

Article

Acquired Tastes: Urban Impacts on Jeju Shamanic Ritual

Tommy TRAN

The Moveable Feast

Preparation for Waheul village's Singwaseje (lunar new year's ritual)¹ at the *bonhyangdang* (village main shrine) began early on February 21, 2016. Joey, a documentary maker, and I arrived at the small rural community in the northern central uplands of Jeju Island barely at the break of dawn. Male community members were already starting to come on bongo trucks with tarp tents, propane gas tanks, chairs, and kitchenware to prepare for the day's ritual. Women came with baskets of food offerings that were all prepared since the early hours at the home of the presiding *yijang* (village mayor). Waheul's shrine, Hangeori harosandang, was a well-kept rock wall-enclosed garden featuring a majestic ancient *paengnamu* (hackberry tree), a three-tiered long semicircle altar made of black stone, and an adjoining lesser altar at a slight remove. Most of the hundred or so people in attendance were middle-aged or older *dangol* (shrine worshippers and shamans' clients), but there were a few younger faces. The Singwaseje was consistently a community-wide affair as the annual ritual's purpose is a communal expression of thanks for the previous year and express hopes for the new (Hyeon 2013, 25). It was a day to perform homage to Waheul's patron deities: the chief patron grandfather god Harosantto (Hallasanim in Korean; god of Hallasan)² and the exiled grandmother goddess Seojeongseung ttanimagi.

When the *simbang* (*mansin* in Korean; shaman) arrived to consecrate the shrine space, she indicated the colored cloth wrapped around the tree. The polyester five-color (yellow, red, blue, green, white) *osaekpo* (five-color cloth streamers for ritual sites) was tied around the large grandfather tree trunk like a parade musician's sash, contrasting with the simpler strips of plain cloth or string that dangle from the branches of the smaller grandmother tree. Scattered around the tree's base were wax remains of burnt out candles and paper offerings of a shamanic-Buddhist flair that suggested that a *bosal* (mainland-

1. The ritual itself is performed on the Lunar 1/14. In Jeju Island's ritual calendar for both shamanism and Buddhism, the first three months of the lunar month is a de facto ritual season, coinciding with the coldest months of the year.

2. The title "tto" seems to be Jeju's analogue of the Korean honorific "nim," which can refer to an esteemed person or a deity (such as "Hananim" as the name for God in Korean Protestantism). Another deity notably referred to as "tto" in Jeju is Baekjutto, who is also the ancestress of many shrine deities including those of Waheul.

style Buddhist shamans) had earlier performed a ritual. With a tinge of resigned frustration in her voice, the shaman expressed her annoyance that Jeju City Hall had not seriously taken her complaints about *bosal* intrusion. She promptly had the *somi* (attendant shamans) pull it off to burn. The long *osaekpo*, which stretched for some yards, became part of a bonfire of loose twigs and fallen branches to provide heat for the guests who would come on this frigid morning. The *simbang* wanted the ritual space to be clear of any trace of the *bosal*, even having their ritual décor cast into the fire. With numerous *bosals* migrating to Jeju along with other mainland Koreans, Jeju *simbangs* view their activities with ambivalence. *Simbangs* have grown especially irritated at *bosals'* use of local shrines, some of which have specific taboos such as prohibitions against pork, without observing local protocol regarding pescatarian³ deities. The shaman here, a dedicated indigenous lineage shaman, was austere in her practice, Joey had noted, and she had spurned interviews, even from researchers.

The presiding *simbang's* ritual rejection of ritual mainland intrusion did not, however, mean that she or any other practitioner at the shrine was necessarily opposed to outsiders. On the contrary, the intersections between local practice with urban, regional, and global shifts were ever-present. Along with some hundred residents of Waheul, including *ijumin* (mainland Korean migrants to Jeju), there were many more outsiders, local and non-local alike: researchers and folklorists (whose presence has by this time become a ritual), curious younger mainland Koreans, local or locally-based *munhwa kontencheu* (culture content) creators looking for inspiration, aspiring politicians looking for potential voters, and complete circus troupes of media and freelance camera people looking for a dramatic or profitable shot of Jeju's most photogenic shrine.

A few non-locals chipped in their 10,000-won (roughly USD \$10) bills to the altar of Harosantto and performed prostrations. For officials and some senior researchers, it was a necessary formality. The offering was an expression of the gift economy (Mauss 1966) that reaffirmed ties of mutual obligation. As Waheul affairs were more tied to larger Jeju City or provincial matters, the

3. See Hyeon 2013. Many deities in Jeju have particular aversion to the smell of pork or the flesh of cloven-hoof animals, a feature strikingly parallel to Judaism and Islam. This is explained specifically in various shrine myths of divorced deities in which husbands or wives are cast out for offending their partner with the stench of pork. Though some locals consider non-pork-eating deities as "vegetarian," they are actually not opposed to having grilled *okdom* on their offering altars and hence I use the term "pescatarian."

researchers' or officials' offering to Harosantto was an indication of interest, whether it was academic, artistic, or a slight nudge for a second's thought at the ballot box. To a certain extent, other non-*dangol* money contributions might have also indirectly served to justify one's presence as a contributor to the island's culture economy, as has been the case of major hotel and service industry sponsors for Jeju City's Chilmeori yeongdeung-gut ritual. More likely the case for outsiders without long-term interests, however, was that it was something of a voluntary donation for a fleeting cultural experience as they giggled when a *simbang* or *somi* would exclaim, "Oh, how nice of you" (*Aigu! Chakhada!*)

What was once difficult to access was accessible. What was once a purely community-oriented observance became a public festival. Blurred boundaries between city and countryside made more conspicuous local and non-local presences as well as their tensions. One could observe a separation between non-*dangols* and *dangols*.⁴ The latter congregated closest around the ritual space and only rarely interacted with the mostly-unfamiliar visitors. Non-*dangols* in contrast busily snapped pictures at the slightest motion. *Dangols* would more directly acknowledge only non-*dangols* who were already familiar faces including folklorist Mun Mubyeong and the odd awkward foreign researchers. When too-curious camera people set their equipment atop the altars and briefly transgressed the ritual space, they earned the swift angry rebuke of *simbang*, Waheul elders, and researchers alike. A village shrine became a shifting contact zone that reflected Jeju islanders' ambivalence toward their island's renewed popularity as a domestic Other. On the other hand, Waheul's leadership and residents were eager to promote their practice in urban-derived terms⁵ as they kept it meaningful for themselves.

4. In two cases—one at Chilmeori Shrine in Jeju City and Songdang Shrine in Songdang Village—I encountered two women of Seoul background who noted that they became devotees of the local gods after living in the island for some time. In the former case, a woman received healing from Chilmeori's patron deity while the latter married into a Jeju household. Both declined to give details given the shadow of longstanding stigma toward practitioners.

5. Jeju City sometimes provides funds for officially-recognized community rituals, often via the semi-public Munhwa yesul jedan (Culture and Arts Foundation). In 2015 in the nearby community of Wasan, one of the motivations for opening their Singwaseje to visitors was to promote their practice as a *munhwa yusan* (cultural heritage asset) and to gain some funding from Jeju City. The *yijang* complained that even after spending community money to pave an abandoned farm field into a parking lot for festival visitors, Wasan received neither because of a personal vendetta on the part of a city functionary.

Despite the occasional cultural kerfuffle, trespassers were tolerated or welcomed provided that they did not interfere. The *yijang* and other Waheul leaders made their rounds to greet outsiders to what they advertised as either a *meoelje* (*maeulje* in Korean), which previously referred specifically to Confucian-style village ritual (Hyeon 2013, 14), or even a *munhwaje* (culture festival). In 2016, several village communities, including locales made famous for their shamanic rituals, increasingly conflated the language of *meoelje* or *munhwaje* with community *danggut* (shamanic shrine ritual).⁶ Though many rituals in Jeju maintain specific taboos against pork and contact with bodily fluids within a span of three days minimum, it is unclear whether visitors were at all aware. In Waheul at least, taboos seemed to primarily apply to those already engaged in the local gift economy. The community itself nonetheless straddled the fence between rural and urban, especially as administrative boundaries along with practices of everyday life tended to render such terms more conceptual than actual.

Urban flows into country ritual spaces were in continuous negotiation. By 2016, tourism was a natural extension of life for many Jeju islanders. Tourists, mostly comprised of mainland Koreans, flocked to villages made famous as heritage or scenic gems among Jeju's so-called Triple Crown UNESCO accolades.⁷ In 2016, upscale cafés and guesthouses clustered in every part of Jeju Island. Cautiously welcomed as a harbinger of newfound prosperity, such changes also increased anxieties over the island's status as South Korea's prime resort. Like many other photogenic rural regions, Waheul, now a mere fifteen minutes car ride from Jeju City's easternmost district of Bonggae-dong thanks to a road that encircles the island's interior, attracted visitors whose purpose oscillated between intellectual interest and cultural tourism.

The village patron gods, too, became accustomed to the cosmopolitan city that looms ever closer to them though their interests remained local. In a twist to Jeju's tourism slogan "The world comes to Jeju, Jeju goes to the world" (*Segyega channeun Jeju, segyero kaneun Jeju*), the world and its goods did indeed

6. In practical matters, *meoelje* dose coincide with village gut. Yet one also might wonder if this conflation, with the added dimension of *munhwaje*, was in part due to a longstanding stigma toward shamanism in Korea.

7. See <http://www.ijto.or.kr/english/?cid=11>. The three designations UNESCO awarded Jeju were Hallasan National Park, the Geomun oreum Lava Tube System, and Seongsan ilchulbong Tuff Cone.

come to Jeju at the Singwaseje. Waheul's gods did not only grant blessings to the occasional outsider who sat for the *pudasi* (*putakgeori* in Korean; exorcism of negative energies) but also listened to worries about skyrocketing land prices. Beyond the usual motions of ritual offering, the gods also were entertained with a culture festival and feasted on the new things their worshippers have brought to them.

For Seojeongseung tthanimagi, whose altar sat at a remove from the main ritual space, the fare was simple yet dignified, featuring fried *okdom* (one of Jeju's prime fish exports and a culinary luxury), rice, three hardboiled eggs, three cups of alcohol, a plate of three dried persimmons and three chestnuts, two apples, a pear, a *hallabong* (orange-tangerine hybrid fruits), a plate of *dolle tteok* (a plain flat oily cake made of pounded sticky rice flour), and a small saucer of fried bean sprouts. While this minimalist set clearly delimited the exiled Seojeongseung tthanimagi's lesser status vis-à-vis Harosantto, it was still presented with orderly care.

Harosantto's meal in contrast effused with bursting opulence. It was in individual offerings to Harosantto that *dangols* implicated themselves in the ritual gift economy of mutual exchange with the deity and the *simbang*; they negotiated the particulars while they maintained their position as part of a community of devotees. Among the usual fruit and rice offerings atop the terraced altars, *dangols* included non-traditional items to cater to Harosantto's sweet tooth: sweet bread, *Gyeongju ppang* (red bean paste-filled sweet pastries), cupcakes, sugar cookies, and Paris Baguette pastries. What was presented was no longer the fruits of village fields but the best the *dangols* could afford as they now had access to Jeju City and international markets. Such opulence reflected Waheul's general prosperity. Selections paralleled what worshippers themselves favored in South Korea's age of accessible mass consumption. The scent of milled flour and processed sugar mixed with grilled fish, glutinous rice cakes, Hallasan-brand *soju* alcohol, *makeollli* (rice liquor), *myeolchi guksu* (thin wheat noodles in anchovy broth), *kkakdugi* (cubed turnip kimchi) and leeks, instant coffee mix, and the wafting aroma of burning incense. Waheul's gods were treated with both the usual fare and Korea's indigenized European and Japanese pastries as much as their *dangols*. Acquired tastes on the part of worshippers naturally extended to the gods, whom *dangols* sought to maintain in their personal networks for annual favors.

Each household arranged individual offerings atop white, yellow, or pink

cloth or newspaper. While it was unclear if people had a specific aesthetics of presentation in mind, no one set of offerings resembled the other. Some presented their goods with porcelain dinner plates. Others gave the impression of a sumptuous feast with food stacked atop brass footed platters accompanied with polished three-footed incense censers. Some substituted *hotteok* (syrup-filled pancakes) in place of white rice *dolle tteok* or expensive *hallabong* in place of *gamgyul*. Aside from the fried fish and alcohol, all that was standard among these meal sets for the gods was the brass bowl of rice with a spoon stuck in to indicate that these offerings were for spirits and ghosts.

Before the *simbang* called the gods to join the new year's party and during the preparations, Joey indicated to me a unique offering wrapped around the grandmother tree: a plastic Starbucks bag with the Starbucks mascot's face looking straight down at the earth. We wondered if a shrine worshipper simply re-identified the enigmatic nameless mascot, a two-tailed mermaid with a crown, with Seojeongseung ttanimagi. While the appearance of a Starbucks bag can set off alarm bells over the reach of corporate encroachment on Jeju—a valid cause for concern given Jeju's rampant development problems—the conversion of a bag into a divine offering was accidentally proper and disruptive at the same time. One person's innocuous refuse became another's means for sacred connection.

Productive incongruity was not anomalous; it characterizes many surviving rituals in Jeju. In exactly a year prior at the *bonhyangdang* of Songdang, a village about fifteen minutes east and the seat of the ancestress of Waheul's patron god, a bottle of wine replaced the traditional *gamju* (sweet rice liquor) offering beside the epitaph of the goddess Baekjutto. *Dangols* at that shrine presented their offerings—which included snack chips, fruit jelly, cans of *sikhye* (a sweet rice drink), bottles of Fanta orange soda, and cakes—in baskets like box lunches rather than a full setting as was the case in Waheul. Likewise, in the northeastern seaside village of Gimnyeong, *dangols*, many of whom have relatives abroad in Japan, included Japanese snack foods on the altar. How these rituals are organized and with what resources owes as much to the material prosperity of a growing Jeju City as it does the tenacity of tradition. Provided that one observes the basic taboos, a general rule in Jeju shrine conduct is simple: offer what you can.

Making Authenticities

“Tradition” may not necessarily be restrictive to set norms, especially if it refers to gestures more than objects themselves. Is a Starbucks bag any less sincere an offering than the “traditional” cut cloth? Are Paris Baguette cakes any less “authentic” than hand-pounded *dolle tteok*? Does the ubiquity of urban presence necessarily displace ritual sanctity? To what extent is the sacred and profane dichotomy followed? A further (and perhaps for some, troubling) question to ask is how to make sense of ritual practices that take on new concepts or even new forms once alien to them.

This article is an initial exploration of ways practitioners and devotees of Jeju shamanism have adapted to Jeju Island’s epochal urban change to maintain spiritual efficacy. The specificities in ritual, whether it be the pork taboo or consecration of space and time, paradoxically allow for considerable leeway in other seemingly non-essential aspects. Like the Waheul example above, so long as the community of *dangol* and *simbang* feels that essential protocols and functions of ritual have been maintained, adaptations and additions such as a cultural festival component are added without an overt sense of contradiction. Internal features that allow a degree of choice perhaps were what allowed Jeju shamanism to survive under much duress, even in their greatly diminished form.

A central consideration in this article is the question of how authenticity operates in practical change and deliberately constructed continuity. One can regard substituting offering goods with store-bought surrogates as trivial, commonsense, and a natural extension of a long-perpetuated practice. On the contrary, I argue that what may seem as corruptions or even commonsense adjustments reveals much about broader changes in everyday life. A question that researchers might ask is why these changes are naturalized to the extent that they arouse little or no controversy among practitioners. As Jeju scholars (Jin 2005; Mun 2005; Hyeon 2013) already have produced a wealth of studies on the structural meaning of ritual, this will not be dealt with in detail in this article. This article suggests that researchers should consider additional attention to the material components of ritual and what their use implies, especially in a rapidly urbanizing context. Variable offering goods, non-traditional insertions into ritual, or using new frameworks or institutions to address local gods express a personal touch. How and with what people perform ritual can reveal subtle

details of shifting choices and the socioeconomic context. One might also wonder if new goods—former luxuries that became everyday objects in twenty-first century Korea—bring the deity into the orbit of contemporary relations as anthropologist Laurel Kendall (1996) suggested more than two decades ago. What distinguishes 2016 Jeju from the late 1980s-1990s Seoul-Gyeonggi area in which Kendall worked, however, is that such changes have become second nature that they occur with little or no controversy. The gods themselves may be understood to have acclimated themselves to the new goods and technologies of the city.

Few in Jeju would deny that urbanization and cultural heritage preservation had a fundamental impact on how ritual is interpreted. As exemplified in folklorist Mun Mubyeong's case for integrating the Chilmeori yeongdeung-gut ritual into Jeju City as an urban festival in 1996, shamans and folklorists alike have long grappled with the paradox that preserved ritual is itself an artifice of the times. While Jeju folklorists debate⁸—often outside of their written papers—about the veracity of new inventions for cultural revitalization, shamans have found new opportunities that come with the city. Jeju studies' resurgence in the 2000s coincidentally followed the 2002 Free International City project which, aside from attracting international investment for luxury resort development, was also premised on commoditizing island heritage. Tourism booms have been curious boons for interest in all things Jeju. Fragments, though sometimes inaccurately represented, from its endangered language to gestures at indigenous rural spiritual practices grace many new upscale cafés and artisan establishments as Jeju City experiences unprecedented expansion. Jeju words such as *warang-warang* (bursting with fiery vigor) or artists' renditions of Jeju's goddesses became a form of new chic. Urban change gives new meaning to rural tradition. The threat of erasure inspires anxieties as well as opportunities.

Authentic heritage as an ideal in Europe (Bendix 1997) and Korea (Pai 2013) has long premised authenticity on raw and original expressions created

8. While a few scholars such as Yun Kyoim (2015) and Hong Sunyoung (2013) have written about the paradoxes of heritage preservation, others interestingly rarely put their reservations into writing though they do debate about the issues in person. In a personal communication with anthropologist Hyeon Seunghwan in 2015, Hyeon noted that the codification of Chilmeori yeongdeung-gut led to an insertion of a Yonggam-nori skit into the ritual in honor of shaman An Sa-in even though it was not originally a part of Chilmeori Shrine version.

by anonymous preliterate people before urban domestication. A paradox lies in the mutual reconstitution of the urban and rural; the definition of one depends on the other. Careful preservation decontextualizes a practice and transforms it from the quotidian to a hallowed representation of ethno-national culture. A further irony the process exposes is in the raw economic expenditures to maintain a practice in situ: the ability to maintain designated heritage as a professional pursuit is, after all, a mark of an industrial or postindustrial modernity (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006). On the other hand, change, including the artifice of preservation itself, can be productive. The active making of something authentic can become a self-regenerative process where constant practice gives an embodied sense of living tradition. Far from mere fabrication or corruption, adaptations manifest the second meaning of *authentēs*, the Greek root word of authenticity: to be “made by one’s own hand” (Bendix 1997, 14). Authenticity therefore necessitates deliberate practice.

I look briefly at examples of material and practical adaptations from my dissertation research period between January 7, 2015 and March 31, 2016. Aside from the 2016 Waheul’s Singwaseje mentioned above and some commentary on a few cases, I look mostly at the 2015 Yeongdeung-insa of Sincheon and the 2015 Yowangje of Jongdal. Practices are still region-specific in Jeju. In some cases, increased integration with urban economies have accentuated or created new ritual oikotypes, or geographically-based variants (von Sydow 1948). Waheul is an *jungsangan* (interior upland) village adjacent to Jeju City while Sincheon and Jongdal are remote *haean jeojidae* (coastal) villages in southeastern and northeastern parts of the island respectively. The first two rituals are based on two of what Jeju folklorist Gang Jeongsik (2007) calls the *4 dae je ui* (four great rituals) and were performed at shrines with lineage shamans. The third ritual is a Buddhist rite with indigenous religious elements held during the traditional Yeongdeung-gut period. In the context of this article, I formulate the term “urbanizing” as pertaining to the constant orientation of daily life to the city (in this case, Jeju City) as a principal nodal point to which one engages in material exchanges and self-expression.

In the third part of this article, I assess the three with regard to the Yeongdeung-gut ritual in the seaside community of Hamdeok, which has been transforming into a tourist resort town and de facto suburb of Jeju City. Both the Waheul and Hamdeok ritual features are closely tied to the Chilmeoridang yeongdeung-gut bojonhoe (Chilmeori Shrine Yeongdeung-gut Preservation

Society; hereafter Chilmeori Preservation Society) while being sponsored from a substantially prosperous *dangol* community. The two rituals thus float in a liminal space between officially sanctioned heritage and a locally-oriented observance. They contrast as well as parallel Sincheon and Jongdal where there are limited or no concerted efforts at ritual preservation. I conclude with a commentary that all are equally “authentic.” The disparate forms of ritual produce two complementary and overlapping kinds of authenticities: 1) authenticity of practice in which participants take on new forms or materials to keep tradition meaningful even with the absence of a complete ritual; and 2) authenticity of continuity in which participants adhere to a specific officially-sanctioned format to maintain a sense of unbroken tradition. The analysis and findings discussed below are not intended to be exhaustive but an initial exploration.

Jeju Shamanism in the Urban-Rural Matrix

Local (Jin 2005; Yi 2005; Hyeon 2009, 2013; Heo 2011) and Anglophone (Park and Tangherlini 1987; Pettid 2003; Yun 2007) scholars regard Jeju shamanism as a representative component of island culture. Such an assessment is not wrong. What is collectively called *musok* (shamanism) is a veritable storehouse of knowledges on Jeju Island and the Korean Peninsula. Aside from maintaining a rich mythology, Jeju shamanism plays a crucial role in preserving and addressing traumatic memories of violent mainland repression that has long been suppressed in official Korean histories (Kim 1989; Pettid 2003). Scholars frequently take for granted that “ultimately shamanic belief is the fundamental original religion” of Jeju (Yi 2005, 232).

Since the start of the twenty-first century, Jeju’s community shrine-centered shamanism has been facing enormous pressures. Mainland shamanism has become a competitor, tourism development—ironically to capitalize on Jeju’s uniqueness—threatens sacred geographies in the process of driving cultural consumption, and the shrine communities decline or disappear, as *dangols* age or move to the city. With few exceptions (Gang and Hong 2004; Gang 2007; Yun 2007, 2015), Jeju shamanism literature, often geared toward salvage anthropology, curiously is silent about the present situation. New technology, urbanization, tourism development, bureaucratization via the

Munhwajaecheong (Cultural Heritage Administration), and even the 1970s New Village Movement mass mobilization programs had all diminished living traditions but also all played accidentally productive roles. The case of Waheul above demonstrates that practitioners themselves take active part in remaking ritual as heritage. Parallel to the state-protected Chilmeoridang yeongdeung-gut or the recently-revived Ipchun-gut (the welcoming of the spring ritual) in Jeju City where only a handful of women diver *dangols* remain, some practitioners have been re-framing ritual more in terms of an abstract notion of heritage. As Gang Jeongsik (2007) recognized, Singwaseje and Yeongdeung-gut, two *4 dae je ui*, retained their relevancy in part because of their broad application to personal and community welfare. Such rituals are broad enough in scope that shifting their annual observances to include a culture festival component is not necessarily such a major jump.

In contemporary Jeju, *dangols* have unprecedented easy access to high quality goods and new ideas. The reverse is also true: outsiders have far greater ease in travelling to shrines and formerly remote villages due to new infrastructure as well as a wide array of introductory literature in print or online. Increasing numbers of *bosal* have been tapping into the island's sacred geographies more readily, sometimes sparking cultural conflict when they do not observe local taboos. President Park Chung Hee's anti-superstition campaigns, the New Village Movement of the 1970s, and the cultural promotion campaigns since the early 2000s further had accidental productive effects even while they undermined Jeju shamanism.⁹ Some rituals became more muted *anjeunje* (short rituals) (Hyeon 2013, 64), *binyeom* (prayer), or merged with Confucian-style *maeulje* due to Park's earlier anti-shamanism policies. On the other hand, organizing community ritual, once the province of *sang dangol* (high-rank shrine worshippers), has integrated with a bureaucratized process that involves village administrations, associations (many of which were formed as part of the New Village Movement), the Cultural Heritage Administration, and the backing of Jeju City Hall.¹⁰ Administrations once used to suppress ritual

9. See also Hong 2013. Hong demonstrates how civic organizations, academics, and these bureaucratic apparatuses were instrumental in re-inventing the Ipchun-gut ritual in Jeju City.

10. In 2015, the *yijang* (village mayor) of the village of Wasan about ten minutes down the road from Waheul mentioned that he had been attempting to lobby Jeju City Hall to recognize Wasan's shrine and ritual as heritage properties. The Wasan community was much more direct about their long-term intention of making their annual Singwaseje a culture festival. See also Gang 2004 on

became the means to promote them. It was to Jeju City Hall, after all, that the shaman in Waheul issued her complaints about cultural intrusion. Village leadership permits, if not encourages, non-locals and media to attend what historically were community-centered rituals.

Almost every aspect of Jeju Island life is inextricable from the global market since the late 1990s (Yun 2007; Hong 2013; Tran 2017). By 2016, work on the interior 1136 road was largely completed and connected all northern upland villages like Waheul directly to Jeju City, including Sin-Jeju (New Jeju City). The entire island is connected to the densest parts of the city through a complex web-like network of highways. Nevertheless, Jeju is still often cast as one of Korea's last rural bastions. This paradox is well-illustrated in the attitudes of mainland photographers at rituals, who cite as their motivations the mission of capturing (if not disrupting) the last expressions of *minjung* (the masses') spirituality.¹¹ The disconnect between image and reality is perpetuated in mainstream media. The national Yonhap TV news' portrayal of Jeju Island as a virgin green paradise waiting to be discovered in a report on a plan to build a second airport—ironically in one of Jeju's most "traditional" regions—on a November 2015 was broadcast. With flights arriving at Jeju International Airport every five minutes, Jeju Island is perhaps more tied with urban change than any other "rural" region in Korea. Constant flights move goods and people from mainland Korea and Japan to Jeju on ritual days. The present contradictions are not lost on ritual practitioners, the remaining dedicated *dangols*, and local cultural preservationists.

What makes Jeju spirituality both vulnerable and malleable to change is that it concerns immediate practical matters more than abstract moralism. Efficacy depends on the gift exchange with the gods. The purpose of rituals is to narrativize or rationalize a personal need in a non-discursive framework. Because ritual fulfills this basic need, how it is performed—and for what reason it is performed—accommodates to rather than resists urban change. Urban prosperity in turn validates the efficacy of the exchange and thus the process can be made self-regenerative despite a changed context. Worshippers still must observe certain taboos, especially the pork and bodily fluids taboo, and follow

community's new organizational means for rituals.

11. A rather disruptive photographer gave this as his justification for snapping pictures directly in *dangols'* and shamans' faces at the 2015 Woljeong's Singwaseje without any tinge of irony.

specific codes for etiquette, but gods tend to be rather liberal in what they receive and give. Gods are conceived as abstract supernatural entities yet in the act of the offering or feasting at ritual they become liminal figures with whom a person of *iseung* (this world) can access the benefits of *jeoseung* (the world beyond). As the anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1966) suggested, in the gift economy, a gift has embedded within the exchange the expectation of obliging the other person involved to reciprocate. One can see a ritual offering as a natural extension of the gifting process, which augments the personalized connotations of the terms *halmanim* (grandmother) or *hareubanim* (grandfather) to refer to gods.

The system of shrine shamanism breaks down when there is no one to perform the gift exchange at the shrine and thus not simply with the disappearance of lineage shamans. It is for this reason that *bosal*-maintained Jeju shrines like Seogwi bonhyangdang in downtown Seogwipo or Neungdang in Sin-Jeju (New Jeju City) maintain their efficacy despite the absence of a Jeju lineage shaman. Aside from an aging *dangol*, a principal cause for diminishing seasonal *gut* (shamanic ritual) is due, as Gang Jeongsik (2007, 108) notes, to “a growing gap between shrine *gut* and the economic life of communities” because livelihoods are no longer bound to agriculture or fishing. On the other hand, while *danggut* (communal ritual) may disappear, simpler rituals such as *binyeom* or *anjeunje* sometimes have been integrated into urbanizing lifestyles. Whereas some *bonhyangdang* lose their primacy, other shrines oriented to generalized personal welfare such as *ilrwedang* (seventh-day shrines) or *yeodeuredang* (eighth-day shrines) may still have visitors.

What of the more complex seasonal rituals like Waheul’s Singwaseje that manage to persist? At a glance, Singwaseje may seem like a form of resistance to urban change, a community’s will to keep tradition and some semblance of collective solidarity. Such an initial impression is not altogether wrong, but the urban economy may be the very impetus for people to maintain ritual. Aside from substantial provincial and Munhwajaecheong grants to community cultural events of any form across the island,¹² material plenty can enable ritual to be viable and creates new concerns that require responses. Waheul’s substantial *dangol* community, after all, maintains collective means to sponsor full *danggut*. Internal features of Jeju shamanism, particularly the absence of

12. Hong Sunyoung, personal communication. Jeju City, March 29, 2018.

absolute orthodoxy (at least with forms not designated as official heritage), also may be a key characteristic that enables change without a sense of contradiction. Though Waheul's Singwaseje did keep mostly to "tradition," the community's relative affluence from economic changes in the past few decades enabled opulent offerings. That Jeju City's (and Seoul's) presence furthermore was rather a natural extension of life made outsiders' presence less of an intrusion.

Geographical proximity to Jeju City and its cultural institutions also likely made more familiar academic concepts of tradition and cultural heritage. As a long-documented ritual and shrine community, Waheul had always been featured in Jeju folklore research and professional photography. Heritage concepts adapted to Waheul's situation gave an additional discursive means to recognize the shrine's sacredness. During a break in the ritual, the presiding *yijang* rebuffed an aspiring politician's suggestion that the community could make the shrine more accessible to tourists if they expanded infrastructure. As a preface to his rebuttal to the politician's suggestion, the *yijang* began with noting that he and the community had long agreed with academics' perspectives. Waheul's community, the *yijang* mentioned, felt that the shrine was better left as a shrine. The language of cultural preservation ideas augmented rather than ossified a practice as being true to form. Amidst these changes in cultural politics, the gods continue to function as gods, active agents perfectly aware of the times.¹³

The Yeongdeung Gods as Divine Tourists

The Yeongdeung-gut rituals, the second of the major annual seasonal shamanic observances, likewise underwent fundamental shifts despite heavy cultural baggage. The ritual sequence historically was observed among fishing and farming communities, but became re-signified as a crucial part of *jeomsubu* (*haenyeo* in Korean; women divers) culture. As a ritual to visiting gods from beyond the sea,¹⁴ Yeongdeung-gut is not confined to a single geographic area.

13. See Tran 2017. In Chapter 4 of my dissertation, I explore how shamans make use of cultural heritage terminology and official apparatuses. Within the ritual framework, Jeju's gods are not oblivious to the island's changes.

14. See Mun 1996. Cf. Tangherlini and Park 1990. Although it is nowadays common to refer to only

The ritual sequence takes place within an annual transitional shift in pre-spring weather patterns that one can observe across the island. The island-wide ritual series historically begins with a *yowang-maji* on the lunar 2/1, culminates with a *songbyeolje* at Chilmeori Shrine in Jeju City on 2/14, and concludes at a final farewell *gut* at Udo Island on 2/15.¹⁵ The ritual dates are not always absolute, but for at least the first two weeks of the second lunar month, work at sea is technically taboo for spiritual and practical reasons in this windy season. With few exceptions, notably the Chilmeoridang yeongdeung-gut, which UNESCO bestowed heritage accolades in the 2009 Dubai meeting (Yun 2015), observances have been considerably abbreviated. Though the Chilmeori Preservation Society's attempts to revive Yeongdeung-gut, many of these practices have disappeared with a steadily diminishing and aging *dangols* as the numbers of active women divers and fishermen declines.¹⁶ Already in the 1990s, folklorists such as Mun anticipated that the officially-preserved rituals, too, would become public culture festivals dependent on institutional subsidies.

Where Yeongdeung rituals persist as practice independent of heritage institutions, oikotypification is more pronounced. In some regions, the Jeomsu-gut (also spelled Jamsu-gut), or women divers' *gut*, became conflated with Yeongdeung-gut (Gang 2007, 108). Adding to the complication of identifying the tradition of Yeongdeung rituals is that the form designated as heritage is ironically that of Geonip-dong, one of the central districts of Jeju City. Direct access to resources, developed infrastructure, and academic expertise might have contributed to the retention of practices no longer extant elsewhere. Elsewhere, oikotypes remain or are still in the process of being formed as shamans, even those appointed by the preservation society, do not dismiss regional differences.

The coastal community of Sincheon in Pyoseon-myeon, which encompasses the southeastern part of the island, held what they called a "Yeongdeung-insa" in lieu of a full Yeongdeung-gut on April 1, 2015. The main

"Yeongdeung halmang" (Yeongdeung Grandmother), the "Yeongdeung" deity historically referred to several related entities depending on the local oikotype. In Sincheon and in Jongdal, community members addressed Yeongdeung hareubang (Yeongdeung Grandfather). Yeongdeung also does not traverse Jeju alone as there are other deities such as Yowang (Yongwang in Korean; the Dragon King) that follow as well as the patron gods of the shrines that receive them.

15. The final *gut* on Udo is seldom done. According to Hong Sunyoung, in 2018 it consisted only of a *bosal* performing a *binyeom*.

16. In 2017, Yeongdeung-gut was revived in Hansu and Gwideok at the initiative of the Chilmeori Preservation Society.

cluster of what comprises Sincheon village hugs the jagged basalt rock coastline and is slightly off the Iljudo Road, which completely circumnavigates the island. At about an hour away from both Jeju City and Seogwipo City by car, Sincheon is far more remote from an urban area than Waheul. Although folklorists know Sincheon more for its *Seon-ssi* (Hyeon-ssi in Korean; Hyeon family) shrine, a rare instance in which a patron deity is specific to a clan, its Yeongdeung-gut has received far less attention. Whereas other communities have opted to host rituals at women divers' workstations or *eochongye* warehouses, Sincheon still held its ritual at its shrine, Gossitdang, an isolated rock wall enclosure with a basalt rock altar, perched on a seaside promontory. Like many other seaside villages, Sincheon appeared to have earned some measure of prosperity as its divers and fishers sell to seafood-hungry Japanese and, more recently, Chinese markets. *Jeomsubu* arrived at the shrine in a motorcade of motor scooters and the local official, a middle-aged man, stopped by the shrine in a luxury car accompanied by his chauffeur. At the same time, relative material prosperity mixed with rugged *jeomsubu* character. The consequences of Jeju's prosperity were also immediately apparent; regardless of material plenty, Sincheon was a depopulating community with a shrinking and aging population. Some worshippers had come in from Jeju City on behalf of their families, but such visitations were not regular.

Sincheon no longer had a *dang maein simbang* (village head shaman). The village office instead posted an advertisement for shamans in the wider southeastern region. For the 2015 Yeongdeung ritual, the community commissioned a Jeju lineage shaman and her thirty-something daughter from the Namwon-eup area adjacent to Pyoseon-myeon. As Jeju lineage shamans historically were concerned with the shrines of their own regions, both shamans invited to Sincheon had their sponsors brief them on the community's expectations and observances unique to their locale.¹⁷ Out of practicality, some invocations therefore had to be summarized. Sincheon's ritual started after dawn, a retention of previous practices that contrast with the publicly-sponsored performances that nowadays often begin at around 10 AM. What followed, however, was an abbreviated *anjeunje* that participants called an "insa" (greeting) rather than a complete Yeongdeung-gut.

The Sincheon ritual was truncated in every aspect. What was kept were

17. Although both were willing to converse for this research, they have requested that their names not be disclosed.

key parts of the process: *gwemun yeollim* (the opening of the god doors), invoking the visiting Yeongdeung and Yowang (Yongwang in Korean) deities, appeals for bountiful harvests, and divinations. Except for the closing procession, chants and songs were accompanied with the rhythmic jingles of the *yoryeong* (bell) rather than a full percussion ensemble. No complex dances or other ritual motions to goad the deities to feast were necessary. Rather than sit for a full day-long banquet, the gods were content to drop by for a bite. Though not as diverse and cosmopolitan as Waheul or other more populous villages, offerings comprised of expensive high-quality local and imported food including the usual *okdom* fish, *kkul sagwa* (honey apples), Naju pears, and *hallabong*. After receiving individual divinations, women climbed down from the promontory upon which the shrine was situated, tossed rice wrapped in *baekji* (traditional white mulberry paper) into the water for Yowang, and ate a spoonful of the offering food as a form of communion. There was a specific technique to throw the packets to keep them from floating up, an inauspicious sign that Yowang rejected the offering. One had to throw in a deliberate yet not too deliberate manner. *Dangols* could push the limits to get an auspicious result, provided that they did not make it too obvious. While the pair of shamans did not perform a series of dances to goad the gods along, the post-ritual sequence nonetheless featured a procession to the shore. They proceeded along with the head woman diver bearing a paper streamer-decorated bamboo banner and another woman beating a *buk*. The *insa* ended with the head woman diver making her way out to the furthest edge of the rocky shore, strangling a live chicken with her bare hands, and tossing it to the sea for the departing gods.

The *insa* was exactly as the name suggests: a greeting. A ritual sequence that normally would have spanned days wrapped up by the early afternoon. The younger shaman, Ms. C, who was at that time training in her mother's craft, expressed her own surprise that Sincheon *dangols* wanted to expedite the process to get to their divinations early.¹⁸ She explained that as she learned ritual performance, she had to train in all the appropriate proceedings in their entirety from *gwemun yeollim*, inviting the gods, and consecrating the ritual space. Instead, she noted, Sincheon's *dangols* were insistent on setting down the ritual

18. See Tran 2017. In the opening to Chapter 1 of my dissertation, I include a more detailed description of the ritual including a spat between a mainland *bosal* (Buddhist shaman) and the Sincheon community.

offerings as soon as possible. It was not that Sincheon's community was being unceremonious or lost interest in their rituals but that they spared the gods the pleasantries.

Along with ritual convenience, Sincheon's *jeomsubu* community accepted an urban and remarkably North American culinary convenience. The post-ritual communal meal featured not the now-standard culture festival fare of *guksu* (noodle soup) or freshly harvested seafood but takeout fried chicken from the Pelicana chain shops. When I asked a senior woman about the meal choice, she answered plainly that eating chicken means the ritual concluded. She continued to explain that in the past, community members of each household would each bring their own chickens for the ritual. Chickens that were not sacrificed to Yowang were cooked and eaten after the ritual. Most no longer raised their own chickens and manually preparing a fresh chicken meal would have been inconvenient. The community instead ordered out from the nearest Pelicana restaurant. They did not deviate from tradition *per se*. Tradition only required chicken and did not specify from where said chicken should come.

Changes did not diminish the ritual's significance or the meanings around the Yeongdeung season. Technological changes such as the availability of motorboats have allowed for going out to sea, which would have been taboo historically, but some reinterpreted the taboos to better reflect the times. When asked about working in the tabooed period, a senior diver responded, "when the good Grandfather (Yeongdeung) comes in, the winds come in and all return after doing their work...but if there is rain, then they don't work..."¹⁹ The deciding factor is not the wind, which normally indicates the deity's presence, but the rain. Rain indicates that Yeongdeung is in an unpleasant mood and so even if the rain does not diminish the ability to work, fishers and divers must still respect the sign. On the other hand, while some taboos were reinterpreted, other ritual boundaries were maintained in the *insa*. When my colleagues and I asked permission to enter the ritual space during the divinations, the head *jeomsubu* adamantly refused. We were allowed to enter the shrine only after the *insa*. The *insa*'s abbreviations and omissions highlighted rather than diminished key aspects of the Yeongdeung ritual.

Where Sincheon retained an abbreviated ritual in form and practice, a

19. Recorded in Sincheon, Pyoseon-myeon, Jeju, April 1, 2015. Rain indicates that Yeongdeung arrived with his/her daughter-in-law and that the two are quarrelling.

more complete change occurred in the community of Jongdal at the northeast coast of the island. Located near the tourist town of Seongsan with the backdrop of the dramatic Seongsan ilchulbong (Sunrise Peak), the region is relatively well-known to photographers and tourists. In part due to proximity to Hado, which hosts the Haenyeo bangmulgwan (Women Divers' Museum), Jongdal's *jeomsubu* community gained local and international recognition. They were featured in special photographic exhibitions, including those of National Geographic.²⁰ Whereas photographic representations cast them as the last hardy heirs of time-honored tradition, Jongdal's *jeomsubu* community opted not for even an abbreviated *anjeunje* or *binyeom*, but a Buddhist Yowang-gido (Yongwang-gido in Korean; Dragon King Prayer), also known as a "Yowangje."

The Yowangje at Jongdal was held in the women divers' workstation on the harbor near the base of Jimibong hill on March 25, 2015, around the same time the community historically observed Yeongdeung-gut. At a glance, the Yowangje follows the standard form of Buddhist temple rites albeit performed in a non-temple setting. The wall behind the altar was decorated with paper talismans bearing images of pagodas, devotional invocations to the Dragon King deity, and *dharani* (Buddhist sacred verses). Chants consisted of sanctification mantras, the *Cheonsugyeong* (*Thousand Hand Sutra*), and a devotional melodic invocation of Yowang's name to the rhythm of a *moktak* (wooden fish instrument).

What distinguished this Yowangje as an oikotype in Jeju Buddhism as well as Jeju indigenous ritual in general were some subtle material details: a long white cloth to represent the "god path" typically used in shamanic *gut*, rice wrapped in *baekji* to be cast into the sea for Yowang, and a separate box of offerings for the Yeongdeung deity. The Yeongdeung deity was not the focus of devotion in the ritual, but his²¹ presence was not forgotten. The two-tier hierarchy of offerings further parallels that of shrines. Individual worshipers throwing paper rice packets and emptying *soju* bottles into the sea are more common to Yeongdeung observances rather than Buddhist Yongwang-gido. At

20. See <https://www.ft.com/content/e1ec5434-50f8-11e5-b029-b9d50a74fd14>. The article mentions that the community worships Yeongdeung halmang when Jongdal's community in fact hosts a Yowang-gido. Members do, however, attend the Yeongdeung-gut in the neighboring village of Hado.

21. Like Sincheon, senior *jeomsubu* in Jongdal referred to Yeongdeung as Yeongdeung hareubang (Grandfather Yeongdeung).

the Borimsa temple Yongwang-gido in Jeju City, for example, it was only the monk and temple helpers who tossed scoops of cooked millet.

Foods not standard to Buddhist ritual, which usually maintains a strictly vegetarian fare, in this case were fresh *meyeok* (*miyeok* in Korean; seaweed) and fish roe soup and *nakji* (octopus) harvested prior to the ritual. The offering table also featured the much of the same foods for the gods as was seen at Waheul and at Sincheon with again the standard *dolle tteok*, *soju*, orange Fanta soda, and fruit. As was the case in Sincheon and Waheul, Jongdal's offerings were remarkably saccharine. Large wheels of sweetened rice flour cake sat alongside bags of fruit-flavor candies as if the Fanta were not sugary enough. A common response to inquiries about the ubiquity of sugar was simply that gods enjoyed sweet things. In all aspects, the offering table in Jongdal could have also satiated the gods in the Sincheon or Waheul shrines.

The choice of a different type of ritual was a sign of the extent that traditional systems have declined but also the extent that they continue. Jongdal's community did not necessarily convert but rather transferred their worship and spiritual idioms to Buddhist temples. The Yowangje reveals several important points: 1) Jongdal's *jeomsubu* community made this choice because they felt that a Buddhist ritual was as efficacious as a traditional Yeongdeung-gut; 2) the "Buddhist" pantheon were reinterpreted to local understandings and re-signified as local deities; 3) an officiating monk who is himself a native of the area with extensive local knowledge can and will adapt Buddhism to local idioms; and 4) the offerings and manner of offerings in Jeju Buddhist ritual parallels that of shamanic ritual. Worshippers regard gods as active entities and thus in some cases, provided that certain conditions are met such as specific local taboos or ritual periods, the form of ritual may not be as essential as the act of offering.

Ritual forms are not mutually exclusive if they satisfy the same deities and personal needs. Those who attend the Yowangje do not eschew Yeongdeung-gut or other shamanic practices. Suam Seunim, the monk who presided over Jongdal's Yowangje and a native of the region himself, was well-versed in local knowledges and felt that Jeju practices were compatible with Buddhism. Jeju shamans likewise do not consider Buddhism and shamanism mutually exclusive. On the same morning as the Yowangje, there were fresh food

offerings of rice, hardboiled eggs,²² Fanta, and carrots (Jongdal's specialty crop) at the nearby Saengaeonap donjildang shrine. Jongdal *jeomsubu* also noted that while they no longer host a Yeongdeung-gut, they attended the ritual in the neighboring village of Hado. Aside from the phrase "five hundred shrines, five hundred Buddhist temples" (*dang obaek, jeol obaek*), a common perception among *dangol* and many native-born Buddhist clergy and shamans is the phrase "one who goes to a shrine goes also goes to a Buddhist temple" (*dang-do gago, jeol-do gago*).

Ritual in Transition

How do the three rituals compare with rituals more directly linked to preservation societies and South Korea's cultural heritage apparatuses? Like Waheul, the example of the seaside town of Hamdeok may represent a liminal form. Hamdeok's main shaman is a core member of the Chilmeori Preservation Society and Hamdeok itself has a substantial and substantially prosperous *dangol* community. At the 2016 Yeongdeung-gut in Hamdeok, one can observe a balance between a ritual entreaty to the gods and the influence of more abstract concepts of heritage preservation professionalism. One can further appreciate an accidental boon to ritual vitality due to a more vibrant tourist and seafood market that feeds the island's twenty-first century urbanization.

Hamdeok, unlike Sincheon and Jongdal, occupies a liminal position as a rural town and a suburbanizing satellite of Jeju City. Though Hamdeok is a part of Jocheon-eup, direct transportation links combined with tourist popularity have brought many new developments. Owing to the popular Seoubong Beach and the upscale Daemyung Resort, Hamdeok was already a seasonal tourist draw in 2007. By 2016, however, the entire coastal area became a veritable boomtown. Large hotels such as the Ramada and mainlander-owned artisanal cafés nudge the basalt rock walls of remaining farmhouses.

The moment one steps off of the Number 20²³ Jeju City Bus at the

22. Hardboiled eggs are standard offerings for individual worship at Jeju shrines. The egg whites represent skin and offering them is to pray for the health of children or family members as well as wishes to prevent or cure skin diseases.

23. Now Numbers 311 and 312 after provincial authorities reformed Jeju's transit system in 2017.

Hamdeok-ri bus stop, one is immediately confronted with a visual, audio, and olfactory potpourri: the polished glass of new tourist hotel towers hovering over the corrugated blue and green roofs of older housing compounds, Seoul speech floating between Mandarin Chinese, and the barbecued skewers of a Tudari franchise shop mingling with fresh cut Jeju black pork and the briny air of the sea. Once relatively quiet for much of the year save for midsummer, Hamdeok's main narrow two-lane road barely can channel the daily deluge of pedestrian, tour bus, city bus, delivery truck, and rental car traffic.

The rapid changes in Hamdeok, though it came at the cost of Hamdeok's original main shrine, incidentally afforded shamans many opportunities. New businesses and houses mean a demand for more consecration and blessing rituals. Sponsors of Hamdeok's Yeongdeung-gut even included new hoteliers and tour operators; their names were intoned along with individual women divers' and fishermen's households at the beginning of the ritual. Kim Yeongcheol, Hamdeok's main shaman and a specialist in the *seongjupuri* (house or shrine consecration ritual), became busier with a spike in demand for his abilities.²⁴ Though busied with new obligations, in 2016 Kim Yeongcheol was doubling his efforts to prepare for both the Chilmeoridang yeongdeung-gut as well as the Hamdeok's Yeongdeung-gut.

Hamdeok's Yeongdeung-gut ritual itself is not a nationally-recognized cultural asset, but its chief officiant, Kim Yeongcheol, is *buhoejang* (vice chair) of the Chilmeori Preservation Society. Aside from supplicating the visiting Yeongdeung and Yowang gods on behalf of Hamdeok, the Hamdeok ritual may have also served as a prelude to Kim's performance as a second leading shaman in the Chilmeori Shrine ritual that would take place a few days later. While ritual faith in Yeongdeung and Yowang were no less strong in Sincheon and Jongdal, the level detail and the far more complex ritual motions in Hamdeok followed closely that of Chilmeori Shrine's format from beginning to end. This does not mean, however, that Hamdeok was necessarily closer to "tradition" than others. On the contrary, one can observe that the fact that only a community as prosperous as Hamdeok had the material capability and willingness to host such a complete ritual demonstrates how much Jeju has changed.

24. Interview with author, 15 March, 2016, Hamdeok, Jocheon-eup, Jeju.

Starting from 8 AM, the Kim and attending *somi* drove to the site of main shrine²⁵ about a five-minute walk inland to invite the gods to the ritual space in the fisheries cooperative warehouse. The *chogamje* (an opening rite to acknowledge the gods of the universe) began at 8:34. Since the ritual was not performed at a shrine, a *gwemun yeollim* was unnecessary. Kim Yeongcheol suddenly paused in the middle of the *chogamje* to express his respect to his retired mother, who watched at the side of the ritual space. He had recently inherited her position. Hamdeok's *sang dangol* observed with deep interest, even making commentary of Kim's performance amongst themselves. Like the Chilmeori Shrine version performed some days later, the ritual featured *pudasi* (purification rite) at 9:50, instances of a group Seoujet-sori communal song and dance at 11:45 and 4:40, numerous divinations with the *sinkal* (spirit knives), *sedeorim* (ritual seeding), *ssijeom* (rice grain divination), and *baebangseon* (sending off the offering boats on the sea) after the *dojin* (ritual send-off for the gods) after 4:50.

Opulence in Hamdeok ritual was not in its feast of bounty (although the communal lunch was prepared with the community's best seafood), but in its elaborate performance. The fisheries cooperative head himself was actively involved in much of the proceedings.²⁶ As in Waheul, except for individual offerings, community men's task primarily was heavy lifting; men set up the tables, matting, decorative folding screens, and the ritual bamboo pole to which red, white, yellow, and green streamers were tied along with the South Korean flag. Their participation was limited within the ritual itself, but many choose to remain outside the door throughout the day, even if only to play low-stakes betting games with each other.²⁷ Many, including relatively younger men in their thirties, acknowledged its importance. Some fishing boat operators also hung five-color flags to represent the Seonwang (the Lord of Boats) deity. Flags bearing their boats' names hung inside the Yeongdeung-gut ritual space.

25. Hamdeok's main shrine was destroyed in 2015 due to the town's building boom and relocated inside a small nondescript concrete structure at the side of an apartment building that occupies the original shrine space. In 2018, the structure was altered to allow for an open-air space before the altar.

26. This is customary across Jeju, but Hamdeok's fisheries head in this year was a particularly good sport about it. The fisheries cooperative head was relatively young, which was perhaps the reason older women divers and shamans subjected him to playful teasing throughout the ritual.

27. Men in Hamdeok tended to refer to the ritual not specifically as a *gut* but as a *pungeoje*, a Sino-Korean term that refers to a general ritual for a bountiful sea harvest. Similarly, men in Waheul sometimes referred to their Singwaseje as a *maeulje* in lieu of the term *gut*.

Offerings were relatively simple in composition. Featured primary offering goods Naju pears, *hallabong*, honey apples, *dolle tteok*, hardboiled eggs, and dried persimmons. As Hamdeok's ritual does not have a pork taboo, a pig's head was presented during the *dojin* sequence. In the transition to the *baebangseon* sequence, senior women divers brought in a Styrofoam box some of their recent catch, which was then set into the sea as a final offering. Abalone, turban shells, and an octopus along with three pieces of color ritual cloth—red, yellow, and green—were placed inside the box, but the presentation was modest. Nevertheless, once the *baebangseon* was completed at 4:50, Kim Yeongcheol quickly returned to the ritual space for the next phase. The ritual carried on into the early evening. In its totality, the Hamdeok's Yeongdeung-gut, perhaps because Kim was demonstrating his mettle to both the Hamdeok community and the gods as the recently promoted head shaman, strikingly was as—if not more—involved than the Chilmeori Shrine rite.

The officiants in Waheul, Sincheon, and even Jongdal where a traditional shaman was not present were equally dedicated in their practice, but it was in Hamdeok, the most urbanized and prosperous among the four, where every process was made necessary. Ritual elsewhere has been altered to abbreviated forms or changed completely. Multifaceted paradoxes emerge. Practitioners in remote regions, particularly those outside the purview of city-based heritage apparatuses or lacking sufficient material means, tend to abbreviate or recompose rituals. Some of the more prosperous and urbanizing regions can commission a shaman directly from the Chilmeori Preservation Society and sponsor full ritual performances. Such prosperity likely contributed to Hamdeok fishers' (as well as the new hoteliers') continued willingness to sponsor the local Yeongdeung-gut observances; years of bounty, after all, provided testament to the efficacy of ritual. Yet urbanization can further have an effect that greatly diminishes fishing and farming populations, the traditional sponsors of such rituals as what is occurring in Jeju City's Chilmeori Shrine *dangol*, leading to a situation where ritual is shifting into festival. In all cases, however, far from merely ossifying or decontextualizing ritual, inter/nationally-recognized trained professionalism can have the opposite effect of lending credence to ritual authenticity.

Whether the 2016 Hamdeok's Yeongdeung-gut necessarily marks any major departure from previous iterations is outside the scope of this article and research, but Kim did not at all shy from expressing a connection between the

ritual and an abstract concept of heritage. Well-educated and well-acquainted with the heritage preservation apparatuses based in urban institutions, Kim was equally capable as academics in emphasizing and reframing the aesthetic value of ritual as a representative feature of a collective Jeju culture.²⁸ What was previously more or less localized rituals performed for specific community needs had been given a new purpose as a representation of “culture” in general, even as the actual shrine-based *dangol* communities have been on the decline.

Many shamans nevertheless do embrace the fact that heritage apparatuses serve innovative roles and have been reframing their practices as part of a more abstract concept of a Jeju cultural identity. Just as Jeju City’s epochal physical expansion has increasingly blurred rural-urban boundaries, the professional nature of preservation societies further blurs the distinctions between practitioners and performers, and ritual and cultural display. Members and active *gut* participants also included professional performers—some of whom identified as “atheists”—and academics alongside shamans. Ritual standardization further did not preclude insertions directly related to Jeju’s immediate circumstances into specific ritual processes, such as lighthearted remarks about Chinese land speculators and tourist rental car or boat accidents. Aside from new anxieties about cultural identity, urbanization that came with tourism incidentally sparked a greater interest in all things Jeju as well as a demand for ritual, especially *seongjupuri* (house consecration rites).

Recent prosperity, too, perhaps was essential to enhancing ritual efficacy. The gods must have been pleased with the opulence to which their worshippers treat them and in turn bring bounty to their respective communities. Whereas Kendall (1996) observed unease over adopting foreign-origin goods in shamanic ritual in the mainland during the 1980s and 1990s, the casual attitudes to offering them in 2015 illustrates the extent to which Korean tastes cosmopolitanized. Adaptation, not absolute consistency, after all, indicates a surviving practice. The gods neither demanded absolute adherence to tradition nor were they oblivious to change. From Jeju City to remote country villages, as *simbang* and Buddhist clergy expressed the community’s wishes to the gods, the gods were aware of the concerns that their worshippers faced: traffic hazards,

28. Shamans do read anthropologists’ books and adopt terminology from them. Shaman Seo Sunsil of Keun-gut Preservation Society likewise reframed explanations of Jeju shamanism in academic terminology, sometimes including explanations of trance from a biological anthropology perspective.

spiking land prices, Chinese capitalists, and annoying camera people. And as Laurajane Smith (2006, 125), a scholar of heritage production, observes, authenticity ultimately lies in what meanings of heritage have for the present, not what experts think it had.

Authenticity in Jeju ritual operates at two interconnected and overlapping levels. At the one level, in communities that possess the material means to keep “traditional” form such as Waheul and Hamdeok, maintaining the appearance and embodied practice of the original creates an authenticity of continuity. Ritual that deliberately keeps to a “traditional” form inadvertently demonstrates its urban character. Only a community of means can afford to continue to maintain a complete ritual and continue to employ an officially-titled and publicly prominent shaman. At the other level, communities such as Sincheon and Jongdal more overtly make drastic adaptations to maintain an authenticity of practice. These communities are no longer able to carry out the full process of a complex community ritual but instead highlight the practices and ideas that continue to be most relevant.

As Sarfati (2009, 76-77) observes, “*Musok* (Korean shamanism) lives within contemporary Korea. It does not shy away from modern devices and ideas, and it does not demand full belief and devotion from all.” From the outset, a ritual’s primary purpose is to provide solutions to everyday needs in a non-discursive space of action. Kendall’s (1996, 522) observations in mainland Korea, made in the 1990s, are also true for Jeju: “A system of religious practices oriented toward the health, harmony, and prosperity of the small family farm has been adapted to a world in which these concerns still apply but where the fate of the family, for good and ill, is seen as dangling on volatile external forces in a moment of intense opportunity and danger.” Far from being confined to fishing or agricultural matters only, the gods readily could be invoked to consecrate hotels, provide some modicum of protection from Chinese land speculators,²⁹ and partake in the goods that international trade had brought. Eventual cultural erasure or ossification are indeed possible in the coming years as the remaining *dangols* die out, but one also cannot discount potentials for adaptation.

29. When shaman Kim Yeongcheol expressed community wishes to the gods at Hamdeok’s Yeongdeunggut of March 18, 2016, he mentioned Chinese investors and tourists’ boat accidents.

Postscript: Winds of Change and a Return to Hamdeok

I returned to observe the closing week of the Yeongdeung-gut season on March 25th, 2018 in Hamdeok. Hamdeok remained a largely local affair, centered on the town's still substantial community of women divers and boat captains, but 2018 came with a surprise. The ritual reached a crescendo with a new addition: a *geolgyung* (percussive music parade) and a town festival, complete with arts and crafts. Unlike 2016 where people under 30 were virtually absent as participants and not observers, the Baram ui chukje (Festival of the Winds) program, which entered its sixth year in 2018, included a broader age demographic as organizers recruited local schoolchildren to take part in both the festival workshops and the *geolgyung*.

The Baram ui chukje program, created under the auspices of the Cultural Heritage Administration with the participation of shaman and non-shaman members of the Chilmeori Preservation Society, expanded with new festivals and revivals across the island as it entered its sixth year. The Hamdeok community was a late entry, having decided to join only at the beginning of March, but organized quickly and autonomously, getting together schoolchildren and local associations to put on a festival in less than a month. Hamdeok was among some thirty other communities to which the national and provincial cultural administrations bestowed roughly two thousand USD³⁰ as a supplemental fund for Yeongdeung-gut. While the format and the offerings were relatively the same as in 2016, one could observe the gods' more cultured tastes for heritage presentation. The offering boat for the *baebangseon* was a "traditional" *jipbae* (straw boat) made of dried rice straw in lieu of a simple Styrofoam box. The ritual was held with greater fanfare as the final Yowangmaji was held outdoors to the delight of curious camera people and visitors. The tables were also a sumptuous feast with not one but two pig heads.

Hamdeok treated the Yeongdeung and Yowang gods with a happy and youthful sendoff. Shortly before the *dojin*, a *geolgyung* traversed across the main town from Seoubong Beach to the ritual site. The *geolgyung* featured a large *paper mâché* representation of the goddess Yeongdeung halmang. Aside from a *geolgyung* troupe, she was accompanied with Hamdeok school children bearing

30. Hong Sunyoung, personal communication, Jeju City, Jeju, March 29, 2018.

handheld individually-crafted paper puppets representing the goddess. Along with the goddess, adult participants carried representations of the *dokkaebi* (goblin) spirits featured in the Yonggamnori skit sequence of the Chilmeori Shrine version of Yeongdeung-gut. Typical of many a folk culture festival in South Korea, the community treated procession participants to a hearty snack of roast pork and kimchi and bottles of *makgeolli* for the adults. Owing to their relative prosperity as well as existing local networks connected to the Hallasan noripae performance troupe, Hamdeok had the resources and know-how to quickly adapt their annual Yeongdeung-gut into a town culture festival. Though symbolic, the procession featuring the Yeongdeung halmang goddess was odd given that in ritual practice, the goddess, along with her consort Yeongdeung hareubang and other attending Yeongdeung gods were already present at the *gut* and were about to be sent off. Nevertheless, Kim Yeongcheol as well as Hamdeok's relatively youthful forty-something *eocheongye hoejang* (fisheries manager) and head woman diver played the part of performing an impromptu ritual supplication to the *paper mâché* Yeongdeung. The change was well-received as *dangol* and festival participant alike joined in to a raucous dance to the rhythms of the *geolgung* troupe.

As the Baram ui chukje program matures and the possibility for a taste for the authentic grows in Jeju amidst the island's struggles with rapid urbanization, what transpired in Hamdeok may become more common. So long as faith in the gods' efficacy remains, the distinction between festival and ritual may remain ambiguous. On the one hand, one can observe that cultural festivals are part of Jeju's political economy of heritage in which communities strive to gain resources and recognition, however minimal. On the other hand, one can also observe that surviving (and, occasionally, new) shrine worshippers do not necessarily see a contradiction between heritage performance and actual practice. Gods, after all, are not oblivious to change.

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Tommy TRAN (jinmunhak@gmail.com/ogedei@g.ucla.edu) is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of the University of California at Los Angeles in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. His research interests are urbanization in East Asia and cultural change in Jeju Island.

Abstract

What are the implications of a Starbucks bag tied on a tree as an offering to village gods or a Buddhist chant intoned in place of a shamanic invocation? This article re-considers the cultural meanings of practical material changes in Jeju shamanism in relation to its rapid urbanization since the early 2000s. Though often romanticized as an idyllic rural paradise or a bastion of shamanic practice, Jeju City has grown into a large complex and cosmopolitan city with constant access to international markets. Urban change had a profound impact on Jeju shamanism in every aspect. Once purely region- and community-specific, shamanic rituals, despite their decline in the depopulating countryside, have seen in some aspects an accidental vitality that came with urban interactions. Mainland Korean and foreign goods grace altars and the changed pace of life prompts practitioners to adopt new forms to keep old meanings. This article observes that as rural communities proactively maintain shamanic rites, they hardly are passive recipients of new things and ideas from the city that looms large over them. Although numbers of rural shrine worshippers are indeed declining, where rituals remain pertinent to local communities, Jeju shamanism's interactions with urbanization demonstrate significant, and sometimes accidental, dynamism.

Keywords: Jeju Island, shamanism, urbanization, globalization