

The Change in Perception of the South Korean Mudang

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Research Question

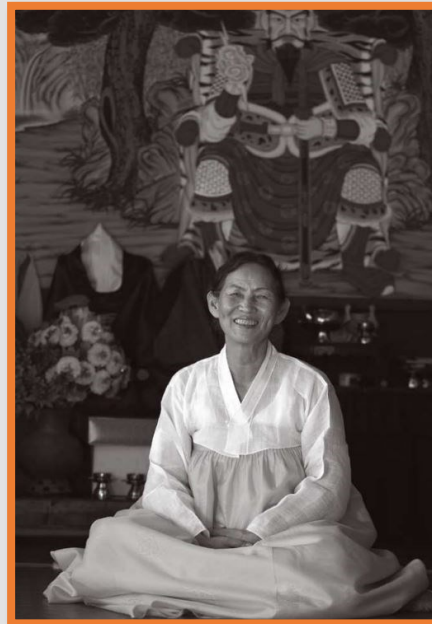
How has the Korean Shaman, or *mudang*, experienced a change in status and perception in modern South Korean society?

Previous Status and Perceptions

- ◇ Traditional gender roles and Confucianism played a role in originally creating a low status for *mudang*, and for the women who practiced this occupation
- ◇ Negative images arose with people's uneasiness and fear with the supernatural aspects of the practice
- ◇ Negative connotations of the *mudang* were encouraged during the cultural suppression that was enforced by the Japanese government during their formal occupation of Korea from 1910-1945

Current Status and Perceptions

- ◇ The installation of Living National Treasures by the current South Korean Government has led to a growth in interest in the *mudang*. National and international recognition arose from performing delegations.
- ◇ The advancement of social media and personal websites have given the *mudang* the ability to self-narrate their story as well as increase their sphere of influence.
- ◇ This paper also examines how the coming new generation does not hold the same superstitions and culturally held beliefs as found in previous generations which has led to a more positive perception of the *mudang* as well as their rise in status in society.



"Kim Keum Hwa: Korea's Foremost Shaman."



"Praying for the Mercy of the Goddess of Wind: Yeongdeung Shaman Rites."

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