to the publication of this English-language edition of the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Beliefs, for their dedication and insight, including the writers, advisors, editors, the reviewers, and the translation team at Ewha Womans University Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation.

October 2013  
Cheon Jin-gi  
Director, National Folk Museum of Korea

## GUIDE

1. Entries are presented in the Romanized form of the Korean terminology, accompanied by the original Hangeul version and its English translation.
2. Entries are categorized into seven sections, and arranged in alphabetical order within each section.  
Entries that appear with in the text or under other entries are marked in bold.
3. The transliteration of Korean terms and names in this book follows the Revised Romanization of Korean system, with the exception of some administrative units, geographical features and artificial structures, which in some cases have been transliterated in alternate forms to enhance the readability of the text. For example, the province 경상남도 has been rendered as Southern Gyeongsang Province within the main text and as Gyeongsangnam-do in photo credits.  
  
The transliteration of Chinese and Japanese terms and names follows the *pinyin* system and the Revised Hepburn system, respectively.
4. The following is a chronology of Korean dynasties as referred to in the encyclopedia:  
Gojoseon (2333 – 108 BCE); Buyeo (18 BCE – 660); Goguryeo (37 BCE – 668); Baekje (18 BCE – 660);  
Silla (57 BCE – 935); Balhae (698 – 926); Goryeo (918 – 1392); Joseon (1392 – 1910)
5. Credits have been given to all photographs copyrighted by institutions and individuals other than the National Folk Museum of Korea.
6. The index includes terminologies both in their transliterated form and in English translation.



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**Concepts**

## Concepts

### BIBO 비보 Geomantic Supplementation

*Bibo*, literally meaning, “to supplement,” is the attempt to artificially alter a geographical environment that possesses a negative effect on people’s lives.

Geomantic supplementation can be viewed as a practice that is centered on humans, of altering nature to suit their needs, but at the same time it is also nature-centered, in that the attempt is about adjusting nature according to its ways without causing damage.

What is lacking in nature is filled by various means, including religious objects, in which case the attempt is called *sinangbibo*, or religious supplementation, and includes the use of a range of religious objects.

*Jangseung*, or village guardian posts, are erected on vacant spots in all four corners of a village to protect and fill the lack of energy.

*Sotdae*, or sacred pole, is erected in the center of villages shaped like a sailing boat (*haengjuhyeong*) to supplement their unstable shape.

*Doltap*, or stone stacks, are erected by water paths, which are believed to be closely related to the geomantic energy of a village and through which the energy is believed to escape.

When the village sits geographically exposed, a guardian forest (*dangsup*) is artificially formed, with a shrine for the village guardian deity (*seonangdang*) built in the center to create a sacred space.

Supplementation related to the worship of sex organs (*seongsinangbibo*) is practiced when the village is shaped like a male or female sex

organ, which results in lewd affairs in the community. A forest is built to cover a specific rock or parts that contribute to the village’s shape, or a rock shaped like a sex organ is prominently worshipped in order to artificially control the *yin* and *yang* energies.

### BUJEONG 부정 Uncleanness

*Bujeong*, literally meaning “uncleanness,” is a term that refers to all forms of impurities that can damage the sanctity of a ritual throughout its process.

*Bujeongtada*, meaning, “to be affected by uncleanness,” is an expression used to refer to the impact of impure elements. In order to prevent the effects of uncleanness, many taboos (*geumgi*) are observed, and thus in Korean folk religion impurities and taboos are closely related. Uncleanness is caused by



Preventing uncleanness by hanging taboo ropes around the village guardian deity tree. Gangha-myeon, Yangpyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do (2003, Choe Ho-sik)

factors related to birth, women, death, and time or space associated with the outside or the other.

To overcome the impact of uncleanness, two types of procedures are observed, *bujeonggarigi* (covering uncleanness) and *bujeonggasigi* (eradicating uncleanness). The former takes place prior to a ritual and is strictly observed, while the latter is executed in the course of a ritual. The two procedures are closely related and interact throughout the process of the ritual.

*Bujeonggarigi* includes all activity that contributes to preventing impurities starting from the selection of the ritual date (*taegil*) up to the ritual. Hanging taboo ropes (*geumjul*) is an active means of keeping out impurities during this period, by marking sacred boundaries. Left-hand lay straw rope is used for the taboo rope, which is sometimes supplemented with red clay (*hwangto*), salt water, clear water, water with red pepper powder, sprinkled around the rope.

*Bujeonggasigi* refers to acts of cleansing to eliminate impurities that can occur in the course of a ritual. An example is *georibujeong*, or street cleansing, which is observed as part of a village ritual to eradicate impurities that occur when a large group of people enter the ritual venue. Shamanic rituals also include the segment *bujeonggeori* to cleanse impurities at the shrine where the ritual is staged.

## DAEDONGHOE 대동회

### Assembly of Village Representatives

*Daedonghoe* is a group of village dignitaries and other representatives formed prior to a village tutelary ritual, or *dongje*, to discuss and decide the details of the



Village representatives attend *daedonghoe*.

ceremonies.

*Daedonghoe* also refers to the meeting of this group, an important part of the village ritual, usually held on the morning after the ceremonies, with discussions taking place on issues of collective interest or action or social cooperation, regarding all areas of communal life including appointment of community officers, budget and balances, management of common property, facility repairs and farming labor. In recent times these meetings also serve as communication channels for local government policies and instructions.

Proceedings are led by the village head, but in the case of major issues, the counsel of village dignitaries, who are considered unofficial leaders of the community, are sought prior to the discussion at the assembly. While all households are required to attend the meeting, the opinion of the village dignitaries is generally accepted as the consensus in the decision-making process.

In traditional villages, *daedonghoe* was a large and powerful organization but a naturally formed one that did not possess binding powers like an executive body, despite its immense influence and organizing capacity.

Its most important function is to enhance social cooperation among community members through the emphasis of the spirit of mutual assistance. The group is also responsible for providing the foundation for religious ceremonies, by selecting the officials for the village ritual (*jegwan*). The term *daedong*, meaning

“unity,” is used for many other related vocabulary like *daedongnori* (seasonal village customs) and *daedonggut* (village ritual), as in *daedonghoe*. In short, *daedonghoe* is an organization assembled for communal self-management, contributing significantly to the sustenance and development of a village as a political, administrative and social unit.

sacrificial goods and in the costs involved, they also serve as important clues for tracking down the changes in the village ritual tradition over the centuries.

## DONGGYEMUNSEO 동계문서

### Village Cooperative Records

*Donggyemunseo* are records kept by the village cooperative *donggye* regarding the preparation and management of communal rituals.

*Donggye* is a cooperative formed to prepare for the annual village tutelary festivals (*dongje*), and alternate terms include *daedonggye* (grand village cooperative) and *sanhyanggye* (mountain village cooperative). The cooperative must maintain all records related to the rituals: details about the sacrifices offered including costs; list of ritual officials; and list of donors. These records serve as important data that reflect how a village is managed and how a village ritual is staged. Since the records show the changes in

## GAJEONGSINANG 가정신앙

### Worship of Household Gods

*Gajeongsinang*, literally meaning, “home faith,” is the belief in deities that guard the home, and the practice of rituals to worship them. Also called *jiban sinang* (worship of home gods) or *japsin sinang* (worship of miscellaneous gods).

In Korean folk religion, *gajeongsinang*, in the narrow sense of the term, refers to the belief in household gods and the rituals that worship them, but in a larger sense, it encompasses all folklore related to the well-wishing of the home, for peace, health and happiness in the family. So it includes the worship of not only the gods that reside inside the home, from **Seongju** (House Guardian God) and **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God) to **Jowang** (Kitchen Deity), **Eop** (God of Property), and **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing), but of those outside—**Yongwang** (Dragon King), **Sansin** (Mountain God), **Seonang** (Village Guardian

Deity) and others. It is also notable that this form of worship is passed down by the women of the family. In other words, while it is the men who organize and carry out the communal village worship rituals, the women are in charge of the rites for the household gods.

DONGGYEMUNSEO Busan-myeon, Jangheung-gun, Jeollanam-do (2003, Seo Hae-suk)



Documents on *byeolsinje* communal rituals among village cooperative records from the village of Hogye.



Documents on the history of the grand village cooperative among village cooperative records from Hogye.



Documents on community representatives from Hogye.

## JAEINCHEONG 재인칭

### Association of Entertainers

**Jaechong**, or Association of Entertainers, was a self-governing organization formed by shamans, musicians, acrobats, dancers and clowns.

The association was also called Gwangdaechong (Association of Clowns) or Hwarangchong (Association of Shamanic Musicians), and maintained offices in Gyeonggi, Chungcheong and Jeolla provinces. It had a strict organizational structure and its members included hereditary shamans (*seseummu*), shamanic music accompanists (*hwarang*), acrobats (*jaein*), singing and dancing entertainers (*yein*) shamanic performers and clowns (*gwangdae*).

The association maintained a regional office in each province, directed by a *daebang*, who was served by two *dosanju*, each in charge of the management of half the province.

**Jaechong** was established in late Joseon, between 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was maintained until the 1920s. It was a civilian association that grew out of the thriving business of entertainment and shamanic services since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and smaller societies reorganized themselves as **Jaechong** to better meet the public demand for these services with better management.

## MAEULSINANG 마을 신앙

### Worship of Village Gods

**Maeulsinang**, literally meaning “village faith,” refers to folk belief passed down within the village community.

It is the collective worship of village deities for the peace and wellbeing of the community and also for the good health and longevity of the villagers. Other terms for **maeulsinang** are *gongdongchesinang*

(community faith) and *dongsinsinang* (village god faith).

Village deities include **Sansin** (Mountain God), Cheonsin (Celestial God), Seongsin (Star God), Moksinsin (Tree God), Jisinsin (Earth God), Susinsin (Water God), Sagwisin (Vicious Ghost), Insinsin (Man God) and many others. In the past, their worship aimed at good harvest, big catch, fecundity, healthy cattle, prevention of contagious diseases, and tiger attacks, but in contemporary times the villagers now pray for marriage, cure for alcoholism, prevention of car crashes or injury in the military, and other wishes that reflect modern lives. The communal worship services are called **dongje**, also referred to as *maeulgut*, both meaning village rituals

## MINSOKSINANG 민속 신앙

### Folk Beliefs

**Minsoksinang**, or folk religion, refers to regional religious customs passed down among the people.

Folk religion can be defined as all the practices of religion that have come to form naturally and passed down outside of official doctrine, without scriptures or organization. Korean folk beliefs encompass seasonal customs; shamanism; worship of village gods; worship of household gods; geomantic belief; nature worship; divination belief and omens; taboos, talismans and sorcery; and folk medicine.

Shamanism refers to a form of folk belief that centers around shamans, while the worship of village gods comprises communal rites held collectively by the entire village. The worship of household gods involves regular rituals for the many guardian gods of a home. Korean geomancy is based on the belief that the energy that is contained in mountains, rivers and other geological features control the fate and fortunes of people, thereby seeking out the landscape for auspicious sites for homes and graves. Nature worship involves the belief of animals, plants and non-living features and



phenomena. Divination belief involves fortunetelling and prophecy about one's future and fate; omens refer to signs that are believed to foretell upcoming events. Taboos (*geumgi*) place limits on human activity in relation to things that are considered sacred or unclean; talismans (*bujeok*) are letters or patterns that are believed to carry the power to chase away calamities and ghosts; sorcery is the practice of magic or spells to achieve one's goals. Folk medicine is the attempt by laymen to heal diseases outside of professional medicine, relying on experience and common knowledge.

Folk religion can be categorized into private worship and collective worship. The former includes shamanism, worship of household gods, geomantic belief, nature worship, divination belief, omens, taboos, talismans, sorcery, and folk medicine, while seasonal customs and worship of village gods fall under the latter category.

## MUSOKSINANG 무속 신앙 Shamanism

*Musoksinang* refers to Korean shamanism, a practice that centers on *mudang*, or shamans, and is transmitted among the general public.

It is generally viewed that Korean shamanism originated from the Siberian region, where the belief was widely spread, and introduced through the migration of the northern ethnic groups to the Korean peninsula. The practice of shamanism involves the shamans, the gods that they worship, the followers (*dangol*) and the ritual (*gut*). Korean shamans are categorized into *gangsinnmu*, or possessed shaman, which refers to shamans who have been initiated through a shamanic calling; and *seseummu*, hereditary shaman.

The elements that make up *gut*, the shamanic ritual, are *musin* (shamanic god); *mudang* (shaman), the officiant; *mueui* (ceremonial procedures); *muga* (shamanic song); *muak* (shamanic music); *mumu*

(shamanic dance); *mubok* (shamanic garb); *mugu* (shamanic props); and *gutdang* (shamanic shrine), where the rituals are held.

## SAL 살

### Evil Force

*Sal* is a term used for vile and evil forces that harm people and cause destruction.

*Sal* can also refer to severe damage caused by evil spirits, including diseases, accidents, conflicts or severed ties, which can result in great unhappiness. In other words, *sal* can be understood as a folk concept for explaining terrible misfortunes that are impossible for humans to solve or comprehend.

Every human is born with a certain curse, brought on by evil force which can be interpreted through folk divination, shamanic foresight, or the four pillars of destiny (*saju*). According to the four pillars, there are around 190 types of *sal*, encompassing different periods in life from childhood to marriage, and those related to one's good fortunes and bad. In Korean folk religion, however, as interpreted by shamans and sorcerers, fewer numbers of bad fortunes afflict human lives, a total of 21, according to some shamans.

The major curses include the ghost curse *judangsal*, which is to be avoided especially at weddings. If a *judang* ghost has invaded a person or a house, a repelling rite (*judangmullim*) is carried out by chasing away everyone standing under the eaves as the bride enters the ritual venue. Another common curse is the death gate curse *sangmunsal*, which can strike if one improperly witnesses the lowering of the coffin into the grave, resulting in illness or even death.

To prevent such damage, a shaman or sorcerer is hired to perform curse-undoing rituals called *salpuri*, and there are also myriad folk customs aimed at prevention, one of which is for infants born with blood on their bodies, and to undo this bad omen, the family



SALPURI Jochiwon-eup, Sejong-si (2012, Hong Tea-han)



Curse-undoing ritual performed by a shaman and sorcerer.



Ritual for repelling judang ghost.



Ritual for repelling judang ghost.

sends their kitchen knife to the butcher, or shows the newborn scenes of cattle being slaughtered.

## SAMJAE 삼재

### Three Calamities

*Samjae*, or three calamities, are bad fortunes that occur in regular cycles according to one's year of birth.

The three calamities are divided into water calamity (*sujae*), fire calamity (*hwajae*), and wind calamity (*pungjae*); or into calamity caused by tool or weapon (*dobyeongjae*), plague calamity (*jilyeokjae*), and famine calamity (*gigeunjae*). It is not clear exactly when this concept was formed, but the folk song (*sogyo*) version of “Cheoyongga (The Song of Cheoyong),” from Goryeo, includes in its lyrics the term “*samjae*,” and a three calamities prevention amulet sheet was discovered inside the stupa at Yongjusa Temple, also from Goryeo, so it is assumed that the concept dates back earlier than Goryeo (918-1392).

The three calamities is a cycle of bad fortune that everyone goes through in life, and is believed to occur over a three-year period. The first of the three years is known as *deulsamjae* or *ipsamjae* (entering the three calamities), the second, *nuulsamjae* or *jungsamjae* (middle of the three calamities), and the third, *nalsamjae* or *chulsamjae* (exiting the threecalamities). It is believed that bad fortunes accumulate as the cycle progresses.

However, the three-year calamity cycle, which comes by every nine years, does not necessarily bring only disaster. Lucky events can also occur, according to individual fate and fortune, in which case the cycle



Three calamities prevention talisman sheet with a three-headed-one-footed-hawk.



Ritual to undo three calamities performed by a Buddhist monk.  
Seocheonsa Temple, Godeok-myeon, Pyeongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do (2007, Kim Hyo-gyeong)

is referred to as *boksamje* (luck of the three calamities).

Upon the arrival of a *samjae* cycle, one purchases a three calamities prevention talisman sheet; seeks help at a Buddhist temple or a shaman by requesting a ritual to undo the cycle (*samjaepuri*) or a recitation of *Samjaegyong* (Three Calamities Script); or attempts prevention through rituals like burning the undergarment of a person who was struck with the three calamities curse and burying the ashes in a three-way intersection.

## SEONGSUCHEONG 성수청

Constellation Agency

**Seongsucheong** was a state agency in early Joseon (1392-1910) that oversaw shamanic rituals to pray for good fortune and prevent calamities for the state and the royal court, officiated by *gungmu*, the state shaman.

The agency was also called *Seongsincheong*, the terms *seongsu* and *seongsin*, both meaning, “constellation,” which were evidently borrowed from Taoism.

In Goryeo (918-1392), state-run rituals called *byeolgeun* were held, which mixed elements of Buddhism and Taoism, while also connected to shamanism. This tradition continued in Joseon with the establishment of **Seongsucheong** and the appointment of the state shaman to officiate national shamanic rites.

Joseon, however, was a state founded on the Neo-Confucian belief of *Seongnihak*, and the kingdom’s ruling literati strongly opposed the existence of **Seongsucheong**, especially since the court had expelled all shamans from the capital’s fortress, which directly contradicted with the appointment of a state shaman and the staging of state-run shamanic rituals. The last record that remains of this agency is that of an appeal made to King Jungjong in his first year of reign (1506) for the abolishment of **Seongsucheong** and the Taoist agency *Sogyekseo*, and it is assumed that the agency was closed soon after.

## SINNAERIM 신내림

### Descent of Spirit

*Sinnaerim*, literally meaning, “descent of spirit,” refers to the phenomenon of being possessed by a spirit, as experienced by a shaman in a transcendental state of mind. Other terms similar in meaning include: *bingui* (possession), *jeopsin* (contact with spirit), *gangsinn* (descent of spirit) and *manga* (loss of self).

In a state of *sinnaerim*, the shaman’s body is possessed by a spirit and her consciousness is also seized. It is not a state of psychosis, or of complete loss of consciousness, but a half-conscious state, retaining self-control and adjusting to one’s surroundings. This state eventually leads to excessive stimulation of the senses, sometimes entailing tremors or convulsions.

*Sinnaerim* is a requisite stage in the process of shamanic initiation, referred to as *sinbyeong* (spirit sickness), or *mubyong* (initiation illness). In Korean exorcism rites performed by *gangsinnmu*, which refers to shamans who have been initiated through this illness, the phenomenon of trance is an essential element that provides connection between this world and the transcendental world.

The manifestations of a shaman’s spiritual possession include involuntary body movements; mystical visual or sound experience; *gongsu* (trance channeling); physical pain; intuition and inspiration; prophetic dreams; change in individual temperament; emotional transference; and preternatural and mystical sexual experience. These phenomena are closely related to the various elements that make up an exorcism ritual, including shamanic dance, song, costume, props, channeling, divination and prophecy. Mystical sexual experience is a symbolic manifestation of the unification of the divine and the secular, and of the transcendence of such boundaries.

## SINTTAL 신딸

### Spiritual Daughter

*Sinttal*, meaning, “spiritual daughter,” is a term referring to a female shaman who has been accepted into the divine lineage of her spiritual mother.

The relationship between a spiritual daughter or son and a spiritual mother or father is formed among *gangsinnmu*, or possessed shamans, based not on blood ties but on the lineage of shamanic calling.

The spiritual mother accepts a possessed shaman as her spiritual daughter through *naerimgut*, which serves as an initiation rite and also a healing ritual for the spiritual sickness of the possessed. The spiritual mother who officiates this rite is usually an aged shaman, one who has acquired sufficient competence, experience and spirituality to pass down to the spiritual daughter.

The spiritual daughters and sons under the wing of the same spiritual parent are joined in siblinghood. These ties are generally far more binding than blood relations, and also more structured and organized. The rules that govern their relationships are called *sinbeop*, or spiritual laws.

A process of teaching and learning the shamanic practice takes place between a spiritual daughter and mother. In the past, they lived under the same roof for at least three years, training in every single element of a shamanic ritual, but in contemporary times, a spiritual daughter sometimes enters independent shamanic practice immediately following her possession ritual, due to the public notion that newly initiated shamans possess keen spiritual powers. A majority, however, learn the basic practices of divination and prayer from their spiritual mothers, as well as ritual preparations including sacrificial foods, props and venue set-up.

On the surface, a spiritual daughter’s relationship to her spiritual mother might appear to be that of an apprenticeship formed to support human traditions, but it is essentially a spiritual one formed by the will of the gods, centering on the inheritance of not only the shamanic practice but the shamanic legacy.



## **Rites and Officiants**



## Rites and Officiants

## AENGMAGI 액막이

### Ritual for Prevention of Bad Fortune

*Aengmagi* is a ritual held in the first lunar month to prevent bad fortunes for the coming year.

When in the beginning of the year, one's prospects according to the divination guidebook *Tojeongbigyeol* (The Secret Divinatory Art of Tojeong) do not prove positive, or when a fortuneteller determines that bad fortunes lie ahead, *aengmagi* is held to prevent bad events from happening. The ritual is also referred to as *aengmaegi* or *maegi*.

The ritual generally takes place on Jeongwol-daeboreum (Great Full Moon Day) in the first lunar month, or on a special date set by a fortuneteller. The

procedures vary by region but are simple, usually involving *bison* (hand-rubbing) by a fortuneteller or shaman.

Substitute objects are often used to take on the bad fortune in the place of humans, the most common form being a straw effigy. A human figure is woven from straw and a piece of paper containing the name and the date and time of birth of the person cursed with bad fortune. Then a simple ritual table is set up indoors, in front of which the fortuneteller or shaman rubs her palms together. After this, she takes the straw doll outside to a three-way crossing in the village and burns it or buries it before returning to the house. On Jeju Island, sometimes a chicken is used in the place of the straw effigy.

At times, a more elaborate ritual is held to prevent bad fortune. *Aengmagigut* can be observed around the country, especially small-scale rites held on a regular basis as a form of devoted prayer. These rituals vary by region in name and procedure: *hoengsumagi* or *hongsumaegi* (prevention of



Making a straw effigy  
Yangpyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do (2002)

unexpected turns in fortune) in the Seoul area and Gyeonggi and Hwanghae provinces; *aengmaegi georije* (street ritual for prevention of bad fortune) of Jeolla and Chungcheong provinces; and *singwaseje* (ritual to greet in the New Year) of Jeju Island. Most rituals feature a shaman who is seated alone, singing to her own accompaniment of a single instrument, among *jing* (gong), *gorijjak* (wicker basket), or *yoryeong* (large rattle).

*Aengmagigut* is also called for when one enters a period of *samjae*, or the three calamities, which comes around every nine years and lasts three, so it is not uncommon that at any point in time at least one family member is going through *samjae*. *Daesamjae* (three great calamities) refers to catastrophes that involve fire, wind and water, and when one's fortune aligns with these great misfortunes all at once, a ritual is necessary. Other general customs that aim at preventing bad fortunes include flying the kite of bad fortune prevention; *jisinbabgi* (earth god treading), *daribabgi* (bridge treading).

## AIPALGI 아이팔기

### Child Selling

*Aipalgi*, literally meaning, “child selling,” is a ritual for praying for the longevity of a child believed to possess a short lifespan or bad fortune, by designating a deity or an object from nature as the child's foster parent.

The term is based on the idea that designating a foster parent is an act of selling the child, and variations include *jasikpalgi* (child selling), *suyangbumo samgi* (bind as foster parent) and *suyangeomeoni samgi* (bind as foster mother). The practice was generally observed when a long-awaited child was born in the family; when a child was born with a short lifespan; when a child's fortunes clashed with those of his parents'; when an infant was weak and prone to illness; or when a child was born with bad fortune. The “selling”

sometimes takes place as soon as the baby is born, but in most cases between ages of three and seven.

A child can be sold to a range of people, institutions or objects in nature, which include mountains, trees, rocks and bodies of water. Hanging a child's life bridge (*myeongdari*) at the family shaman's shrine, or registering the child's name at a temple signified that the shaman or a monk at the temple had been designated as the child's foster parent. Sometimes the child was “sold” to a neighbor who possessed a blissful fate, or to various deities, including **Yongwang** (Dragon King), **Sansin** (Mountain God), Buddha, and **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), who is believed to oversee a child's lifespan.

Child selling rituals were generally officiated by a shaman or a monk. Once the foster parent is decided, the child's family prepares simple offerings and heads to the home, institution or setting of the foster parent, accompanied by a shaman or a fortuneteller. A taboo rope (*geumjul*) is hung at the ritual venue, and prayers are offered for the child's longevity. Sacrificial offerings include steamed rice, rice cake, fruits in three colors, incense, and candles. Skeins of thread (*siltarae*) and strips of white fabric (*myeongdari*) were also offered, both as longevity symbols.

## ANJEUNGUT 앉은곳

### Sitting Ritual

*Anjeungut*, or sitting ritual, is a form of shamanic ritual that centers on the practice of *dokgyeong*, or scripture recitation, by sorceresses or sorcerers.

In *anjeungut*, the sorcerer is in a seated position, reciting the scriptures to his own accompaniment of *janggu* (hourglass drum), *jing* (gong), or *kkwaenggwari* (small gong). This ritual has been preserved mainly in Chungcheong and North Jeolla provinces.

In Chungcheong Province, *anjeungut* involves more than recitation, a complex procedure that mixes



Sorcerer performing scripture-recitation and curse-undoing ritual. Namsangol Hanok Village, Jung-gu, Seoul (2001, Hong Tea-han)

a range of direct and intense sorcery practices and elements including *seolgeyeong*, which are shamanic props made of paper in various patterns, hung around the ritual venue; divination carried out by reading the gods' intents from the shaking of his stick; or locking up the evil spirit by means of a mock chase. *Anjeungut* of Chungcheong can be categorized into healing rituals like *byeonggut* (illness ritual), *michingut* (madness ritual) or *pudakgeori* (chasing away of evil spirits); rituals to pray for good fortune including *antaek* (ritual for peace in the house) or *gosa* (ritual for household gods); possession rituals like *sinmyeonggut*; and rituals to appease the soul of the dead, including *neokgut* or *jinogwi*.

*Anjeungut* of North Jeolla can be divided into personal rituals (*jibangut*, meaning domestic ritual) and collective rituals (*daedonggut*, meaning communal ritual; or *keungut*, meaning big ritual). The former centers on the sorcerer's recitation, but in the case of the latter, the recitation is accompanied by song

and dance performances by the sorcerer and a large number of musicians and shamans, which results in rituals similar in scale to those officiated by a hereditary shaman (*seseummu*) and her followers.

## ANTAЕК 안택 Ritual for Peace in the Home

*Antaek*, literally meaning, "peace in the house," is a ritual officiated by the woman of the house to pray to the household gods (*gasin*) for peace in the home and a good harvest, and to offer thanks.

This ritual is held once a year or every three years, on the first or the tenth lunar month. It is also



held when a new house is built, when the family is receiving a new house guardian god (**Seongju**), when the family is experiencing bad fortune, and when the house guardian god is passing on its position to a new deity. *Antaek* is observed around the country in two types of rituals: the first officiated by the woman of the house and involving *bison* (hand-rubbing); the second by a shaman and involving the procedures of *gut* (shamanic ritual).

The procedures for *antaek* begin with the selection of an auspicious day for the ritual, followed by the elimination of impurities, the preparation of sacrificial food, and the ritual. Date selection is done by the woman of the house, but sometimes a village

fortuneteller is consulted to pick a date that is out of reach from the intrusive spirit *son*. On the day of the ritual, a taboo rope (*geumjul*) is hung over the gate and a layer of red clay sprinkled out front (*hwangto*) to keep out visitors. This is followed by the preparation of *sirutteok* (layered rice cake with red bean filling), wine, sweet rice drink and cooked vegetables. The ritual begins with the arranging of sacrificial foods and offering of devotion to the house guardian god **Seongju**, who resides on the girders of the open hall of the house. Ritual tables are also set up in the kitchen for **Jowang**, on the sauce jar terrace or the yard for the land tutelary god **Teoju**, and in the inner chamber for the goddess of childbirth **Samsin**, the woman of

ANTAEK Samjang-myeon, Sancheong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do (2001, Korearoot)



Preparing sacrificial foods for *antaek*.



Offering wine on ritual table for Jowang.



Ritual for house guardian god Jowang.



Ritual for Goddess of Childbearing Samsin.

ANTA EK Samjang-myeon, Sancheong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do (2001, Korearoot)



Ritual for ancestral god Josang.



Offering of sacrificial foods

the house offering a simple prayer by rubbing her palms together. After the ritual, the hosting family shares the rice cake with the neighbors.

When a shaman or sorcerer is called in to officiate, the ritual is called *antaekgut*, or shamanic ritual for peace in the house. Some devout or well-off families hold this rite on a regular basis, commissioning a shaman or sorcerer with whom they have established a close relationship. Other families decide to host this rite when at the beginning of the year, the shaman's divination declares bad fortune or three calamities (*samjae*). *Antaekgut* is also staged if there is a seriously ailing family member or a new house is built, or when troubles like accidents or failed business continue in the family.

## BAEGOSA 배고사 Boat Ritual

*Baegosa* is a worship ritual to pray for a big catch and safety on a boat.

This ritual is held privately by boat owners to worship the boat guardian deity **Baeseonang**, or as part of communal rituals like *pungeoje* or *dangje*.



BAEGOSA Beopseong port, Yeonggwang-gun, Jeollanam-do (2010)



Boat ritual with five-colored banners to pray for a big catch.



Offering bows on the boat to pray for a big catch.

As a private ritual, *baegosa* is observed on seasonal holidays, among which the biggest is held on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. It is also held when a new boat has been purchased or constructed; when setting out for a catch; when poor catch continues; or when a boat owner is experiencing trouble due to uncleanness (*bujeong*). The ritual is officiated by the boat owner, but if he is afflicted by unclean elements, the captain or one of the sailors takes over. If the boat has been experiencing a series of accidents or poor catch, sometimes a shaman is brought in to officiate. Sacrificial foods must include a croaker, the biggest one from the first catch after setting sail, dried or pickled with salt on the boat. The ritual table is first set up in front of the sacred entity embodying *Baeseonang*, then is moved to the stern, then the head. It is followed by a simple procedure of the officiant pouring a cup of wine on each of the tables and offering two bows at each. Finally, he tears off bits from the food on the table, collects and mixes them in a gourd bowl, then scatters the contents on the water as a sacrifice to *Yongwang* (Dragon King), praying out loud, “We ask for your protection for a safe trip.”

When *baegosa* is held as part of a village ritual, boat owners bring their boat banners (*baetgi*) and offer their prayers for a big catch.

## BAWICHISEONG 바위치성

### Rock Worship Ritual

*Bawichiseong*, meaning, “rock prayer,” is a ritual for worshipping a rock as a sacred entity, mainly to pray for an offspring.

In Korean folk religion, rocks are considered not as mere objects in nature but as beings that possess productive energy and permanence, and are thus deified.

The most widespread rock worship is associated with male sex organ-shaped rocks (*namgeunseok*), or

BAWICHISEONG  
Wondeok-eup, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (1998, Korearoot)



Mireuk wrapped with skeins of silk thread and strips of white cotton cloth.



Burning of sacred text before Mireuk.





Rock worship ritual.  
Geumnam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006)



hand-rubbing prayer.  
Samjang-myeon, Gyeongsangnam-do (2001, Korearoot)

with pairs of male and female organ shaped rocks, deified as village guardian gods.

When a male organ shaped rock is worshipped as the sacred entity of a village deity, communal rituals are held at the rock on a regular basis, with an offering of sacrificial foods. Individual worship of specific rocks is mostly related to conception prayers (*gija*), but in some cases serves the purpose of healing or of wish prayers.

## BISON 비손

### Hand-Rubbing Ritual

*Bison* refers to a simple rite performed by rubbing one's palms together to pray for a wish to come true or for a cure for a disease. The first syllable *bi* is a derivation

of the verb *bilda*, "to pray," and *son* means "hand." Variations of the term include *sonbim* and *binyeon*, in Jeju dialect.

It is assumed that hand-rubbing is a gesture to make an appeal to the divine beings of the human fragility against higher forces of Nature. In the course of history, this humble act evolved into the complicated formal ritual of *gut*, accompanied by song, dance, channeling and myriad instruments including drums, gongs and flutes, but the simple rite of *bison* has survived as well.

The rite requires only plain sacrificial foods, including a bowl of clear water or a small serving of *sirutteok*, rice cake steamed in thin layers with red bean filling. Sometimes it is held in the woman's inner chamber of a home, with simple offerings of rice cake, fruit and cooked vegetables set up in the warm end of the room, accompanied by prayer recitation. Since the rite does not require musical instruments, it is often officiated by an eloquent and experienced village elder or the woman of the household.

## BONHYANGDANGGUT 본향당굿

### Ritual for Village Guardian Deities

*Bonhyangdanggut* is the term for seasonal rituals held on Jeju Island at the village shrine *bonhyangdang*.

*Bonhyangdang* are shrines for village guardian deities that protect the communities of Jeju, and each village on the island maintains one. Village rituals are regularly held at these shrines, and these rituals are called *bonhyangdanggut* and include a range of different rites.

The first seasonal *bonhyangdanggut* of the year is *simnyeongwaseje*, a ritual to offer greetings for the

New Year to the village guardian deities. A date is chosen between the first and the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, and the ritual is held at the village shrine with sacrificial food prepared with devotion by the women of the village and brought over in baskets. The shaman in charge of the shrine officiates the ritual, offering prayers for peace and prosperity in the community and in each of the households, and tells fortunes for the New Year.

*Yeongdeunggut* is a ritual held on a selected date between the first and the thirteenth (or fifteenth) day of the second lunar month. While this ritual sometimes takes place at the village shrine, it is focused more on worshipping *Yeongdeung*, the Wind God, to offer prayers about livelihood associated with the sea.



Ritual for village guardian deities in the village of Songdang.  
Songdang-ri, Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2009, Gang Jeong-sik)



*Mabeullimje* is held on the fourteenth or the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month, and its procedure includes taking out the three-colored ribbons (*samsaekmulsae*) kept in the village shrine as an offering to hang them in the sun to clean them of mold after the rainy season.

*Simangukdaeje* was a ritual held on a selected date in the ninth or tenth lunar month, with sacrificial food made from the new harvest of the season, but is no longer observed.



New Year greeting ritual.  
Songdang-ri, Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Gang Jeong-sik)



*Mabeullimje*, held as part of the ritual for village guardian deities in the village of Songdang  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Choi Ho-sik, Kim Seong-su)



*Mabeullimje*, held as part of the ritual for village guardian deities in Songdang  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Choi Ho-sik, Kim Seong-su)



Divination using grains of rice.  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Choi Ho-sik, Kim Seong-su)

## BUGUNDANGJE 부군당제

### Ritual for Government Office Deity

*Bugundangje* refers to rituals held at shrines set up near or on the grounds of government offices in the capital or in the provinces during Joseon (1392-1910), rituals now observed in the Seoul area along the Han River.

During Joseon, every government building in Seoul had a shrine where newly appointed officials held a rite, and which also served as the venue for annual rites on the first day of the tenth lunar month; this was a prototype of rituals referred to today as *bugundangje* and observed in regions along the Han River. This contemporary version generally takes the form of a shamanic village ritual, combined with elements of a Confucian memorial rite. The shamanic portion of the ritual for the government office deity is

BUGUNDANGJE (2008, Kim Tae-woo)



Dangjin-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul (2006)



Dangsan-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul



Itaewon-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul



Seobinggo-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul



called *bugundanggut*, which is based on the procedures of private shamanic rituals from the Seoul area but expanded with the addition of segments characteristic of village rituals in the region, including the village parade (*maeuldolgi*) and the **Bonhyang** (God of Ancestral Roots) and **Gunung** (Martial Hero Deity) segments. Other segments particular to this rite were also added, including the **Bugun** (Government Office Deity) segment, to form what is now known as the shamanic procedures of this ritual. *Bugundangje* takes place at various times of the year, usually in the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth lunar months, with a majority taking place in the tenth month or the first day of the first lunar month. Each year a shaman is selected as *dangjumudang*, or head host shaman, to oversee the preparations and maintain a close *dangol* relationship with the members of the community. In the past, the Confucian rite was followed by shamanic ritual procedures, but this part of the ritual has increasingly been omitted in contemporary times.

## BULMAGIJE 불막이제

### Fire Prevention Ritual

*Bulmagije* is a ritual held communally or in individual homes for the prevention of fire.

Fire has always been a feared phenomenon that can take away human lives and possessions, and a wide range of sorcery and rituals were practiced in palaces, temples or homes for its prevention. In royal palaces, statues of the imaginary lion *haetae*, known as water gods, were erected, and in Buddhist temples earthenware jars were filled with salt and buried around the temple grounds to suppress the fire energy in the surrounding mountain.

Rituals for preventing fire were held in the spring or fall. Alternate terms for this ritual include *bulje* (fire ritual) and *hwajaemaegi* (fire prevention ritual). Fire prevention rituals were associated with the practice of using earthenware jars containing salt water

BULMAGIJE Sonbul-myeon, Hampyeong-gun, Jeollanam-do (2001)



Fire prevention ritual in the village of Sumun.

**BULMAGIJE** Sonbul-myeon, Hampyeong-gun, Jeollanam-do (2001)



Burying the earthenware jar containing salted water.



Digging up the jar of salted water buried underground.



Checking the amount of salted water and adding more water.



Covering the jar of salted water with a stone.

(*ganmuldanji*) to keep fire away, and are observed in a wide range of forms and procedures around the country.

*Bulmagije* generally takes place in the evening of Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon), with rice cake, fruits in three-colors and wine offered as sacrifices. The ritual kicks off with a villagers' procession to the ritual venue, accompanied by farmers' music. Upon arrival at the ritual venue, the villagers dig up the earthenware jar containing salted water from under the ground to check the water amount and bury it again after adding more water. If the salt water had significantly reduced, it was believed that there was a high chance of a fire and villagers made sure to take extra caution.

In individual homes, salt is sprinkled inside the chimney on Great Full Moon to keep fires away throughout the year. It was also believed that the Chinese character for water, 水, inscribed on pillars or walls was effective for preventing fire.

**BYEOLSINGUT** 별신굿  
Ritual for Village Tutelary Spirit

*Byeolsingut* is a communal ritual held every three, five, or ten years to pray for peace and prosperity to the village tutelary spirit.

Such rituals are also called *pungeoje* (big catch ritual) on the coastal regions and *byeolsinje* in inland regions. *Byeolsingut* from Hahoe village in North Gyeongsang Province, Eunsan in South Chungcheong, and Oti in North Chungcheong are the biggest among those held in inland regions, while rituals from the eastern and southern coasts are also widely recognized.

Hahoe Village Byeolsingut from Andong, North Gyeongsang Province, is held from the first day of the first lunar month to the fifteenth, traditionally carried out by common people. Hahoe is a single-lineage



village of the Pungsan clan of the Ryu family, the hometown of Ryu Seong-ryong, a revered court official of the Joseon dynasty. At Hahoe, the annual village rituals are called *dongje* (village tutelary ritual) or *jesa* (memorial ritual), while *byeolsingut* is held every five or ten years, upon the reception of an oracle. Hahoe Byeolsingut includes a mask dance performance, which was designated by the government in 1980 as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the masks used in the performance were designated as National Treasure in 1964.

**Eunsan Byeolsinje** is a communal rite from Buyeo, South Chungcheong, which comprises both the Confucian memorial service and the shamanic ritual.

It is an annual event, with the grand ceremony (*daeje*) held every three years on the first or second lunar month.

Oti Byeolsinje from Jecheon in North Chungcheong was designated by the provincial government in 2001 as Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is a village ritual comprising a mountain god ritual (*sansinje*) and village guardian deity ritual (*seonangje*): The former is a quiet and solemn Confucian memorial rite with only male ritual officials taking part, without the accompaniment of farmers' music, while the latter is more open, the divine intent confirmed directly through the sacred pole *seonangdae*, and with elaborate festivities that include music. The mountain god ritual is held annually, while

**BYEOLSINGUT** Sokcho-si, Gangwon-do (2006, Choe Ho-sik)



Erecting the sacred pole during Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.



Ritual venue set up for Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.



Shamanic music performed during Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.



Shamanic music performed as part of Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.

BYEOLSINGUT



Shamanic dance performed during Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.



Sokcho-si, Gangwon-do (2006, Choe Ho-sik)



Ritual for village guardian deity Golmaegi held as part of Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.



Shamanic dance performed by a group of hereditary shamans.



Lamp ritual held as part of Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.  
Jukwang-myeon, Goseong-gun, Gangwon-do (2004)

the ritual for the village guardian deity is included in the program every other year.

Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut* is a regular village ritual designated in 1985 as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage. The ritual is organized by a hereditary shaman group and is observed all along the eastern coast, from the northern end of Gangwon Province to the Busan area on the southern coast. The ceremony begins by carrying the village guardian deity from its shrine to the ritual venue and tying the sacred pole (*sindae*), which embodies the deity, on a column of the shaman's ritual shrine, after which the shamanic ritual can start. The shamanic music of the eastern coast is performed only

BYEOLSINGUT Hansan-myeon, Tongyeong-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (Jeong Su-mi)



Southern Coast Byeolsingut.



Ritual for heavenly spirit, held as part of Southern Coast Byeolsingut.



Ritual for Dragon King during Southern Coast Byeolsingut.



with percussion instruments, including *janggu* (hourglass drum), *jing* (gong) and *kkwaenggwari* (small gong), among which the hourglass drum is featured most prominently, performed generally by the husband of the officiating shaman.

Southern Coast Byeolsingut, designated in 1987 as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage, is observed annually in coastal and island villages around Geoje and Tongyeong between the first and fifteenth days of the first lunar month. The ritual shares characteristics of the shamanic rites of both the Gyeongsang and Jeolla provinces.

## BYEONGGUT 병굿

### Illness Ritual

*Byeonggut* refers to shamanic rituals held to heal those suffering from illness.

Shamanic healing rituals are also called *chibyeonggut* (healing ritual), *hwanjagut* (ritual for the ailing), or *uhwangut* (illness ritual). Ritual procedures vary by cause of the illness. If one has fallen sick due to a grievance held by an ancestor or an unrelated dead



Ritual table for illness ritual.



Sacrificial foods offered as part of an illness ritual.



Shaman carrying out *pudakgeori* ritual to chase away evil spirits from patient.

person, an underworld entry ritual is called for. If the illness has been caused by an evil spirit or ghost, rituals like *pudakgeori* or *yeongjangchigi* are staged, both typical shamanic rites for overall healing. Procedures for treating specific diseases include the smallpox eradication ritual, eye disease prevention and treatment, and madness prevention and treatment ritual.

*Pudakgeori* is a simple ritual carried out to chase away evil forces (*sal*) or impurities that are believed to have caused an illness, usually limited to lesser diseases that are not critical. In the case of grave illnesses, a more elaborate *chibyeonggut* (healing ritual) is held.

*Yeongjangchigi* is one of the rituals for healing serious diseases. When one falls ill after attending a wedding or a funeral, a shaman is called in to treat the illness by staging this ritual. It includes a mock burial of the patient, using a straw effigy (*jeung*) and a chicken as proxies. This process is repeated three times, which reflects the procedures of a funeral. The implied intent is to pray for healing by having the straw effigy and the chicken die in the place of the patient, taking away the illness with them.

Healing rituals were also held for madness and other mental illnesses. They were believed to have been caused by the invasion of evil spirits or ghosts, which had to be chased away through the sorcery ritual *anjeungut* (sitting ritual). In central parts of the eastern coast, *gwangingut* (ritual for mad person), is officiated by male shamans and is the only exorcism ritual in which a master shaman of the eastern coast performs the blade dance (*jakdutagi*).

## CHEONJE 천제

### Ritual for Celestial God

*Cheonje* is a ritual for Cheonsin, a celestial god that has been worshipped since ancient times.

Cheonsin worship deifies the sky itself or believes in the existence of a heavenly transcendental

## CHEONJE



*Cheonje* on Mt. Taebaek.



Rite for Cheonsin held as part of *cheonje* on Mt. Taebaek.



Altar, Mt. Taebaek, Gangwon-do (Hwang Heon-man)

Burning of sacred texts by ritual officials during *cheonje* on Mt. Taebaek.Procedures for *cheonje* follow the the formal text *holgi*.

divinity. Variations of the name **Cheonsin** include Haneullim, Haneunim and Hananim, all meaning sky god; Chinjiwang, which is used on Jeju Island; Okwangsangje, or Pure August Jade Emperor, the name of the highest Taoist deity and ruler of the heavens; and Jeseokcheon, which originated from Buddhism.

Celestial god worship in Korean folk religion was established in the foundation myths of ancient kingdoms of Buyeo, Goguryeo, Garak, Silla and Gojoseon, which depict their progenitors as celestial deities that descended to the earthly kingdom and became kings. Rituals for worshipping the heavens included Yeonggo of Buyeo and Dongmaeng of Goguryeo, and there are records of a New Year ritual for the sky and earth in Baekje, featuring drums and pipes, and of a ritual in Silla that took place at an altar for the celestial god on Mt. Taebaek.

Altars for *cheonje* are generally built on the summit or the foot of a mountain without a roof structure, the grounds bordered with a circle of rocks and the altar to one side. Rituals are held seasonally, in the first lunar month, or once every few years or for special occasions on a selected auspicious day.

Two examples of celestial god worship rituals still being observed today are the Mt. Taebaek **Cheonje** and the Ritual at Celestial God Worship Altar in Dongho-dong, Donghae. The former is held each year on October 3, National Foundation Day, to pray for peace around the country and for the people, a tradition that has been observed since the Silla dynasty. The altar for celestial god worship *cheonjedan* is located on the summit of Mt. Taebaek and was designated as Important Folklore Cultural Heritage in 1991. The Dongho-dong ritual is a village rite held each year on the first day of the first lunar month at the altar *cheonjedan* to pray for peace and harmony in the community.

On Chuja Island in Jeju, a ritual for worshipping **Cheonsin**, **Jisin** (Earth God) and **Yongwang** (Dragon King) is held each year on the first day of the second lunar month. **Cheonsin** is the first deity worshipped in the ritual, which was sometimes accompanied by a rain rite (*giuje*). This ritual is closely related to the livelihood of the community, similar to the big catch ritual *pungeoje*.

## CHEONSIN 천신

### New Offerings Ritual

*Cheonsin*, a term that literally means, “offering the new,” refers to a ritual held to offer the season’s new harvest to ancestors and household gods

The rite is a thanksgiving ritual that involves the offering of the fall season’s first harvested grains to the many household gods, generally taking place before the thanksgiving holiday Chuseok or sometimes as part of the Chuseok festivities. The ritual takes place out on the sauce jar terrace in the backyard, or in various corners of the house where household gods reside, as in a household gods ritual (*gosa*). Sacrificial foods comprise a simple offering of cooked vegetables and clear water, or a bowl of newly harvested rice with some accompanying side dishes. Rituals that offer rice stalks harvested before they have fully grown are called



*Olbyeochoonsin* is a ritual offering rice stalks harvested before they have fully grown.  
Jigok-myeon, Seosan-si, Chungcheongnam-do (Song Bong-hwa)

*olbyeochoonsin*, *olbyeo* meaning, “early harvest rice.” Other *cheonsin* rituals include *milcheonsin*, which offers to **Samsin** the goddess of childbearing and the land tutelary god **Teoju** pancakes made with newly harvested wheat (*mil*) in the seventh lunar month; *yuducheonsin*, offering to ancestors new fruits and grains on Yudu, the fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month; *aengducheonsin*, offering new cherries (*aengdu*) of the season on **Dano**, on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month; and *cheongeochoonsin*, offering to ancestors herring (*cheonge*) caught in winter and spring

## CHILSEOKGOSA 칠석고사

### Seventh Evening Sacrificial Rite

*Chilseokgosa* is a ritual held in homes to mark Chilseok Day, the seventh day of the seventh lunar month.

Also called *chilseokje* (Seventh Evening ritual) or *chilseongje* (ritual for Seven Stars), this ritual is an annual seasonal ceremony held to pray for the health and longevity of the family’s offspring. It is observed either on the morning or evening of Chilseok Day, or the evening before, with a simple hand-rubbing (*bison*) rite to worship **Chilseong** (Seven Stars) or Okwangsangje (Pure August Jade Emperor). The ritual takes place in the backyard by the sauce jar terrace, a location considered the cleanest place in the home and thereby the most suitable place to offer devotion to **Chilseong**. Altars are sometimes set up in the form of a rock (*chilseongdol*), or a pile of red clay (*chilseongdan*). Many of the ritual’s procedures are performed in sets of seven, in association with Chilseok or **Chilseong**: seven spoons inserted in the bowl of steamed rice (*me*) on the ritual table; offering seven bows and seven cups of ritual wine; burning seven sheets of prayer text (*soji*); and steaming white rice cake in a steamer (*siru*) with seven holes.

Sacrificial foods generally comprise steamed rice and sea mustard soup, which is related to the longevity





Seventh Evening sacrificial rite.  
Jeongsan-myeon, Cheongyang-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do (Hwang Heon-man)

of children. In South Chungcheong Province, the rice enshrined inside **Samsin** pouch, the sacred entity for the Goddess of Childbearing, is used to make steamed rice on Chilseok Day. Since rice is an important sacrificial food for this occasion, during the fall harvest each year, some rice is set aside for Chilseok. Other offerings include plain white rice cake (*baekseolgi*), made with clear water and rice powder, and cooked vegetables. Flour pancakes are also offered in some regions. In some cases fish and seafood are considered taboo. Taboos are more strictly observed compared to other household rituals: The ritual is not held in the case of impurities, including a death in the village. If the family keeps a “life bridge (*myeongdari*),” or longevity prayer cloth, hung at their shaman’s

shrine, they visit the shaman on Chilseok Day to pray for the longevity of the children, and offer prayers at the **Chilseong** shrine at Buddhist temples as well.



Ritual table with steamed white rice and sea mustard soup.  
Maegyo-dong, Gwonseon-gu, Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do (2002, Choe Ho-sik)

## CHUNGJE 충제 Pest Prevention Ritual

*Chungje*, literally meaning, “insect ritual,” is a summer village ritual held for the prevention of damage on crops by insects and to pray for peace in the village.

It is believed that pest control rituals have been observed throughout history, with records that date back to Joseon on state- or locally-organized village rituals (*poje*) held to address severe insect damage.

In most villages, *chungje* takes place on the first day of the sixth lunar month, when rice stalks have begun bearing grains under harsh weather conditions including heavy rains or drought, a crucial point in farming since insect proliferation at this time will ruin the prospects for a good harvest. Pest prevention rites were held around the country including Jeju Island, where locusts caused much damage.

The rituals were held on the mountain behind the village or facing the village entrance, which is related to the fact that **Sansin** (Mountain God) was the deity worshipped in the ritual. Procedures followed the formal Confucian tradition, without accompanying music, and participated by three male officials or less.

Simple sacrificial foods were offered, including steamed rice (*me*), wine, fruits, and jerky. One notable sacrifice was a beheaded chicken, observed in most

villages. The prayer text reflected the wishes of the villagers, including insect extermination, good harvest and peace in the village.

## DALJIPTAEUGI 달집태우기 Moon House Burning

*Daljiptaengi* is a ritual for praying for a good harvest and peace in the village by setting on fire the moon house, made of bamboo and pine branches, as the moon rises on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon), on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month.

Building a moon house (*daljip*) is an act of enshrining the moon deity, in the same vein as building a shrine to worship a village deity. Setting fire to the moon house is viewed as an attempt at maximizing the life force of all beings of the universe through the union of the *yin* energy of the moon and the *yang* energy of fire. The first full moon of the year is believed to possess the highest level of magical powers, which has resulted in a large number of seasonal customs associated with the occasion.

At around 2 or 3 in the afternoon on Great Full Moon Day as farmers' music is played, villagers set out to collect bamboo and pine branches (*solgaji*) at the instruction of the leader. Upon their return, the moon house is constructed on a field that overlooks the village. Bamboo stalks that still have their leaves intact are used to erect a conical thatched-straw frame of adult height, with a door that opens to the east. The frame is filled with straw brought from villagers' homes, and pine branches are added as a top layer, after which prayers are offered and the villagers play music as they circle the moon house.

When the moon rises over the



Pest prevention ritual in Deokbyeong village.  
Gunnae-myeon, Jindo-gun, Jeollanam-do (2006, Na Gyeong-su)



DALJIPTAEUGI Woldeung-myeon, Seungju-gun, Suncheon-si, Jeollanam-do (2001)



Building Daljip.



Circling Daljip.



Burning Daljip.

mountains, the villagers shout, “The moon is rising!” and the village leader sets fire inside and on the surface of the moon house. Along with the roar of the crowd, hollering, “The moon has risen! Light the fire!” the thundering sound of the percussion music, of the bamboo and pine branches cracking and burning, shakes the heaven and the earth.

It is believed that flames that soar higher than those from the neighboring village bring a good harvest, so competition can be fierce. The sound of bamboo cracking is believed to chase away bad fortune, so villagers try to add as many bamboo stalks as possible. Prospects for a good harvest are also determined by the direction in which the moon house collapses after burning.

Moon house burning is a symbolic ritual for praying for a good harvest and also a ritual for preventing bad fortune by cleansing impurities with fire.

## DANGOL 단골

Shamanic Follower

*Dangol* is a term that refers to a hereditary shaman, or to a follower who has established an exclusive relationship with a shaman.

In Jeolla Province, a hereditary shaman is called *dangolle* or *danggolle*. In other regions, including the Seoul area, *dangol*, or *danggul*, refers to a follower who has established an exclusive relationship with a shaman, and in contemporary Korean lexicon, the term has come to mean “a regular client.” *Dangol* can also refer to the relationship between the shaman and the follower, who get together for various occasions, both regular and irregular. The former includes seasonal rituals for Buddha’s birthday in the fourth lunar month, **Dano** celebrations on the fifth day of the fifth lunar

month, and Yudu, the fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month. The latter takes place on occasions of illnesses, weddings or deaths. *Dangolpan* refers to a specific community formed by a shaman and her followers.

## DANGSANJE 당산제

### Ritual for Village Gods

*Dangsanje* is a village ritual held in the South Jeolla and South Gyeongsang provinces, to worship the various village gods and pray for peace and prosperity in the community.

The term *dangsanje* is used in inland regions including Gwangju and South Jeolla Province, while in the coastal regions, similar rituals are called *dangje*. Rituals are held mostly in the first half of the first lunar month and on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) around midnight, or on the fifteenth day of the tenth lunar month.

The shrine for these rituals can take the form of a shrine house, a stone stacks altar, a rock or divine tree (*sinmok*), or a combination of several of these forms, but the most commonly observed is the divine tree.

Locations for the shrines are as varied, including the peak or the skirt of the village guardian mountain, or the village entrance. Enshrined deities include Dangsansin (Village Guardian Deity) and Dangsang Grandmother. Unlike mountainous regions, the worshipped deities in South Jeolla Province are mostly associated with land tutelary gods.

Ritual officials are selected based on the criteria of cleanness and they are required to observe taboos (*geumgi*) during the period leading up to the day of the ritual, avoiding funerals and killing of animals. On the gates of the officials' homes and around the ritual venue, straw garlands are hung as taboo ropes (*geumjul*) and red clay (*hwangto*) is sprinkled to keep out impurities. Ritual costs are covered by collecting money or rice from each household or through a communal fund.



*Dangsanje* at Mt. Dolmo.  
Buan-eup, Buan-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2002, Seo Jong-won)





Sprinkling red clay around the ritual venue to keep out impurities.  
Yeonggwang-eup, Yeonggwang-gun, Jeollanam-do (2006, Kim Wol-deok)



Band performing percussion music.  
Namyang-myeon, Goheung-gun, Jeollanam-do (2012, Song Gi-tae)



Tug-of-war following *dangsanje* at a five-way intersection in Gochang.  
Gochang-eup, Gochang-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2006, Seo Hae-suk)



Ritual procedures generally follow those of Confucian rites, accompanied by percussion music (*maegu*). When a shaman officiates the ritual, it is preceded by a simple Confucian-style rite of libation (*heonjak*), bowing (*jebae*), prayer invocation (*chungmun*) and burning of the prayer text (*soji*), which is followed by the main shamanic rite. When the ritual is over, percussion performers greet the ritual officials at the village with music.

*Dangsanje* is sometimes followed by a tug-of-war between villagers teamed up by eastern and western neighborhoods or by gender, to predict the year's harvest. Like other village rituals around the country, *dangsanje* is at once a ritual to pray for peace and prosperity in the community, and a communal festival as well.

## DANJAPGI 단잡기

### Healing Ritual for Shingles

*Danjapgi*, literally meaning “shingles hunt,” is a ritual for healing shingles symptoms through sorcery.

*Dan* is a dialectic term for shingles, a disease characterized by high fever and painful rashes. Shingles healing rituals are observed today mostly around Buyeo, Gongju and Cheongyang in South Chungcheong Province. It is a collective ritual, in which the community participates in the healing of an individual's illness. In the early stage of the disease, the patient seeks healing on his own, but as symptoms worsen, he relies on the traditional method of *danjapgi*. Once the disease is determined to be shingles, the villagers work together under the instruction of *danjabi*, or shingles hunter, to prepare for the ritual. The ritual involves the hunter going around the patient's house to capture the shingles ghost in an earthenware jar (*danji*) and feeding the five-grain rice placed inside the jar to the ghost, then closing the lid and tying the lid to the jar with left-hand lay rope before burying it under the ground. The ritual process is

## DANJAPGI



Preparing for *danjapgi*.  
(2006, Hyeon Jin)



Flags symbolizing shingles ghosts.  
(2008, Oh Mun-seon)



Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do



Five-grain rice to feed the shingles ghost.  
(2008, Oh Mun-seon)



Flogging the captured shingles ghost.  
(2006, Hyeon Jin)



Burying the earthenware jar containing the captured ghost.  
(2008, Oh Mun-seon).



a good example of the communal traditions in Korean villages: The five grains, for instance, which are fed to the ghost, are collected from five different households, to emphasize the dedication of the villagers and their communal camaraderie.

## DANOJE 단오제

### Dano Festival

*Danoje* is a traditional festival held each year around Danojeol, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.

Also called *danogut*, Dano Festival comprises a comprehensive mix of festivities including Confucian memorial service, shamanic ritual, folklore, games and markets. Dano is also celebrated privately in homes with a ritual for household gods (*gosa*) or a ritual officiated by a shaman (*gut*). Some of the biggest communal Dano festivals around the country today are the Gangneung Dano Festival, the Beopseongpo Dano Festival in Yeonggwang and the Jain Dano Festival in Gyeongsan, which reflect the history, tradition and folklore of the local regions.

Gangneung Dano Festival, held in the city of Gangneung in Gangwon Province, worships historical figures from the Gangneung area, deified as Guksaseonghwang (State Preceptor God) and Guksayeoseonghwang (State Preceptor Goddess). Festivities include Confucian memorial service, shamanic ritual, mask drama performance, washing hair in *changpo* (iris) water, swing riding, wrestling and other seasonal customs and games.

Beopseongpo Dano Festival, of Yeonggwang, South Jeolla Province, is the largest festival of its kind on the western coast, dating back to mid-Joseon Dynasty. Beopseongpo has long been an important port for transport and fishing, serving as the venue for a state grain storehouse and the country's largest seasonal fish market specializing in croaker (*jogi*). These socio-economic factors contributed to the establishment of the time-honored and elaborate Dano tradition.

Jain Dano Festival of Gyeongsan and Yongseong in North Gyeongsang Province originated from a ritual to commemorate and appease the spirits of a General Han and his sister, who triumphed against the invading Japanese. The exact identity of General Han is unknown yet he is worshipped by the local community as a guardian deity. It is said that shrines were built around the village upon his death to honor his loyalty and following a memorial rite held in his honor on Dano Day, the villagers commemorated for three to four days with elaborate festivities.

While Dano originally marked the sowing season for farmers and also served as a religious ritual for chasing away evil spirits and pursuing auspicious events, in contemporary times Dano festivals across the regions now serve mostly as seasonal celebrations.

## DODANGGUT 도당굿

### Ritual for Provincial Deity

*Dodanggut* is the term for the village rituals of Gyeonggi Province, held regularly in the beginning of the first lunar month or in spring or fall, aimed at bringing peace and good harvest to the community.

*Dodanggut* is organized by the villagers, with a head host official, called *hwaju* or *dangju*, in charge of overseeing the preparations, and *dodanggut* is officiated by a shaman from outside the community. The purpose of this village ritual is to pray to **Dodangsin** (Provincial Deity), the village guardian deity also referred to as Dodang Grandfather or Dodang Grandmother, for peace and good fortune in the community. The characteristics and procedures of *dodanggut* are similar to those of other communal village rituals observed around the country including *byeolsingut* along the east coast, *dangsangut* in the Jeolla provinces and *daedonggut* in Hwanghae Province. One of the differences, however, is the performance of *hwaraengi*, a group of hereditary male shamans who show off their talent for music and creative soliloquys.



DODANGGUT Ui-dong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul (Jeong Su-mi)



Offering a prayer during *dodanggut* of Gyeonggi Province.



Shaman performs blade dance.



Offering words of blessing.



Sacrificial offerings set up inside the shamanic shrine.



DODANGGUT



Ritual at Jangmal shrine for Dodang Grandfather deity in Bucheon.



Dodang Grandfather dancing before greeting the gods.



Shaman chasing away impurities with a ritual table set up in the street during Jangmal *Dodanggut*.



Dodang Grandfather performs divination by erecting his fan in mounds of rice set up on the table.



Ui-dong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul (Jeong Su-mi)



Barachum.



Gunung Segment.



Jeseok Segment.

## DOKGYEONG 독경

Recitation of Scriptures

*Dokgyeong* is the term for the shamanic practice performed by a sorcerer reciting the scriptures of Taoism or Buddhism to pray for the good fortunes of an individual, or peace and prosperity in the family.

In Korean folk religion, *beopsa* are sorcerers who practice divination or officiate *dokgyeong*.

Essential to the practice of *dokgyeong*, is the study of a vast range of scriptures, including the four major shamanic scriptures *Okchugyeong* (Scripture of Precious Fundamentals), *Cheonjipalyanggyeong* (Sutra





A sorcerer reciting the scriptures before shamanic paper props.  
Taegan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2003)



Sorcerer performing scripture-recitation.  
Dongheungnam-dong, Gunsan-si, Jeollabuk-do (2009, Park Hye-jeong)



*Okchugyeong.*

of Heaven-Earth Eight-Yang), *Okgapgyeong* (Scripture of Precious Armor), *Gimungyeong* (Scripture of Taoist Magic).

The most widely observed among the many *dokgyeong* rituals are the household peace-wishing ritual *antaek* and the madness-healing ritual *michingut*. The latter, performed by *beopsa* of Chungcheong Province, are perceived as particularly effective and these sorcerers are called to different parts around the country to stage the healing rituals.

There are specialized recitation practices for healing; for praying for good fortune; for possession rituals; for appeasing the soul of the dead; and many other purposes and occasions.

In the past, the practice was widespread, but is now preserved mainly in Chungcheong Province and part of Gangwon Province, and is not often observed in other parts of the country.



Sacrificial offerings and fire set up at a three-way intersection.  
(Kim Jong-dae)



*Dokkaebigut* of Jindo Island.  
Imhui-myeon, Jindo-gun, Jeollanam-do (1998, Korean Folklore Society)

## DOKKAEBIGUT 도깨비굿

### Goblin Ritual

*Dokkaebigut* is a ritual for chasing away *dokkaebi*, or goblins, believed to be the causes of fire or contagious diseases.

Alternate versions of the term can be used depending on ritual procedure, including *dokkaebije*

or *dokkaebigosa*. In traditional communities, *dokkaebi* are creatures with both negative and positive characteristics. They are often perceived as culprits of fire or as spirits that bring smallpox, who must be eradicated through shamanic rituals to keep the village safe. On the other hand, they are also seen as deities that oversee fishing, as observed in big catch rituals on the western or southern coasts or islands, which are generally private rituals but sometimes staged as part



of the village ritual *dangje* or the boat rite *baegosa*.

In most cases *dokkaebi*-related rituals do not involve specific sacred entities, but some peculiar types of entities are worshipped, including Kim Cheomji (Official Kim), which are a pair of earthenware jars draped with conical straw bundles (*teojutgari*), featured in the fire-prevention rituals of Gyeonggi Province on the sixteenth of the first lunar month.

In communities that view *dokkaebi* as smallpox spirits, ritual procedures involve a procession of women playing percussion instruments or banging on household objects to chase away the goblins, visiting each household and each corner of the village and ending the parade with rituals at the village entrance and in the guardian mountain. These rituals, generally officiated by women, are carried out in an informal atmosphere. Household objects used for the ritual include various metal kitchenware like cauldron lids.

While in inland regions *dokkaebi* are considered objects of eradication, in fishing communities they are worshipped as spirits that promise a big catch, and *dokkaebibul*, or goblin fire, served as a means of gauging the year's catch for the local fishermen.

## DONGJE 동제 Village Tutelary Festival

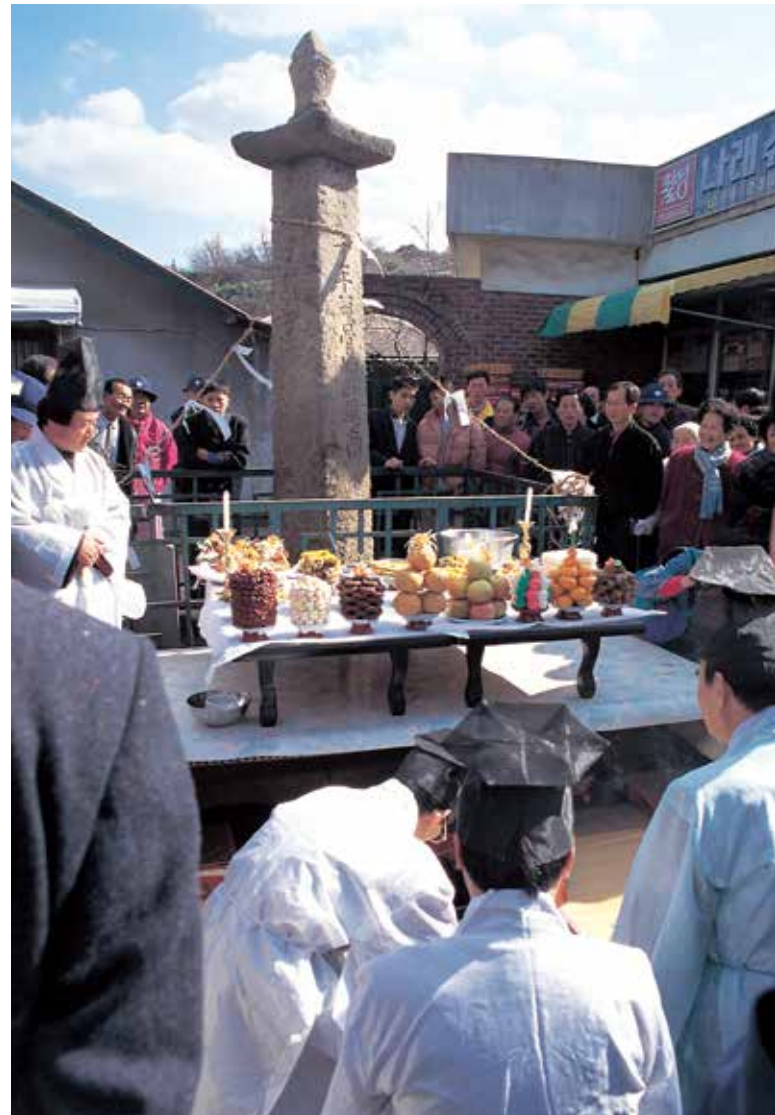
*Dongje* refers to a communal festival staged collectively by the entire village.

In Korea, most of these local festivals take place at the beginning of the first lunar month or on the first full moon of the year (Great Full Moon), or in the tenth lunar month or on Dano, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. Most are annual festivals, while some take place every other year, every leap year or every ten years.

Village rituals in Korea are also called *seonghwangje*, *seonanggosa*, *dangsanje*, *byeolsinje*, *dodanggut*, *sansinje* (ritual for mountain god) or

*gocheongje* (ritual for heavenly request), and the worshipped deities also vary widely, including the gods of the mountain, sky, sun, stars, tree, earth, water, and man gods as well. These rituals were staged at natural altars, *nuseokdan* (stone stacks), *simmok* (divine tree) or shrines.

In earlier times, *dongje* served the purpose of praying for a good harvest or a big catch, for fecundity in the village and cattle, and of protecting the community against contagious diseases and tiger attacks. Nowadays the rituals reflect the wishes of contemporary lives



Village ritual *dangsanje* in Ogeori, Gochang.  
Gochang-eup, Gochang-gun, Jeollabuk-do  
(1994, Hwang Heon-man)



including the prevention of traffic or military accidents, and hopes for a good marriage. Local representatives who host the ceremony are called *jegwan*, or ritual officials, selected through a divination process called *saenggibokdeok*, which determines if one's fortunes on the day of the ritual carry any unclean elements.

Main sacrifices include whole cows or pigs, cow head, or pig head, generally accompanied by a rice cake steamer (*siru*), fruits in three colors (*samsaeksilgwa*) and whole dried pollock (*bugeo*). While in the past funds for the ritual came from solicitations, donations



Village guardian deity ritual during Oti Byeolsinje in Jecheon. Susan-myeon, Jecheon-si, Chungcheongbuk-do (2010, Lee Pil-yeong)



Sacrifices offered during *dongje* in the village of Mulgeon on the southern coast. Namhae-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do (2004, Choe Ho-sik)

and the village cooperative fund, nowadays many local governments provide financial support. Taboos (*geumgi*) are observed in the days leading up to the ritual and the villagers try to avoid births, accidents, menstruation and sexual intercourse.

*Dongje* can be categorized into Confucian rituals, shamanic rituals and music and performance rituals. Confucian rituals follow solemn formalities according to the Confucian tradition and *sansinje* is a widely recognized form. Shamanic rituals are officiated by a shaman, and include *byeolsinje* or *pungeoje* (ritual for big catch) in the coastal regions; *dodanggut* from Gyeonggi Province; and *bugundanggut* from the Seoul area, along the Han River. Music and performance rituals feature a troupe of performers (*pungmulpae*), made up of villagers, staging farmers' percussion music and various other forms of entertainment. One of the widely known examples is *dangsanje* from Jeolla or Gyeongsang provinces.

## DONGTOJAPGI 동토잡기

### Calamity Fixing Ritual

*Dongtojapgi* is a ritual for undoing accidents or healing diseases caused by mishandling of soil, metals or wood.

*Dongto*, or *dongti*, is a term that means, "to dig up land that should not be touched," which has come to refer to calamities caused by the mishandling of objects that according to folk belief require special attention regarding dates and directions. Soil, metal or wooden objects are most prone to this damage, which can also occur when moving household goods or during house repairs, from mishandling the sauce jar terrace or by picking up something that another person has lost. When a person with impurities enters the house he can bring calamities, which is called *indongto*, "in" meaning "human."

*Dongto* causes illness in a person, accompanying various symptoms including lethargy or loss of

eyesight, which modern medicine cannot seem to cure. There are many healing rituals for such symptoms, and each village usually has a healer specializing in *dongto*, who are called to the home of the patient to perform a ritual reciting the *Dongto Scriptures* from memory twenty-one times while knocking an ax with a sickle or a hammer. When symptoms are grave, a fortuneteller or sorcerer is called to perform a recitation ritual with a table of sacrificial offerings. If the calamity has been caused by an improper cutting of a tree, it must be undone by sprinkling salt and mugwort on the trunk of the felled tree and reciting the *Dongto Scriptures*.

## EOBUSIM 어부심

### Ritual of Mercy for Water Creatures

*Eobusim*, a term that literally means a ritual of expressing mercy for water creatures, is a ritual held by the river or the sea by an elderly woman of the family on the evening of the fourteenth day or at sunrise on the fifteenth of the first lunar month, to pray to **Yongwang** (Dragon King) for the safety of her children or good fortune in the family.

The ritual is a private practice based on the worship of **Yongwang** as a deity that oversees all that is related to water, including wells, streams, rivers, and the sea.

*Eobusim* is usually held at the break of dawn, to offer one's devotions out of sight from people and to keep out impurities. The woman of the house sets up by the stream, river, sea, or the well in the garden, sacrificial foods that she has prepared, including steamed rice, fruit, cooked vegetables, *sirutteok* (layered rice cake with red bean filling) and other rice cakes, sea mustard soup, uncooked rice and millet, to pray for the safety of her children or peace in the family.

## EUMBOK 음복

### Consumption of Sacrificial Food

*Eumbok*, literally meaning, “to drink good fortune,” refers to the practice by ritual participants of sharing sacrificial foods during or after the ritual to pray for good fortune.

All rituals aim at communicating the wishes of humans to the deities in hopes of achieving them, for which a variety of sacrificial foods are prepared as an expression of human longing and devotion.

A set of designated foods are offered according



Ritual officials consume sacrificial foods following a ritual.  
Hyeonnam-myeon, Yangyang-gun, Gangwon-do (2003, Choe Ho-sik)



Libation by ritual officials following the rite.  
Mountain God Shrine, Mt. Taebaek, Gangwon-do  
(2010, Kim Do-hyeon)



to formal procedures, during which the worshipped god's response and intent are communicated repeatedly, through the shaman's channeling (*gongsu*) or through the movements and actions of the ritual officiant. At times the officiant takes pieces of the sacrificial food from the table and hands them out to these attending as food sent by the gods, which is also referred to as *eumbok*.

Consuming food from the ritual table signifies that the gods and humans are unified through food, that the gods' intents have been delivered to the people and that the people will be able to achieve their wishes. Once the sacrificial foods are arranged on the ritual table, they transform into sacred entities, and their

consumption signifies not only a communal sharing of food but also contact between humans and the higher spirits.

## EUNSAN BYEOLSINJE 은산별신제

### Rite for Tutelary Spirit of Eunsan

**Eunsan Byeolsinje** is a traditional communal rite observed in Buyeo, South Chungcheong Province, designated as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 9.

Some trace the origins of this village ritual to the rise of the town of Eunsan as a center of transport and commerce during the Joseon dynasty, or to a series of wars that led to the sacrifice of myriad soldiers whose soul needed appeasing.

It appears that the ritual's procedure began from *dongje* (village tutelary ritual), comprising a ritual for **Sansin** (Mountain God) in the high shrine (*sangdang*) and that for the village guardian posts (*jangseung*) and the divine pole (*jindae*) in the low shrine (*hadang*), then was expanded as a larger scale *byeolsinje* with the town's growth as a transport and commerce center. The procedure later came to include a Confucian memorial service for Janggunsin (General God) and shamanic rituals at the high and low shrines.

Like other *byeolsinje*, this festival was observed every three years, but now it is an annual event, with the grand ceremony (*daeje*) held every three years, which includes not only the annual main ceremony, the mountain god ritual *doksanje* and the ritual for village guardian posts (*jangseungje*) but the high and low shrine rituals and the cutting of the divine pole (*jindaebegi*) and the receiving of flowers (*kkotbatgi*).

The most important participants of **Eunsan Byeolsinje** are the head official *hwaju*, selected among ritual officials for being "clean" without impurities, and the shaman officiating the high and low shrine rituals. The former offers a Confucian rite for **Sansin** and



Villagers share sacrificial foods following a ritual.  
Jeongsan-myeon, Cheongyang-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2002, Hwang Heon-man)



EUNSAN BYEOLSINJE Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Cha Jeong-hwan)



Hanging taboo ropes around Eunsan Stream.



Felling a tree to use as divine pole.



Mixing malt with steamed rice to brew ritual wine.



House ritual officiated by a musician troupe.



Parade for flower receiving.



Receiving the flower enshrined in the shrine for village tutelary deity.



Main ceremony at the high shrine.



Prayer invocation during the main ceremony at the high shrine.



Divine pole erected as part of the high shrine ritual.



Post-ritual ceremonies officiated by a shaman at the low shrine (2006, Hong Tea-han).



Mountain god ritual.



Ritual for village guardian posts.



other deities, while the latter entertains and appeases the divine spirits with song and dance.

In contemporary times the festival has been reestablished as a six-day program held between the last week of the third lunar month and the first week of the fourth month. On the first day, taboo ropes (*geumjul*) are hung around Eunsan Stream, followed by the brewing of ritual wine for **Sansin** (*jorasul*) which takes place at the head official's home, and a round of house rituals in the homes of ritual officials. On the second day, the villagers cut a tree in the nearby mountains to be used as the divine pole, followed by house rituals in the evening. The third day is reserved for receiving flowers, the ritual officials travelling from Eunsan to Samchungsa Temple on Mt. Buso in Buyeo, with house rituals again held in the evening. The fourth day marks the main ceremony, along with the high shrine ritual at *byeolsindang*, the shrine for the village tutelary deity. On the morning of the fifth day, the high shrine ritual is held at *byeolsindang*, followed by the lower shrine ritual. On the last day, the closing ceremony (*doksanje*) is held outside *byeolsindang*, with rituals taking place all around Eunsan for its village guardian posts (*jangseung*).

## GAEKGWIMULLIGI 객귀몰리기

### Wayfarer Ghost Repelling Ritual

*Gaekgwimulligi* is a ghost-repelling ritual held at home to heal an urgent symptom or a disease believed to have been caused by a *gaekgwi*, or wayfarer ghost, who has invaded the household.

*Gaekgwi* is the haunted wandering spirit of one who has met a tragic death; one whose death did not receive a proper funeral; or one without descendants to memorialize him through annual *jesa* rites. These wayfarer ghosts are caught between the world of the living and that of the dead. Holding a deep grievance against the world, they will attach themselves to the living at every opportunity and refuse to go away. This

results in physical damage in the invaded individual that can cause sudden illnesses, which has to be cured by repelling the *gaekgwi*, the source of the illness. It is suspected that a wayfarer ghost has invaded one's body when an individual, who was in a healthy state before leaving home, upon returning shows sudden symptoms of headache, stomach cramps or indigestion, chill or other signs of a cold. Further evidence of a *gaekgwi*-related disease is found when modern medicine fails to treat or improve the symptoms.

If symptoms are urgent, a repelling ritual is held immediately, but in other cases, it is held when symptoms persist for a given period. Attempts are made to treat early symptoms by applying simple sorcery like having the afflicted person hold a cauldron lid in front of the kitchen deity **Jowang**, or splashing water on the eaves of the outhouse then collecting the falling drops to be given to the patient to drink. When these methods fail, family members carry out a repelling ritual. A more professional approach is to seek the help of *sinhalmeoni*, or elderly village sorceress, and in the case of critical illnesses, shamans or professional sorcerers were asked to officiate the ritual.

*Gaekgwimulligi* is held at dusk. The afflicted person is to be seated or lying down in a room. The officiant swings a kitchen knife around the patient's head three times while chanting a spell to threaten the ghost. Then she uses the knife to cut three locks of the patient's hair, which is placed in a gourd bowl and the patient is told to spit three times into the bowl. The hair and saliva symbolize the spirit of the afflicted, or the individual himself. The officiant then turns out the light and leaves the room, scattering salt or red beans on the door as she slams it shut. Stepping out to the courtyard, she slings the knife toward the gate or to the ground outside the gate. If the knife lands with its tip pointed toward the house, it is slung repeatedly to force the ghost out of the house. If it lands with the tip pointed outward, it is deemed that the wayfarer ghost has been expelled.



## GAETJE 갯제

### Fishing Ritual

*Gaetje* is a village ritual held to pray for a big catch and safety for the community.

This ritual, practiced at seaside villages, mostly in the coastal regions of Jeolla Province, is also called *dukje* (banner ritual), *pungeoje* (big catch ritual), *susinje* (water god ritual), *haesinje* (sea god ritual) or *yongwangje* (dragon king ritual).

*Gaetje* is held as part of the village ritual *dangje* or as a private ritual. While the main procedures of *dangje* are officiated formally by elderly male ritual officials (*jegwan*), the *gaetje* section of the ritual is closer to a communal festival participated by men and women and the young and the old. *Gaetje* takes place generally on the last day of the lunar calendar or on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) in the first lunar month, although it is also observed in some regions on the fifteenth of the eighth lunar month. The first lunar month marks the start of the farming season for sea laver and sea mustard, while farming for other additional seaweed starts in the eighth month.

Ritual procedures vary slightly by region. In some parts, villagers gather by the sea and enjoy song and dance through the night, and at the crack of dawn, make an offering to *Yongwang* (Dragon King) of the bones of an entire cow. There are villages in which the ritual is observed as a private practice by individual families of fishermen or divers praying by the sea for a big catch by offering food and bows to the deities. In some villages it is believed that *dokkaebi*, or goblins, bring a big catch, and at the

end of village rituals (*dongje*), the ritual officials make an offering to the goblins by throwing buckwheat jelly, their favorite food, into the sea. Some fishing rituals are organized exclusively by women. In the afternoon of the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, maidens of the village visit each house to collect ingredients to make rolls of rice wrapped in dried sea laver, then gather by the sea to pray for a good harvest of sea laver by throwing the food in the water or by distributing it to all the households in the village.

GAETJE Yaksan-myeon, Wando-gun, Jeollanam-do (2003)



Setting up sacrifices.



Offering of sacrificial foods.

## GAEULGOSA 가을고사

### Autumn Rite

*Gaeulgosa*, meaning, “autumn rite,” is a ritual for household gods held on an auspicious day in the tenth lunar month.

Another term for this ritual is *sangdalgosa*, or ritual in the best month of the year (*sangdal*), the tenth lunar month, the date selected by a shaman or as indicated in the almanac. A day of the pig or a day of the horse is usually preferred for this ritual, more often the latter. This autumn rite is often observed as a village ritual, and individual households hold their private rituals either before or after the communal rite. The date is postponed when there is an impurity in the village, including birth or death. Menstruation results in a week-long delay and funeral attendance in a month-long delay, so a death in the village means the autumn rite will be held in the eleventh month, the month of the winter solstice. The last lunar month is viewed as a month of decay, and rituals are avoided.

After the date for the ritual is set, a taboo rope is hung over the gate (*geumjul*) along with a layer of red clay sprinkled out front (*hwangto*), and rice grains are prohibited from leaving the house. On the day of the ritual, the woman of the house wakes early to perform ablution before starting to prepare rice cake for the ritual table. In the past two different types of rice cake—*sirutteok*, made of thin layers of cake with red bean filling, and *baekseolgi*, steamed as a thick white block without layer—were prepared for each household god, but rice cake is no longer a main staple for Koreans and only one steamer of layered cake is made. The smell of boiling red beans on the day of the ritual was considered vital, since red beans chased away bad fortunes. Impurities must also be kept out of the preparation process. It is believed to be an ominous sign if the rice cake is not fully cooked, leaving traces of rice powder inside the steamer, so during the steaming process, the woman of the house continues to bow and rub her palms, praying for the rice cake to turn out well.

On the day of *gaeulgosa*, prior to the steaming of rice cake, the grains inside the earthenware jar of

### GAEULGOSA



*teojutgari* or *eopgari*, sacred entities worshipped as the land tutelary god **Teoju** and the god of property **Eop**, are replaced with newly harvested rice or beans. The conical straw bundle cover is also replaced with new straw. Then the steaming takes place for the rice cake. It was believed in the past that the home hosting a ritual must be filled with the aroma of red beans, so rice cake layered with red bean filling was prepared in steamers in the number of the household gods worshipped in the home.



Nam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006)



## GANGNEUNG DANOJE 강릉단오제

### Gangneung Dano Festival

**Gangneung Danoje** is a communal festival that takes place on Dano (fifth day of the fifth lunar month) in Gangneung, Gangwon Province.

**Gangneung Danoje** is held for the worship of Guksaseonghwang (State Preceptor God) and other

deities related to Daegwallyeong Pass, including Guksayeoseonghwang (State Preceptor Goddess) and **Sansin** (Mountain God). Festivities include a Confucian memorial service, shamanic ritual, mask drama performance, and other folklore and markets, aimed at enhancing the communal spirit. **Gangneung Danoje** was designated by the government as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 13 on January 16, 1967, and on November 25, 2005, was proclaimed as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

The festival's main deity of worship Guksaseonghwang is believed to be State Preceptor Beomil (810-889) of late Silla who founded the temples Simboksa and Gulsansa. Beomil was born in the village of Haksan, now part of the city of Gangneung, where relics still remain that support the mystical traits related to the revered monk's birth. Guksayeoseonghwang (State Preceptor Goddess) was a maiden from Gangneung with the last name Jeong, who was sent for by the village deity **Seonghwang** of Daegwallyeong to be taken as his wife, a tiger acting as the deity's messenger. In downtown Gangneung today remain houses known as the childhood homes of the State Preceptor Goddess and Yeoseonghwang (Village Goddess), where rituals are held as part of Dano festivities. The fact that these deities originated from historical figures signifies the strong local identity of the festival. General Kim Yu-sin (595-673) of Silla, who unified the Three Kingdoms, is believed to have been deified as **Sansin** of Daegwallyeong, due to his time spent in Gangneung mastering his martial skills.

Preparations for **Gangneung Danoje** begin on the fifth day of the fourth lunar month with the brewing of the sacred wine (*sinju*) at Chilsadang, a government office building from Joseon dynasty, accompanied by a shamanic ritual to cleanse impurities (*bujeonggut*) and to pray for successful brewing. On the fifteenth, ritual officials, shamans and villagers climb up to Daegwallyeong Pass to hold a rite for **Sansin** and Guksaseonghwang, followed by a ritual for identifying a divine tree (*sinmok*), the sacred entity that symbolizes the State Preceptor God, and bring with them to the village a branch from the tree. The branch and the tablet for the State Preceptor God are kept



GANGNEUNG DANOJE Namdaecheon, Gangneung-si, Gangwon-do (2011)



Rite for Sansin of Daegwallyeong Pass.



Memorial rite for *Guksayeoseonghwang* (State Preceptor Goddess) of Daegwallyeong Pass.



Procession toward the Shrine for State Preceptor Goddess.



Confucian memorial service at the Shrine for State Preceptor Goddess.



Morning Confucian ritual *jojeonje*.





Dano ritual.



Dano ritual.



Ritual of raising heavy brass jars with teeth.



Burning flower decorations during the send-off ritual for the spirits on the last evening of the festival.

together at the Shrine for the State Preceptor Goddess for a series of rituals leading up to the third day of the fifth lunar month, then enshrined. The main rituals of the festival begin on the evening of the third day of the fifth month. When the ritual for welcoming the spirits (*yeongsinje*) is over, the tablets and the divine tree branch are carried to the shamanic ritual venue set up in the Dano marketplace.

Main festivities continue until the seventh day, including memorial rites, shamanic rituals, mask dances and other designated cultural performances and folk games. In the mornings a Confucian ritual called *jojeonje* is held, participated by local dignitaries including the mayor of Gangneung as ritual officials. Shamanic rituals continue all day long, making up the main religious program of the festival, a celebration of comprehensive performing arts that encompasses farmers' music, narrative song, dance, instrumental accompaniment and theatrical skits. The artistic elements of shamanic rites have greatly influenced Korea's traditional performing arts, from music and dance to theater.

On the last evening of the festival, a ritual is held to send back the deities to their place, called *songsinje*. All props and flower decorations used in the festivities are burned and the festival wraps up with a ritual to pray for peace and prosperity for the villagers for the rest of the year.

categorization of shamans according to their initiation process, used in contrast to *seseummu*, or hereditary shaman. The former directly channels the language of the gods through his or her body, while the latter acts as an agent that delivers the gods' words.

Possessed shamans are defined by three elements: the experience of spiritual sickness (*sinbyeong*); maintenance of a personal shrine for worshipping the deity that possessed them; and their role as officiant in a shamanic ritual. Their calling is not inherited and they possess a strong sense of spirituality and of the presence of the gods.

Prevalent in the regions north of the Han River, possessed shamans in Korea dress in elaborate ritual garb and enter a state of trance through frantic dancing accompanied by percussion music, at which stage they become capable of channeling the words of the gods. Korea's possessed shamans are categorized as part of the Northern tradition shamanism. While Northern tradition shamans experience *talhon* (ecstasy), a process of the shaman's soul ascending from the body toward the world of the gods, what Korean shamans experience is defined as *bingui* (possession), the descent of spirit onto the shaman's body.

Since *gangsinnmu* embody the descended spirit of the gods, every act they perform in a ritual is perceived as an act of the gods. Compared to rituals officiated

## GANGSINMU 강신무

### Possessed Shaman

*Gangsinnmu* is a possessed shaman capable of trance channeling, who has been initiated into the calling through a possession ritual (*naerimgut*) after experiencing spirit sickness.

The term is an academic



Shaman handling a straw cutter blade during a ritual.  
Wolmido Island (1992, Kim In-hoe)



by hereditary shamans, those by possessed shamans are therefore more intense and directly reflect the will of the gods. The categorization of *gangsinnmu* and *seseummu* also serves as a criterion for defining the geographical divide between the regions north and south of the Han River, the former more prevalent in the north and the latter in the south. The spiritual sickness that possessed shamans experience is also called *mbyeong*, a form of psychiatric illness that can be healed only through a possession ritual (*naeringut*).

## GEORIJJE 거리제

### Street Ritual

*Georije*, or street ritual, is held in the first week or on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month at the entrance of the village or a main intersection in town to worship the street god (*georisin*).

Street rituals can be categorized into communal rites held collectively on a specific date, and household rites officiated by the woman of the house.

Communal street rituals are generally held as New Year rituals between the first day of the year and Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon). While the high shrine (*sangdang*) rites of a village ritual, including *sansinje* (mountain god ritual) and *dangje* (village god ritual), are aimed at praying for peace and good harvest for the entire community, street rituals, as low shrine (*hadang*) rites, reflect in many cases more specific and smaller prayers including the eradication of bad fortune and the expulsion of smallpox.

Communal street rites are generally held in the farming villages of inland regions. In order to appease wayfarer ghosts (*gaekgwi*), the rituals are held at the entrance of the village or at the village community center, the procedures open to everyone in the village and carried out in a festive mood, as opposed to the solemn proceedings of a high-shrine ritual.

Upon the arrival of the Lunar New Year, families

also hold street rituals on the town's main intersection, to pray for peace and safety for all members of the family, especially for protection from the dangers on the streets. An auspicious date is selected for the ritual between the third and fourteenth days of the first lunar month, and the ritual takes place late at night. If the family hires a shaman to officiate the peace-wishing ritual *antaek* for the New Year, the street ritual is held together the same evening.

The ritual venue is laid out with two long straw mats on the ground, arranged to form an intersection, with simple sacrificial offerings that sometimes include coins. Although the ritual host (*jeju*) is the woman of the house, sometimes a sorcerer (*gyeongjaengi*) or a shaman is hired to officiate. Once the sacrificial offerings are arranged, the woman of the house bows and offers her prayer. The sorcerer or shaman recites a simple prayer message or offers a prayer, then burns the prayer text (*soji*). Towards the end of the ritual, a kitchen knife is thrown on the ground repeatedly until it lands with the tip of its blade pointing to the outer edge of the street, which means that the ritual has been successfully carried out. The sacrificial foods are left behind on the street and are never consumed by the family. The vessels used to set up the ritual table are also kept outside the gate overnight and brought back into the house the following morning.



Food to appease *gaekgwi* during street ritual.  
Nohwa-eup, Wando-gun, Jeollanam-do (2008, Yun Dong-hwan)

## GEUMGI 금기 Taboo

*Geumgi*, or taboo, is an act or attitude that must be avoided in the course of a ritual and its preparations.

In Korean folk religion, a ritual is an act of praying to the gods for an individual's hopes and wishes and requires great devotion, which is expressed and manifested through various taboos.

As a religious function, taboos are about avoiding unclean elements (*bujeong*) in pursuit of sanctity. The practices related to *geumgi* reflect people's wishes to sail smoothly without obstacles through life's many turning points including pregnancy, birth, funeral rites, moving, marriage and bereavement.

Ritual officials (*jegwan*) must observe strict taboos by avoiding sexual intercourse and visits to unclean venues like a household in mourning. To keep

out unclean people, the homes of ritual officials are marked with a taboo rope (*geumjul*) hung over the gate, and a layer of red clay (*hwangto*) sprinkled outside.

Homes with a newborn baby also hang taboo ropes over the gate and sprinkle red clay outside. Branches of prickly castor-oil tree (*eomnamu*) are also hung over the gate and the baby is addressed by an alternate infant name to prevent diseases and to ensure good health and longevity.

When a family sets a date for a ritual for household gods (*gosa*), the house is cleaned and the husband and wife take cautions in daily routines. Strict taboos are observed in preparing the sacrificial foods, especially in steaming the rice cake in earthenware. Taboos also accompany the replacing of a sacred entity (*sinche*) with a new one: the old one must be burned or scattered on flowing water; and grains that had been contained inside sacred jars that represent **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God), or **Eop** (God of Property) must not leave the house.

GEUMGI Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Cha Jeong-hwan)



Hanging taboo rope on the walls of the shrine.



Sprinkling red clay and hanging a taboo rope around the shrine.

## GIGOSA 기고사

### Flag Worship Rite

*Gigosa* is an annual rite held to worship *nonggi*, or farming flag, which serves as the icon of a village. Farming flags are closely related to Nongsin, or the Farming God, as well as Shennong-shi, or Divine Farmer, a legendary ruler of China.

Most farming flags contain letters or passages, many of which are related to the Farming God or emphasize the importance of farming or agricultural philosophy. This demonstrates that the farming flag is a symbol of the Farming God and also an object of communal worship.

*Gigosa* is usually observed as part of Jeongwol-daeboreum (Great Full Moon) festivities in the first lunar month. As the year's first full moon approaches, the village cooperative (*donggye*) holds a meeting to prepare for the rite. After a household is selected to host the rite, the farming flag is placed in the yard of the house and a taboo rope (*geumjul*) is hung over the

gate to prohibit outsiders from entering. Sacrificial foods vary by region, but in most cases include fruits in three colors (*samsaeksilgwa*), cooked vegetables in three colors (*samsaeknamul*), rice cakes steamed in layers (*sirutteok*) and a boiled pig's head.



*Nonggi*.  
Geumnam-myeon, Chungcheongnam-do (2004, Kim Yeong-gwang)



Flag worship rite.  
Geumnam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2004, Kim Yeong-gwang)



The ritual's procedure generally follows that of a Confucian memorial service (*jesa*), but in some villages, the rite takes the form of a farmers' music performance (*pungjanggut*). After the ritual is done, the farming flag is kept raised in the yard of the ritual host's home until the first day of the second lunar month, unless inclement weather forces it to be lowered and put away.

## GIJA 기자 Prayer for Conception

*Gija*, literally meaning “to pray for a child,” refers to all forms of activity performed by a woman hoping for conception.

Conception prayers were widely practiced throughout Joseon, based on the common desire to lead long, healthy lives in good fortune and prosperity by bearing a son, since in the Confucian mind, sons were more important than daughters as a means of continuing the lineage. Records of national progenitors, however, as seen in *Samguksagi* (Record of the Three

Kingdoms) and *Samgungyusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), show that such practice was common in ancient societies as well.

*Gija* rituals are observed in a range of different methods and forms that vary by region and practicing individual.

Prayers are generally offered by rubbing one's palms together with sacrificial offerings, but sometimes a shaman is called in to officiate a more formal ritual.

Conception prayers are often accompanied by the consumption of particular fruits or foods that are related to the male sex organ in order to receive the energy that will help bear a son, a practice that is still widely observed today.

Sorcery is also practiced as part of a conception prayer, which includes carrying, or hiding in a secret place, a charm that symbolizes the male sex organ or reproduction.

The practice of good deeds is viewed as an effective conception prayer, a belief that is rooted in the Buddhist concept of fulfilling one's wishes through karma. Symbolic acts of pseudo-sexual intercourse using phallic rocks or trees are sometimes carried out as sorcery in accompaniment to prayers.



Offering prayers for conception.  
Muan-myeon, Miryang-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2004, Bae Do-sik)

## GIUJE 기우제 Rain Rite

*Giuje* refers to all types of rainmaking practices carried out to overcome drought.

A narrower definition would include only those structured as worship rituals, but the term is used more broadly to refer to all types of rainmaking sorcery.

In traditional societies without sufficient irrigation systems, rain rites served as a means of overcoming drought, which was not considered merely a natural phenomenon but a grave problem caused by the lack of virtue in the ruler.

*Giuje* can be categorized into sorcery and

## GIUJE



Sprinkling water with winnow baskets.



Hanging a treadwheel upside down.

religious rites; or into state-organized rites and civilian rites.

State-organized rain rites in Joseon (1392-1910) were recorded and sorted into twelve categories during King Sukjong's reign, among which the eleventh category includes the type held at the royal ancestral shrine Jongmyo; that held by the pond at Chundangdae Pavilion in Changgyeong Palace; and the Seokcheokdongja (Lizard Boy) rain rite. The first type is a Confucian ritual for ancestral worship; the second is also a Confucian rite held at famous mountains or rivers, or venues where a dragon is believed to reside; and the third involves children catching and playing with lizards. The lizard is a symbolic substitute for the dragon and the practice is an act of sorcery based on the belief that torturing a lizard under the blazing sun will persuade the heavenly dragon to bring rain.

Civilian rain rites entail differentiated gender roles. In rites held atop a famous mountain, men stage rituals that involve the digging up of secretly-buried corpses, building a bonfire to create smoke, and prayer recitation, while the ritual procedures for women include taking off their undergarments in large groups and urinating, after which water from the village is poured on the ground. Women's rites can also involve sprinkling water with a winnow basket (*ki*); mock plowing while wearing bamboo rain hats; or hanging a treadwheel upside down. It was believed that women's participation in rain rites was more effective than men's.

## GOCHEONGJE 고청제

### Ritual of Heavenly Request

*Gocheongje* is a village ritual for worshipping the heavens.

*Gocheongje* has its origins in *cheonje*, ritual for the celestial god Cheonsin. Since the sky was a sacred presence, it was considered taboo to refer to it directly, hence the term *cheon*, meaning sky, was replaced with



Shrine for *gocheongje*.  
Wangsan-myeon, Gangneung-si, Gangwon-do (2004)

a similar one—*cheong*, which in Chinese characters was 清 (clear) or 請 (to request). And the ritual for the Celestial God came to be called *gocheongje*, meaning a ritual for making a request to the heavens.

The ritual procedure is similar to that of the Confucian village ritual *dongje*. It is generally held on the first day of the first lunar month, and sacrificial foods comprise only raw dishes with the exception of rice cake and steamed rice. Procedures follow the order as specified in a formal text called *holgi*. The ritual is followed by the consumption of sacrificial foods (*eumbok*) and the ritual officials divide up the remaining offerings to be taken home. *Gocheongje* is now practiced in villages along the eastern coast.

## GODAEJECHEONUIRYE

고대제천의례

### Ancient Celestial God Worship Rituals

Celestial god worship rituals in ancient times were farming or hunting rites aimed at offering prayers or thanks for a good harvest.

In ancient kingdoms of the Korean peninsula,

including Buyeo, Goguryeo, Dongye, and Samhan, annual celestial god worship rituals were held to express gratitude for the year's harvest.

Yeonggo, of Buyeo (18 B.C.E.-660), was a large-scale state-organized event held over several days and participated in by people from around the country, with dancing and drinking, which, as in the case of Goguryeo, Dongye and Samhan, indicates that the event was a festive celebration. While most celestial worship rituals associated with the harvest and were held in the tenth lunar month, Yeonggo was staged in the twelfth month. Yeonggo served as a means to present the king to his followers and subjects as a being in communion with the Celestial God (**Cheonsin**). The ritual also aimed at making public and justifying the king's sovereign power, given by the Celestial God, and promoting unity in the community.

In Goguryeo (37 B.C.E. -668), a ritual called Dongmaeng was held in the tenth lunar month each year. According to the chapter "Account of the Eastern Barbarians" in the volume *History of the Wei Dynasty* of the Chinese history book *Sanguozhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms), Dongmaeng was a state-organized event participated in by all of Goguryeo's ruling class, wearing embroidered silk costumes and gold and silver ornaments. Also held in the tenth month was the cave god worship ritual (*susinje*), when the sacred entity of the cave god, enshrined inside the Great Cave in East of the Capital (Gukdongdaehyeol), was brought out to the Amnok River to be worshipped. Dongmaeng was also called Dongmyeong, which indicates that the ritual was related to Goguryeo's founder King Dongmyeong, and that the ritual sought to justify the royal authority by reenacting the kingdom's founding myth to reaffirm the sanctity of the dynasty.

In the small walled state Dongye, the celestial god worship ritual was called Mucheon and also held in the tenth lunar month, involving drinking, singing and dancing that continued through the night, evident in the name, which means, "to worship the heaven with dance." Mucheon was a harvest festival that served to promote solidarity in the community.



## GONGSU 공수

### Trance Channeling

*Gongsu* refers to words of gods or oracles delivered through a possessed shaman in the course of a shamanic ritual or fortunetelling session.

Throughout the ritual or divination process, the possessed shaman (*gangsinnu*) interprets and delivers the intent of the gods, through words, gestures, dance and shamanic props. When the possessing deity delivers a message through the shaman, this phenomenon is called *gongsu*, or trance channeling. It is difficult to determine whether the channeled words are the words of the god speaking directly through the shaman's voice, or the shaman's interpretation of the god's message, and both characteristics exist in the channeling observed in Korean shamanism.

If we were to define a possessed shaman as the medium between the gods and humans, a shamanic ritual can be viewed as a process of delivering the wishes of humans to the gods and their answer back to the humans, which in turn would mean that communication delivered through the shaman's mouth can be seen as channeling. This means that the channeled content can

include all human affairs, and all gods worshipped in Korean shamanism can possess shamans and channel their message. For followers, *gongsu* also serves as a gauge of a shaman's abilities, as evidence of the effect of her rituals. Followers' satisfaction achieved when they receive the answers to their prayers through the shaman's channeling. Recently, with the spread of the notion that channeling is the singular core element in shamanic rituals, there has been added emphasis on *gongsu* in rituals, with less musical elements, or sometimes with no musicians participating at all.

## GOSA 고사

### Worship Rite for Household Gods

*Gosa* is the term used for a range of rituals held to pray for peace and well-being to the household gods, or *gasin*, including **Seongju** (House Guardian God), **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God), **Jeseok** (Goddess of Childbirth), **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing) and **Jowang** (Kitchen Deity).

The ritual, generally held during the tenth lunar month, takes the form of a comprehensive worship rite for the many guardian gods around the house. According to *Dongguksesigi* (A Record of the Seasonal Customs of the Eastern Kingdom), "In the tenth lunar month, which was the best month of the year (*sangdal*), homes held shaman rituals for the household gods, with rice cake and fruits as sacrificial food."

After an auspicious date is picked for the rite, taboos are observed to keep impurities out, with a taboo rope hung over the gate (*geumjul*) and a layer of red clay (*hwangto*) sprinkled out front. Once the taboo rope was hung, family members took extra caution to refrain from unclean acts and kept within the grounds of the house. The main sacrificial foods for the rite were rice cake and alcohol. Two types of rice cake were prepared: *sirutteok*, made of thin layers of cake with red bean filling; and *baekseolgi*, steamed



Shamanic channeling in a state of trance.  
Bamseom Bugundang, Changjeon-dong, Seoul (2008, Kim Heon-seon)

GOSA Geumnam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006)



Worship rite for land tutelary god Teoju.



Worship rite for house guardian god Seongju.



Worship rite for land tutelary god Teoju.

as a thick white block without layer—the latter an offering to **Samsin**, the Goddess of Childbearing, who lives in the inner chamber of the women's quarters. When the sacrificial foods are set up, the woman of the house begins the rite by bowing, followed by a prayer as she rubs her palms together (*bison*) or delivers an invocation. For **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), **Cheuksin** (Outhouse God), **Madangsin** (Garden God) and **Munsin** (Gate God), only sacrifices are offered, without other ritual procedures.

*Gosa* is central to the worship of household gods, a rite that brings these spirits and their importance to light. The ritual is sometimes held in the first lunar month but in most cases takes place after the fall harvest as a way of delivering thanks to the gods for a good harvest.

Regional variations of the term *gosa* include *antaek* (rite for peace in the house), *antaekgosa gido* (prayer), *dosinje* (prayer ceremony), and *sirugosa* (rice cake steamer rite).

## GOSURE 고수레

### Offering of Food

*Gosure* is the practice of throwing into the air a small morsel of food prior to eating, while calling out, “*Gosure!*”

The object of worship in this practice is not specific and can be any being out in the mountains or the fields that can influence the person consuming the food.

The sacrificial food in this case has not been prepared for the purpose of this rite but can be any food that the person has picked up first among the dishes served. This reflects the attitude that the gods come before humans, delivering the message, “This first morsel of food belongs to the gods, not to humans.” The first morsel is considered clean and sacred, referred to by the term *suteumsik*, meaning, “untouched food.” This attitude of offering one’s food first to the gods is related to the practice of waiting at the table for one’s senior to start before eating.

When practicing this ritual, it is essential to shout out loud and clear, “*Gosure!*” which the receiving god is believed to enjoy hearing. The term is believed to be a title for the revered god receiving the food and also an exclamation that expresses the will and longing of the one offering his prayer, of his strong belief that



*Gosure.*  
Godeok-myeon, Pyongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do (2007, Kim Hyo-gyeong)

the god will bring him good fortune. *Gosure* is a ritual dedicated to all beings that exist around the food being consumed, based on the belief that all beings consume food like humans, can understand human language, can feel joy, anger, sadness and pleasure, and can influence the fortunes of humans, both good and bad.

## GUT 굿

### Shamanic Ritual

*Gut* refers to a ritual officiated by a shaman, with a table of sacrificial offerings (*gutsang*) for the gods, and accompanied by song, dance, music and performance.

*Gut* can be defined as a point of encounter between humans and divinity, the staging of which requires a human who commissions it; a deity who receives it; and a shaman who is the medium. The details of the history of shamanic rituals in Korea are not clear, passed down through isolated accounts in a handful of records. In ancient times of theocracy, national epics were recited and shamans held mighty powers. The poem “*Nomupyeon* (Old Shaman)” by Yi Gyu-bo (1168-1241) of Goryeo Dynasty provides evidence that the



*Ssitgimgut*, or grievance cleansing ritual, for guiding the dead to heaven.  
Jindo-gun, Jeollanam-do





*Daedonggut*, or communal ritual, for a big catch.  
Yeonan Pier, Incheon (2006, Cha Jeong-hwan, Im Seong-jin)

practice of Korean shamanism as we know it today was formed relatively early. In a genre painting titled “Munyeosinmu (Shamanic Dance),” Joseon-dynasty painter Sin Yun-bok (1758-?) captures the details of a *gut* ritual, while the book *Mudangnaeryeok* (The Shaman Legacy), also from Joseon, comprises illustrations of costume and table arrangements for different ritual segments. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Seoul, over 60,000 shamanic rituals take place a year, their rich cultural heritage has been an important part of the fabric of contemporary Korean life.

*Gut* can be categorized into private rituals and village rituals. Private rituals include well-wishing rituals to pray for longevity and good fortune; healing rituals to cure diseases; underworld



*Daedonggut* for a big catch.  
Yeonan Pier, Incheon (2006, Cha Jeong-hwan, Im Seong-jin)

entry rituals to help lead the dead peacefully to the other world; and shamanic initiation rituals—called *singut* (spiritual ritual), *naerimgut* (possession ritual),



*Yeongdeunggut* on Jeju Island.  
Geonip-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Choe Ho-sik)



*Yeongdeunggut*.  
Geonip-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Choe Ho-sik)

or *sinnaeringut*—which are held for those afflicted with spiritual illness and require the rite to be healed and initiated as a possessed shaman. Underworld

entry rituals are considered the most distinctive among Korean shamanic rites, called by various names according to region: *jinogigut*, *saenamgut*, *darigut*, *sumanggut*, *ssitgimgut*. Village rituals are aimed at preventing calamities that might befall the community, and at maintaining peace and promoting communal unity. Their names vary also by region, from *byeolsingut* and *dodanggut* to *daedonggut*.

The most important goal of a shamanic ritual is to resolve a state of deprivation and acquire peace for the future. Thus private rituals commissioned by laypeople can also be categorized into rituals for the living; rituals for the dead; and rituals for the community.

In contemporary Korean society, the most



common forms of *gut* are rituals for the dead and shamanic initiation rituals. Not only the fact that death is an important event in an individual's life, but also the distinctive and deep-rooted Korean sentiment of *han*, or sorrowful grievance, contribute to the widespread practice of underworld entry rituals. It is also notable that in our technically advanced times, spiritual possession is still a common phenomena, resulting in the large number of initiation rituals.

## GYEONGSAN JAIN DANOJE

경산자인단오제

Dano Festival of Jain, Gyeongsan

**Gyeongsan Jain Danoje** is a village ritual and festival held on Dano, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, in the villages of Jain and Yongseong in Gyeongsan of North Gyeongsang Province.

According to records, upon Japanese invasion during Silla or Goryeo, a general named Han defeated the invaders by distracting them with a performance of *yeowonmu* (women's circle dance), during which soldiers defeated them. Shrines were built around the village upon the general's death to honor his loyalty and following a memorial rite held in his honor on Dano Day, the villagers commemorated for three to four days with elaborate festivities, including the circle dance, shamanic rituals, clown performances, wrestling and swing riding. This was the origin of today's **Gyeongsan Jain Danoje**.

In late Joseon, the celebrations took shape as a government-organized local festivity with the name Hanjanggunje (General Han Festival) and its socio-cultural significance made it a target of colonial oppression during Japanese occupation in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1971, the festival was designated by the government as an Important Intangible Cultural Heritage and in 2007 its official name was changed to **Gyeongsan Jain Danoje**.

JAIN DANOJE



General Han's tomb.



Memorial rite at General Han's tomb.



Participants dressed as General Han and his sister during a ritual at General Han Shrine. (2007, Hong Tea-han)



Jain-myeon, Gyeongsan-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2004)



Memorial rite at General Han's tomb.



Barachum.



Yeowonmu.



Scene from the circle dance depicting the defeat against Japanese invasion. (Choe Ho-sik) Shamanic ritual held as part of Jain Danoje.

The village tutelary ritual (*dongje*) for General Han is held on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) in the first lunar month, at a village shrine called Hanjanggunsadang (General Han Shrine) or Handang. In villages Songnim and Daejong, the festival Jain Danogut is held on Dano Day as a commemoration of victory and of the spirit of General Han. Festivities include a memorial rite at General Han's tomb, followed by a costume parade, then women's circle dance, eight-character play (*palgwangdaenori*) and the shamanic Dano ritual. In the past, horseback riding, archery and wrestling events were also held.

The circle dance *yeowonmu* is a centuries-old performing art based on the General Han legend and designated as Intangible Cultural Heritage. The costumes for the dance are unique, including a 3-meter-tall flower crown worn with a five-color skirt, which makes the performer appear to be an enormous flower ghost. Due to its sanctity, there are many taboos associated with the flower crown. No one is permitted to approach the crown prior to the festival, but once the Dano ritual is over, everyone clamors to get a hold of the flowers, for it is believed that carrying them in one's arms and keeping them at home will bring a good harvest, good fortune and healing.

## IPTAEGOSA 입택고사 House Entry Ritual

*Iptaekgosa* is a ritual held upon moving into a newly constructed home or from one house to another, to pray for peace and prosperity for the family.

These house entry rituals, also called *jipgosa* (house ritual), are observed around the country.

*Iptaekgosa* can be categorized into ritual types and sorcery types.

Ritual types can again be grouped into reception rites for the house guardian god **Seongju**, officiated by a shaman or recitation sorcerer, and house entry rites

### IPTAEGOSA



Ritual for the house guardian god of a new home.



A whole dried pollack hung on the wall as a proxy to evade bad luck.

officiated by the head of the family in the tradition of household god worship rituals. The latter focuses on reporting to **Seongju** and other household gods that a new family has moved in, and to ask for peace and protection. Sacrificial foods include layered rice cake (*sirutteok*) and wine, and after offering bows, the rice cake is cut up into chunks and placed in various corners of the house. This ritual is followed by the invitation of neighbors into the house (*jipdeuri*).

Sorcery-type house entry rituals are practiced in a range of methods that vary by family and aim



Hyangnam-myeon, Hwaseong-si, Gyeonggi-do (2007, Hwang Heon-man)



Ritual for backyard god Cheollyung of a new home.



Ritual for Munsin of a new home.

at preventing bad fortune or bad energy that can arise in an unfamiliar setting. The ritual is also called *isaaengmagi* (prevention of bad fortune upon moving) and in contemporary times talismans (*bujeok*) have become a big part of the ritual, issued by a Buddhist monk or a shaman, who sometimes bring the talismans and hangs them over gates and doors after a round of prayers around the house.

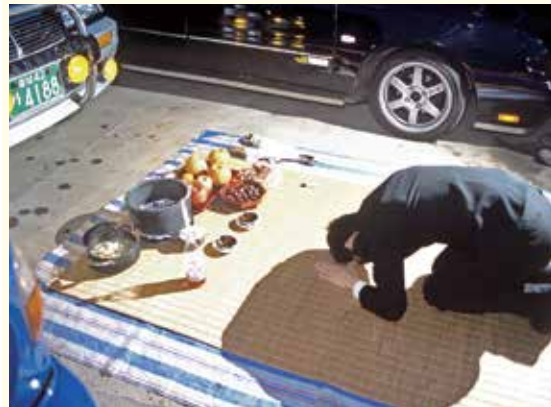
## JADONGCHAGOSA 자동차고사

### Motor Vehicle Ritual

*Jadongchagosa*, or motor vehicle ritual, is a term that refers to rites held for the prevention of calamities that can occur while driving or riding cars and other vehicles.

In Korean folk religion, the many calamities or bad luck that one can experience in life are called *aek*, *jaeaeak*, or *aegun*, and rituals aimed at preventing these calamities were called *aengmagi*. Motor vehicle rituals are an updated version of the traditional calamity prevention ritual and are held upon the purchase of a new car or following a traffic accident to prevent recurrence.

JADONGCHAGOSA  
Seobu-myeon, Hongseong-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Offering of sacrificial foods and bows by the car owner.



Pouring ritual wine on the four wheels of the car.



Ritual procedures are simple, starting with the offering of sacrificial foods, bowing, distribution of sacrificial foods, and ending with the consumption of the foods (*eumbok*). Alternate procedures are also observed, varying by region and individual officiant, including throwing red beans on the car to chase away bad spirits; keeping a whole dried pollock (*bugeo*) and a skein of thread (*siltarae*) in the car then burning the thread; inserting a folded amulet sheet (*bujeok*) inside the mouth of the pollock. The practice can be viewed as superstition but is nevertheless widely observed in Korea, and similar practices have been reported from parts of Asia and Siberia. The ritual has also been adopted by other religions, as seen in Christian services offered to purchasers of new cars, Catholic priests' blessing of vehicles, and prayer rituals for cars by Buddhist monks.

## JAESUGUT 재수굿 Shamanic Ritual for Good Fortune

*Jaesugut* is a shamanic ritual held to pray for good fortune in the family including peace, prosperity and longevity.

*Jaesugut* is the most basic ritual in Korean shamanism, and is also called *cheonsingut*, or new offerings ritual, held to offer the season's new products to the gods. The format of this ritual served as the foundation on which myriad other rituals were developed by adding specific elements and characteristics.

The goals of a good fortune ritual lie in the wellbeing of the living, as opposed to those of *jinogigut*, or underworld entry ritual, held to lead the soul of the deceased to the other world. *Jaesugut* is held annually or every two or three years, or in times of trouble in the family, usually in the first lunar month or in spring and fall, on an auspicious day selected according to *saenggibokdeok*, the family's predicted



Segment of Buddhist Deity of the Heavens staged as part of *jaesugut* in the Seoul area.

Hyoja-dong, Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do (2007, Hong Tea-han)



Stick-erecting procedure in the Mountain Gods Segment.

Sanggye-dong, Nowon-gu, Seoul (2008, Hong Tea-han)



Channeling the message of the gods in a state of trance.

fortunes for a given day. The ritual is officiated by a shaman, accompanied by two or three musicians. In the past, rituals would start in the morning and continue through the night until morning, but nowadays they end by evening. *Jaesugut* is in nature a festive ritual, staged like a celebration in an affluent home, with relatives and neighbors invited as guests. It aims at preserving the family's good fortunes and prosperity by generously extending their hospitality to the gods and to humans.

## JANGSEUNGJE 장승제

### Ritual for Village Guardian Post

*Jangseungje* is a ritual held in the process of erecting *jangseung*, or village guardian posts, or to worship these guardians and pray for good fortune and to chase away evil spirits.

Rituals associated with village guardian posts are held on three different occasions: when felling the tree for carving the posts; to dedicate and bless the new posts with spiritual powers upon their erection; and for annual worship of the guardian posts held as part of *dangsanje*, the ritual for village gods. In many

JANGSEUNGJE Suryong-dong, Hongseong-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Carving the village guardian posts in preparation for *jangseungje*.



Painting faces on the guardian posts.



Writing passages on the posts.



## JANGSEUNGJE Suryong-dong, Hongseong-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Ritual following the erecting of the posts.

regions *jangseungje* is held on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month. Male villagers without unclean elements associated with this day climb the mountain to fell a tree to be carved into new guardian posts. A tree growing in the sun is selected for the male guardian post and a tree in the shade for the female post, and myriad other taboos must be observed for the selection of the right trees. When the selection is complete, simple offerings are set up and a ritual is held, after which the trees are axed. Then the lumber is transported to the carving workshop, the lumber for the male post positioned at the head of the procession. The head of *jangseung* must be carved from the bottom part of the tree, and the male guardian post must be erected prior to the female post, which will ensure harmony between the pair, enhancing the effect of *jangseung* in chasing away bad fortunes and inviting good fortunes for the village. Annual worship of the guardian posts is held as part of the village gods ritual *dangsanje* with simple sacrificial offerings, since *jangseung* is a low-shrine god while the village guardian god *dangsan* is a high-shrine god, but rituals for *jangseung* are often held independently as well.

## JEGWAN 제관

### Ritual Official

*Jegwan*, or ritual official, refers to the officiant of a village ritual or an individual selected to take part in the ritual ceremony.

*Jegwan* comprises a range of positions according to duty—*jeju* (head host official), *chukkwon* (invocation official), *heongwan* (dedication official) and *jipsa* (steward)—and their numbers vary according to the size of the village and the ritual. In the case of large-scale Confucian village rites, the duties are further segmented. *Jeju* is





Serving as ritual officials for Sansin.  
Mt. Gyeryong, Gongju-si, Chungcheongnam-do (2002, Lee Yong-seok)

the head official in charge of supervising the ritual, also referred to as *dangju*, *hwaju*, or *dosin*, according to region. *Chukkwan* reads aloud the ritual prayer (*chungmun*), while *heongwan* performs libation on behalf of all the ritual officials.

Increasingly in recent times, heads of local governments or organizations, including mayors, governors and culture center directors take on the role of *jegwan*. In regions where Confucian-style *dongje* (village ritual) is held, a meeting of village representatives, called *daedonghoe*, is convened prior to the ritual to select the officials. A ritual official must be an adult male over 40 years of age who is not in mourning; whose family has not experienced a recent pregnancy or birth; whose wife is not menstruating during the period leading up to the ritual; who lives in a clean surrounding and has not been remarried; and one who is determined as “clean” for the date of the ritual according to the divination process of *saenggibokdeok*. The selected officials observe taboos (*geumgi*) during the days that lead up to the ritual. Villages on Jeju

Island impose more taboos than others. The officials participate in each ceremonial stage, including cleaning the shrine and preparation of sacrificial foods.

## JEONGCHOGOSA 정초고사

### New Year Ritual for Household Gods

*Jeongchogosa* is a ritual held on the morning of Seol (Lunar New Year) to pray for peace in the family, with offerings to the house guardian deity *Seongju* and other household gods, which takes place prior to the ancestral memorial service.

Regional variations of the term include *seongjugosa* (ritual for house guardian deity), *jeongchocharye* (New Year tea ceremony) and also *seongjucharye* (tea



Offering bows to household deities to pray for good fortune.  
Jeoksang-myeon, Muju-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2007)

ceremony for house guardian deity), since the ritual centers on the house guardian god **Seongju**.

**Seongju** is the first god formally enshrined by a family that has moved into a newly constructed house, the highest deity among household gods, overseeing the family's fortunes and the prevention of calamities. This is why on seasonal holidays or at ancestral memorial services, the first ritual table is offered to **Seongju**, and in the case of family events, a ritual is held to report the event to this guardian god. It is a nationwide practice to observe the ritual for **Seongju** prior to holding the ancestral service. In regions that observe this ritual on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon), on the fifteenth day of the first month, the term *boreumgosa* (full moon ritual) is used. The place for the earthenware steamer (*siru*) on the ritual table and the type of rice cake (*tteok*) served vary by region, but these rituals all serve the same purpose of worshipping the household gods to pray for peace in the family and a good harvest for the New Year.

## JEONGHWA 정화 Cleansing

*Jeonghwa* refers to all activity carried out to cleanse impurities from a place or a living being.

Water, fire, soil and blood are the most basic means of carrying out the process of purification in a sacred venue.

Offering a bowl of clear water fetched at dawn is one of the most basic forms of worship in Korean folk religion, an example that demonstrates the fundamental concept of *jeonghwa*. The concept of *ssitgim* in shamanism, also meaning, "cleansing," reflects the purification effects of water.

Fire purifies through its capacity to burn. In "Cheonjiwangbonpuri (Origin of the Heavenly King)," a shamanic myth from Jeju Island, unethical people are purified with fire as a punishment. The shamanic practice of *hwajeonchigi* is a healing ritual using fire to





Cleansing impurities by holding a ritual on the street.  
Sebu-myeon, Hongseong-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Cleansing the ritual shrine with water.  
Sunheung-myeon, Yeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2004, Cha Jeong-hwan)



Cleansing impurities by sprinkling water on the street  
Sebu-myeon, Hongseong-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Purification by pouring mounds of red clay around ritual venue.  
Eunsan, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Cha Jeong-hwan)

purify the afflicted soul of the patient.

The primary function of red clay (*hwangto*) is expulsion, but its also contributes to cleansing.

Blood is used to cleanse an afflicted patient or sprinkled along the borders of a village for purification. It is also sprinkled as part of the healing ritual *daesudaemyeong*, or substitution of one's lifespan, which involves the killing of a proxy, usually a sacrificial animal like chicken.

*Jeonghwa*, in other words, is a symbolic act of transforming a secular space into a sacred one, of cleansing a tainted object.



## JEUI 제의 Ritual

*Jeui* in Korean folk religion refers to all rituals for worshipping the gods.

*Jeui* can be categorized into private rituals and collective rituals. The former includes *gosa*, held in a home to worship the household gods, and *gut*, a private rite officiated by a shaman. The latter usually refers to *dongje*, also called *maeulgut*, or village tutelary rituals, which are communal rites held collectively by the residents of a village.

## JINJEOKGUT 진적굿 Thanksgiving Ritual

*Jinjeokgut* is a ritual of offering thanks by shamans to their possessing deities and other shamanic gods.

The term *jinjeokgut*, once referred to as *jinjeok*, came from the word for libation, “*jinjak*,” a formal term found in *Uigwe* (Royal Protocols) of the Joseon dynasty.

This thanksgiving ritual is held during the spring blooming season and after the fall harvest. Spring rituals held in the Seoul area and Hwanghae Province are called *kkotmajigut* (flower greeting ritual) and fall rituals are called *danpungmajigut* (foliage greeting ritual).

Flower greeting rituals are held each year in the third lunar month, the host shaman inviting followers (*dangol*) and fellow shamans to treat them with food and to wish them good fortune and longevity. The ritual, dedicated to the shaman’s possessing deities, must include all the segments related to good fortune and the shaman’s sorcery skills. The process usually takes a full day but in some cases it is held over two to three days.

The proceedings of a foliage greeting ritual

JINJEOKGUT Incheon (2006, Kim Heon-seon)



Shamanic dance performed during a ritual to give thanks for the season's new grains.



Ritual table for a thanksgiving ritual.

are similar to those of the spring ritual. It is also called *singokcharim* (offering of new grains) or *haetgokmajigut* (greeting ritual for new grains) and can be characterized as a fall harvest thanksgiving ritual.

The significance of *jinjeokgut* lies in seeking harmony between deities—those worshipped by individual shamans and those that rule the natural world—and ultimately promoting communication within the human world.

## JINOGIGUT 진오기굿

### Underworld Entry Ritual

*Jinogigut* refers to rituals held in the Seoul area to guide the dead to the underworld.

The etymology of the term is conflicted. Some claim it originated from *jin hongwi*, a Chinese character-based term meaning, “to appease the spirit of the dead,” while some claim it came from *jinogwi*, meaning, “to guide the path for the spirit.” Generally, however, *jinogigut* is perceived as a purely Korean word that did not originate from a singular concept.

There are many types of underworld entry rituals in Korean folk religion and various ways to categorize them. *Jarigeoji* (venue cleansing) *jinogigut* is held prior to *samuje* (“third grieving,” held three days after the funeral), at the site of the death; *jin* (main) *jinogi* is held within 100 days of the death, which nowadays has been extended to a year; and *mugeun* (old) *jinogi* is held after an extensive period of time

has passed since the death. By the scale of the ritual, *jinogigut* can be categorized, from the most humble to most elaborate, into *pyeongjinogi*, *eolsaenam* (*saenam* also meaning death-appeasing ritual), *pyeongsaenam*, *cheongeunsaenam*, and *ssanggyesaenam*.

The procedure for a *jinogigut* comprises the following stages: 1. Cleansing of the ritual venue; 2. Preparations to send off the dead; 3. Sending off the dead; 4. Confirmation of the departure of the dead; 5. Clean-up of the venue. The segments are complexly interwoven, but the direction of the ritual is singularly focused on guiding the dead to the underworld.

*Jinogigut* is representative of rituals held in the Seoul area, a colorful and complex mix of costumes, food, music, soliloquy and exchange of jokes. The shamanic song “*Barigongju* (Song of Abandoned Princess Bari)” is recited over an extended period of time by the shaman, who also plays the *janggu* (hourglass drum), standing dressed in full formal attire. These impressive performances themselves become living myths that are preserved and passed down for generations.



Calling the dead.  
Mt. Dobong, Dobong-gu, Seoul





Meeting between the dead and the surviving family members.  
*Guksadang on Mt. Inwang* (2004)



Reciting "Barigongju."  
Jeongneung-dong, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul (2007, Hong Tea-han)



Death messenger calling the dead.  
Jeongneung-dong, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul (2011, Hong Tea-han)



Tearing a piece of hemp cloth to break off ties between  
this world and the underworld. (2010, Hong Tea-han)





Confirming the dead person's entry into the underworld through patterns created by scattered grains of rice.

Pyeongchang-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (2007, Kim Hyeong-geun)



Bird's-foot wicks made with twisted paper, their remains used for divination after burning

Hanam-si, Gyeonggi-do (2008, Kim Hyeong-geun)

## JISINBABGI 지신밟기

### Earth God Treading

*Jisimbabgi* is a communal ritual of going around the houses in the village to tread on the earth gods in different corners of the grounds, accompanied by farmers' music, a rite that follows the ritual for village gods (*dangsangut*) held between Seol (Lunar New Year's Day) and Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full

Moon) to pray for peace and good fortune for the New Year.

The ritual procedures aim at keeping in place the earth gods positioned in various corners of each home, and at appeasing the deities with music and prayers.

The ritual procession is led by the flag bearer carrying a farmers' banner, followed by percussionists, who are called *chibae*, playing *janggu* (hourglass drum), *kkwaenggwari* (small gong), *jing* (gong), *buk* (small drum) and *sogo* (snare drum). The musicians first climb up the village guardian mountain (*dangsan*) to offer a simple ritual to report to the village deity that the earth god treading will take place, then they head to the communal well for a spring ritual, or *saemgut*. When the two rituals are over, the troupe of musicians begin their earth god treading, stopping by each house in the village. At each house they carry out a series of rituals at every corner of the house including the gate, kitchen, sauce jar terrace, grain shed, and the yard. Prayers are offered to chase away evil spirits from the house and to invite in good fortune for honor and prosperity.

The ritual is a good example of the sacred and religious role of musicians in Korean folk religion. The first gong player, called *sangsoe*, takes on the role of ritual officiant, and the loud and imposing percussion music contributes to expelling bad fortune.



Earth god treading performed by a troupe of musicians.  
Buan-eup, Buan-gun, Jeollabuk-do (1993)

## JUJEJA 주제자

### Officiant

*Jujeja* in Korean folk religion is the officiant of a worship ritual.

Officiants can be categorized into professional officiants and non-professional officiants. The former includes *mudang* (shamans) and *beopsa* (sorcerers). Their work as officiant makes up their main livelihood, and their practice requires education and training. The latter includes *jegwan*, or ritual officials, villagers who have been appointed to serve in the staging of the village festival *dongje*. They lead ordinary lives but during a designated period leading up to the ritual, observe taboos and participate in the officiation of the ritual, after which they resume everyday routines. Non-professional officiants also include men and women of the family, in charge of staging *gaulgosa* (autumn rite) or other worship rituals for household gods.

## MAEULDOLGI 마을돌기

### Village Parade

*Maeuldolgi*, or village parade, is a ritual that takes place prior to or following the village tutelary festival *dongje*, a procession around the village participated in by villagers and a farmers' music troupe to chase away evil spirits and bad fortunes.

In the village ritual *dangsanje* of Jeolla provinces, the village parade takes place prior to the tug-of-war, the villagers carrying the rope on their shoulders or holding torches as they go around the village. In some regions, the parade includes loud farmers' music, and goes through every single alley to collect all evil spirits and bad fortunes, to be taken to the outer edge of the village and thrown out.

In South Chungcheong and North Jeolla provinces,



*Doldori.*  
(Hwang Heon-man)

a life-size straw effigy (*jeung*) is made for the parade to pray for good fortune and to chase away the bad. The procession is headed by a farmers' music troupe, followed by the straw effigy, ritual officials and villagers.

In the village ritual *dodanggut* of Gyeonggi Province, the music-accompanied parade is called *doldori*, participated in by the officiant shaman and young men from the village, a ritual of going around collecting bad forces and chasing them away.

*Maeuldolgi* can be viewed as an expression of religious faith in the village god *dongsin*, but more practically a procession for the expulsion of bad fortune. It is essentially a process of protecting the village from external dangers by symbolically drawing the line





*Maeuldolgi.*  
Buan-eup, Buan-gun, Jeollabuk-do (1992, Hwang Heon-man)

between the village and the outside world, pursuing a harmonious community within the border and pushing out all evil spirits and bad fortunes out of the village.

## MAGUGANGOSA 마구간고사

### Stable Ritual

*Magugangosa*, or stable ritual, is a rite held in the tenth lunar month, on the day of Muo, which is a day of the horse, to pray for the health and proliferation of cattle and horses.

The stable was an important space in a farming household, maintained within the living grounds to keep cattle and horses close like family and to prevent theft. Stable rituals are generally held in the tenth lunar month along with the peace wishing ritual *antaek* and the autumn rite *gaulgosa*, with a ritual table that includes rice cake layered with red bean filling (*patsirutteok*) and other sacrificial foods set up in front of the stable, offering prayers for the health of the horses and prevention of theft. The year's first day of the horse was called *Sangoil* (High Horse Day) and

was also observed with a ritual at the stable, but most records indicate that the stable ritual was generally held in the tenth lunar month. The day of Muo, or the day of the horse in the heavenly stem *mu*, was considered an auspicious day because the letter *mu* (戊) is a homonym of the letter 茂, which means “lush,” or “abundant.”

When cattle or horses fell ill, hand-rubbing prayers (*bison*) were offered with a bowl of fresh water from the well (*jeonghwasu*), or a shaman was hired to officiate a simple ritual, *pudakgeori*, for which the shaman instructed the preparation of certain sacrificial foods and chased away evil spirits by swinging her divine knife (*sinkal*). When a cow or a horse gave birth, a taboo rope (*geumjul*) was hung over the stable gate and a hand-rubbing ritual was offered with a bowl of water, to pray to the stable god for a safe birth, healthy offspring, and continued proliferation.

## MAJE 마제

### Horse Ritual

*Maje* is a ritual for worshipping the horse or to prevent illness in horses, and is related to the sacred horses enshrined at village shrines as horses ridden by *Sansin* (Mountain God) or *Seonang* (Village Guardian Deity).

*Maje* was carried out on various levels, organized by the state, the community or individual households.

State-organized horse rituals date back to the kingdom of Unified Silla (676-935), as seen in records of a range of rites including *majoje* (horse ancestor ritual) for worshipping Cheonmabangseong, the guardian deity of horses; *seonmokje* (first shepherd ritual) for worshipping the deity that taught herding to humans; *masaje* (horse deity ritual) for worshipping the land tutelary god of the stable; and *maboje*, a ritual to appease the deity that brings harm to horses. Historical records also remain of state-run horse rituals in the dynasties that followed, Goryeo and Joseon.



Shamanic painting depicting a horse that serves a village god.

In a number of village shrines today horses are still enshrined in the form of sculptures or paintings as village gods or as animals that serve the village gods. Horses were also enshrined for the purpose of protecting the village against tigers, and when there were cauldron or earthenware makers in the village, the blacksmiths and other craftsmen enshrined metal horses (*cheolma*) at the village shrine to pray for success and prosperity.

Horse worship was also related to the belief in the masculine reproductivity of horses, as shown in devotions offered to horses to pray for a son, and also to the worship of Madangjanggun (Horse Shrine Martial God) to pray for the safety and proliferation of cattle in the village.

In homes, simple devotions were offered on the year's first day of the horse and on horse days in the tenth lunar month.

## MAJUNGSIRU 마중시루

### Steamer for Greeting Mountain God

*Majungsiru*, literally meaning “steamer for greeting,” is an earthenware steamer used to greet the village guardian **Sansin** (Mountain God) into individual homes. Another version of the term is *matsiru*.

At the end of the village rite *sansinje* (mountain god ritual), after the prayer text is recited and burned, the ritual officials announce the closing by shouting toward the village, “Offer the greeting steamer (*majungsiru*)!” and in each home, where villagers have been waiting for this signal, a steamer containing rice cake is set up in the yard or kitchen, the sauce jar terrace where the land tutelary god **Teoju** resides, or in the inner chamber or the open hall, to hold a simple private ritual for the Mountain God. The rice cake in this case is usually the plain white *baekseolgi*. Along with the steamer, a bowl of uncooked rice with a candle standing in the middle, and a bowl of clear water are also offered. This ritual is generally officiated by the woman of the house. Just as the communal mountain god ritual offers devotion to the deity on behalf of the entire village, this private ritual is aimed at praying to **Sansin** for good fortune for individual families.



Hand-rubbing ritual performed with an offering of earthenware steamer containing rice cake.

Jang-dong, Daedeok-gu, Daejeon (2005, Choe Ho-sik)



## MANGJAHONSAGUT 망자혼사굿

### Wedding Ritual for the Deceased

*Mangjahonsagut* is a ritual to bring together in matrimony the souls of youth who died untimely deaths prior to marriage.

In Korean folk religion, those who die unwed are not considered full adults and cannot be worshipped through ancestral memorial service, hence weddings are arranged for the deceased in order to elevate their status to that of a proper ancestor. This practice, which is observed around the country, is arranged by the

families of a deceased bachelor and a deceased maiden, the ritual costs divided between the two families. The ritual combines the procedures of *andangjeseokgut*, which is a ritual for worshipping *Jeseok* (God of Childbirth) enshrined in the inner chamber of the house, and the procedures of the underworld entry ritual *jinogigut*. In other words, the wedding takes place after worshipping *Jeseok*, which is then followed by a ritual to guide the deceased safely to the underworld.

The deceased must be present at the ritual as a visual image, so photographs are required and they are also represented by sacred entities, for which straw effigies were used in the past but in present times have

MANGJAHONSAGUT Gunja Peak, Siheung-si, Gyeonggi-do (2005, Kim Heon-seon)



Wedding ritual for the deceased.



Dolls representing the deceased consummate their marriage on wedding night.



Circling the ritual table with the dead to pray for rebirth in heaven.

been replaced by dolls. For the wedding, the dolls are dressed in traditional wedding costumes and the ritual also follows the traditional wedding procedures. Then the dolls are placed in a private corner to consummate the marriage, after which the dolls are brought out for the underworld entry ritual.

This wedding ritual for the deceased offers important clues to understanding the concept of ancestral relations and worship in Korea: Unwed individuals were not treated as full adults, so in order to be properly worshipped as an ancestor, weddings were required, even after death.

## MUAK 무악 Shamanic Music

*Muak* is music that is performed to accompany a shamanic ritual.

The tunes and the instrumental composition of shamanic music vary by region. In Hamgyeong Province, *menaritori* is the dominant melody, and instruments include *janggu* (hourglass drum), *jing* (gong) and *bara* (small cymbals). The instruments used for shamanic music in Pyeongan Province are the same as those used in the Seoul area, including the same hourglass drum played with a thin bamboo whip in the right hand and a club with its tip wrapped in cloth in the left hand. The *kkwaengwari* is attached to a wooden pole and played with a stick. The small cymbals, made with hand-hammered brass, are used not only as a musical instrument but also for the shamanic dance *barachum*, carried in the shaman's hands in performance. In North Jeolla and South Chungcheong provinces, shamanic music applies various beats including *anjinban*, *salpuri*, *deongdeokgungi*, and *oejanggu*, while sharing several characteristics with the musical form *sinawi* from the southwestern regions, including the melody *yukjabaegitori* and the instrumental composition of *jing*, *janggu*, *piri* (reed flute), *jeotdae* (*daegeum*, or large bamboo flute), and *haegeum* (two-stringed zither).

Rhythmic devices in shamanic music include



Musical instruments used in the village ritual *byeolsingut* include *buk*, *jing*, *janggu*, *haegeum*, *daegeum*, and *piri*. Geoje-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2008, Oh Jin-ho)



*mansebaji* beat, *gutgeori* beat, *maemdori* beat, and *geosang* beat.

*Mansebaji*, or longevity prayer beat, is applied when singing *cheongbaebuga*, requesting a visit from the gods, in rituals held in Hwanghae Province and areas around Seoul and northern Gyeonggi Province. When shifting from one song to another, *tteomkung* beat is played, the onomatopoeic name coming from the sound of the hourglass drum. It is also called *neomgil* beat, meaning transition.

*Gutgeori* beat, or shamanic segment beat, is one of the most common rhythmic devices for rituals. The beat goes, “*deong-deong-kung-tta, kung,*” which comprises the basic frame for a prototypical shamanic ritual song.

*Maemdori* beat, or spinning beat, is played in the part of the ritual when the shaman begins to spin in a state of trance. The shaman first starts by shaking her shoulders to a slow beat, which gradually starts to pick up pace, the drum beat intensifying as she begins to spin.

*Geosang* beat, or table offering beat, is played when the shaman arranges the ritual table and makes an offering to the gods. The term originated from *geosangak*, court music that was played at royal

banquets when food was served. This beat is played mainly in Hwanghae Province and areas around Seoul and northern Gyeonggi Province. In Hwanghae regions, the drum player plays this beat, which goes, “*deong kung deong deodeodeo-*” when the shaman bows in front of the table of sacrificial food and begins dancing.

## MUDANG 무당

### Shaman

*Mudang* refers to shamans who officiate rituals and perform divination in Korean folk religion.

Shamans are also called *beopsa* in Chunchong Province; *dangol* in Jeolla Province; and *simbang* on Jeju Island. A female shaman is called *mansin*; while a male shaman is called *baksu*, *hwaraengi*, *nanjung* or *yangjung*. In ancient times, political leaders also played the role of officiants in services for worshiping the heavenly spirits, which is believed to be the origin of the shaman, as seen in the name Dangun, the founder of Gojoseon, the first kingdom on the Korean peninsula, and Chachaung, a title for the king of Silla, which, in meaning, all referred to shamans.

Korean shamans are categorized into two groups according to their initiation process. *Gangsinmu*, or possessed shaman, is designated by the spirits to enter the calling. Once the spiritual calling is confirmed, a possession ritual (*naeringut*) is held to formally accept it, followed by a long period of training in ritual procedures and methods under one’s spiritual mother (*sineomeoni*) or spiritual father (*sinabeoji*). Shamans who have been initiated through the experience of possession are capable of making direct contact with the spirits when officiating rituals. *Seseummu*, or hereditary shaman, inherits the calling as a family trade, starting at an early age the training of necessary skills including song and dance. They do not experience possession either in the initiation stage or as an officiant, but focus



*Bara* played as part of the Prayer Segment in a shamanic ritual. Mt. Inwang Guksadang (2007, Kim Hyeong-geun)

on impressing the spirits with song and dance. While the former delivers the human perspective to the spirits through direct contact, the latter delivers the wishes of humans through performance.

Geographically, possessed shamans were more common north of the Han River, while hereditary shamans were more prevalent south of the Han. Jeju Island's *simbang* can be categorized as hereditary shamans since the calling is inherited by blood ties, and they communicate with the spirits through divination and not possession, but there are also differences, including the emphasis of supernatural powers and a firm belief in the spirits. In the southern regions, including South Jeolla, *myeongdu* are fortunetellers who communicate with the ghosts of dead children, which makes them similar to possessed shamans, but they do not officiate shamanic rituals. *Beopsa*, of Chungcheong Province, officiate exorcism rituals by reciting the shamanic scriptures to the accompaniment of a drum and a gong, some of whom experience possession.



*Gunmunchum*.  
Oedo 1-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2002, Mun Mu-byeong)

## MUMU 무무 Shamanic Dance

*Mumu* is the dance performed in a ritual by the shaman.

There are different types of shamanic dance that vary by region and beat.

*Jijeonchum*, or paper money dance, is performed as a underworld entry rite as part of the dead spirit appeasing ritual *ogugut* in east coast regions and the grievance cleansing ritual *ssitgimgut* of the island of Jindo. The dance is performed with bundles of paper money in hand, made of strips of white ritual paper (*baekji*) resembling the shape of coins strung together. It aims at calling or seeing off the gods, or to call the soul of the dead to get rid of impurities and cleanse grievances to guide the dead to the underworld. In the Jindo *ssitgimgut*, the dance starts out slow but

turns fast and intense towards the end, capturing an understated yet dynamic energy.

*Geosangchum*, or table offering dance, is performed when the shaman arranges the ritual table and makes an offering to the gods. In Hwanghae Province, this dance is performed to the beat of *janggu* (hourglass drum) and is also accompanied by oral interjections and other instruments including *piri* (reed flute), *daegeum* (large bamboo flute), and *haegeum* (two-stringed zither). Interjections comprise “*eolssa*” and “*e-e*,” repeated throughout, which is the origin of another name for *geosangjangdan*, the beat of the dance, *eolssajangdan*, and the dance is also referred to as *eolssachum* as well.

*Teobeollimchum* and *dosalpurichum* are dances performed as part of the village ritual *dodanggut* in Gyeonggi Province. The former, meaning “ground-treading dance,” is performed to get the ritual site ready, the shaman dancing as she treads the grounds





*Jijeonchum.*  
Plaza at Jindo Bridge (2008, Kim Yeong-ran)

in all directions. She flaps her gown or shakes her rattle with a fan in hand as she dances in a rectangle around the ritual table. The latter is one of the most widely staged shamanic dances in Gyeonggi Province, performed as the opening of almost every segment of a ritual. The dance comprises the following moves: *yangpalbeolli* (spreading of arms); *jeojeonggeorigi* (shoulder shrugging); *eopgojechigi* (bending one arm and raising the other); and *neoulgeorigi* (swinging both arms left and right). It starts with *gutgeori* beat, which is a four beat structure with triple subdivision, during which the gods are invited, then as the pace picks up into the faster *jajingutgeori* beat, the shaman prances with one hand on the shoulder, chasing away evil spirits and ghosts, and performs the *neoul* move, swinging her arms and jumping up and down.

On Jeju Island, among many other shamanic rites for inviting the gods to hear the prayers of humans, *gunmunyeollim* refers to the opening of the gates of the heavenly palace for the gods to descend to earth. *Gunmunchum* is the dance that depicts the entire process of the chief gatekeeper and other officers of the palace bustling around, opening the gates and leading the gods out, down to earth. The

dance comprises various moves including the shaman checking the palatial gates, spinning (*dorangchum*) and dagger divination (*sinkaljeom*) to confirm the opening of the gates.

## MUNJEONGOSA 문전고사

### Ritual for Gate God

*Munjeongosa* is a ritual observed on Jeju Island to pray to the household guardian deity Munjeonsin (Gate God) for peace and good fortune for the family.

Also called *munjeonje*, this ritual is for worshipping Gate God, the most important of household gods in Jeju, its origins narrated in the shamanic epic “Munjeonbonpuri (Origins of Gate God).”

The ritual is still observed today on the island. Regular occasions for the gate god ritual are New Year



**Munjeongosa.**  
Yeon-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2011, Mun Sun-deok)

and the annual village ritual *poje*. Other occasions include weddings and special events like moves, important exams or a family member entering the military. On seasonal holidays and ancestral memorial services, the gate god ritual is followed by a ritual for the ancestral god *Josang*.

Gate god rituals can be held as a separate ritual or as part of other household rituals. The procedure can follow a range of styles, including shamanic, Confucian or Buddhist: A shaman can be hired for a scripture recitation rite; the man of the family can officiate a Confucian rite; or Buddhist families can request a monk to come and offer prayers.

## NAERIMGUT 내림굿

### Possession Ritual

*Naerimgut*, literally meaning, “descent ritual,” is a ritual for healing one who is possessed or afflicted with spirit sickness, and for initiating her into her calling as a shaman.

Possession rituals in Korean shamanism are also called *singut* (spirit ritual), *sinmyeonggut* (ritual for heavenly spirit), *myeongdugut* (shamanic

ritual) or *gangsinje* (ritual for spiritual descent). A possession ritual is preceded by a rite called *heojugut*, or *heoteungut*, a process of cleansing the possessed individual of miscellaneous evil spirits. When the ritual is over, the individual is no longer addressed by their given name but a new name bestowed by the shaman officiating the ritual. The officiant and the newly initiated shaman enter a new relationship as spiritual parent and spiritual offspring. The spiritual offspring becomes the parent shaman’s protégé and assistant, training in all the skills and procedures of shamanic rituals including song and dance, ritual arrangements and food preparation.

In the Seoul area, possession rituals are staged as part of the good fortune ritual *jaesugut*, adding an extra segment to the standard 12-segment cycle, usually following the Sangsan (High Mountain) Segment. As the officiant sings the Sangsan song, she instructs the possessed individual to put on a shamanic garb of her choice, and leads her to perform a dance, holding a shamanic fan and rattle in each hand. The possessed person’s body begins to tremble during the dance as a heavenly spirit makes its descent, which the newly initiated shaman will serve for the rest of her life as her possessing spirit, or *momjusin*. Next, the possessed shaman “opens her mouth” to tell the fortunes of the viewers in the crowd through trance channeling. Towards the closing of the ritual, the possessed shaman hands out slices of rice cake, called *yeoldubanggitteok*, which the crowd clamors for since it is believed to bring good fortune and good health. This process is called “*banggitteok* selling.” When the ritual is over, the cycle of the good fortune ritual resumes. Three days after the ritual, the possessed shaman holds a simple rite called *samilchiseong* (three-day devotions) at the officiant shaman’s personal shrine, offering rice and wine.

In Hwanghae Province, the possession ritual is divided into three separate procedures: *heojugut* (cleansing rite); *naerimgut* (also *soseulgut*, or ascension rite); and *bullimgut* (ritual of calling). The procedures together form a narrative of chasing away evil spirits and guiding the descent of the spirit to allow the ascension of the shaman’s initiated soul in answer to the spiritual calling. In the past, between the cleansing rite and the descent ritual, the possessed individual went around



NAERIMGUT (Jeong Su-mi)



Newly initiated shaman dancing after receiving her ritual garb.



Handling the straw cutter prior to performing the blade dance.



Possession prayers.



Blade dance.



Spiritual mother and spiritual daughter performing the stick-erecting procedure.



from house to house soliciting brass bowls, brass spoons, ritual vessels and brass coins. This practice was called *soegeollip*, or metal collecting, and the collected items were used to make shamanic tools and props to begin her work as a shaman. In the course of the descent ritual, the shamanic fan and rattle are sometimes hidden and the possessed shaman has to find them in a state of trance, as a test of her shamanic abilities.

Possession rituals serve as rites of passage in the initiation from ordinary individual to shaman with the descent of heavenly spirit.

## NONGSAGOSA 농사고사

### Farming Ritual

*Nongsagosa*, or farming ritual, is a simple rite observed by farming households to pray for a good harvest.

Alternate terms for this ritual include *nongsinje* (ritual for farming god), *nongosa* (rice paddy ritual), *boje* (reservoir ritual) and *yongje* (dragon ritual). Ritual names and procedures varied widely by region, season, venue and deity.

*Nongsagosa*, generally held outdoors in the paddies or fields, worships deities related to agriculture: farmer god Shennong, Nongsin (God of Farming), Jeseokhalmang (God of Childbearing/Farming), Jeonjo (Farming God), **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), and Yongsin (Dragon God), and **Yongwang** (Dragon King), worshipped for the prevention of drought and the protection of levees during floods.

Rituals take various forms: Following sowing of rice seeds, an offering of rice cake is set up at a corner of the paddy or shared among neighbors; hand-rubbing prayers are offered following rice planting; prayers are offered at the reservoir; a rite is observed after offering a meal to workers in the field.

Farming rituals take place at various times of the year.

In the fourth lunar month, prior to the sowing of

rice seeds or rice planting, sacrificial foods are offered to the village guardian deity **Seonang** or to the house guardian god **Seongju** in a ritual held on the banks of rice paddies. In many villages, rituals are also held after rice planting is completed, offering prayers for abundant rain and good harvest on the banks or by the sluice gates of the paddies. Since rice farming relies greatly on water supply, many rituals worship Yongsin, who oversees water, and take place at the sluice gate.



Mulberry paper tied to a stick in the ground to serve as *bokgitdae* (heat flag).  
Gagok-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do(1996, Korea)root



The sixth lunar month is the time of the water festival Yudu and the seasonal divisions Chobok (First Heat) and Jungbok (Middle Heat), when crops grow and vegetables and summer fruits like melons and cucumbers are picked. It was believed that frying pancakes with oil by the rice paddies on Yudu Day (fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month) contributed to reducing pest damage, so rituals were observed around the country with various foods.

In the seventh lunar month, on Baekjung (All Souls Day) or Chilseok (seventh day of the seventh lunar month), rituals were held to keep birds and mice out of the fields.

Farming rituals, in conclusion, were worship activities aimed at overcoming the technological limitations of traditional farming through religious faith and sorcery.



**Frying pancakes to offer as sacrifice.**  
Singi-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2002, Korearoot)



**Ritual offering.**  
Nogok-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (1999, Korearoot)



**Bowing before a table of sacrificial offerings set up by the rice paddy.**  
Singi-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2002)



## OGUGUT 오구굿

### Death-Appeasing Underworld Entry Ritual

*Ogugut* is a shamanic ritual to pray for the rebirth of the dead in the heavens by appeasing the deceased and guiding its spirit to the underworld.

Variations of the term include *ogu*, *ogwi*, *ogwisaenamgut* and *keungut*. The ritual is observed mostly in the south coast regions of Gyeongsang Province and along the east coast. Belonging to the same category of rituals for appeasing the spirit of the dead and praying for the well-being of the living, are *jinogigut*, the underworld entry ritual from the Seoul area and the grievance cleansing ritual *ssitgimgut* from South Jeolla Province.

Southern Coast *Ogugut* is practiced today in Geoje and Tongyeong in South Gyeongsang Province. The ritual procedure comprises the retrieval of the spirit of the dead and its return to the village; enshrining the dead in the home and inviting various deities to entertain them; cleansing the spirit of the dead and related impurities to guide the dead to the underworld; and finally, hosting the miscellaneous gods and spirits.

Eastern Coast *Ogugut* is practiced in regions along the east coast, from the northern tip of Goseong, Gangwon Province, all the way down to Busan, South Gyeongsang Province. Prior to the main ritual, a cleansing ritual is held, arranging a “place for the dead,” which symbolizes the coffin. Then the spirit of the deceased person is invited to meet with that of a deceased ancestor. This is followed by a prayer wishing for the dead to go to a good place, then the ascension of the spirit, which is carried out by lifting the paper symbol of the deceased soul using the paper flower *jihwa*, signifying the rebirth of the deceased. The ritual ends with a farewell to the departing spirit, praying for its safe journey to the heavens.

*Sanogugut*, or underworld entry ritual for the living, is held to pray for the good fortunes in life and entry to the heavens in death for one who is still alive, a practice observed by hereditary shamans (*seseummu*) of the eastern coast regions.

#### OGUGUT



Arranging of a place for the dead during Eastern Coast *Ogugut*.



Impurities-cleansing ritual.

Gijang-gun, Busan (2005)



Arranging of a place for the dead.

Shrine serving as ritual venue for Eastern Coast *Ogugut*.



Inviting the spirit of the deceased.

Spreading a strip of white cotton cloth.



OGUGUT Gijang-gun, Busan (2005)



Praying for the dead's entry to the heavens while reenacting the cleansing of the path.



Bidding farewell to the deceased; praying for rebirth in heaven.



Burning of paper ornaments used to decorate the shrine.

## POJE 포제

### Ritual for Village Guardian Gods

*Poje* is the general term used for Confucian village rituals held on Jeju Island.

Exact terms for these rituals can vary: When the worshipped god is Posinjiryong (Tutelary God), the ritual is called *poje*, *nongpoje* or *ipoje*, which are the most widely used terms; when *Isajisin* (Village God of Land and Grains) is worshipped, the ritual is called *isaje* or *dongsaje*; and *hyangje*, *maeulje*, *dongnetje* are broader terms for referring to the rituals as general village rites.

*Poje* is held on the day of Jeonghae (pig) in the first lunar month, offering livestock like a cow or pig as sacrifice to pray to the heavens for a good harvest and good health and longevity for the family. Local male dignitaries serve as ritual officials and the ritual follows Confucian procedures.

The ritual was developed in Joseon as a formal rite reflecting the community's new political order as a male-oriented Confucian feudal society was established, which viewed shamanism with disdain and attempted to reform traditional shamanic rituals into Confucian memorial services. At first, the shamanic and Confucian procedures were combined into a single ritual, but over time they were split into the shamanic village ritual (*maeulgut*) organized by women, and the male-dominated Confucian memorial rite *poje*.

At the end of the year, an assembly called *pojehyanghoe* is convened for ritual preparation, including funding, accommodations for ritual officials (*jecheong*), and election of officials. Another general meeting is arranged after the ritual for a settlement of accounts. The group is an autonomous communal organization based on regional or blood ties.

To prepare for the ritual, elected officials move into special accommodations and spend three days offering their devotion. In the past, this process used to take five to seven days. During this period of collective living, a taboo rope (*geumjul*) is hung to keep out people with impurities, and the ritual officials are prohibited from seeing human or animal corpses, from

POJE Seongsan-eup, Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do (2004, Seo Heon-gang)



Confucian rite.



Prayer invocation



Prayer invocation during Confucian rite.



Offering of sacrificial foods.



touching unclean objects like urine pails, eating unclean foods like dog or horse meat, and also from sexual activity.

## PUNGOJE 풍어제

### Ritual for Big Catch

*Pungoje* is the term for rituals held in the coastal regions to pray for peace in the village, safety for the fishermen at sea, and a big catch.

*Byeolsingut* and *haesinje* are other terms used to refer to this big catch ritual. Prayers for safety and a big catch are offered to the sea deity **Yongwang** (Dragon King), the procedures generally officiated by a shaman. *Byeolsingut* of the eastern and southern coasts; *pungoje* from the island of Hwangdo off Anmyeondo on the western coast; and *haesinje* of Ulleung and Jeju islands are some of the most widely known big catch rituals.



Divine pole and decorative lamp installed for Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.  
Jugwang-myeon, Goseong-gun, Gangwon-do(2004)



Big catch ritual at a female organ rock held as part of Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.  
Jugwang-myeon, Goseong-gun, Gangwon-do (2004)



Big catch ritual at a female organ rock.  
Jugwang-myeon, Goseong-gun, Gangwon-do (2004)





**Ritual table for Southern Coast big catch ritual.**  
Susan Village, Dongbu-myeon, Geoje-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2004, Choe Ho-sik)



**Shaman performing a song.**  
Susan Village, Dongbu-myeon, Geoje-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2004, Choe Ho-sik)



**Boatowners offering bows during Southern coast big catch ritual.**  
Susan Village, Dongbu-myeon, Geoje-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2004, Choe Ho-sik)



**Western coast big catch ritual.**  
Daegot-myeon, Gimpo-si, Gyeonggi-do (2011, Hong Tea-Han)



**Western coast big catch ritual.**  
Daegot-myeon, Gimpo-si, Gyeonggi-do (2011, Hong Tea-Han)



## SAENGGIBOKDEOK 생기복덕

### Fortunes for an Auspicious Day

*Saenggibokdeok* refers to a divination process for predicting one's fortunes for a given day.

This process plays an important part in the selection of officials for the village ritual (*jegwan*). The methodology involves applying a candidate's age and the day's fortunes to *Palgwe* (the Eight Trigrams) and interpreting the outcome according to the three lines (*hyo*) of top, middle and bottom. A learned village elderly, a village fortuneteller or a shaman is asked to carry out the process. When there is no one to refer to, people outside of the village are sought out, but sometimes, the process is passed over and those among the candidates without "unclean" elements or events in life are selected as ritual officials.

Seeking out individuals with auspicious fortunes for the day of the ritual intends to select those who can best connect with the harmonizing spirit and energy between heaven and earth. In other words, the best candidates for ritual official are those who can best communicate with the gods. Once an individual qualifies as a ritual official after proven to possess the right fortunes for the day, he has to go through a divination process by observing taboos and purification procedures, following which he receives formal status as official.

## SAMJAPGI 삼잡기

### Ritual for Removing Speck from Eye

*Samjapgi* is a sorcery ritual for removing a small speck in the eye.

In the distant past, eye diseases were common but considered especially mysterious and thus feared. *Sam* is a traditional term that refers to a tiny white or red speck that has developed on the pupil, and

SAMJAPGI Dong-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Drawing a face to hold a ritual for removing speck from eye.

*sammun* is the eye inflammation caused by this speck, accompanying pain and redness. An alternate term for the ritual for removing this symptom is *sammunjapgi*.

One healing method involved using red beans. At sunrise, a bowl of water was placed outside the gate, into which a single red bean was dropped and if it made a circle on the water, it was believed that the speck will go away. The red color of the bean was thought to be effective for chasing away bad forces, and the single bean also served as a metaphor for the speck, and its descent into water was a visualization of the speck drowning. The time of the ritual was related to the fact that when a person afflicted with eye inflammation had difficulty seeing in bright sunlight. Another method was to hang or draw a picture of a face and pierce the afflicted spot with a sharp object



Piercing the speck in the eye with a sharp object.

like a needle, thorn or kitchen knife, in an attempt to directly attack and threaten the speck.

*Samjaggi*, in other words, was a conceptual act of seeking direct healing through sorcery.

## SAMSINMOSIGI 삼신모시기

Ritual for Goddess of Childbearing

*Samsinmosigi* is the ritual for worshipping **Samsin**, the Goddess of Childbearing, who blesses families with

children and oversees their birth and health.

Households that eagerly await children hold this ritual, especially families with only daughters and no son. Sometimes when a family is experiencing trouble, a shaman or fortuneteller recommends the ritual.

**Samsin** ritual is officiated by the women of the family, including the wife, post-partum mother, or grandmother of a child. Sometimes an elderly woman from the village is called in to offer prayers, or sometimes a fortuneteller or a shaman is hired.

This ritual of praying for a child is closely related to the fundamentals of **Samsin** worship since the goddess is in charge of childbirth, child rearing and development. In the old days when medical service was scarce, **Samsin** played an important role as a deity of life, overseeing the health of mother and newborn. In the worship ritual, the officiant or a shaman “seats” the goddess, or her sacred entity. When **Samsin** is angry, she leaves the house, which is referred to as **Samsin** “going awry,” and occurs when **Samsin** is not worshipped properly or when its sacred entity has been handled without care. **Samsin** expresses her anger by doing harm to the child of the family, which is why the woman of the house expresses her devotion with a hand-rubbing ritual in front of the ritual table set up facing the sacred entity or the wardrobe.



Burning of prayer text for Samsin.  
Gagok-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (1996, Korearoot)



## SANBARAMMAKGI 산바람막기

### Ritual to Undo Harm on Ancestral Tomb

*Sanbarammakgi*, “keeping out tomb trouble,” is a ritual for undoing a calamity in the home, believed to have been caused by the mishandling of an ancestral tomb.

*Sanbaram*, or tomb trouble, is brought on to descendants by acts related to ancestral tombs on a year when such acts must be avoided, including digging up or moving a grave; erecting stone figures or elevated platforms; cutting down a tree or laying grass; or paving a road next to the grave.

When an ancestral tomb needs to be moved due to land development, or in the case of trouble or hardships in the home, the family consults a geomancer or a shaman about the move or the state of the tomb before going ahead with the move.

When the shaman inquires the spirits about the family’s affairs and if it is concluded that the troubles are due to tomb trouble, she will offer a report at the tomb to the ancestors about the troubles and the necessary antidote, followed by either a ritual held at her shrine, a *Sansin* (Mountain God) worship ritual, or a rite at the family’s home, in which case the procedures focus on entertaining the ancestors to appease the angered *Josangsin* (Ancestral God).

construction process perceived as the birth of a sacred entity. The ridge beam makes up the highest section in the building’s structure and its raising signifies the completion of the frame and the birth of the house guardian god *Seongju*.

*Sangnyanggosa* takes place on a selected auspicious date. Prior to the ritual, the prayer text is composed, often including the Chinese characters 龜 (turtle) and 龍 (dragon), or 青龍 (blue dragon) and 白虎 (white tiger) in the front and back, the turtle and dragon viewed as water gods and thereby signifying fire prevention. Also included is the passage “姜太公造作處,” meaning, “This house built by Grand Duke Jiang,” referring to the legendary character Jiang who is believed to have lived 700 years in poverty and another 700 in riches, the passage serving as a prayer for longevity. Another often included passage is “應天上之三光 備人間之五福,” meaning, “Praying for an answer from the sun, the moon, and the stars, to bring to the human world the five fortunes,” as a prayer asking for a blessing of the house by the gods.

The ritual procedure comprises three stages: offering of sacrificial foods and bowing; the collection of roof-raising funds (*sangnyangchae*) presented as entertainment before the ridge beam is raised; and offering prayers and performing divination during the raising of the beam.

When the ritual is over, the sacrificial foods and the collected money are offered to the construction workers, which means that the ritual is also a celebration of the workers who build the house and an offering of thanks for their work.

## SANGNYANGGOSA 상랑고사

### Roof-Raising Ritual

*Sangnyanggosa* is a ritual to celebrate the raising of the ridge beam (*jongdori*) in the course of constructing a traditional house.

The ritual marks the completion of the frame of the house and calls for celebration and prayers for a safe completion of the house. A house, in Korean folk religion, is deified as a microcosmos for its residents, its

## SANMEGI 산먹이

### Mountain-Feeding Ritual

*Sanmegi*, literally meaning “mountain-feeding,” is a ritual held in the Yeongdong region of Gangwon Province on an auspicious spring day, by climbing up to

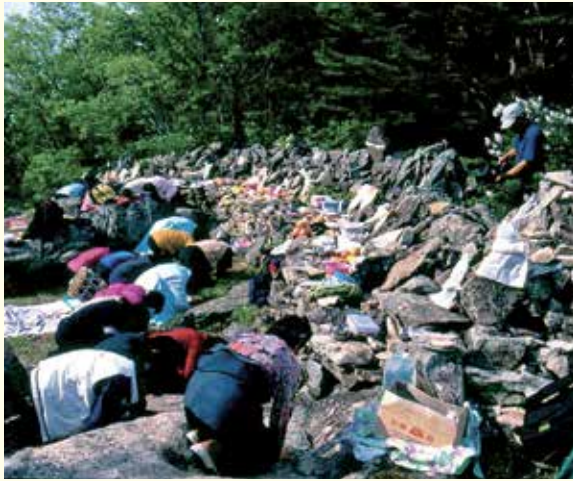
SANMEGI Miro-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2007, Kim Tae-su)



Ritual table set up inside an ancestral shrine.



*Dongdolgaebitteok* (ball-shaped rice cake).



Greeting of ancestors.



Prayer at the shrine of the goddess of childbirth Samsin.



Yongwang ritual.



a designated family mountain to worship the ancestral god **Josang** and to pray for the family's well-being, healthy cattle, and a good harvest. Today mountain-feeding rituals are observed both communally and privately.

Communal rituals generally take place in the third or fourth lunar month, on an auspicious date selected by the ritual host, who makes an announcement to invite villagers to join them. The host also hires a shaman or sorcerer to officiate the ritual. At 4 in the morning on the day of the ritual, a ritual table for the ancestral god **Josang** is set up at the host's home to offer a report about the ritual, then the rest of the party gathers at the edge of the village to start the climb. All rituals are officiated by a shaman or sorcerer. Upon arrival at the mountain summit, a ritual is held for the mountain god **Sansin**. Then each member of the party heads to his family's ancestral shrine and sets up a ritual table and offers bows, which is followed by the shaman going around the ancestral shrines to check the birthdates of the family members and offer prayers.

An item that is indispensable to the table of sacrificial offerings is a rice cake called *dongdolgaebitteok*, made with steamed white rice powder or sticky rice powder, rolled into round balls without filling. The party then prays for the health of cows to martial hero deity **Gunung**, prays for a new child or the health of young children at *samsindang* (shrine for goddess of childbearing). Lastly, the party heads to *yongsindang* (dragon god shrine), where a simple ritual table is set up and the ritual is followed by the scattering of grains of rice, reminiscent of seed-sowing, to pray for a good harvest. When the entire ritual process is over, the shaman throws her knife to the ground to see if the gods have been moved by the ritual. The villagers enjoy a festive feast with the food from the ritual table and descend the mountain between 2 and 3 in the afternoon.

Private mountain-feeding rituals are generally held on one of the following dates: the third day of the third lunar month; the eighth day of the fourth lunar month; or the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. The ritual follows a procedure similar to the communal version, but is officiated not by shamans but the women of the house—the mother-in-law, or the daughter-in-law.

## SANSINJE 산신제

### Ritual for Mountain God

*Sansinje* is a ritual for worshipping the mountain god.

Korea is a mountainous country, with 70 percent of its land covered by mountains large and small, including Mt. Baekdu, the tallest at 2,744 meters. This geographical condition has had tremendous influence on the lives of the Korean people, whose history and culture have their origins in the mountains. According to the book *Samgungyusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), Mt. Taebaek was where Hwanung, the son of Hwanin, the God of the Heavens, descended, and his son Dangun, after founding the first Korean kingdom and ruling its people, became **Sansin** (Mountain God).

Mountain worship has been passed down in the form of the civilian ritual *sansinje*, a ritual for praying for the peace and safety of the community and stability and good harvest across the country. The ritual aims at communicating to the heavens the affairs of the human world, the mountain serving as the medium between the two worlds to build a channel for delivering prayers to the gods. The tradition is rooted in ancient sky worship rituals that were large-scale and state-organized, but in contemporary times *sansinje* has been reduced to local communal rituals that focus on the protection and well-being of the village.

**Sansin** (Mountain God) is the ruler and owner of the mountain, also called Sansillyeong (Mountain Spirit) and Sansinharabeoji (Mountain Grandfather), often with the name of its residing mountain preceding the title. Many mountain gods were rulers deified upon death as guardians of the state or the village.

*Sansinje* procedures follow the Confucian tradition and are carried out by ritual officials (*jegwan*) who have been selected among villagers: Libation is followed by bowing; the prayer message (*chungmun*) is read, followed by a final round of bowing; and the sacrificial foods from the ritual table are brought back to the village for a communal feast.



Libation during mountain god ritual on Mt. Gyeryong .  
Mt. Gyeryong, Gongju-si, Chungcheongnam-do (2002)



Prayer invocation during a mountain god ritual on Mt. Halla.  
Ara-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2007, Mun Mu-byeong)



Ritual for mountain god on Mt. Wonsu.  
Nam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2003, Choe Ho-sik)

## SASEULSEUGI 사슬세우기

### Stick-Erecting

*Saseulseugi* is an inquiry procedure in shamanic rituals in the Seoul area, carried out by erecting a knife and spear.

The ancient term *saseul* refers to a bamboo stick used for counting or divination. In shamanic rituals in the Seoul area, the stick-erecting procedure is held as part of the provincial deity ritual segment (*dodanggeori*) and segment for the deceased royalty god (*byeolsanggeori*). First, the moon knife (*woldo*) is erected on its handle, which is referred to as *woldosaseul* (moon knife stick) or *binsaseul* (empty stick). If the knife stays erect, the three-pronged spear *samjichang* is used to hold up a whole pig, during which the shaman chants a prayer asking the gods to accept this sacrifice and about the purpose of the ritual.



Stick-erecting during village ritual on Mt. Bonghwa.  
Mt. Bonghwa, Jungrang-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Yeong-gwang)





*Saseulseugi* during thanksgiving ritual.  
Galhyeon-dong, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul (2009, Kim Hyeong-geun)

If the spear with the pig stays erect, the shaman moves a cup of wine around the spear in full circle, then hands the cup to the family hosting the ritual as a sign of longevity and good fortune.

*Saseulseugi* serves two purposes: First, for offering a sacrifice to **Dodang** (Provincial Deity), **Bugun** (Government Office Deity), Sangsan (High Mountain) and Byeolsang (Deceased Royalty God), and to inquire if they are satisfied with the ritual; and second, for performing divination for the family that has commissioned the ritual.

## SEONANGJE 서낭제

### Ritual for Village Guardian Deity

*Seonangje* is a ritual collectively organized by villagers to worship **Seonang**, the village guardian deity, to pray for security, good fortune and good harvest for the coming year and to keep away bad fortunes.

*Seonangdang* is the shrine for village guardian

deity and takes the form of a stone stack altar; stone stacks and a tree; stone stacks with *jangseung* (village guardian post), *sotdae* (sacred pole); a shrine house (*dangjip*); or a house and a tree. Rituals that take place at these shrines can be categorized into *seonanggosa*, held privately; and *seonangje*, held as communal rituals.

*Seonangje* usually takes place on Jeongwol-daeboreum (Great Full Moon) or during the first half of the first lunar month to wish for good fortunes for the New Year, but dates can vary by region, some held on Samjinnal, which falls on the third day of the third lunar month, or Dano, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, to pray for good growth; or on Junggu, on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, or on the fifteenth day of the tenth lunar month, as a new offerings ritual following the harvest. Ritual officials are selected five to seven days prior to the ritual in a village meeting, and the ritual wine is brewed three to five days prior to the ritual. During this time the ritual officials clean their homes, the shrine, and the well that will provide the water for cooking the sacrificial food, then protect the sites from impurities by hanging a taboo rope (*geumjul*) and sprinkling red clay (*hwangto*). On the night of the ritual, the officials perform their ablutions (*mogyokjaegy*) and change into clean clothes, then set out for the shrine carrying the sacrificial food on a wooden frame carried on their backs. Upon arrival at the shrine, they hang a taboo rope (*geumjul*) before entering and set up the sacrificial foods. The ritual follows the procedures of Confucian rites and women are prohibited from taking part.

*Seonangje*, in short, is a ritual held in a sacred place and time, to pray for security, a good harvest and a big catch for the village, as well as the welfare of individual homes, its procedures mystical and half-Confucian, and officiated by males without impurities associated with the date of the ritual. The last part of the ritual is *soji*, or the burning of sacred text, a procedure for confirming whether the gods have taken the sacrifice, and for telling the fortunes of the community and individual households for the coming year.



Ritual officials offering bows during *seonangje*.  
Hyeonnam-myeon, Yangyang-gun, Gangwon-do (2003, Choe Ho-sik)



Setting up the ritual table.  
Hyeonnam-myeon, Yangyang-gun, Gangwon-do (2003, Choe Ho-sik)



*Seonangje* held as part of village guardian deity ritual.  
Susan-myeon, Jecheon-si, Chungcheongbuk-do (2010, Lee Pil-yeong)

## SEONGHWANGJE 성황제

### Ritual for Village Deity Seonghwang

*Seonghwangje* is a communal ritual held to worship the village deity Seonghwangsinsin.

The ritual originated from the Chinese worship of Cheng Huang, or City God (the name literally meaning “wall and moat”), which was introduced to Goryeo from the Song dynasty, the earliest record dating back to 996, the fifteenth year of King Seongjong’s reign.

In Joseon (1392-1910), *seonghwangje* was observed in two forms: the state-run ritual officiated by government officials and the civilian version organized by shamans or the local community.

In late Joseon, the shamanic form of *seonghwangje* became more prevalent, evidence that the state-run version of the ritual had not penetrated to the local communities. And as local clerks (*hyangni*) applied Confucian ritual procedures to the civilian *seonghwangje*, the state and civilian forms gradually merged into a communal folk worship ritual practiced around the country, the shrine *seonghwangsa*, with the painting of Seonghwangsinsin, built in each village. In the process, village rituals officiated by shamans, including *byeolsingut*, emerged as the main custom in the worship of village gods.



Village deity shrine.  
Gayang 1-dong, Gangseo-gu, Seoul (2005, Oh Mun-seon)





Prayer invocation during *seonghwangje*.  
Gayang-dong, Gangseo-gu, Seoul (2005, Oh Mun-seon)



Ritual table for house guardian god.  
Gunbuk-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2005, Gang Seong-bok)

of the roof-raising ritual (*sangnyanggosa*) for a new house, or to remove the existing house guardian god to enshrine a new one; the second praying for peace and prosperity for the family, held in the first or the tenth lunar month.

The role of **Seongju** has continued to change over time. The deity was first associated with buildings and architecture, but its realm has expanded to that of a god that oversees the fortunes of a family, including health and healing. It is believed that if the house guardian god falls ill, there will be trouble or illness in the family, and a ritual is held to enshrine a new **Seongju**.

Ritual procedures start with the arrangement of sacrificial foods on the ritual table, using a small and low sitting table, the offerings including layered rice cake (*sirutteok*), wine, dried pollock (*bugeo*), fruits and cooked vegetables, or a simple table of rice cake and a bowl of fresh water from the well (*jeonghwasu*), with a candle standing in the center of the cake. Three bows are then offered, followed by hand-rubbing prayer (*bison*), the burning of prayer texts (*soji*), the first sheet dedicated to **Seongju**, then to family members, males first then females. When the ritual is over, the family consumes the sacrificial foods (*eumbok*), to pray for good health, safety and success.

## SEONGJUGOSA 성주고사

### Ritual for House Guardian God

*Seongjugosa* is a worship ritual for **Seongjusin**, the guardian god enshrined in the open hall of a house, which protects the family and the home.

The ritual is officiated by the woman of the house to pray for good fortune, longevity, safety and good health for the entire family.

*Seongjugosa* can be categorized into two types: The first for the enshrinement of **Seongju**, held as part

## SESEUMMU 세습무

### Hereditary Shaman

*Seseummu* is a shaman who inherits the calling as part of a family trade passed down through generations.

The practice of inheriting the shamanic role was prevalent in regions south of the Han River, and hereditary shamans did not experience possession but carried out the role by training in the skills of the ritual.

Hereditary shaman communities around Korea include the *dangol* shamans of Jeolla Province; the *byeolsingut* (village ritual) shaman community of Gangwon and Gyeongsang provinces; the community

of male shamans called *hwaraengi* in southern Gyeonggi Province; and *sinbang* of Jeju Island. These communities pass down the shamanic tradition through mixed lineages of both patriarchy and matriarchy and also through exclusive *dangol* ties formed between a shaman and her followers.

Hereditary shamans designate the various duties of ritual staging to members of their communities instead of hiring musicians or other professionals, and many of them are highly skilled in the performing arts, including song, dance, music and acting, which are their main channels of communicating with the gods. This does not mean, however, that hereditary shamans never experience possession. In the *byeolsingut* shaman community of the east coast, many shamans have been initiated through possession rituals or have been through experiences similar to those of possessed shamans. It can be concluded therefore that in Korean folk religion, the tradition of the hereditary shaman, which involves training in the shamanic practice, and the tradition of the possessed shaman who experiences direct contact with the gods, are naturally interconnected.



*Simbang*, hereditary shaman of Jeju Island, dancing with an incense burner. (Mun Mu-byeong)

## SIWANGMAJI 시왕맞이

### Ten Kings Greeting Ritual

*Siwangmaji*, literally meaning, “greeting the Ten Kings,” is a ritual for worshipping the Ten Kings of Myeongbu, where judgment takes place in the underworld.

In the shamanic rituals of Jeju Island, “*maji*” is a ritual for greeting the gods as they make their descent to the human world, and *siwangmaji* is a greeting ritual for the Ten Kings (Siwang), rulers of the judgment point Myeongbu, who are enshrined at *siwangdangkeul* (Siwang Shrine), the second palace in the heavens. In other words, the ritual serves to pave the path for the descent of the Ten Kings and the departure of the soul



SIWANGMAJI Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (1994, Mun Mu-byong)



Ritual tables for the souls of the deceased.



Cleansing the path.



Attaching to the shaman's back sheets marking the lifespan of various individuals.



Calling the soul of the dead.



Delivering the message of the spirit of the dead.

of the deceased, and to greet the Ten Kings and to see off the dead souls as they depart for the underworld.

The Ten Kings oversee, from the underworld, human lives and the souls of the deceased. They record the lifespan of each individual in their books and when someone's time is up, a messenger is dispatched to bring him to the underworld, where judgment takes place whether he will be sent to hell or heaven, depending on his deeds during his lifetime. Since the Ten Kings oversee matters of life and death, *Siwangmaji* is practiced in all parts of Jeju.

This greeting ritual takes place on two different occasions: First is to pray for the extension of life for a critically ill patient in the family who is believed to have been summoned to the underworld by the Ten Kings; second is to pray for the exoneration of the deeds of the deceased to help send him to heaven. It is believed that if a deceased soul does not arrive safely in the underworld and gets lost in between worlds, it will turn into a ghost and come back to possess the soul of its family and relations, harassing them with diseases and calamities. *Siwangmaji*, in other words, is held as an individual rite or as part of a larger ritual, to request for healing and good health to lead a long life.



Burning of prayer texts by a shaman during *byeolsingut* ritual on the southern coast.  
Hansan-myeon, Tongyeong-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (Jeong Su-mi)

## SOJI 소지

### Burning of Sacred Text

*Soji* is the burning of a sacred text, written on mulberry paper and torn into a designated size, a religious act performed to purify a secular venue into a sacred one (*jeonghwa*) or to make a wish.

*Soji* is categorized into *dongminsoji*, which involves a villager; *daedongsoji*, held for the entire village; *umasoji*, carried out for the proliferation of cattle and horses; and *gakseongbajisoji*, which involves individuals of different family names.

In a Confucian rite, the sheet containing the prayer text or funeral ode is burned following invocation,



Burning of prayer texts that address all members of the community during a mountain god ritual.  
Jeongneung 3-dong, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul (2008)





Burning of sacred texts for villagers during a village ritual.  
(Cha Jeong-hwan)



Burning of prayer texts on behalf of all members of the community during a village tutelary god ritual.  
Bongnae-myeon, Boseong-gun, Jeollanam-do (2005, Lee Ok-hui)

signifying the act of reporting to the gods the wishes made in the prayer. A vast range of examples of this ritual process can be found in village rituals, the most widely observed being *daedongsoji*, which takes place toward the closing, the officiant addressing all members of the community that participated in the ritual and throwing the burning sheets high up in the air to make a wish. *Soji* also takes the form of a more individualized ceremony on behalf of all members of a family, held as part of a village ritual or home ritual. These procedures are accompanied by wishes for health and safety. It is commonly the shaman who utters these words of private or communal well-wishing as she burns the sheet. This ritual, in the end, is an act of connecting man with the gods by a single sheet of paper burned to ashes. In a shamanic ritual, *soji* also takes on significance as an act of purification.

## SONDOLJE 손돌제

### Ritual for Ferryman Sondol

*Sondolje* is a ritual held in Gimpo, Gyeonggi Province, on the twentieth day of the tenth lunar month, for appeasing the soul of Sondol, a ferryman who met an unjust death.

The full title of this ritual is *Sondolgongjinhonje* (Soul-Appeasing Ritual for Sir Sondol), a local tradition that was revived in contemporary times after discontinuing in late Joseon.

*Sondolje* has its roots in the oral legend of Sondol, a ferryman from Goryeo (918-1392) who was killed by King Gojong for suspicion of rowing the king's boat off the water route on his way to Ganghwa Island to seek refuge. Upon his safe arrival, however, the king regretted the killing and held a ritual for the ferryman after dedicating his tomb. The sea channel where his death took place is still called *Sondolmok* (Sondol Strait) and the cold harsh winds that blow each year around the time of the ritual is called *sondolbaram*, and the

**SONDOLJE** Daegot-myeon, Gimpo-si, Gyeonggi-do (2003, Choe Ho-sik)


Ritual at the tomb of Ferryman Sondol.



Confucian rite.



Jinhonmu.



Barachum.

accompanying cold spell *sondolchuwi*.

In the local community, this legend is considered history and Sondol as a real-life figure, the ritual in his honor observed as a major event. Ritual procedures comprise a Confucian rite and the soul-appeasing dance *barachum*.

## SONNIMGUT 손님굿

Smallpox Prevention Ritual

*Sonnimgut*, literally meaning, “guest ritual,” is a shamanic ritual segment for worshipping the god responsible for smallpox and measles.

The ritual is also called *songut* and is practiced around the country in various formats.

*Sonnimgut* is a prevention ritual closely related to the smallpox send-off ritual *mamabaesonggut*, the two procedures distinguished by function.

This send-off ritual focuses on appeasing the smallpox deity Mama so that it will go away. It is believed that a generous amount of steamed sorghum



Smallpox prevention ritual *sonnimgut*.  
Gijang-gun, Busan (2007, Kim Heon-seon)





Smallpox prevention ritual *Sonnimgut*.  
Gijang-gun, Busan (2007, Kim Heon-seon)

or millet offered in a straw basket will satisfy the deity. The most important part of this ritual is to end it well, by placing the straw basket offering on a tree outside the village or adopting other secret procedures.

*Sonnimgut*, on the other hand, is a prevention ritual worshipping the deity *Sonnim*, believed to be a wandering god. The shamanic song performed for this ritual segment includes a passage about a large number of deities that set out from south of the Yangtze River in China and turned back at Amnok River in Uiju, only a few making it to the Korean peninsula, indicating that these gods were wayfarer deities.

## SOTDAEJE 숫대제

### Sacred Pole Ritual

*Sotdaeje*, or sacred pole ritual, is a communal rite for worshipping sacred poles (*sotdae*) as village guardians.

The rituals are believed to have originated from rites related to a wooden column erected in a district

named *Sodo* in Mahan, one of the Three Han States of ancient Korea, circa 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. The “Account of the Three Hans” chapter in the volume *History of the Wei Dynasty* of the Chinese history book *Sanguozhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms) includes a passage about a wooden pole erected in *Sodo*, hung with a rattle and a drum in order to worship the spirits. If this was to be viewed as a sacred pole and evidence that a ritual for the spirits was held, this would no doubt

## SOTDAEJE



Making *sotdae*.

mark the beginning of *sotdaeje*.

Sacred pole rituals are held when the poles are erected, or on a selected date. The poles are sometimes erected together with the guardian posts *jangseung*, in which case the sacred pole ritual takes place simultaneously.

A case of Jungkok village in Jinan of North Jeolla Province, *sotdae* is erected for the purpose of preventing fire. The village had been suffered a number of fire and

Sinnim-myeon, Gochang-gun, Jeollabuk-do (1991, Hwang Heon-man)



Sacred pole ritual.

it was believed that the cause of fire was the mountain to the East of the village which was geomantically considered a fire mountain (*hwasan*) containing an overwhelming amount of fire energy. Villagers could stop fire by erecting *sotdae* facing the mountain. On the fourteenth day, the villagers hold a ritual before setting out for a nearby mountain to cut down lumber for the poles, and the following day the ritual host heads for the market in town to purchase ingredients for sacrificial foods. The sacred poles are also made on this day, with pine wood secured the day before. When they are completed, they are erected, the bottom ends buried in the ground, which is followed by a simple ritual held next to the poles. The reason the poles are topped with a duck is because ducks are waterfowl, believed to be capable of guarding against fire.

## SSITGIMGUT 씻김굿

### Grievance Cleansing Ritual

*Ssitgimgut*, or grievance cleansing ritual, refers to underworld entry rites observed in the Jeolla provinces.

The procedures of this cleansing ritual vary by situation, but can generally be divided into three sections: The introduction comprises segments that focus on praying for the fortunes and well-being of the living; the middle section is called *mangjagut*, or ritual for the deceased, and is made up of segments for comforting and appeasing the spirit of the dead; and the closing is for seeing off the deities that have gathered at the ritual venue, taking place by the gate of a home or at the entrance of an alley.

*Ssitgimgut* can be categorized into three types by purpose or situation:

*Gwangmeori ssitgimgut*, or coffin head cleansing ritual, takes place the day before the casket procession and takes place by the head of the coffin, and is also called *gwanmeori* (coffin head) *ssitgimgut*, *jin* (main) *ssitgimgut*, *jingut* (appeasing ritual), or *jiril* (appeasing



SSITGIMGUT Buk-myeon, Hwasun-gun, Jeollanam-do (2005, Hong Tea-han)



Grievance cleansing ritual.



Undoing of the knots.



Cleansing the path.

day), since uncleanness has occurred due to death. Rituals for **Jowang** (Kitchen Deity) or **Chilseong** (Seven Stars) are not included in the procedure, or neither is the process of praying for the fortune and wellbeing of the living. Whereas *mugeun ssitgimgut*, held after a significant period of time has passed after the death, focuses on the prayer for good fortunes in this world, the coffin head ritual revolves around rites for the dead. The procedure for praying for the dead person's entry into the underworld takes place inside the room where the coffin has been placed, tying hemp cords around the coffin into knots, representing the grievances that the dead has collected in this world, which is followed by the undoing of the knots and the cleansing of the grievances. If the deceased has met a timely death, the ritual is held as part of a festive funeral process, sending off the dead with song and dance.

*Nalbaji ssitgimgut*, meaning date-setting cleansing ritual, takes place on a set date that is considered auspicious, after a certain amount of time has passed after the funeral, accompanied by a cleansing ritual. It is also called *mareun*, or dry, *ssitgimgut*, or *mugeun* (old) *ssitgimgut*, and the cleansing takes place for many different deceased ancestors. Whereas a coffin head cleansing ritual focuses on guiding the dead to the underworld, a date-setting cleansing ritual highlights the prayer for peace and good fortune for the living.

*San ssitgimgut*, or cleansing ritual for the living, is hosted by families with old or ailing members who might be nearing death, in order to help guide them to a better place after death. The procedures are similar to the rituals for the dead. There are some differences, however: First, the **Josang** (Ancestor God) segment is extended, since this is a ritual for leading the living to the underworld, so the Ancestor God is called upon to answer the family's prayers; second, clothes that belong to the living subject are burned with ancestral clothing, signifying that the ritual's subject is viewed in a way as dead; and third, as mentioned, the subject of the ritual is at the scene of the rite, but

he is perceived as dead, which is why families never hold this cleansing ritual without the permission of the subject.

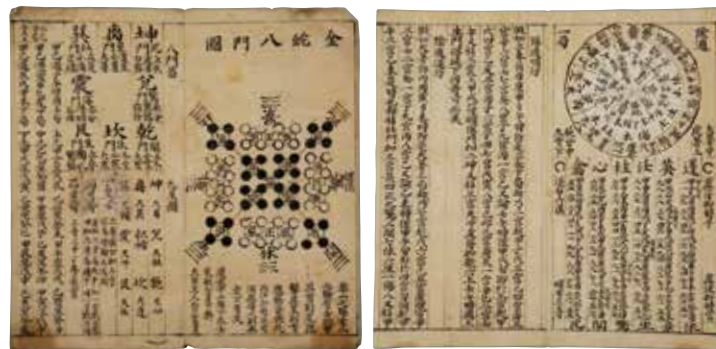
## TAEGIL 택일

### Selection of Auspicious Date

*Taegil*, literally meaning, “to select a date,” refers to the practice of identifying an auspicious date for a ritual or event, or an inauspicious date to be avoided, according to the principles of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements.

Alternate terms include *nalgarim* (date sorting), *bogil* (date divination), *chugil* (inquiry of auspiciousness), *chuil* (date inquiry). Time elements are of crucial importance to human lives in Korean folk religion, and relying on the cosmological principles to seek out auspicious dates is widespread in East Asia.

In contemporary times, auspicious dates are most commonly sought for weddings and moves, and also for store openings and births, and in some cases for funerals, grave-moving, house repairs and roof-raising. The first factor people consider when selecting a date for a wedding, a move or a repair job, is *son*, an abbreviation of the term *sonnim*, or guest, which refers to a ghost that goes around harassing people and causing harm. It is believed that the ghost follows



*Taegilgi*, book on selecting an auspicious date for a ritual or event.



a ten-day cycle, spending the first and second days of the lunar month in the east, the third and fourth days in the south, the fifth and sixth days in the west, the seventh and eighth days in the north, the ninth and tenth days in the heavens, reappearing on the eleventh day in the east. Koreans have long believed that holding a wedding or moving on the day and in the direction that this ghost is expected to appear results in great calamities. It is speculated that the practice became widespread because due to the regularity of the ghost's movements, the public was able to figure out which date to select or avoid without referring to a book calendar.

## TAPJE 탑제 Stone Stacks Ritual

*Tapje*, or stone stacks ritual, is a communal rite held around Seol (Lunar New Year) after building stone stacks at the village entrance as its main guardian deity or as a low shrine deity.

The stacks, built with natural gathered stones, are generally conical in shape, filled inside with small stones, clay or cement, and the gaps between the stones sealed to keep them in place.

Stone stacks are also erected in locations where supplementation (*bibo*) is needed for specific geographical features that are considered inauspicious according to geomantic beliefs. The stacks are usually built as a pair, comprising a male and a female. It is important that communal effort and devotion are invested into the construction of the stacks.

On the day of the stone stacks ritual, the ritual officials wake up early to perform their ablutions and to clean the stone stacks and their surroundings to prepare for the evening's rites. When the troupe of musicians announces the start of the ritual by parading around the village with loud music, the villagers join the procession and head to the stacks, where the music

### TAPJE



Communal stone stacks ritual.



Burning of sacred text.

Sandi Village, Jang-dong, Daedeok-gu, Daejeon (2005, Choe Ho-sik)



playing comes to an end. The ritual proceeds with the offering of sacrificial foods, burning of incense, libation, bowing and burning of prayer text (*soji*), during which the villagers offer their prayers with hand-rubbing (*bison*) or casting their eyes in all four directions around the stacks.

*Tapje* is a distinctively Buddhist ritual and the women of the village play a dominant role. In some villages the women circle the stacks carrying candles, reciting the Buddhist chant, “*namuamitabul*,” to pray for their families and sons, then leave candles burning on the stacks, in the numbers of their sons. It is customary in some villages to include in the straw garland serving as taboo rope (*geumjul*) auspicious prayer slips (*gilji*) inscribed with the Chinese character “佛,” meaning Buddha.

## TEOJUGOSA 터주고사

### Ritual for Land Tutelary God

*Teojugosa* is a ritual for worshipping the land tutelary god **Teoju** and praying for peace in the home.

Variations of this term include *teojuje* and *teotgosa*. **Teoju** is a deity that oversees the grounds of a house, and also brings prosperity while keeping away bad fortune.

This deity is worshipped in the form of the sacred entity *teojutgari*, placed in the backyard or by the sauce jar terrace. *Teojutgari* is an earthenware jar filled with rice grains, covered with a lid and draped with a conical straw bundle. The grains in the jar are replaced each year with newly harvested rice, and the old grains are steamed or made into rice cake to be consumed in the home among family members, for these grains are viewed as divine and therefore containing good fortunes, and they must not leave the house lest the fortunes escape with them. A simple ritual is held each year when the bundle is replaced with new straw and tied up with left-hand lay rope,







Hand-rubbing prayer offered to land tutelary god, Teoju.  
Gunbuk-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2005, Gang Seong-bok)



Hand-rubbing prayer to the land tutelary god, Teoju.  
Gaegun-myeon, Yangpyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do  
(2006, Hwang Heon-man)

with a folded sheet of mulberry paper attached to the knot to indicate that it is a sacred entity.

In South Chungcheong Province, the land tutelary god is called Jisin (Earth God) and is considered a major household god, worshipped in a ritual called *jisinje* on an auspicious day in the first lunar month. A ritual is held for other household gods as well, once a year in the tenth lunar month, around the time of the rice harvest. The newly harvested rice is used to make layered rice cake (*sirutteok*) as sacrificial food for the ritual.

## UMULJE 우물제

### Well Ritual

*Umulje*, or well ritual, is a rite for the spirit in the well, in recognition of the sanctity of a natural spring, the village well, or a private well at home.

Also called *saemje* (spring ritual) or *yongje* (dragon ritual), well rituals worship **Yongsin** (Dragon God) who resides in the well. These rituals are generally observed as household rituals to pray for an ample supply of water, offering sacrificial foods by the well in the backyard of a home; but in some cases held as communal rites.

In agricultural communities, the role of **Yongsin** was expanded to that of a deity that oversees the harvest and a wide range of other responsibilities, from fortune, health, and longevity, to proliferation of sons, prosperity, peace, safety and success.

*Umulje* as household ritual was held on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, when the well was emptied and the woman of the house performed ablutions at nightfall, before a ritual table was set up and bows were offered to pray for good fortune for the family. Sacrificial foods included steamed rice, sea mustard soup, and a bowl of fresh water from the well (*jeonghwasu*), arranged on a low table on a straw mat by the well, the table lit with a candle. When the



**Communal well ritual.**  
Seji-myeon, Naju-si, Jeollanam-do (2003, Lee Don-gi)



**Household well ritual.**  
Jeongsan-myeon, Cheongyang-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2010, Gang Seong-bok)

family did not have a private well in the house, the ritual was held with water fetched from a communal well, or was held at the village well or by a stream.

*Umulje* as village ritual was carried out as a worship rite mixed with farmers' music, or simply as a farmers' music ritual. The villagers gathered for a village gods ritual (*dangsangut*), which was followed by a spring ritual (*saemgut*) by a troupe of farmers' music performers, who sometimes ended the ritual by visiting individual homes for *jisinbabi* (earth god treading).



## YEOLDUGEORI 열두거리 Twelve-Segment Cycle

*Yeoldugeori*, literally meaning twelve segments, refers to the entire process of a shamanic ritual in full cycle.

A shamanic ritual is perceived as comprising twelve segments, but this is a general number and the terms *yeoldugeori* or *sibijecha* refers to the many segments that make up a full cycle. Terms for segment, the unit for these cycles, are *geori*, *seok* or *jecha*.

There are several different approaches to analyzing the structure of a ritual cycle. Some divide a cycle into Beginning, Middle and End; some into three

stages—cleansing of the venue, main ritual, and closing; and some into four sections—calling of the gods, entertaining the gods, trance channeling, and sending off the gods. A more detailed analysis divides a cycle into venue cleansing—Celestial God worship—local god worship—human god worship—household deity worship—serving food to ghosts and lesser gods (*japgwi japsin*).

A typical *jaesugut* (good fortune ritual) in the Seoul area comprises the following segments in the given order: 1. Cleansing of Impurities—Invitation of **Gamang** (God of Origins)—Libation; 2. Balsa (Buddhist Deity of the Heavens) Segment; 3. Hogu (Smallpox God) Segment; 4. **Bonhyang** (God of Ancestral Roots)/**Sansin** (Mountain God) Segment; 5. **Josang** (Ancestor



Byeolsang Segment from *Mudangnaeryeok* (The Shaman Legacy).  
Kyujanggak, Seoul National University



Byeolsang Segment in contemporary times.  
Bugundang, Itaewon-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul (2001, Hong Tea-han)



Changbu Segment from *Mudangnaeryeok*  
(The Shaman Legacy).  
Kyujanggak, Seoul National University



Changbu Segment in contemporary times.  
Bugundang, Itaewon-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul  
(2001, Hong Tea-han)



Janggun Segment from *Mudangnaeryeok*  
(The Shaman Legacy).  
Kyujanggak, Seoul National University



Janggun Segment in contemporary times.  
Toegyewon-eup, Namyangju-gun, Gyeonggi-do  
(2003, Hong Tea-han)





Jeseok Segment from *Mudangnaeryeok* (The Shaman Legacy).  
Kyujanggak, Seoul National University



Jeseok Segment in contemporary times.  
Sanggye-dong, Nowon-gu, Seoul (2004, Hong Tea-han)

God) Segment; 6. Daesin (Shaman Ancestor Goddess) Segment; 7. Jeonan Segment (Worship of Chinese Deities); 8. Guardian Gods of Five Directions-Blade Dance Segment; 9. Sangsan (High Mountain) Segment; 10. Byeolsang (Deceased Royalty God)-**Daegamsin** (State Official God) Segment-**Mugam** (Shamanic Spirit), or Audience Participation Dance; 11. **Jeseok** (God of Childbirth)-Hogu (Smallpox God) Segment; 12. **Seongju** (House Guardian God)-**Gunung** (Martial Hero Deity) Segment; 13. Changbu (Clown God)-Gyemyeon (Shaman Ancestor Goddess) Segment; 14. *Dwitjeon* (Closing Table) Segment.

## YEONGDEUNG GOSA 영등고사 Ritual for Wind God

*Yeongdeunggosa* is a ritual held on the first day of the second lunar month to pray to the wind goddess **Yeongdeung** for timely rain and steady wind for a good harvest and a big catch.

The ritual is also called *yeongdeungje* or *pungsinje*, and the ritual for greeting the goddess Grandmother Yeongdeung is called *yeongdeungmaji*. **Yeongdeung** is generally worshipped privately by women, but also as a village deity in some coastal regions, and is also called Iwolhalmæ (Second Month Grandmother).

Records about this ritual are found in books

from Joseon dynasty—*Dongguksesigi* (A Record of the Seasonal Customs of the Eastern Kingdom) and *Donggukyeojiseungnam* (Augmented Survey of the Geography of the Eastern Kingdom). While **Yeongdeung** worship is observed around the country, it is now preserved mainly on Jeju Island and in South Gyeongsang Province.

In preparation for the ritual, preventive measures to keep away impurities are taken the day before, on the last day of the first lunar month, by sprinkling a layer of red clay (*hwangto*) and hanging a taboo rope (*geumjul*) made of left-hand lay rope and fresh bamboo branches with green leaves. When the first rooster crows at the break of dawn, fresh water is fetched from the well (*jeonghwasu*) and offered to the goddess in a bowl placed out on the sauce jar terrace or in the outhouse. The water is changed three times, on the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth day. In the morning, sacrificial foods are prepared and hung on the rice stalk pole (*byeotgaritdae*), and the woman of the house offers prayer for a good harvest and peace in the family.



Sacred entity representing Yeongdeung and sacrificial offerings. Munchaek-myeon, Gurye-gun, Jeollanam-do (1995, Seo Hae-suk)



Ritual for praying for a big catch. Jinbong-myeon, Gimje-si, Jeollanam-do

## YEONGDEUNGUT 영등굿

### Shamanic Ritual for Wind God

*Yeongdeunggut* is a shamanic ritual held between the first and the fourteenth day of the second lunar month at village shrines in the coastal parts of Jeju Island, to greet the wind god **Yeongdeung** and pray for safety at sea and a big catch, not only for fishermen but also for the island's women divers who gather conch, abalone and sea mustard.

On Jeju Island, the second lunar month marks the arrival of the wind goddess Yeongdeunghalmang as the season shifts from winter to spring, thus it is referred to as Yeongdeungdal, or Wind Goddess Month. Among the many different rituals for greeting and seeing off the deity, the best known is Chilmeoridang Yeongdeunggut in the neighborhood of Geonip-dong. The ritual delivers prayers for safety at sea and a big catch for fishermen and divers, but is also a village ritual to wish for peace and security in the community. The ritual is held in two parts, the first on the first day of the second lunar month, to greet the wind goddess **Yeongdeung**, and the second on the fourteenth day, to see off the departing goddess, the latter the more elaborate process. In contemporary times, *yeongdeunggut* no longer serves as a village



CHILMEORIDANG YEONGDEUNGUT Jocheon-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (Jeong Su-mi)



Inviting the wind god.



Cleaning the path to greet Yeongdeung and Yongwang.



Offering bows to the gods.

CHILMEORIDANG YEONGDEUNGUT Jocheon-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (Jeong Su-mi)



Ritual table.



Divination.

YEONGDEUNGUT Chilmeoridang Geonip-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Choe Ho-sik)



Yeonggammori (ritual to entertain Yeonggam, guardian deity of fishermen).



Miniature straw boats used in the departing ritual to send off the wind god.



Miniature straw boats.



ritual and focuses on the work of fishermen and divers.

On the day before the ritual, women divers and the wives of boat owners prepare rice cake and other sacrificial foods through the night, and at the break of dawn, the ritual table is arranged, along with a straw mat on the ground. Sacrificial foods include three bowls of steamed rice, fruit, seafood, layered rice cake with red bean filling (*sirutteok*), and plain white rice cake (*baekpyeon*). Additional bowls of rice are offered to **Baeseonang** (Boat Guardian Deity) if a boat owner is participating in the ritual or for a villager who has died at sea.

The ritual starts with the lighting of the candles on the table of sacrificial offerings, followed by the villagers, boat owners and the divers association offering three bows, and the shaman offering her shamanic props on the table. Then the shaman proceeds with the ritual.

## YEONGGWANG BEOPSEONGPO DANOJE

영광법성포단오제

Dano Festival of Beopseongpo, Yeonggwang

**Yeonggwang Beopseongpo Danoje**, South Jeolla Province, is the largest festival of its kind.

The festival at Beopseongpo Port dates back to mid-Joseon and has been designated by the government as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 123. In Joseon, the port served as the venue for a state-run warehouse for storing grains collected as tax.

The warehouse, named Beopseongchang, was large enough to hold all the grains collected throughout the southern Jeolla region. The Chilsan fishery off the coast of Beopseong was abundant in croaker (*jogi*). Each spring, croaker fishing boats from around the country gathered to these seas to form the country's largest seasonal fish market at Beopseong Port. These socio-economic factors contributed to the establishment

### YEONGGWANG BEOPSEONGPO DANOJE



Ritual for village gods.



Libation.



Dano festivities.



Beopseongpo, yeonggwang-gun, Jeollanam-do (2010)



Ritual for Yongwang.



Ritual to appease dead spirits on the land and sea of Beopseong Port.

of the time-honored and elaborate Dano tradition.

The tradition is upheld today by the Beopseongpo Dano Preservation Association, which organizes five days of festivities for Dano Day, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar year, including rituals, folk games and other activities. Rituals including *sansinje* (ritual for mountain god), *dangsanje* (ritual for village gods), *yongwangje* (ritual for dragon king) and *musoksuryukje* (shamanic ritual to appease dead spirits on land and sea). Folk programs include *seonyunori* (boating accompanied by music), *gillori* (road parade), national traditional music competition, lotus lantern parade, swing riding competition, wrestling and performances of farmers' music from the western Jeolla region.

*Sansinje* is held on the morning of the first day of the festivities on Mt. Ineui of Beopseongpo, in the Confucian tradition by selected ritual officials. The ritual serves **Sansin** (Mountain God), the community's guardian deity, and prays for peace and good fortune for the residents of Yeonggwang.

*Dangsanje* is held during the day to pray for peace and harmony in the community, as well as a big catch. *Harabeoji dangsanje* (ritual for village grandfather god) follows the Confucian tradition, with a ritual table set up and ritual officials reciting a prayer message, but *halmeoni dangsanje* (ritual for village grandmother goddess) is a simple ritual with farmers' percussion music.

*Yongwangje* is held on a boat out at sea, organized by ritual officials, a hereditary shaman and a farmers' music troupe. The main ritual is officiated by the ritual officials and the shaman. The ritual is followed by *seonyunori*, a local



folk custom participated in by women from the village dressed up in traditional *hanbok* for an outing on boats to enjoy the view, withsinging and dancing to the accompaniment of drum music.

*Musoksuryukje* is a shamanic ritual for keeping away bad fortunes by appeasing the spirits of those who have died in aggrivement.

## YONGWANGJE 용왕제

### Ritual for Dragon King

*Yongwangje* is a ritual for worshipping Dragon King at a venue on or by the water, including the river, sea or a well, to pray for a good harvest and a good catch, peace in the family and good health for children, and the prevention of bad fortune.

*Yongwangje* can be categorized into rituals that are held privately in the home and those organized by the community as village rituals, but both serve the same purpose.

The dragon king ritual practiced in the home is also called *eobusim* (ritual of mercy for water creatures) or *gogibapjugi* (fish-feeding); *yongwangmeogigi* (feeding the Dragon King), also *yowangmegi* or *yongwangbapjugi*; and other variations including *yowangje*, *yuwangje*, and *yuhwangje*. The ritual is generally held on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month or on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon), which falls on the fifteenth, but the date can vary each household or region, ranging from the beginning of the year or the second lunar month to Samjinnal (third day of the third lunar month), Chopail (Buddha's Birthday), Chirwolchilseok (seventh day of the seventh lunar month), the tenth lunar month, and the last day of the lunar calendar. It is an annual ritual, but can also take place on special occasions like trouble in the family.

*Yongwang* is believed to oversee water, so any location by a body of water, including the sea, river,

well, or spring, can serve as a ritual venue. Each village usually has several designated places of worship, but a specific spring or rock might be picked out by a fortuneteller. Sacrificial foods include steamed rice, sea mustard, pollock, fruits in three colors, candles and sacred texts. First, straw is spread out at the ritual venue and a table of sacrificial foods is set up. Then the woman of the household offers her bow and burns the sacred texts as she prays for peace and safety, starting with the text for *Yongwang*, then the ones for the man of the household, then the sons and the daughters. Sometimes the text burning (*soji*) procedure is replaced by that of throwing into the water steamed rice wrapped in mulberry paper or dried sea laver as an offering to *Yongwang*. Invocation of the names of the family members or a specific person accompanies this process. This is followed by floating a gourd bowl carrying bits of the sacrificial food and a lit candle on the water, or a small boat woven with the straw that had been spread out to set up the table, carrying a tiny oil lamp in a bowl and some sea mustard (*miyeok*). It is believed that the gourd bowl or the straw boat will carry bad fortunes far and away.

*Yongwangje* as village ritual is observed in seaside villages on islands along the coastal regions. Names for the ritual vary by region, including *gaetje* (fishing ritual), *yongsinje* (dragon god ritual), *haesinje* (sea god ritual), and *pungeoje* (big catch ritual). *Yongwangje* can be staged as part of the village ritual (*dongje*), or independently. Some are organized only by women, while some by the entire community. In most villages, the ritual takes the form of a communal festival participated in by both men and women, organized by the village's women who bring the sacrificial foods they have prepared at home and offer their personal prayers. In some regions, a straw effigy is placed inside a miniature straw boat (*ttibae*) and floated away, as a gesture of chasing away the village's bad fortunes.

YONGWANGJE Wondong-myeon, Yangsan-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2005)



Confucian rite held as part of Gaya Yongsinje.



Confucian rite.



Ritual table.



Offering of sacrifice.



Preparing sacrificial foods for Yongwang.  
Dongbu-myeon, Geoje-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2000)



Offering hand-rubbing prayer to Yongwang.  
Geundeok-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2006, Kim Do-hyeon)





# **Divinities and Sacred Entities**



**Divinities and Sacred Entities**

**BAESEONANG** 배서낭

Boat Guardian Deity

**Baeseonang** is a boat guardian deity that oversees the safety of fishermen and is responsible for big catches on the boat.

Other names for this deity include Seonwang (Jeju Island), Baeseonyeong (South Jeolla Province) and Baeseongju (Gwangwon Province), all rooted in words that are related to “god,” “king,” or “shrine.”

**Baeseonang** is worshipped both as a female (Yeoseonang) or male deity (Namseonang), the latter of which is more often the case. Its gender is determined by the dream that the boat owner or his family has in the process of purchasing the boat, or sometimes by a shaman or fortuneteller. The female deity is enshrined in the form of a box that contains women’s items like a hairpin, skirt and blouse, flower-embroidered shoes, sewing kit, make-up, mirror and comb; the male deity in the form of a box containing men’s shoes and clothing, or sometimes is not worshipped in the form

of a sacred entity. The sacred entities are placed in a clean spot on the boat, out of the way from activity, usually in a corner of the captain’s cabin or the engine room, and the bigger the boat, the more significance is placed on **Baeseonang**, since bigger boats sail further and are at sea longer. It is believed that **Baeseonang** sometimes alerts the sailors of imminent dangers, or good signs, including accidents, damages to the boat, a poor or big catch, or troubles at home back on shore, and if villagers hear the cry of **Baeseonang**, the launch of the boat is delayed. Good fortune can be acquired by proper worship, so sailors offer food to this deity prior to eating, and worship rituals called *baegosa* are held on seasonal holidays.

**BARIGONGJU** 바리공주

Song of Abandoned Princess Bari

“**Barigongju**,” or “Song of Abandoned Princess Bari,” is an epic song performed as part of various shamanic rituals including the Malmi (Prayer) Segment of *jinogigut*, the



Boat guardian deity Baeseonang.  
Mokpo-si, Jeollanam-do (2011, Song Gi-tae)



Shaman reciting “Song of Abandoned Princess Bari” during an underworld entry ritual.  
Mt. Inwang Guksadang (1970)

underworld entry ritual from the Seoul area; the Ogupuri (Song of *Ogu*) Segment of the grievance cleansing ritual *ssitgingut* from South Jeolla Province; and the *Balwongut* (Prayer Ritual) Segment of the underworld entry ritual *ogugut* from the eastern coast regions.

**Barigongju**, or Princess Bari, is the name used in the Seoul area for the heroine of the epic, and is called Baridegi in Jeolla and on the eastern coast. Over ninety versions of the song from around the country have been recorded and archived, offering a comprehensive pool of materials for studying the process of their transmission through history. Details vary by region, but the common plot goes as follows: 1) Princess Bari's parents wed; 2) The parents give birth to a string of daughters; 3) Their seventh child again turns out to be a daughter; 4) The seventh daughter, Princess Bari, is abandoned; 5) The parents fall ill; 6) Princess Bari learns that the cure for her parents' illness is a

special spring water; 7) Princess Bari meets her parents; 8) The six other daughters all refuse to go find the spring water; 9) Princess Bari sets out to find the spring; 10) Princess Bari encounters the keeper of the spring; 11) Princess Bari pays a price in exchange for the spring water; 12) Princess Bari saves her parents; 13) Princess Bari's contributions are honored.

The epic reflects traditional Korean views of the afterworld and the spiritual realm, the most notable aspect being the horizontal, rather than vertical, spatial concept of the afterworld and reality. Central to the theme is the traditional virtue of filial piety, as conveyed in the story of the abandoned daughter making sacrifices for her parents. The literary significance of "**Barigongju**" lies in the motive of the sacred mother myth, emphasizing the maternal qualities in women, and also in the tradition of narratives depicting women overcoming ordeals in a male-centered world.



Shaman dressed as Princess Bari.

## BONHYANG 본향

God of Ancestral Roots

**Bonhyang** is a god that signifies one's origins, generally referring, in a shamanic ritual, to the god that oversees the ancestral roots of the family that has commissioned the rite.

**Bonhyang**, in Korean folk religion, is an abstract deity, one that does not appear in shamanic paintings. The myriad gods in Korean shamanism each have their responsibilities, practicing their goodwill directly on humans, but **Bonhyang** does not come in direct contact with them. The term is also used to refer to one's roots or the place where one's ancestors came from, as in the question routinely addressed in a shamanic ritual, "Where is your *bonhyang*?" In rituals of the Seoul area, invocation of **Bonhyang** takes place at the beginning of the mountains god segment (*sangeori*), or in the ancestral gods segment (*josanggeori*), prior



to the invocation of **Gamang** (God of Origins), **Malmyeong** (God of Deceased Ancestors) and **Daesin** (Shaman Ancestor Goddess), the shaman holding up her rattle and the prayer sheet for **Bonhyanggamang** (God of Ancestral Roots), calling to request the descent of the deity. Since the mountain gods segment invites the local gods from the well-known mountains around the country, calling out to **Bonhyang** at the beginning of this segment signifies a quest for one's regional origins. The same can be said of the order of invocation in the ancestral gods segment. **Gamang** is a god of origins, responsible for opening the channels of the ritual to allow the gods and the humans to meet at the ritual venue. That **Bonhyang** is called before **Gamang** underlines the significance of this deity.

## BUGUN 부군 Government Office Deity

**Bugun**, or Government Office Deity, is a village tutelary god worshipped at government shrines or in shamanic rituals around the Seoul area.

In Joseon, this deity was enshrined at *bugundang*, set up near or on the grounds of government offices in the capital or in the provinces. These shrines were also called *bulgeundang* (red shrine), *bugunmyo*, *bugunsa* (shrine for government office deity), or *bugeundang* (phallic shrine). In present times, **Bugun** is enshrined at village shrines in the Seoul area along the Han River and worshipped as a folk deity of this specific region.

Historical figures and other characters are worshipped as **Bugun**, including **Dangun**, founder of ancient kingdom Gojoseon; Yi Seong-gye, founder of Joseon; General Kim Yu-sin of Silla; General Nam Yi of Joseon; General Choe Yeong of Goryeo; General Im Gyeong-eop of Joseon; and Maiden Song. Shamanic paintings hung inside shrines provide vivid representations of **Bugun**, mostly male but also sometimes presented as husband and wife. When



Shamanic painting of Bugun.  
Han River Bugundang, Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul  
(2007, Kim Tae-woo)

portrayed as a male deity, his appearance is that of a high-rank official; when portrayed as a female, the deity wears fancy headpieces like *jokduri* or *hwagwan*, and ceremonial attire like *wonsam* or *hwalot*, all associated with aristocracy.

## BULSAHALMEONI 불사할머니 Grandmother Balsa

**Bulsahalmehoni**, or Grandmother Balsa, is a deity worshipped by possessed shamans (*gangsinnmu*) in the Seoul area.

Despite the shared name, this deity is unrelated

to Balsa (Buddhist Deity of the Heavens), featured in its namesake segment in shamanic rituals of the Seoul area. **Bulsahalmioni** is worshipped in shaman shrines in the form of a shamanic painting in which the deity is depicted as an elderly woman dressed in white hanbok and wearing Buddhist prayer beads around her neck, with a wooden gong (*moktak*) placed on the table in front of the painting. The figure is similar to the goddess **Jeseok**, but can be distinguished by the white conical hat, which **Bulsahalmioni** does not don.

**Bulsahalmioni** is known as a deity that oversees the shamanic profession, and it is believed that a shaman will succeed and thrive with outstanding skills if this goddess possesses her in the initiation process.



Shamanic painting of Bulsahalmioni.

## CHANGBUSSI 창부씨

Clown God

**Changbussi**, or Clown God, is a deity in charge of entertainment and the arts.

Alternate versions of the name include Changbu and Changbudaesin. It is believed that a famous clown died and was enshrined, or deified. Good fortune rituals (*jaesugut*) held in the Seoul and Gyeonggi regions include a segment dedicated to **Changbussi**, a character of artistic and theatrical spirit that requires a loud and entertaining performance by musicians and dancers. The deity is also responsible for protecting the people against calamities and bad fortune through the twelve months of the year. The *Changbu* Segment is generally performed as the eleventh of the twelve segments.



Shamanic painting of Changbussi.  
Jingwan-dong, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul (2003, Hong Tae-han).



## CHEOLLYUNG 철륭

### Backyard God

**Cheollyung** is a household god believed to reside on the sauce jar terrace or other parts of the backyard of a house.

**Cheollyung** is a deity similar in character to **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God), **Sansin** (Mountain God), **Yongsin** (Dragon God), **Jangdoksin** (Sauce Jar Deity) and other gods, worshipped as a guardian of peace in the home and for the children in the family. Worshipped mostly in South and North Jeolla provinces, this deity's name is believed to be an altered transcription of Cheongnyong, meaning Blue Dragon. Other versions of the name include Cheollyungsin, Cheollyongsin and Jisin (Earth God).

The deity is in charge of guarding the entire grounds of a house, mainly the backyard including the sauce jar terrace, where the deity is worshipped on the morning of seasonal holidays like Seol (Lunar New Year), Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) and Chuseok, the participants rubbing hands in prayer and offering a table of sacrificial foods including rice cake, steamed rice, cooked vegetables, seafood and fruits.



Offering prayer to backyard god Cheollyung residing on the sauce jar terrace.  
Noseong-myeon, Nonsan-si, Chungcheongnam-do (1990, Bae Do-sik)

**Cheollyung** is enshrined together with **Seongju** (House Guardian God), **Jowang** (Kitchen Deity) and other household gods, and because the deity is known as the most strong-willed among them all, calamities can result if a household stops enshrining him and also if one spits or urinates in the sacred spot where he is enshrined. If there is a tall tree growing in the backyard, this is usually where **Cheollyung** is enshrined and strict taboos are observed for this tree. Most families that worship **Cheollyung** do not eat dog meat and observe other discretions in their everyday lives. In Jeolla Province, **Cheollyung** is worshipped in homes located at the foot of a mountain or other locations that are considered to possess a strong energy according to geomancy.

Sacred entities for **Cheollyung** are divided into ones that do not adopt a specific form and those that take the form of an earthenware jar (*ogari*). The latter are covered with a conical straw bundle (*jujeori*) and kept in the backyard or buried in the ground.

## CHEOLMA 철마

### Metal Horse

**Cheolma** is a metal horse enshrined and worshipped as a deity in village shrines.

Also called *soemal* or *soemul*, metal horses as objects of worship are observed around the country. They are simplified renditions of a horse's image, between five to ten centimeters long, their legs quite short in proportion to the large torso, some legs missing or cut off at the knee. Metal horses are the most common, but clay or stone horses are also observed. These figurines are associated with a range of divinities, which vary by region and ritual, including the main village god, or an animal god ridden by one of the village gods. In some cases they serve as sacrifices offered to a village god.

**Cheolma** were also worshipped as village



Iron horse figurines that serve as sacred entities of the deity Cheolma.

guardian gods that protected the community against attacks from tigers, and in villages with cauldron makers or earthenware potters, metal horses were offered as sacrifice and enshrined for successful business for the craftsmen.

is not worshipped on a regular basis. Instead, small offerings are made after memorial services or when special foods are prepared in the house, in the form of small morsels torn off and offered as they are, without using vessels to serve them. **Cheuksin** is also addressed as Cheuksingaksi, as noted above, or Cheuksinbuin (Outhouse Deity Mistress), which are attempted as honorifics to appease the hostile goddess and protect from harm.

## CHEUKSIN 축신

### Outhouse Deity

**Cheuksin** is a goddess believed to reside in the outhouse.

The deity is known to be fierce and hostile. Since old-fashioned outhouses were dark and dank, incidents related to outhouses were considered as attacks from evil forces, resulting in a curse (*sal*). This was why in the past, when one fell into the waste at the outhouse, or into a compost box or pile, a simple ritual was called for, with an offering of fresh rice cake.

Cheuksingaksi, or Outhouse Deity Maiden, has long hair, and when someone enters the outhouse, in a startle she chokes the person's neck with her locks, which results in an illness so grave no shaman or healing ritual is able to cure it. This was why one needs to make coughing noises before entering the outhouse. **Cheuksin** resides on the grounds of the house, but

## CHILSEONG 칠성

### Seven Stars

**Chilseong**, or Seven Stars, is a deification of the constellation Bukduchilseong (Big Dipper), overseeing health and longevity, personal wishes, peace and safety, and most of all, longevity of children.

**Chilseong** worship is one of the oldest practices in Korean folk religion, observed by women in the form of private household rituals with an offering of fresh water from the well (*jeonghwasi*), or by shamans in the form of *chilseonggut*, or Seven Stars ritual.

In Taoism, **Chilseong** is believed to oversee the fortunes of individuals, and are called Chilseongyeorae (Seven Stars Buddha) or Chiraseonggun (Seven Star





Shamanic painting of Chilseong.

Gods). At Buddhist temples, **Chilseong** is enshrined as an adapted version combined with the healer Buddha Yaksayeorae (Bhaisajya-guru), promoting faith in the afterlife. **Chilseong** shrines became a part of Buddhist temples in Korea because **Sansin** (Mountain God) worship and **Chilseong** worship were the two most important folk beliefs at the time of the introduction of Buddhism, and the adaptation of **Chilseong** was especially crucial since the deity oversees the lifespan of individuals. Within this historical context, **Chilseong** worship spread around the country, combining folk religion with Buddhism and Taoism.

## CHILSEONGBONPURI 칠성본풀이

### Song of the Origin of the Seven Stars

“**Chilseongbonpuri**,” or “Song of the Origin of the Seven Stars,” is an epic narrative of the birth and the deification of Chilseongsin (Seven Stars), a snake god that oversees the fortunes of a family.

This shamanic epic is often recited in present times as part of formal rituals and rituals for the dead spirit of snakes (*chilseongsaeenam*), observed on Jeju Island.

The plot begins with the birth of a daughter between State Official Jang Seol-ryong and his wife Song Seol-ryong who had been able to conceive by praying to Buddha at a temple. One day in the year the child turned seven, the couple left her home alone and she was impregnated by a monk. The couple put their daughter in a metal box and threw it into the sea, and she drifted on the water until she reached Jeju Island, where she tried to climb on shore but the village god (*dangsin*) appeared wherever she went, keeping her away. She finally reached the shore at Hamdeok Village, where she was discovered by divers and fishermen, who saw that the child and her babies had turned into snakes, and turned away, condemning them as dirty, ugly creatures.

In response to this, **Chilseong** brought them bad omen to make them worship the Seven Stars as ancestral god **Josang**, and upon worshipping **Chilseong**, the divers and fishermen acquired great riches. When the villagers found out, they all began to worship **Chilseong**, abandoning the shrine for the village guardian deity (*bonhyangdang*), which in turn caused Seomulhalmang, the guardian deity of Hamdeok, to persecute **Chilseong**. To seek shelter, **Chilseong** fled to Jeju Fortress, but at Gwandeok Pavilion visitors harassed them and they headed to Sanji Stream, where they met the daughter-in-law of the Song family from **Chilseong** Street and followed her home. The Song family began to worship **Chilseong** as their ancestral god and **Chilseong** made them very rich. **Chilseong** later scattered to different places, the youngest enshrined as the outdoor deity Batchilseong and the mother as the

indoor deity Anchilseong, protecting the grains in the house to make the family rich, and **Chilseong** came to be worshipped around Jeju as a common god.

At the end of “**Chilseongbonpuri**,” a simple ritual called *binyeom* is added to offer a prayer to **Chilseong**, asking for a good harvest, an overflowing grain jar, and riches.

## CHOE YEONG JANGGUN 최영장군 General Choe Yeong

**Choe Yeong Janggum** (1316-1388) was a military commander in late Goryeo (918-1392), revered and later deified, as a defender of the state against the invasions of the Red Turbans (Honggeonjeok) and the Japanese, and maintained peace by sending reinforcements to Yuan China and suppressing domestic turmoil.



Shamanic painting of General Choe Yeong.

General Choe Yeong is one of several martial gods worshipped in Korean shamanism originated from historical figures. While serving as the highest chancellor in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King U, Choe set out on a campaign to conquer the Liaodong region of Manchuria together with Jo Min-su and Yi Seong-gye, who would later found Joseon. Upon arriving in Pyongyang on their way north, he was persuaded by the king to return to the capital Gaegyeong, and Jo and Yi were sent to carry out the campaign. Yi, however, betrayed Jo and turned back to attack the capital. Choe struggled to defend the kingdom with the small number of soldiers remaining in the capital, but was defeated and beheaded.

General Choe's tragic life led him to be deified as the most widely worshipped among shamanic martial gods including General Im Gyeong-eop (1594-1646) and General Nam Yi (1441-1468). According to shamanic worldview, those who meet a tragic, victimized death continue to drift around this world, unable to arrive at the underworld, and shamanic rituals serve as a means to appease these spirits and to guide them to the underworld. Among these tortured spirits, those of kings, generals and other renowned figures are deified and worshipped. General Choe Yeong is worshipped all over Korea, with shrines and related relics spread out around the country, especially in the central regions.

## DAEGAM 대감 State Official God

**Daegam**, or State Official God, is a deity that oversees material fortune.

This deity is worshipped mostly in the Seoul and Gyeonggi regions and the northern provinces, and rarely observed south of the Han River. A separate segment for **Daegam** is held as part of shamanic rituals and the deity is also enshrined in the form of shamanic paintings (*musindo*).



It is generally viewed that **Daegam** is in charge of the singular function of overseeing material fortune, but the deity is manifested as various types and versions. **Daegam** can be largely classified by types of sacrificial food, into Sodaegam (Clean Daegam) and **Daegam**, the former a deity that does not take meat and the latter a deity that accepts meat. This classification



Shamanic painting of Daegam.

is observed in the shamanic practices of Hwanghae Province. A larger and more complicated range of types make their appearance in the **Daegam** segment of shamanic rituals held in the Seoul area: **Daegam** as possessing spirit of shamans; Sangsandaegam, which is associated with General Choe Yeong; Dodangdaegam, or Bugundaegam, with mountains around Seoul; and *Daegamsin* with the house and ancestors of the family hosting the ritual, or with their livelihood or possessions, including household items and cars. In other words, **Daegam** is a deity that exists in myriad forms and manifestations related with the people, objects or activities within a given space, including houses and villages.

**Daegam** is universally portrayed as a greedy character that brings with him material fortunes, and also as a two-sided deity that brings to people both material gain and troubles. In other words, **Daegam** expects humans to pay attention to him and offer devotion, and if this expectation is not met, the deity brings calamities and causes pain for the family.

## DANGUN 단군 Dangun, Founder of Gojoseon

**Dangun** is the founder of Korea's first kingdom Gojoseon (2333-108 B.C.E.) and is also worshipped as a deity in Korean folk religion.

Earliest records on **Dangun** appear in 13<sup>th</sup> century historical texts including *Samgungyusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) and *Jewangungi* (Songs of Emperors and Kings). **Dangun's** status in Korean history was firmly established during Joseon, when his tomb was identified and state-organized rituals were launched to worship him as the national founder. During the Great Han Empire (1897-1910), **Dangun** was newly recognized as the originator of the Korean people, which was developed into the belief that Koreans are a single people, all descendants of **Dangun**.



Sacred entities for Daegam.  
Hajeom-myeon, Ganghwa-gun, Incheon-si (2010, Yun Dong-hwan)



Cheonjingung Hall at the Shrine for Dangun.  
Naeil-dong, Miryang-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2012, Bae Do-sik)



Portrait of Dangun.

This was not a readily acceptable idea within the feudal class system of the time, but as the kingdom declined in the face of foreign invasion, an ideology was required to bring the people together and **Dangun** suited this need.

Alongside the attempts to historicize **Dangun**, the tradition of worshipping a deified version of the king continued as well. The name **Dangun** can be interpreted as “shaman,” which signifies that he was the ruler of Gojoseon and at the same time a ritual officiant of the highest authority. This led to his deification as **Josang** (Ancestral God) and **Sansin** (Mountain God) of Gojoseon. The tradition of **Dangun** worship is preserved today in the form of new religions, with over thirty **Dangun**-related faiths, and in the form of shamanic or folk worship. In folk religion, **Dangun** was worshipped as a village god, as found in records from the Japanese colonial period of **Dangun** worship observed as part of village tutelary rituals (*dongje*) in Yangyang, Gangwon Province, and in Hamyang, Gyeongsang Province. Today, Dangun Harabeoji (Grandfather) and Halmeoni (Grandmother) are enshrined, along with various other gods, at **Bugundang** (Government Office Shrine) in Dongbinggo-dong, Seoul. Shamanism itself is believed to be a national religious tradition that originated from **Dangun**, and the various segments of a shamanic ritual, from the Jeseok segment, royal subject segment (*byeolseonggeori*), general segment (*daegeori*) and house guardian god segment (*seongjogeori*) are all related to **Dangun**. **Dangun** is also mentioned in the narratives of shamanic songs.

## DANGSANNAMU 당산나무

Village Guardian Deity Tree

**Dangsannamu** is a deified tree worshipped as the guardian of a village.

The term can refer to both a tree that is believed





Village guardian deity tree.  
Jocheon-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2002, Gang Jeong-sik)

to be divine and to the tutelary deity that is embodied as the tree. *Dangsannamu* sometimes stands on the grounds of a village shrine like *dangsan* or *seonangdang*, or sometimes serves as a shrine in itself. Furthermore, it is often upheld as the center of communal worship, the central axis of the village—the divine tree (*simmok*) of the community. *Dangsan*, or village deity shrine, is perceived as a sacred space, a medium between the heavenly and earthly worlds, an altar where rituals are held upon receipt of the gods’ messages. And *dangsannamu* is at the center of this space.

*Dangun* mythology features *sindansu*, or divine altar tree, which serves as *dangsannamu*. Hwanung, father of *Dangun*, who would go on to found the ancient kingdom of Gojoseon (2333-108 B.C.E.), descends from the heavens, landing under *sindansu*, which in effect is a cosmic tree, or a world tree, connecting the heavens with earth. It stands tall on a high perch, in the middle of an altar where rituals

are held to greet the god of heaven. It is a vertical axis, a pole that connects the heavenly world with the earthly; it also serves as a column placed in the center of the four directions, front and back and left and right. This is where we can find evidence for referring to *dangsannamu* as the cosmic tree, the cosmic axis. Another widely recognized example of *dangsannamu* is the tree of *Sodo*, a sacred district in the ancient Korean state Mahan, as described in the following passage from the “Account of the Eastern Barbarians” chapter of the volume *History of the Wei Dynasty* of the Chinese history book *Sanguozhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms): “A tall tree was erected, then worshipped as a spirit by hanging a rattle and a drum.”

## DANGSINHWA 당신화

### Village God Myth

*Dangsinhwa* refers to the myth of the village god worshipped in the village's communal rituals.

Also called *maeulsinhwa* or *chollaksinhwa* (village myth), they are tales of divine beings and events transmitted over generations in the community. The narrative takes the form of a dialogue with the village god (*dangsin*), and contributes to the development and reinforcement of the community's rituals. The divine punishments or powers that manifest as a result of human negligence or dedication to the rituals mentioned in the myths provide legitimacy to the rituals and confirm the sanctity of the gods, thereby enhancing the faith of the villagers. Myriad village gods are worshipped in a community, but the deity featured in the *dangsinhwa* narrative is generally a human god, categorized into ancestral deity (*josangsingyeok*); haunted spirit deity (*wonhonsingyeok*); and the divine mother deity (*sinmosingyeok*). Ancestral deities can again be divided into village founders (*iphyangjo*), ancestors who revitalized the declining family (*jungsijo*) and those who have died without descendants to memorialize them (*mujugohon*). Haunted spirit deities refer to the deceased who have met unjust and untimely deaths, worshipped by communities to appease their soul and to serve them as village guardians. Divine mother deities are goddesses who are worshipped as mothers of great figures like **Sansin** (Mountain God) or national progenitors.

While in national foundation epics and other myths the hero exhibits extraordinary powers that land him on the throne, in *dangsinhwa*, the miraculous powers of the village god continues to develop while serving as evidence of its sanctity and the effectiveness of the rituals. Village god myths, therefore, are open-ended narratives, continuously shifting and growing.

## DANJI 단지

### Earthenware Jar

*Danji* is an earthenware jar that is worshipped as a sacred entity enshrining a household god, or as the deity itself.

These jars are small and round, bulging around the center, and their names vary according to the enshrined deity.

*Daegamdanji* is the sacred entity for **Daegamsin** (State Official God), who oversees a family's material fortune. This jar is usually enshrined in the grain shed, but sometimes in a corner of the inner chamber, the open hall, the kitchen, or outdoors in some cases. The jar contains newly harvested rice grains or stalks, or sometimes money or a spirit tablet.

*Samsindanji* is the sacred entity for the goddess of childbearing **Samsin**, filled with rice, then covered with white ritual paper (*baekji*), which is tied with left-hand lay straw rope.

*Seongjudanji* is the sacred entity for the house guardian deity **Seongju**, filled with rice stalks or grains and kept on a shelf in the inner chamber of the house.

*Sinjutdanji* is worshipped as Ancestral God (**Josang**), believed to represent the spirit of the ancestors and is enshrined in the inner chamber of the house of the eldest son of the eldest son, who is the heir apparent in the family.



*Danji* worshipped as a sacred entity for a household god.  
Yeongdeok-eup, Yeongdeok-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2004, Kim Myeong-ja)



*Josangdanji* is also a sacred entity for **Josang**, one jar per family enshrined in the house of the eldest son of the eldest son, to be worshipped not only as Ancestral God but also to pray for peace and safety for the family.

*Dodanggut* is the term for village rituals held regularly to worship **Dodangsin**, and the ritual's procedures promote communal productivity, which signifies that this deity serves not only as a tutelary god but also as a symbol of good harvest. **Dodangsin** is embodied in myriad different forms, including natural objects like trees or rocks; artificial objects like *teojutgari*; sacred tablets; or paintings of the deity, generally portrayed as a married couple, with characteristics of historical figures added in some regions.

## DODANGSIN 도당신

### Provincial Deity

**Dodangsin**, or Provincial Deity, is a village tutelary god worshipped in village rituals in the central regions.

**Dodangsin** worship is observed in the northern and southern parts of Gyeonggi Province. This deity is also referred to as Dodang Grandfather or Dodang Grandmother, and is generally worshipped in village shrines, or in some cases is embodied as a tree or in the form of *teojutgari*, an earthenware jar filled with rice and draped with a conical straw bundle. **Dodangsin** is generally worshipped in villages located at a distance from the banks of the Han River, and in villages along the Han, the guardian deity is called **Bugunsin** (Government Office Deity).

## DOKKAEBI 도깨비

### Goblin

**Dokkaebi** is a spirit possessing extraordinary powers and skills, using them to enchant, tease, taunt, and sometimes offer help to humans.

It is believed that these spirits are formed from old discarded household tools like brooms, pokers, winnow baskets (*ki*), pestles and sieves, and objects stained with human blood, especially menstrual blood.

**Dokkaebi** usually makes its appearance in dark, humid, eerie corners, mostly at nighttime but also during the day when the weather is foggy with rain. These spirits enjoy playing tricks on people, daring men to wrestle all night long or appearing as a beautiful woman to seduce them. They like to sing and dance, and also chase after women. Foolishness is also a trait that **dokkaebi** possesses, as shown in the tale of one who borrows money from a human and repeatedly pays him back.

**Dokkaebi** has supernatural powers, capable of immense endeavors like filling a pond overnight to create land, offering a feast of all kinds of delicacies from the land and sea, bringing good



Shamanic painting of provincial deity Dodangsin.  
Pyeong-dong, Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do (2010, Kim Eun-hui)

harvest, big catch or great fortunes to humans.

The appearance of *dokkaebi* is rendered in a variety of ways, the most common being the roof tiles with *dokkaebi* patterns, their features including horns, bulging eyes, a big mouth, long, sharp teeth, a hairy body and long claws. Their appearances might vary by different time periods, but throughout history *dokkaebi* have always been viewed with fear and awe, as defenders against evil spirits, possessing versatile supernatural powers, and at the same time imperfect and contradictory. Rituals are held to bring out the best of these spirits so that they will use their powers in a manner that benefits humans.

## DOLHAREUBANG 돌하르방

Stone Grandfather

*Dolhareubang*, or stone grandfather, is a stone deity erected outside the gates of fortresses on Jeju Island during the Joseon dynasty.

In Joseon, Jeju Island was divided into three counties—Jejumok, Jeonguihyeon and Daejeonghyeon—and in the capital of each county was



*Dolhareubang.*  
Jeongui village, Pyoseon-myeon, Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do (2013, Park Hoon-il)



*Dolhareubang at the West Gate of Seongeup.*  
Pyoseon-myeon, Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do (2008, Gang Jeong-sik)



a fortress, outside of which *dolhareubang* were erected. It is difficult to determine the date of the first stone deity, but the official Jeju provincial record *Tamnaji* notes that a stone grandfather was erected by Jejumok magistrate Kim Yeong-gyu in the 30<sup>th</sup> year of King Yeongjo's reign in Joseon (1754). *Dolhareubang* is a children's term that later came into wide use. Records refer to the statue by the term *ongjungseok*, which originated from the legendary Chinese commander and tomb guardian Weng Zhong, while villagers used the term *useongmok*, meaning stone general guardian, its function similar to that of wooden pillars (*jeongjumok*) that function as a gate in traditional Jeju houses for keeping out outsiders, and in religious terms, evil spirits from the outside world. In the same vein, these stone deities served as guardians of the fortress.

It is notable that *dolhareubang* were erected in stone by the magistrate of Jeju outside the fortress of the county capital, while the village guardian post *jangseung* of the mainland, similar in function, were carved from tree trunks by villagers and erected at the entrance of the village. This could be interpreted as a result of the government's embrace of the shamanic faith of the people of Jeju.

## DOLTAP 돌탑

### Stone Stack

*Doltap*, or stone stacks, refer to elaborate conical cairns erected at village entrances as objects of worship believed to keep away bad fortunes and invite in the good.

Stone stacks are generally observed in mountainous inland regions of South and North Chungcheong, North Jeolla, Gangwon and South Gyeongsang provinces, but are found on Jeju Island as well. They serve not only as guardians against diseases, evil forces, fire, and tiger attacks, but also as structures to supplement specific geographical features that are considered inauspicious according to geomantic beliefs. In other words, they



*Doltap* in the village of Sumun.  
Maro-myeon, Boeun-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do (1997)



*Doltap* in Hwanam village.

are closely related to the faith of *bibo*, or geomantic supplementation, which is not common among worship monuments. They are built through communal effort to worship the village gods, and must be distinguished from simple stone piles at the entrances to temples, mountain paths or near village guardian deity shrines (*seonangdang*), formed randomly by travelers or for personal prayer.

The worship of stone stacks is based on the most basic religious principle relying on the permanence and unchangeability of rocks. Stone stacks can take the shape of a cone, cylinder, or half-sphere, and may contain inside various items that reflect the villagers' prayers: pitchfork for raking in fortune; five kinds of grains to pray for a good harvest; talismans to keep out bad fortune; wooden charcoal or a jar of salt to prevent damage from flooding; sorcery items to supplement geomantic weaknesses including pig, cauldron and straw; and a sheet containing the date of the erection and a list of the names of those who participated in the construction. The contents are known only by the villagers.

If there is a separate shrine in the village for mountain god rituals (*sanjedang*), a single stone stack or a pair is erected at the village entrance as a low shrine deity (*hadangsin*), but if the village does not have a mountain ritual shrine, the stone stack serves as the high shrine. The stacks are also referred to as *halmeonitap* (grandmother stack) or *harabeojitap* (grandfather stack). Communal rituals held for the stone stack are called *tapje* or *doltapje* (stone stack ritual), *jotapje* (stack building ritual), or *georije* (street ritual), and take place around Seol (Lunar New Year) or on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon), or in the tenth lunar month. For the ritual, a taboo rope (*geumjul*) is wound around the stack and a piece of paper is placed on the top stone, which personifies the stack as a grandmother spirit or grandfather spirit, who will guard the village for the year.

## EOP 업 God of Property

**Eop** is a deity that oversees the material possessions of a household.

This household god resides in furtive corners of the house like the pantry or shed and brings material fortune. Alternate versions of its name include Eopsin, Eopwang, Eopwisin, and also *jikimi* (guardian) or *jipjikimi* (house guardian) in secular terms. Sacred

EOP Gyodong-myeon, Ganghwa-gun, Incheon (1998, In Byeong-seon)



Conical bundle of pine needles serving as sacred entity for Eop.



Danji as sacred entity for Eop.



entities that embody **Eop** include conical bundles of straw or pine needles (*jujeori*), while it is also identified as animals like serpents, weasels, toads, pigs, mice, even humans, a phenomenon unique among household gods. In Andong, North Gyeongsang Province, where the dragon jar (*yongdanji*) is the predominant form of household god worship, the dragon is considered as a presence identical to the serpent and is worshipped as **Eop**. The serpent **Eop** is believed to live on the roof of a house, and when it is observed in other parts of the house, it is considered a sign that the household is in decline. To pray for the serpent to return to the roof, human hair is burned to give off smells or rice porridge is cooked to offer to the serpent. These efforts are usually fruitless, however, because **Eop** behaves according to its own will and will leave in the event of misfortune in the house. Ineop, or Human God of Property, is another form of this deity, which attaches itself to humans and brings good fortune. Its appearance is identical to the person it is attached to, which means the person and his **Eop** are indistinguishable despite the fact that the two are separate beings.

There are many tales and accounts related to **Eop**, especially about serpents leaving the house, which results in the fall of the family. Similar stories apply to Ineop. Rituals for **Eop** are generally held in the tenth lunar month, and also on Dongji (Winter Solstice), when a large bowl of red bean porridge (*patjuk*) is offered to the deity. If the bowl has not been emptied after a time, it was believed to be a bad omen.

family while caught between the world of the living and that of the dead.

In Korean shamanism, it was believed that those who died from drowning, or those who died away from home as a victim of tragic death by suicide, murder or accident on the road, became wayfarer ghosts, or **gaekgwi**—also called *gaeksagwi*, meaning “ghost by death away from home.” People feared that these haunted spirits, unable to ascend to the heavens, drifted amongst humans, causing calamities to random targets. This was why families preferred to bring home in-patients from hospitals when, after seeking treatment, it was determined that death was inevitable.

Ordinary people sought the service of shamans to hold exorcism rituals for resolving grievance (*haewonje*), or staged spirit-appeasing rites at Buddhist temples (*hoehonje*), to help the spirit of a dead family member ascend to heaven without holding a bitter grievance. **Gaekgwi** was also to blame for terrible diseases. Shamans were hired to provide healing through exorcism rituals called *gaekgwimulligi* or *pudakgeori*.

A simple home ritual for chasing away **gaekgwi** involved leaving out a gourd bowl containing a meal of steamed millet and cooked vegetables, and shouting to the ghost to eat up and leave. This was followed by the brandishing of a knife to threaten the ghost, then the knife was slung to the ground: If it landed with its tip pointed outward, the ghost had left the house. In a shaman’s home, a pair of shoes were sometimes hung on the shrine, another means of appeasing the grieved wandering spirit of **gaekgwi**.

## GAEKGWI 객귀

### Wayfarer Ghost

**Gaekgwi**, or wayfarer ghost, is the haunted spirit, or *wonhon*, of one who has died an untimely death away from home before reaching one’s *cheonsu* (span of life allotted by the heavens), tormenting the surviving

## GAMANG 가망

### God of Origins

**Gamang** is the god that oversees the origins of all the deities in Korean folk religion, in charge of opening the gates of the heavens for the spirits and humans to meet.

Since **Gamang** signifies the shamanic origins, the segment for cleansing impurities inviting the gods (*bujeong cheongbae*) in the rituals of the Seoul area start out with the incantation of “Yeongjeonggamang Bujeonggamang,” to invite these deities. In shamanic rituals, **Gamang** must be addressed prior to **Bonhyang**, the deity that oversees the ancestral roots of the ritual host, and must be called out prior to **Josang** (Ancestor God), before calling **Malmyeong** (God of Deceased Ancestors) and **Daesin**, the deity of the officiating shaman’s ancestor. Assistance from **Gamang** is crucial to the journey to the underworld.

In the rituals of the Seoul area, the *bujeong cheongbae* segment is followed by the **Gamang** segment, after which the ritual’s host (*jaegajip*) can carry out libation and offer bows, for **Gamang** has arrived and opened the gates to the origins and the ritual can now begin.

**Gamang** is also related to **Josangsin** (Ancestor God). In the **Josang** segment, many of the family’s deceased ancestors are invited to the ritual, and they can enter the ritual grounds only after the words of **Gamang** are delivered through the shaman’s channeling (*gongsu*). The invitation of **Gamang**, as shown in the rituals of the Seoul area, is a procedure observed in rituals across the country, and can be viewed as a universal phenomenon in Korean shamanism.

## GASIN 가신 Household Deities

**Gasin** are household deities that are worshipped within a home.

In Korean folk religion, household deities reside in various parts of the home and are believed to be responsible for peace and wellbeing in the family, and the health and longevity of its members. Myriad household gods are worshipped, including **Seongju** (House Guardian God), **Teoju** (Land Tutelary

God), **Jowang** (Kitchen Deity), **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing), **Daegamsin** (State Official God), **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), and **Eop** (God of Property). **Yongwang** (Dragon King), **Umasin** (Cattle God), **Munsin** (Gate God), **Cheuksin** (Outhouse God), **Cheollyung** (Backyard God) are also common household gods. Some families also worship **Josang** (Ancestor God) or **Byeolsang** (Deceased Royalty God).

## GEOLLIPSIN 걸립신 Collector God

**Geollipsin**, or Collector God, is a deity that helps spirits or good fortune enter the house and be greeted.

*Geollip* refers to the collection of grains or goods for a collective effort that serves a specific cause related to the public good and solidarity.

It seems that this spirit of fundraising and participation has been developed into a conceptual deity. **Geollipsin** is a shamanic god, often enshrined in the image of **Daegam** (State Official God), which oversees material fortune, and is also called **Geollipdaegam** (Collector Official), **Geollipmanura** (Collector Wife), and **Geollipseongsu** (Collector Shaman).

*Geollipdaegam nori* is a ritual for worshipping **Geollipsin** as **Daegam** to pray for money and material gain for the family. **Geollipdaegam** is considered capable of “acquiring all the riches that drift around in all four directions.” In farming communities, **Geollipsin** is worshipped to pray for a good harvest. **Geollipsin**, however, is not worshipped individually as a household god, and is addressed when the family shaman visits to officiate a ritual for household gods (*gosa*), or in the case of illness or other calamities in the home.

The deity is not enshrined in the form of a specific sacred entity but sometimes in the form of a pillar in the house, or as the head of a dried pollock (*bugeo*) hung by a straw rope on the wall outside the





Shamanic painting of Geollipsin.  
Itaewon-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul (Jeong Su-mi)

open hall where the house guardian god **Seongju** is enshrined, or as a bundle of mulberry paper folded and hung on the wall.

## GOLMAEGI 골매기

### Village Guardian Deity

**Golmaegi** is a personified god based on the founder of a village, deified after death and worshipped by his descendents or the local community as an originator god or guardian god.

The term *golmaegi* is believed to have come from the words *goeul* (village) and *magi* (guardian), to signify the deity's role as a protector of the village and its residents against all calamities and impurities

attempting to enter the community. Alternate versions of the term include *Golmaegihalbae* (Village Guardian Grandfather) and *Golmaegihalmæ* (Village Guardian Grandmother), and more female deities are observed than males. **Golmaegi** worship is practiced in Gangwon and South and North Gyeongsang provinces and in Busan and Ulsan areas.

**Golmaegi** is enshrined in a range of venues that vary by village, including old village guardian trees that stand at the village entrance or on the hill behind the village, in stone stacks, stone statues, and the village shrine, in which case the sacred entity takes the form of a spirit tablet, a shamanic painting, a rock or an offering of folded mulberry paper. Generally the deity is enshrined as either a male or female god, but in some villages the deity is worshipped as a married couple or in groups of three or four gods, each with a different family name. **Golmaegi** rituals, like village rites, are staged in the Confucian tradition, either as an individual rite or as part of mountain god rituals (*sansinje*), taking place before or after the main rite.

## GONGMINWANG 공민왕

### King Gongmin

**Gongminwang** was a king of Goryeo (918-1392), a reform-minded ruler who led a tragic life, now worshipped as a deity in Seoul, Gyeongsang Province and many other parts of the country.

**Gongminwang** reigned from 1351 to 1364, taking the throne as Goryeo's 31st king at the age of 21 after spending a decade in China. During the shift in China from Yuan dynasty to Ming, King Gongmin took advantage of the changing times and attempted many reforms towards Goryeo's revival. Following the death of his wife Queen Noguk in 1365, however, the king fell into great despair and delegated state affairs to National Preceptor Sin Don, and was murdered in the end in the hands of his subjects.

In Korean shamanism, **Gongminwang** is worshipped as a king deity, but the process of his deification is not clearly known, only speculated that it was due to the king's attempts at fighting off Yuan China and also his death in the hands of his own subjects. As a deity, **Gongminwang** is closely related to village rituals, including those held in Dongmak of Seoul, Sanseong Village in Bonghwa, and Sudong in Andong, both in North Gyeongsang Province. In the royal ancestral shrine Jongmyo in Seoul is a sanctum dedicated to King Gongmin.

The worship of historical figures is a common phenomenon in Korean folk religion. It is notable that in Andong, not only **Gongminwang** but most of his royal family, including the queen consorts, princes and princesses, are worshipped as deities.



Portrait of King Gongmin.  
Changjeon-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul, Mapo Cultural Center

## GONGMUL 곡물

### Grains

*Gongmul* refers to all the grains that serve as food for humans, and also as important sacred entities in the worship of household gods, and includes rice, barley, wheat, millet, soybeans, red beans, sorghum and corn.

In Korean folk religion, there are three uses for grains: First as a means of sorcery in rituals related to life events including birth, and to farming and seasonal customs; second as sacrifice offered to deities in rituals for household gods or those related to life



Red beans enshrined in an earthenware jar.  
Namil-myeon, Gumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2007, Gang Seong-bok)



Unhulled rice enshrined in an earthenware jar.  
Mungyeong-eup, Mungyeong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do  
(2002, Korearoot)



events of farming; third, as sacred entities (*sinche*) that represent deities. These uses are all associated with the worship of *gongnyeong*, or corn spirit, which was the belief in ancient agricultural societies that grains were spiritual entities possessing fundamental forces, from germination and growth to fruition. Therefore, worshipping grains and sharing the grains as food were considered means of achieving prosperity and happiness in a family or a community.

This faith was developed because for farmers, preserving good grain seeds over winter was crucial to their livelihood and required special care and attention, not only in practical terms but as a process of religious devotion to help restore and revive the force and energy that the corn spirit possessed. So from fall to spring, various farming-related seasonal customs were observed, including harvest rites and prayer rituals, and most household gods rituals were also centered on grain seeds, especially rice.

The most important part of annual rituals for the house guardian deity **Seongju** and other household gods is the changing of grains that were enshrined the previous year for newly harvested ones. Grains that are enshrined through household rituals like *gosa* and *antaek* serve as objects of worship in memorial services that follow, their dates varying by region and family. In each home, grains were kept inside earthenware jars (*danji*), baskets or gourd bowls to be worshipped as sacred entities. When the grains in these sacred containers are replaced, they are used to cook rice or rice cake, to be shared only amongst family members, since it was believed that if these grains leave the house, they would take with them the forces of the corn spirit, dissipating and weakening its powers, which could result in a bad harvest and bad fortune.

## GUNUNG 군웅 Martial Hero Deity

**Gunung** is one of several martial commander gods in Korean shamanism.

**Gunung** is portrayed as a general with many soldiers under his command, but is different from military commander gods like **General Choe Yeong** or



Shamanic painting of Gunung.

**General Im Gyeong-eop**, historical figures who were posthumously deified but maintained their identities from their former lives. **Gunung** is depicted as an abstract and non-specific commander figure.

**Gunung** appears in many variations in the shamanic rituals of Seoul, Gyeonggi and Hwanghae provinces, the eastern coast, and Jeju Island. In the rituals of the eastern coast, the mighty powers of **Gunung** are confirmed by the shaman, who becomes capable of holding up a large brass bowl with her teeth. **Gunung** is also associated with the ancestral god *Josang*. On Jeju Island, **Gunung** has been worshipped by families over many generations as a guardian god for a family or clan, a deity that carries a bow and arrow to fight bad fortunes and evil forces that harm a group of people or their territory. In Gangwon Province, **Gunung** is worshipped as a household god that oversees cattle, enshrined outside the cowshed, where prayers are offered when a cow is sick or is about to give birth.

when someone dies a tragic death, he or she is deified for the purpose of appeasing his or her soul. Unsound deaths can be categorized into deaths caused by disease, and unjust deaths that occur due to political conflict or turmoil. The higher the social status of the dead person, the bigger his grievance, and thus the stronger the deification tendency. In shamanic rituals in the Seoul area, which was where the king's palaces were located, the concept of shamanic gods placed more emphasis on these haunted spirits (*wonhon*), and it is assumed that the worship of **Hogubyeolseong** was the result of this tendency.

## HOGUBYEOLSEONG 호구별성

Gods of Death by Smallpox

**Hogubyeolseong** is the combined name of two deities, used to refer to two separate gods or one, which originated from those who have died from smallpox or other diseases.

The deity is sometimes referred to as *sonnim* (guest) or *manura* (wife). *Hogu*, as seen in its variation *Hoguae-gissi* (Hogu Maiden), is associated with the female gender, while *Byeolseong* or *Byeolsang* is generally a male god, in most cases spirits of men who bear the grievance of getting caught in the turmoil of history and failing to pursue one's cause.

In Seoul or Hwanghae Province, where possessed shamans (*gangsinnmu*) make up the majority, the worship of **Hogubyeolseong** is based on the souls of those who have died unsound deaths. In shamanism,



Shamanic painting of Hogubyeolseong.



## IM GEYONGEOP JANGGUN

임경업장군

General Im Gyeong-eop

**Im Gyeong-eop Janggun** was a great commander in late Joseon and is worshipped in shamanism as a martial deity.

Im Gyeong-eop (1594-1646) was a revered general who won wide public support for his outspoken opposition against China's Qing dynasty, newly founded by Manchus, and continued loyalty for the declining Ming, but in the end died a tragic death in prison. He collaborated with Ming in resisting against the Qing forces to overcome the disgrace of the



Shamanic painting of General Im Gyeong-eop.

Manchu invasion of Joseon in 1636, but failed to win support within Joseon. This failure, however, led to the restoration of his reputation as a national hero, an icon of loyalty, fidelity and courage.

The story of Im's life, as passed down in oral history, is a heroic one with displays of supernatural powers, chronicling early training in Taoist magic with the help of **Sansin** (Mountain God); a courageous hostage rescue mission to China; catching croakers with brambles; fetching drinking water from the sea. Following his tragic death, he is enthroned as a fishing god of Yeongpyeong Island off the western coast.

As a shamanic deity, General Im Gyeong-eop is worshipped in the coastal regions of Hwanghae and Gyeonggi provinces as a village guardian god who also oversees fishing. On Yeongpyeong Island there is a shrine dedicated to the deity and the general's spirit is worshipped in the big catch rituals (*pungeoje*) of the western coast. In the past, croaker fishermen held a big catch ritual at the shrine for General Im Gyeong-eop on Yeonpyeong Island upon the arrival of the fishing season. The general public worships this deity as a protector against evil spirits and a healer of diseases, bringing health, longevity, security and peace.

## JANGSEUNG 장승

Village Guardian Post

**Jangseung** is a wooden or stone figure carved in human form and erected in the entrance of a village, temple or mountain pass to serve as guardian deity.

Alternate terms include *jangsaeng*, *beoksu* and *susalmok*, but **jangseung** is the most common. The practice of erecting these guardian posts goes back to ancient times and many villages held rituals to worship them.

While its most important function was to protect the village or temple against diseases, bad fortune, and tiger attacks and to preserve peace and prosperity in the



Various guardian posts depicting Woman General Serving Underground.  
Sojeong-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2010, Bae Do-sik)



Great General Serving Under the Heavens and Woman General  
Serving Underground.  
Gunseo-myeon, Okcheon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do (2010, Bae Do-sik)



Village guardian posts.  
Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2006, Cha Jeong-hwan)



village and the health and safety of travelling villagers, *jangseung* also served as guideposts that mark distances to major destinations, and in places that were viewed according to geomancy as lacking in energy, as devices of geomantic supplementation (*bibo*). *Jangseung* were also erected in the four corners of a village as gods of the four directions, and outside fortress gates as gatekeepers.

A village guardian post comprises three parts: face, body, and the root, which is the part that supports the post underground. The face includes a pair of huge eyes bulging like bells, a prominent nose and a mouth that reveals a full row of teeth, the features generally painted, or in some regions carved, with ears attached on the sides. The face connects without a neck directly with a body that has no arms or legs. These posts are usually tall and linear, although some are curved or stand comically at a slant, depending on the shape of the tree that it is carved from. The most important part of *jangseung* is its face, unrefined and humorous, its expression frightening and at the same time friendly.

The posts usually come in pairs, comprising a male and a female. Often inscribed vertically on the body are the Chinese characters “天下大將軍,” meaning, “Great General Serving Under the Heavens,” in the case of the male post, and “地下女將軍,” meaning, “Woman General Serving Underground.” The carving of *jangseung* follows strict formalities: Once a tree has been chosen, villagers pour wine on it and offer bows before felling it with an axe. The village’s sacred poles (*sotdae*) are also carved during this process, which usually takes place on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, followed by a ritual for the village guardian posts (*jangseungje*) held the next evening of Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon).

is a term that refers to gods of the lowest order in Korean folk religion.

These spirits are viewed as forces that can harm and harass rather than as objects of worship that answer people’s prayers. The term is used collectively for all human spirits that have died tragic deaths bearing grievances, including those who died without children (*mujugohon*); bachelor ghosts; those who have died from disabilities; or those who died during childbirth. These ghosts and lesser gods are generally viewed as negative forces, which is the reason for the widespread practice of hanging taboo ropes (*geumjul*) or sprinkling red clay (*hwangto*) to keep them out prior to the start of village rituals.

While the village’s main guardian deity and other higher gods are treated to sacrificial foods in the course of the ritual, the miscellaneous ghosts and lesser gods are fed small morsels of the offerings at ritual’s end. When a shaman officiates the village ritual, the ghosts are entertained at the end of the ritual with performances and games, emphasizing a sense of playfulness associated with them. In other words, prior to the main ritual, the ghosts are viewed as negative forces, so in the course of the ritual the higher gods, who are capable of controlling the lesser deities, are treated and entertained, and towards the end of the ritual, the remaining ghosts are appeased in order to prevent them from incurring harm. The practice of scattering morsels of sacrificial food at the end of a ritual for the ghosts and lesser gods is called *gosure* or *heonsik* (food offering).

## JAPGWIJAPSIN 잡귀잡신

### Miscellaneous Ghosts and Lesser Gods

*Japgwijapsin*, or miscellaneous ghosts and lesser gods,

## JESEOK 제석

### God of Childbirth

*Jeseok* is a household deity believed to be responsible for the conception and birth of offspring and for overseeing their fortune and longevity. It is also referred to as *Jeseokjumeoni* or *Jeseogogari*, depending on the

form of sacred entity—a pouch or an earthenware jar, respectively. The name Chilseokhalmioni, or Seven Stars Grandmother, is also used, indicating that it can be viewed as a female deity.

The name **Jeseok** originated from Buddhism, based on the Chinese transcription of Indra (Sakra), but in Korean folklore, its role is identical to **Samsin**, the Goddess of Childbearing, and thus in some cases regarded as the same deity. In the central regions of the Korean peninsula, **Jeseok** is viewed as a god who oversees the fortune and longevity of descendants, while in South Jeolla Province, it is regarded as an ancestral god, and in some parts also as a harvest god.

*Jeseokjumeoni* and *Jeseogogari* are sacred entities related to **Jeseok**. The pouch or earthenware jar usually contains rice, replaced each fall with newly

harvested grains. When the year-old grains are taken out, a reading sometimes takes place to determine the fortunes for the family or the coming harvest. Sometimes the cotton pouches are wrapped with mulberry paper. In some regions, simple rites are held on Chirwolchilseok (Seventh Day of the Seventh Lunar Month) offering sea mustard (*miyeok*) soup and steamed rice cooked with the grains from the sacred pouch or jar. Worship rites for **Jeseok** are called *jeseokje* and are observed right before or after the sowing of millet or buckwheat, or on Baekjung (All Souls Day), which falls on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month. All the dates are closely related to the sowing and cultivation of seeds, the purpose of the rites lying in praying for a good harvest for the entire village.



Shamanic painting of Jeseok.



*Jeseokjumeoni*, pouch serving as sacred entity for Jeseok. Cheongpung-myeon, Hwasun-gun, Jeollanam-do (1998, Seo Hae-suk)



## JESEOKBONPURI 제석본풀이

### Song of the Origin of Jeseok

“**Jeseokbonpuri**,” or the “Song of the Origin of Jeseok, Goddess of Childbirth,” is a shamanic song performed as part of rituals.

This epic is also referred to as “**Samtaejapuri** (Song of the Triplets),” “**Danggeumaegi** (Song of Maiden Danggeum)” and “**Chogongbonpuri** (Song of the Origin of Shaman Ancestor Goddess).” “**Jeseokbonpuri**” is one of Korea’s three major shamanic epics along with “**Seongjupuri** (Song of House Guardian God),” performed as part of the ritual for household guardian god **Seongju**, and “**Barigongju** (Song of Abandoned Princess Bari),” performed as part of the underworld entry ritual *ogugut*. It is also the most widespread among the three.

There are myriad versions of “**Jeseokbonpuri**” so the plot varies but can be summarized as follows:

The heroine is home alone while her parents and brothers are away, when a monk from the mountain comes and requests a donation. In the story,

the donation is accompanied by an act suggestive of sexual intercourse related to conception, or the monk spends the night at the house and the two engage in intimacy. The heroine’s ensuing pregnancy results in her banishment or incarceration by her family. When she gives birth to triplets, she sets out to find the monk and settles down with him or is deified as **Samsin**, the goddess of childbearing, and the triplets as **Jeseok**, the god of childbirth.

“**Jeseokbonpuri**” as a nationally recognized epic can be seen as Buddhist worship modified as a form of folk belief—in other words, a phenomenon of cultural assimilation. The name **Jeseok** originated from Buddhism, based on the Chinese transcription of Indra (Sakra), and the shamanic garb for performing this song in the South Jeolla Province is clearly related to the costume of a Buddhist monk, including a white conical hat folded from paper, and a simplified version of the monk’s jacket, with a red band across the shoulders. This signifies that **Jeseok**, a deity borrowed from Buddhism, has been developed over time into an influential presence in Korean folk religion, its influence prevalent across the culture, from foundation myths to the worship of household gods.



Recitation of “**Jeseokbonpuri**”  
Jindo-gun, Jeollanam-do (2007, Na Gyeong-su)



Shamanic painting of Triad Jeseok.

## JOSANG 조상

### Ancestor God

**Josang** is a god widely worshipped in Korean folk religion, which in narrow terms refers to one's immediate ancestors or offspring, but in broader terms refers to any deceased relative or unrelated soul that can affect the family.

As a household god, **Josang** refers to one's immediate ancestors or offspring, but they are viewed as transcendental beings rather than blood relations. On the other hand, **Josang** as a shamanic god includes all immediate and extended family, both male and female, and all other deceased souls that can influence the family, including those who died before marriage,

who died a tragic or untimely death.

Rituals for **Josang** as a household god are quite different from shamanic rituals or Confucian memorial services. Rice or mulberry paper is kept inside earthenware jars or baskets as sacred entity and replaced each year, sometimes accompanied by a shamanic ritual. On seasonal holidays, a ritual table is set up in front of the sacred entity and a worship ritual is held for **Josang**. In some regions, **Josang** is worshipped as a higher god than **Seongju** (House Guardian God).

In shamanism, rituals include a **Josang** segment, in which all the ancestral gods meet their descendants, the shaman serving as a medium of communication. When they meet, the ancestral gods reveal the grievances they carry from their past lives and express gratitude for the devotion of the descendants, promising care and support.

**Josang** is a deity closely related to the lives of the living, and thus has the biggest influence on them, playing a central role in shamanic belief. In shamanism, it is a widespread belief that lack of devotion in worshipping **Josang** results in trouble for the descendants, and that a well-treated ghost will respond accordingly while an ill-treated ghost will respond accordingly as well.

In other words, despite a strong Confucian tradition of ancestral worship, the shamanic ancestral god **Josang** was also worshipped in a different manner and form.

## JOWANG 조왕

### Kitchen God

**Jowang** is a fire god that governs the kitchen and oversees the fortunes of the family and the health and welfare of their descendants.

The kitchen is a place where humans can control and use fire for their purposes, where fire is used to cook food and to heat the house. The kitchen is also a space for the women of the house, and thus **Jowang**





A small bowl enshrined on the stove.  
Seolcheon-myeon, Muju-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2002, Korearoot)



A small bowl of water serving as sacred entity for the kitchen god Jowang.  
Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (1998, Korearoot)

is a deity worshipped by the wife in the family or her mother-in-law. The kitchen deity worshipped by the general public is a goddess, referred to as Jowanggaksi (Kitchen Maiden Goddess) or Jowanghalmae (Kitchen Grandmother Goddess), but shamans and Buddhists worship the kitchen god as a couple or a male deity.

Women enshrine **Jowang** upon marriage or upon forming a new household independent of her in-laws, generally inheriting the sacred entity from her mother-in-law. Sacred entities vary by region and family, and include a small bowl that contains water; talisman sheet folded into the shape of a floor pillow; and a combination of dried pollock and earthenware jar. Devotions are not offered as a daily routine, but **Jowang's** place in the house is always approached with care. On days when a rite is held in the home, a ritual for the kitchen deity is also observed, with rice cake and other sacrificial foods. Unlike other household gods that are enshrined on special days or during shamanic rituals, **Jowang** is enshrined on a daily basis,

the woman of the house waking early to head to the well to wash her face with fresh untouched water and fetch a bowl to offer to **Jowang** as *jeonghwasu*. A bowl of fresh water from the well is also offered to enshrine **Jowang** on the first and fifteenth days of each lunar month, on traditional holidays, on memorial services of parents, family birthdays, when a new house is built, and when a family member is out of the house or travelling.

## KIM BU DAEWANG 김부대왕 Great King Kim Bu

**Kim Bu Daewang** was the 56<sup>th</sup> king of Silla who reigned from 927 to 935, deified and worshipped by later generations as a village god.

In Korean folk religion, the deification of historical figures took place when the individual possessed extraordinary talent or fell victim to tragic circumstances. Kim Bu falls under the second category, for he was the last king of Silla, and lost his kingdom. His reputation as an incompetent defeated ruler was shadowed by the emphasis of his decision to surrender a 1,000-year dynasty for the sake of his people, which turned him into a hero of the people, then gradually into a deity possessing miraculous powers, and finally to be reborn as a state guardian dragon or a village guardian god. Shrines were built around the country to worship the king as an object of sympathy and of reverence, including the village deity shrines at Jaenmeori in Ansan and on the island of Eumseom in Hwaseong, both in Gyeonggi Province; the shrine at Beolmal in Suwon, Gyeonggi Province; and the Great King Pavilion in the village of Kim Bu in Inje, Gangwon Province. The proliferation of shrine dedicated to Great King Kim Bu indicates that the worship of this deity as a god of the people was a deep-rooted phenomenon.

**KIM BU DAEWANG**  
Nam-myeon, Inje-gun, Gangwon-do (2009, Lee Hak-ju)



Shrine for Great King Kim Bu.



Portrait of Great King Kim Bu.

## MAEULSIN 마을신

### Village Deities

*Maeulsin* are deities collectively worshipped by a community.

Village deities are believed to reside in the village's sacred locations, protecting the welfare and security of the community, and are distinguished from deities individually worshipped by a shaman or her followers. They include **Sansin** (Mountain God), **Yongwang** (Dragon King), **Dodangsin** (Provincial Deity), **Bugun** (Government Office Deity), the guardian deities **Seonang** and **Seonghwangsin**, and myriad others. Each individual village worships a range of historical figures as communal deities as well, including the founder of Gojoseon **Dangun**, **General Im Gyeong-eop** of Joseon, **General Choe Yeong** of Goryeo, **King Gongmin** of Goryeo and **General Nam Yi** of Joseon.

## MAGOHALMI 마고할미

### Grandmother Mago

**Magohalmi**, or Grandmother Mago, is the Great Earth Mother Goddess, who is believed to have carried out all the geographical formations at the beginning of the universe.

This giant goddess appears squalid but is strong, with an enormous body spanning the size of seas and mountains, capable of performing acts of creation like moving earth and rocks to change the natural landscape.

The oral tradition of **Magohalmi** is observed around the country in various versions, each called by a different title: **Seolmundaehalmang** (Grandmother Seolmundae) on Jeju Island; **Gaeyangalmi** (Grandmother Gaeyang) on the western coast; **Seoguhalmi** (Grandmother Seogu) in Gangwon Province; and **Angadakhalmi** (Grandmother





**Suseong Shrine.**  
Byeonsan-myeon, Buan-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2006, Lee Yeong-geum)

Angadak) of Gyeongsang Province. In Suseong Shrine of Buan, North Jeolla Province, Grandmother Gaeyang is enshrined, along with her eight daughters, as a guardian goddess of fishermen. In Haesindang (Sea God Shrine) of Port Danggae in Seogwipo, Jeju Island, Seolmundaehalmang is enshrined as a village goddess, and shamanic songs sung as part of mountain god rituals (*sansinje*) include lyrics about the goddess, which serve as evidence of the goddess's deification.

## MALMYEONG 말명

### God of Deceased Ancestors

**Malmyeong** is a broad term that refers to the dead in Korean folk religion. When the dead being referred to by the term are related by blood, the term signifies ancestors at large.

In narrow terms **Malmyeong** refers to the soul of a deceased female, but broadly it can be used for all deceased souls. It can also refer to an ancestor who has died with a grievance and appears often in family members' dreams, in which case a garment is tailored for the ancestor and kept inside a small willow basket

at home, at a shaman's shrine, or at a temple, to ensure the safety of the surviving family. This basket is called *malmyeongsangja* (box for **Malmyeong**) and should contain not only the garment but a small amount of money. It is believed that an ancestor who has died young or before getting married can incur harm on the surviving family, and must be worshipped as **Malmyeong**. A **Malmyeong** box is considered dangerous, and is kept out of the rooms, sometimes by the door or above the shoe rack in the home, but is generally kept in a shaman's shrine.

## MIREUK 미륵

### Maitreya

**Mireuk**, or Maitreya, is the future Buddha that resides in the heaven Tusita who, according to Buddhist belief, will reappear 5.6 billion years in the future and lead all living beings. In Korean folk religion, **Mireuk** is worshipped as a deity related to childbearing and prosperity.

Alternate names for this deity include Mireungnim, Mireukbul and Seondol, which means "standing stone," named after the deity's sacred entity which is a rock carved in the shape of a male sex organ, also referred to as *namgeunseok* (male sex organ-shaped rock) or *seonggibawi* (sex organ rock). **Mireuk** worship is preserved in villages around Buddhist temples and in inland villages with a standing stone worshipped as this deity. Maitreya worship was introduced during Buddhism's earliest period on the Korean peninsula, then was applied as the governing ideology of the ancient kingdoms Silla and Baekje, after which it spread widely among the public in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

The people of Baekje (18 B.C.E.-660) possessed a strong faith in the future advent of Maitreya, which would open an ideal world. In the Later Three Kingdoms period (901-936), Gungye, the founder of Later Goguryeo referred to himself as **Mireuk**, winning

public trust and support. In Goryeo (918-1392), **Mireuk** worship grew more secular as a form of sorcery, becoming widespread with Maitreya sculptures erected in all corners of the kingdom. The faith gradually merged with shamanism and came to be associated with son-bearing, taboos, fortune-seeking, healing and protection, a phenomenon that deepened with the oppression of Buddhism during Joseon (1392-1910), which enhanced the secularization of the religion.

**Mireuk** faith reflects the worship of sex organs and is also a form of homeopathic magic, the belief that a rock shaped like a sex organ will bring fertility and prosperity due to its similarity in shape. In village rituals, taboo ropes (*geumjul*) or straw cones are hung on these rocks.

These sex organ-shaped rocks, as entities that embody **Mireuk**, serve as an object of worship for women to pray for a child (*gija*). In the Confucian society of Joseon, sons came to be favored over daughters and **Mireuk** worship came to be centered around the conception of sons. The rocks also served



**Rock Mireuk**  
Daesul-myeon, Yesan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2009, Bak Jong-ik)



**Mireuk Shrine.**  
Ayang-dong, Anseong-si, Gyeonggi-do (Kim Ji-uk)



as an object of prayers for safety in the community and good harvest and big catch. The productivity symbolized by the shape of the rocks was believed to bring prosperity to the village, and the rocks came to be worshipped as village guardian gods.

**Mireuk** worship is observed in all parts of the country. Private son-bearing prayer rituals are held individually throughout the year, but when **Mireuk** rituals are observed as part of village tutelary festivals (*dongje*), they are generally held on the first week of the lunar New Year or on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon).



Mireuk.  
Unsan-myeon, Seosan-si, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Yi In-hwa)

## MOMJUSIN 몸주신

### Possessing Spirit

*Momjusin* is the spirit that has descended upon the possessed, the principal agent of the spiritual powers acquired in a state of possession.

Unlike other gods and spirits that descend during a ritual and channel words through the shaman, the possessing spirit maintains a continuing relationship with the possessed shaman, worshipped for life in the shaman's personal shrine.

*Momjusin* can be categorized into spirits connected with the shaman by blood ties and those that are not. The former are spirits of the kin of the possessed, including grandparents and parents, who have died tragic deaths or by accident or away from home. The latter are historical figures many of whom have died tragic deaths or are known to have had spiritual or bizarre experiences in their lifetime, including Queen Seondeok, General Nam Yi, General Choe Yeong, Empress Myeongseong, and even U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, from contemporary times. Some shamans also worship **Sansin** (Mountain God), *dongja* (boy monk), *seonnyeo* (fairy), and the legendary Chinese general Guanshengdijun (Saintly Emperor Guan), as their personal deities.

Shamans recognize their possessing spirits upon encountering them in dreams. The possessing deities are worshipped in personal shamanic shrines, and the shaman's rituals are dedicated to them as well. Personal shrines are decorated with objects that symbolize the possessing spirit, for instance rattles or candies when the worshipped spirit is that of a child. When the spirit has descended on the shaman, the possessed shaman identifies with the spirit by speaking and acting like the possessing spirit. A shaman possessed by a child's spirit, for example, will act like a child, speaking informally without honorifics to everyone attending the ritual.

## MUSIN 무신

### Shamanic Deities

*Musin* are gods worshipped in Korean shamanism.

*Musin* can be categorized into cosmic deities, local deities, household deities and human deities. The cosmic shaman deities include the goddess of the sky **Bulsa**, **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), **Jeseok** (God of Childbirth) and **Yongsin** (Dragon God), the god of the seas. Local deities watch over specific regions or geographical features and include the village guardian deity **Bugun** (Government Office Deity), **Sansin** (Mountain God) and **Seonang** (Village Guardian Deity). Household deities, or *gasin*, include **Daegam** (State Official God), **Seongju** (House Guardian God), **Geollip** (Collector God) and **Jisin** (Earth God). Human deities can again be divided into **Josang** (Ancestor God); **Mujosin** (Shaman Ancestor Goddess); **Yeongungsin** (Hero God); and *japgwi japsin* (miscellaneous ghosts and lesser gods). Ancestor Gods refer to a deceased ancestor in the family worshipped as a deity and include **Gamang** (God of Origins) and **Malmyeong** (God of Deceased Ancestors). Shaman Ancestor Goddesses include **Barigongju** (Bari the Abandoned Princess), **Daesin** (Shaman Ancestor Goddess) and **Changbu** (Clown God). Hero Gods refer to myriad martial gods and royalty gods including **Choe Yeong Jangggun** (General Choe Yeong). Miscellaneous ghosts and lesser gods include **Yeongsan** (Mountain of Spirits), **Sangmun** (Spirit of Death), **Subi** (Lesser God), **Hogu** (Smallpox God) and many others.

## MUJOSIN 무조신

### Shaman Ancestor Goddess

*Mujosin* is a deity believed to be an ancestor or progenitor of a shaman.

In Korean folk religion, various gods and figures

are worshipped as a shaman's ancestor, including **Beobuhwasang** (Monk Beobu), from popular legends, and **Barigongju** (Princess Bari), **Gyemyeonhalmeoni** (Grandmother Gyemyeon), **Ssangdungi Samhyeongjesin** (Triplets Deity) and **Yujeongseungttal** (Minister Yu's Daughter), from the shamanic tradition.

The legend of Monk Beobu is the story of the monk who weds the human incarnations of **Seongmocheonwang** (Sacred Mother and Celestial King) of Mt. Jiri, and has eight daughters, training them as shamans to practice around the country. These daughters went on to be worshipped as shaman ancestor goddesses.

"**Barigongju** (Song of Abandoned Princess Bari)," is a widely spread epic song that tells the story of a shaman ancestor goddess. When his queen gives birth to their seventh daughter, King Ogu abandons the baby, who comes to be called **Baridegi**, meaning, "abandoned baby." The king dies from a disease but comes back to life thanks to life-saving water brought by Princess Bari. He asks her what he can do for her and Bari answers that she would like to help guide the deceased, thereby being appointed as a deity that oversees the underworld. This is viewed as an official acknowledgment of her power and authority as a shaman, and the basis of the worship of her character as a shaman ancestor goddess.

**Gyemyeonhalmeoni** (Grandmother Gyemyeon), worshipped in the Gyemyeon segment of a shamanic ritual, is a deity that goes around the country blessing children with good fortune and longevity and preventing calamities, and also plants bamboo and paulownia trees to make musical instruments.

**Ssangdungi Samhyeongjesin** (Triplets Deity) were the first shamanic officiants in the folk religion of Jeju Island, according to the oral epic "**Chogongbonpuri** (Song of the Origin of Shaman Ancestor Goddess)." A couple had a daughter late in life and named her **Jajimengwangagissi**. While her parents were away in Seoul, a man named **Juja** from Gold Mountain visits, leaving her pregnant. The daughter is thrown out due to her pregnancy, and after a difficult search, meets her husband and gives birth to triplets. When the mother is kidnapped by a man seeking revenge on the three brothers for his own failure in the state exam, the triplets rescue her, playing music on drums and gongs.



They make their mother the keeper of a sacred shrine, and as makers of the divine knife (*sinkal*), they take the throne as Samsiwang, king of the underworld.

Yujeongseungttal (Minister Yu's Daughter) is believed to be the first possessed shaman (*gangsinnmu*). The daughter of Minister Yu loses her sight at age seven, experiencing great suffering in life. At 77, while passing through a neighboring village, Minister Yu's Daughter saves a dead girl in a villager's home, and in order to hold a shamanic ritual for her, is accepted as the spirit daughter (*sinttal*) of Jajimengwangagissi, the mother of the Triplets Deity.

Other shaman ancestor goddesses include Jakdodaesin (Blade Dance Shaman Ancestor Goddess), Daesinhalmioni (Shaman Ancestor Goddess Grandmother), Mansinhalmionisin (Shaman Ancestor Goddess Grandmother), and Daesinchangbusin (Shaman Ancestor Clown Goddess).

## MUNSIN 문신

### Gate God

**Munsin**, or Gate God, is a deity that invites in good fortune or keeps away evil spirits or impurities that can enter through the gate of a home.

**Munsin** is not embodied by a specific sacred entity. On Jeju Island, however, the wooden pillars (*jeongjumok*) and ribs (*jeongsal*) that comprise the island's distinctive makeshift gates are believed to embody the god that is called Munjeonsin (God Outside the Gate). The practical function of this gate is to keep out cattle, and they are installed not only at houses but in the fields as well. In Jeju, Munjeonsin oversees all domestic affairs and is also referred to as the personified name Namseonbi. Shamans call door gods Sumundaegam (State Official God of the Gates) and in Jinan, North Jeolla Province, the gate god is called Mungandaegam.



Main gate of a house.  
Songak-myeon, Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do (2010, Bae Do-sik)

In Korean folk religion, it is believed that a god resides in every door, but the door god is generally not worshipped in a separate ritual but with a simple acknowledgement of leaving a small piece of rice cake at the gate after a household gods ritual (*gosa*). On Jeju Island, however, where gates are viewed as highly important, every household ritual includes the narrative song “Munjeonbonpuri (Origin of the Gate God)” and a ritual for the gate god (*munjeongosa*) is held upon moving into a new house.

## MUSOKSINHWA 무속신화 Shamanic Mythology

*Musoksinhwa* is a term that refers to shamanic mythology, comprising narratives related to the origins of the universe, the human world, and the deities.

In Korean folk religion, shamanic mythology can be categorized into cosmic genesis myths; myths of the birth and enthronement of deities; myths of the genesis of humanity and the human world; and myths about the afterworld.

Cosmic genesis myths include “Chogamje (Song of First Invitation)” from Jeju Island; “Changsega (Song of Genesis)” and “Senggutmuga (Shamanic Song of Genesis)” from Hamgyeong Province; and “Cheonjiwangbonpuri (Song of Heavenly Ruler)” from Jeju, which is a narrative of the conflict between this world and the afterworld.

Myths about deities include “**Barigongju** (Song of Abandoned Princess Bari),” which is a shamanic ancestor myth; “Dangbonpuri (Song of the Origin of Village Guardian God)” from Jeju, a narrative of the birth of village god; and “Seongjumuga (Song of Household Guardian Deity)” and Munjeonbonpuri (Song of Household Gods)” from Jeju, which are both myths about the origins of household gods.

Myths about the creation of humanity include “Dangeumaegimuga (Song of Maiden Danggeum)”

and Samtaejapuri (Song of the Triplets),” which are all versions of **Jeseokbonpuri**, which narrates the story of the origin of **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing). Other myths related to the human world include “Jacheongbiwamundoryeong (Song of Goddess Jacheong and Bachelor Mun)” and “Segyeongbonpuri (Song of the Origin of Farming)” from Jeju, about the origins of farming; “Samgongbonpuri (Song of God of Destiny Samgong)” from Jeju and “Simcheonggutmuga (Song of Filial Daughter Simcheong)” from the east coast regions, about filial piety; and many others about longevity and disease healing.

Afterworld myths comprise narratives about extended life including “Maenggambonpuri (Song of the Messenger of Death)” and “Jangjapuri (Song of Wayfarer Ghost Jangja);” stories about resolving the grievances of the deceased including “Jingajang (Song of Jingajang)” from Hamgyeong Province; and myths about rebirth including “Dorangseonbi Cheongjeonggaksi (Song of Groom Dorang and Bride Cheongjeong).”

Shamanic myths carry great cultural significance as they narrate the stories of cosmic creation and the origins of the myriad gods in Korean folk religion.

## SADOSEJA 사도세자 Crown Prince Sado

**Sadoseja** (1735-1762) was the second son of Yeongjo (1694-1776), the 21<sup>st</sup> king of Joseon, who was locked inside a wooden chest and left to die as a victim of political sacrifice, and later deified and worshipped by the people.

Crown Prince Sado’s birth name was Yi Seon and was named at age two as the heir to the throne. He was a brilliant child, talented in reading and writing, showing keen interest in politics as well, and starting at the age of fifteen, ruled as prince-regent. However, he grew distant from the Noron (Old Doctrine) faction,



then in power, which led to political pressure and slander, and eventually, his murder.

Many heroes who have met unjust and tragic deaths are deified in folk religion. In Korean shamanism, Crown Prince Sado is also worshipped by the name Dwijudaewang, or Wooden Chest King.

## SAMSIN 삼신 Goddess of Childbearing

**Samsin** is the goddess of childbearing, a shamanic deity and household god that oversees the birth and growth of children.

It is believed that humans are born with the blessing of **Samsin**, and their lifespan is determined by **Chilseong** (Seven Stars). **Samsin** is also called Grandmother **Samsin**, Grandfather **Samsin**, Grandmother Sejun or Grandmother Jiang, Jiang and Sejun referring to Jewang and **Sejon**, respectively, both deities originated from Buddhism and related to the god of childbirth **Jeseok**. The origin of **Samsin** is narrated in the shamanic myth “Dangeumaegimuga (Song of Maiden Dangeum),” also called, “**Jeseokbonpuri** (Song of the Origin of Jeseok)” or “Song of Sijun (**Sejon**) Ritual,” in east coast regions including Gangneung and Uljin.

As a household god, **Samsin** oversees childbirth, the lifespan of a child and also the health of the entire family, taking on varying roles in the home. **Samsin** is generally perceived as a goddess and some homes worship one of their deceased female ancestors as **Samsin**. Worship rituals are held on seasonal holidays including Seol (Lunar New Year), harvest holiday *Chuseok*, Jeongwoldaeboeum (Great Full Moon) and *Dongji* (Winter Solstice), or when replacing the grains contained in sacred entities. Rituals are also held on occasions related to childbirth, child illness, or other troubles in the family.

On the day a child is born, a ritual table is



Wicker basket serving as sacred entity for Samsin.  
(Kim Myeong-ja)



Earthenware jar as sacred entity for Samsin.  
Pungsan-eup, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2007, Baek Min-yeong)

prepared for **Samsin**, comprising sea mustard (*miyeok*), sea mustard soup, steamed rice and fresh water from the well (*jeonghwasu*). A **Samsin** table for a child's 100<sup>th</sup> day or first birthday includes skeins of thread (*siltarae*) and red peppers (*gochu*). For everyday worship, only a bowl of fresh well water is offered. Additional dishes are offered for seasonal rituals: rice cake soup on Lunar New Year; five-grain rice on Great Full Moon; red bean porridge (*patjuk*) on Winter Solstice.

**Samsin** is worshipped in varying forms of sacred entities, including *samsindanji* (earthenware jar), *samsinbagaji* (gourd bowl), *samsingori* (wicker basket), or sometimes not in the form of a specific entity. Sacred entities contain newly harvested grains, mulberry paper or skeins of thread and are sealed before being placed in the inner chamber (*anbang*) for the woman of the house, on top of the wardrobe or on a separate shelf.

## SANSIN 산신

Mountain God

**Sansin**, or Mountain God, is a widely worshipped village guardian deity that resides in the mountain as its ruler and protector.

The worship of **Sansin** is based on animism, the religious belief that natural physical entities possess a spiritual essence. **Sansin**'s sacred entities are rendered in the form of the tiger or the Taoist immortal *sinseon*. There are records that say the national founder



Shamanic painting of Sansin.

**Dangun** became **Sansin**, which supports the belief that humans could also become **Sansin** in afterlife.

**Sansin** comprises both male and female deities. The earliest existing record of **Sansin** is the **Dangun** myth, which notes that **Dangun** took the position of **Sansin**, evidence of the gender of the mountain god in Korea. In other ancient records that follow, however, **Sansin** are in most cases goddesses. Starting in Goryeo (918-1392), male mountain gods emerged as the majority, which is reflected in the shamanic paintings that remain today. Along with this change came the new custom of offering a virgin to the mountain god, observed in Gaeseong (Mt. Deongmul) and in Naju (Mt. Geumseong). The change in the gender of the deity is closely connected to the shift in history to a male-centric society.

**Sansin** resides on the summit, the hillside, or at the foot of a mountain. The summit is considered an ideal place for the ruler of the mountain, due to its proximity to the sky and the vista of all that lies below. The hillside is sunny, sheltered from cold winds, also providing a good home for the mountain god. For a deity that resides at the foot of a mountain, an altar or a shrine is set up in a bright spot or by the hiking path at the entrance of a village, serving as a communal shrine for the private prayers of villagers for a good harvest, healing or a son.

Shrines for mountain gods come in the form of altars, made of clay or stones, large trees or a house. Clay altars are round or rectangular, and are the oldest types of mountain god shrines, generally located on mountain summits. Stone altars are stone stacks, made of either natural or artificially cut stones. Tree shrines are mostly located at the entrance of a village, with an altar next to the tree, but some take the form of a divine tree (*sinmok*) deep in the mountains. Found inside house-type shrines are a figurine of **Sansin** and a spirit tablet.

**Sansin** has great influence over the lives of individuals but first of all serves as a village guardian deity. *Sansinje*, or mountain god rituals, therefore, are held not as private but communal affairs. The rituals are generally observed in the first lunar month, around dusk or dawn. Ritual procedures follow the Confucian tradition and participants pray for peace and safety in the village and a good harvest.



## SEJON 세존 Ancestral Household Deity

**Sejon** is a household god that originated from Buddhism and alternate versions of the name include Sijun and Siju.

Following the introduction of Buddhism, Korea's folk religion and Buddhism have had significant influence on each other in many different ways. As in the case of **Jeseok**, **Sejon** was originally a Buddhist term, **Bhagavat** in Sanskrit, referring to the most revered one, or Buddha himself, but has been worshipped as a household god in Korean folk belief. **Sejon** is an ancestral deity, that of the highest order among household gods, along with **Seongju** (House Guardian God). As an ancestral god also related to childbearing, **Sejon** also possesses Buddhist traits, especially in regard to sacrificial offerings, which excludes fish and meat due to the deity's Buddhist associations. Shamanic rituals include a segment dedicated to **Sejon**. The household worship of **Sejon** is a practice that is passed down from mother to daughter, who enshrines the deity in her married home through divination or a shamanic ritual.



*Danji* as sacred entity for ancestral household deity **Sejon**.  
Okcheon-dong, Dongnae-gu, Busan-si (1989, Bae Do-sik)

## SEOLMUNDAEHALMANG 설문대할망 Grandmother **Seolmundae**

**Seolmundaehalmang**, or Grandmother **Seolmundae**, is a giant goddess of Jeju Island who, in the beginning of the universe, created the geographical features of the island.

Grandmother **Seolmundae** shows aspects of a creator goddess, believed to be responsible for the mountains and islands around Jeju, and the remnants of what appears to have been a bridge between the island and the mainland, as observed in ancient records as follows: "When the heaven and earth was first created, the two bodies were attached as one, and **Seolmundaehalmang** separated them so that the heaven was located above and the earth below, and dug up soil from under the water to make Jeju Island for people to live on."

The goddess came to be perceived by later generations in a somewhat negative light, depicted as an object of ridicule, building mountains with her bodily wastes and hunting with her sex organ, or as a tragic character that drowned in the porridge that she

was cooking. It is difficult to confirm widespread worship of this goddess on Jeju, but some evidences have been found of its worship as a guardian deity of fishermen and the people of Jeju: In **Haesindang** (Sea God Shrine) of **Danggae Port** in the village of **Pyoseon**, **Seolmundaehalmang** is enshrined as a village god (*dangsin*) that protects the women divers and brings riches; and the shamanic song performed as part of the shamanic rite *sansingut* (mountain god ritual) includes lyrics about the goddess.

## SEONANG 서낭

### Village Guardian Deity

**Seonang** is the guardian deity of a village, responsible for preserving the welfare and prosperity of the community, and for treating illnesses and eradicating bad fortune as well.

The name **Seonang** is believed to have come from Sanwang (Mountain King), another name for the mountain deity **Sansin**, and its worship was aimed at using divine powers to protect the communal sites for hunting, farming and cattle-breeding in ancient societies. Built on these sites were altars made of stone stacks (*nuseokdan*), which served as the location for the descent of higher spirits and as residence for Cheonsin (Celestial God), as well as a venue of worship, called *seonangdang*. These shrines, which function as a village guardian facility, are located at the entrance of the village, the foot of a mountain, or flat, open spaces. Today, *seonangdang* are generally comprised of a stone stack altar, some with a divine tree (*sinsu*) as well, the tree marked with five-colored ribbons (*osaekcheon*). **Seonang** worship shares many similarities with ovoo (heap) worship in Mongolia, which might have served as an influence, along with the Chinese Cheng Huang (City God) worship.

**Seonang** worship is observed in all parts of Korea. Rituals are held either as private rites or as the Confucian communal rite *seonangje*, or *seonanggut*, officiated by a shaman.

Since **Seonang** worship is a faith that seeks divine powers for the protection of the village, it promotes solidarity and cooperation in the community, and *seonangdang* served as facilities to guard and protect the village with the help of divine powers.

## SEONDOL 선돌

### Standing Stone

**Seondol** is a large upright standing stone, or menhir, made of natural rock, erected as a monument or object of worship.

Alternate terms include *ipseok*, *soekju*, *satgatbawi* and *seonbawi*, all identical in meaning.

Standing stones are generally 1 to 2 meters in height, although some rare ones reach 6 meters. In Korea, menhirs are generally natural, only rarely artificially carved. Most are erected at the village entrance or in the middle of open fields or rice paddies, or sometimes next to dolmens.

A *seondol* largely serves three functions: First, it is an entity that symbolizes fertility, productivity and longevity, closely related to the worship of rocks, **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), and of sex organs; its second function is to protect from flooding (*sugumagi*) and to keep away evil spirits; the third is to mark a tomb or to serve as a symbol of the deceased. These functions are related to religious worship of local mythology, especially in that the shape and size of the menhirs create a sense of awe in people, who also view them as



**Seondol.**  
Songhak-myeon, Jecheon-ri, Chungcheongbuk-do (2009, Lee Chang-sik)



phallic and associate them with sex organ worship in primitive societies.

In Seodaemun-gu of Seoul, on Mt. Inwang, across from *Guksadang* (Shrine for Village Gods) stands Seonbawi, where many come to worship and to pray for the conception of a son or for their children to thrive.

*Ipeok juldarigi* (standing stone tug-of-war), practiced in Gimje and designated as Folklore Heritage No. 7 of North Jeolla Province, is another form of standing stone worship. The tug-of-war is held each year to pray for a good harvest, between two teams divided by gender. When the game is over, the rope is wound around the village menhir for protection. Touching the rope will result in a deadly winter, and the rope is left on all year long. The tradition has given the village its name, Seondolmaeul, or Ipeokdong, both meaning “standing stone village.” It is believed that victory for the female team will bring a good harvest, so each year the game ends in a win for the women, who wind the rope around the menhir, followed by a formal shaman-officiated ritual for village gods (*dangsanje*).

## SEONGJU 성주 House Guardian God

**Seongju**, or House Guardian God, is the highest deity in the house, overseeing every element related to the household, from construction to the protection of the family.

Variations of this name include Seongjo and Seongjusin. In mythology, **Seongju** is a building god, and is born when a new house is built, when a family moves to a new house, or when a new family is formed. **Seongju** oversees every element related to the household, from furniture and appliances to peace and good fortune in the family. It is **Seongju** that brings cattle, grains, rice paddies and silk clothing to the home,

and ensures the longevity of parents and proliferation of offspring that are pious and loyal, promising success in government service and in farming.

The date for receiving the new **Seongju** is selected according to the fortunes of the man of the house. The reception and enshrinement of the deity involves the pole *seongjutdae*, comprising a staff with a paper cutout of a human figure, using white ritual paper (*baekji*). Bamboo is used for the staff for its evergreen quality, and in regions where bamboo does not grow, oak wood is used, since oak trees bear abundant nuts that are not eaten by harmful beasts. The pole is completed by attaching a paper bag containing rice. *Seongjutdae* is then erected next to a living tree on a bowl filled with white rice to receive the house guardian god. In the past, families headed out to a pine tree on the hill behind the house, but



White ritual paper and pine twig as sacred entity for Seongju. Mungyeong-eup, Mungyeong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2002, Korearoot)

nowadays the deity is received from a fruit tree on the grounds of the house, or from a column near the gate of the house or the shed. Sometimes the reception is executed by throwing a burning prayer sheet (*soji*) into the air, but however the process is performed, it never takes place in another family's house. When the reception is complete, an individual is assigned to confirm the god's intent by holding the pole to find the spot in the house where the pole will attach itself to be enshrined. Rituals for worshipping **Seongju** are held regularly on seasonal holidays including the first lunar month and the tenth lunar month, called *sangdalgo* or *antaek*, or on special family occasions including the initial reception or weddings.

## SEONGJUPURI 성주풀이

### Song of House Guardian God

“**Seongjupuri**” is a shamanic myth or epic song that chronicles the history of house guardian god **Seongju** and his wife Jisin the land goddess.

The song is performed or recited as part of shamanic rituals held for **Seongju** upon moving into a new home or to mark the completion of a newly constructed house. This narrative has been preserved in two different versions: The Hwanguyang type from the northern parts of Gyeonggi Province and the Ansimguk type from the Busan area. Both tell the story of the genesis of the deity **Seongju** through the union between heaven and earth, but they differ greatly in detail.

The Hwanguyang type begins with the birth of Hwanguyang between Cheondaemoksin of the Palace Under Heaven and Lady Jital of the Palace Underground. The baby grew up and married, and one day a sudden east wind blew, battering the Palace Under Heaven into decline, and the palace's guardian deity **Seongju** disappeared as well. The person summoned to solve this problem was Hwanguyang,

who was living at the foot of Mt. Hwangsan in the Palace Underground. Since he did not have carpentry tools, his wife had them made for him, using metal she had received from the Palace Under Heaven. Seeing him off, she instructs him never to talk back to anyone on his way to the palace. But Hwanguyang falls for Sojinnang's scheme and while engaged in a conversation, agrees to switch clothes with him. While Hwanguyang continues to travel to the Palace Under Heaven, Sojinnang heads to the Palace Underground in Hwanguyang's clothes and attempts to take his place as husband, but Hwanguyang's wife manages to keep him out by outwitting him. Hwanguyang learns of this situation in his dream and rushes back home upon completing his work. He finds a note that his wife has written in blood and finds out what has been happening, and transforms into a bird to hide under his wife's skirt and succeeds in capturing Sojinnang. He locks the captive in a stone box and gives him the title of **Seonang** (Village Guardian Deity). Upon hearing that his wife has acquired the skill of breeding silkworms and spinning silk, he gives her the title of Jisin, the land goddess, and himself takes on the title of house guardian god **Seongju**.

In the Ansimguk type of the “**Seongjupuri**” narrative, the husband's name is Ansimguk, also known as Seongjossi. When he learns that there is no house for him in the Palace Underground, he plants pine nuts for lumber. He falls into debauchery, however, which sends him into exile and upon his return to the Palace Underground, cuts down the pine trees and builds his house. Upon completion of the house, he takes on the title of **Seongju**.

“**Seongjupuri**” myth is fundamentally a narrative about husband and wife, the foundation of family, which is closely related to its function as a song performed in shamanic rituals for worshipping the house guardian god of a new home. By telling the story of a husband and wife that overcome trials and become a house guardian deity and a land goddess, this myth gives significance to rituals that pray for the fortunes of a family.



## SEONGSEOK 성석

### Sex Organ-Shaped Rock

*Seongseok* is a rock shaped like a sex organ, which, as a symbol of human productivity, serves as an object of worship in praying for fertility or prosperity.

Such rocks are categorized into male organ rocks (*namgeunseok*) and female organ rocks (*yeogeunseok*). The male rocks are carved and erected in the belief that women who have been unable to conceive can bear a son by holding a ritual at the rock. They were also objects of folk worship to pray for a good harvest through the symbolic congress between the male organ-shaped rock and the land, viewed as female.

In villages with a male organ rock, women set

up tents around the rock to pray, or offered sacrificial foods and prayed for a son on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon). Some families were able to conceive a son simply by moving to the village. In villages with strong yin energy according to traditional geomancy, male organ rocks were erected to supplement the yang energy in an attempt to increase the birth rate of sons.

When a pair of male and female organ rocks was erected side by side, the male rock was called *sutmireuk* and the female *ammireuk*, referring to the pair as **Mireuk**, or the future Buddha Maitreya, which in Korean folk religion is worshipped as a deity related to childbearing and prosperity. It was believed that calamities would result if one made fun of the rocks, or planted crops too close to the rocks out of greed, or if a funeral bier went directly past them. Fishermen hung their first catch on the rocks to pray for safety at sea.



*Namgeunseok.*  
Chilbo-myeon, Jeongeup-si, Jeollabuk-do (2005, Hong Tea-han)



*Namgeunseok.*  
Paldeok-myeon, Sunchang-gun, Jeollanam-do (2010, Lee Yeong-bae)



*Yeogeunseok.*  
Jukwang-myeon, Goseong-gun, Gangwon-do (2004)

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*A pair of female and male Seongseok.*  
Nam-myeon, Namhae-gun, Geongsangnam-do (2010, Jeong Sang-bak)

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Female organ rocks are worshipped by throwing rocks into the hole or inserting a phallic wood-carving, to pray for a child or prosperity. Beliefs related to sexual organ-shaped rocks are based on the worship of human sexual activity or organs to pray for fertility and prosperity.

## SIN 신

### Deity

*Sin* refers to all the deities worshipped in Korean folk religion.

Korean folk deities can be categorized into nature deities, human deities and miscellaneous deities. Nature deities are again divided into Cheonsin (Celestial God), Jisin (Earth God), **Sansin** (Mountain God), Susin (Water God), Pungsin (Wind God), and Sumoksin (Tree God). Human deities are divided into Wangsin (King God), Janggunsin (General God), Daegamsin (State Official God) and others. Miscellaneous deities include *gasin*, or household gods. The functions and responsibilities of these deities are specialized according to space and territory. It is notable that the nature deities are personified, possessing distinct characters.

## SINCHE 신체

### Sacred Entity

*Sinche* are sacred objects, geographical features or living beings believed to carry divine spirits.

In Korean folk religion, various animate or inanimate entities were believed to be divine, including plants, animals, rocks, mountains or earthenware jars.

*Sinsu*, or divine trees, were living trees onto which the divine spirit has descended. **Eop**, or the God of Property, is believed to manifest itself as animals, among which the serpent is an important sacred entity in the worship of village deities. Inanimate sacred objects including *doltap* (stone stacks), *seondol* (standing stone), *jangseung* (village guardian post), *sotdae* (sacred pole), *seongseok* (sex organ-shaped rock) and *danji* (earthenware jar). In the worship of household gods, earthenware jars are the most important sacred entities, including *seongjudanji*, which holds the House Guardian God, and *teojudanji*, holding the Land Tutelary God.

## SOTDAE 솟대

### Sacred Pole

*Sotdae*, or sacred pole, is made of wood or stone with a bird carving on top and erected next to village guardian posts (*jangseung*) or at village entrances.

Alternate terms include *susaldae* (village guardian pole), *oritdae* (duck pole) *jimdae* (mast), *hwaju* (celebratory pole), and *jinttobaegi* (long pole). *Sotdae* served as a divine pole (*sindae*) that bridges the heavens and the earth, guarding the village against fire, drought, diseases, and other calamities. With the spread of geomancy and the increase of social mobility through state exams, these poles were divided into *jimdae*, which were erected as “masts” for villages geographically shaped like a launched boat, and *hwajutdae*, for celebrating success at the state exam.

Sacred poles are erected generally at village entrances, either on their own or next to village guardian posts (*jangseung*) or pagodas. The bird on the pole is made out of tree branches shaped like the letter Y, or ones bent at a right angle for the bird's head and neck, nailed to a Y-shaped branch or a flat wooden board. Sometimes the bird is carved in a realistic rendering. The bird is usually referred to as a

duck but in some regions also as a wild goose, seagull, ibis, heron, magpie or crow. Waterfowl like ducks serve as a means of praying for abundant water for farming and guarding against fires. In some villages, sacred poles are erected anew each year around the time village rituals are held, while in some villages new ones are erected when existing ones are broken or on leap years.



**Sotdae.**  
Okgye-myeon, Gangneung-si, Gangwon-do (2010, Lee Yeong-sik)

## SUGUMAEGI 수구맥이

### Flood Prevention Deity

**Sugumaegi**, literally meaning, “waterway blocker,” is a term that refers to the deity that provides protection as required by geomancy by blocking the waterway at the village entrance.

The term can refer to a street god that protects the village entrance, or to a deity that keeps forceful water energy under control or supplements energy that is lacking.



**Flood prevention tree.**  
Ganghwa-gun, Incheon (2010, Kim Heon-seon)



Rituals related with this deity include those performed by farmers' music troupes, with songs that contain prayers for blocking the waterway and the prevention of natural disasters; those for the supplementation (*bibo*) of weak geomantic energy, as in village guardian posts (*jangseung*); and flood prevention rites like *susalmaji* or *susalmagi*, held in coastal regions or villages prone to damage from flooding.

Water was clearly an element that could threaten the peace of a village. Flood victims therefore relied on **Sugumaegi** and geomantic principles to prevent natural disasters and to protect the village, and rituals were held for this purpose, by farmers' music troupes or by the shaman who officiates village rituals.

## TEOJU 터주 Land Tutelary God

**Teoju**, or Land Tutelary God, resides on the grounds of a house, overseeing peace in the family and safety on the grounds.

This deity is also called Teojusin, Teojutdaegam (Land Tutelary Official God), Teojuhalmæ (Land Tutelary Grandmother) and Jisin (Earth God), and is worshipped in the form of the sacred entity *teojutgari*, placed in the backyard or by the sauce jar terrace.

*Teojutgari* is an earthenware jar filled with the best grains of rice among the first harvest of the fall, covered with a lid and draped with a conical straw bundle. Sometimes the jar is filled with five grains, including rice, soy beans, sorghum, and red beans. The straw cover is made by tying one end of the bundle to form an upside down cone, the bottom spread



*Teojutgari*, a straw bundle covering an earthenware jar that serves as sacred entity for the land tutelary god Teoju. Sonhak-myeon, Jecheon-si, Chungcheongbuk-do (2010, Bak Jong-ik)

outward. The straw is replaced each year during the annual household ritual *gaeulgosa* (autumn rite), and the old straw bundle is burned in the yard. To replace the grains in the jar, the old grains are steamed or made into rice cake to be consumed in the home, for these grains must not leave the house. When the family moves, the sacred entity is taken with them.

**Teoju** worship rituals take place around the tenth lunar month, on an auspicious day selected by the women of the household, and is called *gaeulgosa* (autumn rite). The order of worship varies by region, but generally follows one that starts with **Seongju** (House Guardian God), **Jowang** (Kitchen God), then **Teoju**. Sacrificial food for **Teoju** includes *sirutteok* (layered rice cake with red bean filling), whole dried pollock (*bugeo*), and fresh water from the well (*jeonghwasu*), or *makgeolli*, coarse rice wine. When

a shaman is commissioned to officiate the ritual, the sacrificial foods are more elaborate, including fruits in three colors. The women of the house also offer their prayers to **Teoju** throughout the year whenever there is trouble in the home, with a simple bowl of steamed rice (*me*) and fresh water from the well.

## UMASIN 우마신 God of Cattle and Horses

**Umasin** is a deity that resides in a stable or cowshed and oversees cattle and horses.

Alternate names for this deity include Mabusin (Groom God) and Oeyanggansin (Stable Deity). **Umasin** protects cattle and horses against diseases to help them proliferate. In the past, cattle were considered very precious, and were treated with special care on the first horse and cow days in the first lunar month. The following is the entry in *Dongguksesigi* (A Record of the Seasonal Customs of the Eastern Kingdom) for the days associated with the horse on the traditional zodiac in the tenth lunar month: “On the day of the horse, layered rice cake with red bean filling (*sirutteok*) was set up as an offering in the stable to pray and give thanks for the health of the horses. On the day of Byeongo, the day of the horse on the third stem, the horses were allowed to rest because the syllable “*byeong*” sounded the same as the word meaning disease. And on the day of Muo, the day of the horse on the fifth stem, the horses were cared for with devotion.” This shows that rituals were held at the stables on the horse days of the tenth lunar month with an offering of red bean rice cake. Today, no special dates are set aside for cattle rituals, which are held on seasonal holidays and when a cow or horse is ill, without sacrificial foods except for morsels from the ritual table on seasonal holidays.

There are no sacred entities associated with **Umasin**, but in Gyeonggi Province, a small square of



Earthenware jar filled with unhusked rice as sacred entity for Teoju .  
Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Gang Seong-bok)



white paper or mulberry paper is hung on a nail on the wall and worshipped as Umageollip (Cattle Collector God) throughout the year, until the annual household gods ritual (*gosa*) when the piece of paper is taken down and burned to be replaced with a new one. In Gangwon Province, instead of a piece of paper, a stone with a hole in the middle is hung with straw rope.

## YEONGDEUNG 영풍

### Wind God

**Yeongdeung** is the god that oversees the wind, worshipped in homes and in the community.

Names for this god vary by region, including Grandmother Yeongdeung, Pungsin (Wind God), Iwolhalmae (Second Month Grandmother), and Iwolsonnim (Guest in the Second Month), the most widely used being Grandmother Yeongdeung.

Wind is a critical factor in farming and fishing, and **Yeongdeung** is the god that reigns over it from the celestial spheres where she lives. This deity does not get involved in the affairs of the earthly world

and of human lives throughout the year, with the exception of the first day of the second lunar month, when she descends on earth. If the winds are strong on this day, it is believed that the deity is accompanied by her daughter, and if it rains, she is accompanied by her daughter-in-law, an interpretation based on the general notions of the relationship between mother and daughter and that between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law—the former defined by mutual rapport, the latter by conflict. On the day of the ritual, villagers also rely on the weather to predict the prospects of their livelihood for the year ahead: Wind indicates that Wind Yeongdeung has descended, signifying drought and thereby a poor harvest; rain indicates the descent of Water Yeongdeung and signifies good production and rich harvest; and bright sun on ritual day indicates the descent of Fire Yeongdeung.

As the term Grandmother Yeongdeung indicates, this deity is generally perceived as a goddess, but on Jeju Island, the deity is worshipped as Grandfather Yeongdeung. **Yeongdeung** worship is observed mainly on Jeju and the southeastern parts of the peninsula, but can also be seen in a wide range of areas including the central regions and South Jeolla Province. The worship takes the form of rituals like *yeongdeungje* or *pungsinje*, the procedures varying by region.



Burning of sacred text as prayer to the wind god, Yeongdeung. Danjang-myeon, Miryang-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do (1993, Bae Do-sik)

## YONGWANG 용왕

### Dragon King

**Yongwang**, or Dragon King, is a deity of the river or the sea, overseeing peace in the house, good health and longevity in the family, the harvest, catch and safe sailing.

**Yongwang** is also called Yongsin (Dragon God). The dragon is a divine creature that appears throughout Korean mythology and ancient history, including the Jumong myth of Goguryeo and the state protector dragon worship of Silla Buddhism. Communities

worshipped **Yongwang** as a water god, holding divine powers to control rainfall. Dragon King worship is closely related to the contemporary practice of staging rituals at village springs or wells that are believed to be dwelling places for **Yongwang**. Around the country there are also legends regarding dragon springs and dragon wells, created by a dragon that brought rain to repay humans by turning wasteland fertile, which shows that **Yongwang** is closely related to farming. Dragon King is also believed to oversee fishermen's catch and the wind and the waves, residing in the undersea Dragon Palace (Yonggung), filled with wonderful treasures.

**Yongwang** worship can be categorized into three forms. In the worship of village gods, **Yongwang** is the most important deity in *pungeoje*, or big catch ritual, held in fishing villages in the beginning of the year to pray for a big catch and safety for the fishermen. In shamanism, **Yongwang** oversees not only fishing, but the souls of those who have drowned and died. In the worship of household gods, it is a deity that oversees peace in the household, good health and longevity in the family, the harvest, catch and safe sailing.

Among rituals held for **Yongwang** in the home by women, the most widely spread is *yongwangmeogigi* (feeding the dragon king), also referred to as *yongsinje* (dragon god ritual) and *gaetje* (fishing ritual). This ritual can take place in three different venues: First is a private well in the backyard; second is the communal well, where, in some cases, a spring ritual (*saemje*) is held, then water from the well is brought to the home and placed in the kitchen or on the sauce jar terrace for the Dragon King; and third is along the village waterside, the most common venue since the principal rule is that Dragon King feeding should be practiced outside the home.

In the home, **Yongwang** is worshipped in the form of an earthenware jar, a sacred entity referred to as *yongdanji* (dragon jar). Some homes keep one or three, but generally a pair.



Shamanic painting of Yongwang.



*Yongdanji*, serving as sacred entities for Yongwang.  
Imha-myeon, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do (Kim Myeong-ja)





# Ritual Venues



## Ritual Venues

## BONHYANGDANG 본향당

### Shrine for Village Guardian Deity

*Bonhyangdang* is the term used on Jeju Island for village shrines for worshipping **bonhyang**, deities that protect the community.

*Bonhyangdang* is a sacred place in the village, serving as the venue for regular ritual services that reaffirm a sense of community. Enshrined here are gods that oversee the welfare of the village and prayers on livelihood, childbirth and rearing, and healing diseases, collectively called **bonhyang** and include mountain gods and gods of childbirth and rearing.

Some of the well-known *bonhyangdang* on Jeju Island are *Waheulbonhyangdang*, *Songdangbonhyangdang*, *Susanbonhyangdang* and *Saemiharosandang*.

Enshrined in *Waheulbonhyangdang*, located in the village of Waheul in Jocheon, are Harosantto, a village guardian deity and also a mountain god, and Seojeongseungttanimagi (State Official Seo's Daughter), a god of childbirth and rearing and also a healing god—two deities of different gender and responsibilities. Two big rituals a year are held here.

*Songdangbonhyangdang*, in the village of Songdang in Gujwa, is known as the oldest shrine on Jeju. A giant *sinmok* (divine tree) stands on the grounds and the village guardian gods enshrined here are believed to oversee production, death and lineage.

Enshrined in *Susanbonhyangdang*, in the village of Susan in the Seogwipo metropolitan area, are two deity figures carved of wood, dressed in gender-specific traditional *hanbok* to indicate that the pair comprises male and female deities. The village guardian deity worshipped here is considered to be the highest in the hierarchy of all **bonhyang** originating from Mt. Halla.

*Saemiharosandang* is the shrine at Donghoecheon village in the Jeju metropolitan area, comprising an old hackberry tree that serves as *sinmok* and a cement altar to its left, without a separate shrine building. The deity



*Songdangbonhyangdang*.  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2007, Cho Sun-young)



*Susanbonhyangdang*.  
Seongsan-eup, Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do (2008, Gang So-jeon)



*Anhalmangdang*.  
Pyoseon-myeon, Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do (2009, Gang So-jeon)



**Saemiharosandang.**  
Hoecheon-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2008, Gang Jeong-sik)



**Dongbokbonhyangdang.**  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2011, Gang Jeong-sik)



**Gimnyeongbonhyangdang.**  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2003, Gang Jeong-sik)

worshipped here is believed to be the eighth or twelfth son of the deity enshrined at *Songdangbonhyangdang*.

Village rituals are still regularly held today at these shrines, mostly on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, called *singwaseje* (ritual to offer greetings for the New Year), and on the fourteenth day of the seventh lunar month, called *baekjungmabullimje* (ritual for Buddhist All Soul's Day).

## BUGUNDANG 부군당

Government Office Shrine

*Bugundang* referred to shrines set up near or on the grounds of government offices in the capital or in the provinces during Joseon (1392-1910), and in present times refers to village shrines observed in the Seoul area along the Han River.

These government office shrines were also called *bulgeundang* (red shrine), *bugunmyo* (shrine for government office deity), or *bugeundang* (phallic shrine).

In Joseon, *bugundang* was housed in tile-roofed buildings that measured one or two *kan* (1 *kan*=6.6 m<sup>2</sup>),



**Seobinggodongbugundang.**  
Seobinggo-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul (2007, Kim Tae-woo)





*Banggatgojibugundang.*  
Singil 2-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Tae-woo)



*Dangsandongbugundang.*  
Dangsang-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul (2006, Kim Tae-woo)



*Gyodongdobugundang.*  
Gyodong-myeon, Ganghwa-gun, Incheon (2007, Jeong Yeon-hak)

located on its own separate grounds fenced with walls, in a corner of the courtyard of the government office building, or in a forest or on a hill nearby. These shrines were constructed as part of the government building in the beginning, but are believed to have been transformed into communal shrines as their government-related functions became obsolete.

Hung inside the shrine was a painting of **Bugun** (Government Office Deity), portrayed sometimes as a singular individual or as husband and wife. Historical figures and other characters are worshipped as **Bugun**, including **Dangun**, founder of ancient kingdom Gojoseon; Yi Seong-gye, founder of Joseon; General Kim Yu-sin of Silla; General Nam Yi of Joseon; General Choe Yeong of Goryeo; General Im Gyeong-eop of Joseon; and Maiden Song.

## CHEONJEDAN 천제단 Altar for Celestial God Worship Ritual

*Cheonjedan* is the altar for celestial god worship rituals (*cheonje*).

It is generally located on the summit or at the foot of a mountain, and built without a roof structure, on the grounds bordered with a circle of rocks and the altar to one side. Mt. Taebaek *Cheonjedan*, on the mountain's summit, is a large-scale ancient altar constructed of natural rocks. In Joseon (1391-1910) and under Japanese occupation in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the altar was also called *Taebaekcheonwangdang* (Shrine for Celestial King), *Taebaeksansa* (Mountain Shrine), *Taebaeksinsa* (Shinto Shrine) and *Taekbaeksa* (Taebaek Shrine). The worship of **Cheonsin** (Celestial God) and the Taebaek Mountain God spread around the region, with many villages building similar altars on mountain peaks or below ridges to worship these deities. In these villages, **Cheonsin** is considered a deity of higher power than the village guardian deity **Seonang** and is worshipped as a higher god in rain rites (*giuje*) or in street



*Cheonjedan on Mt. Taebak.*  
Gangwon-do (2004, Kim Do-hyeon)

rituals (*georije*). *Cheonjedan* serves as the venue for village rituals in Dongho-dong, Donghae, Gangwon Province. While most celestial god altars are built exclusively for Cheonsin, the Dongho-dong altar enshrines Tojisin (Earth God) and Yeoyeoksin (Plague Spirit) to the left and right of the celestial deity. A village ritual is held here each year on the first day of the first lunar month.

## CHEO YEONG JANGGUN SADANG 최영장군 사당 Shrine for General Choe Yeong

This is a shrine is dedicated to General Choe Yeong (1316-1388), a commander and loyal subject of late Goryeo (918-1392).

General Choe Yeong was revered for military distinction including his defense of the kingdom against

Japanese invasion. He was however defeated by mutiny leader Yi Seong-gye, who went on to found Joseon (1392-1910) and beheaded. Because he met a tragic death while trying to defend the declining Goryeo, Choe came to be deified and worshipped as a shamanic god.

Shrines dedicated to General Choe Yeong remain today in several locations, including Mt. Deongmul in Gaeseong; in Tongyeong, South Gyeongsang Province; and on Chuja Island in Jeju.

The General Choe Yeong Shrine on Mt. Deongmul in Gaeseong, Hwanghae Province, was considered the most sacred site among shamans of the central regions. In Joseon, a shaman was assigned to this shrine to exclusively worship the spirit of General Choe Yeong and the state collected taxes from the shrine to finance government projects. On the summit of Mt. Deongmul, there was a village for shamans named Sansangdong, a community that lasted until the Japanese occupation. The village was home to a shrine for General Choe Yeong called Janggundang (General's Shrine); Buindang, where Choe's wife was enshrined; and Changbudang, a shrine for the Clown God, where each deity was enshrined in the form of clay figurines or paintings.





Choe Yeong Janggun Sadang on Chuja Island.  
Chuja-myeon, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Song Gi-tae)



Sacrificial foods offered at the shrine for General Choe Yeong.  
Daeseo-ri, Chuja-myeon, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2009, Mun Mu-byeong)

The southern coast is also home to a number of shrines for General Choe Yeong, since this was where the commander fought off the invading Japanese. The shrine in Tongyeong is also called *Janggundang* and enshrined inside are a portrait of the general and a spirit tablet. Rituals are observed on the fourteenth day of the first and last lunar months of the year.

The General Choe Yeong Shrine in Jeju is believed to have been built in late Goryeo. In the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of King Gongmin's reign (1374), the general was on a boat headed to Jeju Island where a rebellion had erupted but a sea storm forced him to seek shelter on Chuja Island, where he stayed for a period of time and taught the villagers to use fishing nets. Legends say that the villagers built the shrine in his honor after he left, and rituals have been observed each year on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month and on the last day of the lunar calendar to pray for a good harvest and big catch.

## DANGSAN 당산 Village Guardian Mountain

*Dangsan* is a general term that refers to a central venue in the worship of the village gods.

The literal meaning of the term is “the mountain where the village deity resides,” but its uses are broad, varying by region: It can refer to a deity, as in *Dangsanhara-beoji* (Dangsan Grandfather) and *Dangsanhalmeeoni* (Dangsan Grandmother); to a ritual, as in *dangsanje*; or a place of worship, as in the expression, “head up to *dangsan*.” In village rituals, all guardian deities of the community are called *dangsan* spirits.

In the village of Seoeri in Buan, North Jeolla Province, are a set of guardian posts and poles called *Dangsan* at *Seomun* (West Gate), an example of the



*Dangsan.*  
Jido-eup, Sinan-gun, Jeollanam-do (2006, Song Gi-tae)

term used to refer to deities. They comprise four structures made of granite—a pair each of *jangseung* (village guardian posts) and of *sotdae* (sacred poles), each comprising a male and a female, and called Dangsan Grandfather and Dangsan Grandmother, respectively.

The name of the neighborhood Dangsan-dong in Seoul's Yeongdeungpo district is an example of the term referring to a specific place. In this neighborhood is an ancient *bugundang* (government office shrine) that is over 500 years old, indicating that state shrines served as *dangsan*. In the village of Yesong on Bogil Island of South Jeolla Province, *dangsan* is a shrine located in a valley northwest of the village, between Gyeokja Peak and the mountain ridge to the east, with a stream that never runs dry throughout the year and surrounded by a forest of centuries-old bamboo-leaf oaks and camellia trees. Enshrined here are the tablets for the Grandmother and Grandfather of Yesong

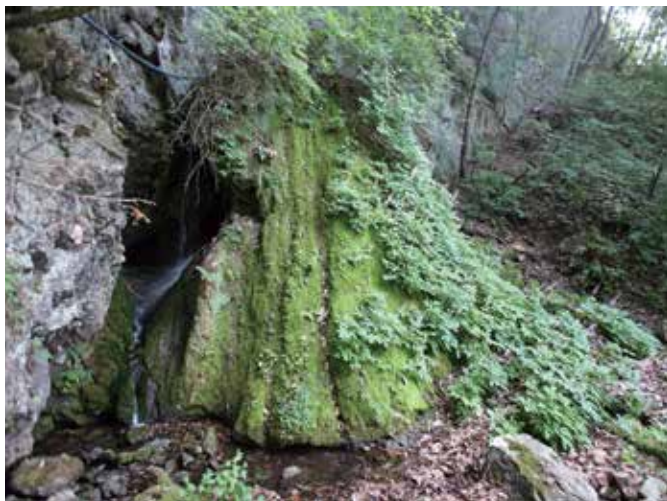
village. The tablet for the Grandfather was brought later from the village of Buyong. The shrine stands next to the village deity tree (*dangsamamu*) and serves as the venue for *sansinje* (mountain god ritual). The mountain where the shrine for the village guardian deity is located is also called *dangsan*.

## GIUJEDANG 기우제당

Shrine for Rain Rite

*Giujedang* is a shrine for holding rain rites (*giuje*) in times of drought.





**Pond at Handugol valley.**  
Nogok-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2010, Kim Do-hyeon)



**Giujedang at Cheongjing Pond.**  
Jinsan-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2010, Gang Seong-bok)

Rain rites are held inside rock caves or by ponds or springs deep in the mountains. Some well-known *giujedang* where these rites have long been held include the shrine at Mt. Jinak's Mulgul Peak in Geumsan, South Chungcheong Province; the shrine at Cheongjing Pond in the village of Samgari in Jinsan, South Chungcheong; and Dragon Pond at Handugol Valley in the village of Sangbanchaeolli in Samcheok, Gangwon Province.

The Mulgul Peak Giujedang in Mt. Jinak is a natural shrine without a building or spirit tablet, a large rock cave with a pond inside that is believed to be deeper than the entire length of a skein of silk thread unraveled. In old times, when news spread that a rain rite would be held here, people from surrounding villages headed to the summit of Mt. Jinak, with spades and hoes in hand and accompanied by farmers' percussion music. Taboo ropes (*geumjul*) were hung on the gates of each home on the day before the rite, along with a bottle filled with water and closed with a bunch of pine needles then hung upside down.

Cheongjing Pond served as a rain rite shrine since Joseon and until as recent as the early 1990s. There is an underwater cave at the bottom of the pond, where a dragon or *imugi* (imaginary python that failed in its attempt to become a dragon) is believed to live. The rain rite at this pond was attended by all the residents of three surrounding villages, both men and

women, the old and the young. The women led the way, parading to the pond playing percussion music and wearing a winnow basket (*ki*) on their heads. At the pond they set up a table of sacrificial foods and staged a Confucian-style rain rite. After the rite, the women staged a rainfall performance by sprinkling water with their baskets or bowls, or stepping inside the pond and splashing water on one another.

The Dragon Pond at Handu Valley is located inside a rock cave on a cliff. Sacrificial offerings for a rain rite at this pond included a whole dog, steamed rice (*me*), cooked vegetables and coarse rice wine makgeolli. The dog was not offered as food but as a means of upsetting **Yongwang** (Dragon King) by throwing it into the pond and polluting the pond with bad blood, which the deity would try to wash away with rain.

## GUKSADANG 국사당

### Shrine for Village Gods

*Guksadang* is a shrine for village gods that protect a community.



**Mt. Inwang Guksadang.**  
Muak-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (2013, Choe Ho-sik)



**Interior of Mt. Inwang Guksadang.**  
Muak-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (2013, Choe Ho-sik)



**Interior of Mt. Inwang Guksadang.**  
Muak-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (1930s)



*Guksa*, *guksu*, *guksi* are all words for “deity” and *gusu* means “mountain of the gods.” *Guksadang*, therefore, are generally located on mountaintops around the country, and also signify a “landing place for Cheonsin (Celestial God).” Variations of the term include *guksudang* and *guksidang*. One of the few that still serve as a communal shrine today is the Mt. Inwang *Guksadang* in Seoul’s Jongno district.

Along the mid-western coast, *guksadang* is located on a high peak behind the village, at a further distance than *sansindang* (shrine for mountain god) or *seonangdang* (shrine for village guardian deity), to serve its function as guardian and border of a village. When all the tutelary shrines are located behind the village, *guksadang* takes on the position of high shrine (*sangdang*) and *sansindang* or *seonangdang* the low shrine (*hadang*).

In the central regions, *guksadang* is located on the top of the mountain behind the village, *sansindang* on the mountainside, *seonangdang* at the village entrance, with *jangseung* (village guardian post) and *sotdae* (sacred pole) at its side. Today, while *sansindang* and *seonangdang* are still found, *guksadang* are gradually disappearing in Korean villages, along with guardian posts and poles.

*Guksadang* served as the shrine for communal faith, and at the same time as a place of shamanic worship. *Guksadang* is closely associated with the Cheonsin (Celestial God) faith, making up an ancient form of village deity worship in Korea.

used to serve as venues for state-organized rituals each year in the second and eighth lunar months, with incense and prayer messages sent by the king: *Donghaesinmyo* (Shrine for the East Sea God) in Yangyang, Gangwon Province; *Seohaesinsa* (Shrine for the West Sea God) in Pungcheon, Hwanghae Province; and *Namhaesinsa* (Shrine for the South Sea God) in Yeongam, South Jeolla Province.

The Shrine for the East Sea God in Yangyang is believed to have been built in Goryeo (918-1392) and was designated as a state ritual venue in early Joseon (1392-1910). The shrine was closed down during the Japanese occupation in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century then was rebuilt in 1993 when the government bought back the land for the shrine’s restoration.

The Shrine for the South Sea God had served as a venue for both state and civilian rituals since Goryeo but was closed down under Japanese occupation. The shrine was recently restored and rituals are observed each spring and fall. The deity worshipped as South Sea God is Yongsin (Dragon God) and it is believed that the dragon emerged from the sea during rituals and entered Namhae Port.

On Jeju Island, the Sea God Shrine was first built in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of King Sunjo’s reign (1820) in Joseon, in Hwabuk, a major port that connected the island with the mainland, for the purpose of praying for the safety of boats sailing the rough sea. Rituals were held prior to the departure of each boat, and a large-scale annual

## HAESINSA 해신사

### Sea God Shrine

*Haesinsa* is a shrine for praying to the god of the seas for a good harvest, big catch, peace in the village and safety for the boats.

Sea god shrines stand on the three coasts of the Korean peninsula, which



Haesinmyo.  
Yangyang-eup, Yangyang-gun, Gangwon-do (2005, Lee Han-gil)

rite was observed on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) in the first lunar month.

## JEUIJANGSO 제의장소

### Ritual Venue

*Jeuijangso* is the term that refers to the venue where the ritual takes place.

In Korean folk religion, rituals can take place at a shaman's shrine, village shrine or a private home, among other venues. Shamans hold rituals at their personal shrines, at the home of the person who has commissioned the ritual, or outdoor locations in natural surroundings like the mountains or the river. Venues for village rituals are more varied: natural altars set up on the ground or a rock; temporary structures serving as altar; *museokdan* (stone stack altar); *sinmok* (divine tree); *seondol* (standing stone); shrine set up in a dugout hut or a haystack altar; or shrines with tiled or thatched roofs. Village shrines are called many different names: *guksadang* (shrine for the village gods); *bugundang* (government office shrines); *sansindang* (shrine for Mountain God); *seonangdang* (shrine for Village Guardian Deity); *seonghwangsa* (shrine for village deity Seonghwang); and *bonhyangdang* (shrine for God of Origin).

Rituals for the worship of household gods take place in the locations associated with the relevant deity: the open hall, where **Seongju** (House Guardian God) resides; the kitchen where **Jowang** (Kitchen Deity) resides; and the backyard and the sauce jar terrace where **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God) and **Eop** (God of Property) reside.

## POJEDAN 포제단

### Altar for Village Rituals

*Pojedan* is a term that refers to the altar and ritual venue for the Confucian village ritual *poje*, observed on Jeju Island.

Generally there are three different types of *pojedan*: Altars are the most basic; stone walls were developed by the need to build a boundary between the ritual venue and secular spaces; and shrines are the most recent developments, owing to the increase in population and in the number of visitors, which called



*Pojedan* in the village of Aewol.  
Aewol-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2001, Kim Dong-seop)



*Pojedan* in Geonip-dong.  
Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2008, Kim Dong-seop)





*Pojedan* in the village of Napeul.  
Aewol-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2010, Gang So-jeon)



*Pojedan* in the village of Myeongwol.  
Hallim-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2002, Kim Dong-seop)

for a more comfortable shelter. Stone walls make up the most wide spread form of altar, but shrines are on the rise and open-space types are observed as well.

Altar-type *pojedan* are located in residential areas or deep in the mountains, comprising simply a flat altar made of natural stones, with small flat stones laid out in the number of the spirits enshrined at the altar. When rituals are held here, the ritual officials use temporary tents set up by the altar as accommodations. Stone wall types are fenced by a wall, inside which is an altar, either with a roof structure or without. Shrine types can accommodate ritual officials in the days that lead up to the rituals, during which devotions are

offered to the gods and strict taboos must be observed.

These ritual venues were originally built in quiet, subdued locations where dog barking or chicken crowing could not be heard, but over time the locations shifted to clean yet accessible places.

## SANSINDANG 산신당 Shrine for Mountain God

*Sansindang* is the term for village shrines for *Sansin* (Mountain God), located on the hillside or at the foot of the guardian mountain behind the village.

Alternate terms for mountain god shrines include *sanjedang*, *sansingak*, and *sallyeonggak*. When a mountain is believed to be sacred, its spirit is worshipped as a deity. A shrine that is located in the village and not in the mountains but dedicated to a mountain god is also called *sansindang*.

The deity enshrined in *sansindang* can be male or female, or sometimes a heterosexual pair is enshrined together. Inside, a tablet for the mountain god, or a painting of the deity is enshrined. If the deity is based on a historical figure, a wood carving or a clay figurine is enshrined, accompanied by a wooden or clay horse.

Tablets are inscribed in ink with the Chinese characters “○○山神之位,” or “○○山靈之位,” meaning



Shrine for *Sansin* in Daeya village.



Interior of the Daeya village shrine.



Spring at the the Daeya village mountain god shrine.

“Tablet for the God of ○○ Mountain,” marking the place for the deity and the specific name of the mountain, which signifies that **Sansin** were regional gods associated with specific villages and communities.

Buddhist temple compounds often have a separate pavilion dedicated to **Sansin**, or the deity is enshrined in Samseonggak (Trinity Pavilion) along with **Chilseong** (Seven Stars) and **Dokseong** (Pindola Bharadvaja). In these pavilions, **Sansin** is enshrined in the form of a painting of an old man with white hair and beard, seated with a tiger by his side. The fact that most Buddhist temples in Korea enshrine the mountain god underlines the deity’s importance as a universal village god and the spread of its worship in both shamanism and Buddhism.

## SEONANGDANG 서낭당

### Shrine for Village Guardian Deity

*Seonangdang* is a term that refers to a shrine for village guardian deity, located at the entrance of the village, on a hillside or hilltop, or the foot of a mountain, in the form of a stone stack altar, some with a tree as well, or in the form of a shrine house.

In some regions *seonangdang* is called *cheonwangdang*. Shrines that take the form of a stone stack altar or a tree (*dangmok*, or village guardian tree), are called *guksudang* or *guksidang*.

Today, not many *seonangdang* in the form of a stone stack altar or tree remain, and most take the form of a small house or hut, sometimes next to an old tree, serving as the guardian deity in the communal faith.

The shrine house, or *dangjip*, has an altar inside, with a tablet set up in the center. The tablet contains an ink inscription of the Chinese characters “城隍之神位 (Tablet for Seonghwang Deity).”

While the stone stack *seonangdang* is more closely associated with private prayers and rituals,





Shrine for Seonang in the village of Jonggok.



Shrine for village guardian deity.

the shrine *seonangdang* is perceived as a venue for communal worship. *Seonangdang*, in other words, serves as a venue for not only village worship but also the worship of shamanic and household gods.

## SEONGHWANGSA 성황사

Shrine for Village Deity Seonghwang

*Seonghwangsa* is the shrine for worshipping the village deity *Seonghwang*, serving as the venue for village rites and shamanic rituals.

*Seonghwangsa* was a state shrine that was built on major mountains around the country, starting in late Goryeo (918-1392). In Joseon (1392-1910), provincial officials continued to officiate rituals at these shrines, but eventually villagers took over the rituals. One of the few *seonghwangsa* from history that still remain include



Shrine for the village deity Seonghwang at Uljin Twelve-Pass Mountain Route.  
Seo-myeon, Uljin-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2011)

Worship services at *seonghwangsa* were held in spring and fall, officiated by a village elderly, the costs covered by harvest from communal rice paddies maintained for village rituals (*widap*). Sacrificial foods comprised wine, steamed rice, white rice cake, beef, and fruits, and the service was followed by the village ritual *byeolsingut*.

one at Daegwallyeong, a mountain pass in Gangwon Province, and one on the Twelve-Pass Mountain Route in Uljin, North Gyeongsang Province.

The Shrine for Seonghwang at Daegwallyeong is a wooden structure with a tiled roof, its Chinese-character signboard reading “城隍祠 (Seonghwangsa).” Inside is a tablet that reads “大關嶺國師城隍之神 (State Preceptor God of Daegwallyeong)” and a painting of the deity, depicted as a general on horseback, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. A servant is holding the reins of the horse, and a pair of tigers guard the god at the side, their front legs stretched forward. The shrine is believed to be divine, with shamans from around the country still visiting everyday to hold rituals and to offer prayers.

The Shrine for Seonghwang at Uljin Twelve-Pass Mountain Route, located at the bottom of the mountain pass Joryeong (Saejae), is a wooden structure with a gabled roof, measuring 1 *kan* (6.6 m<sup>2</sup>) in area. This shrine served as a place of worship for peddlers traveling on this mountain route and also for enshrining the spirits of deceased peddlers. Inside the shrine stands a wooden tablet with the Chinese characters “鳥嶺城隍神位 (Tablet for Seonghwang Deity of Joryeong)” written in ink.

## SODO 소도 Sacred District Sodo

**Sodo** was a sacred district in Mahan, one of the Three Han States of ancient Korea, circa 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries.

Details about **Sodo** can be found in the Chinese history book *Sanguozhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms), in the “Account of Dongyi” chapter of the volume *History of the Wei Dynasty*. The book describes a district called **Sodo** in the Three Han States that was independent of the boundaries of political administration, where spirits were worshipped through rituals using a pole attached with a rattle and drum. The district was sacred, and refugees fled there for protection, which resulted in widespread burglary, the book records. The Three Han States were small political entities based on metal culture that had formed in the southern parts of the Korean peninsula.

The pole is viewed as the channel for the descent of an agricultural god to the venue of the ritual, and the rattle and drum used to signal to the god the directions to the site. **Sodo** was, in effect, an asylum of sorts, a sacred place unreachable by secular authority.





# Ritual Props



## Ritual Props

## BAETGI 뱃기

## Boat Banner

**Baetgi** is a banner raised on a boat to pray for a big catch and safety on the boat.

The banner generally comprises stripes of three or five colors and is called different names by region. Some banners serve simply as ornaments but most are religious, referred to as *seonanggi*, or guardian deity banner. They are also called *gosagi*, or ritual banner, because they serve as sacred entities that embody deities in village rituals.

When setting out for a catch, the boat owner raises the boat banner by the gate of his house then goes up to the village shrine for a ritual, after which he heads to his boat, accompanied by a percussion troupe, and erects the banner to hold the boat ritual *baegosa*.

During the village ritual of the first lunar month, boat owners carry their *baetgi* up to the village shrine and hold a ritual, then carry the banners to their boats for a fishing ritual (*gaetje*), a big catch ritual (*pungeoje*) or straw boat (*ttibae*) ritual. They also hold impurity-

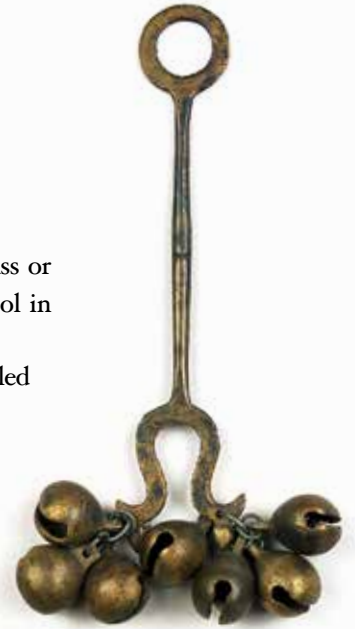
cleansing rituals with the banner when poor catch continues or an unfortunate incident occurs on the boat. When returning with a full load of fish from a big catch, the boat sails back with the banner raised and percussion music is played on gongs and drums.

## BANGUL 방울

## Shamanic Rattle

**Bangul** is a rattle made of brass or copper, used as a shamanic tool in rituals.

Shamanic rattles, also called *muryeong*, date back to the Bronze Age on the Korean peninsula, as shown by ancient relics including *paljuryeong* (eight-arm rattle), *yuangnyeong* (rattle attached to pole), and *ssangduryeong* (double-headed rattle), *hwansangssangduryeong*



Seven Stars rattle.

(ring-type double-headed rattle), all assumed to have served as tools for religious rituals. There are two types of **bangul**: one with a ball inside the rattle to make sounds, the other comprising many rattles that clink together to create sound.

As a shaman begins her career, she goes around soliciting metal from households, to be melted and made into a rattle. Some shamans are initiated into the calling after experiencing a dream of finding or acquiring a rattle. In a possession ritual (*naeringut*), the senior shaman,



Boats with five-color banners.  
Sinheuk-dong, Boryeong-si, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Kim Jun)



Ninety-nine rattle.

rattle and fan. A shaman's rattle also serves as a symbol of her status and role.

The gods are known to be drawn to and at the same time have a fear for metallic noise, and rattles are used to either call or chase away the spirits. Rattles are used in almost all rituals officiated by a senior possessed shaman (*gangsinnmu*): when inviting the gods; when trance channeling; when demonstrating the supernatural powers of the gods; when guiding the dead to the underworld. The rattle, in other words, is a vital tool for possessed shamans.

There are several different types of rattles used in Korean shamanism. *Gunungbangul* is a large rattle attached to a pole, used in *gununggeori*, the segment for worshipping **Gunung** (Martial Hero God) in Hwanghae Province rituals. *Chilseongbangul*, or the Seven Stars rattle, is comprised of seven rattles, each engraved with the Chinese character 壽 (longevity) or 福 (fortune), and the shaking of this rattle is aimed at bringing longevity and good fortune to man. *Daesinbangul* comprises a bundle of twelve rattles, widely used in rituals and in divination.

or spirit mother, tests the possessed shaman of her qualification by ordering her to find the hidden shamanic



Shamanic channeling in a state of trance.  
Mt. Bonghwa, Jungnang-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Yeong-gwang)



## BUCHAE 부채

### Shamanic Fan

*Buchae* refers to the fan used as a shamanic tool in a ritual.

The fan is one of the most important tools, central to the processes of a ritual. In a ritual, the shaman, as an agent of the gods, uses the fan to serve as a medium between the gods and her follower who has commissioned the ritual. When officiating a ritual or when trance channeling, the shaman has in her left hand the rattle and in her right the fan. She uses the fan to hide her face or to accept money. In shamanism, the fan is capable of chasing away evil spirits and calling in the good spirits, creating wind that washes away the wrongs of the past, brings in the good fortunes of the present, and delivers prophecies for the future.



Shaman using fan and rattle.  
Mt. Bonghwa, Jungnang-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Yeong-gwang)



*Buchae.*

When a shaman is near death or is retiring, she passes down her fan and rattle to a younger shaman or buries them in the ground. The younger shaman who receives the fan and rattle considers herself as heir to the legacies of the older shaman, and those who discover by chance the buried tools enter the shamanic practice, considering the coincidence her fate in life. To a shaman, the fan is not a simple tool but a magical symbol that reflects that she is an agent of the gods.

## BUJEOK 부적

### Talisman

*Bujeok* is the term for talisman, comprising letters or patterns that are believed to carry the power to chase away evil ghosts and prevent calamities.

In Korean folk religion, amulet sheets are generally made by painting letters or pictures in red on a sheet of yellow paper, and can be categorized into good fortune talismans (*gilsangbujeok*) and ghost-repelling talismans (*byeoksabujeok*). The former includes wish talismans (*sowonseongchwibu*), prosperity talismans (*bugwibu*), harmony-and-longevity-in-the-family talismans (*bubujasonhwahapjangsubu*), and protection-from-benevolent-god talismans (*seonsinsuhobu*), while the latter includes protection-against-ghost-attacks talismans (*gwisinbulchumbu*), disease talismans (*jilbyeongbu*), and three-calamities talismans (*samjaebu*).



Talisman sheet to prevent fire calamities, with the Chinese character '火 (fire)' surrounded by '水 (water)';  
Bongdong-eup, Wanju-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2004, Seo Hae-suk)



Talisman for the prevention of burglary.  
Hajang-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2003, Korearoot)



Talisman sheets pasted on the walls inside the home.  
Goha-eup, Paju-si, Gyeonggi-do (2007, Seo Jong-won)

Among them, disease talismans (*jilbyeongbu*) were used to prevent illnesses caused by evil ghosts. When medicines show no effect, an amulet sheet written in cinnabar is burned to drink the ashes with water, which is believed to help treatment as a supplement to medication.

Three-calamities talismans (*samjaebu*) help prevent against the three major calamities (*samjae*) that can occur in life—referring to war, smallpox and famine, or water calamities, fire calamities and wind calamities. There are myriad types of talismans for this purpose, the most distinctive among them the three-headed-one-footed-hawk talisman, which was based on a subgenre of paintings of the three-headed hawk from early Joseon.

There were also talismans for seasonal occasions including Dano talisman, pasted over gates or on pillars, and the winter solstice talisman (*dongjibujeok*), pasted on the pillars or walls of the kitchen on winter solstice.

## CHUNGmun 축문

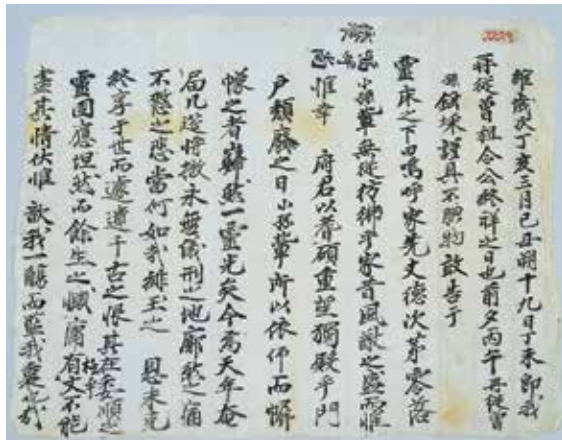
### Ritual Prayer

*Chungmun* refers the prayer message offered to the gods, prepared in text form to be read aloud in a village ritual.

Prayer invocation was introduced in late Goryeo (918-1392) when Confucian rites were adopted from China.

As with other ritual procedures, the prayer also followed the Confucian tradition, opening with “維歲次,” meaning, “now the present year,” followed by the date, and ending with the closing “敢昭告于;” or “as we solemnly inform,” the style and format indential to those used in Confucian memorial service. The difference is that while in a Confucian memorial rite the invocation was carried out by the eldest son of the family, in a village rite this responsibility is assigned to a selected villager.





Ritual prayer text.

The prayer follows the four-character pattern of Chinese poetry except for parts that address the names of places or deities, including **Sansin** (Mountain God), Seonghwangsin (Village Deity Seonghwang) and Sancheonsin (Deity of Mountain and River). The text extols the sanctity of the gods and lists the hopes and wishes of the villagers. Ritual prayers were traditionally written in Chinese characters but the Korean writing system Hangeul has been used in some villages starting at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

When the invocation is completed, the prayer sheet is rolled up and burned, in a procedure called *soji*, viewed as a departing ritual to send off the gods. In some cases, the sheets are prepared according to the number of households in the village and the name of each household head is called out as each sheet is burned. There is a belief that if the sheet burns quickly, sending the ashes soaring high, one's wishes will come true.

## EOMNAMU 엄나무 Prickly Castor-Oil Tree

*Eomnamu*, or prickly castor-oil tree, particularly its thorny branches, are used in Korean folk religion to

chase away evil spirits and illnesses.

*Kalopanax septemlobus*, common name prickly castor-oil tree, is a deciduous tree in the family *Araliaceae*, which grows around Korea, Japan and China. Its branches are prickly with thorns, believed to scare away evil spirits and diseases, and are hung over gates or room doors in homes at Seol (Lunar New Year). Another related custom is to take malaria patients to forests dense with castor oil trees to pray for healing.

This tree is also used to chase away *yagwanggwi*, or night light ghost, which is believed to invade homes around Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) in the

EOMNAMU  
Yeongsan-myeon, Changnyeong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do  
(2011, Bae Do-sik)



Prickly castor-oil tree branches.



Prickly castor-oil tree branches.

first lunar month. On the sixteenth day, observed as ghost day, hair collected around the house is burned and prickly castor-oil tree branches are attached to a strainer and hung on the wall. In some regions, these branches are hung horizontally on the living room wall when there is a contagious disease going around.

The use of thorny branches including acacia to chase away bad spirits from homes is also practiced by China's ethnic minorities and by the Altai, Tuvan and Buryat peoples of Siberia.



Taboo ropes hung around a village guardian deity tree.  
Wolsan-myeon, Damyang-gun, Jeollanam-do (2006, Seo Hae-suk)

## GEUMJUL 금줄

### Taboo Rope

*Geumjul*, or taboo rope, is a straw garland hung over a gate, in the entrance of an alley, around a divine tree (*sinmok*) or on the sauce jar terrace to keep out impurities.

The garland is made of left-hand lay straw rope, tied with a number of symbolic items, which vary by function and occasion: When a son is born, a rope is hung over the two pillars of the gate of the house, with fresh pine branches (*solgaji*), pieces of wooden charcoal (*sut*), and red peppers (*gochu*); when a daughter is born, with pine branches, charcoal and folded paper. For village tutelary festivals (*dongje*), taboo ropes with folded paper or pine branches are hung not only at the village shrine and on the village guardian tree but all other venues considered as sacred, including the gates of the houses of the ritual officials.

Left-hand lay rope is not a regular type of rope and is not used in venues for everyday routines. This practice is related to the belief that evil spirits that possess *yin* elements fear the left, which is of *yang* elements.

The straws used to make the rope are stalks that bear rice grains and this symbolizes strength. White ritual paper is the symbol for money and reflects a prayer for material fortune, and its color contributes to the function of clearly marking forbidden territory.

Pine branches are evergreen, representing unchanging energy, and the sharp pine needles symbolize sorcery powers for driving away evil forces. Red peppers symbolize the phallus, and red is a *yang* color that is most feared by evil spirits. Charcoal is black, a *yin* color, and its purifying capacities are believed to prevent evil forces by absorbing them.

## HWANGTO 황토

### Yellow Soil

*Hwangto*, which literally means “yellow soil,” refers to red clay that is sprinkled at sacred venues related to rituals to purify and to keep out bad fortune.

Also called *geumto* (taboo soil), the clay is dug from a location in the village considered clean and free of impurities. The color red is believed to possess ghost-repelling powers and red clay ensures sanctity in carrying out a ritual by keeping out bad forces. It is sprinkled at the ritual venue and other venues occupied by ritual officials and those preparing the sacrificial





Red clay placed in piles around a sea god shrine.  
Wondeok-eup, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2003)

foods, or in places believed to be susceptible to the intrusion of evil spirits; around the village guardian tree; the well that provides water for preparing sacrifices; outside the homes of ritual officials and others participating in ritual preparations; and where the taboo rope (*geumjul*) is hung at the village entrance.

*Hwangto* is sprinkled evenly, about half a shovel for each step taken.

In secular terms, *jakdu*, is a sword-like tool with a wide blade, used for cutting straw or other cattle feed, or for chopping ingredients for herbal medicine. The cutters used in shamanic rituals are identical to those used in farms, but take on new meaning as a spiritual device when the shaman performs on them with bare feet.

Prior to stepping on the blades, the shaman feigns gestures of poking or slashing her limbs or tongue with the cutter to show off the sharp blade and her powers. Blade dancers testify that the sharper the blades, the less pain they feel when they perform.

When shamans sharpen the cutter blades,

## JAKDU 작두 Straw Cutter

*Jakdu*, meaning straw cutter, refers to the shamanic device on which a shaman performs the blade dance to demonstrate her spiritual powers.



*Jakdu*.



Blade dance performed as part of the ritual *mangudaetakgut*.  
Gugi-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (2006, Choe Ho-sik)

they keep a sheet of mulberry paper between their teeth, called *hami*, to keep out impurities that can be incurred by speaking. In an attempt to demonstrate their supernatural powers, some shamans perform on single blades instead of a pair; on seven tiers of blades constructed like a ladder, called *chilseongjakdu* (Seven-Stars blades); or on blades installed on a swing, which they ride on as they would a swing.

Performing the blade dance is believed to facilitate deep communication between the gods and the shaman and the transmission of supernatural powers from the gods. This is why trance channeling that takes place in the middle of a blade dance is considered more credible and authoritative than channeling that occurs in any other situation. The symbolic significance of blade dance lies in preventing or repressing unclean energy by cutting off bad fortune and harmful forces.

## JEUNG 제웅

### Straw Effigy

*Jeung* is an effigy woven with straw in the form of a human.

The terms for these straw dolls vary by region: *heosuabi*, *heojebi*, *jeongeobi*, *cheoyong*.

In Korean folk religion, there are two different uses of *jeung*: one is as part of a seasonal custom called *jeungchigi*, held on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon) Festival in the first lunar month, and the other as part of a village ritual.

*Jeungchigi* is practiced on the eve of the Great Full Moon. Figurines are woven with straw, and a coin is inserted inside the head. The figurines are then discarded on the road, which is believed to prevent bad fortunes.



*Jeung*.  
Nam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2002, Gang Seong-bok)



*Jeung* featured in village rituals can again be categorized into inland rituals and coastal rituals, which vary to a degree in form and function.

In inland regions, *jeung* takes the form of ordinary people, like a scarecrow. *Dodanggut*, the village ritual in Gyeonggi Province, features *jeung* in its *Dwitjeon* (Closing Table) Segment, during which the straw effigy (*jeongeobi*) is condemned and burned as a punishment, to prevent all kinds of bad fortunes from arriving at the village. The punishment of *jeung* is a final act of cleansing the ritual venue and eradicating evil spirits.

*Jeung* in the coastal regions is characterized by its exposed or exaggerated sex organ. *Wido ttibaetgut* is a ritual observed in areas around Daeri Village on the island of Wido in North Jeolla Province, at the end of which a straw boat (*ttibae*) is sent out to sea to wish for a big catch. Inside the straw boat are seven *jeung*, each doll appointed a post including captain, boatswain and chief cook (*hwajang*), and placed in relevant spots on the boat. These effigies are about 40 centimeters tall. Since the deity that oversees the sea is female, the *jeung* have exaggerated sex organs, their dispatch into the sea a symbolic union between male and female to pray for a big catch.

The above examples show that *jeung* serve as ritual tools for eradicating evil forces or to prevent bad fortune, and for serving as stand-ins for humans.

## JIHWA 지화 Paper Flower

*Jihwa*, or paper flowers, are ornaments used for expressing devotion to the gods in a shamanic ritual.

Paper flower ornaments, also called *sinmyeongkkot* (spirit flower) or *muhwa* (shamanic flower), are considered sacred, on display for the purpose of entertaining the gods, of creating a venue where the deity will be surrounded by flowers while receiving the ritual, and they come in many different kinds with different uses and meanings.

*Geolliphwa* (collector god flower) is used in bigscale rituals like *mangudaetaekgut*, observed in Hwanghae Province to pray for longevity in the elderly. It is also



*Jihwa* decorating the shamanic shrine serving as a venue for the dead spirit appeasing ritual *ogugut*.  
Ilgwang-myeon, Gijang-gun, Busan (2005, Kim Hyeong-geun)

called *mudonghwa*, or child dancer flower, because the way the shaman dances when possessed by the Collector God resembles a child. *Geolliphwa* is prepared for one-time use in a ritual.

*Deombulgukhwa* (chrysanthemum bundle) is a type of paper flower offered on the ritual table in the east coast regions, an abundant bundle of chrysanthemums in the shape of a half-sphere.

*Darihwa* is a paper rendering of an imaginary flower, offered on ritual tables in Seoul and in the east coast regions. It is believed that large flowers scare away ghosts, and *darihwa*'s huge blossoms contribute to this function.

*Seorihwa* is also an imaginary flower, believed to blossom on snow, without roots. In shamanic rituals in Hwanghae Province, the shaman holds a *seorihwa* blossom in her hand as she officiates parts of the



Imaginary flower *supallyeon*.



New-star chrysanthemums.

ritual, an attempt at purifying the venue with a flower considered clean and pure.

*Josanghwa* (ancestor flowers) are paper flowers offered on the ritual table to invite the ancestors from both the father's and the mother's side of the family, and also the in-laws.







Chrysanthemum bundle.  
(2005, Yun Dong-hwan)

Imaginary flower *seorihwa*.  
(2009, Hong Tea-han)

Ancestral flowers.  
(2009, Kim Sang-su)

*Supallyeon* is the largest type of *jihwa*, made only for special rites observed in the Seoul and Gyeonggi regions and in Hwanghae Province. It is also an imaginary flower, and is featured prominently in Korea's Buddhist and shamanic rituals.

*Baengnyeonghwa* is a type of flower used sometimes as part of *supallyeon*, or placed on the ritual table for the goddess of childbearing Chilseongjeseok.

solemnity props (*jangeomgu*), hand props (*jimul*), and gifts (*yedan*).

As solemnity prop, paper money is used to decorate the ritual venue, to add an air of solemnity and sanctity.

*Jijeon* as hand prop is carried in the hands of the shaman officiating the ritual, a phenomenon mainly observed in the Jeolla provinces.

On Jeju Island, paper money is offered to the gods as gifts, in the form of bundles of bills cut into the shape of a foot (*baljijeon*), similar to the hand prop paper money held by a shaman in the Jeolla provinces, or in the form of a rectangular sheet of paper with a hole in the center (*tongjijeon*), like a coin. *Baljijeon* signifies that money is being waged on the gods, and the more one waged, the more effective the ritual.

*Jijeon*, in effect, serves as a means of purchase or distribution, used to pray for god's protection and security for the deceased in the underworld, and thus taking on far more value and significance than real-life

## JJEON 지전 Paper Money

*Jijeon* refers to paper cut into the shape of bills or coins, used as a shamanic prop that symbolizes currency for the dead to use in the underworld.

*Jijeon*, also called *geumjeon* (gold money) or *eunjeon* (silver money), is widely used in rituals, and made with various different types of mulberry paper. It is most frequently featured in grievance cleansing rituals (*ssitgimgut*), along with the rattle used by a possessed shaman. The paper money in this ritual for the dead takes the form of a bundle of thin strips of paper cut up to resemble a long chain of coins.

Paper money can be categorized by function into



*Jijeonchum*.  
Plaza at Jindo Bridge (2008, Kim Yeong-ran)



*Jijeon.*

currency and closely associated with rituals for the dead. Its use is reserved for religious rituals including funerals, where *jijeon* serves as travel money for the dead in their journey to the underworld.

## KI 箕

### Winnow Basket

*Ki* is a basket for winnowing grains and is used as a sorcery tool for fortunetelling or in rituals.

Woven of bamboo or willow, a winnow basket measures between 50 to 70 centimeters in width and 70 to 100 centimeters in length. Its function of sifting grains from chaff is reinterpreted in folk belief as that of sorting out

impurities and uncertainties, and thus used for problem-solving and decision-making.

The most common uses of winnow baskets as a sorcery tool are for harvest divination and rainmaking. In farming households, on the morning of Jeongwol-daeboreum (Great Full Moon), the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, a winnow basket containing five-grain rice, cooked vegetables, cotton seeds, and a mix of grains is taken to the farm's cow as a means of telling the fortunes for the coming harvest, determined by which food the cow eats first: Rice and cooked vegetables are for determining how the year's harvest will turn out; the mixed grains and cotton seeds are for determining how the harvest for the individual crops will turn out. Winnow baskets are also used for the rain rite *giuje*, by the women of the village who head out to the river and wash the baskets to pray for rain, based on the belief that the impurities from the baskets will contaminate the river, which will anger the gods and bring rain. The rite also includes prayers performed by women while splashing water by the river or a well, which is based on the belief that enacting a scene that resembles a rain shower will bring rain in reality as well.

Winnow baskets are also used for offering food to lesser spirits and miscellaneous ghosts (*jagwijapsin*). As part of the ritual *antaek*, held in the first lunar month to pray for peace in the home, a ritual table is set up right outside the rooms or in the yard, for lesser



*Ki.*



spirits, using a winnow basket as a table, with straw mats laid over it in the shape of a cross, on which the sacrificial foods are arranged, sometimes with proper offerings, or with small morsels collected from the ritual tables in other rooms.

*janggu*, *jing* (gong), *bara*, *piri*, *haegeum* and *daegeum* are played, while in the province's southern parts and in Chungcheong and Jeolla provinces, *janggu*, *jing*, *kkwaenggwari*, *piri*, *haegeum* and *daegeum* are used. In Hamgyeong and Pyeongan provinces, *janggu*, *jing* and *bara* are mostly featured, and sometimes also *kkwaenggwari*, which is similar to the shamanic music of Hwanghae Province.

On Jeju Island, a wide range of percussion instruments are used, including *janggu*, *buk*, *daeyeong* (gong), and *seolsoe*, an important percussion instrument in Jeju shamanic music, looks like a small brass bowl turned upside down on a basket and is beaten with two metal sticks.

The cymbals-like instrument *bara*, also called *jegeum*, is generally used to keep time in shamanic music, and featured as a main instrument in ritual segments that are related to Buddhism. Made of brass, they are between 20 and 30 centimeters in diameter, slightly smaller than the ones used in Buddhist temples. *Bara* is considered one of the most important shamanic instruments, second only to *janggu*, and is either passed down from the spirit parent to the spirit child, or purchased.

## MUAKGI 무악기 Shamanic Instruments

*Muakgi* is a term that refers to the wide range of musical instruments used in a shamanic ritual.

Music accompanies almost all shamanic rituals, performed on *janggu* (hourglass drum), *bara* (small cymbals), *piri* (reed flute), *daegeum* (large bamboo flute, also called *jeotdae*), *haegeum* (two-stringed zither), *kkwaenggwari* (small gong), *buk* (small drum), *seolsoe* (bowl-shaped gong) and other instruments.

In the northern parts of Gyeonggi Province,

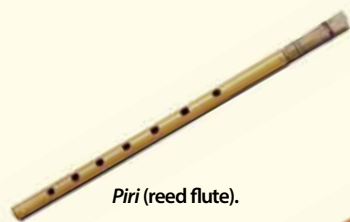


Shamanic music performed at village ritual on Mt. Bonghwa. Mt. Bonghwa, Jungnang-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Yeong-gwang)

MUAKGI



*Haegeum* (two-stringed zither).



*Piri* (reed flute).



*Daegeum* (large bamboo flute).



*Kkwaenggwari* (small gong).



*Jing* (gong).



*Bara* (small cymbals).



*Buk* (small drum).



*Jangu* (hourglass drum).



## MUBOK 무복 Shamanic Garb

*Mubok* refers to ritual garb that the shaman dons to represent the gods in a shamanic ritual.

Shamanic garb comprises various types of traditional costumes—*wonsam*, *dopo*, *jangsam*, *cheollik*, *mongduri*, *dongdari*, *jeonbok*, *gwaeja*—which a shaman selects not by sex or social status traditionally associated with the costumes, but by the purpose and characteristics of the ritual. Alterations are also made to the traditional forms to emphasize function or decorative effect. The color of *mubok* serves to



*Wonsam.*

symbolize a deity and to distinguish between the different segments that make up a ritual. While the shamanic garb of possessed shamans (*gangsinnmu*) boasts a wide variety and extravagance in form and color, hereditary shamans (*seseummu*) keep to simple costumes that observe specific boundaries.

*Wonsam* is a formal dress from the royal courts of Joseon (1392-1910), which also served as bridal dress for commoners. Today the dress is used as shamanic garb in the Hogu (Smallpox God) and Changbu (Clown God)



*Dongdari.*

segments, representing the relevant gods. In the illustrated book *Mudangnaeryeok* (The Shaman Legacy), a shaman is featured wearing *wonsam* with color-striped sleeves, with a fan and a rattle

in each hand, as she performs the segment for Seongju, the house guardian god.

Today, the dress is worn for the various segments associated with smallpox, including segments for the deceased royalty gods (*byeolsanggeori*) and for the clown god (*changbugeori*).

*Dopo* is a coat for men with a back slit, worn by the Confucian literati of Joseon. It is worn by possessed shamans in regions north of the Han River, including the Seoul area and Hwanghae, Pyeongan and Gangwon provinces, generally for rituals worshipping dignified and masculine deities.

*Jangsam* is a Buddhist monk's jacket, and the shamanic garb modeled after it is worn in ritual segments associated with Buddhism. It is a long white robe with wide sleeves, with folds along the waist of the skirt section, wide and long enough to cover the feet. A red band is worn over the shoulder and across the chest, with another red band around the waist, and a white conical hat.

*Dongdari* is a military coat from Joseon, worn over a traditional jacket and pants and under the vest coat *jeonbok*. It is similar in shape to a traditional coat but with narrow sleeves. The body of the coat is a reddish yellow, its sleeves red. When worn as shamanic garb, this coat takes on a different color scheme. Modern-day shamans wear the military felt hat *jeollip* with light green *dongdari* and the vest *gwaeja* over it.

*Mongduri* is a yellow women's coat worn by court entertainers when performing in royal banquets. As shamanic garb, the color or shape of this coat is not clearly defined and is worn by both possessed shamans and hereditary shamans.

*Jeonbok* is a vest coat, without sleeves or lapel, and with slits on the side and back center. Exact shapes vary by region, the colors mostly dark blue or black. It



*Mongduri.*



*Jeonbok* worn by shaman in *yeongdeunggut*.  
Geonip-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Gang So-jeon)



*Gwaeja* worn by shaman in *mangudaetakgut*.  
Gugi-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (2006, Choe Ho-sik)

is a main shamanic clothing item, worn over various shirts and coats as both ritual garb and everyday wear.

*Cheollik* is a formal military coat worn by court officials high and low from mid-Goryeo through late Joseon for battles or for hunting. It is a full-length coat worn with a belt, the short leather boots *mokhwa* and the horsehair hat *gat*. This coat serves as an important shamanic garb for hereditary shamans in Gyeonggi Province.

*Gwaeja* is a sleeveless coat originated from China and worn until the Joseon dynasty. As shamanic garb, it was worn in segments for the five-direction guardian gods (*sinjanggeori*) and the state official god *Daegam* (*daegamgeori*) and nowadays also in the royal subject segment (*byeolseonggeori*) as well.



*Jangsam* worn by shaman officiating Jeju Big Ritual.  
Gujwa-eup, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (1994, Mun Mu-byeong)



## MUGEUKGAMYEON 무극가면

### Shamanic Mask

*Mugeukgamyeon* is a term that refers to the masks used in a shamanic ritual.

The village tutelary spirit ritual *byeolsingut* of the east coast regions and the goblin healing ritual *yeonggammori* of Jeju Island accompany performances that make use of many different masks, while the cattle ritual *sonorigut* features a cow mask. Masks are also worn in illness rituals (*byeonggut*).

*Byeolsingut* of the east coast regions feature a grandmother mask called *halmigamyeon*, worn by the male shaman (*hwaraengi*) in the role of the grandmother. The mask is made of white cardboard painted with crooked red lips, eyebrows and ears, and tears falling from eye holes that slant outward, the face covered with red and black spots. This mask is burned when the performance is over, so new masks are made for each ritual.

Another mask that makes an appearance in the east coast ritual is the old man mask (*yeonggamgamyeon*), worn by the officiating shaman or a male shaman in the role of the old man, representing an aristocrat. Black eyes, eyebrows and mustache are painted on a white mask, with red lips.

In the goblin healing ritual of Jeju Island, a mask of the same name is worn by the *somu* (young courtesan) character to disguise them as *yeonggam*, an old goblin. It is a simple paper or cloth mask with the eyes, nose and mouth cut out, and the top and bottom parts cut into thin strips to render the hair and beard.

In the cow rituals (*sonorigut*) of Yangju, Gyeonggi Province, and of Pyeongsan, Hwanghae Province, cow masks are featured, which are full-body mask suits that vary in

size, from the one-person suit of the Pyeongsan ritual to the enormous suit for five or six people of the Yangju ritual.

In illness rituals (*byeonggut*), the mask is believed to invite healing forces and to chase away evil spirits that cause diseases, and they are called healing masks (*uisulgamyeon*). In the madman ritual (*gwangingut*) of the east coast regions, the mask of a female ghost that causes madness is worn to chase ghosts away.



Yeonggam character mask in *yeonggammori* ritual.  
Geonip-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (2006, Mun Mu-byeong)



Making of the mask for the character Yeonggam in Eastern Coast *Byeolsingut*.  
Ganggu-myeon, Yeongdeok-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2009, Kim Sin-hyo)

## MUSINDO 무신도

### Painting of Shamanic Deity

*Musindo* is the painting of a deity worshipped by a shaman.

Such paintings are also called *muhwa* (shamanic painting) or *hwabun*, and are hung in the personal shrines of possessed shamans (*gangsinnu*) or in village shrines. *Musindo* takes up great significance in shamanic practice and all possessed shamans enshrine paintings of deities that have descended upon them. They are generally individual paintings, painted in color on paper or silk. The oldest remaining *musindo* in Korea are the

paintings in the shrine for the village gods (*guksadang*) on Mt. Inwang in Seoul. These paintings were designated as Important Folklore Heritage in 1970. There are seventeen in all, of King Taejo, the founder of Joseon; Lady Gang; Hoguassi (Measles Maiden); **Yongwang** (Dragon King); **Sansin** (Mountain God); Changbu (Clown God); Sinjang (Shamanic Guardian God); Great Monk Muhak; Great Scholar Gwak Gwak (Guo Pu); **Dangun**, founder of Korea's first kingdom; Triad **Jeseok** (Goddess of Childbirth); Royal Preceptor Naong of Goryeo; Chilseok (Seven Stars); **Gunung** (Martial Hero Deity); General Geumseong; Empress Myeongseong of Joseon; and General Choe Yeong (**Choe Yeong Janggung**) of Goryeo.

Another historically important *musindo* are the

MUSINDO Mt. Inwang *Guksadang* (2013, Choe Ho-sik)



King Taejo.



Lady Gang.



MUSINDO Mt. Inwang Guksadang (2013, Choe Ho-sik)



Hoguassi.



Yongwang.



Sansin.



Changbu.



Sinjang.



Great Monk Muhak.



Great Scholar Gwak Gwak.



Triad Jeseok.



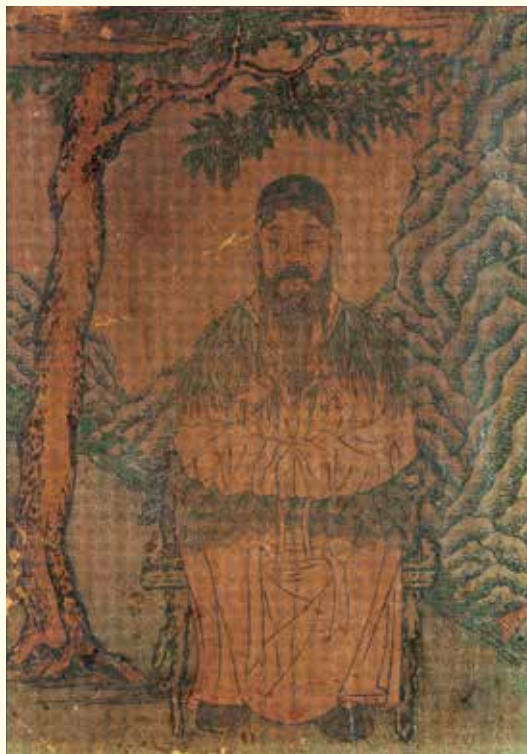
MUSINDO Mt. Inwang Guksadang (2013, Choe Ho-sik)



Chilseok.



Gunung.



Dangun.



Royal Preceptor Naong.



Gumseong.



General Choe Yeong.



Empress Myeongseong.



MUSINDO Naewatdang, Jeju National University Museum



Jeseokwi.



Wonmangwi.



Suryeongwi.



Cheonjawi.



Gamchalwi.



Sangsawi.



Bongungwi.



Jungjeonwi.



MUSINDO Naewatdang, Jeju National University Museum



Sanggunwi.



Hongawi

paintings from Naewat Shrine in Yongdam-dong of Jeju Island. The entire work is believed to have comprised twelve panels but now only ten remain, six with paintings of male deities and four with those of female deities. They were designated as Important Folklore Heritage in 2001 and are now housed at the Jeju National University Museum. The *Naewat Shrine musindo* are very different from those found on the Korean peninsula, in terms of color, sensibility and the facial features portrayed. They are also invaluable in that *Naewat Shrine* was a very influential institution as one of Jeju's four biggest government shrines.

## MYEONGDARI 명다리

Life Bridge

*Myeongdari*, a term that literally means, “life bridge,” is a strip of fabric that serves as a marker of foster parenthood formed between a shaman and her follower (*dangol*), offered to the gods to pray for longevity.

*Myeongdari* comprises a strip of white cotton cloth, skeins of thread and mulberry paper, the thread inserted into the folds of the cloth, which is folded up and wrapped with mulberry paper, and kept in a pile.

This offering is made by parents to their regular shaman on the years their child turns one, three, five or other odd-numbered years of age. The shaman offers the package of cloth to **Chilseong** (Seven Stars) to pray for the longevity of the child, and keeps it in a chest at the foot of the shrine or under the altar.



White thread and white fabric serving as *myeongdari*.  
Maegyo-dong, Gwonseon-gu, Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do  
(2002, Choe Ho-sik)

These life bridges are effective for a limited time and must be replaced with a new one in order to extend their powers. This practice of offering *myeongdari* to a shaman is called “child selling (*aipalgi*),” and the “sold” child becomes the shaman’s foster daughter or son, and the shaman the foster parent, thereby forming an exclusive relationship as follower and family shaman. The practice is rooted in the belief that a shaman with special powers oversees the lifespan of a child.

As a foster parent, the shaman is responsible for praying for the longevity of her foster children, and when she holds her ritual of thanksgiving to her gods (*sindanggut*), she performs a dance using the white cloths from the *myeongdari* packages and offers prayers. When a shaman moves away, she can sell the life bridges, and when a shaman dies, the shaman who succeeds her position can inherit or burn the cloths.

## MYEONGDO 명도

### Shamanic Mirror

*Myeongdo* is a round brass mirror that serves as a sacred shamanic prop that represents the face of a god.

Alternate terms include *myeongdu* and *donggyeong* (brass mirror). The patterns on this

shamanic mirror must include the sun and the moon and the Seven Stars (Big Dipper). Some scholars connect the shamanic mirror to the Seals of Heaven (Cheonbuin) that was sent down to the human world in the mythology of **Dangun**, the founder of Korea’s first kingdom, which underlines its symbolic significance as a sacred prop.

Since the mirror is worshipped as the face of a god, it is hung in a shrine over the top middle section of a painting of a shamanic god, or over an effigy of a god. Sometimes the mirror is hung on its own, in which case it is covered from behind with a sheet of white paper, as “courtesy cloth (*yedan*).” Some shamans worship the shamanic mirror as a face hung on the wall over a set of miniature traditional attire, comprising a small red skirt and yellow shirt, or a pair of pants and a shirt.

Shamans can see the god they worship in the mirror, which also functions as a medium of communicating with the god.

There are currently 12 deities worshipped in the form of shamanic mirrors, including the two most widely observed ones, *ilwolmyeongdo* (mirror of the Sun God and Moon God) and *chilseongmyeongdo* (mirror of the Seven Stars), which is decorated with a relief carving of the Seven Stars and a crescent moon.

It is difficult to find antique shamanic mirrors that date back a significant period of time, since shamans bury their mirrors in the ground upon retiring.



*Ilwolmyeongdo*



*Chilseongmyeongdo*



## NEOK 넙

### Paper Prop for Dead-appeasing Ritual

*Neok* is a shamanic prop made of white paper that symbolizes the soul of the dead, which is the literal meaning of the term.

In Jeolla provinces, this prop is also called *neokjeon*, *honbaek*, *sokyeon*, or *neokbal*. It is made of white mulberry paper, in various shapes including one that resembles the human body; in the form of a puffed-up bundle of paper; or strips of paper containing the name of the dead. The ones in the form of human bodies are gender specific, the male with a traditional man's coat and horsehair hat, the female with a traditional shirt and skirt and an impression of long hair.

Throughout the ritual, *neok* represents the soul of the dead, hung on the wall of the ritual venue or on the folding screen, or placed atop a pile of clothing that belonged to the dead or his ancestors. In the soul-greeting process called *hornmaji*, this prop is considered the subject that greets the soul of the deceased: It is placed on the heads of the surviving family and if the shaman succeeds at lifting it with her divine knife (*sinkal*) or paper money (*jijeon*), the paper prop is taken straight into the ritual venue, which in effect is the procedure of chaperoning the dead to the site of the ritual.

*Neokolligi*, or soul-lifting, is in procedure similar to soul-greeting, but in this case, if the prop is lifted by the knife or paper money, it is concluded that the deceased is satisfied with the ritual and is now ready to leave this world. So here, *neok* symbolizes the parting between the dead and his or her family.

In the cleansing process *ssitgim*, the prop is placed inside a vessel (*neokgeureut*) and placed next to *yeongdon*, a prop that symbolizes the body of the dead. And in the path-cleansing procedure *jildakkeum*, the prop is placed upon another prop, called *jilbe*, which symbolizes the path or the bridge between this world and the underworld; or hung on *dangseok*, a paper prop intended as a carriage for the dead; or placed inside the sacred basket to be carried to the underworld. *Neok* is

burned when the path-cleansing is complete.

To conclude, while the soul may be invisible in Korean shamanism, it is expressed as a concrete entity through props like *neok* and ritual procedures that feature them.

## OBANGSINJANGGI 오방신장기

### Banners of the Guardian Gods of the Five Directions

*Obangsinjanggi*, or the banners of the guardian gods of the five directions, is a set of banners in five colors, used for divination in shamanic rituals.

These flags are made with bamboo staffs around 70 centimeters long, some as long as 100 centimeters, the banner with silk or other fabric, sometimes dyed mulberry paper. They are around 70 centimeters in width and 50 centimeters in length.

The colors of the banners are associated with the five directions according to traditional cosmology: blue is for the east, and symbolizes misfortune and distress; white is for the west, symbolizing *Cheonsin* (Celestial God) or blessing for the dead; red for the south, symbolizing good fortune; black for the north, symbolizing death; and yellow for the center, which stands for one's ancestors.



*Obangsinjanggi*



Picking a flag for divination during village ritual.  
Mt. Bonghwa, Jungnang-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Yeong-gwang)

In the five-direction guardian gods segment (*sinjanggeori*) of a shamanic ritual, the shaman rolls up the five banners together, and the followers pick one of the staffs to have one's fortunes told. The red banner brings good fortune and material gain, which make it the most favored pick in the good-fortune ritual *jaesugut*. White and yellow banners are also considered auspicious; black and blue banners ominous.

*Obangsinjanggi* functions not only as a divination tool but for chasing away evil spirits and ghosts: In the possession ritual *naeringut*, the shaman brushes the body of her spiritual daughter, the possessed shaman, with these banners; and in the healing ritual *byeonggut*, the shaman uses the banners to pound on the patient's body.

## OSAEKCHEON 오색천

### Five-Colored Ribbons

*Osaekcheon*, meaning five-colored fabric and comprised of the colors red, green, blue, yellow and white, is worshipped in Korean folk religion as a sacred entity or offered in rituals as sacrifice.

Five-colored ribbons are used as offerings for the village guardian deity *Seonang*; or as banners tied to bamboo staffs for the wind god ritual *yeongdeunggosa* or for worshipping the boat guardian deity *Baeseonang*; or for wiping the body of the patient in healing rituals (*byeonggut*).

*Osaekcheon* is offered to the village guardian deity *Seonang* as part of the village ritual *seonangje* or as part of a private ritual, by hanging or wrapping the five-color ribbons on or around a stone stack or a tree that is worshipped as the village guardian deity. This is called





*Osaekcheon* used in the rite for the tutelary spirit of Eunsan.  
Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2004)

“dressing the village guardian.”

In Gangwon Province, five-colored ribbons are tied to trees as part of *sanmeigi*, or mountain-feeding ritual, to “dress the ancestor god *Josang*.” In worship

rituals for boat god *Baeseonang*, five-colored banners on bamboo staffs are erected on boats and five-colored ribbons are also offered on the ritual table along with the other sacrifices.

Five-colored banners are also used in the wind god ritual *yeongdeunggosa*, erected in a corner of the kitchen. This banner is called *yeongdeungot*, or dress for the wind god, and is considered a sacred entity that embodies Grandmother Yeongdeung.

In *byeonggut* (illness ritual), the process for washing away evil spirits involves the five-color fabric, which the sorcerer cuts with the divine knife (*sinkal*), and wipes the body of the patient with.



*Osaekcheon* used in the rite for the tutelary spirit of Eunsan.  
Eunsan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Cha Jeong-hwan)

## SAEONG 새옹

### Brass Pot

*Saeong* is a small brass pot for cooking rice or porridge, used in village rites as a ritual prop.

*Me*, or steamed rice, is one of the most important sacrificial foods on any ritual table, and *saeong* refers to the pot that is used to cook the rice to be offered, especially for rituals that observe strict taboos, mainly Buddhist rituals and village rituals in mountainous regions

*Saeong.*

including Gangwon Province. When rice is cooked inside a *saeong*, it must be served on the table in the pot. Wild *insam* (ginseng) diggers use this brass pot to cook rice for a mountain god ritual (*sansinje*) before setting out into the mountains. Its use is also observed in village rituals and other shamanic rites where the rice is cooked at the ritual venue. Rice cooked in this small pot, called *saeongme*, is considered cleaner and cooked with more devotion than rice cooked in a large cauldron and scooped into a bowl, thereby more suitable for rituals that require perfect cleanness.

The rice to be cooked in *saeong* must be taken from a new sack, and must be rinsed using chopsticks made of tree branches, not touched by hands. When fetching water for the rice from a spring near the ritual venue, the gourd dipper must not be flipped over but kept straight, and the rice must be rinsed three times. Then the rice is ready for steaming, and the lid must remain closed, never to be opened in the process since it was believed that lesser spirits will get to the rice first if the lid is opened.



## SAMJICHANG 삼지창

### Three-Pronged Spear

*Samjichang* is a three-pronged spear used as a prop in shamanic rituals.

A shaman acquires her *samjichang* through four different routes: by inheritance from her spirit mother; by discovery while experiencing spirit sickness or during a possession ritual (*naerimgut*); by purchase; or by donation from followers. In the past, the spears were custom-ordered through blacksmiths but are now mostly bought ready-made at stores.

Spears of different sizes are used for different functions.

In rituals staged in the Seoul area, small three-pronged spears are used in shamanic dance staged as part of the guardian gods segment (*sinjanggeori*), the segment for the government office deity (*bugungeori*),



Three-pronged spear featured in *mangudaetakgut*.  
Gugi-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul (2006, Choe Ho-sik)



and others. The shaman holds the moon knife *woldo* in her right hand and the spear in her left, the props symbolizing the power and authority of the deities.

Medium-sized spears are used in the stick-erecting procedure (*saseulseugi*) in a ritual, as a support for sacrificial offerings including a cow foot, beef rib, or a whole pig. The procedure is aimed at inquiring the intent of the gods by making a knife and spear stand while holding up the sacrifice, determining that the god is satisfied with the ritual if the prop holds the sacrifice in place without falling.

The biggest spears are used as decorations to convey solemnity, some as tall as 150 centimeters. These spears are placed by the ritual table or at the entrance of the ritual venue, to signify that the gods are present at the site and to reflect their sanctity and authority.

## SEOLGYEONG 설경 Shamanic Paper Props

*Seolgyeong* is the term for an assortment of paper props set up to threaten away or lock up evil spirits in the venue where a scripture recitation ritual (*dokgyeong*) is staged by a shaman or sorcerer.

Other terms include *seolwi* or *seolwiseolgyeong*, varying by region or by individual sorcerer.

The props take the form of large sheets of thin paper that reaches from floor to ceiling, decorated with cutout patterns made by folding the sheet into three layers. The top and middle sections are cut into various figures and letters including Buddha, the death messenger and passages from the scriptures, and the bottom parts are filled with red letters to serve as a talisman (*bujeok*). There are different patterns serving various purposes: some serve as channels between this world and the heavenly universe; some are for threatening away and eradicating evil spirits; some simply list the names of deities in all the directions of

heaven and earth.

*Seolgyeong* are visual expressions of the contents of the scriptures, while also serving as devices for locking up evil spirits in captivity. The make-up of these props is closely associated with the occasion of the ritual and the scripture recited by the sorcerer. For example, when staging a ritual to worship **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), or a ritual for a shaman possessed by **Chilseong**, the paper props should reflect the letters that make up the name and other elements associated with this deity.



*Seolgyeong.*  
Cheongyang-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(1997, Im Seung-beom)

*Seolgyeong.*  
Taeon-gun, Chungcheongnam-do  
(2003, Im Seung-beom)



Shamanic shrine decorated with *seolgyeong*.  
Taeon-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2003, Im Seung-beom)

## SINDAE 신대

### Divine Pole

*Sindae*, literally spirit-receiving pole, is a bamboo pole or rod used in Korean folk religion to receive, or to move, a god, from the sky, from deep inside the mountain, or from a shrine.

An alternate version of the term is *singan*, and these poles also serve as markers of prohibited spaces, and include village guardian deity poles (*seonangdae*), farmings flags (*nonggi*) and sacred poles (*sotdae*).

Divine poles are generally used for village tutelary rituals (*dongje*) and also during shamanic rituals.

To prepare for a village tutelary rite, ritual officials (*jegwan*) must be selected, a process in which a divine pole is used. A shaman or fortuneteller is hired to use the pole to decide who should serve as ritual official. The pole is also used during the village ritual to determine whether the spirit has descended, which is communicated through tremors, in the pole or in the rattle attached to the pole.

When holding large-scale shamanic rituals, the shaman erects a divine pole for the descent of Cheonwang (Celestial King) or Dongsin (Village God). The pole, in this case, is quite tall, the top made of fresh bamboo stalk with the leaves intact. When there are impurities, it takes several attempts for the spirit to descend.

*Seonangdae*, or village guardian deity poles, serve as a cosmic tree, or the divine altar tree (*sindansu*) as defined in Korean history, that serves as a divine channel between the heavens and the earth, with the roots stretching toward the center of the earth to receive its energy and the branches reaching for the heavens.

*Nonggi*, or farmings flags, represent each farming village and are considered divine, carrying the spirit of a deity with miraculous powers.

*Sotdae*, or sacred poles, are wooden poles with a carved bird attached to the top. While village guardian deity poles are portable, sacred poles are erected in a fixed location, usually at village entrances next to village guardian posts (*jangseung*) to protect the community against bad fortune and calamities.



*Sindae* used in the dead spirit appeasing ritual *ogugut*.  
Daejin Beach, Yeonghae-myeon, Yeongdeok-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2006, Kim Hyeong-geun)



## SINKAL 신칼

### Divine Knife

*Sinkal*, or divine knife, is a prop used by a shaman when staging a ritual.

*Sinkal* comes in many shapes, names, and functions.

Its range of size or shape includes small or large; with handle or without; straight or curvilinear; with fixed blade or a bending blade; with steel blade or wooden blade.

Other terms for the shaman's knife include *mukal*, *sinmyeongdo*, *daesinkal*, and *daemusinkal*. Specific names of the knives can be categorized by shape, by the deity that they represent, or by function. The first includes *woldo* (moon knife) and *eonwoldo* (half-moon knife). *Sinjangkal* (knife of the guardian god), *chilseongkal* (knife of the Seven Stars), *janggunkal* (knife of commander god), and *byeolsangkal* (knife of deceased royalty god) are names that reflect the deities that the knives stand for. Names that reflect the function of a knife include *bujeongkal* (impurity knife), which is thrown to the ground in the beginning and ending of a ritual to tell if the god has left or if the evil spirit has been chased away; and *ipkal* (mouth knife), which the shaman holds between



General's sword and three-pronged spear.  
Jungnang-gu, Seoul (2005, Kim Yeong-gwang)

her lips during a ritual. Sizes also vary, but are generally not longer than 1.5 meters, most around 30 to 40 centimeters.

*Sinkal* has many uses in the ritual process, but most importantly, serves as a symbol of the authority of the shaman and the gods, while representing the worshipped god. The knives are believed to cut away bad fortune and bring in good fortune. In the stick-erecting process (*saseulseugi*) of a ritual, *sinjangkal* is used along with the three-pronged spear *samjichang*, signifying that the knife is sacred. *Sinkal* is also used as a prop in shamanic dance and as a tool for divination.



Shaman's knife *daesinkal*.



Knife of the Seven Stars.

## SIRU 시루

### Earthenware Steamer

*Siru* is an earthenware steamer that is used for cooking grains and also as a prop in folk rituals.

The earthenware steamer was first used in the Korean peninsula during the late Bronze Age, mainly in the northern regions. By the Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C.E.–676), its use had spread evenly to all parts of the peninsula.

The traditional steamer comprises handles, main body, bottom and hole. It cannot be placed directly over fire and requires a separate pot for heating up water. The steamer is generally used for making *tteok*, or rice cake, made by steaming grains that have been ground into powder. In pre-historic times, rice cake was the main carbohydrate dish in a Korean meal, but starting in the Three Kingdoms period, it was replaced by steamed grains, and with the development of formal rituals, *tteok* came to serve as ritual offerings or as food for special occasions. Rice cake, in other words,



*Siru.*

has long been a part of the offerings table at worship rituals and ancestral memorial services, and also food for chasing away bad spirits or for celebrating seasonal change, and along with this change in function the earthenware steamer has taken on significance as a ritual prop.

*Siru* is also used in shamanic rituals. “Sirumal” is a song about the creation of the universe, performed in front of an earthenware steamer as part of the village ritual *dodanggut* in Gyeonggi Province. The steamer is also featured as part of the offering table for Daegamsin (State Official God) in shamanic rituals performed in the Seoul area and Gyeonggi Province, usually for serving *sirutteok*, made of thin layers of cake with red bean filling.

*Siru*, in other words, is not an everyday kitchen utensil but one for preparing and serving sacrificial offerings for special rituals, a sacred utensil that carries symbolic significance.

## SOEKOTTURE 쇠코뚜레

### Nose Ring for Cows

*Soekotture* is the term for the wooden ring attached to the nose of a cow, also used as a sorcery tool for keeping out evil spirits.

These nose rings are made with tree branches between 2 and 3 centimeters thick, the bark stripped and fastened with rope to be shaped into a ring.

Cows are big, powerful animals, but once the nose ring is attached, the pain confines them to a life that is constrained by humans. The nose ring, therefore, was a symbolic tool that connotes eternal confinement, and therefore greatly feared. A nose ring that had been on a cow for a long time was believed to possess significant sorcery power, and was hung on the gate or inside the home to prevent the possible invasion of evil spirits and ghosts.

It was also believed that nose rings had the



power to confine and hold on to good fortune or material goods that the family has acquired, and were hung over gates or doors on New Year to keep out bad forces and invite in the good.



*Soekotture.*  
Chodong-myeon, Miryang-si, Gyeongsangnam-do (2011, Bae Do-sik)

In many regions, the practice of using nose rings as sorcery charms are observed: When an owner is having a hard time selling a house, a nose ring is hung on the gate; hanging a nose ring in a store helps business; and when someone in the family is ill, a cow's nose ring or branches from prickly castor-oil tree (*eomnamu*) are hung on the gate to pray for healing.

## SOLGAJI 솔가지

### Pine Branch

*Solgaji*, or pine branch, is used in Korean folk religion to chase away impurities and to cleanse a given space, enlivening it with vitality.

Pine trees were believed to be sacred and auspicious, providing humans with protection and other benefits, and were used in important functions and occasions that required high devotion, including seasonal customs, initiation rites, and folk rituals, as a means of keeping out evil forces and praying for good fortune.

On Seol, the first day of the first lunar month, a pine branch was hung or left standing by the gate of a home as a means to keep out unclean forces. On Dongji (Winter Solstice), pine branches are also used to sprinkle red bean porridge (*patjuk*) around the house to chase away bad fortunes.

When a baby is initiated into this world through birth, a taboo rope (*geumjul*) is hung over the gate for 21 days, with pine branches and other sacred objects tied to the straw garland for protection. In traditional weddings, the ritual table includes a set of vases with pine and bamboo branches, symbolizing nuptial bliss.

In shamanism, the symbolic significance of the pine tree is integrated into the



*Soekotture.*  
Gurye-gun, Jeollanam-do (2011, Bae Do-sik)



Pine branches attached to taboo rope.  
Heunghae-eup, Buk-gu, Pohang-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do (2002, Choe Ho-sik)

history of the house guardian god **Seongju**, represented as the origin of the house and of its guardian deity.

In folk rituals, pine branches are used to chase away impurities and to cleanse the ritual venue. At the beginning of a ritual, incense is burned to invite the spirits that have ascended to the heavens (*hon*), and wine is poured into a bowl of sand (*mosagi*) to invite the spirits that have descended underground (*baek*), and a pine branch is inserted in the bowl of sand to cleanse the ritual venue.

In preparing for the village tutelary festival *dongje*, taboo ropes (*geumjul*) are hung and red clay (*hwangto*) is scattered at the village shrine, the homes of ritual officials, the venues where sacrificial foods are prepared, the common well, and the village entrance. The straw garland used as taboo rope includes folded sheets of white ritual paper (*baekji*) and pine branches, believed to keep out evil spirits with its sharp needles.

## SUT 炭 Wood Charcoal

**Sut**, or wood charcoal, in Korean folk religion, is believed to possess the power to keep out evil forces.

When a new baby was born in the family, charcoal was tied to left-hand lay straw rope to hang as taboo rope (*geumjul*) for keeping out unclean persons and bad fortune, and the same rope was also placed inside sauce jars during fermentation process. Charcoal was sometimes offered as a sacrifice in household rituals for the kitchen deity **Jowang**.

Wood charcoal is an effective dehumidifier, and was mixed into the clay when constructing a house or building the stylobate of a house. It was also used in building tombs, to keep away insects or to prevent tree roots from penetrating.





Wood charcoal attached to the taboo rope hung to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> day after childbirth.  
Godeok-myeon, Pyeongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do (2007)

The custom of sending a holiday gift to relatives before the arrival of Lunar New Year was called *sechan*, and gift items included special delicacies, cigarettes, fabric, and also wood charcoal, which indicates that charcoal was not only useful, but that high-quality charcoal was considered rare and sought after.

which the boat is sent out into the sea. *Wido ttibaegut* (Straw Boat Ritual of Wido Island) is the most widely known among them but straw boats are also used in the village ritual *byeolsingut* of the southern coast and Geoje Island; the wind god ritual *yeongdeunggut* of Jeju Island; and the village ritual *maeulgut* of Chuja Island. Similar ritualistic boats are observed in Japan, China, and parts of Southeastern Asia.

*Ttibae* is made with materials found in the region including straw or bush clover. Placed inside the boat are straw effigies (*jeung*) with exaggerated sex organs, five directions banners, and other banners made of mulberry paper. The boats are sent out at the end of the ritual for **Yongwang** (Dragon King), carrying offerings of food or money. The exaggerated sex organs of the straw effigies symbolize fecundity and prosperity.

These boats are largely aimed at preventing bad luck by sending off the bad fortunes with them. *Ttibae* can also be viewed as a sacrificial offering, the exaggerated sex organs of the straw effigies intended to signify a symbolic union with Yongsin, the goddess that oversees the sea, to pray for a big catch.

## TTIBAE 띠배

### Straw Boat

*Ttibae* refers to a miniature straw boat sent out into the sea at the end of the big catch ritual *pungeoje* to prevent bad fortunes and to pray for a big catch.

The term varies by region, including *jipbae* (straw boat), *toesongbae* (rejection boat), *honbae* (spirit boat). These ritualistic boats are usually featured in village rites in the coastal regions, in the final stage during



Fishing boat tugging *ttibae* out to sea.  
Wido-myeon, Buan-gun, Jeollabuk-do (2010, Kim Jun)

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Miniature *ttibae*.  
Wonsan Island, Chungcheongnam-do (2006, Kim Jun)

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# Ritual Offerings



## Ritual Offerings

## BAEKJI 백지

### White Ritual Paper

*Baekji* is the term for sheets of white paper used in shamanic rituals as sacred objects or as offerings, or in *soji*, the burning of sacred text.

White ritual paper symbolizes cleanness and purification, but also serves as a symbolic currency offered to the gods to wish for material wealth. At homes, sheets of white paper are folded as sacred objects in worship rites for **Seongju** (House Guardian God), **Josang** (Ancestor God) or **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing). White paper is also added to straw garlands hung over the gate as taboo rope (*geumjul*) following the birth of a child in the family, as an attempt to utilize the purifying effect of white paper to keep away bad fortunes.

In village tutelary rituals (*dongje*), sheets of white paper are placed on the table along with other offerings and also hung inside the shrine, as offerings to the gods. White paper is also used in wrapping sacrificial food or in setting up the ritual table, or in *soji*, both the personal

and communal rites. Paper burning can be viewed as an act of purifying uncleanness with fire, but also as a prayer to the gods, in which case the white paper serves as a medium between man and the gods.

Shamanic rituals include segments that extend the shaman's invitation to the gods, and the papers used here are also examples of paper as sacred objects. *Sanji* refers to an invitation requesting the visitation of **Sansin** (Mountain God); *gamangji* an invitation for **Gamang** (God of Origins); and *mulgoji* for **Sangsan** (High Mountain) Wife. These three invitations are sacred papers featured in village rituals in the Seoul area, an example of paper used for prayer, serving as a communication medium between man and the gods in shamanic rituals.

## BAMMUDEOM 밥무덤

### Rice Tomb

*Bammudeom*, a term that literally means, “rice tomb,” refers to the hole for burying the steamed rice (*me*) that had been offered as sacrifice, a practice observed as part of village tutelary festivals (*dongje*) in South Gyeongsang Province.

Rice tombs are generally located under the village guardian tree (*dangsannamu*) or a spot considered clean, or under the poles of the four directions in the village.

Rice tombs are built in a range of forms, which vary by region: Some in the form of stone stacks that resemble a three-story pagoda or an easy chair; some in the form of a terraced flower bed; or some in the shape of traditional burial mounds.

The steamed rice from the ritual table is wrapped in several layers of mulberry paper, placed



*Baekji* placed in a shrine as a sacred entity.  
Gagok-myeon, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2010, Kim Do-hyeon)



**Bammudeom.**  
Nam-myeon, Namhae-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do (2010, Bae Do-sik)



**Burying the steamed rice.**  
Samdong-myeon, Namhae-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do  
(2004, Choe Ho-sik)



**Rice tomb.**  
Nam-myeon, Namhae-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do (2010, Bae Do-sik)

inside the hole, then buried under soil and covered with a flat piece of rock. The lid keeps away mice, cats, or dogs that might dig up the rice, as digging up the rice is believed to bring bad fortune, turning invalid the offering that had been made to the gods. On the islands off Namhae on the southern coast, where land for rice cultivation is scarce, rice has always been considered a precious life-sustaining crop, and rice tombs are offerings made not only to the village guardian gods but also to the earth goddess Jimosin (Mother Earth), to pray for her forces to seep into the ground and bring to humans the reward of prosperity.

In some regions, rice tombs were made at the four ends in each of the four cardinal directions from the village center, to appease the god of the directions and to use the power of rice, the origin of life, in keeping out evil spirits and impurities trying to enter the village.

## **BANGI** 반기 Sharing of Sacrificial Foods

**Bangi**, a term that literally means “rice bowl,” refers to the sacrificial food distributed in bowls to family or neighbors following the village tutelary festival (*dongje*), or to the practice of sharing sacrificial foods.

The practice is an act of redistributing the food to families that have contributed to the ritual costs, closely related to the festivity and religious symbolism of communal rituals. The food on the ritual table is viewed as sacred and auspicious since they have been accepted and consumed by the gods, thus they are called “auspicious food (*jaesuitneun eumsik*)” or fortune cake (*boktteok*),” and their consumption by people is an act of receiving a blessing and achieving happiness. In broader terms, **bangi** also includes the consumption of sacrificial foods that take place at the ritual venue following the rite (*eumbok*).

Animal sacrifices are the most significant objects





**Bangi.**  
Iljuk-myeon, Anseong-si, Gyeonggi-do (2002, Choe Ho-sik)

of *bangi*. For the government office deity ritual (*bugundangje*) held in Seoul's Gugi-dong neighborhood, a whole cow is offered as sacrifice, purchased with money collected by equally dividing the cost among the neighborhood's households. Following the ritual, the beef is distributed to the contributing households in equal portions, which also serves as an opportunity for families to save money in acquiring beef.

and funerals to memorial rites, because it does not give off unpleasant smells and its eyes and other features remain distinct without losing form. Common beliefs also require that sacrificial foods for the gods should be consumed in whole, without leaving out any parts, and all parts of the dried pollock are edible. Pollocks have large heads and lay an abundant amount of roe, which is associated with proliferation and prosperity. One of forms of the shamanic practice of *daesudaemyeong*, or transferring one's bad fortune on another being, is to wrap a dried pollock with one's clothing or a sheet of paper written with one's Four Pillars (*saju*) and birthdate, and to throw it out on the street, using the pollock as a proxy in order to evade bad luck.

Newly opening stores hold rituals to pray for good business and following the ritual, the dried pollock from the ritual table is hung over the store door with a skein of thread (*siltarae*), in hopes that the pollock's big round eyes and wide, open mouth will keep out bad forces from entering the store. In roof-raising rituals, an important rite of passage in

## BUGEO 북어

### Whole Dried Pollock

*Bugeo* is the term for dried pollock, used as an offering or sacrifice in folk rituals.

Dried pollock is used in all rituals, from weddings





*Bugeo tied with left-hand lay rope.*  
Gunbuk-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (1999)

traditional architecture, the pollock offered on the ritual table is hung on the ridge beam with a skein of thread before it is raised. Used together with thread, dried pollock signifies not only the prevention of bad fortune but also a prayer for unchanging peace and stability. If a site for a new house is declared to possess too strong an energy, dried pollock is buried in the ground to fix it. A similar practice was observed when a tomb site was purchased for a family member nearing death and a fake grave (*gamyo*) was dug to prepare for a good death.



*Gochu.*  
Damyang-gun, Jeollanam-do (1994, Seo Hae-suk)

## GOCHU 고추 Red Pepper

*Gochu*, or red pepper, is used to cleanse impurities and to chase away evil spirits in the event of an illness or the birth of a son.

The pepper's red color was believed to symbolize the sun and its spicy flavor to be effective for chasing away bad forces, while its shape was associated with the birth of a male infant.

The practice of attaching red peppers to the taboo rope (*geumjul*) hung over the gate to announce the birth of a son is observed around the country. Upon the outbreak of a contagious disease, three red peppers are hung over the gate of a home along with the fastening ribbons from a shirt that belongs to a patient, while in some other regions, ten peppers are strung together with thread and hung near the gate. In some regions, if no smell was produced after burning peppers, it was believed that the disease had been caused by a spirit angered by the breaking of a taboo, and a shamanic ritual or a village ritual was held. In fishing villages, boat rituals (*baegosa*) and cleansing rituals include the sprinkling of red pepper powder, or soaking of red peppers or wood charcoal (*sut*) in *jeonghwasu* (fresh water fetched from well). A taboo rope with red peppers was also hung over the gate

when new sauce or paste was being made inside the home.

## GUTSANG 굿상 Ritual Table

*Gutsang* is the term referring to the table of sacrificial foods in a shamanic ritual.

The make-up of a ritual table varies by the deity being worshipped, but is generally identical to that in a Confucian memorial rite, with the head or leg of a cow or pig added. The type and arrangement of the ritual table provide clues to the characteristics of the ritual and the deity being worshipped. The arrangement and the amount and quality of the sacrificial foods also provide information about the status of the worshipped deity within the hierarchy of deities in the community.

The simplest table is prepared for private rituals staged in the form of palm-rubbing (*bison*), comprising a bowl of water, whole dried pollock (*bugeo*), wine and fruits in three colors.

Slightly more elaborate tables are for small-



scale rituals that are individually commissioned to shamans, including *jaesugut* (good fortune ritual), *seongjugut* (ritual for House Guardian God), and *josanghaewongut* (ritual for resolving ancestral grievance). The different types of tables for good fortune rituals include *bujeongsang* (table for chasing away uncleanness), *bulsasang* (table for deity of the heavens *Bulsa*), *bonhyangsang* (table for Bonhyang, god of ancestral roots), *josangsang* (table for **Josang**, ancestor god), *jeonansang* (table for deity at shrine's center), *daegamsang* (table for *Daegamsin*, state official god), *seongjusang* (table for **Seongju**, house guardian god), and *dwitjeonsang* (table for ritual's closing).

The biggest and fanciest table is prepared for

communal rituals like *byeolsingut* or *dodanggut* and other large-scale rituals including the thanksgiving ritual *jinjeokgut* and underworld entry ritual *ogwisaenamgut*. These big rituals worship all gods, so the table is huge as well, with enough food to feed every attendant, including items that require time and devotion like beef, pork, fruits or other foods served in intricate layers (*goim*), and *yongtteok* (dragon-shaped rice cake strips). The scale and variety of the food is immense because individual tables are prepared for each deity that is worshipped. In *jinjeokgut*, for example, the following tables are presented: *cheonggyesang* (table for *cheonggye* ghost), *gamangsang* (table for **Gamang**, god of origins), *daesinhalmeonisang* (table for Shaman Ancestor Goddess

Grandmother), *bulsasang*, *dodangsang*, *bonhyangsang*, *josangsang*, *jeonansang*, *daegamsang*, *seongjusang*, *daeanjusang* (food and wine table), *teojusoban* (small table for **Teoju**, land tutelary god), *dwejidaegamsoban* (small table for **Daegam** with pork), *sumunjangdaegamsoban* (small table for chief gatekeeper and **Daegam**), *andangjeseoksoban* (inner quarters table for **Jeseok**), and *dwitjeonsang*.



*Gutsang*.  
Gunja-dong, Siheung-si, Gyeonggi-do (2004, Choe Ho-sik)



*Gutsang*.  
(Jeong Su-mi)

## HEONMUL 헌물

### Offering

*Heonmul* is the term for offerings to the gods.

In Korean folk religion, *heonmul* includes all offerings to the deities, from food like wine, rice cake and sacrifice, to ritual items like five-color ribbons (*osaekcheon*), white ritual paper (*baekji*) and skeins of thread (*siltarae*).

Five-color ribbons are for dressing up the gods; white ritual paper signifies cleanness and purification (*jeonghwa*);





*Heonmul* for stone stacks ritual.  
Yongun-dong, Dong-gu, Daejeon

and skeins of thread are arranged on the ritual table along with the sacrificial foods, then offered to the god when the ritual is over. Wooden male sex organs (*mokjenamgeum*) are also commonly offered, as in the case of fishermen offering the wooden symbol to the goddess of the sea to pray for protection and safety. Steamed rice wrapped in paper and thrown into the sea during the ritual for *Yongwang* (Dragon King) is also an offering.

was again replaced by domestic animals. Over time, animal sacrifices came to serve the satisfaction of both the gods and the humans, and the practice of consuming the sacrifice (*eumbok*) was also established.

Animals offered as sacrifices in folk rituals include cows, pigs, chicken and dogs.

Cows are considered the biggest sacrifice offered to a village guardian deity. Because of the enormous costs involved in sacrificing a cow, faith and religious unity of the community are required. In a village ritual that involves a cow sacrifice, a majority of the ritual procedures are focused on the cow, especially the slaughtering, butchering, the arrangement of the ritual

table according to meat parts, and the consumption of the meat.

Pigs also make up a major sacrifice in large-scale communal rituals including *byeolsinje* and fishing village rituals. It is believed that the mountain god *Sansin* demanded a loud squeal from the pig before coming down to consume the sacrificial foods so sometimes the slaughter takes place at the shrine in the mountain.

Chickens are offered as sacrifices for both the gods and one's ancestors. In shamanic rituals, chickens are used as proxies that are put to death in the place of a

## HUISAENGJEMUL 희생제물

### Animal Sacrifice

*Huisaengjemul* is the term for animal sacrifices offered to the gods in rituals.

The origins of animal sacrifices in Korea date back far in history, with records of the practice in Buyeo (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E.–494) of a ritual for the heavens held in times of war, which included the killing of a cow and making predictions about the outcome by reading its hoofs. The most primal form of sacrifice is known to be human sacrifice, which was replaced by animals over time, beginning with wild animals, which



A whole pig offered on the ritual table.  
Samyang-dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do (1998, Kim Dong-seop)

human who is cursed with bad fortune or a short lifespan.

In some regions, dogs were also sacrificed. Dog sacrifices in village rituals were related to the prevention of attacks from tigers, offered to please tigers since they liked to eat dogs.

## JEBI 제비

### Ritual Costs

*Jebi* is the term referring to all costs involved in the preparation and staging of a ritual.

They include costs for purchasing ritual goods, fees for ritual officials, and transportation fees, among others.

In the past, ritual costs were generally covered by a process of collecting donations called *geollip*, a word

that originated from the practice of Buddhist monks collecting funds for temple activities by visiting homes and offering to recite prayers in return for donations of grains or money. In many villages donations are collected during the New Year festivities when farmers' music troupes go around the village holding earth god treading rites (*jisinbabgi*) in each home, sometimes visiting neighboring villages as well.

Another method was to establish a community fund called *gye*, to which all the members contribute over a given period of time for the preparations and the preservation of the village ritual. Some communities cultivate and manage a village paddy (*dongdap*), and use the proceeds from the harvest exclusively for ritual preparations. Funding from local governments and dignitaries also contributes greatly to the staging of community rituals.

Collecting funds for ritual costs not only provided a financial foundation for the communal tradition but also helped promote interest and a sense of community among villagers.



Farmers' music troupe collecting donations for *jebi*.  
Beopseong-myeon, Yeonggwang-gun, Jeollanam-do (2010, Kim Eun-jin)





Farmers' music troupes collecting donations for *jeju*. (Hwang Heon-man)

## JEJU 제주 Ritual Wine

*Jeju*, or ritual wine, is the term for wine that is poured on the ground or offered to the gods in the course of a ritual.

In ancient times, people were mystified by the intoxicating capacities of the bubbly substance acquired through natural alcohol fermentation and believed it possessed sorcery powers. When the ritual officiant became drunk, they believed that the spirit had descended on his body. Intoxicated rapture was perceived as an act of communicating with the gods. Wine, therefore, came to be viewed as a sacred medium that connects humans with the gods, and this belief was reflected in ritual or banquet procedures, of the officiant or host holding a rite to worship the earth.

Grain wines are generally used for rituals. In Confucian-style village tutelary festivals (*dongje*), clear

refined rice wine is used, while in communal shamanic rites including *byeolsingut*, *danggut* and *dodanggut* coarse unrefined rice wine is offered.



Earthenware jar containing *jeju* buried in the ground. Tong-dong, Taebaek-si, Gangwon-do (2002, Kim Gi-seol)

JEJU Brewing of ritual wine for Sansin, Gangneung-si, Gangwon-do (2004)



Wine offered in mountain god rituals (*sansinje*), dragon king rituals (*yongwangje*) and the rite for the tutelary spirit of Eunsan (Eunsan Byeolsinje) is called *jorasul* and is prepared through a special process. The ritual official in charge of brewing the wine blocks impurities from his home by hanging a taboo rope (*geumjul*) and scattering red clay (*hwangto*) from the mountain behind the village several days prior to the ritual. Only after these procedures are complete, he performs ablutions and brews the wine. On the day of the ritual, the wine jar is opened for libation. When the ritual is over, participants consume the wine and the sacrificial foods (*eumbok*), to share the sacredness amongst them.

## JEONGHWASU 정화수

### Fresh Water from Well

*Jeonghwasu* is fresh water that has been fetched from a well early in the morning.

Water, being an indispensable substance for sustaining human life, has throughout civilization served as an object or medium of religious worship.

It is the women in the family who generally fetch a bowl of clean water at the crack of dawn as an offering to pray for their wishes. *Jeonghwasu* carries symbolic significance as a sacred offering in its





A bowl of fresh *jeonghwasu*.  
Nam-myeon, Yeongi-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (2006)

purest form, prepared with devotion during the day's first hours. Rituals that offer *jeonghwasu* take place in women's spaces in the house, including the well or the sauce jar terrace in the backyard and the kitchen. Household gods including **Chilseong** (Seven Stars), **Jowang** (Kitchen God) and **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God) are worshipped, along with nature deities like trees or rocks.

Water is also believed to possess purifying powers for cleansing what is unclean, so *jeonghwasu* is also used for chasing away impurities, by sprinkling it three times with your fingers.

## ME 메 Steamed Rice

*Me* is an honorific used to refer to rice served on the ritual table as sacrificial offering.

The term is used for rice served in front of the spirit tablet in Confucian memorial rites, and also for rice on the offerings table in village rituals and other shamanic rites as well.

Ritual rice is generally served in a ceramic rice bowl, and the term can vary by container: In village rituals in Gangwon Province, for instance, rice served in a brass pot called *saeong*, is called *saeongme*, and rice served to the gods of mountains and rivers in a small brass pot is called *nogume*.

In some regions, the term *jinme* is used for rice cooked with clean grains that have not been exposed to impurities (*bujeong*), and with clear water fetched from a spring near the altar. *Sujibap* is the term used for the first scoop of rice from the pot reserved as an offering for the gods. On Jeju Island, where rice is rare, millet, steamed with a large proportion of water, is served as ritual offering and is called *sanme*.

*Bap*, the secular term for steamed rice, is also used to refer to certain sacrificial foods: In village rites, small portions taken from various sacrificial foods on the ritual table and wrapped in mulberry paper are called *bongjibap*, or bag rice; in big catch rituals (*pungeoje*), sacrificial food thrown into the sea as offering for



Bowls of *me* set up on the ritual table.  
Gangneung-si, Gangwon-do (2004)

**Yongwang** (Dragon King) is called *yongwangbap*; and in Jeolla provinces, rice offered in shamanic rituals for the god of childbirth Jiang is called *jiangbap*.

## MIYEOK 미역

### Sea Mustard

*Miyeok*, or sea mustard, is a sacrificial offering in rituals related to childbirth or to **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing).

Sea mustard is known to help produce breast milk and also to possess diuretic effect, both beneficial

for post-partum mothers who are nursing, which is why it has traditionally been used as an important offering in birth-related rituals. The practice of offering sea mustard soup to **Samsin** is still widespread today.

Homes prepare for childbirth by stocking rice, sea mustard and diapers, and immediately following labor and the cleaning of the newborn, steamed white rice and sea mustard soup is served. First, in a clean southwestern corner of the room where the labor took place, a table is set with three bowls each of the rice and soup for a ritual for **Samsin**, which is repeated on the third, seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first and one hundredth day after birth.

## MOKJENAMGEUN 목제남근

### Wooden Male Sex Organ

*Mokjenamgeun* is a wooden carving of the male sex organ.

In Korean folk religion, phallic carvings are symbols of the harmony between *yin* and *yang*, serving as a prop for praying for a big catch and peace and safety. Many records from the Joseon dynasty include accounts of phallic carvings dedicated at government office shrines *bugundang* in the Seoul area, and of such carvings painted red and inscribed in blue, dedicated at state rituals for Sajksin (God of Land and Crops). It is notable that phallic worship in Joseon was observed mostly as a state-run practice.

*Songinori*, or pine mushroom festival, at Beopju Temple on Mt. Songni, also included the dedication of phallic carvings, the term *songi*, or pine mushroom, here referring to the phallus. On the last day of the year on the lunar calendar, the monks at the temple organized a large gathering that included a memorial service, followed by the carving of myriad male organs from wooden clubs, painting them red for a round of festivities for appeasing the spirits. In fishing villages





*Mokjenamgeun* in a sea god shrine.  
Wondeok-eup, Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do (2010, Yun Dong-hwan)

on the eastern coast, phallic carvings were dedicated to appease the goddesses and to pray for a big catch and safe sailing, a tradition still observed in Manggae Village in Goseong and Sinnam Village in Samcheok, both in Gangwon Province.

Phallic worship is widely spread, also observed in spirit wedding rituals for deceased young men and women who died prior to marriage.

## PATJUK 팔죽

### Red Bean Porridge

*Patjuk*, or red bean porridge, is a dish served on Dongji (Winter Solstice), and also offered as a sacrificial food or sprinkled in an act of sorcery to keep out bad fortune.

*Patjuk* is cooked by boiling red beans in water, after which the beans are crushed, then strained. Rice is added to the water to make porridge.

The practice of eating red bean porridge dates back to late Goryeo (918-1392), when the Chinese book *Jinchu suishiji* (Festivals and Seasonal Customs of the Jing-Chu Region) was introduced. Red was traditionally believed as a color that chases away evil, which gave red beans the same power. The section on red bean porridge in *Jinchu suishiji* goes as follows: “The legendary figure Gonggongshi had a son who was a fool, and he died on winter solstice and became the ghost of smallpox. He was afraid of red beans, so on winter solstice red bean porridge was cooked to keep him away.”

By late Joseon, it had become widespread practice to offer red bean porridge as sacrificial food at shrines and at various corners of the house where household gods reside. Sometimes the porridge was sprinkled on the gate of the house, or even inside the house for the household gods. In Gyeonggi Province, a ritual was observed at the shrine offering red bean porridge, then bowls of the porridge were offered to the household gods in the rooms, in the open hall, and on the sauce jar terrace, and the entire family sat down together for a meal of porridge. In Gyeongsang Provinces on winter solstice, red bean porridge was sprinkled in the



*Patjuk* served on Winter Solstice.

yard and on the walls of the house using pine branches. The porridge was also sprinkled on the big old tree in the entrance of the village to keep out evil spirits and ghosts.

## SILTARAE 실타래

### Skeins of Thread

*Siltarae*, or skeins of thread, are used as sacrificial offerings to the gods in folk rituals.

They reflect a prayer for longevity, or simply as a sacrifice, both in communal or household rituals.

In the homes, the earthenware jar enshrining the house guardian deity (*seongjudanji*) is covered with mulberry paper, over which a skein of thread is placed. Thread bundles are wrapped on ridge beams with paper, and offered as sacrifices in home rituals for the village guardian deity *Seonang* or for *Samsin*, the Goddess of Childbearing. Their use became widespread over time as thread had always been viewed as a symbol of health and longevity.

In village rituals, skeins of thread were offered on the ritual table along with other sacrifices, sometimes used to tie up paper around the dried pollock (*bugeo*), and when the ritual was over, the thread and other attached offerings were hung as offerings on the divine tree (*simmok*), village guardian posts (*jangseung*), stone stacks (*doltap*), standing stones

(*seondol*), *Mireuk* rocks, or the village guardian shrine *seonangdang*.

Skeins of thread also serve as important sacrifices in shamanic rituals. They are offered in the peace-wishing ritual *antaek* and the good fortune ritual *jaesugut*, and when enshrining the house guardian deity *Seongju*, coins and rice are wrapped in mulberry paper, then tied with a skein of cotton thread, in which case the thread is both a ritual sacrifice and an offering.



*Siltarae* wrapped around the top stone of a stone stack.  
Buri-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do (1999, Gang Seong-bok)

## SOGEUM 소금

### Salt

*Sogeum*, or salt, is used in various rituals for household gods including dragon king feeding (*yongwang-meogigi*) or fire prevention rituals (*hwajaemagi*) as a sorcery tool with purifying, evil-chasing, and bad fortune-repelling capacities.

The use of salt is widespread, both as a sacrifice and as a sorcery tool.

In South Gyeongsang Province, when a baby is born, a ritual table for **Samsin** (Goddess of Childbearing) is arranged in the mother's room. Seven days after birth, a hand-rubbing ritual (*bison*) is held, with rice, sea mustard, fresh water from the well and salt and red pepper powder offered on the table. In other regions, salt is offered as sacrifice in the dragon king feeding ritual (*yongwangmeogigi*) on Jeongwol- daeboreum (Great Full Moon) in the first lunar month. A hand-rubbing rite for **Yongwang** (Dragon King) is held with a ritual table arranged with salt, rice, dried pollock and red beans. After the ritual, the rice is wrapped in paper and thrown into the sea for the Dragon King to consume, and the salt and red beans are scattered around the ritual venue to purify the site.

Salt is also used in fire prevention rituals (*hwajaemagi*) in the homes. In North Jeolla Province, on the morning of the Great Full Moon, after rinsing the rice for breakfast, the water is saved in a bowl, then using a spoon used by family members, three scoops each of ashes and salt are added, and three red peppers as well. A prayer follows, for fire prevention and safety for the family, and then the water mixture is sprinkled in various corners of the home. Salt, in this case, symbolizes seawater, and also the dragon god Yongsin, who can suppress fire, and is thus used in this ritual for preventing fires.

Another use for salt is during the peace-wishing ritual *antaek* in the first lunar month, when it is sprinkled to cleanse impurities. In South Gyeongsang Province, salt is sprinkled in all corners of the house prior to the ritual to keep out bad fortune. It is also used in all other sorcery rituals for eradicating impurities.

These uses of salt are associated with its capacities as a preservative, thereby believed to maintain the sanctity of a venue. Its color, white, is also known to keep away impurities and to cleanse.

## SSAL 쌀

### Rice

*Ssal* (rice) is offered regularly to household gods, including **Seongju** (House Guardian Deity) and **Teoju** (Land Tutelary God).

In Korea, rice is the most important among grains, the most significant food source and agricultural product. Since ancient times rice has always been an object of worship in rice growing regions around the world and the tradition is preserved today in various forms. For example, rice serves as the medium when a childless woman receives blessing from the goddess of childbearing **Samsin**, a deity that is worshipped in the form of earthenware jars (*danji*) as sacred entities, which contain rice inside, called *samsinssal*, or rice for the goddess of childbearing. Rice, in other words, is perceived as the origin of life.

Rice is also enshrined inside sacred entities for the house guardian deity **Seongju**, and placed in various corners around the house as offerings to the household deities that oversee the fortunes of a home. Other uses include rice and other grains hung at the tip of rice stalk pole (*byeotgaritdae*) on Jeongwoldaeboreum (Great Full Moon); divination with rice that takes place at the end of shamanic rituals or rituals for household gods; and rice used to chase away evil spirits in wayfarer ghost-repelling rituals (*gaekgwimulligi*). Newly harvested rice is enshrined inside sacred entities in order to offer the season's first reaping to the farming god. This signifies that the grains were in themselves objects of worship and reflects the wish for another good harvest in the following year. Replacing old grains with new crops is a ritual of rebirth, of sending off the old and greeting



the new, a cyclical process of putting away the old grain gods and replacing them with the new gods.

## TTEOK 떡

### Steamed Rice Cake

*Tteok*, or steamed rice cake, is a sacrificial food offered at rituals, made by steaming powdered rice, then pounding or rolling the dough.

A steamer from the Bronze Age serves as evidence of the earliest rice cake, and with the spread of rice plants and farming in the Three Kingdoms era (57 B.C.E.–676), rice production increased and the use of earthenware steamers spread as well. It is believed that the earlier form of *tteok* was close to steamed rice, then plain white rice cake was steamed with fine rice powder, similar to what we today call *baekseolgi*, and with the introduction of red beans, fillings were used to make layered cake called *sirutteok*.

Eventually *tteok* became the most important sacrificial food in a ritual, taking on additional meaning. Layered rice cake with red bean fillings was believed to chase away evil spirits and the plain white cake *baekseolgi* symbolized cleanness and purity. The types of rice cake can vary by occasion but no ritual is held without a plate of rice cake offered as sacrifice.

*Sirutteok* is a layered cake steamed with fillings made of beans or red beans, and the most basic sacrifice offered in rituals for household gods. This cake is generally used for bad fortune preventional rituals (*aengmagi*). *Baekseolgi* is pure white, and thus offered to the higher gods, including Cheonsin (Celestial God), **Sansin** (Mountain God) and Yongsin (Dragon

God), reflecting the folk belief that the latter two are considered to be as immaculate as Cheonsin. *Baekseolgi* is the highest among the sacrificial foods. *Baekbyeong*, which is also called *jeolpyeon* or *gyemyeontteok*, is made with finely ground nonglutinous rice, steamed, then pounded on a wooden board to make it sticky, then molded into various shapes. This rice cake is offered to **Jeseok**, Siwang (Ten Kings) and other gods related to Buddhism. The term *gyemyeontteok* is used for this type of cake made by a shaman with rice collected from house to house, believed to bring longevity and prosperity. Finally, *injeolmi* is made with glutinous rice powder, pounded after steaming, then rolled in bean powder. This cake is also offered to gods that are related to Buddhism.

In Gangwon Province and on Jeju Island, buckwheat powder or millet powder is also used to make *tteok* for rituals, including *dollaetteok*, made by shaping the dough into flat, round pieces, which are cooked in boiling water, then glazed with sesame oil; and *omegitteok*, made by shaping millet dough into flat round pieces with holes in the center, which are then cooked in boiling water and rolled in crushed red beans or bean powder.



*Sirutteok*.  
Gaegun-myeon, Yangpyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do (Hwang Heon-man)



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## BURAKUSAI 부락제

### "Village Rituals"

"Burakusai (Village Rituals)" was the first report issued during the Japanese occupation of Joseon by the Japanese Government-General as part of the publication *Chōsen no kyōdo shinshi* (Folk Religious Worship in Joseon).

It was written in 1936 by Murayama Chijun, a Japanese ethnographer who was commissioned by the Japanese Government-General to survey the religious practices of Korea as part of an attempt to investigate the Joseon way of thinking, visiting over 230 locations around the country.

As he writes in his introduction, Murayama defined the origin of a people's cultural heritage as "*shinden*," literally meaning "spiritual field," and concluded that the Korean heritage that had been best preserved without external influence was folk religion.

Among many communal folk rituals, Murayama emphasized that village rituals were the most important for improving the quality of life and revitalizing the economy. He also asserted that with the influence

of Western thought, Korean folk religion had been neglected as superstition, but village rituals were representative of the beauty of Korea's traditional culture, and that communities where village rituals were observed as a serious tradition were healthy and thriving.

Murayama defined "village" not as an administrative unit but the smallest unit of naturally formed communities, and village rituals as the folk custom of staging one or several annual communal rituals, in which the entire community came together to pray to the gods for increased happiness and the prevention of calamities, in order to enjoy a comfortable life of gratitude, devoid of insecurities.

## CHOSEN FUZOKU NO KENKYU

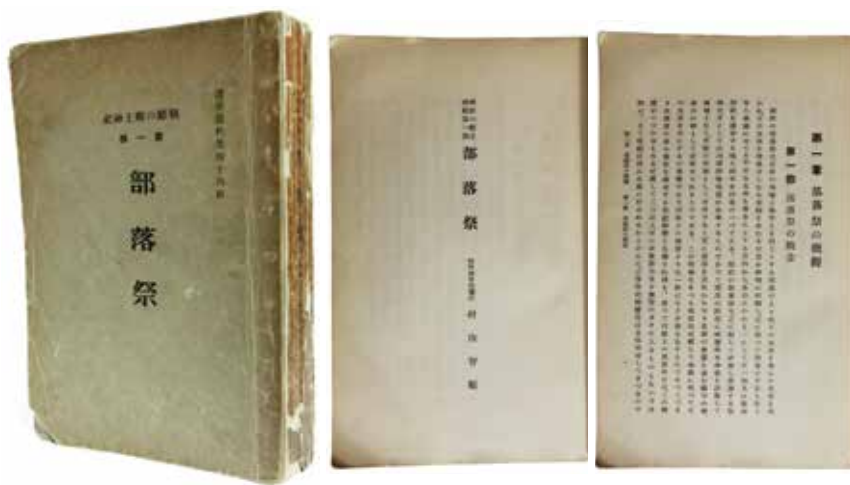
조선무속의 연구

A Study of Joseon Shamanism

*Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū* (A Study of Joseon Shamanism) is a two-volume publication written in 1937 by the Japanese scholars Akiba Takashi (1888-1954) and Akamatsu Chijo (1886-1960).

Akiba majored in sociology at Tokyo Imperial University and Akamatsu in theology at Kyoto Imperial University. Akiba was a researcher for the Japanese Government-General and was appointed in 1926 to the faculty at Keijo Imperial University in Seoul, where he served until 1945. Akamatsu served on the faculty at Keijo Imperial University until 1941, teaching theology and religious history.

The two scholars



"Burakusai:"

Written by Murayama Chijun, edited and published by the Japanese Government-General (1937), Minsokwon



*Choseon fuzoku no kenkyu* (Volumes 1, 2).  
Written by Akiba Takashi (1937, first volume) and Akamatsu Chijo (1938, second volume)  
(Minsokwon)

recognized the importance of their study; that it would contribute greatly to the understanding of Korean folk beliefs and society. They worked separately on the two volumes. The first volume is a collection of shamanic songs, comprising the origin narratives of shamanic ancestors; the twelve segments; ritual prayers; the song of the house guardian god; prologue song; death narratives; shamanic songs of Jeju Island; and miscellaneous songs. The second volume comprises the names and types of shamans; the shamanic initiation process; household gods rituals; village rituals; shamanic garb and props; the family lives of shamans; the social lives of shamans; shamanic songs and scriptures; and shamanism's relation to Buddhism and Taoism.

and King Sunjo (1800-1834).

The book records the monthly seasonal rites practiced around the country from the first lunar month to the twelfth, including a leap month, as observed in the royal court; by aristocrats and literati; and by the commoners of farming, fishing and mountain communities. Customs that do not follow specific dates in a month are listed separately under “*wollae*,” meaning “within the month.”

A total of 23 customs are listed, 34 including the *wollae* category. Seven of them are listed under the first lunar month, the biggest number of rites under a single month, followed by the third lunar month, with three.

## DONGGUKSESIGI 동국세시기

A Record of the Seasonal Customs of the Eastern Kingdom

*Dongguksesigi* (A Record of the Seasonal Customs of the Eastern Kingdom) is an almanac of the monthly seasonal customs written by Hong Seok-mo, a scholar in Joseon during the reigns of King Jeongjo (1725-1800)



*Dongguksesigi*.  
Written by Hong Seok-mo et al., Joseon (1849), Yonsei University

Each custom is described with quotes from writings and poems on the seasonal customs of China. The 15<sup>th</sup>-century cultural geography *Donggukyeojiseungnam* (Augmented Survey of the Geography of the Eastern Kingdom) was also widely quoted in introducing the Korean customs.

## JOSEONMUSOKGO 조선무속고

"On Shamanism in Joseon"

"Joseonmusokgo (On Shamanism in Joseon)" was an article published by scholar Yi Neung-hwa in 1927 in the No. 19 issue of the journal *Gyemyeong* (Enlightenment), published by Gyemyeong Gurakbu (Enlightenment Club), compiling a wide range of materials on Korean shamanism.

Yi was a Chinese classics scholar and a foreign language educator who was appointed in 1921 as an editor for the Japanese Government-General and as a member of the Committee for the Compilation of Korean History in 1922, during which time he worked with great interest in compiling materials on Buddhism,

shamanism, Christianity, and Confucianism in Korea, and also folklore including women's customs and courtesan culture.

"Joseonmusokgo" is perceived as a milestone in the study of Korean shamanism. The article compiled a total of 124 entries on shamanism from Korea, China and Japan. He also carried out substantial fieldwork for the article, interviewing shamans and recording shamanic songs. In an attempt to better understand Korean shamanism, he also provided a comprehensive comparison of the shamanic practices with those of China, Manchuria and Japan.

"Joseonmusokgo" comprises 20 chapters, each chapter including a prologue, with the exception of three. It proposed a new direction in understanding Korean shamanism by basing his book on the survey of existing literature and fieldwork, then providing interpretations, historical evidence and additional information.

Between shamanism and the worship of the national progenitors Hwanung and **Dangun**, which was called *singyo*, which share origins and other common grounds, Yi concluded that shamanism was Korea's oldest religion. The social and political influence of shamanism declined with the introduction of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in Silla (57 B.C.E. - 935), but Yi believed that shamanism continued to grow and develop with the influx of the



"Joseonmusokgo."  
Written by Yi Neung-hwa (1927), Minsokwon



foreign religions.

Following Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, and the promulgation of the National Mobilization Law, which was extended to colonial Joseon as well, the Japanese Government-General sought a policy of *shinden* ("spiritual field") development to persuade the Koreans to participate in Japanese imperialist causes. At this turn of events, Yi proposed as the primary principle of the *shinden* policy the worship of Japanese gods by the people of Joseon, based on his belief that the folk religions of Joseon and Japan were closely related.

## MUDANGNAERYEOK 무당내력

### The Shaman Legacy

*Mudangnaeryeok* (The Shaman Legacy) is an illustrated book of each of the segments that make up the shamanic rituals of the Seoul area, written by an author with the pen name of Nangok.

The book, now part of the collection at the Kyujanggak Archives at Seoul National University, compris-

es two volumes, each 14 pages long. The two volumes contain identical introductions, and the illustrations and the writings indicate that they were done by a single author. Date of publication is the fourth lunar month of either 1885 or 1945.

Each page of the book contains an illustration of the shaman officiating each ritual segment and the ritual table with the various sacrificial foods. The shaman is shown dressed in a traditional skirt and shirt, a vest (*kwaeja*) or the Buddhist-style jacket *jangsam*, her arms spread out and holding in each hand a shamanic rattle (*bangul*) and a fan (*buchae*), or a divine knife (*sinkal*) and a three-pronged spear (*samjichang*). These illustrations of shamanic garb and props are functional and aesthetically unrefined.

The short expositions on the ritual segments are in Chinese characters. The author notes that Gameung, Jeseok, Byeolseong, Daegeori and Seongjo segments all originated from Dangun worship and denounces the worship of historical figures like General Choe Yeong and Crown Prince Sado as ludicrous.

The significance of this book lies in being the first illustrated record of shamanic practice in the Seoul area, authored by a 19th-century writer with a strong faith in **Dangun** worship who set out to trace the origins of shamanism in the national progenitor.



*Mudangnaeryeok*.  
Written by Nangok, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University

## NOMUPYEON 노무편 "Old Shaman"

"Nomupyeon (Old Shaman)" is a poem by Yi Gyu-bo (1168-1241), written after the author witnessed an old shaman who was a neighbor of his being expelled from the capital Gaegyeong after King Myeongjong of Goryeo Dynasty ordered a ban on shamanic practice. The poem was published as part of *Donggukisanggukjip* (Collected Works of Minister Yi of the Eastern Kingdom).

In an introduction to the poem, Yi writes, "an old shaman lived in the eastern part of my neighborhood and I had been distressed by strange singing and words when the state sent down orders that all shamans move far away from the capital, which pleased me greatly and led me to write this poem."

The poem categorizes shamans into the female shaman *mudang* (巫) and the male shaman *baksu* (覡) and provides detailed descriptions of ritual procedures: of the shaman making prophecies and performing divinations in a state of trance; of decorating the shrine and hanging shamanic paintings of constellations and **Chilseong** (Seven Stars); of the shaman dancing in ecstasy. By offering realistic depictions of the shamanic ritual, Yi stressed the need to overcome the superstitious practices that were widespread in his time.

The poem provides evidence that shamanic practice in Goryeo was a hybrid of Buddhist, Taoist and also nature worship practices. It also shows that the shamanic practice we see



*Donggukisanggukjip*.  
Yi Gyu-bo, Goryeo, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University



"Nomupyeon"  
Yi Gyu-bo, Goryeo, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University

today was established prior to Goryeo, and that the 12th-century practices share many similarities with those observed today in the central regions and Hwanghae Province.

## SEOKJEON GIU ANTAEK

석전 기우 안택

"Confucius Worship Rituals; Rain Rites; Rituals for Peace in the Home"

"Seokjeon Giu Antaek (Confucius Worship Rituals; Rain Rites; Rituals for Peace in the Home)" was the second report issued during the Japanese occupation of Joseon by the Japanese Government-General as part of the publication *Chōsen no kyōdo shinshi* (Folk Religious Worship in Joseon).

In the late 1930s the Japanese Government-General carried out a detailed survey of the folk religious practices of Korea in each of the provinces and counties and the final publication issued in March 30, 1938, included all the reports from around the country from May 1936.

The Japanese ethnographer Murayama Chijun



"Seokjeon Giu Antaek."  
 Edited and published by the Japanese Government-General (1927), Minsokwon

was commissioned to compile the report, which is a comprehensive investigation of the religious attitudes of the Joseon people, executed as part of the Japanese Government-General's *shinden* ("spiritual field") development policy of the 1930s.

The report comprises two sections and eleven chapters. The six chapters of the first section deals with communal rituals, including the Confucius worship ritual *seokjeon* and rain rites, while the next seven chapters of the second section are on private rituals. The communal rituals in the first section are divided into rituals held at Munmyo, the National Shrine to Confucius; shrine rituals; rain rites; protection rituals; plague prevention rituals; and market rituals. The private rituals in the second section include the household peace wishing ritual *antaek* and household gods ritual *gosa*, along with dragon king rituals (*yongwangje*); mountain god rituals (*sansinje*); village deity rituals (*seonghwangje*); state preceptor rituals (*guksaje*); bad fortune prevention rituals (*jaekje*); and rituals for Seven Stars (*chilseongje*). A bibliography at the end of the book lists chronologically references on Korean folk beliefs from ancient times through Goryeo and Joseon, including geographies. The survey for the book collected 513 examples of private rituals from 191 counties around the country, which were sorted into 40 types; 20 were household god worship

rituals; seven were private rituals held across the country; 13 were miscellaneous private rituals observed only in some parts.

This report was carried out for the purpose of improving the lives in the provincial areas and accelerating the Japanese Government-General's *nai-sen ittai* (Japan and Joseon as one entity) policy. The crisis that Japan was facing domestically and internationally at the time of the report and the policies to overcome them became the political background to the purpose and direction of this publication.

Murayama concluded that among the myriad worship rituals, the three in the title best represented the Korean folk ritual: Confucius worship ritual *seokjeon* as the most formally established; *giuje*, or rain rites, which served a major function for both the public and the government; and the household peace wishing ritual *antaek*, which promoted family-oriented life. This publication came to be issued as the second volume of the *Chōsen no kyōdo shinshi*, following the first, "Burakusai."





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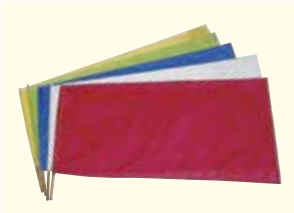


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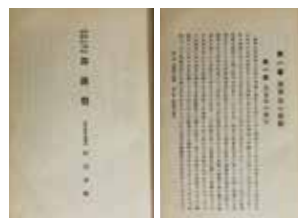
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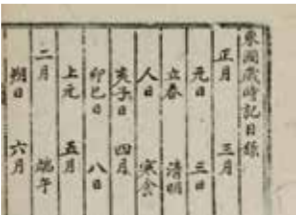
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