

The Creation of Urban Village Rituals and Participant Groups: A Case Study of the *Jangseung* Ritual of Noryangjin, Seoul

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(In lieu of an abstract) In this article, I observe how the historical memory of the past has been represented in the reconstruction of *jangseung* and the creation of the *jangseung* ritual in Noryangjin, Seoul. This article investigates how the *jangseung* ritual is perceived beyond the boundaries of the regional district and what its meaning translates to in the larger society. This study also examines the process of the invention of tradition through the creation and practice of the *jangseung* ritual. By revealing the conflict with Christians during its nascent practice, I also illuminate how the *jangseung* was perceived in modern society in Korea. In so doing, I explore the distribution of roles within participating groups and their relationships with each other in order to shed light on the significance of Noryangjin's *jangseung* ritual.

1. Introduction

Among the urban regional events produced extensively in Korean societies in recent times, an increasing number of events have been created based on historical resources, tradition, or folklore. Along with the *yutnori* game that is traditionally played on the first full moon of the New Year in neighborhoods in Seoul, a few select neighborhoods have frequently hosted ritual events, such as *sansinje*, *dodangje*, and *bukundangje*, rooted in the traditions of each region. The continuation of the ritual events based on traditional

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resources appears to be the result of top-down protectionism led by the national government and the launch of the autonomous local government system in 1991, which spurred the excavation and promotion of regional traditional culture.

Unlike the national or metropolitan council that designated and provided budgets to cultural properties as administrative and financial institutions, local groups have actively channeled traditional resources to regional festivals and continued the traditions by turning them into sources of tourism or annual events. This method was also used to construct a regional identity. With the implementation of the autonomous local government system in 1991, Seoul also saw an increased momentum in the development of traditional resources that gave distinct identities to each of its districts, which invigorated the use of traditional resources among local groups. Since the Seoul Summer Olympics in 1988, a greater number of traditional reproductions have surfaced, and the Seoul Resident Folk Festival was inaugurated. In addition, a series of policies regarding the discovery and restoration of intangible traditional resources was implemented with the sixth centennial anniversary of Seoul in 1994, which also inspired the creation of annual events that showcased the regional traditions of each district in Seoul.¹

The *jangseungje*, or *jangseung*,² ritual of Noryangjin, which is the subject of this study, was also part of the traditional cultural events produced when Korean society underwent such change. When Dongjak-gu seceded from Gwanak-gu and became an independent district in 1980, it chose the place name Jangseungbaegi as its traditional resource. With the launch of the autonomous local government system in 1991, a group from Dongjak-gu held a jangseung ritual for the first time. Since that time, the jangseung has been explosively popular and produced extensively in Korean society. It came to be regarded as an emblem of tradition, and, at times, it was constructed in prominent tourist destinations in Seoul. The merging of the

1 To commemorate the sixth centennial anniversary of Seoul in 1994, the city sponsored the excavation and restoration of historical and cultural resources in each district. The folklore that represented each district was restored in the form of events and festivals, a few of which were designated as intangible cultural property of the city of Seoul (Seoul Metropolitan Government 1995).

2 (Translator's note) The word *jangseung* means wooden totem pole with carvings of a face and/or words. It was usually posted at the entrance of a village or a temple as a form of protection or as a sign post.

social zeitgeist and the historical narrative of jangseungbaegi was the catalyst for the creation of the jangseung ritual and secured its status as a sought-out attraction in Noryangjin. Particularly, the jangseung of Noryangjin inspired the historical memory of the royal procession of Jeongjo of Joseon to the grave of his late father, Crown Prince Sado, who had been tragically killed by his own father (Jeongo's grandfather, Yeongjo). This provided a unique story upon which to build Noryangjin's jangseung ritual, which took on a different form than other rituals performed in Seoul and continues to be held to this day.

The production process of the jangseung ritual of Noryangjin is germane to the discourse on the invention of tradition as discussed in social history and cultural studies. *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, popularized the idea of traditions as contemporary constructions and yielded a perspective that explained the relationship between the creation of traditional culture and nationalism (Jeong Sujin 2008; Nam Geunu 2008). However, while the idea of the invention of tradition served to critique the ideology of nationalism in the West, some criticized that it assumed discursive authority over non-Western cultures. A dynamic reproduction of non-Western regional traditions that came on the heels of modernization was paralleled to Western nationalism, which presented cultural creations of non-Western regions in a negative light.³

The issue of discursive authority over the invention of tradition was also reflected in select studies conducted in Korea. The purpose of this article is to critically challenge negative views that these "inventions" are inauthentic and that traditional resources are simply an ideological manifestation of nationalism.⁴ This is not to negate the critical arguments

³ This problem was addressed by anthropologists in the 1990s, when they discussed the controversy surrounding the "invention of tradition" concerning the South Pacific island regions. In the process, it was pointed out that Hobsbawm and Ranger's work and the idea of the invention of tradition could inadvertently operate as a discursive authority over non-Western traditional cultures. The critics argued that such a notion denigrated native cultures since it presented the culture of the natives as being solely invented for popular consumption, which caused the oppression of their rights (Briggs 1996).

⁴ What Hobsbawm actually explained in his work was the relationship between tradition and the emergence of modern Western states (Hobsbawm 2004: 21–28). It is important to point out here that he did mention that the invented traditions should not be considered and dismissed as inauthentic or wrong. Nevertheless, in Western

against invented tradition in relation to nationalism. Rather, it is to examine the activities of those involved in carrying out traditions not only within the boundaries of national and regional governments or cultural policy and administration but also beyond them. By so doing, I seek to supplement the aspects of the invention of tradition that have normally been dismissed or neglected. Exaggerating the institutional roles played by national or regional governments related to the creation of tradition or explaining its process from the perspective of power relations is a peripheral issue here. Anthropologists who supported protection of the cultural ownership of those who created tradition advocated this argument. Jonathan Friedman claimed that newly created traditions were sufficiently authentic and regarded the process of invention as a process of a dynamic cultural construction. Further, he considered the invention as a way of expressing one's identity to others (Friedman 1992: 845). Robert Borofsky (1994) also posited that one sees the creation as a process and how its creators practiced the tradition within the context of history before one sees it as a final product of invention. Thus, he provided a new perspective through which one can examine a newly created tradition (Kwon Hyeokhui 2012: 23–24).

Therefore, I refrain from defining the jangseung ritual of Noryangjin simply within the discourse of the invention of tradition. Instead, I examine its construction by illuminating the actions of its creators and participating groups and the dynamics between the active parties. Particularly, I observe how the historical memory of the past has been represented in the reconstruction of Noryangjin's jangseung and the creation of the jangseung ritual. This article investigates how the jangseung ritual is perceived beyond the boundaries of Dongjak-gu and what its meaning translates to in larger regional society. This study also examines the process of the invention of tradition through the creation and practice of the jangseung ritual. Moreover, by revealing the conflict with Christians during its nascent practice, I illuminate how the jangseung was perceived in modern society in Korea. I also explore the distribution of roles within participating groups and their relationships with each other in order to shed light on the significance of Noryangjin's jangseung ritual.

discourse, his argument was misconstrued as an attack against third-world cultures (Sahlins 1993).

2. The Formation of Jangseungbaegi's Historical Memory and the Creation of the Jangseung Ritual

1) Merging Jangseungbaegi with the Narrative of Jeongjo's Royal Procession

The name “Jangseungbaegi” wasn't a place name that uniquely belonged to Noryangjin. The same name was used in other parts of Seoul, such as Yeomchang-dong in Gangseo-gu. Other similar names, like Jangseungkkot, were used in Yeomgok-dong in Seocho-gu, and the name Jangseunggol was found in Samjeon-dong in Songpa-gu (Seoul Historiography Institute Committee 2009). Aside from names of places, the actual ritual known as jangseung existed in many places. According to Japanese researchers during the colonial period in Korea, jangseung totem poles were planted outside of both Heukseok-dong and Dongsomun.⁵ However, the word jangseungbaegi seemed to be an antiquated term used throughout the country to describe any hill wherein a jangseung was planted. Even until the first half of the twentieth century, one could easily encounter a jangseung sign on the road in front of a village or a Buddhist temple. A few select jangseung poles were subjects of a village community ritual and folk religion; even if they were not part of a praying group, individuals would throw a stone and offer a prayer, the way people did in front of a shrine for the village deity.

According to oral tradition, the jangseung of Noryangjin, on which this study is based, was created by king's order to aid the excursion of Jeongjo of Joseon at the end of the eighteenth century. The name of the place was subsequently called Jangseungbaegi, after the totem pole. As illustrated in Figure 1, on an old map, Jangseungbaegi Road was written as *gwacheongyejangsaenghyeonro* (果川界長牲峴路). However, scholars have estimated that this map was drawn during the reign of Yeongjo, the grandfather of Jeongjo. This fact raised the question of how the oral tradition of the story between Jangseungbaegi and Jeongjo was formed. It hinted at the possibility that the jangseung may not have been constructed to aid the excursion of Jeongjo but was made much earlier. Nonetheless, there is no written record that Jeongjo erected the jangseung on his way to

⁵ *The Study of Korean Shamanism* (朝鮮巫俗の研究) (1938) by Akamasu Jijo (赤松智城) and Akiba Takashi (秋葉隆) shows a record of a jangseung in Heukseok-dong and a jangseung ritual (Akamasu Jijo and Akiba Dakashi 1991: 200–203) as well as a plate illustration of a jangseung near a temple outside of Dongsomun.



Figure 1. The map of Haedong (海東地圖). A partial view of Geumcheonhyeon (衿川縣). The Jangseungbaegi Road (長牲峴路) is marked as Jangseunghyeonro. Archived at Kyujanggak. (<http://e-kyujanggak.snu.ac.kr>)

visit Hyeonryungwon, his father's (Crown Prince Sado) gravesite in Hwaseong.

Therefore, it is necessary to dissociate the creation of the jangseung—while acknowledging its existence—with the royal procession of Jeongjo. Considering that the Jangseungbaegi Road was the main path leading to Seoul even before Jeongjo's processional trail was made, it is sufficiently plausible to assume that a jangseung may have been planted in the same location.⁶ Still, the fact that Jangseungbaegi Road was one of the roads that split from the royal trail and was a place of rest for the king even after the establishment of Sieungno,⁷ another newly created road for the king, one could speculate that Jeongjo's procession played an important role in the memory of the village residents. In other words, the tale that the jangseung pole of Jangseungbaegi was created for Jeongjo's travel might have been

⁶ The current location of the Jangseungbaegi Road is on the major intersection of Sangdo-dong (in the direction of Sangdo Station on line 7) and Daebang-dong (in the direction of Sindaebang Station on line 7). This place, which was lined with thick foliage at the time of Jeongjo, was also the intersection at which Jeongjo's processional trail split into two. According to the tale of how the jangseung was established, "The place was sparsely trafficked, remote, lonesome and overrun by a thick forest. So Jeongjo ordered his servants to erect a jangseung and took a break from the royal carriage at this location" (Seoul Historiography Institute Committee 1989: 147–148).

⁷ Jeongjo's trail was split into two roads at the time. In the beginning, he took a break at Yongwangbong Jeojeong in Bondong, across the Han River, after which he passed Manhanhyeon (Manyang Hill, currently the hill that connects Bondong to Maebong Mountain), Jangseungbaegi, Keumbul Hill (in the vicinity of Soongsil University), and climbed Nantaeryeong Hill over to Gwacheon. The other road, Sieung Daero, led not to Sangdodong but to Anyangkyo (Anyang City, Seoksu-dong), Manankyo, Sageuncham (Euiwang City) to Suwon.

constructed and passed down through memory of the grand royal procession that had been firmly planted in the minds of the village residents. Despite the fact that place name of Jangseungbaegi was given because of the jangseung that was planted in a geographically significant location, people remembered the road by the narrative centered on the king's splendid procession (Jeongjo was also known for his filial piety). This narrative provided an important historical background for the creation of the jangseung ritual in the 1990s.

The history of Jangseungbaegi and its connection to the royal procession continued to be passed down well after the procession discontinued. Even when the jangseung was destroyed during the Korean War, it continued to act as the mechanism that carried the history of Jangseungbaegi with its sense of place. This sense of place, in return, restored the jangseung that was foundational in creating the jangseung ritual. The village residents accepted the tale of the king's procession as the authoritative narrative, whose construction revealed how "history-making" occurred for the jangseung. On the other hand, it also illustrated how the narrative led to the development of the jangseung ritual by a local organization at the end of the twentieth century. The history of Jangseungbaegi in Noryangjin illuminates how the meaning of the place in the latter part of the twentieth century was construed and who the active agents were in creating the ritual that continues to be held to this day.

2) The Reproduction of Jangseungbaegi's Narrative

The narrative of Jangseungbaegi that was produced in connection with the royal procession of Jeongjo died with the advent of Japanese colonialism and subsequent abolition of royal processions. Even after Japanese rule ended, the Jangseungbaegi narrative did not resume because of the outbreak of the Korean War. According to residents of the region, the jangseung was briefly re-erected after colonization, but no record was available on why it was taken down. However, Mr. A. (born in 1928), who had relocated to Noryangjin from Hwanghaedo in the early 1940s, reported that the jangseung was planted slightly off from where it was originally erected. Considering that he was able to recall the event relatively well in such detail,⁸ I surmise the pole might have been destroyed at the outbreak of the

⁸ Mr. A. recalled that the jangseung pole was re-erected near where Seong Pharmacy

Korean War. After the Korean War, in the 1950s, the population began to grow rapidly, and Noryangjin became more and more urbanized. The low hills and rice paddies came to be replaced by roads and dense building construction. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as people from other regions began to move to Noryangjin, the village turned into a city, just like other neighboring towns in Seoul. Despite rapid urbanization and the disappearance of the jangseung, people continued to refer to the place as Jangseungbaegi, which helped maintain its sense of place. The unofficial name that was used among the residents became official in 1972, when a road was named Jangseungno to commemorate the 578th anniversary of the city of Seoul. This was a period in which the government actively sought to organize a city that had expanded uncontrollably after the war, by building roads and foundations.

Since then, Dongjak-gu seceded from Gwanak-gu in 1980 and became an independent district. And in 1981, its residents submitted a proposal to build an official jangseung as part of a traditional culture project. Further, they turned a plot of land near Dongjak Library into a park (where the jangseung now stands) and named it Jangseung Park (Kyunghyang Shinmun, January 19, 1981). Although the building of the jangseung was never officially pursued or realized at the time, the Jangseungno Road was renamed as Jangseungbaegi Road in 1984. A few years later, in 1987, a stone post with the name “Jangseungbaegi Road” was installed, which recounted the historical origin as well as the meaning and purpose of the name. This official administrative act commemorated a sense of place of the past.

The actual building of the jangseung took place in 1991, ten years after the district office announced the project. After the autonomous local government launched in 1991, various independent groups actively developed historical and traditional resources, turning them into events. As enumerated in Table 1, Jangseungbaegi faced new history after the jangseung was constructed. In 1994, it was selected as one of the 600 tourist attractions in Seoul in commemoration of the sixth centennial anniversary of the city of Seoul. In 2000, with the opening of the Jangseungbaegi Station on subway line 7, it reinforced the memory of Jangseungbaegi to everyone in Seoul—not just to the area residents. In 2003, the surrounding area of the jangseung was turned into a park, and a new jangseung was erected in the

(near Daebang-dong) now stands. This location is about 20 meters away from where the pole was originally planted, which is where the Noryangjin Police Station is now.

Table 1. A chronology for Jangseungbaegi from the 1970s to 2000s.

| Year | Content | Acting Agent | Notes |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1972 | Given the road name “Jangseungno” | Seoul Metropolitan Government | The ritual ends in the 1970s near Seonangdang. |
| 1981 | Announcement of the building of Jangseung Park and the jangseung | Dongjak-gu office | Dongjak-gu split from Gwanak-gu in 1980. |
| 1982 | Jangseung Park created | Dongjak-gu office | Park built on a plot of land where the Dongjak Library now stands. |
| 1984 | Changed the name from “Jangseungno” to “Jangseungbaegi” | Seoul Metropolitan Government | |
| Ca. 1985 | Attempt to restore the jangseung with the help of a National Assembly member (failed) | A politician from the region (National Assembly member) | Failed due to opposition from churches and Christian groups. |
| 1987 | Stone post installed to mark the historic origin of Jangseungbaegi | Seoul Metropolitan Government | The history of the road was recounted and recorded in relation to Jeongjo’s procession. |
| 1989-1990 | Pursued the construction of the jangseung | Jeonghwachujin Committee (selected members) | Raised 10,000,000 won. |
| April 1991 | Began manufacturing the jangseung | Bareugesalgi Committee, Noryangjin 2 nd -dong, resident representative | The construction stalled for six months due to Christian protests. Jeonghwachujin Committee became Bareugesalgi Committee. Autonomous local government implemented. |
| Oct. 24, 1991 | The jangseung is erected | Bareugesalgi Committee, Noryangjin 2 nd -dong | The event was covered by various media outlets. |
| Oct. 28, 1991 | Protests and prayers to remove the jangseung commenced | Seoul Dongjak Christian Young Adult Group | 70 people held a prayer meeting in front of the jangseung and protested. |

Table 1. (continued)

| Year | Content | Acting Agent | Notes |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nov. 1991 | The jangseung damaged (arson) | A Christian group in Noryangjin (group name unidentified) ⁹ | The stem of the jihayeojangkun (female jangseung) was charred by fire. |
| Jan. 1994 | The jangseung damaged (the pole severed) | A Christian group in Noryangjin (group name unidentified) | The stem of the jihayeojangkun pole was severed by a chain saw. |
| March 1994 | The jangseung restored | Bareugesalgi Committee | Reattached the severed part of the pole with a wooden stem and reinforced it with a metal piece. |
| June 1994 | Opened a jangseung exhibition | Bareugesalgi Committee, Dongjak-gu | Opened a photo exhibition of jangseung from eight provinces at the Dongjak-gu office. |
| Aug. 1994 | Was picked as one of the 600 tourist attractions in Seoul | Seoul Metropolitan Government | A project in commemoration of the 600 th anniversary of Seoul. |
| 2000 | Relocated the jangseung to a roadside | Bareugesalgi Committee, Dongjak-gu | The Jangseungbaegi Station opened on subway line 7. |
| 2003 | A park is built near the jangseung | Dongjak-gu office | Installed a fountain, designed a landscape and built a Korean traditional wall around the park. |
| 2005 | The origin of the Jangseungbaegi inscribed on a stone post. Doroseom Park opened | Dongjak-gu office | A reproduction of a pine forest of the Joseon period. |
| 2011 | Proposed a replacement of the jangseung | Bareugesalgi Committee, Dongjak-gu | Procured a chestnut tree from Munsan and soaked it in saltwater. Sponsored by the Dongjak-gu office. |

⁹ There isn't much information available on the group that inflicted damage on the jangseung pole in 1991 and 1994. The members of the Bareugesalgi Committee suspected a certain group but chose not to continue the investigation for the sake of regional unity.

Table 1. (continued)

| Year | Content | Acting Agent | Notes |
|------|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2012 | The jangseung replaced | Bareugesalgi Committee, Dongjak-gu | Consulted a craftsman in Goesan about jangseung sculpture and built a new pole. Replaced jihayeojangkun with jihadaejangkun (male jangseung). |

park. The park became equipped with a new fountain and traditional landscape, creating an atmosphere apropos for a historical tourist attraction. On a small traffic island not too far from the jangseung, in the direction of Sangdo-dong, a small park with pine trees was built in 2005. Installed there was a stone post with the inscription of the history and origin of the trail of Jeongjo's procession, firmly establishing Jangseungbaegi as one of the top tourist attractions in the area (Kim Gyeongdu, July 27, 2007; Yi Jaemyeong, May 4, 2003).

The official endorsement of Jangseungbaegi from a government office mostly came in the form of stone posts or a sponsorship of landscape architecture. The restoration of the jangseung in 1991 was a significant catalyst for these new developments. Before the jangseung was reconstructed, only limited action was allowed, such as renaming the road that bore the name jangseung and installing a stone post. However, when a local organization in Noryangjin built the jangseung and introduced the jangseung ritual in 1991, the sense of place for Jangseungbaegi Road expanded beyond superficial recognition. The area surrounding the Jangseungbaegi Road was described as follows: "It was called Jangseungbaegi after Jeonjo ordered his servants to build a jangseung" (Jangseungbaegi stone post, produced in 1987, Seoul). It was also recorded that "Jeongjo ordered the construction [of a jangseung] to rest from his procession in the midst of a thick, lonesome forest. The place has been referred to as Jangseungbaegi ever since" (Jangseungbaegi stone post, on its origin. The stone post sponsored by the Dongjak district office in 2005). The description of the Jangseungbaegi Road became thus formed and reproduced. The sense of place of Jangseungbaegi, originating from its unavoidable connection to Jeongjo's processional trail, provides us with insight into the process and effort of creating the jangseung ritual by Noryangjin residents.

3) *The Creative Process of the Jangseung Ritual: The Role of Regional Groups and Struggles of Individuals*

The process of creating the jangseung ritual as a local event becomes much clearer when it is compared to the residents' previous village ritual. Before the advent of the jangseung ritual, there were approximately three locations where village rituals were held in Noryangjin. According to a 1989 report, every October the residents prepared a feast under an old zelkova tree and held a village ritual at midnight (Seoul Historiography Institute Committee 1989: 150).¹⁰ A community ritual that was central to the village existed even before Noryangjin became urbanized, and the location of the ritual bore no relationship to the jangseung. The fact that no resident recalled seeing a ritual held in front of the jangseung makes it clear that the jangseung ritual was created with the construction of the new jangseung. The large trees in front of which the village ritual was typically held were destroyed with urbanization, resulting in the end of the ritual. On the other hand, the newly created ritual, invented by people who relocated to Noryangjin, became the ritual that represented the area.

A local organization in Noryangjin played a crucial role in the creation of the jangseung ritual. In order to better understand the connection between the local community of Noryangjin and the creation of the jangseung ritual, it is necessary to discuss the rise of regional organizations, the so-called *gwangbyeon* groups,¹¹ between the late 1980s and 1990s. Three important *gwangbyeon*, or government, groups were founded around 1990: Bareugesalgi Council, Saemaueul Movement Council, and Korean Freedom Federation. This was also the period marked by fierce public demand for the investigation of the corruption of the Fifth Republic of Korea. The Sahoecheonghwa Council, one of the groups that demanded the investigation, became the Bareugesalgi Council, formed with all the

¹⁰ It is unclear when the Noryangjin village ritual disappeared. However, it appears it was practiced until the 1970s (Seoul Historiography Institute Committee 1989: 150).

¹¹ The "Gwanbyeon" of Gwanbyeon Group relates to its connection to the government and the government office. It is divided into two groups: a lawful order group (*junhaengjeong jojik*) and a national movement group (*gukminundongdanche*). The lawful order group consists of the neighborhood officials' council and the Bareugesalgi Council, the Korean Senior Citizens Association, and Saemaueul Movement Council; in other words, they all exist under the umbrella of the lawful order group (Yi Eunjin 2004: 40-44).

members of the original group. With this transition and the passing of a bill related to the investigation in 1991, the Bareugesalgi Council in Noryangjin—the place in which Jangseungbaegi was located—became an administrative assistance group that received government subsidy.¹²

At the time, local organizations in Noryangjin took on a variety of forms similar to groups in other cities. There were career groups made up of people from specific professional backgrounds, administrative assistance groups, such as Saemaul Council, Bareugesalgi Council, and Bankbook Council, as well as informal social gatherings, cooperative project groups for shopkeepers, and athletic associations. The leaders or members of government groups had the advantage of information and a network of human resources that led to informal social gatherings. The members of the groups were either employed by the district government or were business owners or sole proprietors.¹³ Their daily activities outside of their jobs did not veer too far from their residence (Yi Eunjin 2004: 52–54). Members also actively maintained a number of hometown alumni groups. A few of the most famous alumni groups in the 1980s were the Hwangno Gathering, which was made up of people from Hwanghae-do,¹⁴ the Chungwu Meeting of people from Chungcheong-do, and the Gyeongwu Meeting of people from the Yeongnam area.¹⁵

Among the members of Hwangno Gathering, a man named Mr. A. played an important role in the area. He served as the town chief and participated in the jangseung ritual for twenty-three years. He spearheaded changes in the community by creating the Community Credit Cooperative in Noryangjin and establishing a senior citizen center by collecting funds from town residents.

12 For a more detailed account of its history, consult the website of the Bareugesalgi Council (<http://www.sfbt.or.kr>).

13 For the activities and composition of the groups of business owners in Seoul by district, consult Bak's Mihye research (Bak Mihye 2010).

14 The name of Hwangno Gathering was made with the first syllables of Hwanghae-do and Noryangjin. Although the group had approximately 100 members, the number decreased to only four by the mid-1990s, which resulted in the dissolution of the group. Mr. A's discussion of the Hwangno Gathering can be found in the 1989 publication *The History of Place Names of Seoul* (Seoul Historiography Institute Committee 1989: 155).

15 A study of the hometown alumni groups in the Yeongnam area was partially conducted at the Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies at Seoul National University (Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies at Seoul National University 2009: 131-132).

According to members of the community, on average, a resident was typically active in five groups. These organizations and group activities signaled the social life, hobbies, and community of the Noryangjin residents. Simultaneously, these groups provided them with a network of people connected to their livelihood as well as a complex web of connections linked to their political position.

Among the complex network of regional groups, the organization that actually led the restoration of the jangseung and resolved its attendant issues was the Bareugesalgi Committee. More specifically, the effort was spearheaded by a committee member named Mr. B., who made significant contributions to the restoration. At the time, Mr. B. was president of the Bareugesalgi Committee and was well known as the go-to town worker in Noryangjin. As a native of Chungcheong-do, he was a member of the Chungwu Meeting and became president of the Saemaul Committee in the 1970s. In the 1980s, he served several terms as president of the Jeonghwa Committee, and his role naturally carried over to Bareugesalgi Committee in 1989. To commemorate the founding of the new organization, he created a new project—the restoration of the jangseung—that would later become the symbol of Noryangjin. He said he was motivated by a personal passion to “do something extraordinary.” The demand to level the debt incurred by the Fifth Republic and for the creation of regional society service also greatly influenced his action. The jangseung restoration was previously championed by a former National Assembly member, to no avail. However, on the heel of the installation of a stone post for the city of Seoul, the idea of restoring the jangseung gained traction. Taking advantage of this newly resurrected interest, Mr. B. began the restoration process in earnest in 1990 with the support of the committee.

Ultimately, the project that failed in the hands of district officials and a politician came to fruition through Mr. B.’s efforts. People who knew him, including those who saw the restoration process and those who hold the jangseung ritual to this day, all uniformly bore witness to the immense personal struggle and efforts exerted by Mr. B. He started the project in 1990 after confirming the interest of the committee members and of those who held influence in the community. Recognizing that his greatest obstacle would be Christian organizations, he meticulously studied the historical background of the jangseung to forge a persuasive argument against their objections. First, he attempted to prove the historicity of the Jangseungbaegi Road by establishing a connection between the road and

Jeongjo and his father, Crown Prince Sado, as well as through a field investigation report conducted in the area. He submitted a proposal for a construction permit to the district office in 1990 after a rigorous process, including personally confirming the signs and the contents of an old map of the area. He said he gained confidence in the restoration after reading and studying research materials on the jangseung and consulting an expert on the subject.¹⁶

Simultaneously, Mr. B. informed the members of the groups he was active in and community members about the appropriateness of manufacturing the jangseung. Soon, he began to find ways to raise funds and searched for the right variety of chestnut wood, the main material needed for the restoration. He and another town resident (a co-member of the Bareugesalgi Committee and a hometown alumnus) scoured every lumber mill in Gyeonggi-do. He also traveled to see the newly built jangseung manufactured in Seoul and Gyeonggi-do. When the word got out in Noryangjin about his strenuous effort in search of chestnut wood, a resident who was a native of Cheongyang, Chungcheong-do, informed him about quality chestnut trees in his hometown that would be suitable for a jangseung. The restoration project quickly accelerated after this news. The leaders of the community, organizations, chair of the Community Credit Cooperative, and regional politicians provided the funds for the wood and for manufacturing the jangseung. The residents belonging to other groups and leaders of other organizations also aided the project by covering the construction fees of the jangseung (Nam Daehui, October 7, 1991). The creators of the jangseung paid special attention to the design; they made the faces look more palatable for Seoul residents by sculpting the expressions to look less threatening. And to balance the yin and yang energy, the face of the male jangseung was embossed, and the face of its female counterpart was engraved into the wood.¹⁷ Lastly, after numerous negotiations, and with the aid of the Dongjak-gu district office, the residents received permission from the government to use property that belonged to the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education for the location of the jangseung.

¹⁶ The restoration project made rapid progress after he visited the National Folk Museum of Korea the following year and consulted experts about the form and materials of the jangseung.

¹⁷ A Noryangjin resident who was an experienced calligrapher, carpenter and wood processor was given the job of manufacturing the jangseung.

As discussed above, the plan to manufacture and construct the jangseung was realized through the unshakable will of the Bareugesalgi Committee members, leaders of regional organizations, donations from community leaders, and administrative help from the district office. However, the erection of the jangseung received more opposition than they expected. A member of the Bareugesalgi Committee reminisced, “Christian groups had so much power at the time. We didn’t even try going against them....” Although the jangseung was finished, they could not erect it due to petitions from Christian churches. The district office also announced the indefinite delay of the project. However, when the residents received sympathetic coverage from the media, the Bareugesalgi Committee members gained leverage and pursued the construction of the jangseung. Finally, they were able to erect the jangseung on October 24 and chose this date to inaugurate the jangseung ritual, which is held every year on this date.

The jangseung ritual was thusly created in conjunction with the construction of the jangseung and became an annual celebratory ritual.



Figure 2. The construction of Jangseungbaegi’s jangseung amidst controversy (Dong-a Ilbo, Oct. 26, 1991)

However, the ritual was not improvised; rather, it was planned well ahead of its first ceremony. In preparation for the ritual, Mr. B. and a few Bareugesalgi Committee members visited Gyeonggi-do, Gwangju, and Oemmiri and met with the president of Saemaul Committee to consult with him about the current state of the jangseung ritual. They applied what they learned to their own ritual. However, there were conflicting opinions about which form and procedure the ritual should adopt. In the beginning, many voted for the form of offering a folk prayer through exorcism, similar to what had been done in other towns. They considered combining Confucianism and shamanism by holding a Confucian ceremony after a shaman exorcism. However, due to the high cost of the jangseung construction, they could not afford to hire a shaman and musicians

every year. Hence, they chose to adopt solely the Confucian aspect of the ceremony.¹⁸

The restoration of the jangseung and the creation of the jangseung ritual were possibly due, in large part, to the efforts of a regional organization led by its leader, Mr. B., the help of the district office, and community leaders. However, the restoration of the jangseung in the early 1990s wasn't simply about resurrecting the *jangseung* that was destroyed in the past. It was also about forging a new history by creating a form of ritual that did not previously exist in Noryangjin. Rather than "inventing" something completely different, the creators assigned a new meaning to their environment and acted upon materializing the newly conceived idea. In actuality, restoring the jangseung and forming a ritual was an unachievable project, even for an accomplished politician from the region and government administrators. It was a project that required a complex network of cooperation from jangseung experts, town residents, and the mass media as well as having access to historical resources. Furthermore, for the last twenty-three years, the restoration project faced and overcame a series of intense opposition from Christian organizations that regarded the jangseung and the ritual as a form of idol worship.

3. The Establishment of the Jangseung Ritual and Participating Organizations

1) Jangseung's Traditional Symbolism and its Conflict with Christianity

To better understand the context of the jangseung ritual's creation, it is necessary to examine what people remembered from the past and the reproductions of tradition that were occurring beyond the activities of local organizations in Korean society after the 1980s. The jangseung began to rise as a symbol of tradition through its representation and reproduction in Korea in the Folk Arts Contest and other national events. While miniature jangseung had previously been produced as a tourist product for Japanese

¹⁸ The residents could not proceed with offering a prayer through exorcism since they needed a lot more funds to afford it (verbal testimony of Mr. I.). To pay for the formidable cost of the ritual feast, the residents asked for donations in various forms. They accepted cash as well as food and goods.

Table 2. The designation of cultural assets related to the jangseung

| Year | 1962–before 1980 | 1980s | 1990s | After 2000 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The designation of cultural assets | 8 cases (5 national designations and 3 city and provincial designations) | 13 cases (city and provincial designations) | 5 cases (city and provincial designations) | 3 cases (1 national designation and 2 city and provincial designations) |

during the colonial period (Kwon Hyeokhui 2007), it later became representative of Korean handicraft. Simultaneously, when the jangseung ritual emerged as an important town ritual in the late 1980s, the residents of varying regions began to designate the jangseung as a cultural asset. As a result, the Tanseon jangseung ritual of Gongju became designated as the intangible cultural property of the region.

According to Table 2, the jangseung that were designated as an important folk resource in the 1960s and 1970s, during the nascent years of the cultural asset designation system, were chosen as regional cultural assets in the 1980s by the national government. Not only were jangseung designated as tangible cultural assets, jangseung rituals, in the form of town ceremonies, began to surface in the 1980s (Kwon Suneok, April 6, 1988). Currently, originating from the Chungcheong area, jangseung rituals are held across the country, many of which began with the restoration of the ritual in the 1990s. Further, these rituals were introduced as part of a village-land resource development and community event since the 2000s.¹⁹ Jangseung poles were erected as a symbol of the people, reunification of North and South Korea, and Korean tradition in university towns in the 1980s, when the pro-democracy movement was in full swing. Even during the 1988 Summer Olympics, jangseung were introduced as an important aspect of Korean tradition and were erected in tourist attractions, such as Insa-dong, and by the highway entrance to Seoul from the airport. The symbolic value of jangseung was elevated to the emblem of the nation and people and as the representation of communal unity. Its meaning expanded to include the reunification of the two Koreas and the pro-democratic

¹⁹ Changes made on jangseung in the late 20th century can be found in the works of Kim Juho (2007) and Kim Jinsik (2013).

movement, as Korea's traditional icon (Yi Taeho, February 22, 1989).²⁰ Since 1990, jangseung have been used in various regional festivals and regarded as a folk culture resource. Furthermore, jangseung began to be erected in the gardens of folk museums and became the subject of photographers and craftsmen. The aesthetic value of jangseung began to be recognized, and related products were produced for popular consumption.

However, controversy surrounding jangseung discourse surfaced when organizations argued against the production and dissemination of jangseung. Christians and Christian organizations viewed jangseung as an object of idol worship and inflicted physical damage on them. Jangseung also faced damage on university campuses, sparking heated debates among students (Kwon Seokcheon, September 3, 1992).²¹ Similar problems occurred during Olympic commemorative events. This conflict between Christian and indigenous cultures became an issue of religious diversity, setting off debates between theologians, religious leaders, and folklorists in newspapers.²² As stated previously, the construction of the jangseung in Noryangjin was also met with opposition from local churches and Christians, resulting in damage to the jangseung. Specifically, the jangseung could not be erected for six months after completion because of Christian opposition. When finally



Figure 3. Damage inflicted on the jangseung by Christians. (Photo from *The Dong-a Ilbo*, January 24, 1994)

²⁰ The title of the news article by Yi Taeho in *The Hankyoreh* was “The resurging of people’s power and hope.” According to Yi, jangseung became increasingly popular in university towns from the mid-1980s.

²¹ According to Kwon Seokchun, damage to jangseung was found at Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul National University, Korea University, Hanyang University campus in Ansan, and Jeonju University.

²² For example, *The Hankyoreh* reported: “The jangseung ritual as an Olympic event cancelled. Buddhist community fiercely demands reconsideration” (July 31, 1988); *The Dong-a Ilbo*, “A letter from a reader—the cancelling of the Olympic traditional event is regrettable” (Seo Ilho, July 28, 1988).

erected, the jangseung was charred by fire within a month. Three years after the fire damage, the remains of the jangseung were cut off with a chainsaw, and the jangseung ritual was faced with possible suspension. The media reported a series of such events, shedding light on the conflict between tradition and Christianity (Yang Yeongchae, October 26, 1991).

One of the members of the Bareugesalgi Committee, who vividly recalled the incident in which the jangseung in Noryangjin was damaged, reported that through the district office civil council, the residents organized a debate between a Christian pastor and resident representatives. While the Christian side argued that the jangseung was an object of idol worship and a source of superstition, Mr. B. and a few selected residents asserted that the creation of the jangseung was rooted in folk belief, which had nothing to do with religion, and that it was part of the tradition of praying for the village and family. When the jangseung was damaged for the second time in 1994, the members of the Bareugesalgi Committee paid a visit to the church and fiercely protested, after which they received a promise that no more damage would be inflicted.²³ Now, there isn't as much opposition from Christian organizations, but they do continue to receive a few complaints after each annual jangseung ritual. Since this was a sensitive issue for the district office, the Bareugesalgi Committee took extra precautions to ensure that the ritual did not take on the semblance of superstition. Whenever they received a complaint call, they emphasized that the ritual was held as a prayer for the welfare of the town and its residents.

Even a few years ago, the district office received a complaint after the ritual was finished. When we get the call, we say, it's a folk symbol not superstition! Some people ask why we bow and prostrate ourselves in front of it. People who file complaints are usually Christians. When they ask us why we hold the ritual, we always answer the same. "We hold the ritual for resident unity and the welfare of our town. We made it to unify the residents. It's not superstition! It's folk culture!" What can they say after that? (Current member of the Bareugesalgi Committee at Noryangjin 2-dong)

You can't say that the jangseung is superstitious. It contains...what should I

²³ The members of the Bareugesalgi Committee did not spend much time uncovering the identity of the criminal when the jangseung was sawed off. They spent most of their time restoring the jangseung for the sake of regional unity, hoping that the incident wouldn't draw too much attention.

say...the meaning of regional community. It's nonsense when people say it's superstition. [A long time ago] they chopped it off with a chainsaw at night and ran away. They are bastards. (Mr. D., town resident)²⁴

The Bareugesalgi Committee caught the arsonist who set fire to the jangseung when it was first erected. However, after consulting with the police, they decided to forgive him for the sake of town unity. After much effort and reconciliation, churches in neighboring areas stopped opposing and criticizing the jangseung. Their adverse reactions also diminished significantly. Event organizers also took extra precautions to mitigate the misunderstanding that the ritual was based on superstition by keeping the ceremony simple, in the style of a Confucian ritual. Moreover, the ritual officiants did not encourage residents to prostrate in front of the jangseung, unlike at other village rituals. Although a few residents did prostrate, they limited the bowing time since it was out of the norm for Christians. The members of the Bareugesalgi Committee, the sponsoring organization of the jangseung ritual, stated that they felt fulfilled knowing that residents now saw the jangseung as part of the folklore or tradition of their area. They considered the establishment of the jangseung ritual as a success because of the way in which the residents finally accepted it as part of traditional culture.

The ideas for the jangseung and the jangseung ritual of Noryangjin were inspired by the place name, Jangseungbaegi. Socially, they were seen as a symbol of national unity at universities and have become a popular representation of tradition in cultural events. Additionally, the jangseung were made into souvenirs for foreigners and became the subject for craftsmen, painters, and photographers as they began making products for popular consumption. All of these social phenomena were part of the sociocultural discourse of the 1980s. More and more people began to accept the jangseung as a symbol of tradition, especially after it survived the clash with Christian doctrine and a select group of aggressive Christians. The intense media coverage of Noryangjin's jangseung incident was portrayed in this context. However, before defining the phenomenon of the Noryangjin jangseung as part of the discourse on national culture or the invention of tradition, it must be recognized that it was the product of

²⁴ Mr. D. is a Noryangjin resident in his late 70s. He relocated from the southern area of Gyeonggi-do in 1983 and has been residing in Noryangjin for about 30 years.

many people's efforts and groups that had tirelessly invested in the project. The regional community and the interaction between social organizations such as the Bareugesalgi Committee, the district office (which worked to elevate its district as a tourist attraction that symbolized the tradition of the region), and the resident center (which sponsored the jangseung ritual as a resident event) as well as other groups that contributed through various regional events, played an invaluable role in resurrecting the jangseung.

2) The Division of Labor among Participating Organizations and their Dynamics

As explained above, the creation of the jangseung ritual and its practice could be understood from multiple views when examined through the actions of participants and participating groups rather than solely through the context of tradition discourse. In order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the participating organizations and the specific aspects of the jangseung ritual, I attended the 23rd jangseung ritual of Noryangjin, held on October 24, 2013. In addition to my general observations and interviews conducted with those who ran the ritual, I attended a meeting they held to settle the expense accounts one week later. By so doing, I was able to gain better insight into the relationship of the internal and external functions of the Bareugesalgi Committee, the sponsor of the ritual. I constructed a chart listing the participating groups and their roles.

As shown in Table 3, the roles delegated to each group were carried out in perfect order. In this system of delegation, the members of the Bareugesalgi Committee, who had first initiated the restoration of the jangseung and oversaw the ritual for over twenty years, played the most essential role. In truth, Jangseungbaegi was not an exclusive property of Noryangjin since it was situated on the border with Sangdo-dong. The fact that the jangseung was restored in Noryangjin and not in Sangdo-dong was indicative of how much the jangseung meant to the members of the Bareugesalgi Committee. Their efforts also stemmed from the expectation that the jangseung ritual would maintain the interest of participants and continue to be developed. For instance, some members asserted that the jangseung ritual should be turned into the main festival that represented Dongjak-gu. They argued that improvements should be made to include the reenactment of the royal procession on Jangseungbaegi Road as well as provide various activities, such as sculpting miniature totems in front of the jangseung and holding a *gut* to provide more entertainment for the residents. They maintained

Table 3. Participating groups of the jangseung ritual and their roles

| Groups | Bareungsalgi Committee and ritual participants (20 people) | Saemaul Women's Committee (6 people) | Nodeul Nongak Salmulnori Team (15 people) | District resident center (5 people) | Dongjak-gu district officials and VIPs/ police officers (15 people) | Reporters and chroniclers (6 people, including the writer of this article) | Residents (120 people) |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Roles | Secure a budget, prepare balance sheets, prepare and arrange food, send out invitations and promote the event (put up placards and banners), control traffic before and after the ritual, clean up | Serve food to the residents on the day of the ritual, clean up | Perform salmulnori music before and after the ritual | Install tents and set up tables and chairs for the residents | District office: invite VIPs, install microphones, amps for the ceremony and event and handle parking; police officers: maintain order | Reproduce the jangseung, jangseungbaegi and other related folklore (a university student and researcher of folklore, reporters from cable TV, newspapers, and photographers) | Attend the jangseung ritual |

these expectations in the hope that the jangseung ritual would become a traditional cultural event that represented the greater Dongjak-gu District beyond Noryangjin.

However, it was clear that the jangseung ritual would not be sustainable solely through the efforts of the Bareugesalgi Committee members. They were also aware that without the help of other interest groups and organizations from other areas, such as the district office and district resident center, the jangseung ritual could not succeed. Realistically, it would be difficult to continue the ritual by only collecting donations. In order to make the ritual a success, they needed administrative support and helping hands from other groups to properly receive resident guests. Delegating responsibilities to participating groups, as shown in Table 3, is a system of cooperation that is essential to the continuation of the jangseung ritual. The will and effort of the sponsoring organization of the ritual and the district policy that recognized the ritual as an important traditional culture and its subsequent provision of government subsidy were all part of the engine that drove the development of the jangseung ritual. Moreover, its progress would not have been possible without the administrative support of the resident center and service-related organizations from other neighborhoods.

On the other hand, the distribution of responsibilities for the jangseung ritual reflected a more complex network of relationships when it was examined through the context of what each group strived for, both communally and individually. All groups participated in the jangseung ritual by carrying out their respective responsibilities, each with its own sense of purpose but working interactively. In addition to the significance of praying for the welfare of the town, the Bareugesalgi Committee considered the jangseung ritual as its most important project. This was the reason they chose not to turn the project over to the district office when some founding members of the jangseung restoration proposed the idea. The Bareugesalgi Committee members believed that they were doing a fine job operating projects in the community, such as the jangseung ritual, which played a vital civic role and set them apart from other towns.²⁵ They also felt

²⁵ The supervisor of the ceremony made cards containing the script and emcee remarks to ensure that the ritual ran smoothly. The committee members also held a meeting prior to the ritual and composed a list of responsibilities for each group. All these procedures were compiled and made into a manual. The manual contained detailed documents including the medical fee receipt of a member who was injured while

fulfilled knowing that they provided residents with opportunities to renew the meaning of tradition through the jangseung and to remember the history of the region.

As for the district office, it regarded the jangseung ritual as one of its official traditional events. The district chief had stated that the meaning of the jangseung ritual was reflected in its relationship with Sayuksin Cultural Festival, the National Cemetery, and Hyosajeong, three of the greatest traditional cultural resources in Dongjak-gu. This suggested that the jangseung ritual was considered a regional historical resource that shared the theme of filial piety with other historical sites. Dongjak-gu branded itself as a “home of filial piety” as a way of utilizing its traditional resources, which was condensed into the idea of loyalty to the nation and filial duty toward one’s parents. This idea was based on the story of the construction of the jangseung of Jangseungbaegi and was inspired by the filial piety demonstrated by Jeongjo to aid his visit to Hyeonryungwon, his father’s gravesite, in Hwaseong. Thus, the jangseung ritual was deemed as an expression of filial piety.

Next, the district resident center assisted the jangseung ritual as part of a resident support project. Citizens frequented this place regularly, and through the center’s interaction and meetings with resident interest groups, its work was effectively communicated, even to rank and file employees. Therefore, by supporting the project championed by the Bareugesalgi Committee, which was one of the most important organizations in its jurisdiction, the resident center carried out its role as a subordinate branch of the district office. Their main goal was to serve those who attended the jangseung ritual and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the Bareugesalgi Committee. Subsequently, the district resident center was delegated to help with the after-party that was held across the street from the ritual site. Employees of the resident center were responsible for installing tents and tables for the feast. After the ritual had concluded, two officials from the center were invited by the Bareugesalgi Committee members to attend a meeting to settle the expense accounts. However, the meeting was also taken as an opportunity for two new officials to introduce themselves to the committee. This incident demonstrated the intimate and

putting up a promotional banner. All these actions testify to the fact that the jangseung ritual was the most important project of this organization, and the process of preparation was streamlined so even a new member could easily take over.

cooperative nature of the relationship between the resident center and organizations within its jurisdiction. It also showed an aspect of regional politics that resulted in mutual benefit.

The formation of this relationship naturally led to the participation of the Saemaeul Women's Council and Nodeul Nongak Samulnori Team, both of which were closely connected to the resident center. Generally, the Bareugesalgi Committee and Saemaeul Women's Council were not as dependent on the resident center as the Resident Association or the Neighborhood Officials Council, since the nature of serving their respective residents required more intimacy. Hence, they participated in smaller neighborhood events. Members supported and attended each other's events, including the jangseung ritual, a yutnori competition, and a party for the neighborhood's elderly. Whenever an event was held within the district jurisdiction, the members of the Saemaeul Women's Council were the first to wrap a green apron around their waist and serve in the kitchen. The Nodeul Nongak Salmulnori Team was formed through a resident cultural program that was sponsored by the district resident center. Aside from the jangseung ritual, they held performances with other groups at the district office hall. They considered their outdoor participation at the jangseung ritual to be an important opportunity and performed every year.²⁶ Their volunteer efforts were repaid through a meal prepared by the Bareugesalgi Committee after the ritual festivities had concluded or through a small donation.

The importance of the relationship between the participating organizations of the jangseung ritual was also internalized and expressed by the residents. First, the residents explained that the ritual was an offering of prayer for the welfare of their town. At the same time, they regarded it as a district-sponsored festivity for the elderly or as one of the neighborhood parties. A few residents expressed that, compared to the *sayuksin* ritual, the size and the level of spectacle of the jangseung ritual were lacking, but they were satisfied by the serving of festival food, as it was the traditional way of celebrating a feast. The residents also emphasized that the continuation of these events was possible because of faithful local workers and the organizations they were a part of. The residents also expressed this sentiment

²⁶ The Nongak Samulnori Team attracted attention and enlivened the spirit of the residents by wearing silly makeup. They created a festive atmosphere by parading between the jangseung ritual site and the party held across the street.

during evaluation; they praised a certain group when food was particularly good and commented on how smoothly the ritual was run.

Another important group of outside participants included the media reporters, photographers, and researchers who covered the jangseung ritual. Their goals were to report and record the jangseung ritual as part of modern folklore. Although they were few in number, they were an important outside group that collected or reproduced folk materials. This group included cable TV stations, internet and newspaper media, photographers, and undergraduate students and researchers from a nearby university. Additionally, even though they did not participate on the day of the ritual, a few activists who were greatly interested in the jangseung and considered it an important part of Korean folklore paid a visit to the jangseung. For example, one visitor who was regarded as a jangseung expert pointed out a problem with the Jangseungbaegi's jangseung. The community members accepted the correction and remedied it when the jangseung was replaced later.²⁷

The jangseung ritual was imbued with subtle yet different meanings by various participating organizations. By overcoming conflict and making compromises, the jangseung ritual secured its place in the community by ensuring its continuation as a meaningful town event. The Bareugesalgi Committee took pride in the fact that they oversaw a unique project every year that was fully their own. The ritual gained a stable foundation through the efforts of the committee to inspire solid cooperation from the government office and regional organizations. In this aspect, the jangseung ritual's survival was dependent on the experience and interaction of the Bareugesalgi Committee and its tradition. For this group, the jangseung ritual was a yearly custom for which they felt the weight of responsibility to continue. In order to successfully carry out the ritual, they created a procedural system and a member manual for ritual makeup, tool storage, and ritual preparation. These efforts were seen as their way of preserving the continuation of the jangseung ritual. While other organizations considered the ritual merely as one of many events they attended, with no regard for their continued practice, the Bareugesalgi Committee members deliberated on

²⁷ When the jangseung was replaced in 2012, they replaced the jihayeojanggun they had initially erected in 1991 with jihadaejanggun, according to the advice of a jangseung expert. The expert claimed that the traditional jangseung was in the form of jihadaejanggun and that jihayeojanggun was a modern concoction.

various issues related to the ritual, such as the expansion of resident participation, location of the ritual, and lack of budget and promotion. They determined that the survival of the ritual was at risk because most of the participants were elderly, and they hoped to include more kindergarten and elementary students in the ritual festivities. The core members, who were in charge of organizing the jangseung ritual, remembered that they received a significant amount of attention many years ago when kindergarteners attended and enlivened the spirit of the ritual. They hoped for a greater turnout of the younger generation in order for the jangseung ritual to become a site for the education of traditional culture.

4. Conclusion

As discussed above, the production and practice of Noryangjin's jangseung ritual illustrates the ways in which ritual events based on tradition were created in Korean society through utilizing their sense of place. As a ritual derived from a newly formed jangseung—not as the village ritual that had been traditionally held in the region—it went through the creative process of merging with the historical narrative of Jangseungbaegi. However, if the residents had not been determined to restore the jangseung or been earnestly engaged in the activities in their community, especially the select few whose efforts and investment in the restoration was paramount, the jangseung ritual may not have been created. Above all, if they had not overcome the conflict with Christian churches during the process of erecting the jangseung and holding the jangseung ritual, the ritual would have been held only a handful of times before it dissolved from people's memory. Its survival and continuation attested to the success of the jangseung ritual, which turned the tradition of a place into a more concrete form of town ritual.

The purpose of this study was to examine the process through which tradition was created and practiced. I conducted this research to supplement the existing discourse on the invention of tradition that was discussed mostly through the cultural and political dynamics of nationalism. Rather than analyzing a tradition that had already been invented or created, I focused on the meaning of tradition that was in the process of being created. Although the social climate of the 1980s was in favor of the expansion of the jangseung as a symbol of tradition, in reality, it was

difficult to preserve the continuation of the jangseung ritual in the same location due to religious conflict and difficult restoration management. The jangseung ritual of Noryangjin was able to continue to exist—even when the jangseung disappeared from a university town where heated debates occurred—thanks to the unrelenting activities of the Bareugesalgi Committee, which acted as the main driving force. When the jangseung was finally erected in 1991, after overcoming much opposition and many trials, one of the resident representatives teared up, saying, “The jangseung of Jangseungbaegi is going to live longer than we are.” This showed how much they loved their work and what their labor meant to them. Further, the pride they felt for accomplishing something a former National Assembly member and a district chief failed to do, and for being able to continue the historicity of Noryangjin’s jangseung, further motivated them to maintain the tradition. As a result, they were able to preserve a unique form of ritual event that was not available anywhere else in Seoul.

Lastly, research on jangseung and jangseung ritual needs to consider that it was not only created as a city event during a time when a flood of studies on the tradition discourse on jangseung surfaced in the late 1980s, but the jangseung ritual is also reproduced in a new form by town residents and outsiders. Although I was not able to conduct comprehensive research on the subject, my intention for this study was to focus on the ways in which an object known as jangseung and a ceremony known as jangseung ritual were produced with diverse meanings in Korean society. The romanticism of the jangseung, which spread from the time of Japanese colonialism, evolved into various forms with specific details since the 1980s. Activities such as miniature jangseung carving demonstrations and lessons, jangseung photography exhibitions, jangseung park construction, and jangseung rituals in hundreds of places across the country testify to their interconnectedness with Noryangjin’s jangseung ritual. Ultimately, the process of creating tradition was also a matter of observing how the intangible cultural traditions in modern Korean society were practiced and examining who held the power to decide the meaning of such practices and their standards.

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