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PROLOGUE

I grew up with a dad who has borderline personality disorder. I spent every afternoon with him at home and he was the sweatiest dad in the world, but he often bursted with anger because of it. I got confused by his extremely contradicting attitude towards me. When my mom came home from work I was disheartened and shrunk by his anger. She told me that he didn't mean to hurt me, but he was just haunted by an evil spirit. I believed it and I could handle these situations without hating my dad.

We live in a world full of absurd. Sometimes they can be spoken, but sometimes they cannot be. Like my childhood experience, my mom could not explain to a nine-year-old kid how her dad got to be emotionally unstable and mad at her because of a character disorder. However she still had to convince the kid that her dad loved her, so she took the words of fairytales instead of psychology. Now the kid has grown up and can accept her dad's struggle with psychological definition, but back then it was not the name of the disorder that helped her to keep her faith in dad's love. Because of the unobservable spirit that took over my dad's mind, and because I believed

the story, I could recognize a loving dad instead of suffering from the happening itself.

A lot of stories like it are disappearing. Looking from the outside, they seemed to be surviving, but almost none of them are believed. People in the contemporary don't have a bible that works as a rule book about life, we don't have an altar to pray to a god from old stories. I somehow miss the world of spirits that saved the relationship between my dad and I. I still have a lot of absurd, and there is one old-forgotten god who seemed to be able to save me.

Once upon a time, on the east end of this land, there was a lion, a sacred beast that had a thunderous voice and mighty spirit. Its dance had a special power to defeat the sprites of disease. It was a tutelary of life, listening to wishes from the people and giving everybody the courage to move forward to tomorrow. Anybody who craved relief sang a song of the lion, anybody who despaired danced with him.

This is the story of an imaginary lion in East Asia. Since there was no lion in nature, East Asian people never encountered lions in real life at all, but the

description of a lion traveled and reached the land without its physical features. People imagined the bravest, the strongest monster that was driven by fear. Lion got a clearer description from mouth to mouth and became the hunter of fearful objects. This imagination had been spread over a thousand years and people took the lion as a guardian of life. The story of a lion hunting the source of fear was performed as a communal theatre, helping folks to endure the life that was given. The lion performance had dance and singing elements as a shamanistic ritual wishing a year without disease and disasters.

Even though it's hard to say life in the medieval era was the most abundant, people sang and danced together to hold on to life. Compared to back in the days when the lion was guarding, the era that we live in seemed quite equipped. Humanity now knows how to expect natural disasters and how to prevent man-made accidents. Nevertheless, are we free from disasters?

The word "*catastrophe*" also known as disaster comes from the Latin "*catastrophā*" which means an overturning; a sudden end. It indicates something unpredictable and unavoidable. Under this original definition, quite a lot of things can be in its category.

Like losing a job or loved ones, things that suddenly bring grief to life can be a disaster. Although we have some cool technology to predict the weather tomorrow, we still cannot predict everything. Nonetheless, like not giving up on the harvest of the year with the unexpected drought, people put their hearts into being successful with careers and having happy relationships. Then how do we treat the fear of overturn? Is there a lion beating them away?

I wish I had a story that I believed like in my childhood. I wish I believe the tutelary lion and dance with it.

This is a story about the lion, that has been and will be with us.

IMAGINARY LION

When I was young, my grandma often took me to the Buddhist temple. While she was praying, I was playing in the yard which had a pagoda. On the edge of the pagoda, there was a facial feature that looked like an old grumpy man who used to shout to kids in town. The face caught my attention quite often, and I felt uncomfortable whenever I made eye contact with it. I asked my grandma “**WHY IS HE SO MAD?**”, and she said, “**HE LOOKS MAD TO PROTECT YOU FROM BAD THINGS.**”

The face that I saw was a lion feature sculpted on the side of the pagoda as a guardian. However, it didn't look like Simba from *The Lion King* at all. It's a different kind. This lion appears throughout East Asian culture, mainly in Korea, Japan, and China, especially in shamanic folklore. It doesn't have that much similarity to a real lion aesthetically, rather it looks like a gargyle. Since there had been no lion naturally inhabiting the East Asian region, back in the days without the internet, approximately 1500 years ago, people in the east end of the continent didn't have a chance to see the actual features of lions. It was only via the way Buddhism traveled,

that a few words describing the mysterious beast lion reached the region.

Angular cheek, huge structure, big head, long and high eyebrows, deep mouth and nose, even and sharp teeth, and red shiny hair and tail

The king lion, the guardian harangues every morning.¹

This description was developed as an imaginary animal among people in East Asia, how exactly the lion acquired its physical shape remains an orally transmitted, mythical story. There is no exact document of the original lion story, but most historians conclude that the story was employed by the monarchy using it as a symbol of conquest. The first official mention of the lion in Korea was from Shilla, the dynasty that had been in the peninsula between the third century and the tenth century. According to the record, one king of Shilla, King JI-JEUNG used wooden lions to conquer the Usan island.

People from Usan were ferocious but dumb, so it was not that easy to bring them under only

with force, though good tricks made them surrender easier. King Ji-jeung made wooden lions and faked a show of beasts threatening them. People in Usan got scared and surrendered only in half a day.²

It seemed like King JI-JEUNG had a clear idea of the lion being a fierce and strong beast, but there is no more detailed description of the lion. The above narrative indicates the lion being a terrifying object that was not decipherable by the people on the island. Such lack of description implies that the lion had already become synonymous with a fearful monster. This is followed by the relation between fear and the unknown that is often found in the shaman culture of medieval society, in which the unknown is interpreted as an overwhelming object that cannot be overcome. Considering that Shilla was a monarchy based on shamanism and feudalism, it would not have been difficult to associate a strange beast with a god getting projected fear of the unknown. In this aspect, the only decipherable thing about the fearful object was the fact that it was not figured out. The people on the island didn't know what the monster was, how much power it had, or even how it

could destroy them. The un-disclosure of the object reinforces its frightening function. This phobic projection not only carried the fear but also contained the character of the terror in a sense of annihilation. Since there was no way to overcome the fear of the object, the story's conclusion was fixed. The lion was not a trigger causing some tension between two opposing states, it was an ultimate threat, a fear at the far end, that put an end to all confrontations, which would remain an unknown mystery forever.

Around the 600s, the lion feature started being used as a guardian of Buddhist scriptures on pagodas and sculptures in temples. Usually, it was placed under the statue of Buddha as a decorative stone basis, and this structure was developed into a specific pedestal style in Shilla. In certain temples, the god of law had a carved ornament of a lion holding a torn body part in its mouth on the shoulder or belly, as an aide and an executor of the god who protected Buddhist scriptures. This revealed a change in the idea projected to the lion, which started to become a pragmatic part of the story. The lion didn't stay as a figure of terror that was impossible to overcome, instead, it became an active character that plays a role. Now as part of Buddhist symbolism, the lion

was no longer an unknown monster. It has taken on a particular role of fear, of uncertainty, through which people were able to challenge and reflect upon themselves. The once fierce and punitive figure standing in the temple now opened the chance for growth and development. This signals a change in the perspective of the inhabitants of Shilla becoming more sophisticated: they put a clearer character to the fear, instead of leaving it behind the veil.

Royal tombs from the 700s in Shilla started to have two gatekeeping lions beside the entrance which is connected to the lion being a powerful symbol in the society. From this period, the lion had been actively used in mural art in the tombs, temples, and sanctuaries to reinforce divinity. **SUNG-DUK ROYAL TOMB(736)** was the first official royal tomb with lion statues, which was the start of the expanded application of the character in the monarchy. **CHUN-YANG BRIDGE** and **WOL-JUNG BRIDGE** from the 760s had a road sign sculpture with a lion figure, indicating a sacred sanctuary where the first king of Shilla was born. Also, stone lion sculptures were used for the road sign heading to the royal palace, marking the realm of the monarchy and reassuring the authority of the king. They were looking down at the viewer

like in Gothic architecture as well.

After the 7th century, not only was lion sculpture actively confirmed as a guard among the governing authority, but also there appeared a performance piece presenting the lion: the lion dance. The first record of the lion dance appeared in the poem from the archived series of theatrical art in Shilla, written in the 9th Century.

Coming from far far away,
crossing the desert for thousands of days
All the hairs languished and dusted
Though raising their head,
stretching their tail vibrates the air
Their breath could not be compared to
any beast³

The series is referred to as one of the most important records of mask dance in ancient Korea, describing the shamanic performance art which was an essential element in feudal societies. There were five original Korean shaman dances described in the poem which all had functions as an enchanting ritual. Each of them had a different protagonist with a special power. GUM-HUAN was a dance with a round object

representing a total eclipse. It was said to quell the waves. **WOL-JEON** was a comedy play about a mysterious spirit with blue eyes and unusually tall height proving the power of enjoyment, who was admired as a god of laughter. **DAE-MYEON** was a performance with small bells in which a golden mask hero defeated ghosts. Sokdok was a dance of goblins using knives in each hand, thanking the martial god for attainment. The last one was about the lion, whose spirit shook heaven and earth, sweeping away evil spirits. Considering that these five dance pieces are referred to as the most commonly performed show in Shilla, it reveals that the lion transformed into a super-powered character in the culture shared through communal unconsciousness, taking an obvious role in people's minds as a shaman.

Among the characters beating up the evil, the lion especially has a unique dynamic with fear. The character that had been built from the state of being unknown causing fear became a hero that removed the evils representing fearful objects. It is a subversion of states, flipping upside and downside, blurring the division between the subject and the object. In the story of the lion, the source of the fear is the punisher of the fear, which also hints that the fear

itself should be punished, that fear itself is fearful. Moreover, it can be said that the lion changed and stood high as a supervisor and a savior of people. The narrative turned upside down.

This dynamic is also observed in the lion in Shilla. After the 8th century, the lion was normalized not only in architecture but also for small objects like incense burners. Getting spread out as a common character in craft among folks, the lion feature was made a caricature which was in-between the monster and the clown. The scale with an engraved lion found in the temple from Shilla is assumed to be used for measuring the amount of grain, implying that it had been used in the design of daily tools. At this time the lion appeared with weirdly big eyes and a mouth that looked somewhat creepy and hilarious, containing the aspect of a threatening punisher and friendly guardian at the same time.

It is related to the humorous aspect of Korean culture which consists of making fun of frightening objects, lessening the weight of the fear. Coming in and out of seriousness is the core strategy in Korean folk culture. The evil object being made fun of is easily observed in Korean theatre, which used to console the tired souls of commoners. More than

half of Korean traditional plays have this narrative structure in which the corrupted high-class people like horny monks or greedy bureaucrats get made fun of by a righteous hero as a punishment. This punishment not only provides a psychological compensation for the lower class to bear life with less, but it also makes the weight of absurd (in this case, the injustice of evil people living well) light. It is a typical tactic of comedy, often found in Western theatre as well, though this method in Korea has a different importance. The humor that supports enduring absurd reflects a certain mindset in Korean common unconsciousness.

There is an original Korean word called **HAN**, representing the character of Korean unconsciousness, which means sorrow or pain from life that is supposed to be dealt with by each individual as their own. This term indicates both such feeling itself but also contains a type of attitude and action a person takes towards the sorrow. In the concept of **HAN**, sorrow that the subject feels is a portion that is given to them, waiting to be digested. However, it doesn't mean that it's mandatory to swallow sadness. Grief is something just there in everyone's life, but the execution of mourning is up to each person.

Having HAN in someone's mind means the person constantly mourns themselves. Mourning is a process of accepting the loss, admitting the fact that the lost object is in the past and cannot be back. The process of distinguishing the loss in the present from the memory in the past is a kind of repression. To not lose oneself under the repression of the past, the person needs confirmation that the loss is invincible and unavoidable both internally and externally. The subject needs to express their grief and via getting empathy from outside the loss gets confirmed as inescapable. With the perception of inevitable loss, the person can be in grief for some time and move on. HAN includes all mourns that one has had in one's life. The definition of HAN includes temporality, embracing the pain of the loss, and continuously grieving the past as an ungraspable yet once-grasped entity.

It is an attitude of life accommodating hardship rather than trying to fix it. The weight isn't easy to carry, but there is a tactic to take it joyfully.

The secret is

“MU”

MU

Once upon a time, there was a son of a dragon called Cheoyong. He protected the human kingdom from evils and assisted in royal affairs. He had a beautiful wife, and there was a spirit of sickness who was secretly in love with her.

One day, the spirit transformed himself into the feature of Cheoyong and knocked at his door like him coming back from work. Cheoyong's wife was fooled and opened the door.

When Cheoyong came home, he found out his wife had an affair with the spirit. Instead of lashing out in anger he immediately burst into a mysterious dance, singing an entrancing tune all the while. His dancing and singing kicked the evil spirit off.

From then on, people started to dance and sing to defeat evil.⁴

This is the origin of MU, the myth of CHEOYONG. MU or Muism, refers to Korean shamanism. It is both

an outlook that existed in the past and a mentality that has been transmitted generationally through the history of the Korean Peninsula. It is classified as a folk religion, having no central authority in control of its belief system. It is polytheistic, having diverse deities from the first king the son of the sky to a little boy who died when he was five. There is no hierarchy between deities, but a classification exists, which depends on the believer's point of view. There are three types of deities, that are family gods, village gods, and foreign gods. Since *MU* is based on rituals from the community, the parameter to perceive the world is a unit of community. Interestingly, perception in *MU* is always subjective. There is no definitely decided heaven or hell, but only here and there that dictates the location of the speaker. That is why *MU* doesn't have the concept of redemption. *MU* stems from the desire to sustain life on the track of circulation, appreciating unpredictable values.

Like the story of *CHEOYONG*, *MU* consists of rituals with dancing and singing that change the state. Defeating the spirit of sickness in the myth can be seen as curing a sick person. *MU* is to wish to change death to life, not being to being, sorrow to joy. It's an execution that desires transition from short to

long, from weak to strong, and from fate to choice. Therefore, it aims to turn a finite being into an eternal one, which derives from the afterlife paradigm of MU in which life and death just exist in the providence of the natural cycle. In MU, what human perceives, like emotions and thoughts, are just temporary statues running in the cycle. Because all things are in the principle of circulation, sorrow is joy and fun is grief, the dead can live and life can die. MU is facing the state in the present and dreaming of the other state at the other time.

In Seoul, under shining moonlight
Coming home late at night
There are four legs on my bed
Two of them are my love's
Whose are the other two?
It was mine, but now is stolen
What can I do, it is what it is⁵

CHEOYONG's song feels like resigning himself. It doesn't look like a lament from a person who accidentally found out his wife cheated on him, rather it sounds like a narration from a third person. The subject of the situation made himself an object,

blurring the border between the protagonist and the narrator. The emotions of a singer are excluded from the lyrics, which only list the view of the scene. This is followed by the audience receiving the story drily but the said person is speaking, which confuses the separation between me and the other. Singing in **MU** has the same character that the story is spoken by a god but the singer is a narrator.

MUDANG, the priest of **MU**, leads the ritual and functions as a bridge between gods and humans. Unlike half-god **CHEOYONG**, since mudangs are humans without magical powers, they need to be possessed by a deity to ward off evils. Music and dance in **Mu** is a tool for that, to be united with a deity. There needs **SHINMYEONG**, which is an entering of the joyful condition of being possessed of a god. **SHINMYEONG** can be translated literally as god's being or a life of god, and it is commonly used in daily conversation as a term for joy or excitement from rhythmic elements. When **SHINMYEONG** comes, a mudang embraces the deity taking over the body, experiencing a state of ecstasy. It is forgetting about oneself and letting oneself be on an exciting flow that connects different states. It is the priest who starts to dance and sing, but the one who runs the

excitement is the god. This relation implies passive activeness from a human following the god, in which a human serves a god with obedience and is served with ecstasy.

HAN has a common principle with MU, being passively active in facing one's reality. Both concepts contain recognizing the limit of the possibility and willingly choosing to embrace those unchangeable defaults. Carrying HAN is to keep longing for the lost object, which demands ceaseless cognizing of the loss. This matches the ritual process of MU where the subject confronts the status quo and wishes to be the other being across the cycle. Longing for one who cannot come back and wishing for a being that does not exist here, both don't make sense from modern scientism's point of view. Logical thinking only identifies reality(HERE), excluding death(THERE) from cognition, and then all desires and projections heading THERE (death) become useless.

How long have we been blinding ourselves from death?



Kashmir earthquake, 2005
Buildings ruined in the 7.6-magnitude earthquake that struck
Pakistan and Kashmir

DISASTER

When you search the word disaster on a search engine, you see many images of ruins of natural disasters like an earthquake. Destroyed wreckages of buildings from humongous power are not easy to recognize how they functioned before. It is the end of one state where chaos takes place after a happening, meaning the original function and the goal of the subject are of no use. This state of chaos is against the memory of the subject stored in the other's mind, feeling like denying the existence of the subject that happened before. Nevertheless, the point is that being is not solid but a state.

Based on the scientific point of view that humanity has chosen for the last two centuries, we consider the world as what is in front of us physically. Led by Isaac Newton(1642~1726), the scientific revolution dragged humanity towards formulating the observed into a logical linguistic system. During this process, we have learned how to specify phenomena into each case and achieved utilizing the world absorbed as technology in daily life. If Galilei hadn't said that the Earth is round, we would not be able to use the internet which relies on satellites.

Starting from the question of why apples drop from the tree, humans have believed only parts of the world that you see at the moment, in which superstitions and religious dogmas have lost their space. We don't take old stories relating reality with the other world seriously but try to figure out what it is with propositions, like seeing a doctor and figuring out the cause of the pain when someone is sick instead of being frozen with fear and wishing to a god to save them. This method derives from casual thinking, which presumes that all factors should be observed in reality(HERE). It has pulled the paradigm to help the development of employing existing elements of the world, though we have been excluding the other(THERE). The reality that we analyze is the orderly state. In regards to using factors only observed here and now, the formulated perception fails a state of chaos(THERE). This leads to solidifying a state of order, where a collision between investigated reality at the moment(HERE) and being aware of death(THERE) happens. We've got to eliminate a being of death, which is not here but the state that will come.

Although logical thinking has carried out the major incidents of history and even is a pillar of how this paper is shaped, it is limited to a certain extent.

When a person sees a doctor for their painful symptoms, they can get the name of a disease or the cause of the pain. Symptoms get analyzed and defined, which leads to the prescription of pills and therapy that represses the pain. It reflects the desire to avoid the death that is inevitably at the end of the pain as if such avoidance can actually be accomplished.

This prescription to pursue a longer life is also observed in the era of magic before the scientific revolution, but with a different approach. Instead of potions that would ease the pain, the priests of **MU** prescribed a rite to offer food to deities in sacrifice. The notable thing is that the deities getting served are not the ones who will rescue the people from sickness but the ones who give sickness to them. Until the 1600s in Korea, smallpox had been one of the most fatal diseases that took away people's lives, and there was a group of gods bringing smallpox called "*the guests*". When they visited a town, the people sincerely prepared food together and the priest representing the town carried out a ritual dedicating the food to the guests. It was believed that the guests were on their destined way and it was inevitable to have them passing the district, but if they were served well they would not give a harsh one that

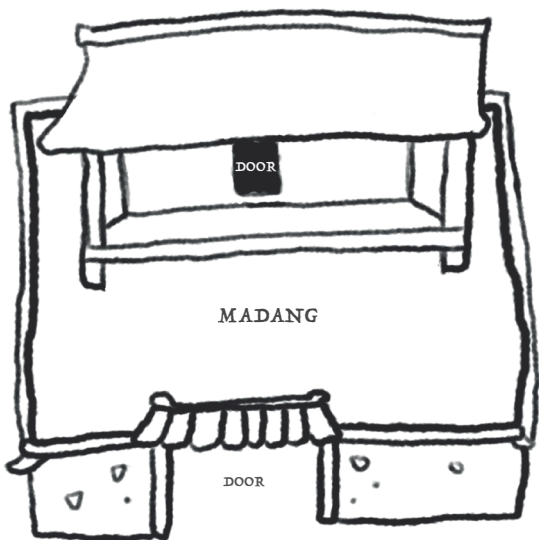
killed people or left hideous scars. This approach to disease differs from modern doctors', especially considering the invincibility of pain. Both cases dream of life without pain but the modern one does not take into account the fact that pain cannot be eradicated, whereas the one of $\mathcal{M}\mathcal{U}$ lets an ideal absence of pain coincide with the unavoidable presence of pain as both being "here". The first one is more executive and statistically has reduced the number of people who suffer and die from diseases, but left the question of how we confront the reality full of pains.

Pain is an alarm toward the threat. It is not an enemy that we have to fight with but is ourselves fighting the outside world. It explains something ahead the realm that we see, where our body is the world itself. When a virus invades the world, pain emergence is a sound of defense from a garrison of the world. Fear is similar to that signal from the world that is not visible to the eyes, as a matter of mind's survival. It is a reaction of the mind that only sees space toward time, facing the position of itself never being able to see the future on a line. The etymological definition of disaster is a sudden accident that can be explained as an unpredictable overturn. Fear is a symptom of the mind toward

the invasion of sudden happenings against memory and cognition.

Ironically, the modern perspective on sickness excludes pain(THERE) via diagnosing and curing diseases but it also excludes itself from reality(HERE) in which death(THERE) is fated to come. This isolation often causes the lack of will to wish for better, appearing in the form of depression, the chronic disease of the contemporary. Under the illusion of eternal life, it is not that hard to be oblivious to death(THERE) and be lost in reality(HERE) forgetting what we have to wish, pray and fight for. It is being in reality(HERE) with a loss of life(HERE) and death(THERE).

In the era that we live in, some people mourn death with psychology, some others with religion, and some with other ways like art or philosophy. But I would like to continue especially with how the loss from death can be mourned with a mentality of HAN and in a forgotten virtue of MU. For that, there needs a sanctuary called MADANG.



the space between the door to the outside and the door to the inside

THE LION'S SANCTUARY

MADANG indicates a space between the gate and the buildings in Korean traditional architecture.

Traditional house in Korea consists of one or two buildings and walls and a gate, regardless of class or wealth. There can be separated buildings of more than two from the higher class, but from the palace of the king to a house of folks, the basic parameter to count households is the main gate of the space distinguishing the range of inside. Between the main entrance to the next door, there is a *MADANG* that looks like a yard bridging the inside and outside.

It functions as a space mediating the inside and outside, a stage where people gather. When guests from outside of the household visit the house, *MADANG* is where people of the household encounter them first. It is where two different worlds cross each other. The structure is also found in bigger measurements. Each Korean town in history has the same form, having a *MADANG* as a path connecting the first door and the residential area. This shape is also reflected in modern apartments in Korea, having a living room right next to the main door and not having a linear corridor space in the house. It shows

the distinguishable perception of being in-between from Western culture, revealing the space in the middle of each thing as an open space not only a line connecting different things. In regards to the structure that has been in general Korean space design, being in between is recognized as a circle.

This circular space in between was used as a stage for the communal shaman rituals of *MU*. From family-scale rites to nation-scale ones, the ritual happened in a *MADANG* that bridged the inside and the outside of the unit. The performance of wishing for a better life(HERE) was a prayer to the gods in another world(THERE). The *MADANG* played a role as a mediator connecting the world to the next world as an extension of its character in architecture, as the sanctuary cushioning humans and divinity.

This is the reason why some rites of *MU* that were specifically developed into folk theatre are called *MADANG*-dance. *MADANG* dance is distinct from *MU* rituals with the focus on roleplay, having multiple performers acting in each role not only as a narrator, but both had the fundamental praying function of the shaman. It used to be executed by the people in the community unit, played by the laborers who were the prayer, consolidating the subject of

labor and the performer. The farmer who wished for a bumper crop played the role of a deity of abundance, and the subject who wanted not to be sick played the role of a god who had the power to give disease.

This aspect is revealed well in the lion dance mentioned at the beginning, which is also classified as a **MADANG** dance. The lion dance developed from 9C to 15C and settled as a regional traditional folk performance from all districts in Korea. Each region had a slightly different plot but there was a common story in which the lion gets to hunt the fearful objects with its dance containing the power to frighten evils. This can be read on the same base as **CHEOYONG**'s dance, transferring the frustration into enjoyment, therefore overcoming the threats.

Hey you jester, please come and amuse
the lion for the whole year!⁶

It is a line from an old man in the lion dance, showing that the plot enables people to contact the lion, not only praising it as an untouchable god. The play is narrated by a jester, who adds comments as an extra explanation and breaks the third wall by

talking to the audience. The main characters who get help from the lion differ in each region, but are usually socially weak: like the elderly, the disabled, or the single mom. With enhancing comments from the jester, the lion eats the fearful objects when they harass the protagonists. During the whole time, the jester asks for opinions and communicates to the audience directly, heightening the atmosphere in the circle. *MADANG*'s shape matches this aspect of the show in which the distinction between the performers and the spectators is blurred, not discriminating between the stage and the house vertically but putting them horizontally as a circle. The audience surrounding the circle helps the communal enhancement of the show, uniting everybody into one lump of excitement deriving from the pain of life.

This is where the spirit of *MU* was placed in reality with an execution from the parties. Consisting of the jester's comments, the protagonist's screams, and the audience's cheers, the air in the space becomes a synchronized vibration from the different voices. It's the moment that the breaths from different speaking get the power to give the breath to the lion. The airflow of wishing echoes the space, bonding the people in the space and running the lion.

Nothing changes at the moment, and everything changes.

The most exclamatory words that were said by both the jester and the audience in the show were “SHINMYEONG IS BEING!”. This indicates not only the lion god’s being in the space at the moment but also the communal ecstasy that people experience together, implying each person becomes a mudang (the priest of MU) during the show. The lion dance was developed as a different branch from MU rituals, though it kept the core mentality of MU as the execution happening by believers.

The performance happened on the first day of every year by the lunar calendar, in every unit of the community, usually a town. It was the biggest communal event and a symbolic pillar that showed how Korean communal subconsciousness held the paradigm of shamanism in feudal society. Magic and superstitions were there in the shape of wills accepting the current impossibility of itself, transferring different individuals into a community with a united mind, furthermore integrating them into mere humans who could not change their fate. The lion who came from fear and who hunted the fear was a alive manifestation of the mentality of

passive activeness.

The lion inherits the character of **MU**, where the transition between being and not being happens. It was a treat to hold on to reality(HERE) full of han. Therefore, the **MADANG** was a sanctuary of the lion, existing in every unit of being and implying the potential state transfer.

21ST-CENTURY SHINMYEONG

Where can we see the lion in the current world?

We don't have a sanctuary like **MADANG**, nor a unit of community that gathers wishes altogether. The unit of life has been divided into individuals instead of forming a group of people, though the elements that consist of each individual have been specified. We don't take over the family business but consider who I am on a level of a person's mind to choose what each of us does for life. Identity is not one thing in the contemporary, being followed by various categories of sex, character, tendency, and preference. This is also related to having many different gods instead of a common one. Regarding Friedrich Nietzsche(1844~1900), the god was dead, but instead, countless gods were born. In the past, the words of the one and only god were absolute to people who believed him, but now there are multiple gods consisting of images of objects.

Some people pursue romantic love as the object, and some chase money and belonging. Sometimes they get to hold their career more than the one before and sometimes they have no god. Relationships, knowledge, technology, beauty, and

uncountable images are floating in each person's mind, being fluid and not fixed. Regardless of what the person picks for the object, individuals must get to experience disaster(absurd) on the way to pursue it. Not being able to be successful with a job even if the person did their best and going through a harsh breakup without knowing the other one's story can be examples.

Clubs and bars are two of the places where these people going through disasters gather. Drinking and getting tipsy leads people to be in a state of release, easing the tension of the people and erasing the weight coming from maintaining a unit of the individual in society. This is similar to what happened in *MU* rituals and the lion dance in the past, erasing oneself and actively accepting the excitement coming from the other's force that doesn't consider one's will. However, the current one fundamentally differs from the previous one since the ecstasy does not align with the gods of each person. During the rapture, only people's feeling of entrancing is synchronized, not the whole narrative of the objects. It can be called *21ST-CENTURY SHINMYEONG*, a group of countless isolated gods being in the same tuned channel.

This aspect is commonly observed at a rave as well. It is not hard to find people who have never met each other before and have no common ground dancing and chatting together for hours at the party. Although, they are tuned into the same vibration on entrancing music, being dipped in SHINMYEONG came from different story strands. In this case, it has more things in common with the past SHINMYEONG than the one above, having enhancing music that enables people to reach the trance regardless of music knowledge. The music used in MADANG theatre is focused on the vibrating sound from metal, consisting of percussion making echoes in the space. The rhythm is not complex nor swiny, varies only with the speed which easily guides people in the same air vibrancy. People do not have to know how to follow the rhythm or the structure of the process to take on the flow. Electronic music in raves works similarly, holding people in a space full of repetitive bouncing air which becomes the only common ground for strangers.

The isolated communal SHINMYEONG can be also found in different places. It is not necessary to be in the same space to be in the same SHINMYEONG in the present. The Internet allows people to sing

and listen to the same songs wherever they are on the planet. On the lead of mass culture, pop music spreads mostly among music, which has different stories for each that can be empathized with similar disasters on storylines that differ from each other. This creates an interesting aspect of comment culture on the internet, in which people tend to put their experiences together with the narrative of the song. This can be seen as trials to synchronize each god from individuals, emerging the willingness to recognize their disaster publicly with others. It is a process of mourning, ironically with a reversed order from HAN in the community culture. When the community confirmed the disaster together in the past, then HAN followed it in each person's mind as an attitude of accepting reality. But in the case of contemporary pop songs, individuals first get to perceive and accept their own experience(it can be shared with their acquaintances, but still exists on a level of individuals, not on a unit of the community), and then they get to confirm it publicly with the music.

Even though how we dance to live is quite different from the past, a notable thing is that SHIN-MYEONG(a life of god) still exists in the present. The shared common object has faded and it seems that

we have forgotten death(THERE), but still, we've been getting through countless losses every moment and have been mourning them constantly. How we tag those executions is not the same at all, although these differences validate the unchangeable disasters that we have had. 21ST-CENTURY SHINMYEONG implies the wisdom of life penetrating time, which is how to surrender responsibly.



EPILOGUE

I still remember when I first got to know about the name of personality disorder that my dad has. First, I was quite excited to understand something was not clear enough, and then I felt endless sadness for my dad and also for myself who got anxious about it. I felt deeply let down for a few weeks and my sorrow was lost in its direction. I could not blame him, nor his parents and siblings who probably provoked it, since life is like a woven chain that never comes from isolated factors. But after those weeks, I could appreciate my family, much more actively surrendering.

Looking back on these times, I think I have been mourning these inevitable disasters just in different ways. A confirmation that approves it as unavoidable was in different shapes, as a tale in childhood and now as a psychoanalytic approach, but still both are just a way to accept what it is. Whether my dad was haunted or not, if my dad was diagnosed with borderline character disorder or not, I have known that it was not my fault when he burst his anger, and I danced enough to mourn the disaster.

There is no **MADANG** where the lion dances anymore,
but the lion still dances.

And I believe we will keep dancing as well.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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Lion dance:
how to surrender responsibly
by Eleri

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