

VALUATIONS OF
SHAMANISM IN
CONTEMPORARY
SOUTH KOREA

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to discover the valuation of shamanism in contemporary South Korea and the contexts in which shamanic values are displayed despite the stigmatization of the practice of shamanism. By employing Louis Dumont's theory on values, the most significant shamanic values have been defined. These are the values of *sinbyŏng* (spiritual illness), *han* (resentment, grief, regret or anger), *malmun* (gates of speech), *kongsu* (inspired speech), *injŏng* (ritual offering) and *kongdongch'e* (collective body). Two examples portray the different contexts in which shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon. The first context consists of South Korean Protestant and evangelical groups, while the second entails the commodification of shamanism by South Koreans. Both contexts demonstrate the expression and elaboration of shamanic values, in particular the shamanic values that are concerned with this-worldly affairs such as *injŏng* and *han*. However, shamanism remains stigmatized in these contexts and in some cases shamanism is even modified to adhere to secular or Christian values. Further ethnographic fieldwork is required to confirm the expression of shamanic values in similar contexts.

Author's Note

This thesis features numerous Korean terms. Throughout the thesis the McCune-Reischauer system is employed, since it has a common usage among scholars and the diacritics (the breve and apostrophe) contribute to readability (Song 2005, 64). Names of Korean authors will be written as published by the author. Korean names will be written according to native tradition, with the last name first and no comma. For some cities such as Seoul and Busan, conventional romanizations will be used.

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Introduction

Korean shamanism, arguably the indigenous religion of Korea (Grayson 2013, 216), is regarded by many Koreans as “superstition.” Throughout Korean history, shamans have been shunned by the Korean populace and by foreigners within the Korean Peninsula. Their practices have been demeaned as witchcraft and perceived as dangerous. Consequently, the survival of shamanism into the 21st century is described by Zolla as miraculous, given the banning of shamanic ceremonies and the shamans who have been persecuted even in recent decades (Zolla 1985, 101). Nonetheless, as Chongho Kim has identified, a large number of people consult shamans in contemporary South Korea and expend considerable effort to locate the shamans who seem to be hidden within Korean society (Kim 2003, 10-25). Despite stigmatization by Korean society, shamanism is practiced throughout contemporary South Korea. This phenomenon of simultaneous appreciation and depreciation raises a number of questions: why do people simultaneously despise and appreciate shamans in contemporary South Korean culture? Who consults shamans and why do they do so despite their stigmatization? Furthermore, in what contexts do people consult shamans and what factors are specific to these contexts? By providing answers to these questions, researchers of Korean shamanism can discover how and in what form shamanic practice exists in contemporary South Korea despite its paradoxical position in Korean society.

The circumstances under which shamanic practices are appreciated and depreciated in South Korea can be evaluated in various ways. Since shamans appear to occupy a paradoxical position in South Korean society, the question arises of how shamans are able to function relatively well in South Korean society despite their stigmatization. A potential explanation for this paradox is the existence of conflicting values, which are currently operating in South Korean society. Accordingly, the concept of value, as elaborated upon by the French anthropologist Louis Dumont in his theory of value, is a helpful concept. Dumont argues that values structure the ideas in a given culture (Robbins 1994, 28). For example, values can explain the differences between American culture and Korean culture. Dumont’s concept of value can also be helpful for understanding the dynamics of the competing and conflicting values in South Korean society.

It follows, therefore, that in this thesis, I seek to ascertain the factors that will help to understand this paradoxical position by focusing on the contexts in which and by whom the practice of Korean shamanism is valued in South Korean contemporary society. Consequently, I have formulated the following research question:

“What are the valuations of shamanism in contemporary South Korean society?”

This research question is operationalized by using four sub-questions. First, I identify the crucial Korean shamanic values and in what way Korean values that conflict with these are related to the stigmatization of Korean shamanism by means of the following two sub-questions:

1) What are key values of Korean shamanism?

2) How do shamanic values conflict with other values in contemporary South Korea?

Then, by examining two examples in which shamanism is stigmatized yet shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon, I answer the following two questions:

3) In what contexts are shamanic values expressed and elaborated upon?

4) How are shamanic values expressed and elaborated upon in these contexts?

The two examples under study are Protestant and evangelical groups from South Korea involved with shamanism and the South Korean commodification of shamanism. Through the sub-questions the valuations of shamanism in contemporary South Korea are determined.

The idea for this research was inspired by a visit to South Korea, where I discovered that the existence of shamans was common knowledge, yet the practitioners seemed to be hidden in the concrete jungle of large cities such as Seoul and Busan. In conversations I had with Koreans, it became apparent that shamans were consulted whenever certain problems appeared. At the same time however, shamans were feared and deemed dangerous. Thus, it became clear that in particular situations the shamans were appreciated, while in other situations they were shunned and stigmatized. This observation led me to speculate what those circumstances were and what defined them. Consequently, my aim with this thesis is to investigate the central role shamanic values occupy in Korean culture even in contexts in which shamanism is generally frowned upon or even stigmatized.

In the section that follows, I expound upon Dumont's theory of value, as the concept of value is crucial to answering the research question. This is accomplished by using the ideas and theories of Joel Robbins, who has elaborated upon Dumont's theory of value.

The concept of value

In this thesis, I use the term "culture" when referring to the totality of ideas and values within a society. In his work, Dumont uses culture and society interchangeably, but mostly refers to society in

relation to values (Dumont 2013, 311). Other terms that he uses to denote culture or society are “civilization” and “ideology,” but for the sake of consistency I have used “culture” throughout this thesis. I have also used this term because Joel Robbins, an author of importance in this thesis, has undertaken more recent work on the concept of value and primarily uses the term “culture” when referring to the totality of ideas and values within a society. Dumont also cites the necessity of comparison to gain a better understanding of a culture or an aspect of a culture (Macfarlane 1992, 4). A comparative framework allows a culture to be placed in perspective. Dumont’s theory of value is based on the idea that values structure the relations between the different elements of a culture (Robbins 2007, 297).

In the structuralist tradition, Dumont’s theory of value is based on the concept of a hierarchy in culture. This hierarchy, according to Dumont, is not easily recognized by people, but it is an essential part of his theory of value. It is not however to be confused with hierarchy as a social stratification, where a culture is divided into different strata like race, education, age, etc. Dumont’s hierarchy is about how relations are structured in a culture (Robbins 1994, 28). Hierarchy therefore indicates how a culture’s values are organized in relation to each other. Values are therefore hierarchically ranked, with some being more important than others (Haynes and Hickel 2016, 2). By studying this hierarchy of values, Dumont believes a better understanding of how a culture is structured and organized can be obtained. Another intrinsic part of Dumont’s theory of value that is related to hierarchy is holism. Bruce Kapferer explains Dumont’s holism as “the relational value that encompasses all others that can be conceived of as part of its set” (Kapferer 2010, 188). An example of holism given by Dumont is that of the right and the left hands. Most people agree that the right hand is superior to the left, as we use it to shake hands and greet others with. However, the right hand is also part of a whole, namely the person who also has a left hand. Thus, the right hand encompasses the left and represents the totality, but on a subordinate level the distinction between the right and left hand still exists. A hierarchy therefore presupposes a whole (Haynes and Hickel 2016, 3). The totality of values, how they are related to one another and separated from each other, the configuration of ideas and values, thus, make up the whole or culture (Dumont 1986, 231).

The values of a culture can be obvious and easy to recognize. There may be a word or an expression in the respective language that represents an important value. For instance, in Korean culture formal and informal speech exist, respectively known as *chondaenmal* and *panmal*. By using *chondaenmal* one shows respect to one’s elders, hence, it can be inferred that *chondaenmal* represents the value of respecting one’s elders in Korean culture. However, not all values are expressed through language. Some values may go unnoticed and some values may influence the thoughts and actions of an individual without them realizing this to be the case (Berger forthcoming). Moya describes this in his

text as an “unavowed” value and provides the example of women’s exchange ceremonies in Senegal. The Senegalese deem these ceremonies to be wasteful because of the expenditure involved, but nonetheless wish to retain these ceremonies because in some way the ceremonies are considered valuable (Moya 2015, 165-166). The concept of “unavowed” values as explained by Moya can make it difficult to identify values in a given culture.

How, then, does one recognize the values in a culture? Sherry Ortner suggests that there are different indicators, such as a figure or an image, that can point to specific core or key symbols within a culture (Ortner 1973, 1338). These symbols can help ethnographers to identify a culture’s values in their fieldwork. When conducting ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher may be able to recognize how a group of people are emotionally involved with regard to values and responds to them in a negative or positive manner. As an example, the rose of Sharon or hibiscus flower (*mugunghwa*) is found on many official Korean national emblems. This flower, which is also known as the Korean rose, is recognized for its strength and ability to regrow after damage, and it can be compared to the hardships of the Korean nation during Japanese colonialization and their ability to rebuild the nation afterwards. The degree of cultural elaboration afforded to the symbol is also an indicator for recognizing a value, which means that the value is expressed through many different forms, has been linguistically elaborated upon, evokes great ceremonial care and economic investment, and/or considerable time is spent on the value. In the example of the hibiscus flower, this elaboration can be observed in the literal translation of *mugunghwa* as eternal flower, in the many different emblems in which the flower is featured in South Korea and in the fact that the flower is mentioned in the national anthem. Another indicator of a key value is that the value is referred to in many different empirical situations and contexts (Berger forthcoming). Once again the example of respecting one’s elders is relevant in this regard, as the matter of seniority and honorific references to elders can be found in family relationships, working environments, school settings, or in the army.

As previously stated, Dumont’s theory of value explains that values structure the relations between the different elements of a culture. It is important to note that Dumont assigns three properties to values. The first of these properties is encompassment, which I previously represented with the example of the right hand encompassing the left hand. The second property of a value is segmentation, which means that a value can have different units. Dumont gives an example of the different rungs on a ladder that blend smoothly into each other, leaving no void between them. The different segments of a value are thus a continuous series of expressions denoting that same value (Dumont 2013, 303). In his work *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications* he elaborates upon segmentation with the example of the caste system:

In the caste system, as in the political system of the Nuer, which groups appear – or disappear – depends on the situation at hand. Sometimes we are concerned with one caste opposed (in fact or idea) to another, sometimes we see the same caste become segmented into subcastes (etc.). For this reason we shall employ the words ‘segment’ and ‘segmentation’ only to designate the division or subdivision of a group into several groups of the same nature but smaller scale (Dumont 1980, 42).

The third property is reversal, which distinguishes between hierarchical oppositions and distinctive oppositions with regard to values. Dumont explains that reversal can only be detected on an empirical level. He gives the example of Christianity, in which the priest and king are important on different levels. The priest is superior in religious matters to the king to whom public order has been entrusted, but the priest will obey the king in matters of public order, that is, in subordinate matters. There is no conflict between the values because there is a difference in the empirical situations or levels (Dumont 2013, 301-302). By considering a distinction in levels a “logical scandal” between values, as Dumont calls it, in which something is both liked and disliked at the same time is avoided (Dumont 1986, 227).

Joel Robbins adds to Dumont’s theory of value. He argues that Dumont’s theory can help us understand why cultures allow choice in particular domains and situations and how these choices are regarded as moral ones (Robbins 2007, 296). An explanation for the freedom to make a moral choice is the model of cultures that are structured by values. Either values are expressed through a Durkheimian morality of reproduction, where value hierarchies remain stably organized, or the freedom to make a moral choice allows for stable value conflicts to exist (Robbins 2007, 300). Robbins’ addition to Dumont’s theory is that value conflicts can be produced by cultural change. Robbins defines cultural change as a change of key values, and it may occur because new values are introduced or the hierarchical relations between traditional values have been transformed (Robbins 2007, 301). Robbins’ interpretation differs from that of Dumont because it allows for cultural change.

Dumont’s concept of value and the way it has been elaborated upon by Robbins allows for a better understanding of the valuation of shamanism in contemporary Korean society. The concept of value as described above thus plays a crucial role throughout this thesis in determining the valuations of shamanism in South Korea. The Protestant and evangelical groups and the South Koreans commodifying shamanism demonstrate the groups involved in contexts in which shamanic values are at play. By limiting myself to these two examples, contemporary contexts in which shamanic values exist can be thoroughly discussed while remaining within the scope of this thesis.

In the remainder of this introduction, I outline the content of the chapters. I also explain the methods I have used in my research, present an explanation of the key concepts relevant to this thesis, and provide an overview of the literature that has been used for my research.

Overview of chapters

In order to answer the research question “What are the valuations of shamanism in contemporary South Korean society?”, several subjects need to be considered. Accordingly, the first chapter provides an explanation of shamanic values. This chapter also examines the stigmatization of shamanism and how shamanic values conflict with other values present in contemporary South Korean society. By doing so, the complexity of the beliefs and practices of shamanism is identified and the treatment of shamans in Korean society is described.

Once the context of the paradoxical position of shamans in South Korea has been established, the second chapter analyzes the first of the two examples employed to answer the research question: the large number of Protestant and evangelical groups in South Korea who are involved with shamanism. The chapter examines the contexts in which Protestant and/or evangelical groups express shamanic values. This chapter also observes the contexts in which shamanic values are in conflict with Christian values, which offers an explanation for how Christians are able to simultaneously value and devalue shamanism.

The third chapter examines the second example, namely South Koreans commodifying shamanism. Similarly to Chapter 2, Chapter 3 explains the contexts in which shamanic values are expressed by South Koreans through a commodified version of shamanism.

Methods

To gain a better understanding of the paradoxical position of shamans and to determine when shamanic values are at play, I have chosen to primarily base the research on secondary literature for an essentially practical reason. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic (2020-2021), it has become extremely difficult to undertake fieldwork and ethnographic research without placing all those involved in danger. Another reason for using literature-based research is that extensive research on the subject of Korean shamanism has already been conducted. There is a considerable wealth of historical and ethnographical research on the subject of shamanism and shamanism in contemporary South Korea. In choosing the data for this research, I focused on sources that contained ethnographic accounts of shamanic rituals held in a contemporary setting or described shamanic rituals and

practices that were held outside a shamanic context. This focus aided in answering the research question, since the objective of this research is to discover valuations of shamanism in South Korea in a contemporary context where shamanism remains stigmatized. Important sources in this regard are *Shamans, Nostalgias and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion* (Kendall 2009) by Laurel Kendall, *Korean Shamanism: The Cultural Paradox* (Kim 2003) by Chongho Kim and *The Shaman's Wages: Trading in Ritual on Cheju Island* (Yun 2019) by Kyoim Yun. Kendall's extensive work was chosen because it gives an ethnographic account of contemporary Korean shamanism and demonstrates the values that are prominent in Korean shamanism. Kim's work assists in determining the context in which shamanism is being valued, since he highlights the prevalence of shamanic ritual in contemporary South Korea despite prevailing stigmatization of shamanism. Yun's work provides examples of contexts in which shamanism is being valued outside the context of shamanism. In the next section in which I present the problem analysis, I will elaborate further on these sources and explain their relevance to this research. Other sources that have been used are theological sources, such as those by Boo-Woong Yoo (Yoo 1986), Sun Myung Moon (Moon 1998) and David Kwang-Sun Suh (Suh 1983), that demonstrate an overlap between Christian and shamanic practices and therefore provide an answer to the sub-question of what the contexts are in which shamanic values are expressed or elaborated upon. Quotes have been used to demonstrate how shamanistic terms are employed and shamanic rituals are interpreted by Christians. This data was then analysed by using the theory of Dumont on values, Robbins additional theory on values and Ortner's theory on culture and key symbols to determine what values are at play.

Whereas the sources by Kendall, Kim and Yun focus on shamans, their practice and their place in society, this research aims to provide an explanation as to why shamanism is prevalent in contemporary South Korea despite stigmatization by providing specific contexts in which shamanism is being valued by those not closely associated with shamanism. This research specifically examines two examples in which, despite stigmatization, people find themselves in contexts in which shamanic values are at play, namely 1) the Protestant and evangelical groups from South Korea involved with shamanism and 2) the South Koreans commodifying shamanism. These examples have been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the new Christian movements in South Korea and South Koreans who commodify shamanism are groups that are prevalent in recent Korean history as a result of historical and economic circumstances. Protestantism arrived in Korea in the late 19th century (Wells 1990, 25-29) and many of the new evangelical churches were established after the 1960s in South Korea (Lee, Ch'oe and de Bary 2000, 379). Many of the evangelical churches established during that time or in subsequent years have gained large followings in the 21st century. For example, as of 2016, the Yoido Full Gospel Church had over 480,000 followers (Hazzan 2016). Secondly, the South Korean

commodification of shamanism has become an expanding phenomenon due to the interest of other countries in indigenous Korean culture and shamanism in particular. For instance, the famous Korean shaman Kim Keum Hwa, who has been awarded the status of “intangible cultural treasure” by the South Korean government, has traveled around the world showcasing shamanic rituals in presentations that resemble performance art (Kendall 2009, 201-202). These two groups are historical novelties: never before has Korea been the setting for such a large group of native Protestant and/or evangelical groups and never before have Koreans commodified shamanism to gain traction from Western countries. The two examples both feature contexts in which shamanic values are at play. However, shamanic values are not expressed explicitly in each context and it is still possible that the stigmatization of shamanism is present. These different contexts are discussed in the two chapters dedicated to each example, along with the ways in which the shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon within these contexts.

The resources that have been used in this research have made it possible to conduct research based solely on a review of the literature, albeit in a somewhat limited manner due to constant changes and developments in the practice of Korean shamanism. However, to answer the research question secondary literature research is the best possible approach in current circumstances because it provides diverse and recent data. In the following section the main sources are discussed and it is explained how they contribute to this research.

Problem Analysis

In this section, the literature that is relevant to researching how shamanism is valued in contemporary South Korea is discussed. The research by various authors is described along with how their research contributes to this study. I also discuss the implications of their findings for this research. By discussing the literature that already exists on the research topic, a solid foundation is created and the research question is embedded in a general academic debate.

In the last five to six decades, extensive ethnographic fieldwork and research have been conducted on Korean shamanism. Since the end of the Korean War, a steady flow of American researchers have traveled to South Korea and shown interest in the indigenous practices of the Korean Peninsula. An important author in this regard is Laurel Kendall, an anthropologist who has researched shamans in Korea since the 1970s. Her interest in the relationship between women and shamanism plays an important role in her work, and one of her main focuses has been the role of gender in Korean shamanism. One work that is important to the valuations of shamanism in contemporary South Korea is Kendall’s book *Shamans, Nostalgias and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion*

(Kendall 2009). In this book, Kendall investigates how the practice of shamanism has changed within the years while she has been studying it. Kendall discusses several topics in her book that are relevant to this research.

First, she examines how the position of shamans has changed due to the urbanization of South Korea and a changing political climate. She considers how shamanism has been categorized as a superstition, a culture and a religion and how ideas around these objectifications have changed according to economic and political circumstances. For example, she mentions the anti-superstition campaign of the New Community Movement under dictator Park Chung-Hee during which policemen tried to intervene in village rituals, while at the same time of Park Chung-Hee's dictatorship laws were being passed that protected shamanism as an intangible cultural heritage. The conflicting ideas surrounding shamanism show the paradoxical position shamanism has occupied in South Korean society both in the past and in the present. This also points to a distinction in the contexts in which shamanic values are at play, which is relevant to this research.

Second, Kendall studies the economic transformation South Korea has undergone since the 1980s and how this has affected the work of the shamans, the concerns of the clients and the attitude to gods and ancestors in rituals. More specifically, she notes how Korea requested financial aid from the International Monetary Fund after the market's collapse in 1997. As a result of their sense of hopelessness, Koreans turned to shamans who performed rituals for prosperity. In this way, Kendall recognizes the flexibility of Korean shamanism as the shamans tended to their clients during this crisis and included the IMF in their cosmology. From Kendall's research, it is evident that despite the threats to shamanism in South Korea, Korean shamanism is a fluid practice that adapts alongside social and economic changes and, hence, has survived into the 21st century. Kendall also recognizes the importance of material wealth to South Koreans and shamans alike, which features prominently in contemporary rituals and generally within the shaman profession. This link to wealth is worth acknowledging as this thesis studies how shamanic values emerge in the commodification of shamanism, which typically has an underlying economic objective.

Another author who has contributed to the discourse of the survival of Korean shamanism into the 21st century is Chongho Kim. In his research, Kim tries to understand how despite the stigmatization of shamanism by the Korean populace, shamanic practices are still present in contemporary South Korea. Instead of focusing on the shamans as Kendall does in most of her work, Kim focuses on the perspective of the clients and how they go about consulting a shaman in contemporary South Korea. Kim attempts to explain the paradoxical position of shamans in contemporary South Korean society by arguing that shamans are in "the field of misfortune" (Kim 2003, 15), a field that is associated with

danger and should therefore be avoided. His findings are based on his ethnographic fieldwork in a village near Seoul and present a detailed description of ritual exchange that has been influenced by globalization and urbanization. Kim focuses on the stigmatization of shamans in contemporary South Korea. Notably, this thesis seeks to represent the ways in which shamanic values are respected by the general Korean populace despite this stigmatization.

An author who studies the practice of ritual exchange and recently contributed to the research of shamanism is Kyoim Yun. Her book, *The Shaman's Wages: Trading in Ritual on Cheju Island* (Yun 2019) details a specific case study of shamanic traditions on Cheju Island. Yun has been conducting fieldwork on the island since the early 2000s and her focus has been on the specific aspects of Cheju Island shamanism. For this purpose, she discusses the history of Cheju Island and how mainlanders, Confucian scholars and Japanese colonials have historically perceived and treated shamans on Cheju Island. Through records and paintings, Yun demonstrates that the stance adopted by outsiders towards shamans has been largely negative. Expenditure on rituals and the swindling of innocent people appear to have been common critiques, which also point to the main topic of the book: the practice of ritual exchange in shamanism. Yun dedicates the latter three chapters of her book to this practice, based on the findings from her ethnographic fieldwork on the island. She argues that despite the critiques from Confucians, Japanese colonialists and Christians, the use of sacrificial objects is not a wasteful act but a means to strengthen the bond between shamans, clients and their gods and a way to enhance the idea of reciprocity. The importance that Yun subscribes to the practice of ritual exchange and how it is practiced in the 21st century is particularly relevant to this thesis, since it demonstrates how shamanic values are at play in the context of economic motives. Yun also observes recent developments in which shamanic practice is now regarded as part of Korea's cultural heritage and the way in which the practice has become part of UNESCO. This thesis attempts to explain this phenomenon by investigating what role shamanic values have in the commodification of shamanism.

Both Kim and Yun consider the importance of ritual exchange in their work, however, they do not consider how this ritual exchange is appreciated by those in society who are not closely affiliated with shamanism. They do mention that the practice is perceived negatively by Confucians, Christians and other groups, but they do not consider how shamanism might be appreciated by these groups in certain contexts. This thesis aims to ascertain the contexts in which ritual exchange and other aspects of the shamanic practice in contemporary South Korea is appreciated by those not closely affiliated to Korean shamanism and how this is manifested.

An overview of Korean shamanism

To obtain a better understanding of Korean shamanism and its worldview, the following overview provides a summary of the different elements and practices that Korean shamanism involves.

Shamanism

To understand what Korean shamanism is, the term “shamanism” has to be evaluated. Mircea Eliade famously considers shamanism to be a religious phenomenon that is mostly concentrated in Siberia and Central Asia. According to Eliade, the word “shaman” derives from the Tungus word *šaman* (Eliade 1974, 4). The shaman, who performs shamanic practices such as initiation through sickness and the use of magical powers, is seen as a great master of ecstasy. This leads Eliade to provide a careful definition of shamanism as a technique of ecstasy, hence, the title of his book, *Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (ibid., 4). In defining shamanism, Eliade based his study primarily on the practice in Siberia. Korean shamanism derives from a source common to Korea and Siberia; one possible implication of this is that the elements of shamanism to which Eliade refers are also applicable to Korean shamanism (ibid., 4). For example, there are features in Korean shamanism that can be related to the Paleo-Siberian tribes and the Neo-Siberian tribes such as the practice of crossdressing (Grayson 2013, 218).

For several decades, Mircea Eliade’s work was regarded as the authority in the study of shamanism. In more recent decades, several anthropologists have pointed out flaws and inconsistencies in Eliade’s definition of shamanism, deeming it insufficient to encompass all forms of the practice (Hutton 2001, 54-55). More recently, Margaret Stutley has argued that all forms of shamanism share three features. First, there is a belief in a spirit world. The shaman can contact the spirit world and communicate with and manipulate the spirits on behalf of the community. Second, a trance-like state is created by singing, dancing and drumming, in which the shaman’s spirit leaves their body to enter the supernatural world. Third, the shaman can cure disease and help with problems involving clan members or members of the community (Stutley 2003, 2). Although Stutley’s definition is broader than that of Eliade, this definition is problematic when it comes to Korean shamanism because the spirits of Korean shamans do not leave their bodies to enter the supernatural world. Noting the inconsistencies that exist in the definitions of the phenomenon of shamanism, Peter N. Jones researched the scholarly use of the term “shamanism.” He discovered that the uses of the terms “shaman” and “shamanism” changed significantly in the last century and the current uses of the terms are inadequate as they do not account for cultural differences (Jones 2006, 4-32). Therefore, to examine Korean shamanism more broadly, it is necessary to go beyond the considerations of Eliade, Stutley and others and investigate shamanism specifically in its Korean context more closely.

Korean shamanism is considered by many to be the primal religion of Korea. Although folk religion in Korea includes more than just shamanism, James Grayson defines shamanism as the most evidential characteristic of *musok-kyo*, the Korean term for folk religion or shamanic religion (Grayson 2013, 216). Traces of shamanic practices in the folk religion can be found throughout the history of the late Silla (57 BC – 935 AD), Koryŏ (918 – 1392) and Chosŏn (1392–1897) periods of the Korean Peninsula (Grayson 2013, 216). Historical records recount rituals that had the following characteristics: healing, the divination and the conveying of oracles, and the descent of the spirit and possession of the shaman. All of these characteristics can still be found in contemporary Korean shamanism (Kim Hogarth 2002, 159). Even though shamanic practices have been performed throughout different periods of Korean history, the shamans themselves were pushed to the peripheries of society, taxed and their practices were appropriated and encompassed within Buddhist, Confucian, or Christian practices while shamans were denied an official and public status in Korean society (Grayson 2013, 217). Grayson therefore argues that contemporary shamanism as part of popular folk religion exists as the substratum of the Korean religious experience (Grayson 2013, 217).

Cosmology

Korean shamanism is a highly absorbent religion. It has borrowed ideas and practices from Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity and Confucianism. However, there is a belief system based on foundation myths and key concepts that are specific to the cosmology of Korean shamanism. One of the beliefs that is of great importance to Korean shamanism is the affinity of spirits with disease and misfortune. This becomes apparent through the many rituals related to this belief, as well as by how it affects clients and practitioners.

The belief system or cosmology of Korean shamanism is expressed through foundation myths. The myths tell a story from which believers can abstract a worldview, which can serve as a guide in conducting rituals. Furthermore, when written down the myths can help with the transmission and implementation of the belief system. Korean shamanism has a few myths that have either been written down or transmitted orally (Owens 1975, 47-48). Many of the foundation myths concern Korean clans and their rulers, from their births to their deaths. The myths recount magical births and an ascension to heaven after dying. Some leaders are described as spirits who form part of the shamanic pantheon. The theme of these stories is strongly focused on a belief in supernatural power (ibid., 49-51). This supernatural power is exemplified in a multitude of gods. The gods rule different worlds; some believe there are three worlds, while others believe in four worlds. The upper world or heaven is where Hananim, the almighty god, who has control over the affairs on earth, resides. The middle world is where people reside, animals live, and vegetation grows. The lower world is where

malignant spirits roam. It is also believed by some that a god called Ryum Ra Tae Wang rules over the lower or under world. The fourth world is the sea, but some believe that the sea is part of the lower world. In the sea, a dragon king called Ryong Wang resides. These three or four worlds comprise the cosmos, or *Oo-Joo Kwan*, where the gods jointly control all affairs and where different spirits are rivals and partake in conflicts. *Oo-Joo Kwan* is charged with personal supernatural power, which contrasts with the Confucian and Buddhist belief in power in the impersonal. This personal supernatural power allows people to have control over the cosmos and to influence it. However, Korean shamanism is mostly concerned with the middle world, which differs from Christian and Buddhist ideas that focus on the afterlife. The three (or four) worlds together form a battleground in which the spirits come to play. Central to this cosmos is the shaman, who has a unique relationship with the spirits (ibid., 56-57).

Individuals proceed to the upper world or lower world based on their deeds in life, which is linked to the idea of misfortune in Korean shamanism but also borrows from the Christian and Buddhist ideas of hell and punishment. People can travel between worlds since there is a belief in a physical body that has a spiritual essence. The spirit is of great importance, since it can live without the physical body and is therefore immortal. However, the spirit is intensely involved with the physical body and any untimely death or disease will affect the spirit's behavior. Even its burial ground can cause the spirit to be angered and act out of malice. Furthermore, a malignant spirit can invade the body of a living human being and possess it. By doing so, they can alter the individual's personality and lifestyle. Life after death is also indicated through materialism. Graves and burial places are filled with material goods and food, as the spirits can become hungry and are even believed to consume food. An individual's life and death, including happiness and misfortune, depend upon the will of the gods since they control all the affairs in the cosmos. The shaman, on behalf of people and the spirits can influence the decisions of the gods. Due to the great strength of the gods and a belief in supernatural power, people often feel helpless and search for protection from shamans. Through rituals, the shaman seeks to provide solace and solutions of a practical and functional nature. The core of the cosmology of Korean shamanism therefore appears to lie in a belief in a system of supernatural relationships (ibid., 58-60).

The spirits in Korean shamanism are generally divided into two kinds. The benevolent gods and spirits who bring good fortune and the malignant spirits who bring misfortune. However, some spirits can be good and helpful in certain situations, while in others they can become malevolent and dangerous (ibid., 61). It is also believed that in addition to humans and animals, plants, inanimate objects, places and natural phenomena can possess a spiritual essence, which makes Korean shamanism an animistic religion. Within the shamanic pantheon, according to Kim T'ae-gon the gods

of Korean shamanism can be classified into natural gods and human gods. They can be divided into different categories, of which earth, water, mountain and heaven gods are the most prevalent natural gods and warrior, royal, Buddhist and shaman ancestral gods are the most prevalent human gods (Kim 1972, 22). There are numerous deities in the Korean shamanic pantheon whom I will not describe to remain within the limits of this thesis, but it does appear that there is a great deal of overlapping between different spirits. Therefore, what is most important to shamans is whether a spirit is benevolent or brings misfortune and is involved with this world. As the shaman is concerned with human problems and diseases, it is important to identify the spirits that are involved so they can be summoned during rituals and managed. These are known as familiar spirits (Owens 1975, 61-65).

Mudang

The term *mudang* is generally used to describe a specialist in Korean shamanism. They have a central position in Korean shamanism as the performers of the rituals and the transmitters of the tradition. *Mudang* is a general term for a shaman, however other terms exist for shamans that differ according to gender, skill or region. A female shaman is known as *Munyo* and by the more general term *Posal*. A *Pansu* or *Paksu* is a male shaman. *Popsa* is a more general term used for any male shaman, however, this term is specifically used for a male shaman who reads the hybrid Buddho-Daoist scriptures (Yi et al. 2015, 82-84).

According to Don Baker, there are three types of Korean shamans: charismatic, hereditary and divining shamans (Baker 2008, 20-22). Charismatic shamans are able to contact spirits. Unlike shamans outside the Korean Peninsula, Korean shamans allow the spirits to come to them instead of traveling to the spirit world. An important element of becoming a charismatic shaman is undergoing a spiritual initiation by experiencing “the spiritual illness” (*sinbyŏng*; Yi et al. 2015, 83). Hereditary shamans have inherited the power to perform certain rituals that influence the behavior of spirits. They do not however enter into a trance, travel to the spirit world or become possessed by spirits. Divining shamans are those who perform divination or fortune telling. For instance, they read the words of the spirits in the throw of a set of coins. They do not really experience spirit possession or perform the rituals that charismatic and hereditary shamans perform. Most of the charismatic, hereditary and divining shamans are female shamans, but male shamans also exist (Baker 2008, 21).

Ritual

A *kut* is a shamanic ritual performed by a *mudang*. The *mudang* are accompanied by musicians and other shamans, and there are many different types of *kut*. Some *kut* are performed while seated, others are performed while standing and even dancing (Yi et al. 2015, 92). There are also many forms and purposes for a *kut*, along with regional differences. Furthermore, a *kut* is almost always performed in a communal atmosphere (ibid., 98). Some important *kut* are *chaesu-kut*, which is a household ritual in which ancestors and gods are welcomed in the home; *ssikkim-kut* or *chinogwi-kut*, which are rituals related to death, *pyong-kut*, which are rituals for illness; and *tang-kut*, which is a village ritual (ibid., 100-101).

Spirits, gods and ancestors

During a *kut* the *mudang* makes contact with the spirit world. The spirit world in Korean shamanism consists of a wide array of deities or gods, spirits and ancestors. Kendall distinguishes between the three in terms of how they are used most commonly by *mansin* (*mudang*). “Gods” (*sin*, *sillyŏng*) are distinguished from “ancestors” (*chosang*), while “spirits” (*sin*) refer to the whole collectivity. Evidently, both gods and spirits are called *sin* in Korean (Kendall 2009, x). Annemarie de Waal Malefijt has a similar understanding to Kendall. She notes,

while the term god is best applied to those supernatural powers of nonhuman origin that are individualized and personally known, the term spirits would refer to those that appear collectively. The spirit population is too numerous to be counted, and, as a consequence spirits are not usually named individually but referred to by category (de Waal Malefijt 1968, 154).

In addition to the shaman, there are other living beings and inanimate objects that spirits can embody and make their presence known. Often these are tools that the shaman uses primarily for the purpose of making known which god, ancestor or spirit is present. There is the so-called spirit-stick (*sinjangdae*) which can be possessed with a spirit while the shaman or client holds it. When the stick moves and shakes without the holder’s intention, the spirit is making its presence known (Kim 2003, 59-60).

By performing a ritual, the shaman’s goal is to win the good will of spirits by entertaining and feeding them. In exchange for providing good fortune to the shaman and their clients, the spirits receive offerings such as rice cakes, clothing, cash, pig’s heads and bottles of liquor. The spirits engage with these offerings by desiring them, ritually consuming them and playing with them. Through the

performance of the shaman the spirits can physically engage with the offerings, as Kendall describes in the following text:

Gods cackle appreciatively over tubs of steamed rice cake, which they hoist triumphantly to their heads, contemptuously scrutinize a pig's head or full carcass and smear a client's face with meat grease, or banter over a scrawny chicken that "isn't any more than the smell of a chicken." Tearful ancestors share cups of wine with the living, even as they lament the heavy drinking that precipitated their own early deaths (Kendall 2008, 154).

The wishes of the spirits can be extremely precise, and the shaman and their assistants need to consider this when preparing the offerings, as becomes clear in the following excerpt in which Yang describes the preparations for a ritual:

There is a rice cake for each separate spirit, and if a mudang has twenty different gods, for example, then twenty different dishes of rice cakes must be prepared. The new mudang, then, has to learn the gods' names and which rice cakes are appropriate. None of the food can be eaten until after the performance of the Chilseong Kori (Scene of the Spirit of the Big Dipper). Food preparation is essential to being a professional mudang (Yang 1988, 33).

Furthermore, the spirits may demand large sums of money. Often, the spirits will complain during a ritual that the amount of money or other paraphernalia is insufficient and demand more in exchange for good fortune. Kendall accordingly describes them as "greedy gods" (Kendall 2008, 155).

The focus on food, drinks, money and other material goods is in line with the focal point of worldly issues that Korean shamanism seeks to address. It is striking, however, that the spirits display inherently human needs and wishes. Spirits of children who died of the smallpox or measles known as child gods (*Tongja*) characteristically ask for candy to be offered. Warrior gods may act promiscuously by dancing with clients and reaching lustfully for their breasts (Kendall 2008, 156). The spirits ask for worldly goods, and through the ritual the shaman offers these to the spirit world in a ritual exchange for good fortune.

In this chapter, I have considered the paradoxical position of Korean shamans in South Korea. This paradoxical position, in which shamanism survives in contemporary times despite stigmatization, raises the question of how it has been able to survive. Accordingly, the aim of this thesis is to examine how shamanic values continue to be expressed in certain contexts. Since this thesis is based on literature-based research, the different authors who have contributed to the research on Korean shamanic practice in recent years and how their research intersects with this study have also been

discussed in this chapter. By presenting an overview of Korean shamanism, a basic awareness of the practices and beliefs of Korean shamanism has been provided. In the next chapter, I discuss what shamanic values are and how they conflict with other values in South Korea.

Chapter 1: Shamanic values in conflict

This chapter is dedicated to the identification of shamanic values. A selection of the key values that are part of the contemporary form of shamanism in South Korean society are discussed by discovering the forms they take and in what contexts they are being expressed and elaborated upon. Furthermore, this chapter examines how these values conflict with other values that exist in contemporary South Korean society. By considering how shamanic values conflict with other values, the stigmatization of Korean shamanism is highlighted and explained. This provides a bridge to the following chapters in which the contexts are discussed in which shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon despite the persisting stigmatization of shamanism.

Key values of Korean shamanism

Sinbyŏng (spiritual illness)

The key figure in Korean shamanism who holds the knowledge of the ancient tradition is the *mudang*. *Mudang* is the most common term used for those who practice shamanism, but many other terms exist that are based on region, gender or type, as previously mentioned in the introduction (Kendall 2009, ix). The *mudang* is the performer of rituals and serves as the intermediary between the client and the spirits in shamanism. It is important to note that the *mudang* is the only person within shamanism who can perform rituals, which suggests a certain exclusivity (Yi et al. 2015, 82). However, this exclusivity can only be observed in hereditary shamans who inherit the profession of *mudang* from their families. Hereditary shamans learn the profession of *mudang* through apprenticeship while the other type of *mudang*, a charismatic shaman, becomes a *mudang* through “spiritual” illness.

This spiritual illness, which is also known as *sinbyŏng* (Grim 1984, 239), causes the *mudang* to experience intense physical pain and mental torment that can assume many forms.

When a person is experiencing recurring pain and there seems to be no cure for the illness, it is believed in shamanism that a god has descended into them and it is their calling to become a *mudang* (Yi et al. 2015, 86). For charismatic shamans, who constitute a large part of Korean shamanism, *sinbyŏng* is an important value because it recognizes that certain illnesses and pain are induced by the spirits instead of being a regular illness, and it allows someone who is not a hereditary shaman to become a shaman. The contexts and forms in which *sinbyŏng* occur can differ, but for

every charismatic shaman relating the value of *sinbyŏng* to their suffering is of importance to their identity.

In opposition to *sinbyŏng* is the idea of being possessed by a malevolent spirit. While *sinbyŏng* leads to shamanic initiation, possession by a malevolent spirit leads to illness and misfortune. In both cases a spirit inhabits the body of a human being, however in the case of *sinbyŏng* it can lead to something good while in the case of possession to something bad. This is what Dumont calls a reversal, where a distinction on the empirical level can be detected but the literal meaning of the idea remains the same (Dumont 2013, 301). The superior of the hierarchical opposition when it comes to spiritual possession is *sinbyŏng* since it leads to becoming a shaman, however on a different level *sinbyŏng* still remains a serious illness invoked by a spirit just like possession by a malevolent spirit.

Not every Korean who experiences hardships and illnesses, however, considers their suffering to be part of *sinbyŏng* or spiritual possession. According to Joel Robbins' theory, a culture consists of stable value conflicts that allow for moral choice (Robbins 2007, 296-300), the charismatic shamans choose to give more importance to the value of *sinbyŏng* rather than to other competing values in South Korean society. These values can include a trust in scientific research of the treatment of illnesses or a belief in the Christian faith to alleviate their sufferings. This would also explain why not all suffering is considered to be *sinbyŏng* in South Korea, but that it is a specific shamanic value to interpret prolonged suffering as a call to become a *mudang*.

Han (resentment, grief, regret or anger)

The word *han* is difficult to translate, even in Korean no clear definition of the word exists. A general understanding of *han* is that it is an underlying feeling particular to the Korean people. This means that what *han* is and represents belong only to the lives and experiences of the Korean people. Although there are similar terms in neighboring countries, such as *hen* in China and *kon* in Japan, they do not express the same sentiment as *han*. The feeling that *han* represents is a certain anger that cannot be expressed and has no concrete target, resulting in a sort of inward frustration. The feeling of *han* is therefore seen as burdensome and since it cannot be easily expressed, many people seek to be healed from *han* (Kim 1999, 125-127).

Han plays a major role in Korean shamanism, as one of the purposes of *kut* is to help people release their *han*. In the shamanic worldview it is believed that the cause of disease and death is the accumulated *han* of ancestors or dead spirits. Therefore, in shamanism *han* is perceived as an illness from which people need to be healed. In a healing *kut* a person can be healed from their *han* by contacting the spirits. Through possession, the shaman may speak and act like the ancestor or dead

spirit who has caused the *han*. The deceased person may be angry or may have met an untimely death. Often these spirits are referred to as *wǎnhon* or spiteful souls, which are a category of spirits that have been struck down by violence, accidents, drowning, or childbirth, those who died during warfare, who committed suicide, or died without marrying (Kim 2015, 257). By recognizing and reliving the painful event of their ancestor's death or frustrations, the *han* can be released from the current subject (Kim 1999, 127-128). This is when the spirit is free to move from this world to the other world or heaven and will no longer cause misfortune for their relatives (Kim 2015, 257-258).

People recognize shamans as "priests of *han*" because they are able to sympathize with those who suffer and because they also have the supernatural power to heal them (Kim 1999, 128-130).

Traditionally, it was the task of shamans to release individuals in the spirit world of their *han* through rituals and to help people avoid accumulating *han* in their lives through fortune telling (Lee 2016, 300). With regard to the latter, divining and fortune telling have increased significantly in South Korea through the so-called "cyber shamans" who offer their services online. These online divinations have also increased due to turbulent events such as the financial crisis of the late 90s in South Korea (Lee 2016, 301). These rituals and divinations and their modern forms demonstrate that there are multiple ways to interpret and cope with *han* in Korean shamanism, which points to how the value has been the subject of cultural elaboration. Again, there are people who go to a hospital or find other means to be relieved of their sufferings (Kendall 2009, 3), but in order to heal from the *han* accumulated in this world and the next they need the help of a *mudang*, which indicates that *han* is specifically a shamanic value.

The *han* that people seek to be healed from is often accumulated *han* from both bad luck and inherited *han* from ancestors. *Han* has many expressions and forms but is in essence the same, since one *han* causes and influences the other *han*. Dumont calls this segmentation which signifies a value (Dumont 1980, 42). According to Dumont, segmentation is when a value can have different expressions, yet these expressions are also seen as a continuity of a whole. Just like the rungs on a ladder are insignificant to the ladder as a whole, the accumulated *han* smoothly blends into one another and becomes one.

Malmun (gates of speech) and *kongsu* (inspired speech)

To become a *mudang*, an initiation ritual is necessary. During this ritual, which is called a *naerim-kut*, the apprentice has to perform like a shaman by singing, dancing and divining through the inspiration sent by the gods (Kendall 2009, 70). The initiation takes its full form when the gods open the "gates of speech" (*malmun*) of the initiate, which allows the apprentice to utter inspired words from the

spirit, which is known as *kongsu* (Kendall 2009, xx). Summarized, *malmun* is gaining the ability to produce inspired speech while *kongsu* is the inspired speech. Multiple aspects of the initiation ritual are important such as singing, dancing and the offering of food, however, *malmun* and *kongsu* are accorded the highest values in the initiation.

Essentially, the apprentice needs to offer themselves to receive the god, so the god can use the apprentice's body as a medium to present their needs and wishes. This embodiment of the god in the shaman can assume many forms. The apprentice will use particular costumes to indicate the presence of a certain god while using a tone of voice that is also indicative of this god. The apprentice choosing different costumes and talking in particular voices is the result of obeying impulses as potent gods lend their inspiration to the apprentice. The purpose of this inspiration by the gods is so that the shaman conveys the presence of the gods through their own words and actions. They do not become the god, but they act on behalf of the gods by uttering inspired dialog and using objects to indicate their presence (Kendall 2009, 82-83). All these features are important for a successful shaman because they allow the shaman to perform a successful ritual. A successful ritual is defined by making the needs of the clients and gods known of which *malmun* and *kongsu* are crucial aspects.

Through the embodied performances of the shamans, in which they mimic the gods in order to manifest them, the presence of the god is made known. A distinction is thus also made between the call to become a shaman and the profession of a shaman. Since this performance takes on full form and escalates with *malmun* and *kongsu*, these values can be seen as important shamanic values, because they solidify the status of a shaman. Furthermore, it is a judgment of the gods whether to open the "gates of speech" of an initiate and deem them fit to become a shaman. The judgments of the gods are highly respected by shamans since it is these judgments that provide the shamans with their profession and their role as intermediary communicating the gods' appraisals (Kendall 2009, 67).

Kendall describes an initiation rite for an apprentice who hopes to become a shaman, in which the older shamans cite the importance of *malmun* and *kongsu* and vigorously encourage the initiate, Chini, to speak for the gods (Kendall 2009, 81). The shamans are vocal about the importance of *malmun* and *kongsu*, and they are also positively aroused by it. According to Ortner, this emotional involvement with *malmun* and *kongsu* indicates it is a key symbol (Ortner 1973, 1339).

According to Dumont a value always presupposes a hierarchical opposition, in which the superior value contains its opposite. Dumont calls this encompassment. The encompassed idea might in turn also be considered a value when it encompasses other values or ideas in different contexts (Berger Forthcoming). In the case of the values *malmun* and *kongsu*, they are considered superior values to

the value of *sinbyŏng* which represents the calling of becoming a shaman. This is because *Malmun* and *kongsu* are considered more important to the practice of shamanism:

Korean shamans draw legitimacy from personal histories of affliction constructed as evidence of a calling, but they become great shamans through their command of ritual knowledge and performance skills acquired during an onerous apprenticeship (Kendall 2009, 70).

However, a shaman still needs their calling in order to acquire the ability of producing inspired speech and therefore *sinbyŏng* is considered a value in different contexts. In this way the value of *sinbyŏng* is encompassed in the value of *kongsu* and *malmun*. Dumont describes this as the superior value representing a larger whole of which the inferior value is a part of (Berger Forthcoming).

Injŏng (ritual offering)

One important element of shamanic rituals is ritual consumption. In ritual consumption the shaman eats, drinks or even receives gifts during a ritual. The food, drinks and gifts are generally provided by the clients in an effort to please the gods and with the hope of receiving something in return. This practice is called ritual exchange and it is a necessary element of the shamanic ritual to achieve favorable consideration by the gods (Yun 2019, 7). Both shamans and clients perceive ritual as an investment that is based on a belief in reciprocity (ibid., 76). Many clients pay large amounts for rituals with the expectation of receiving something in return. As the intermediary, the shaman presents the offerings to the gods and negotiates with them on behalf of the clients (ibid., 7). The term *injŏng* refers to the type of ritual offerings that are based on the idea of reciprocity (ibid., 8). In other contexts, the term *injŏng* can also mean “money for the dead to travel to the other world” (Park 2001, 298). *Injŏng* strengthens the moral obligation that exists between the shamans, the clients and the gods (Yun 2019, 8). In his work *The Gift*, the anthropologist Marcel Mauss discusses the practice of ritual exchange in Polynesia and Melanesia, among others, and has found that this moral obligation to one another is a significant part of the ritual exchange as it strengthens the belief in reciprocity as well as the spiritual bond between two individuals or two groups of people (Mauss 1966, 11). The importance and distinction of *injŏng* in shamanic ritual indicates it is an important value in Korean shamanism.

The belief in reciprocity in shamanic ritual is thus made explicit through the word *injŏng*. *Injŏng* distinguishes itself from ceremonial goods or *chemul* which refers to all kinds of offerings for the gods, such as food, drinks, clothing and money. Neither can *injŏng* be compared with gifts (*sŏnmul*) or bribes (*noemul*) within the context of ritual. The distinction is produced because there are all sorts of feelings and ideas attached to *injŏng* that makes it a unique feature of shamanic ritual. For

instance, human feelings are attached to *injŏng*, such as compassion, kindness and, most importantly, empathy. *Injŏng* therefore also refers to the moral quality of relations with the gods that soften the harsh righteousness of the gods and make them less strict because they are moved by the ritual sponsors' sincerity (*chŏngsŏng*) and the shamans' requests. The people who lack *injŏng* are those who are considered inhumane, cruel and heartless and in the shamanic tradition it is believed that the gods mirror the feelings of humans. *Injŏng* therefore underlines the similarities between the actors, contexts and motivations in both worlds (Yun 2019, 8-9).

In contemporary times, the idea of *injŏng* has increasingly been used for the purpose of financial gain. The economic conditions in South Korea have made shamans more directly concerned with money as a financial asset, and the shamans have become more direct in telling their clients in rituals that honoring the gods will grant them material success (Kendall 2009, 131). Because of the moral obligation owed to the gods and vice versa, which is rendered explicit in the saying "*injŏng* is also reciprocal" (*injŏng to p'umasi ra*), it is strategically inserted into the shamanic ritual. This is because the offerings made during rituals can have the qualities of both bribery and gift-exchange between humans, however, under the guise of *injŏng* they are not referred to as such (Yun 2019, 9). Just as the clients hope to receive something from the ritual, the shamans also wish to receive their imbursement. Shamans often decide on a set amount of money that needs to be paid for holding a *kut* (Yun 2019, 3). Many ethnographers have noted the greediness of some shamans who request large amounts of money (Kendall 2009; Kim Seong-nae 2002; and Jun Hwan Park 2012). During the *kut* the ritual fee is paid in food and drink offerings and cash, as well as surrogate paper money to satisfy the gods' needs. In *chaesu kut* in particular, a ritual that is held for good fortune, greedy gods will ask for cash while they promise wealth in return (Kendall 2009, 135-141).

The frequent use of money and other goods of financial value as *injŏng* raises the question of how *injŏng* differs from regular forms of transaction. Since the belief in reciprocity is based on the idea of being in a favorable accord with the gods, the value of *injŏng* is not only about giving and receiving, but also about maintaining a relationship with the gods. For instance, during a ritual the cash and food offerings of the clients become infused with ritual meaning when the shaman transforms and personalizes the offerings upon presenting them to the gods (Yun 2019, 7). Even the shamans sponsor *sin kut* (ritual for the gods) to nurture their relationships with the gods and to maintain the quality of those relationships (Kim Hogarth 2009, 245-247). According to Dumont, a characteristic of values is reversal. Reversal indicates the importance of a value based on a distinction in levels or contexts (Dumont 2013, 301-302). When money or food is offered, it is only in the context of a ritual with the help of a shaman that the offering becomes sacred and may come to represent the relation a client has with the gods. Outside the context of a ritual, the offerings do not hold the value of

injŏng and can become mere forms of transactions. In the context of ritual the offerings hold the value of *injŏng* while their economic value is ignored, while outside of the context of ritual the offerings regain their economic value that stands in contrast with the value of *injŏng* that opposes bribery and gift-exchange. This is what Dumont calls reversal of a value.

As previously mentioned, the people who have *injŏng* are seen as compassionate and kind while those who lack *injŏng* are considered inhumane, cruel and heartless, which demonstrates that *injŏng* is a concept that is very emotionally laden. The emotional response to *injŏng* is therefore another indicator that it is an important key symbol within shamanism, according to Ortner (Ortner 1973, 1339). Furthermore, the economic investment and time spent on *injŏng*, as well as the great ceremonial care, which Ortner describes as involving a large degree of cultural elaboration, is another indication that *injŏng* is an important key symbol in Korean shamanism (ibid., 1339) and therefore also points to an important idea or value (Berger Forthcoming).

Kongdongch'e (collective body)

The *mudang* is the leading character in the ritual, but they seldomly conduct rituals alone. They are joined by a client, a family or even an entire village, depending on the type of ritual that is being performed. Often, multiple shamans participate in a ritual. As previously stated, it is the purpose of the *mudang* to invoke the spirits and make the needs and wishes of the gods known. In this way they serve as an intermediary between the clients and the gods. The purpose of the *mudang* is therefore to engage the spirits on behalf of the community (Kendall 2009, xx). This community can be as small as a client and their family and as large as the populace of the Korean Peninsula. The community also involves the shamanic pantheon, which consists of many gods and ancestors.

In Korean, the idea of “*communitas*,” a term employed by anthropologist Victor Turner that denotes an intense feeling of social togetherness and belonging often in connection to ritual (Turner 2002, 360), is conveyed in the word *kongdongch'e*, which translates to “the collective body” (Kendall 2009, 22). This collective body refers to the group of people who join village rituals and dance together for the purpose of the ritual. Participation in rituals is extremely important in shamanism because it enhances the relationship between the gods and the people, which is important for establishing *kongdongch'e*. *Kongdongch'e* is important, because it is the collective assembling of family, gods and ancestors, who perform and experience their collective story together that creates a successful ritual (Kendall 2009, 93).

A village ritual can be held at different times of the year. One such ritual is the ritual for the new year. The ritual is held for the providence of the entire village community during the cycle of the

year. Kendall argues that the new year ritual is a ritual in which household shamanism and the extended kin group ideology of Confucianism come together and in which harmony between the residents of the same village is demanded (Küster 2010, 42-43). One can refer to a stable value conflict, as described by Joel Robbins, in this case between shamanic values and Confucian values (Robbins 2007, 296), since it is a moral choice to conduct a ritual for the betterment of the village. The purpose of the ritual is to make the village gods and spirits merciful. In doing so, the village community acts as one unit. In the ritual, the village has one or two sacred trees that are venerated as the abodes of gods and spirits. The tree is the center of the village ritual and as such is the symbol of it (Küster 2010, 42-43). Ortner explains that a summarizing symbol is a symbol that represents an idea or value and demonstrates what an idea or value means to a group of people (Ortner 1973, 1339-1340). The tree can thus be viewed as a summarizing symbol which represents the value of *kondongch'e*.

A system of values

The previous sections have established that *sinbyöng*, *han*, *malmun*, *injöng* and *kongdongch'e* are important values in shamanism. The question remains of how these values intersect with one another and how they define the relationships between the participants in shamanism.

The main participants in shamanism are generally three groups: first, the gods, spirits and ancestors; second, the shamans; and third, the clients. Each group has needs and wishes that are portrayed through the different values described above. Through the different values a constant cycle of misfortune and fortune is represented. This can be demonstrated with the example of an ancestor who has met an untimely death, thereby, carrying *han* with them into the spirit world and giving *han* to their relative as a result. The relative of this ancestor experiences hardships because of this *han*. Owing to their misfortune they contact a shaman to find a resolution for their *han*. The shaman, who is a master of *han*, can mediate between the client and the ancestor because they have experienced *sinbyöng*, a spiritual illness that represents a calling to become a shaman and indicates a special relationship with the spirits. The shaman asks the client for a sum of money and other offerings as a sign of *injöng* towards the shaman as well as to the gods, spirits and ancestors. Through *malmun* and *kongsu* the shaman conveys messages from the ancestor to the client and describes their needs and wishes. The client makes offerings during the ritual to appease their ancestor, thereby, displaying *injöng* towards their ancestor. The ancestor is able to dispose of their *han* through the ritual with the assistance of the shaman and in effect also rids the relative of their *han*. This shows the similar contexts and motivations that exist in the spirit world and this world. Thus, the ancestor gives the

relative *injŏng* in return by creating a prosperous situation for them through the shaman, that is, becoming wealthier or, becoming more fertile, etc. The reciprocal relationship that exists between the ancestor, the shaman and the client is a demonstration of *kongdongch'e*, which is the community that exists between this world and the spirit world as they participate together in rituals and keep the cycle of misfortune and fortune intact.

What determines the relationships between the spirits, the shamans and the clientele is that they all have to deal with misfortune. Their relationships arise from seeking help to deal with misfortune and offering help in this regard. The shaman therefore works in “the field of misfortune” (Kim 2003, 15), a term coined by Kim Chongho. He explains that when people deal with issues such as illness in shamanic ritual, the illness is transformed into misfortune and is explained as having misfortune as its root cause (Kim 2003, 18-19).

When it comes to misfortune, *han* seems to play a central role. Kang Won Don describes it as such:

From a shamanistic perspective illness is aroused by the spirit of the dead who is not at all free from his or her han or by the spirit of the ancestor who is not properly treated. In order to cure the illness, shamans must identify the han of the dead and release him or her from the han; shamans must suggest the descendants the way to appease the spirit of their ancestor. (...) The shaman opens a channel for communication among the concerned persons and tries to establish peace and reconciliation among them (Kang 2018, 16).

The resentment and anger that *han* is born out of can be inherited from ancestors and can have an effect on creating misfortune for both ancestors and descendants. Shamanism revolves around releasing the *han* of both yourself and others through a belief in spiritual powers that can be manipulated by shamans. Misfortune is therefore the link between all parties (i.e., the gods, spirits, ancestors, descendants and shamans) involved in shamanic ritual and determines their relationships.

Figure 1 shows the relationships and transactions between the gods, spirits and ancestors; shamans; and clients and demonstrates the system of values as explained in the previous example.

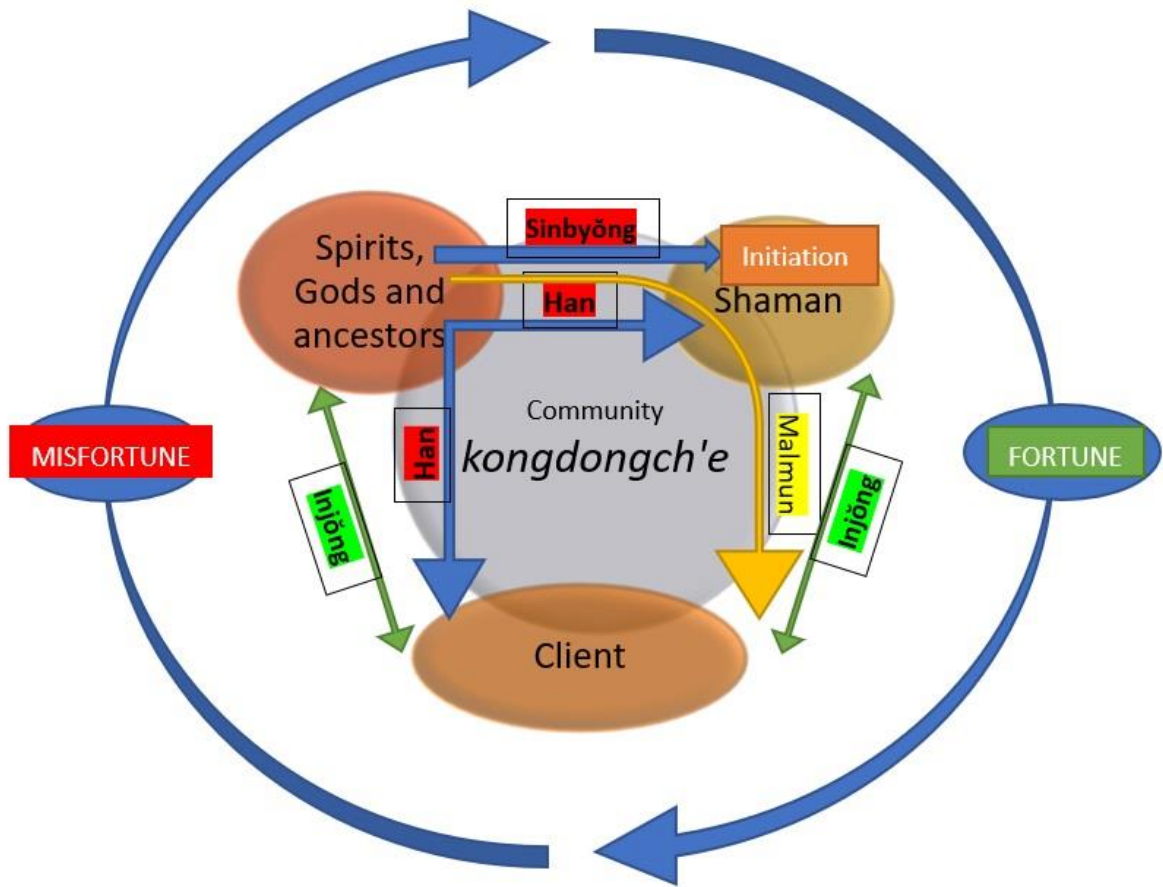


Figure 1: system of shamanic values

In determining the shamanic values in this chapter, I have focused primarily on the values that demonstrate the shamanic cosmology and show the relationships between the different participants in shamanic ritual. In the next section, I examine how these shamanic values conflict with other values in contemporary South Korea.

How shamanic values conflict with other values in contemporary South Korea

In the previous section, I established that the shamanic values that are of importance in contemporary South Korea are the values of *sinbyŏng*, *han*, *malmun*, *injŏng* and *kongdongch'e*. In this section, I discuss how these shamanic values conflict with other Korean values and how this conflict appears today.

I have chosen to examine values that are part of three traditions that have historically had a major impact on Korean culture. These traditions are Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity. Many other traditions in Korea have influenced Korean culture, but these three traditions along with shamanism have been most important in the formation of Korean culture as it exists in South Korean contemporary society today. Buddhism was the official state religion during the Koryŏ period (918-1392) and heavily influenced Korean culture for almost 400 years. It survives as a tradition in contemporary society. Although not considered a religion by many in contemporary South Korea, Confucianism has had a large influence on Korean culture in the form of Neo-Confucianism, a form of Confucianism that was the state religion during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910). At the end of the 18th century, Catholicism arrived in Korea and Protestantism followed in the late 19th century. The influence of Christian religions on Korean culture is apparent through the many churches and followers that exist in South Korea today. The value systems of these three traditions serve as reference points to answer the sub-question of how shamanic values conflict with other values in contemporary South Korea.

Buddhism

Buddhism was introduced in Korea during the Three Kingdoms era (57 BC to 668 AD). It quickly gained popularity among the population and became the state religion in the Koryŏ era (918-1392 AD). Upon initial contact with Buddhism, shamanism expanded its pantheon and practices by accepting the gods and ceremonies of Buddhism (Cho 1998, 50). To this day, many Buddhist gods can still be found in the shamanic pantheon. Out of all the religions with which shamanism has come into contact, Buddhism has been the most significant in terms of borrowing elements of shamanism and vice versa. Following their initial encounter, due to the accepting natures of the both religions, shamanism and Buddhism coexisted in a peaceful manner during the Koryŏ period in which Buddhism experienced its peak.

One of the similarities between shamanism and Buddhism is the belief that suffering and illness are part of life and cannot be avoided. However, they both address this fact differently. Buddhism views suffering as an inherent aspect of life. This uncomfortable and unpleasant aspect of life is known as

dukkha in Buddhism (Harvey 2001, 75-77). *Dukkha* refers to the painful and traumatic cycle of rebirth, re-aging, re-sickness and re-death but also to mental pain and a desire to manipulate the world, people and situations to fulfil our needs although being unable to do so. *Dukkha* leaves us dissatisfied and frustrated. Even in moments of happiness suffering is inevitable since everything is subject to change. Consequently, *dukkha* demonstrates the first noble truth of the Four Noble Truths, the first teaching of the Buddha, which is that suffering is a permanent fact in this world (ibid.,75-77). However, this philosophy is unlike that of shamanism, in which suffering is not inherent to life but a result of unfortunate circumstances and the relationships one has with the gods and ancestors. Furthermore, shamanism emphasizes a life of material wealth and good health that is attainable in this world. Conversely, Buddhism seeks a release from suffering by attaining liberation from this world and its material resources.

Shamanism also offers resolutions to the problem of suffering by contacting the spirit world through rituals with the help of the shaman, while Buddhism believes ending suffering is achieved through following the so-called eight-fold path. The eight-fold path demonstrates the steps one must take to cease the cycle of suffering and gain *arahatship* or Buddhahood. By doing so, one can find liberation from suffering and experience *nirvana*, a timeless state beyond suffering and change, and achieve perfect enlightenment (Harvey 2001, 65). Liberation from suffering is the highest goal in Buddhism and can be considered the highest value within Buddhism. Again, the key difference between shamanism and Buddhism in this case is that shamanism seeks a this-world solution while Buddhism believes the solution does not lie in this world.

Correspondingly, in Buddhism any material possessions or earthly desires stand in the way of attaining enlightenment. The idea of *Sila* in Buddhism is translated by some scholars as to mean ethical conduct. It teaches the practice of self-restraint, compassion, killing no living things and abstaining from alcohol, among other things, to produce positive *karma* (good or bad actions that will determine rebirth) and attain liberation (Lusthaus 2014, 110-111). This idea contrasts with the shamanic value of *injöng*, which is related to the belief of being in favour with the gods through material goods and cash offerings for which clients expect something in return. Often clients will offer large amounts of appetizing food in shamanic rituals as well as pig heads and other meats. The gods may also request alcohol, which the shaman will then consume to excess. Furthermore, shamans believe that suffering can be ended through ritualistic offerings in which the accumulated *han* is relieved. The ritual is inherently of an acquisitive nature since the gods ask for offerings in order to be satisfied. The self-restraint Buddhists practice is virtually absent in a shamanic ritual.

Confucianism

During the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1897) when Confucianism was the state religion in Korea, shamans were among those who were pushed to the edges of society. In a land reform proposal written by scholar Yu Hyungwon (1622-1673) following the Imjin war and the beginning of reconstruction (Lee and De Bary 1997, 71), in which plots of land were to be divided among citizens, it was mentioned that shamans were not to be granted land. Only if they abandoned their practices and become commoners were they able to receive land. Through historical accounts such as these, it becomes evident that shamans have been disliked and shunned throughout history by Confucians (Lee and De Bary 1997, 60). In this section, I discuss how Confucian values have conflicted with shamanic values in Korea.

Confucianism and shamanism are two vastly different traditions; the former is based on a written tradition and the latter on an oral tradition. Confucianism has generally been perceived as a philosophical tradition with patriarchal ideas, whereas shamanism deals with a belief in spirit possession and is practiced by primarily women and people from lower classes (Kendall 1987, 23-38). However, there are also similarities between Confucianism and shamanism. One strong similarity between Confucianism and shamanism is their strong references to family relations known as *xiao* or filial piety. Confucianism states that one must honor and obey one's parents. This obligation extends past the grave and, similarly to shamanism, Confucianism identifies rites and offerings for ancestors (Nivison 1999, 749). Rites and rituals in Confucianism are known as *li*, which are comprised of simple rituals such as bowing and other daily practices. Those who carefully observe these ritual and sacrificial duties and are figures of authority (king, lord, head of the family) are considered to have *de*. *De* can roughly be translated as virtue and can also be interpreted as gratitude. This gratitude exists as a result of the spirits being grateful for attention and therefore allowing the person observing the rituals and duties to prosper. David Nivison describes it as: "if I do something for you that causes you to feel grateful and compelled to respond favorably, I 'have *de* from' (i.e., in relation to) you" (Ibid., 749). Recognizing the reciprocity factor, *de* can be compared to the shamanic value of *injŏng*, but there is a difference in attitude. *Injŏng* is based on giving freely, while *de* is acquired through self-cultivation and being a good student (Ibid., 750).

Another important value in Confucianism is the concept of *ren*, which literally means person or human in Chinese (Peimin 2017, 33), but is interpreted as benevolence or goodness and is related to one's morality. In the tradition of Confucianism *ren* also seems to refer to an individual's status and whether they have been born into a good family. However, Confucius refers to *ren* not as the exterior aspect of an individual but rather the interior virtue of their character. In the Analects of Confucius, the distinction is made between men who have clever words and an attractive appearance and "The

gentleman (*junzi*, literally "lord's son") who desire to be cautious in speech but earnest in action" (Analects 4/24; Nivison 1999, 752). *Ren* therefore determines the intellectual aspect as well as the class of a person. This definition has resulted in a classist and elitist culture within Confucianism. This sense of elitism was also observed in Korea in the way in which the Confucians treated shamanic rituals. The male literati were generally disturbed by shamanic rituals that were based on an oral tradition, involved wild dancing and music and were performed and utilized primarily by women. Consequently, they distinguished themselves by conducting more sober and structured Confucian rituals based on written texts (Kendall 1987, 23-38). The male literati would not allow themselves to be involved in shamanic rituals, but they tolerated them for the rest of the population. This resulted in the bifurcation of rituals, which preserved the class distinctions and the patriarchy (Yun 2019, 47).

What can be observed through Confucian values such as *xiao*, *de* and *ren* is that there is a strong focus on political and social (family) relationships. By acquiring a good moral compass that is cultivated through being a good student and having good qualities, these relationships can be fostered. The Confucian focus is therefore not initially on this world but rather the social world (Nivison 1999, 752), which contrasts with the shamanic worldview that is committed to this world and its appetites first and foremost.

Christianity

The West entered Korea for the first time in the form of Christianity. The Catholics arrived in the country in the 18th century and a century later the Protestants sent missionaries to Korea. Promoting their own religion, they tried to convince the Koreans to abandon religious practices that contradicted Christian practices and ideas. Catholics referred to shamans as devil-worshippers, but at the same time they viewed shamans as having "no religion" and therefore did not consider them to pose a threat (Oak 2010, 95-104).

Protestants were considerably more vocal in their resentment of shamanism and urged for its elimination (Oak 2010, 104). They maintained that the belief in spirits by shamans was a form of polytheism, which inherently contradicted the central idea and value of monotheism in Christianity. Although there was a similarity with regard to the spirits present in the New Testament, there was a fear that the spirits worshipped in shamanism were demons. This similarity caused conflict for Korean missionaries, as they could not deny the similarity between the two concepts but did not want to be regarded as heretics by their peers (Kim 2017, 66). The conflict between shamanic values and Protestant and evangelical values is discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

In this chapter, I have discussed the shamanic values that are prevalent in contemporary Korean shamanism. I noted that the values *sinbyŏng*, *han*, *malmun*, *injŏng* and *kongdongch'e* are values of importance in the practice of shamanism today. There are many other shamanic values, but I have chosen to investigate those values that are prevalent in contemporary shamanism and do not overlap with other Korean values outside the practice of shamanism to a large extent. Furthermore, I examined how shamanic values conflict with other Korean values, namely those relating to the traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity in Korea. In the next chapter, I consider the contexts of South Korean Protestant and evangelical groups in which shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon despite stigmatization.

Chapter 2: Protestantism and evangelical groups and shamanism

This chapter examines the large number of Protestant and evangelical groups involved with shamanism in South Korea. I analyze the contexts in which shamanic values are being expressed by Protestant and evangelical groups and how they elaborate on those values.

Yoido Full Gospel Church

The Yoido Full Gospel Church is a megachurch situated in Seoul. The Pentecostal church is known for its large congregation, at its height claiming to have more than 800.000 members. One of the important features of the theology of Yonggi Cho, founder of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, are his blessings. Based on III John 1:2: “Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health; I know that it is well with your soul”, Cho formulated the threefold blessings of God (Yoo 1986, 74), which he interpreted as follows:

- 1) “All may go well with you” means business or material prosperity
- 2) “That you may be in health” means good health or longevity
- 3) “Well with your soul” means protection from evil spirits (ibid., 74)

These blessings can be seen as an expression of the shamanic value of *injŏng*. *Injŏng* is a type of ritual offering to the gods that promises bounty in return from the gods. In the case of Yonggi Cho’s blessings, in return for the congregants their believe in God they receive blessings. The power of *injŏng* became attractive for Protestant churches in the 20th century when health and wealth were the primary concerns of people after the Korean war. Pentecostal churches in particular reflected a shamanistic influence that consisted of an expectation of immediate reward or retribution for one’s deeds (Lee, Ch’oe and De Bary 2000, 378). The importance and elaborate expression of the value of *injŏng* through the three fold blessing demonstrates that it has a high ranking as a value. Dumont calls this encompassment of a value, in which an idea that grows in importance begins to encompass its contrary (Dumont 2013, 301). The belief in God itself is encompassed in the idea of receiving something in return for the belief in God.

Throughout the 20th century, this idea of material wealth and prosperity and the value of *injŏng* was incorporated into the theology of many churches. Andrew Eungi Kim emphasizes the shamanic influence on Korean churches:

In addition to the role of the Church as a major force of modernization, it is Christianity's affinity or convergence with the central religious values of Koreans, particularly those of Shamanism, that has ensured the rise of the imported faith to social prominence in South

Korea. In particular, Christianity has adopted shamanic emphasis on the fulfillment of material wishes through prayers to or communication with spirits as a belief of its own (Kim 2000, 115).

In the 1980s, when the basic concerns of people had been satisfied and the economy of South Korea began to improve, a significant controversy emerged when some theologians accused Yonggi Cho's Full Gospel theology of syncretizing shamanism with Christianity. The problem the theologians had with Cho was that he preached that the spiritual world holds the power over the material (Kim 2017, 73), an idea reminiscent of the relationship between the shaman and the gods in shamanic ritual. The shamanic influences on Cho's church were expounded in two main sources: David Kwang-Sun Suh and the Christian Academy, a leading forum of Minjung theology, and the doctoral dissertation of Boo-Woong Yoo (Yoo 1986; Kim 2017, 59-60). In his dissertation, Yoo explains the influence that shamanism has had on Protestantism in Korea.

Yoo observed that the people who were converted to Protestantism upon its arrival in Korea were predominantly working class people and women, who were the social groups that had been most familiar with shamanism. He refers to them as "a credulous folk," (Yoo 1986, 71) an attitude which, according to him, has allowed shamanism to remain popular even in modern times. Furthermore, he considers shamanism to be a fluid religion because it lacks a systematic doctrine, allowing it to blend easily with other religions. Yoo argues that this fluidity has resulted in shamanism blending with Protestantism. Yoo even states that all Korean Protestant churches have been influenced by shamanism to a greater or lesser extent, despite their critical attitude towards shamanism. Pentecostal churches in particular have a similar worldview and structure to shamanism according to Yoo. Yoo does not elaborate on what parts of the shamanic worldview Pentecostal churches are influenced by, but he does present some shamanistic ideas in his dissertation that contextualize the shamanic worldview.

Yoo argues that the influence shamanism has had on Protestantism is due to a few shamanic characteristics and ideas that have allowed people to better understand Christian concepts. He names a few of these ideas: the idea that all human beings, animals and inanimate beings have a soul or spirit; the concept of *Hananim* or the almighty God in heaven; the idea of three worlds in which spirits can travel; and a belief in the immortality of the spirit or soul. These ideas are translated into the values of *sinbyŏng*, *malmun* and *injŏng*, which are based on a relationship with the spirits. More importantly, however, Yoo argues that the shamanistic characteristics of fatalism, moral indifference, self-centered interest, escapism, and also fanaticism in ceremonial rites have been used to shape and

give expression to Christianity in Korea. These characteristics refer to the focus on this-worldliness in the shamanic worldview.

Interestingly, the example Yoo provides of shamanistic influence in Protestantism is that of Yonggi Cho's Full Gospel Church. He provides three arguments for this example. Firstly, Yoo argues that this church has the same premise as shamanism: "Why do the Korean working class and particularly women go to the shaman? Because they need health, wealth, fertility and success in their life ventures. Reverend Cho's preaching meets those needs exactly." Secondly, the threefold blessings of God which the Full Gospel Church provides address the same shamanistic ideas and beliefs of material prosperity, longevity and health and protection from evil spirits. Thirdly, the church's leader performs exorcisms, which is also a common practice in shamanism. From a Christian point of view, shamanism has traditionally been associated with managing and exorcizing evil spirits.

Yoo explains that he can perceive little difference between Yonggi Cho and a shaman: "His role in Sunday morning worship looks exactly like that of a shaman or *mudang*. The only difference is that a shaman performs his wonders in the name of spirits while Reverend Cho exorcises evil spirits and heals the sick in the name of Jesus" (Yoo 1986, 70-74). Considering Reverend Cho presents as a charismatic leader, Sin Hong Kim asserts that Christian blessings work similarly to the ritual exchange in shamanism or *injŏng*:

Pastors perform a leadership function similar to that of the shaman and, like shamans, are given preference according to their spiritual abilities (healing, prophecy, etc). Pastors who are perceived to be particularly powerful attract increasingly large congregations. In an attempt to secure spiritual and material blessings many church members seek to establish a connection with their pastor. Pastors are invited to meals and presented with gifts or money by members of their congregations, and to a large extent are treated as though they were shamans (Kim 1993, 81).

One can recognize characteristics of a shamanic *kut* with the value of *injŏng* in the mediating role of the pastor as he secures the blessings for the congregants, just like the shaman secures wealth and health for their clients by playing a mediatory role. Furthermore, the 'payment' by the congregants in the form of food, gifts or money is nearly indistinguishable from the payment given to the shaman during a *kut*. According to Ortner, to recognize a key symbol in a culture the idea has to be seen as important by people, people are positively or negatively aroused by it, there is cultural elaboration of the idea and it seems to come up in many different occasions (Ortner 1973, 1339-1340). In the case of *injŏng* as portrayed by the blessings in the Yoido Full Gospel Church, the congregants are positively

aroused by the blessings and will attend Sunday worship occasionally as well as give donations to secure these blessings. This is an indication that *injŏng* is a key symbol.

In the next section another church with a charismatic leader is discussed, namely the Unification Church under the leadership of Sun Myung Moon.

The Unification Church

The Unification Church that was founded by Reverend Sun Myung Moon in 1953 has been accused of including shamanic elements both nationally and internationally (Kim and Kim 2015, 206; Barker 2018, 24). These allegations are not implausible, since the church was partly based on the teachings of the Bible, while also including a new dimension that is not found in Christianity but rather in indigenous religions such as shamanism (Kim and Kim 2015, 206).

Similar to Korean shamanism, The Unification Church focuses on a 'this-worldly' goal, centered on the coming of a messiah of Korean origin who will unify and save the world (Chryssides 1991, 79, 88).

In the 1970s, members of the church spoke of the presence of a certain Lee Baek-Im, who was better known as Nonsan Halmoni (a grandmother who came from the town of Nonsan). She was a friend of Sun Myung Moon and joined the Unification Church as an authority on spiritual matters. She helped the members of the Unification Church solve their ancestral problems. For this purpose, she performed *kut* with the characteristics of a shamanic ritual, exemplified in the following text by Unification Church member Myung-Hui Kim:

In 1973, at a resort house at Cheongpyeong in Kyeonggi-do, church leader Moon held an ancestor exorcism rite (kut) with the 36 couples witnessing team members at the end of their 3-year witnessing course [which Moon had sent them to do] in 1970. At that time, they performed a shaman ceremony bow (on their knees) and carried out an exorcism (kut) under the direction of 'grandmother' Baek-im Lee of Nonsan (Nonsan Halmoni), offering sacrificial rites to heaven with unstrained rice wine (makkolli), a pig's head, rice cakes, and so on, on an ancestor memorial offering table (Kim N.d.).

The similarity to a shamanic ritual is not coincidental. Not only is it obvious that a *kut* is being performed by Nonsan Halmoni, but an offering table with goods for the ancestors is also present. The shaman ceremonial bow that is mentioned may be a reference to the repetitive bowing of villagers during a communal ritual in an attempt to please the gods and be granted good fortune (Kim 1992, 45) or the ritual bowing in front of the altar on which images and paintings of shaman gods are located and offerings are displayed (Ch'oe 1989, 220). From the excerpt, we can infer that Nonsan

Halmoni is a performer of rituals and a mediator between people and ancestors, which are common characteristics of a *mudang*. This becomes even clearer in the following excerpt from “The Way of the Spiritual Leader Part 2” written by Reverend Sun Myung Moon himself:

The person that I want to introduce to you is Grandmother Nonsan. You have to understand that this grandmother has suffered tremendously. Why did I raise her up? Now is the time when the physical world and the spiritual world are to come together and intersect. We are entering such a time (Moon 1998, 249-250).

In this excerpt, there are several things that can be interpreted as references to shamanic practice and beliefs. First, Moon explains that Nonsan Halmoni has suffered tremendously in her life. In the context of shamanism, her immense suffering can be interpreted as a reference to the spiritual illness every *mudang* experiences before becoming a *mudang* known as *sinbyŏng*. Given her mediating role between people and ancestors and her ability to host a *kut*, this appears to be further evidence that Nonsan Halmoni was a *mudang*.

In the following excerpt more shamanic elements are highlighted by reverend Moon:

The thing about resolving the wishes of the ancestors and so forth, when you observe them all is like some noisy shamanistic ritual. I know that very well. I understand very well that aspect. The spirit world has to go through such a process. Only after it is crossed over several times... In the first hour Satan enters and in the second hour good ancestors come in. One hour is taken up by the evil spirits and another hour by the good spirits. You have to separate these. You have to ward off evil spirits with evil spirits” (Moon 1998, 249-250).

In this second excerpt, Moon talks about the concept of the Liberation of the Ancestors. In the Unification Church this is a practice in which ancestors are “liberated” and “blessed” from hereditary, communal and individual sin (HJ Heaven and Earth Cheonbo Training Center, n.d.). In the ceremony, the spirits of the ancestors are invited to travel between the two worlds. In shamanism it is believed that people can travel between the physical and spiritual worlds since there is a belief in a physical body that has a spiritual essence (Owens 1975, 58-60). Moon mentions how the Ancestor Liberation ceremony has superstitious (shamanic) aspects and can feel shamanistic. Those aspects refer most likely to *kut*, in which the Ancestor Liberation ceremony may be an appropriation of the ancestor *kut* that exists in Korean shamanism. The comparison to the ancestor *kut* in shamanism becomes clear in the following procedure, “During collateral liberation, aside from liberating friends or even celebrities who have passed away, one can liberate spirits that are inside people and are causing problems” (HJ Heaven and Earth Cheonbo Training Center, n.d.). In shamanism this is known as *han* and is dealt

with by performing *kut* and exorcizing an individual who is possessed by a malignant spirit. The hereditary sin that is referenced in the Liberation of the Ancestors has a further likeness to *han*, since *han* is also something that can be inherited from your ancestors and released through *kut*. Essentially, in the excerpt Sun Myung Moon explains that the shamanistic features, even though uncomfortable at first, may be embraced and implemented by the members of the church through the Ancestor Liberation ceremony. Here we could speak of a stable value conflict as explained by Robbins, in which a moral choice allows for stable value conflicts in a culture (Robbins 2007, 300). In the case of the Ancestor Liberation ceremony, Moon implies that shamanic values such as *han* can be embraced while at the same time Christian values are upheld. It also means however that *han* and the expression of *han* throughout the Ancestor Liberation ceremony is hierarchically ranked higher than any other Christian value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the contexts in which shamanic values are expressed by the Protestant and evangelical groups originating from South Korea. I chose to investigate two main churches that have contexts in which shamanic values are expressed, namely the Yoido Full Gospel Church and The Unification Church. Following accusations of syncretism between Protestant churches like the Yoido Full Gospel Church and shamanism, Boo-Woong Yoo wrote a dissertation in which he described how the blessings of Cho are to be interpreted, which is an expression of the shamanic value of *injŏng*. In the Unification Church, the presence of Nonsan Halmoni who performs *kut* shows an affinity with the practice of shamanism by the members of the church. Moon highlights her prolonged suffering during her life, a reference to the value of *sinbyŏng*. Sun Myung Moon even states the shamanistic nature of the Ancestor Liberation Ceremony of the Unification Church in which releasing sin from their ancestors is a demonstration of the value *han*. Although there is an explicit influence of shamanism present in both the Yoido Full Gospel Church and the Unification Church, it could still be debated whether this implies that these churches give expression to shamanic values or that they have Christian values that are historically embedded in Korean indigenous culture.

In the next chapter, I examine the commodification of shamanism by South Koreans and the contexts in which shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon.

Chapter 3: The South Korean commodification of shamanism

In this chapter, I investigate the second example of a context in which shamanic values are at play, which is the South Korean commodification of shamanism. I examine the ways in which shamanic values are expressed and elaborated upon while simultaneously remaining stigmatized within this context.

haenyŏ ch'ukche

The context described here concerns the setting of a local festival on Cheju Island during the 2002 World Cup. In 2002, South Korea was the host country for the international soccer tournament that is held every four years and for this reason the country held nationwide celebrations. Cheju Island regarded the event as an opportunity to draw global attention to the island and increase its level of tourism. For this purpose, there were several central and provincial governments who sponsored festivals on the island that commodified shamanism in some way. Shamanism was used to capture the attention of the global audience and draw more people to the island to increase tourism. This led to a commercialized version of the shamanic rituals (Yun 2006, 7).

When the festival staff members and policymakers decided on a theme for the festival held on Cheju Island during the 2002 World Cup, they decided to name the festival in honor of the *haenyŏ*, namely *haenyŏ ch'ukche* (*haenyŏ* festival) with support from the local elites (ibid., 11). The *haenyŏ*, or their indigenous Cheju name *chamnyŏ*, are women who dive in the ocean to collect marine products such as sea cucumbers, shells and seaweed, and they are native to Cheju Island. The origins of the *haenyŏ* are linked to a myth surrounding the figure of Grandmother Sŏlmundae, a gigantic goddess who is believed to have created the island and the ocean with all its marine life. The *haenyŏ* learned to live by collecting the fruit of the sea, resulting in Cheju becoming the island of the *haenyŏ*. The practice of the *haenyŏ* has declined heavily since the 1970s because the women are reluctant to pass their trade on to their descendants. The *haenyŏ* are seen as icons of the island as they represent the island's cultural heritage and the strong spirit of Cheju women (ibid., 11).

Since the women's work presents many dangers, shamanic rituals are held to ensure their safety (ibid., 16). One of the organizers of the *haenyŏ ch'ukche*, a local folklorist named Han, specified the shamanic nature of the festival. When organizing the event, he discussed how the *haenyŏ* should be linked to the shamanic rituals in a promotional article:

What would the domestic and foreign tourists who would come to Cheju to see the World Cup games gain? ... The Cheju haenyŏ ch'ukche is haenyŏ's kut, which could faithfully show the marine culture of Cheju through the haenyŏ's life and death, and the myths that the haenyŏ's cultural imagination created. "The dynamic Korea Festival 2002 – Cheju haenyŏ ch'ukche" was planned with this purpose (ibid., 14).

This direct connection between the *haenyŏ* and the practice of shamanism through the festival shows an appreciation for shamanism and its participants.

By calling the festival *haenyŏ's kut* in the paragraph above, folklorist Han is not just using *kut* as a metaphor. Throughout the festival held on Cheju Island, various rituals were performed by shamans and traditional artists. In the booklet made for the festival, Han described the origin, purpose, features and procedures of each ritual that was going to be performed, placing the practice of shamanism at the forefront of Cheju culture (ibid., 14). The three *kut* that were performed during the festival were *Yŏngdŭng kut*, *Chamsu kut* and *Muhon kut*. *Yŏngdŭng kut* is a communal ritual held traditionally in the second lunar month of every year in honor of the Goddess of the Wind (*Yŏngdŭng*) and to ensure a good sea harvest. *Chamsu kut* is held to ensure the safety of the *haenyŏ* and fishermen and to guarantee an abundant catch. As mentioned previously, the *haenyŏ* both sponsor and help prepare the *Chamsu kut* and *Yŏngdŭng kut*. The *Muhon kut* is held to comfort the souls of the *haenyŏ* or fishermen who have lost their lives at sea, to help their souls release their pent-up grief and to help propel them into "the otherworld" (ibid., 18-19). In the *Muhon kut*, the value of *han* can be recognized, as the *han* of the *haenyŏ* and fishermen is released through the ritual. This expression of the value of *han* is recognized by Dumont through the segmentation of the value, in which the same value is portrayed through a series of different expressions. This is recognized in the elaborate care for the deceased *haenyŏ* and fishermen by comforting them, helping them and remembering them, all in an effort to release them from their *han*.

All three rituals were performed during the World Cup games, which were unusual times for the rituals to be held. The *Chamsu kut* and *Yŏngdŭng kut* are normally held at different times of the year and are traditionally planned by the *haenyŏ*, and the *Muhon kut* is only held when someone dies at sea. During the festival, the *kut* were held to showcase the traditional culture of the island for the purpose of entertaining the tourists (ibid., 20). The shamans, who are known as *simbang* on Cheju Island, performed the rituals on open stages knowing that there would be an audience. The festival organizers hired traditional female dancers for the rituals, who were mostly there as entertainment for the audience and are not traditionally part of a shamanic ritual. Some *haenyŏ* were present at the

rituals as is traditional on Cheju Island during shamanic rituals. However, as a result of the commodification of the shamanic rituals the *haenyŏ* were less interested in participating:

On one occasion, when Simbang Kim tried to deliver messages from the gods to the haenyŏ - a critical part of shamanic rituals, and one to which clients are usually keenly attentive - the addressees were not present. Facing the seats where the haenyŏ were supposed to be sitting, Kim recited: "While I am working hard for the kut, these people go elsewhere and eat something." An assistant simbang excused the haenyŏ, saying, "They are making paper money." But because his interlocutors were missing, Kim conveyed the gods' message in just one sentence - "I deliver the message that all of the Dragon Kings are happy with [your offering this ritual]" - before proceeding to the next ritual session (ibid., 21).

In the excerpt one can recognize the act of *kongsu* or inspired speech as Simbang Kim delivers messages from the gods to the *haenyŏ*. Furthermore, *injŏng* is recognized in the offering of paper money, a common offering with symbolic value in shamanic ritual to appease the gods and the Dragon Kings for which the ritual is held.

During one of the rituals, namely the *Yŏngdŭng kut*, one of the shamans managed to recontextualize the ritual for the current circumstances of the World Cup. Although the ritual is traditionally held in honor of the *haenyŏ*, public performer Kang Min'gu managed to include prayers for the national team in one of the songs originally intended for the gods, "*Let the national [soccer] team of our country be among the best sixteen teams*" (ibid., 23).

By doing so, Kang Min'gu pleaded with the gods to ensure success for the national team. This represents the shamanic value of *injŏng*, in which the shamans bargain with the gods with a guaranteed reciprocity. Similarly, at the *Muhon kut* the shaman Shin prayed for the World Cup players and their safe return as well as for the welfare of the country:

After our Korea

Does the 2002 World Cup,

Let our country be well;

The players from all of the countries in the world

Go back to their hometowns safely (ibid., 23).

During this ritual, money was given as an offering to the gods. In this part of the ritual, the value of *injŏng* can also be recognized, as offerings were used as a gift to the gods in return for the country's

welfare. They were relying on *injŏng*, of which reciprocity is an inherent part, for the gods to honor their prayers. In both the *Yŏngdŭng kut* and the *Muhon kut*, the shamanic value of *injŏng* was expressed and elaborated upon in song and prayer. This cultural elaboration is an indication of a key symbol in a culture according to Ortner (Ortner 1973, 1339).

Yŏngdŭng kut as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

The following context pertains the UNESCO shamanic ritual *Yŏngdŭng kut* originating from Cheju Island. In 2009 the *Yŏngdŭng kut* gained UNESCO recognition by being added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The process of nominating the ritual involved a folklorist, the shamans of Cheju island, the provincial government and the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA, the state-sanctioned governing body that oversees traditional culture in South Korea) (Yun 2015, 186). The motive of the latter group differed from that of the shamans. This caused friction during the process of making the ritual an intangible cultural heritage. A motivation to add the ritual to the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritages was that the ritual would be seen as important and valuable by other countries, however, an underlying motivation included the economic benefits it would have. The label of UNESCO world heritage is known to help tremendously with boosting tourism (ibid., 186). Although not explicitly mentioned in the application materials, the economic value of the ritual becoming a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage was spoken about openly on the island (ibid., 187).

On March 29 2010, Kyoim Yun describes a performance of the *Yŏngdŭng kut* she attended after it had become a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage. One of the first signs of commodification of the ritual noticed by Yun were the two broadcasting stations present, namely the two popular television stations KBS and MBC. The shamans were aware of their presence and took care of their appearance, knowing they would be broadcasted on television. An association that advocates for the preservation of the *Yŏngdŭng kut* handed out booklets to tourists in different languages explaining the ritual (Yun 2019, 149). The presentation of *Yŏngdŭng kut* was therefore rather similar to that of a theater performance instead of a shamanic ritual, demonstrating the commodification of a shamanic ritual.

In 2010 *Yŏngdŭng kut* was performed at the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts in Seoul. The resemblance to a theater performance is recognized once more as the island's *kut* is performed in a nonritual setting with the National Kugak Center as its host. While attending the event, Yun describes the ritual as performed on stage:

As no one in the audience volunteered to come to the stage for an exorcism, the female simbang (shaman) had to rely on one of her own young performers, an expedient I had never seen before. In an effort to help, I went onstage and served as a living prop during the performance of the exorcism. At the finale, the spectators were invited to join the performers on stage for singing and dancing in order to generate a sense of the “lost communitas (kongdongch’e) of a village ritual” (Kendall 2009, 14), but most audience members remained in their seats. (Yun 2019, 152).

During the performance of the ritual the communal aspect of *Yöngdüng kut* is highlighted by engaging with the audience repeatedly and asking them to join on stage. Singing and dancing together is believed to unite humans and gods which demonstrates the importance of *kongdongch’e* (Yun 2015, 45). The excerpt demonstrates that the value of *kongdongch’e* is deemed a vital aspect of the ritual and is therefore given significant attention. However, the setting of the National Kugak Center with a stage and a seated audience appears to have hindered the communal aspect of the ritual to flourish.

The value of *kongdongch’e* seems to have been a motivating factor in nominating the *Yöngdüng kut* as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. However, during the process of nominating *Yöngdüng kut*, shamanism remained stigmatized. This becomes apparent in the lack of involvement of local shamans as described by Yun:

Despite UNESCO’s stated emphasis on community participation, the selection process is not necessarily conducive to promoting the interests of small communities because the nomination is ultimately submitted by nation states, and it even involves top-down governmental intervention. The nomination of the Cheju ritual encompassed a four-pronged effort by a folklorist, the shamans, the Provincial Government, and the Cultural Heritage Administration, the state-sanctioned governing body that oversees traditional culture in South Korea. However, the shamans themselves did not play a leading role. When I visited the office of the Association for the Ch’ilmöri Shrine Yöngdüng Kut Preservation near the shrine in fall 2010, a Mr. Kim, then the office manager and de facto administrator of the association, emphasized that the nomination had little to do with the association itself, whose main members are simbang (shamans) (Yun 2019, 142).

Furthermore, *Yöngdüng kut* was selected by the Cultural Heritage Administration because of its communal aspect and colorful performers. The participants in the ritual wear costumes, masks and other decorations that showcase the island’s “Otherness” (ibid., 142). The participating community wearing colorful clothing made the ritual more attractive because they could be easily captured and

photographed as UNESCO seems to prefer anything exotic and colorful to attract a Western audience (ibid., 143). *Kongdongch'e*, or the community, was thus appreciated as a value during the process of nominating *Yöngdüng kut*. In reality however, only a small part of the community still participates in the communal *Yöngdüng kut*. It seems that the shamans were not the leading authorities on what the ritual entailed and what it looked like in reality. Instead of consulting the shamans, a local Cheju scholar was asked to prepare a dossier on the ritual, a requirement to support the nomination (ibid., 142-143). This exclusion of the local shamans demonstrates that despite the appreciation of the shamanic value of *kongdongch'e*, shamanism remained stigmatized.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the South Korean commodification of shamanism and the contexts in which this commodification has nonetheless given expression to shamanic values. The event of *haenyö ch'ukche* can be described as a group of Koreans who commodified the practice of shamanism. The government supported the festival financially with hopes of advancing the island's economy and the local government was interested in increasing tourism. The culture of the *haenyö* were thus appropriated for the agenda of the government and local governments, along with the shamanic rituals that were performed to showcase the local traditional culture. Even then, the festival organizers were limited in their decisions concerning the festival, since the first and most important goal was money-oriented (Yun 2006, 16). This became apparent through the lack of the involvement of the *haenyö* still living on the island, and the shamanic rituals that were performed by hired professional dancers, folk singers and theatrical performance groups (Yun 2006, 15).

Nonetheless, during the shamanic rituals that were performed at the time of the festival, the value of *injöng* was expressed through song and prayer. The *Yöngdüng kut*, *Muhon kut* and *Chamsu kut* were adjusted and recontextualized for the purpose of the festival to accommodate a foreign audience and to acknowledge the World Cup games. During the rituals, the shamans asked for the success of the national team as well as the country's welfare, demonstrating the value of *injöng*, which relies on a belief in reciprocity. Furthermore, during one of the rituals the *simbang* conveyed a message from the gods to the *haenyö*, which is known as inspired speech. By doing so, *kongsu* was valued.

Following the festivities on the island during the 2002 World Cup, *Yöngdüng kut* was nominated for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009. The communal aspect of *Yöngdüng kut* was a motivation for the provincial government and the Cultural Heritage Administration to nominate it as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, since the participating group of colorfully dressed people would help gain attention from UNESCO who favor exotic and visually interesting things. During the nomination, shamanism remained stigmatized as shamans were consulted rarely and given less

authority during the nomination process. After becoming UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, significant attention was given to the communal singing and dancing part of the ritual. This showcased the value of *kongdongch'e* because singing and dancing together during *Yŏngdŭng kut* strengthens the bond with the gods.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined the contexts in which shamanic values are elaborated upon despite sustained stigmatization of shamanism in these contexts. For this purpose, the following research question was formulated:

“What are the valuations of shamanism in contemporary South Korean society?”

This research question was operationalized by using four sub-questions:

- 1) What are key values of Korean shamanism?*
- 2) how do shamanic values conflict with other values in contemporary South Korea?*
- 3) In what contexts are shamanic values expressed and elaborated upon?*
- 4) How are shamanic values expressed and elaborated upon in these contexts?*

In this conclusion I answer the research question and four sub-questions, present my main findings and propose ideas for future research on topics that exceed the scope of this master’s thesis.

Prior to determining the contexts in which shamanic values are expressed, I first defined shamanic values and ascertained which of these values were most prevalent in contemporary South Korean shamanism. By analyzing the findings of authors who have conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork on shamans in the last few decades, I was able to determine the prominent themes and ideas in the practice of Korean shamanism. This led me to establish the following as important shamanic values: *sinbyŏng*, *han*, *malmun*, *kongsu*, *injŏng* and *kongdongch’e*. I compared these values to other values prominent in South Korean society that are part of the traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity and described how they conflicted. I concluded that shamanic values are mostly concerned with this world while Buddhist, Confucian and Christian values are less involved with this world. Given that shamanism is a complex tradition with a long history on the Korean Peninsula, I chose to focus on the shamanic values that were most relevant for this research. Their relevance in this regard relates to the ways in which these shamanic values figure in the contexts related to the two examples investigated in this thesis: the Protestant and evangelical groups involved with shamanism and the South Korean commodification of shamanism. While determining the shamanic values, the limitations of a literature study became apparent. Words and practices used in ritual can be omitted from academic papers when deemed irrelevant in a specific research. Further research and fieldwork will have to demonstrate the importance and prevalence of other shamanic values.

In this thesis the theory of values by Dumont was employed to establish what shamanic values are. His theory demonstrates that values are about hierarchical relations in a culture. With three characteristics, namely encompassment, segmentation and reversal, one can recognize a value. In addition to Dumont's theory, Robbins elaborates on Dumont's theory by demonstrating how a culture can have a stable value conflict by means of a moral choice. This moral choice will also allow for cultural change. Although their theories proved to be a great tool in finding important values in shamanism, their theories also lacked when it came to defining values that greatly overlapped with values from other cultures. Robbins indicates that this could be seen as a stable value conflict when two values appear to be in conflict, however Korean culture seems to be inherently contradictory in nature with its primary example of shamanism. Chongho Kim gives a great rendition of this argument with his book *Korean shamanism: The Cultural Paradox* (Kim 2003), in which he demonstrates how people simultaneously participate in shamanic ritual and stigmatize it.

With the help of two examples, namely the Protestant and evangelic groups involved with shamanism and the South Korean commodification of shamanism, I described the contexts in which shamanic values figure despite stigmatization of shamanism. The first example of Protestant and evangelic groups focused primarily on contexts from the Yoido Full Gospel Church and the Unification Church. Through literature in the field of anthropology and theology I established that the two churches have been influenced by shamanic practices either voluntarily or involuntarily. In the Yoido Full Gospel Church this influence is demonstrated in the blessings which are an expression of the shamanic value *injŏng*. In the Unification Church this influence becomes apparent in the performance of *kut* by the figure Nonsan Halmoni through which several shamanic values are given expression to. In the second example of the South Korean commodification of shamanism, I examined the festival of *haenyŏ ch'ukche* and the UNESCO Intangible World Heritage ritual of *Yŏngdŭng kut*. The communal aspect of the rituals performed on Cheju Island, an expression of the value of *kongdongch'e*, proved to be a motivation for nominating *Yŏngdŭng kut* as UNESCO Intangible World Heritage and highlighting the shamanic culture of the haenyŏ during the World Cup festival. The tourism agenda of Cheju Island led them to focus on the most visually interesting representation of shamanism: the community. What may be noted with the different contexts described here is that they are generally concerned with this worldly affairs, which is in accordance with the shamanic worldview.

The two examples examined within this thesis have provided snapshots of how shamanic values play a role in contemporary South Korea. To answer the research question, "What are the valuations of shamanism in contemporary South Korean society?", I may conclude that some of the shamanic values of *sinbyŏng*, *han*, *malmun*, *injŏng* and *kongdongch'e* are present in contemporary South

Korean society albeit in contexts in which shamanism is generally stigmatized. Despite this persevering stigmatization throughout history, the tradition of shamanism is strong and in small communities, such as on Cheju Island, shamanism and the practice of shamanism still plays a central role in everyday life. The general outlook of South Koreans on shamanic values, however, appears to be focused on those shamanic values that have a positive attitude towards or effect on this worldly affairs. This indicates that South Koreans have a worldview that is closely linked or connected to the shamanic worldview that is mostly concerned with this worldly affairs. Further research will have to prove a shared worldview between South Koreans despite differing religions and philosophies. In the case of Christianity and in particular Protestantism and Evangelicalism ethnographic fieldwork needs to be done in order to indicate more explicitly the presence of shamanic values and what role they play in the faith and lives of Christians.

This thesis commenced with the premise that despite the presence of shamanism in contemporary South Korean society, the stigmatization of shamanism still persists to this day. Due to the limitations of this thesis, a question that has not been answered is the following: how does shamanism operate in a society where the practice is more often than not branded as non-shamanic and where the practice is subject to changes in society due to globalization and urbanization? This also leads one to speculate whether shamanic values will remain distinguished as such and if not how they will transform alongside other Korean values. The question that remains, then, is: How will the practice of shamanism transform in order to uphold shamanic values in a culture with other competing values? And what will this look like? Future ethnographic fieldwork of shamanic practice and the expression of shamanic values in South Korea will have to point this out.

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