

# The Concept of Agricultural People and Changes in their Worldviews

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This paper examines form of rituals and changes in the worldviews based on changes in perceptions during the period when agricultural production began and became common due to the entry into an agricultural society. Regardless of the quantity, the social structural and conceptual changes that occurred during the process of entering into an agricultural society were known to be great enough to be called epochal. The Korean peninsula went through many changes in the perception of its people when it became an agricultural society as opposed to mainly hunting or foraging society. People became aware of vegetation growth and disappearance, as well as changes in weather and in natural phenomena. Concrete understanding of phenomena and things such as concepts of production and bountifulness, life, death, regeneration, and the land god began to appear around this time period. Such thoughts were represented in various rituals such as agricultural or burial rituals.

Perceptual changes from believing in ambiguous nature worship to more functional gods such as Mother Nature or ancestral gods are closely related to the development of social structure. The concept of boundaries was established in communities as population increased and society developed. Living space, production space, tomb space, and ritual space were clearly distinguished, and each ritual was performed in a standardized format. The main rituals were made up of agricultural rituals or the ritual of escorting the body to the gravesite where members of the group jointly participated, and the burying of bronze-ware was initiated by water burial. The function of group rituals within a community is to unify the society by strengthening the relations and bonds among its members and to maintain and develop the entire society.

The agricultural society in the southern part of the Korean peninsula not only developed in terms of politics and socioeconomics but was also equipped with a standardized framework in terms of religion and faith. It is important for the development of society to be supported by the spiritual as well as the political and economic aspects. The central power in prehistoric and ancient societies seems to lie within the spiritual such as faith or rituals. Various rituals of agricultural society that accompany practical behavior are valued as having exerted great influence on the transformation and development processes of society. Southern parts of the Korean peninsula continued to inherit and develop worldviews along with social changes for a long period after entering the stage of agricultural society.

*Keywords: Changes in the worldviews, concept of territory, awareness of time, land god, ancestral god.*

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## Introduction

Though it may not be the case for all regions in the Korean peninsula, most of the regions located in the middle and southern areas of the peninsula turned themselves into agricultural regions when they entered the late Neolithic period or the later days of the Bronze Age. Remains of grain pieces indicating rice, barley, wheat, millet and other types of cereals were found in the sites of the Yeosu Heunam-ri or Jinju Daepyeong-ri areas. Certain types of agricultural utensils like the crescent-shaped stone knife are being discovered, too. Especially in the Jinju Daepyeong-ri vestige that is located in the Nam-gang River area, what seems like a dry field previously and apparently hailing from the Bronze Age, is spread across thousands of *pyeong* (unit of measuring land). Water fields from the early days of the Bronze Age were also identified at the sites of the Milyang Geumcheon-ri and Ulsan Mugeo-dong areas. Cereal remains were found along with pottery containing an impressed cordon from the Daepyeong-ri vestige, informing us that agricultural activities were in place during the end of the Comb Pattern Pottery Period to the early Mumun Pottery Period.

It seems that environmental changes were the prime factor among many reasons that prompted the change in the inhabitants' way of producing things for their own living. Around the tenth century B.C., rice, barley, wheat, and millet were all being planted and cultivated and in such fashion, the social structure was being turned into something that was quite capable of agricultural production. Why did humanity begin to accept agriculture as a method of production, or was it an inevitable choice because of the increase in population, or was the population increase instead the reason for such a choice (choosing agriculture)? These are all legitimate questions that deserve answers, yet none are available. All we can guess is that the change should have been inevitable, and it should have taken a very long time to complete this kind of change in which humanity shifted its greatest engagement from hunting or collection to agricultural production.<sup>1</sup> That shift had literally changed everything for humanity.

1. Some researchers argue that it would not be appropriate or accurate to assume that the people who engaged in agricultural production would have had a better life than those who were still engaged in hunting and collection (Jared Diamond and Kim Jin-jun trans.), 1998: 159-165; Ahn Seung-mo 1998: 52). There is also a very high possibility that the agricultural people would not have taken the path of embracing agriculture if they had any idea of the upcoming or entailing difficulties. Arguments of this kind suggest that agriculture certainly did not bring only joy or a better life to humanity. They also believe that the adoption of agriculture was merely a newly risen necessity in order to raise the productivity in a certain size of land.

In this study, this researcher is trying to examine the rituals and certain views of the world that were generated during the era when agricultural production was initiated and became an established way of life. Considering the general traits of mankind, it is not difficult to assume that new rituals would have been developed when humanity adopted agricultural production for the first time. Regardless of the region or culture, entering an agricultural phase was a significant change for the inhabitants, in not only physical but also psychological terms. And the Korean peninsula could not have been an exception. Evidence that has been excavated so far should contain some information regarding such changes. Yet rituals were mainly performed or expressed in verbal terms or through written media, so depending solely upon archaeological artifacts to extract such information may not be entirely advisable. In this research, not only archaeological data but also documented texts and other folklore sources from later periods will all be consulted to reach the researcher's goal.

### **Characteristics of Agricultural Society and Their Perception of Things**

Entering the agricultural phase, the size of communities or villages grew, and the people started to demonstrate a more concentrated fashion in choosing their living habitats. That led to eventual stratification, which formed a classification system in the process. This is confirmed by evidence including large tombs, or other traces such as bronze-utensils (ritual items) that were buried along with the dead who must have had a definitive hierarchical power in their lifetime. Changes like these that occur in production methods or social structure and caused by environmental or technological shifts usually have significant influence upon the inhabitants' consciousness and their ways of viewing the outer world. So it would be fairly presumptuous not to think that there might have been any changes in the people's view of the world when they adopted agricultural production methods.

In ancient time periods, humanity engaged in hunting or gathering that were not in violation of the natural order, but they became predators whose actions were in some ways meant to destroy the natural environment when they shifted their methods to agricultural production. Due to such changes, their mindsets were destined to go through some alterations, although we do not know which one preceded the other. When fighting against nature, people must have started

to feel significant resistance and challenge or feel their own shortcomings and weaknesses. So they must have started to develop new ways to counteract nature's hindrances in order to maintain their new way of life; thus, people had to stick close to each other in order to survive.

Humanity has shown for many centuries that they tend to feel fear and awe in the presence of the paranormal, supernatural phenomena, and at the same time they feel inclined to pray for something that could not be achieved by humans themselves but could be accomplished only with the help of such power. That is what has hatched countless forms of rituals and protocols for such a long time. This kind of trait should have been more strongly demonstrated by the agricultural people, as they were literally defying nature's orders. But instead of resorting to believing in ambiguous forms of forces such as the sky or the rivers, or simply engaging in totem worship, they chose to believe in more functional gods such as Mother Nature, ancestral gods, or the agricultural god, for example. And other new patterns of thought, like perceiving the chronological or temporal changes such as the plants' growth and demise, or perceiving the concept of established living spaces, or creating large tombs to serve the ancestral gods, began to emerge and be polished.

## **Rituals of Agricultural Society**

### 1. Types of Rituals

The rituals of the agricultural people were distinctively related to every aspect of their lives, and the ones that were most prevalent were the ones designed for agricultural production and funeral rites.

#### a. Rituals regarding agricultural matters

In a sense, we could say that agriculture is at the mercy of climate and other environmental situations. Due to such a reason, agriculture itself has shown for centuries some unique qualities such as the underlining image of "revitalizing" and "rebirth" (M. Eliade, 堀一郎譯, 1968: 123-127), the sentiment of hope for a rich harvest, and gratitude for such a result that makes all literally beg with ritualistic actions. Agricultural production is also not a job for a single person. A collective of manual labor-force should be arranged to see the task through, and that kind of mandate also makes the agricultural rituals another potent barometer

of the degree of bonding formed inside a certain group of people. In other words, the most important ritual for internal solidarity was the one that originated from agricultural activities such as agricultural praying services (金關 恕 1986: 226).

Distinct evidence regarding the agricultural rituals were found from the dry land of Eoeun section No.1 of the Jinju Daepyeong-ri vestige. Agricultural utensils like stone axes, stone sickles, crescent-shaped stone knives, military equipment such as stone knives and arrowheads, and other artifacts like unstriated earthenware, shards of red burnished pot, dragnet bob (耒), pyramidal bob (耒), earthenware marbles and jade materials were included as such evidence. A notable characteristic shared by all the artifacts retrieved from these sites is that they are all deliberately damaged in some fashion. This suggests that there had been specifically designed acts with a certain objective to intentionally damage or alter the physical shape of an artifact. In the case of earthenware, there are holes punctured on the surface or the base is removed. In the case of stoneware, they are intentionally broken into pieces and reassembled to feature a different shape. There are also imitations of practical utensils, such as miniature stoneware objects, round-shaped stone utensils and little pieces of earthenware, that draw our attention. For example, there have been a great many earthenware-based agricultural utensils retrieved, but considering their size and nature they cannot be items that had been meant for practical usage. Instead, they must have been related to or directly involved in agricultural rituals. There was also some kind of habit of throwing an agricultural utensil into the middle of dry land, which should have been an act designed to look like cultivating the land, in the hope of a good harvest.

One of the most notable artifacts is the ritual artifact with agricultural design. Drawn on the exterior of the item are a certain person's figure of cultivating the land with a small plow, pictures of utensils, and drawings of a person digging a hole with a hoe. On first sight, the pictures seem to be suggesting a fairly ordinary action. But on the other side of the item, a figure of a bird symbolizing a Sotdae (a wooden pole with birds on its top) and a man's naked body with a feather attached to his head are all distinctively recognizable, so we can see that this artifact is related to some kind of a ritual, describing a part of an ongoing ritualistic process. The original reporter of this artifact, Han Byeong Sam (1972), suggested that this cultivating posture and action of putting grain inside a jar were in fact actions of embracing the ancestral spirits during the time of cultivation in spring and harvesting in fall. Kim Byeong Mo(1995: 46-47) thought that

the figure of the man who is naked yet wearing an official hat and carrying a small plow utensil is symbolizing the priests, who would have conducted important sessions of agricultural ritual. (田中 勝弘 1994: 25) interpreted the action as a representation of hope delivered “in advance” (예축의례: 豫祝儀禮), an act of praying for a rich harvest. Staged on dry field space, this bronze-ware definitely indicates a leading figure conducting (overseeing) agriculture-related rituals. What should be noted is that the genitals of the man in question are depicted in a very sharp fashion, which in turn makes it most apparent that this person is truly naked. This fashion of cultivation, performed by a naked person, is often referred to as Nagyeong (裸耕), and it is a very similar finding to those seen in the Gangweon-do and Hamgyeong-do areas. This Nagyeong custom required a naked, unmarried man with a big penis to assume a cultivating posture with a fake cow(made of wood or earthenware) in his control and was performed on the 15th day of Lunar January in the hope of bringing a rich harvest. This is a custom harboring a very similar intention that also underlined the custom of throwing fake agricultural utensils into the dry field. Erotic customs regarding rich harvests are also, not hard to find elsewhere. The peasants of Estonia believed that they could ensure rich harvests by cultivating the land naked. In some places, women were required to cultivate the land naked themselves, and they also soaked their hoes with water, which in itself symbolized not only rain but also semen from men(M. Elide, 堀 一郎 譯, 1968: 232-234). We can see such agricultural rituals were continued for a very long time.

In conclusion, we can see that agricultural rituals were related to the gods of the earth or of agriculture, and the methods or appearances of such rituals certainly had imitation-based skills and incantation-based intentions. They were usually performed when the agricultural cycle initiated in spring. It is indeed hard to obtain any information regarding the harvest rituals that would have taken place in fall. Burnt Red burnished pottery artifacts barely suggest the existence of such rituals. We will dig more.

#### b. Rituals Regarding Funeral Rites

Since when has humanity started to perceive death in certain terms, and what were the contents of that perception are solid questions of which the answers are yet difficult to deliver. But archaeological artifacts such as tombs serve as partial evidence that reveal such perceptions to us. The creation of a tomb, as a place to contain the body that is separated from the spirit, is in itself evidence of the existence of a perception regarding matters like death. It is a belief in the after world

that exists beyond death. Determining what were the contents, and also the extent of such perception of death, is an important matter. A certain service performed for the dead is a very meaningful action not only to the dead but also to the survivors.

Perceiving death not only from the perspective of the dead but also from that of the survivors is no different than philosophically looking into one of the most important aspects of life. When a person is dead, in order to prepare proper services it is most usual for the others to put extraordinary effort into that preparation. So, tombs and other related aspects of the services for the dead are perfect examples that could show us how things were going on in the past. Especially through the tombs from the Bronze era, we can determine how the people at that time perceived death, and what death meant to them.

The first instances of certain rituals being conducted for the dead at their burial are known to have existed even in the Paleolithic Period. But they were admittedly very rare cases, and were not normal at all. In the Korean peninsula's case, burial sites from the Neolithic Period are reported to have been found in areas such as Tongyeong Yeondae-do or Chuncheon Gyodong, and Uljin Hupo-ri. Sites from this era do not show any consistent fashion, so we can assume that the habit of burying was not a general one just yet. And in a society where nomadic behavior was still a popular fashion of existence it would be hard to expect a tomb to bear any significant meaning for the members of that society. In societies where collecting and hunting is the way of obtaining food, burial habits should have been deemed with very little importance. In order for the burial habits to become a generally accepted fashion, the society should have had to transform itself into an agricultural one, and when humanity entered this phase, it seems that the outer appearances of a tomb also came to be established in certain forms.

When a person is born, he or she goes through numerous stages in life including birth, coming of age, marriage, death, and memorial services (for others). These stages come with different styles of rituals, and by going through such rituals a person moves on with his or her life from one step to the next (A. Van Gennep, Jeon Gyeong-soo trans. 1992). The ending of life in this reality, which would be death of course, is arguably the most important and inevitable stage of one's life. And the ways to respond to this major stage of one's life are the ones that were developed into burial and funeral ritualistic services. A death of a certain person, who is also a member of the society, means a death of social person, and makes the rituals regarding the matter also a social event (大林 太良 1977). One of the characteristics of the humanity's perception of death, whether

it came from the dead itself or the survivors, was that death should be shared by everyone involved. Unknown deaths, or deaths occurring on travel far from home, were considered to be very unfortunate events because of humanity's age-old perception of death like this.

Death is the end of life, and in a manner of speaking, through death the dead one is allowed to enter another plane of existence, namely the state of an ancestral god. But at the same time, the concept of death should have been a frightening one, or even an impure one to the eyes of the living people. Hence the habit of cleansing their bodies after burial and funeral rituals, and the destruction of any items involved in the rituals ensued were all meant to purge themselves from the dirt and fear. They thought that only by doing so would they be let free from their responsibilities regarding a social colleague's death and allowed to proceed on with their own lives at once. So we can say that the burial and funeral rituals were meant to free the survivors from their grief over a colleague's death and also the fear for death. And the funeral ritual was also a social act to publicly recognize and acknowledge a colleague's death, which was in itself a 'preparation' to inherit and obtain the social rights, states, and even materials that were previously owned by that colleague.

Such rituals appeared when the act of creating tombs became general fashion. The most commonly identified ones are apparently from the Bronze era. In the early stages of the agricultural phase, huge stone pieces were used in creating Jiseok tombs, and tombs with large surrounding areas were also created. To construct a tomb with such magnitude, a large group of people should have been enlisted in its creation. The existence of a ritual performed in the attendance of a mass group of people also suggests that at death one was transformed into an ancestral god and designated to oversee a certain collective of involved and related persons.

## 2. Imagining the Rituals

In this chapter, a recreation of numerous aspects of rituals of the early days of agriculture will be attempted. In order to do that, folklore data from the later eras will be utilized.

### a. Customary Time-tables for the Rituals

Determining timetables that would have underlined the rituals based upon archaeological data is not an easy task. For example, funerals and burial rituals

regarding a person's death certainly would not have had any pre-fixed time-table or cycles. Yet in the case of rituals related to agriculture, which usually operates on an established time cycle, second-hand data could prove useful in tracking down at least some of the time cycles designed for agricultural activities. According to the *Wi-seo Dongih-jeon* of *The History of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志, 魏書 東夷傳) a service was prepared in May when seeding was completed and in October when the harvest was done. In many cases, when barley was harvested and the rice-transplanting was completed, services such as Yongshin-jae, Non-gosa (services at the paddy field), Mulko-gosa and Danoh-gut, which were all meant to pray for rich harvest or timely raining, were arranged. With the exception of rice, numerous types of cereals were usually harvested at this time of year, and the services arranged usually meant not only to express gratitude for harvesting but also to pray for healthy growth in the rice fields. Some folklore customs show us a habit of pulling out old grains from the ancestral vases and filling them with new cereals. Such custom should have had something to do with the May planting. On the other hand, October is the harvest season for the most important grain—rice. So the services arranged at this time period of the year served essentially as gratitude festivals, which have been a typical event in agricultural societies for centuries, such as the Dongmaeng (東盟) event of the Goguryeo dynasty or the Mucheon (舞天) ceremony of the Yae (濊) tribes. Although it is not certain, it seems that the picture engraved on the backside of the Ritual artifact with an agricultural design that describes a person filling up a jar with grains has something to do with the ritual services arranged at this time of year. Aside from these services, there were also semi-rituals arranged during winter or spring before the seeding was initiated in order to pray for a good year. IB.C.hun-gut is the most typical one, and the aforementioned Bronze-ware's scene or the Nagyeong custom from the Gwanbuk (관북) area were also pre-arranged rituals. a tug of war and/or stone throwing events were also held at this time of year.

According to customary rituals that are still prevailing today, we can assume that agricultural rituals continued to be held all year. And especially in May and October, and in a certain time period just before seeding began, such events were arranged in a concentrated fashion, all with a basic design to pray and hope for a good year.

#### b. Places Staged for the Implementation of Rituals

Unlike funeral rituals that would have usually taken place around the tomb or

the nearby area, agricultural rituals usually took place around residential settlements, or other open living areas including cultivated fields. According to folklore customs, particular items such as the Seongju (?) or the so-called Ancestral pod, which all represented the habitants' belief in a Household god, were enshrined in special places inside the house. Inside the household sites from the Bronze era, earthenware-based replicas and small-sized earthenware or stoneware that are all suspected to have had a certain relationship with rituals have been excavated. It is yet not confirmed whether these artifacts were related to rituals or if they were ever used or even were about to be used. These artifacts that were put inside the wall may have something in common with the Seongju jars or ancestral pods. Usually, researchers think that these were used to contain something, but considering they are very rare, it does not seem like they were used for that purpose of containing produced/harvested grains.

Large and open places like the nearby areas to the villages or the center stage of the villages must have been popular places to arrange rituals. But there is no archaeological evidence to support that assumption. The stream(溝) or the stones(集石) from the Daepyeong-ri vestige might have had something to do with such rituals. The stream found in the Ulsan Geomdan-ri vestige was researched, and some researchers suggested they were definitely related to gratitude festivals (the Museum of Busan National University, 1995: 258).

Direct evidence for agricultural rituals of the Bronze era was confirmed and found even in the dry fields. The unstriated earthenware and red burnished pottery, military equipment such as stone knives arrowheads, discoidal stone maze, agricultural utensils like stone axes, stone sickle, stone knives, stone chisel, a grindstone, a cutting tool (擦切具) and jade material were included among such artifacts. In most cases, they are burned or intentionally impaired. Small-sized earthenware and stone utensils that were all created as fake miniatures were also found. Considering the status and condition of such artifacts, it seems pretty likely that they were used in agricultural rituals around the dry field and were later thrown into the field, suggesting that the dry field itself served as a designated space for the rituals to take place. Sancheong Mukgok-ri vestige or Daegu Dongcheon-dong and Changweon Toweol-dong sites are located a little distant from the villages, alongside the water. These sites also revealed a large amount of artifacts showing that rituals frequently took place there. Discovered artifacts show similar shapes and condition to those found from the Eoeun 1 section. We can clearly see that agricultural rituals of the Bronze era took place in residential areas, cultivated fields, and even coastal areas.

### c. The Procedures to Perform and Conduct Rituals

#### • Rituals regarding Agricultural matters

Rituals in agricultural societies carry very significant, important meaning. In many cases most of the community members would have participated in such events. Collective participation can be confirmed by many customs including collective dancing at rituals, the Nagyeong customs, and stone throwing events. In such cases there were usually leaders who could lead the situation and conduct the sacred rituals. The available data of agricultural rituals depicted on the aforementioned Bronze-ware shows that men assumed that place. Considering the fact that land was often considered to bear almost female qualities, it could be understood that the action of cultivating the land should have been considered to bear almost male qualities. Hence the men's lead in agricultural rituals. Bronze-based ritual utensils that came to be used during the latter half period of the Bronze area should also be considered in such terms. The leaders of such agricultural rituals would have been the bearers of such utensils. The Seongju jar or ancestral pods were mostly managed by females. From examples like Yuhwa (柳花) the grain god (穀靈神) or the land god (地母神) being depicted as female characters, we can see in most cases that the god of the ancestral pods was often depicted as a female figure. So, while in many cases the objects of the agricultural rituals were females, the active ones who conducted them were males.

Agricultural rituals appear mostly in the form of imitation and incantation actions, and cow-shaped items made of wood or soil and imitations of agricultural utensils were used for such function. The bird described on the aforementioned Bronze artifact, a bird-shaped imitation found on the Gwangju Shinchang-dong vestige, the pigeon mentioned inside the Dongmyeong Wangpyeon text, Sotdae, and a bird as a messenger from the grain god (곡령사자) are all frequently found items. The bird-shaped wooden imitation from the Shinchang-dong vestige has a hole punctured in the rear so that it can be attached to a stick and erected at the ritual site, which is a very similar feature to that of an ordinary Sotdae today or such posture as described in the Sodo (蘇塗) scene. Earthenware and stone items that were used for practical usage were also used in rituals. After the ritual these items were all broken and abandoned because there was a belief that an item once used in serving the gods should not be put to use ever again. This kind of action has been found in many rituals. It seems like a common and general trait. Considering the wooden weaponry from the Gwangju Shinchang-dong vestige, the wooden knife-type stone knife from the Daegu Dongcheon-dong vestige, and the weapon imitations from the Jinju

Daepyeong-ri and the Sancheong Mukgok-ri vestiges all suggest the existence of stone-throwing events as well.

The primary objects for the agricultural rituals were mostly the heaven gods who were believed to be controlling the wind and rain, or the land god(nature god) who could ensure the advent of a good year and a rich harvest. The depiction of a God seen on the rock art (암각화) of the Goryeong Yangjeon-dong vestige or figurines (土偶) could be such figures. Especially, according to the belief in household gods including Seongju or ancestral spirits, the body of the gods are often mentioned as grains themselves, strongly suggesting that such beliefs were directly linked to agricultural production. And in most cases the status of such gods were often considered to be females, controlled by the cultivators who happened to be considered as males.

#### • Rituals Regarding Funeral Rites

The tombs provide archaeological evidence regarding the people's perception of death, and also show us the type of rituals of the era. Certain actions regarding death are usually not recorded or preserved in archaeological terms. And when a corpse is processed in some unusual ways such as using wind, water or even the appetites of birds, tombs are simply not required to be constructed. But humanity's perspective toward death and its understanding of the concept is a crucial one that should be explored by today's researchers as they undoubtedly contain the people's general understanding of death and the afterlife at that time. The understanding and knowledge of that time would have been expressed at the sight of a colleague's death in many kinds of ways. During the excavation process, some situations draw our attention as in some cases there are unusually many items found around the tomb. Burnt stone pieces and earthenware are found in places that were definitely not residences, and in some cases the direction and orientation of a tomb is unusual (like the direction is set in line with the waterways or the head side is placed toward East). In some tombs red soil seems to have been intentionally piled up inside, or a red knife is placed in as well, and the dolmen tombs featuring an altar-like Goin-dol unit are also found in some cases.

To create a tomb like the Jiseok tombs with such a magnitude, it is a well-known fact that many people must have been gathered to complete such a task. And such a task naturally required a social system equipped with such capability.<sup>2</sup> Most of all, Jiseok tombs do not usually stand in isolation, but stand in groups in certain concentrated places, and the fashion of its selection of positions

suggest that there were some consistent intentions behind such constructions. In other words, from the selection of the burial place to the actual burial, the entire process would have been accompanied by the attendance of an entire community, which means that the collective participation of the community in funeral matters would have succeeded not only in effectively expressing the collective's grief, but also in strongly uniting the community.

The characteristic usually spotted in funeral rituals is the fact that aside of burying certain items with the body, usually traces of certain intentionally destroyed items in the surrounding stream (周溝) or other nearby areas are confirmed: Acts that were continued in fear and in reverence of the dead. Again, sharing such kinds of experience with community members would have been quite assuring in re-acknowledging their internal unity.

Death is of course the discontinuation of life, but also an opportunity to transcend into the status of God. Creating a tomb for the dead is only possible when the persons concerned believed in the existence of afterlife. A death of a living person is most surely an unfortunate and shameful (不淨) incident. The body starts to decay, and begins to show signs of impurity, which would eventually stain the mental spirit. So a cleansing act should be arranged alongside the usual grief. Hence the act of burial. Considering the entire sequence from the creation of the Jiseok tombs till the end of the ritual performances, rituals related to burial and funeral seem to have been conducted not only once but also several times during the entire process of serving the dead, whenever it was deemed necessary to express grief, or to purge the body. If we can presume that grief was a constant and naturally forthcoming feeling that must have been shared by concerned persons without any kind of enforcement, we could say that the repeated actions suggest the aspect of purging more prominently.

In the meantime, if we examine the artifacts left from the rituals meticulously we can find many similarities between them and those used in agricultural rituals. This suggests that the participants were essentially the same, and all those rituals were arranged, conducted, and performed under the same intentions and objectives. And through the number of artifacts found in the sites related to funeral rituals, we can sense the collective nature of the participation.

2. A strong leadership is usually considered to be a crucial factor for construction of such a large tomb (Ji Geon-gil 1983). Yet we cannot blindly assume that every Jiseok tomb would have been constructed for the burials of community leaders or chiefs. There can be exceptions, in which autonomous collective participations could have been secured without the presence of a strong leadership.

#### d. The Completion of Ritual Performances and Characteristics

Archaeological evidence is not a ritual itself. There are only remains of what was used during the ritual. They were definitely not preserved in documented form. And biological remains do not withstand the passage of time at all. The artifacts from the Bronze era seem to have been practical living items, yet they should have been processed in some fashion, or should have been used in some special places. Usually, artifacts that we assume bore religious meaning have some characteristics that lead us to believe that they were used on such occasions. Bronze-based ritual utensils or imitations or even miniatures like small-sized earthenware immediately cause us to realize that they were created specifically for such purposes. On the other hand, practical items also reveal themselves in a tortured state, including punctured holes, shattered pieces, or burnt fragments.

#### e. Participating Members in Ritual Performances

Another problem we just cannot answer yet is what kind of participants were there on such ritualistic occasions. We can only presume such based on the supposed nature or objectives of such gatherings. When a society enters the agricultural stage, usually it shows a tendency to become larger. Rituals start to assume a more communal nature, conducted and performed in a much more collective fashion, with all members of the community in presence. Especially, agricultural rituals or burial and funeral rituals should have evolved that way. Large tombs by themselves strongly argue such characteristics themselves. And this kind of characteristic seems to have been a widely shared one among many societies throughout the history of mankind. The pictures created on stone walls, or the custom of burying bronze-based items that are usually created by a single individual also share such traits as they were created under the intention and toward an aim that are all shared by the entire community, serving the public interest in the end. There may have been individual leaders, but they were all appointed for the job to serve the public itself.

#### f. The Objectives of the Rituals and the Performances

The object or objective of a certain ritual are subjective to change due to environmental factors that would include the structure of a society or certain types of living. In a society where hunting and collection is the primary way of life, people are usually inclined to obey the laws of nature. People living in agricultural societies, on the other hand, usually defy nature's orders through their activities.

The problem is, that it is not very easy to define or determine the objects or objectives of all rituals, for obvious reasons.

So the sites as spatial stages for the rituals and the characteristics of the excavated artifacts should help us in our task. The spatial stages should suggest the nature of a certain ritual through its location within the community's residence. That should lead us to guess what would have been the purpose of that ritual in question. And of course, the general contemporary perceptions regarding spatial usages, religious interpretations, and folklore data should be utilized in the process as well.

The object of a certain ritual would have varied due to the meaning within a particular place where the ritual itself is staged. For such objects, there had been traditional concepts like fire and water, or other ones that had significant meaning to the individuals or the entire community. Or, other more specific and at the same time broad objects that had direct relationship to the public interest of the entire community were selected for the rituals involving agricultural or funeral matters. Ancestral gods were no longer deemed as a member of the family and became an object of reverence. The land God(지신) became more precise and visible as time passed after the Bronze era. And as the concept of god changed its shape, people got to share more typified rituals.

So depending upon the places the rituals were staged, the type or object of that ritual also came to assume a different form. The creation of pictures engraved on stone walls or the burial of bronze-based utensils were all coordinated or arranged by persons of special ranks or by persons from the ruling party, so the size and contents of such rituals also had to mirror such characteristics. But the objective for the ritual remained the same, no matter what kind of person or entity was behind it. That objective, was the prayer for a rich harvest and a good year. Agriculture was obviously the most primary way of life that defined the life style and survival method of the entire population, so rituals never let go of their original design of supporting these economical efforts, and therefore in turn, were able to secure social support as well.

## **The View of the World of Those who were Engaged in Agricultural Activities**

Many changes accompanied society's shift from the habit of collecting and hunting to the agricultural way of life. This changed environment also forced a

change in their thinking pattern and consciousness (Hwang, S-I and Yun, S-O, 1999). As said many times before, securing hard evidence that would show us the exact signs of change is nearly impossible. But considering the general traits of mankind, it would not be an unimaginable task to draw some aspects of the general view of the world of the people who lived at the time through remaining sites and artifacts.

### 1. Changes of Places or and the Concept of Space

Unlike societies that engaged in hunting or collecting, agricultural societies show some rather limited usages of spaces. Such characteristics can be confirmed from the floor design of the sites. Entering the agricultural stage, defensive facilities or spaces dedicated to guarding or even isolating the residence areas were created.<sup>3</sup> In this kind of environment, tombs are usually located in other areas outside the residences. Not many sites of cultivated lands in the southern region of the peninsula have been discovered, yet on examination of the Milyang Geumcheon-ri vestige, the Ulsan Mugeo-dong vestige, the Jinju Daepyeong-ri and Nonsan Majeon-ri region, and Daegu Dongcheon-dong and Seobyeon-dong sites, the residence areas seem to have been separated from the area where tombs are found. And in the cases of Sancheong Mukgok-ri vestige, Changweon Toweol-dong vestige, and the Daegu Dongcheon-dong vestige, places that would have apparently served for stages of rituals are also located far outside the residing areas. The rock art was also placed in a rather isolated fashion. Dividing spaces and allocating them for different purposes such as residence, burial, cultivation and ritual is a typical trait examined from the agricultural societies. Living in an area for a prolonged period of time should have required that residents develop an efficient way to use available spaces. Places for earthenware production, waste, and toilet places should have been placed in certain locations. Cultivated lands and general ritual stages should have been placed closer to the village than the tomb places. And most of all, it was imperative for the agricultural societies to secure more cultivatable land, so it was only natural that they would build villages in places that were not near to forests.

Entering the Bronze era when established residences and agricultural produc-

3. On a worldwide scale, established residences with surrounding guards first emerged during the Neolithic Period. They are believed to have been developed when agricultural production began (Choi J. G. 1996: 29).

tion became a normal concept for the inhabitants, the concept of division of space seems to have become more apparent. More people were living together in a much more enlarged village. So proper discipline and guidelines had to be established. Residences would occupy the center stage, with cultivated lands circling the outskirts of residences. And tombs were in the nearby areas. The outer perimeter of the cultivated lands would have been natural landscape like mountains or streams. Tombs were specifically separated from the residences, and stages for religious rituals were arranged in places that would have been surrounded by streams (溝·環濠). The Sacheon Igeum-dong vestige revealed a large vestige of a compound that was suspected to have been a house for God. This compound was stationed in a position that served as a dividing line between the residence and the tombs area, drawing a line literally between life and death.

Using streams, natural trenches (溝), or artificial enclosures (環濠) as landmarks and considering the inner area as a sacred place is reported to have been confirmed as existing even in the ending days of the Pottery of the cam pattern Culture Period. Dividing a place like this has something to do with defensive purposes. Yet this defensive mechanism seems not to have been meant for physical usage, but for rather philosophical reasons, preventing evil from intruding the sacred domain. Surrounded space like this seems to have been much smaller in the early days, but should have expanded as time has passed. And the aforementioned philosophical defensive areas should have become much more practical and undoubtedly physical in the process.

More and more research regarding villages is being reported, and academic interest in such matters is also increasing. Not only the internal disposition but also every internal aspect of the village sites are being examined. Considering there are many factors that should be evaluated in order to successfully construct a village, like the natural environment and many other practical reasons, we can say that spaces for residence, production, burial and rituals would have been top priorities. They all seem to have been placed in isolated fashions supposedly because of their roles, practical or religious. And as said earlier, the natural environment or artificially created surrounding streams also served as landmarks or dividing lines. They served as lines between the inside and outside, and sacredness and secularity. Most of the practical rituals usually seem to have been performed at this juncture. The Seonghwangdang at the entrance to the village, or Jangseung units, or erected stone pieces, demonstrate such purpose.

In agricultural societies, usually the residences are considered to be the

‘inside’, and cultivated lands, tomb sites, and sacred places usually comprise the ‘outside.’ Premodern societies show a philosophical division, while examples that seem to be coming from the Bronze Age show a much more practical division, and trenches and enclosure were the most vivid representations of that division. These served not only as defensive measures but also as dividing lines. They may have been not enough to serve as an effective defense perimeter, but they were certainly doing their jobs as landmarks at least. And artifacts that seem to have been related to ritualistic matters are heavily being excavated from such areas. It is certain that they served a dual role, both as practically sturdy and philosophically distinctive lines of division. And other natural streams would also have done the same job between the residence areas and the tomb sites.

Division patterns like this are being confirmed in the Southern area of the Korean peninsula. And they are essentially new features that came from the advent of the agricultural phase of humanity. Many various types of rituals were performed, and places were arranged for such function, showing that due to changes in the areas of social structure and production methods, the general public’s perception of space must have gone through some changes as well.

## 2. Perceptions of time and cycles

The most prominent characteristic of a plant is that it lives on a one-year cycle, experiencing growth and death in that time period. The act of worshipping plants represents the worshipper’s belief in resurrection and immortality. Revived in spring and fading away in winter are definite signs and also an effective reminder of time’s nature and its cycles for the general public. When humanity was still engaged in collecting or hunting they would also have noticed the animals’ living and moving cycles or the plants’ inner clocks, but when they came to embrace agriculture as a way of life, their understanding of such inner clock workings would have grown much sharper. The weather changes due to season changes were vital factors defining the outcome of a year’s effort of agricultural production, and that significant importance led them to believe in supernatural powers. And that kind of belief paved the way for numerous rituals to come, especially for rituals that were based upon specific seasons. The custom of burying the dead ones near the cultivated lands also reveals another type of hope, praying for a rich harvest with help from the resurrected qualities emanated from a decaying dead body.

### 3. The Establishment of the Concept of Mother Nature (大地母神)

Land is the basis for life, and perceiving land in this way is a commonly shared trait of all humans everywhere (Compilation Committee for the Dictionary of Symbols on Korean Culture 1992: 244-247). The Jaeju island's Samseong-hyeol (三姓穴) tale exemplifies such a perception. Thought patterns perceiving land as a birthplace for life, and a male-type sky as an influential power seem to have something to do with the thought pattern considering land to harbor a female-based quality. They also believed the females' fertility and the land's richness to be the same thing. Such perception regarding land as a female god is best represented through a utensil named Jijin-gu (地鎮具), which was a ritual item that was buried under the soil prior to certain 'Notifying' rituals (of newly creating a tomb or a house) meant for the land god. The item was also used in rituals praying for the wellbeing and maintenance of the compound itself. Items like these are usually found in temple sites. The epitaph on the stone found in the Muryeong Wangreung mausoleum reveals the Maejigwon (買地券) section that essentially refers to the Jijin-gu item. Similar items were also found under the founding stones of the residence vestige located inside the Jinju Daepyeong-ri vestige's Eoeun section No.1. Such evidence suggests that perceiving and acknowledging the existence of a land god was already existent during the Bronze era. The Dongmyeong Shinhwa's Yuhwa also represents a land god or a god for grains.

And on the other side of the coin, the act of cultivating was also considered philosophically as an act of procreation. This kind of perception too is a commonly shared one (M. Elide and 堀一郎 譯, 1984: 104-110). And it is directly related to the sentimentality of wishing for a rich harvest and also counting upon the land's richness, which should be the same thing as a women's natural fertility. So in that sense, cultivation is an act of sexual intercourse, and the agricultural utensils are the genitals of man. The Nagyeong habit or pictures describing naked persons engaged in agricultural activities were all based upon that perception.

### 4. The Arrangement of Tomb sites (墳墓) and Worshipping the Ancestral Gods

The construction of tombs and the burials of dead bodies are clear evidence that the persons who did such did have a perception and understanding or even a

guess about the after world, and also a caring for the dead. Surely there had been cases, according to reports, of body burials even in the Paleolithic and the Neolithic periods. But the structure of the tomb or the burial fashion showed a development in a much more sophisticated way when humanity entered the agricultural phase. And burying a body in a typified fashion is only possible when residences were established and the inhabitants all became accustomed to the fact they were not going to wander in a nomadic fashion anymore. Settling in this kind of environment, the inhabitants began to construct Dolmen (a megalithic tomb with cap stone) for the first time. Tombs themselves effectively demonstrate the creators' belief in an ancestral god and their reverence toward them. Partial exposure of the tomb above the ground also helped the Dolmen to serve as a monumental figure in agricultural terms (Yi S. J. 2000: 158). And from the construction till the burial, the entire process was accompanied by a collective participation of the entire community (Yi S. G. 1994). To leave something to the next generation, to make sure the legacy of their own would survive the test of time and prevail, was the typical wish shared by the inhabitants of agricultural societies.

## **Conclusion**

We examined the general public's religious thoughts and rituals that were developed during humanity's entering stage to the agricultural phase. A lot of changes happened at that time. Newly developed perceptions of a plants' growth, its demise, and seasonal change can be good examples. They started to notice the natural environment, and started to believe in more powerful supernatural phenomena that could control their fate. Concrete understanding of production, harvest, life, death, resurrection, and land gods all started to emerge. And such understanding culminated in the development of numerous rituals regarding agriculture and funerals.

The simple worshipping of nature developed into more definitive belief such as belief in the land god or ancestral gods (functional gods), and it had something to do with the changes in social structure. Population increased, and society was bettered, then villages began to show internal divisions such as residence sections, production spaces, tomb places, and stages set for ritual performances. Rituals also continued to be developed and performed in a more collective fashion. Agricultural and funeral rituals were the most prominent cases, and

the leaders exhibited the custom of burying Bronze-based ritual items. Such rituals of that magnitude served in consolidating the internal unity of the community. The agricultural societies of the southern area of the Korean peninsula shows of communities that were not only politically and economically developed but also beginning to demonstrate established forms of religious thought and faith. Such philosophical factors were crucial in defining the societies at that time. As the southern area of the peninsula entered the agricultural phase, it's people developed their perception of the world.

The rituals of the agricultural societies were religious acts expressing their sincerity to supernatural beings and praying for a good year and a rich harvest. And at the same time they also served as an entertainment event that would be shared and enjoyed by all members of the community, and also as an anchor for the unity of that community. After agricultural production was initiated, perceptions and understanding of the concepts such as seasons, time cycles, resurrection, imitation rituals based upon images of sexual intercourses all emerged and various rituals were performed. Even today, the objectives remain the same. People of the past adapted themselves to the given factor of their natural environment and overcame the challenges. We can learn from that, anytime. Rituals are actions, and are not documented material. Archaeological data does not serve us well in those terms. But we have to keep searching for what they would have thought of such phenomena, which would have surrounded them, haunted them, and in the end, nurtured them.

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