

KOREAN Rainmaking Ritual





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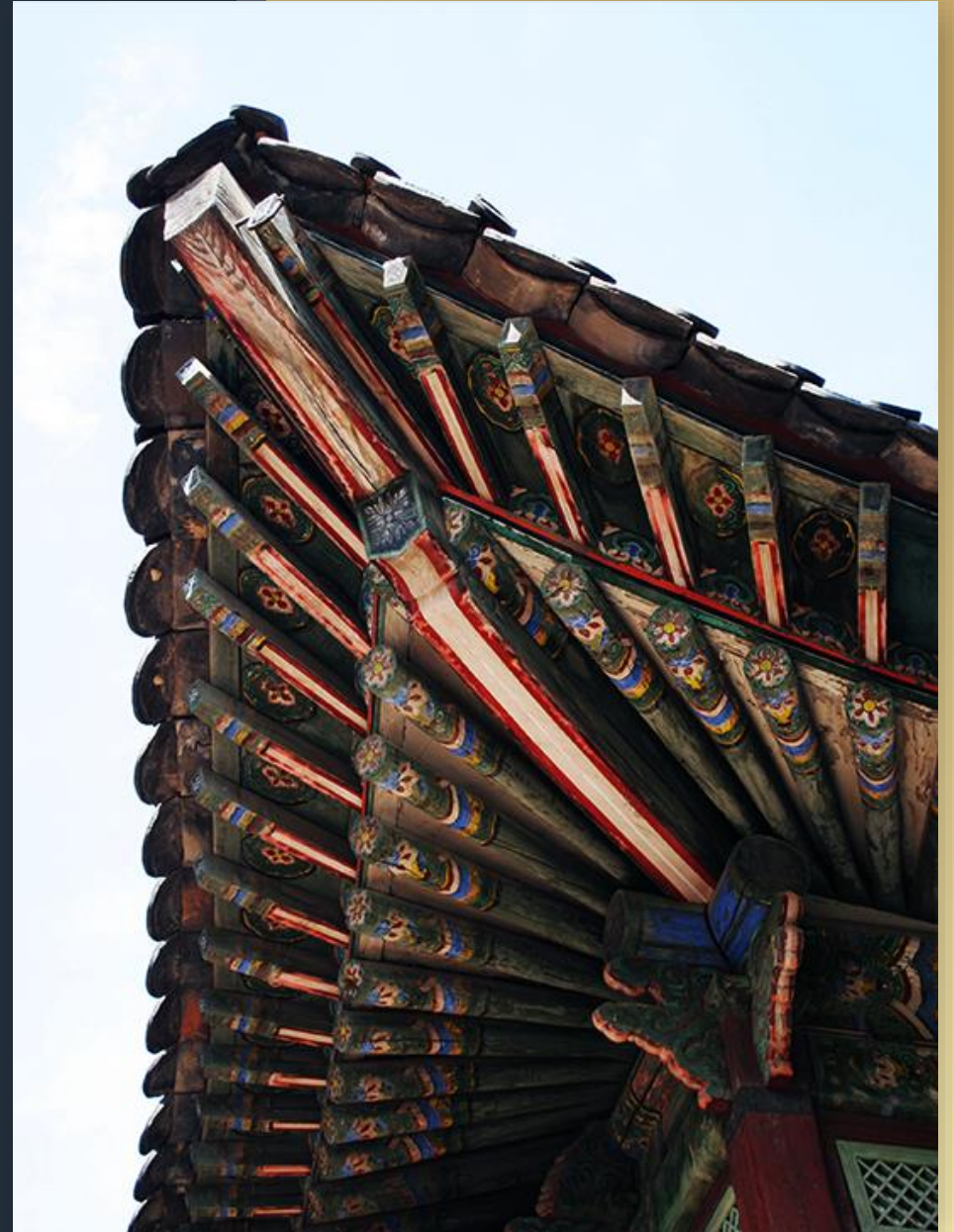
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01

History of Rainmaking Rituals



Agriculture in KOREA



Natural Environment

Even though Korea is a peninsula- a country with three sides surrounded by water- agriculture- not fishing- has been the primary focus for inhabitants. Many scholars argue that this phenomenon may be due to Korea's high proportion of plains and the great fertility of the land.

Korea was an optimal environment for farming. Rice, the primary crop of Korean agriculture, originated in Southeast Asia, where hot and humid weather continued throughout the year. However, in Korea, rainfall is concentrated only during the summer monsoon season. The periods directly preceding and following the monsoon were often plagued by drought. For most of the year, the Korean peninsula lacked the necessary natural precipitation needed for sustainable rice farming

Agriculture in KOREA



the movie "Kundo: Age of Civil War"

Drought & Rainmaking

Especially in ancient times when hydraulic infrastructure such as dams was absent, not only the prosperity but the sustenance of the entire population depended on natural rainfall. A drought meant that many innocent civilians would starve to death. And at the same time, rainfall was something beyond human control. The only way humans could express their thirst for rain was by resorting to the mystical and supernatural

As a result, These strong desires for rain were inevitably expressed in more rain rituals, indicating that it was a serious and universal phenomenon nationwide. Rain was considered a sacred, spiritual, element — before it was a very important natural phenomenon.

Gojoseon dynasty (BC2333~AD194)

The sacralization of rain can be seen in the Dangun myth era. The Dangun myth is the story of **Dangun** and how he founded Gojoseon, the first Korean kingdom. It is said that **Hwanwoong** (the son of god himself) descended with **Ppungbaek** (wind god), **Usa** (rain god), and **Unsa** (cloud god).

Let's take a look at the third scene for a moment. and all three gods were gods that controlled precipitation, so it shows how much importance ancient Koreans placed on rain and the ability for religious/political leaders to control it.



Lord of Cloud, Unsa



Lord of the rain, Usa



Lord of the wind, Ppungbaek

Three kingdom dynasty (BC18~AD892)



Lord of the river and water, Habaek

Buyeo dynasty

The mythical importance of rainmaking continued to be seen during the Three Kingdoms period. This national ambition was the only son of **Habaek**, and made **Dongmyeong**, the founder of the Buyeo family, into a mythical figure that showed various rainmaking abilities.

During the Three Kingdoms period, agriculture and rain were considered vital. Kings during those periods were regarded as god's agents by the people; thus they believe that the king must be capable of controlling rain and drought. As the only son of Habaek, national ambition made Dongmyeong, the founder of the Buyeo family, into a mythical figure that possessed the rain god's abilities. In the end, there is a record that the tomb of the same name was the object of the rain ritual in Baekje, which inherited the same name as the founder of the same Buyeo family

Three kingdom dynasty (BC18~AD892)



During the Three kingdom dynasties, the development of transportation led to more active political and economic exchanges with China. Through these trade relationships, much of China's culture permeated into South Korea. This exchange was not limited to commodities and products but also include religious ideologies and Buddhism. This left a mark on South Korea's religious hierarchy as Buddhism became to take a deep root in Korean society.

However, because Buddhism became the mainstream religion, other religions besides Buddhism were severely scrutinized and excluded. Shamans who once held great power and status before the emergence of Buddhism lost their power, transferring their temple to more rural areas from urban regions.

Three kingdom dynasty (BC18~AD892)



“Even before the Three Kingdoms period, the status of shamans seems to have been in a leadership position. According to the History of the Three Kingdoms, **Namhae Cha Cha-woong**, the second king of Silla, was also called Jachong, which means that he was a respected shaman at that time.

At that time, people were in awe of the shaman who worshiped the ritual for ghosts and called it Jachung, the meaning of respectful elders. In addition, in the third year of King Namhae's reign, **Park Hyuk-geose**'s tomb was erected and a memorial service was held, and there is a record that the king's sister Aro was organized. It attracts attention as the ritual is separated and female shamans are appearing. In light of the fact that most shamans are women today, it is meaningful as the first data to confirm the existence of female dancers.”

Three kingdom dynasty (BC18~AD892)



deify of the agriculture in Goguryeo

During the Three Kingdoms Period, shamans played a role in treating diseases, fortune-telling and prophecy, and executing various rituals. He not only played personal and social roles, but also performed work at the national level. It provided religious measures to maintain and prosper the country and society by predicting the future of the country, predicting climate and farming, and suggesting ways to prevent and combat disasters. At that time, shamans assisted state affairs and influenced policy decisions

Goryeo dynasty (AD918~1392)



Dragon deity

By the Goryeo Dynasty, the political role of shamans was reduced and excluded from the state's public organization, and the official function of assisting state affairs was greatly weakened.

Subsequently, claims to reject shamanism began to materialize, centering on Confucian scholars. Soon, it was argued that shamans should be banned from entering the court, ousted from the capital, and national rituals such as Giwooje or Byeolgeun, which were handled by shamans, should be stopped, and some were implemented.

At that time, the effectiveness of measures to reject shamanism was not great, but it was restricted to the activities of shamans and tended to neglect shamanism.

Goryeo dynasty (AD918~1392)



deify of the shaman, sung-su

During the Goryeo Dynasty, shamans still presided over ceremonies at the national or social level, despite some restrictions, and continued to play a religious role in providing the people. Due to the lack of data, it is not possible to confirm in detail the activities of shamans at the time, but it seems that similar rituals were performed as they are today.

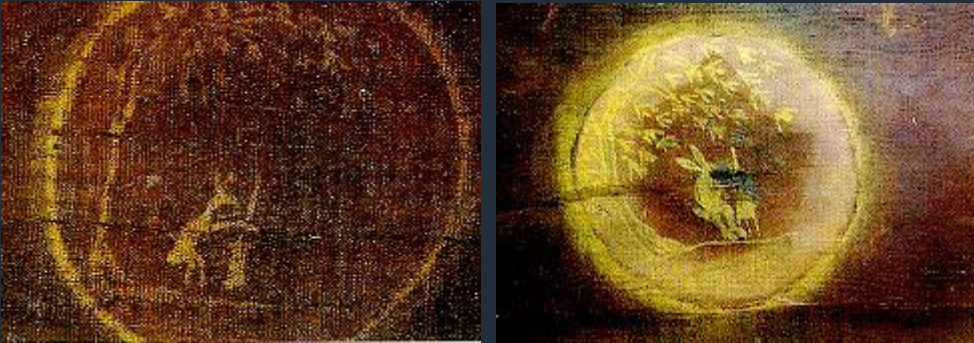
Regardless of its diminished presence in Korean society, Shamanism continued to serve an essential role when it came to the rainmaking ceremony. Perhaps this was due to the limitation of Buddhism ideologies; Buddhism is not about pleading with god for reward, but rather it is more about the process of enduring pain. Therefore, even as Buddhism spread throughout the country, many people still resorted to shamanism in instances of desire or hardship. Indeed, it resumably during draughts, farmers would have been more attracted to as compared to maintaining a buddhist philosophy of endurance

Shamanism still had to take the role of executing the rainmaking ceremony.

Goryeo dynasty (AD918~1392)



Governments, despite on paper being buddhist could not completely deny public will and through out Koryeo, there are data indicating that shamanistic rain rituals were used in all possible ways. According to the data from various documents, the priests of the ritual include the king, local monks, monks, and shamans. The rituals are held evenly in different places, including the Cheonji, Sancheon, Jongmyo, Sajik, and Buddhist temples. In these temples, dragon gods were mobilized for the rain rituals.



In Goryeo Buddhist paintings, paintings of traditional beliefs such as Samjok-oh, Moon Rabbit, Dragon and Bong are painted like hidden paintings

Joseon dynasty (AD1392~1894)



Confucianism basically does not recognize the existence and afterlife of God. Confucian scholars criticized Buddhism and other religions for being illogical. However, people could not curb the public's desire for religious salvation. These people have no choice but to find another religion because they do not get comfort from Confucianism. Confucian scholars constantly suppressed Buddhism and Shamanism by defining them as 邪教 or a "cult" but despite such oppression, Buddhism and Shamanism remained firmly alive.

Joseon dynasty (AD1392~1894)



"In the Joseon Dynasty, all kinds of cultures were uniformly copied and equipped with the Chinese system. However, praying to shamans and Buddhas still remains an orang-kai custom. Therefore, when the king became ill in Jojongjo Dynasty, a monk or shaman memorized the scriptures, prayed on top of Injeongjeon Hall, and worshiped Songak Shrine further, and after the shaman made a place, Gaeseong Yusu entered and participated. Even singing and dancing with a shaman was not strange at all. At this time, all the goods needed for shamans to come and go to the shrine were supplied by the government office.

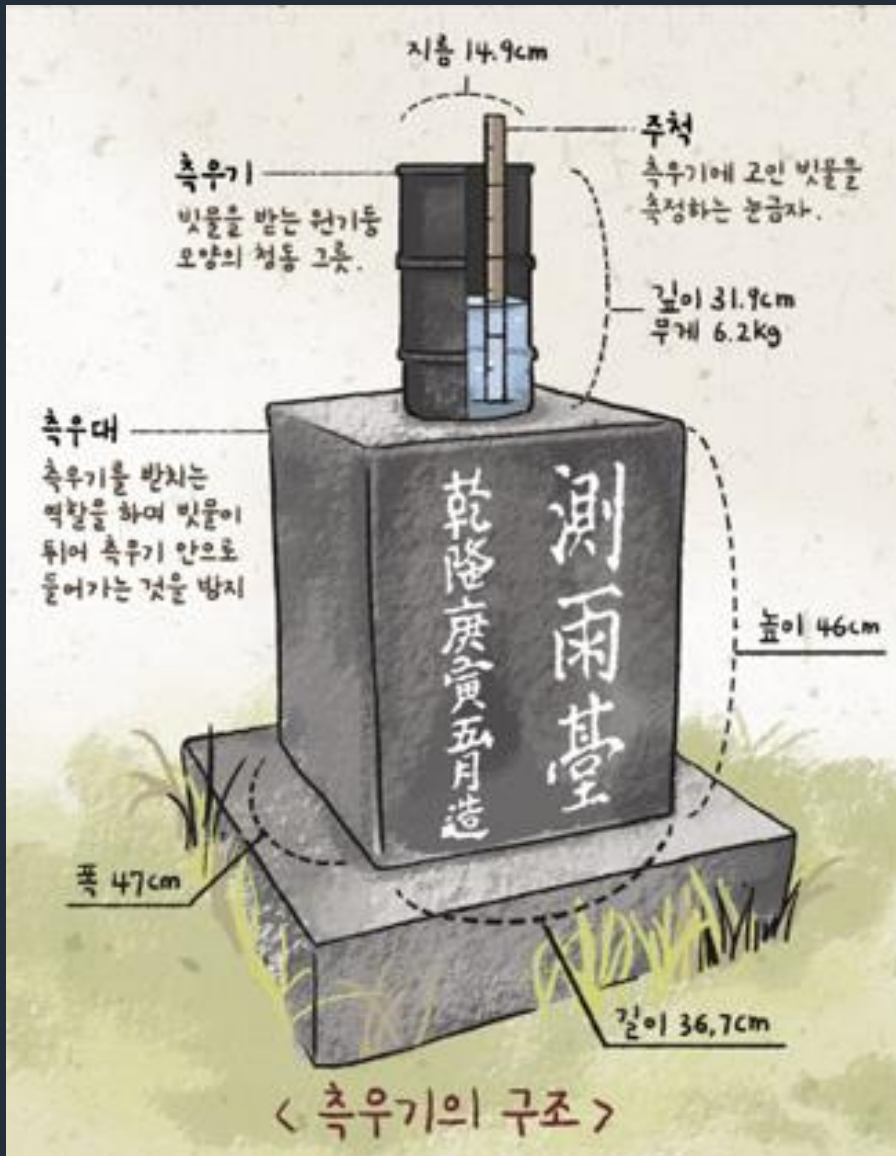
Shin Heum (1566-1628), "Sangchon Japrok"

Joseon dynasty (AD1392~1894)



In the case of shamanism, if they call themselves ghosts or mislead people by saying that God has fallen on them, they execute them, and the shaman who does shamanism without being named in the martial arts was kicked out of the city. They also collected taxes from shamans. He collected taxes such as Sindang's tax office and Toemi from shamans living outside, and even received taxes from shamanists who belonged to Dong and Seohwal Inseo to help treat patients. Because of this, the witches were suffering a lot.

Joseon dynasty (AD1392~1894)



Improvement in scientific precipitation technologies

On one hand they did focus on improving technology. Joseon focused on establishing **weather observation facilities**. The method of measuring the depth of water in Cheonggyecheon Stream and Han River and measuring the depth of wet soil were institutionalized

King sejong famously introduced the **측우기**, **CHEUK-U-GI** (a rain gauge)- a standardized device which measured rainfall nationally. **서운관**, **SE-WOON-GUAN** was established which was expected to predict important events such as rainfall and eclipses based on observation of the skies and animal behavior. This shows that the Josun government made various attempts to systematically analyze weather data including precipitation.

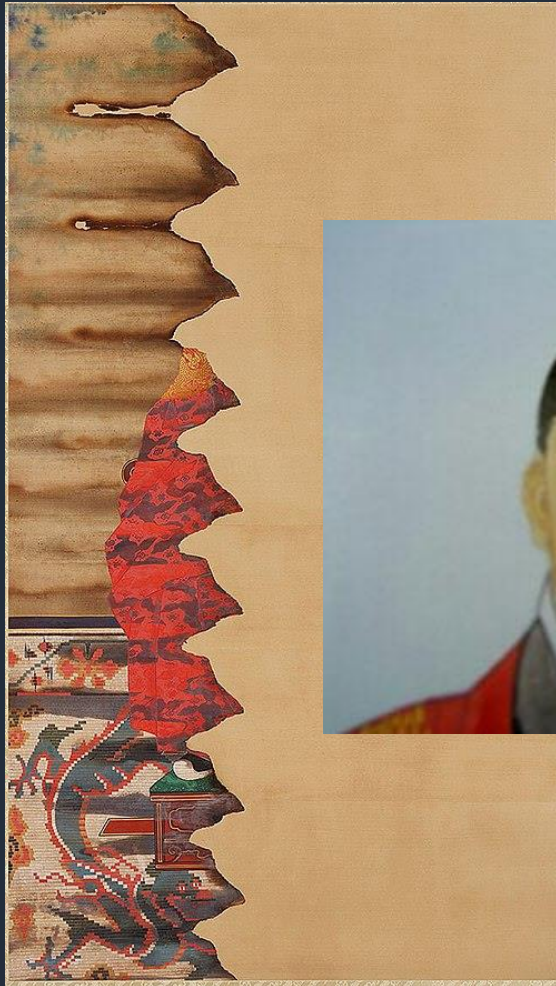
Joseon dynasty (AD1392~1894)



During the Joseon Dynasty, unlike other periods where(when) people were guaranteed more freedom, rainmaking rituals were only led by the central government. It led to a new form of rainmaking rituals, national rain rituals, which were conducted under the leadership and the control of the state.

However, in the early Joseon Dynasty, the national rainmaking ritual was not based on Confucianism belief but rather resolved by mobilizing various ritual practices through an improvised and discretionary process. In particular, during the early Joseon Dynasty, a wide variety of rain methods were mobilized, and people with various different characteristics participated. It is noteworthy that referring back to the many records of the time, there was no mention of methods of rain. This fact is surprising to scholars given that there were many shamans and monks who practiced praying or worship at temples

Joseon dynasty (AD1392~1894)



19th king, Sukjong

It was not until the 18th century that the official procedures and procedures of the national rain system were more systematically refined. In the 30th year of **King Sukjong**'s reign, it was suggested that Min Jin-hoo, the then Yejo Panseo(head of international affairs), rectify **the order of the rain ritual under centralized monolithic structure. Accordingly, the order of the rain ritual was revised.**

It is noteworthy that these regularizations included not only rituals in the form of contribution, but also a number of various methods that were difficult to be politically supported by Confucian logic.

From this we can infer that even Joseon, a supposedly science and philosophy based country, had to continue to resort to superstition for rainmaking. While scientific technology developed and Confucianism shunned shamanistic rituals- the desire to be saved from bad fortune was still widespread among the public



02

Rituals of Rainmaking

the disposal of corpses and sacrificial offering

Rituals of Rainmaking



Rain rituals hosted by the government and civilians

From ancient to modern times, rain rituals had been executed both by the state and private sector through multiple ways

All rain-invoking ceremonies, performed both on state and civilian levels, have aimed at the same goal, namely, 'the securing of affluence' under the same conditions, in other words, severe drought.



Rituals of Rainmaking

掩擊埋屍

Disposal of Corpse: Eum-geuk-mae-ja

The act of retrieving the corpse wallowing around without being buried



破墓暴露

Disposal of Corpse: Bal-myo-pok-ro

The act of digging up and exposing the corpse that is safely settled down



government

private



沈虎頭

chim-ho-du

The act of hurling the tiger's head into mountains, lakes, ponds, etc., believed to be the living quarters of the dragon



流血撒布, 沈狗猪頭

Yoo-hyeul-sal-po Chim-gu-jeo-du

The act of Strewing, applying or occasionally submerging blood and flesh in places where dragons exist such as the Yongbawi(Dragon Rock)



Disposal of Corpse: Eum-geuk-mae-ja



Eum-geuk-mae-ja was implemented coupled with ① the act of discreet self-control & taboos of the statesmen, ② Reexamination of the resentful inmate confined under false charges and ③ the act of providing relief to the impoverished people.

Disposal of Corpse: Eum-geuk-mae-ja



When the grain was scarce in the spring, the government lent it to the people and returned it with interest after the autumn harvest



A higher authority reexamined the sin of a sinner who expressed his innocence, commuted or released the sentence

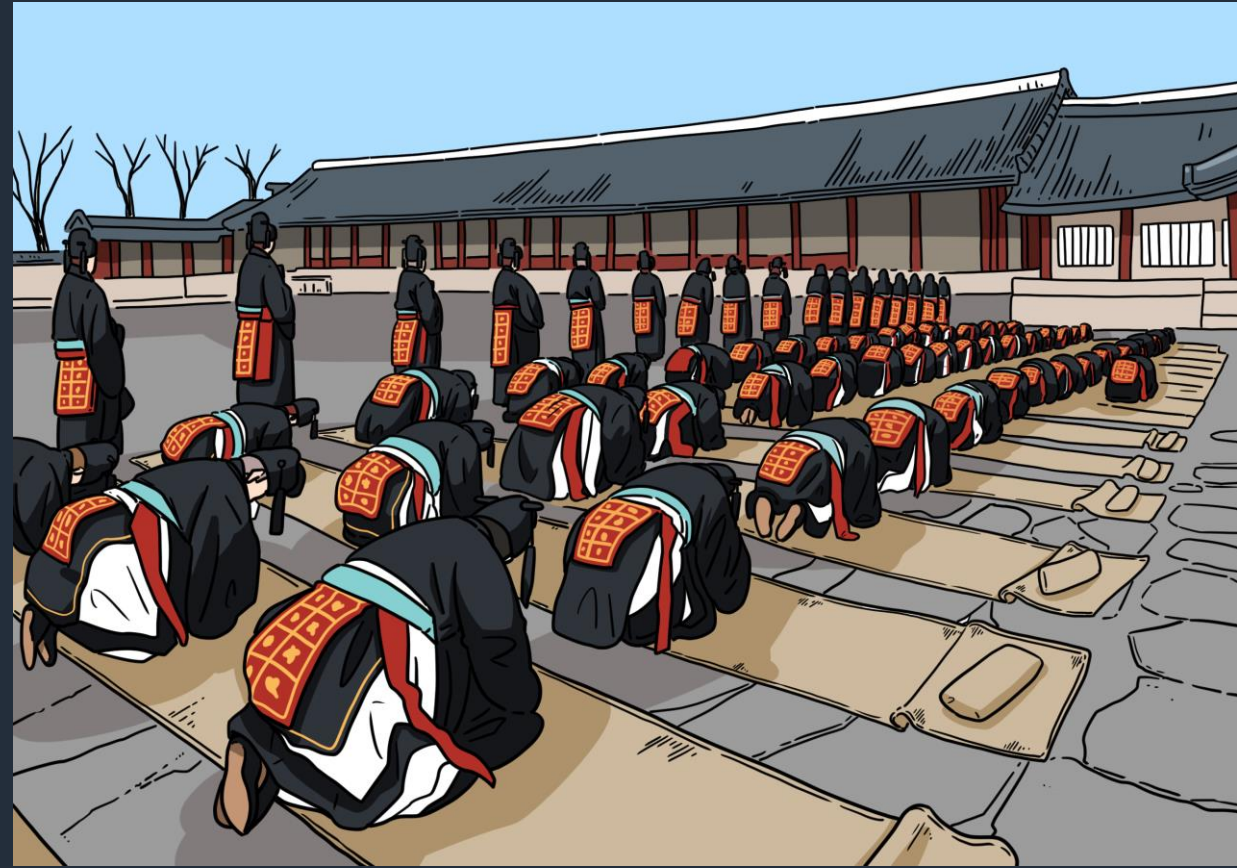
Disposal of Corpse: Eum-geuk-mae-ja



The drought caused a situation where people died massively, and the corpses were left on the streets, and burying them in the field was called [Eum-geuk-mae-ja]

The act of gathering human ashes for collective burial is based on the premise of ancient notions. The belief is that since unburied corpses are shunned to be exposed to rain as they get in the way of precipitation, they must be duly and properly recovered and buried

Disposal of Corpse: Eum-geuk-mae-ja



Kings influenced by Confucian moral politics, reckon the phenomena of natural disasters are massive scourges cast from heaven owing to the blunders he has perpetrated

The attitude of self-blaming confession and repentance of the rulers partaking in the rain ritual is fixed as a formality obligatorily adopted in all funeral orations of all types of rain rituals



Disposal of Corpse: Eum-geuk-mae-ja



The goal of Eum-geuk-mae-ja is to unleash the warning from heaven against politicians refusing to practice virtue and benevolence.

The objective is to respond to heavenly will and comply with the people's wishes. Heaven oversees the universe and living matters of mankind and take penal punitive measures.

Sacrificial rituals : chim-ho-du



When the drought worsened, the country would hold a nationwide hunt to offer sacrificial tigers in rain rituals



Chimhodu refers to the act of throwing a tiger's head into a river, lake or pond which is believed to be where a dragon lives.

Sacrificial rituals : chim-ho-du



By creating a situation of Titanic struggle(a fight between dragon and the tiger), it is meant to be a rain ritual to raise the dragon and eventually evoke cloud and rain

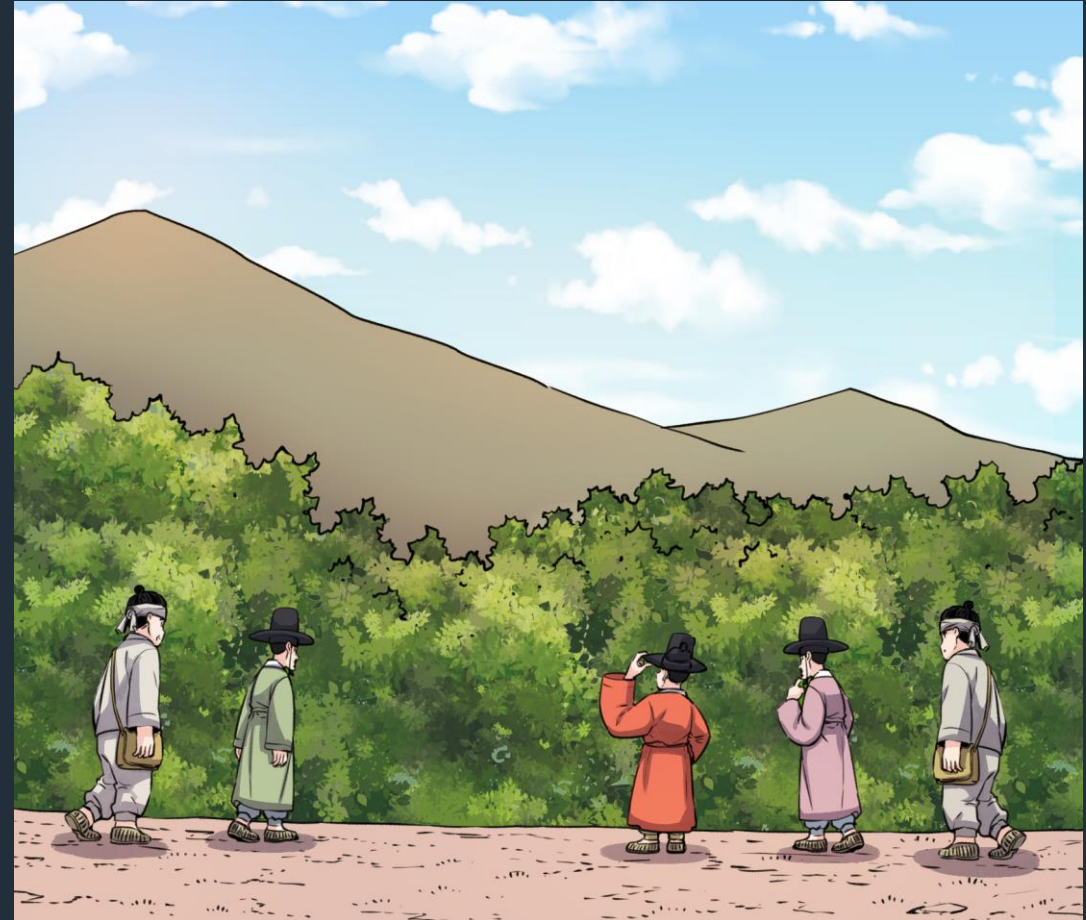


Given that Hodu is regarded as a whole-hearted offering hard to come by, the ritualistic context Chimhodu would be reconciliation and consolation with deities and, the ritualistic context that Hodu is supposedly an inducer that provokes target deity would probably be an incongruous impact and confrontation rather than a reconciliatory empathy with deities.

Disposal of Corpse: Bal-myo-pok-ro



It is an aggressive and passionate event held as an exceptional measure taken when droughts endlessly continue, despite performing several rain rituals



In accord with the folklores, it was reckoned that once the corpse is clandestinely buried in propitious grave sites of renowned mountains, the bereft individuals would be granted the opportunity to revel in opulence and wealth.

Disposal of Corpse: Bal-myo-pok-ro

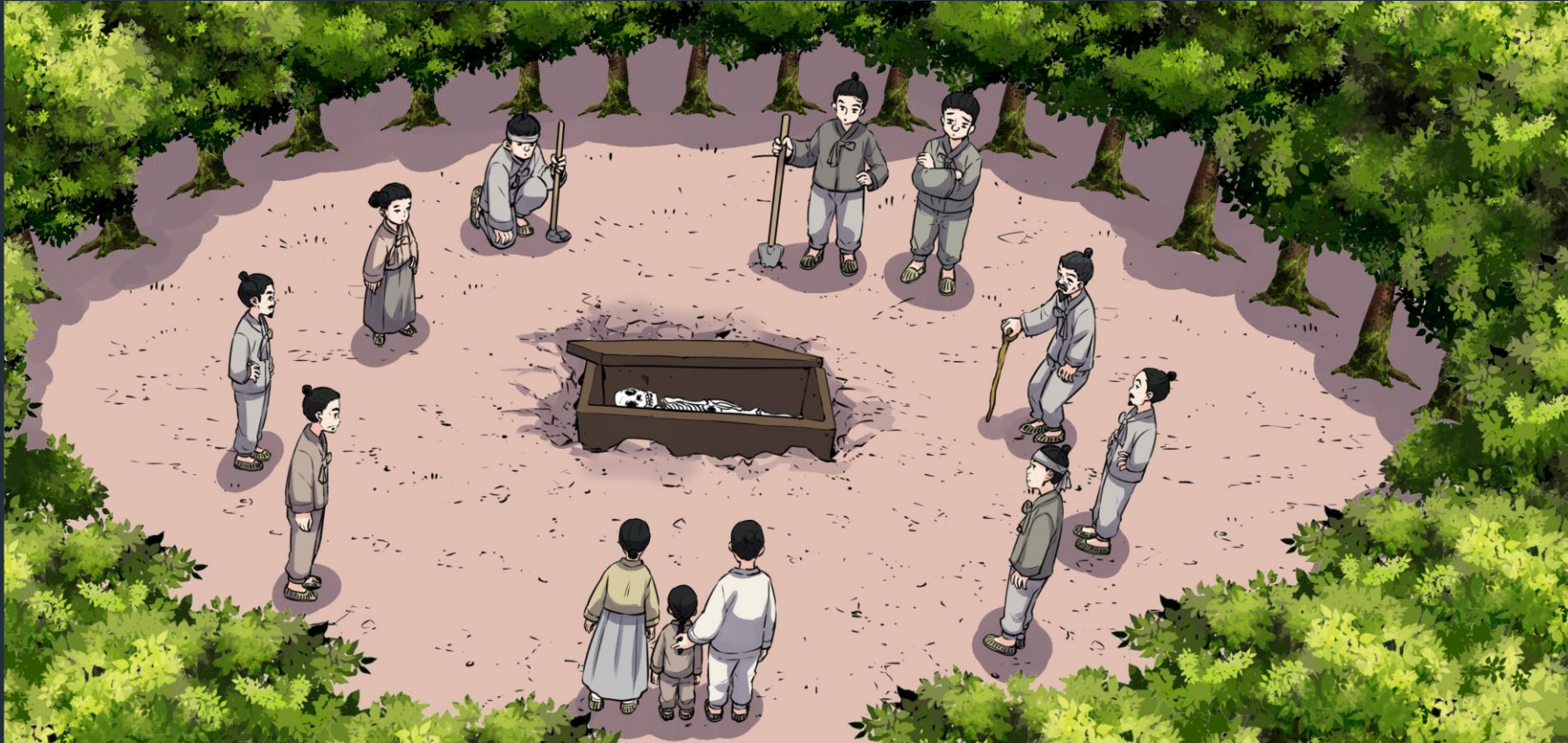


It was believed that if the corpse was secretly buried in a propitious location where the mountain deity rests, this would outrage the mountain deity to cast droughts.



To coax the fury of the mountain deity the corpses buried at the mountaintop of the corresponding region were exhumed

Disposal of Corpse: Bal-myo-pok-ro



Such acts of excavating sepulchers stem from concerns over individual monopolization of abundance and good fortune deriving from auspicious as well as divine sites

The offensive and destructive action such as digging up and exposing corpses was defined as the path to guarantee the communal fortunes of the entire villages.

Sacrificial rituals : Yoo-hyeul-sal-po



When a long drought continued, private rain rituals were held to stimulate the god of dragons. It was proceeded with a sacrificial ceremony using dogs and pigs.

Sacrificial rituals : Yoo-hyeul-sal-po



In areas where a dragon was believed to live (rocks, mountain peaks, rivers, etc.), dogs' and pigs' blood and meat were sprinkled or stained and sometimes flooded.



The blood and meat of dogs and pigs were stimulants to let the dragon god perform its function as the ruler of the clouds and rain.

Sacrificial rituals : Yoo-hyeul-sal-po



It was believed that the dragon made rain to bucket down to cleanse the contaminated region with the dog's flesh and blood since the dragon detests impure dogs

It is an induced and provocative sacrifice to exert the function of the Dragon deity in charge of the rain and cloud

Rituals of Rainmaking



Sky God, 天神

- the supreme deity
- Confucianism
- Government driven ritual
- Consolation & reconciliation with deity
- Self-reflective



Unburied Corpses

<Eum-geuk-mae-ja>



Buried Corpses

<Bal-myo-pok-ro>



Mountain God, 山神

- the rural deity
- Folk religion
- Private driven ritual
- Consolation & reconciliation with deity
- Aggressive

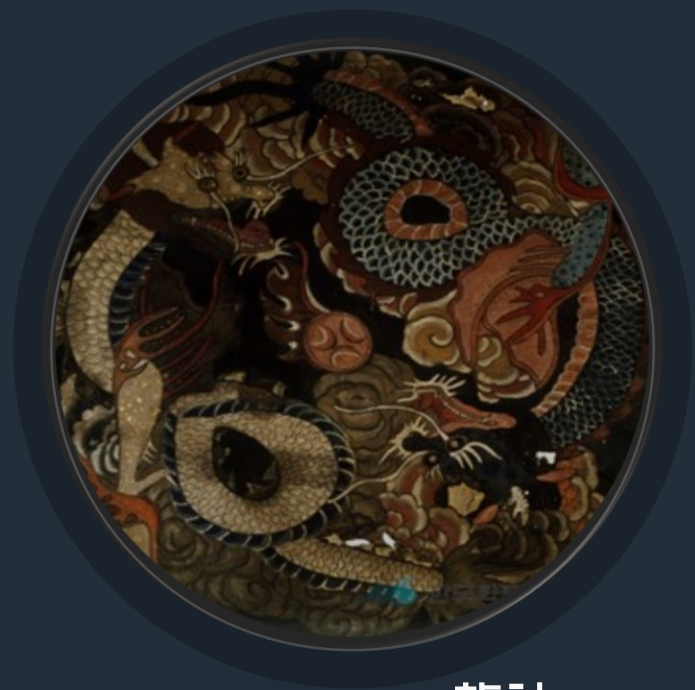
Rituals of Rainmaking



Heads of tigers

<Chim-ho-du>

- Government driven
- the devoted care of offering sacrifice
- stimulate



Dragon deity , 龍神

- the functional deity
- Lord of wind and rain



Blood and flesh of dogs and pigs

<Yoo-hyeul-sal-po>

- Private driven
- the devoted care of offering sacrifice
- contaminate

03

Function of rainmaking ritual



Characteristics of rainmaking ritual



01

Post

The rain ritual is a powerful post formality which arranges for the written prayer. it prays for rain after experiencing the severe drought circumstances

02

goal-oriented

It is a goal-oriented ritual involving the special objective of praying for precipitation to relieve drought

03

communal

It's a communal ritual in which all residents take part. This communal ritual is conducted following the form which is socially recognized and contracted and, the members participating in the ritual should retain the same system of ideas and values

04

separated

It is also a separated ritual, in which those selected to attend the ritual acquire the values by being extricated from the daily circumstances through taboos and ablution prior to performing the ritual

Function of rainmaking rituals



Resolution



Recovery

01. Resolution of the crisis

- Working off the crisis and psychological anxieties of the residents caused by the drought.
- after wrapping up the rain ritual, tapping on the vessels, in which rice was cooked, as percussion instruments, the villagers make their way back to the village. → It holds the meaning of reordering or regeneration of the social member centered on the target deity.

02. Recovery of the village order

- Regardless of the precipitation, the objective of social integration where the residents join forces and display their strength is already achieved in the process of conducting the formality.
- In other words, the mind shared amongst the residents before performing a rain ritual highlights the collective heartfelt devotion of 'Sincerity moves heaven' as well as the unity of the community



04

Modern Rainmaking Ritual

Modern Rainmaking Ritual



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeTvLJbL4wM>

In 2016, a large-scale rain-making ritual was held in the center of Seoul. The 21st century is the age of science, where mankind is seemingly all but conquering nature and pushing the boundaries of human capacity. Indeed, governments can manipulate chemicals to generate artificial rain in times of drought. Then what room do god and spirituality have in face of ever-improving technology?

And yet why do people still hold rain ceremonies in this era? For what purpose?



Modern Rainmaking Ritual

Professor Koo, Young-chan



As we have seen earlier, perhaps the modern rain ritual can be regarded as a form of ritual that implies the acts of social integration and healing, not as an ignorant superstition (wushu). ritual has too been culturally surviving for a long time, acquiring a unique transmission style.

We must regard the rain ritual as a religious and cultural heritage, cherish it, and hand it over to future generations.

Despite the growth of science and understanding of the world, the rain ritual will likely continue as a way for people to reconcile with the natural world. The rain ritual should be regarded as a religious and cultural heritage and passed down to future generations

THANK YOU

