

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

Filozofická fakulta Katedra asijských studií

BAKALÁRSKA DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCA

**Signs of witchcraft in the Korean religions and  
the day-to-day life**

Znaky witchcraftu v kórejských náboženstvách a dennodennom  
živote

Olomouc 2024

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## **Čestné vyhlásenie**

Čestne vyhlasujem, že celú bakalársku diplomovú prácu na tému „Znaky witchcraftu v kórejských náboženstvách a dennodennom živote“ som vypracovala samostatne s použitím uvedenej literatúry. Som si vedomá zákonných dôsledkov, ak v nej uvedené údaje nie sú pravdivé.

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## **Pod'akovanie**

Týmto by som chcela poďakovať školiteľke Mgr. Štěpánke Horákovej za ochotu, trpezlivosť, kontrolu, nápady a pomoc pri tvorbe mojej bakalárskej diplomovej práce. Taktiež by som chcela poďakovať Mgr. Blanke Ferklovej, Ph.D. za dodatočnú pomoc pri kontrole práce a poskytnutie informácií k písaniu bakalárskej diplomovej práce.

## **Anotácia**

Názov práce:	<i>„Znaky witchcraftu v kórejských náboženstvách a dennodennom živote“</i>
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Vedúci práce:	Mgr. Štěpánka Horáková
Počet strán a znakov:	58 strán, 68 149 znakov
Počet použitých zdrojov:	54
Počet príloh:	3
Kľúčové slová:	čarodejníctvo, praktizujúci čarodejníctvo, znaky čarodejníctva, čarodejníctvo v Kórei

Ťažiskom diplomovej bakalárskej práce bude výskum čarodejných znakov v dnešných kórejských náboženstvách. Bude zahŕňať historické a teoretické postupy spojené s čarodejnými praktikami po celom svete. Kvôli všeobecnému nedostatku vedomostí o čarodejniciach v Kórei bude prebiehať formou prieskumu o každodennom živote Kórejcov a preferovaných kórejských náboženstvách, pričom sa v nich budú hľadať znaky praktizovania čarodejníctva. Súčasťou prieskumu a diplomovej práce bude aj štúdia psychologickú súvislosti s čarodejníctvom a s ním spojenou stigmu.

## **Abstract**

Title:	<i>„Signs of witchcraft in the Korean religions and the day-to-day life“</i>
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Supervisor:	Mgr. Štěpánka Horáková
Number of pages and characters:	58 pages, 68 149 characters
Number of used sources:	54
Number of appendices:	3
Keywords:	witchcraft, witchcraft practitioners, signs of witchcraft, witchcraft in Korea

Researching witchcraft signs in today's Korean religions will be the focus of the diploma project. It will include historical and theoretical practices associated with witchcraft practices around the world. Because of the general lack of knowledge about witches in Korea, it will take the form of a survey about Koreans' daily lives and preferred Korean religions, looking for signs of witchcraft practice in them. The survey and diploma work will also include a study of the psychological connection to witchcraft and the stigma associated with it.

## List of graphs

<b>Graph no. 1 – What is your sex?.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Graph no. 2 – What is your age? .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Graph no. 3 – What is your highest received education? .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Graph no. 4 – Do you identify with a particular religion or belief system? .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Graph no. 5 – Choose which religion you identify with.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Graph no. 6 - Do you follow the traditions and the rules of your religion? .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Graph no. 7 – Do you believe in other things that could be against your faith?.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Graph no. 8 – Which superstitions do you believe in?.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Graph no. 9 – Do you know what is Witchcraft? .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Graph no. 10 – Have you ever casted a spell or cursed someone? .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Graph no. 11 – Do you believe in ghosts and bad spirits? .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Graph no .12 – Do you believe in fortune telling or angel numbers (Numerology)?.....</b>	<b>41</b>

## **Editor's note**

The Korean alphabet – *hangŭl* will be transcribed into the McCune-Reischauer Romanization in this thesis. To signify transcribing, italics are used as well as terms from foreign languages. Korean names will be written in the format of last name first, followed by first name, as is the Korean convention. For authors' names of formal public use, they will be transcribed in Korean Romanization rather than McCune-Reischauer Romanization. A transcription table is included at the end of the thesis in the list of appendices. Because this thesis is primarily concerned with South Korean respondents, the term Korea is always intended to refer to the country itself.

Lastly, for the citations, I utilized the APA (7th edition) style, which is the most often used globally.

## Table of contents

<b>List of graphs.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Editor's note .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 Understanding witchcraft.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 Overview of witchcraft.....	11
1.2 Modern vs traditional views on witchcraft .....	11
1.3 Global witchcraft – Diverse beliefs and rituals.....	12
1.4 Most common and popular witchcraft practices.....	13
<b>2 The daily life of South Koreans – Beliefs and superstitions.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3 Korean religions .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Overview of Korean religions .....	17
3.2 Christianity in South Korea .....	17
3.2.1 Christian practices.....	18
3.2.2 Similarities between Christianity in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice .....	18
3.2.3 Protestantism in South Korea .....	19
3.3 Buddhism in South Korea .....	20
3.3.1 Buddhism practices.....	20
3.3.2 Similarities between Buddhism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice .....	21
3.4 Confucianism in South Korea .....	21
3.4.1 Similarities between Confucianism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice .....	22
3.5 Shamanism in South Korea.....	23
3.5.1 Examples of Shamanic practices in Korean tradition.....	24
3.5.2 Similarities between Shamanism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice .....	25
3.6 Ch'öndogyo in South Korea.....	25
3.6.1 Ch'öndogyo practices .....	25
3.6.2 Similarities between Ch'öndogyo in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice.....	26
3.7 Hinduism in South Korea.....	27
3.7.1 Hinduism practices .....	27
3.7.2 Similarities between Hinduism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice .....	28
3.8 Islam in South Korea .....	29
3.8.1 Islam practices.....	30
3.8.2 Similarities between Islam and modern witchcraft in South Korea .....	31

<b>4</b>	<b>Research .....</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1	<i>Overview of the research .....</i>	32
4.2	<i>Structure of the survey .....</i>	32
4.3	<i>What is your sex? .....</i>	32
4.4	<i>What is your age? .....</i>	33
4.5	<i>What is your highest received education? .....</i>	33
4.6	<i>Do you identify with a particular religion or belief system? .....</i>	34
4.7	<i>Choose what religion you identify with: .....</i>	35
4.8	<i>Do you follow the traditions and the rules of your religion? .....</i>	35
4.9	<i>Do you believe in other things that could be against your faith (superstitions, magic, etc...)? .....</i>	36
4.10	<i>Which superstitions do you believe in? .....</i>	37
4.11	<i>Do you know what is Witchcraft? .....</i>	38
4.12	<i>Have you ever casted a spell or cursed someone? .....</i>	39
4.13	<i>Do you believe in ghosts or bad spirits? .....</i>	40
4.14	<i>Do you believe in fortune-telling or angel numbers (Numerology)? .....</i>	41
4.15	<i>Conclusion .....</i>	41
	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>43</b>
	<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>List of appendices .....</b>	<b>50</b>



## **Introduction**

The study of witchcraft and its prevalence in various cultures has long piqued the interest of both experts and laypeople. One subject that has received little attention in this field of study is the presence of witchcraft in Korean faiths and its impact on Koreans' daily lives. This theme was chosen for multiple reasons.

To begin, I have previously studied the art of witchcraft and was interested in investigating its expressions in many cultural situations. As the writer of this text, I have vast experience studying and practicing witchcraft, both modern and traditional. Since 2019, I have uncovered a variety of interesting philosophical and religious subjects related to witchcraft, which stimulated my interest in exploring the topic of this research tailored to South Korea. as I am also studying South Korean culture and language.

On top of that, there has been a recent rise in interest and discussions about witchcraft in various regions of the world, with opposing viewpoints and beliefs voiced. As the author of this study, I contend that the topic remains highly sensitive for many people due to the historical stigma connected with witchcraft, which originates mostly from other religious beliefs. As a result, I aim to study the South Korean population's thoughts on this topic, which is not widely discussed in South Korea.

In addition, while there is research on witchcraft in Western cultures, there appears to be a paucity of extensive studies looking specifically at the role of witchcraft in Korean faiths. For that reason, I am interested in providing the public with what is believed to be the first study on the prevalence of witchcraft in Koreans' daily lives. This is owing to the topic's peculiarity when compared to other countries having a long history of witchcraft, both past and present.

Additionally, I am determined to discover whether witchcraft practices exist in Koreans' daily lives. Later I want to investigate whether Koreans are aware of the practice of witchcraft or are unaware of it from the rest of the world since I believe that the stigma around this topic continues to arise.

First, this research will examine the concept and intellectual basis of witchcraft over the world. It will contain witchcraft-specific actions and beliefs.

Next, consider the typical daily lives of South Koreans today. Also examining their usual day versus their regular day based on online research. In order to understand this research, it is crucial to grasp the concept of "Korean religion". To investigate the occurrence and significance of witchcraft in Korean religions and everyday life, it is

necessary to look at cultural beliefs and practices that form Koreans' perceptions and understanding of witchcraft.

Finally, I am going to do an online poll of South Korean individuals to gather crucial information on the topic of this study. Questions will be asked to learn about how South Koreans live their lives in relation to witchcraft practitioners, as well as how much they are aware of the presence of witchcraft in their surroundings.

# 1 Understanding witchcraft

## 1.1 Overview of witchcraft

Witchcraft is a complicated and comprehensive notion with various cultural, historical, and theological interpretations. Witchcraft has traditionally been associated with the practice of magic and supernatural abilities. These individuals, known as witches, are thought to have the ability to call and manipulate natural forces, cast spells, and interact with spirits or creatures beyond the physical sphere. Witchcraft is viewed differently in modern society. Witchcraft is currently regarded as a spiritual activity, a mode of self-expression, and a means of connecting with nature and the divine. Witchcraft practices vary greatly based on an individual's beliefs and traditions. Spell casting, divination, herbalism, ritual worship, and energy manipulation are some of the most common witchcraft practices. In addition, modern witchcraft often emphasizes personal empowerment, self-care, and the promotion of social justice. (Brandeis University, 2023)

## 1.2 Modern vs traditional views on witchcraft

Individual liberty, personal spirituality, and acceptance of varied beliefs and practices are central to the modern understanding of witchcraft. Practitioners of modern witchcraft may identify as *Wiccans*, *Pagans*, or *Eclectic witches*, depending on what kind of practice they belong to. They may participate in a variety of rites and ceremonies to honor nature and connect with deities. These modern witches may consider witchcraft as a means of developing personal power, manifesting intentions, and promoting healing and positive transformation in their lives.

Traditional views on witchcraft, on the other hand, are frequently based on cultural and historical beliefs that depict witches as dangerous or wicked individuals who utilize their abilities to cause harm or trouble. These traditional beliefs frequently drive society's anxieties and prejudices, resulting in persecution and witch-hunting throughout history.

Witchcraft techniques have developed over time to reflect cultural shifts and individual beliefs. Traditional witchcraft techniques frequently involve casting spells or crafting magical potions using natural ingredients such as herbs, crystals, and candles. Modern witchcraft contains a diverse set of activities and beliefs. Some modern witches may combine components of traditional witchcraft, such as spellcasting and ritual

worship, whilst others may focus on energy work, meditation, and psychic powers. (Russell, 2024)

### 1.3 Global witchcraft – Diverse beliefs and rituals

Witchcraft practices and beliefs differ significantly across the globe, reflecting the various cultural, spiritual, and historical contexts from which they originate. For instance in African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, witchcraft is frequently strongly ingrained in ancient spiritual and healing traditions. These rituals are viewed as a manner of connecting with ancestors, spirits, and the natural world in order to seek guidance, healing, and protection. In Latin American countries such as Mexico, *brujería*<sup>1</sup> refers to a variety of folk magical practices influenced by indigenous beliefs, Catholicism, and African diaspora faiths. (Secker, 2012) (E. Franco, 2024)

Witchcraft is seen as sacred and essential to some indigenous tribes' spiritual traditions, and it is utilized for healing, divination, and keeping nature balance. In contrast, modern witchcraft in Western countries, particularly in Europe and North America, is frequently inspired by a variety of historical and cultural elements. These activities often involve rituals, spellwork, and the worship of nature and deities. (Adinkrah, 2014, s. 314–321)

Modern witchcraft communities value personal empowerment and self-discovery. Individuals use methods such as meditation, visualization, energy work, and spellcraft to cultivate their personal power and intuitive talents. These societies frequently emphasize the value of individual liberty and responsibility, allowing practitioners to create their own belief systems and spiritual practices.

Witchcraft, as a sort of practice, has its own set of laws that practitioners apply, named the „Seven Hermetic Principles“. (Furie, 2021, s. 105–117)

The principle of mentalism

The principle of correspondence

The principle of vibration

The principle of polarity

The principle of rhythm

The principle of cause and effect

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<sup>1</sup> This term refers to the craft of a witch or warlock. While the actual origins of *brujería* are unknown, they are thought to be derived from the Catalan *bruxia*, which was used in the Middle Ages and may have Celtic or Iberian roots. (Dictionary.com, 2021)

The principle of gender

To introduce one of these, there is „The principle of gender“, which states that everything contains both feminine and masculine energies. (Furie, 2021, s. 115–116) There's also „The principle of polarity“. The principle of polarity is considered one of the most significant, as it states that every topic or thing has both a positive and negative aspect. Nothing is purely good or harmful. (Furie, 2021, s. 111–112)

Furthermore, there may be found as an ancient tradition that is still practiced in modern witchcraft today. „Magickal“<sup>2</sup> herbalists frequently rely on a theory known as the „Doctrine of signatures“, that can be traced back to medieval folk. Anything that resembles a certain item can treat that specific thing. For example, the plant Eyebright has flowers that resemble the form of an eye, therefore it has been used to treat vision difficulties. (Robbins, 2017, s. 16–18)

#### 1.4 Most common and popular witchcraft practices

**Numerology** is a witchcraft technique that focuses on the study of numbers and their mystical meaning. Practitioners utilize numerology to obtain insight into their personalities, life paths, and relationships by analyzing the vibrations and energies associated with particular numbers. Numerology is a study that is considered in witchcraft practice to teach that each number has its own vibration frequency, and the most essential numbers that the practitioner must be aware of are 1–9. For instance, the number 1 in witchcraft practice represents individualism, but the number 4 represents a system or hard effort, also known meaning of it is the word "build". (Angeles, 2003, s. 208)

**Meditation** is an important part of modern witchcraft since it helps to focus the mind, connect with higher consciousness, and tune in to spiritual forces. Witches use meditation to strengthen their intuitive talents, create a sense of peace, and get a better understanding of both themselves and the world around them. (Angeles, 2003, s. 25–26)

**Divination**, another key activity in witchcraft, includes many kinds of techniques like tarot card readings, pendulum divination, scrying, and runic casting. These techniques are utilized for guidance, clarity, and intuitive insight into past, present, and future events, and they are also used to communicate with spiritual entities. (Omen, 2024)

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<sup>2</sup> The term "*magickal*" is derived from the belief in a real type of supernatural energy manipulation that draws you closer to realizing one's destiny - true will (first expressed by Aleister Crowley), as opposed to the word "*magical*," which refers to anything unreal and supernatural as depicted in movies. (Beyer, 2019)

**Visualization** is an extremely effective tool in spellcasting and manifestation rituals. Witches use visualization techniques to center their intentions, harness energy, and create their desires through mental imagery and concentration. By envisioning their objectives and aspirations, practitioners hope to match their mental and emotional state with the energy of the cosmos, resulting in good transformation. Visualization is additionally considered one of the most misunderstood or difficult concepts to implement into practitioners' practices. It demands a strong intellect and inner peace to serve most efficiently. (Angeles, 2003, s. 30)

In witchcraft, **spellcasting** is the practice of channeling energy and manifesting specific goals through rituals, spoken words, and symbolic gestures. Spells are created with intention and can address a number of issues in life, including love, prosperity, protection, and healing. Witches frequently customize spells to reflect their own aims and ethical issues. Spellcasters can also channel energy or different deities to aid in rituals or spells that are difficult to conduct on one's own. When the spellcaster completes the spell, the energy is released, bringing the spellcaster's wish to the physical realm. (Furie, 2021, s. 15–17)

Last but not least, **the use of colors** in witchcraft has major symbolic and energy implications. Different colors are supposed to connect to certain intentions, energies, and goals throughout different rituals and spellwork. It is claimed that using the proper color for the right situation might increase the strength of one's spell. The color can be used to represent flowers, plants, or even the color of candles lighted during the casting ritual. The use of colors in witchcraft has major symbolic and energy implications. For example, it is believed that the color black represents defense and can be used to drive away negativity or illness. In witchcraft, the color red means love, passion, and the element of fire, and the color green is believed to symbolize prosperity or health. (Dugan, 2014, s. 194)

## 2 The daily life of South Koreans – Beliefs and superstitions

Many South Koreans rely heavily on superstitions, which are strongly ingrained in their culture and history. Superstitions in South Korea span from commonplace activities to beliefs in chance, fate, and supernatural happenings. These superstitions are influenced by a range of religions, including Shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity.

South Koreans frequently execute rituals and activities to honor their ancestors, such as placing food and drinks at ancestral altars and practicing ancient practices on ancestral holidays such as *ch'usŏk*. (Ho-jeong, 2007)

In South Korean tradition, certain numbers, such as 4, are considered unlucky since they are associated with death. (Journey, 2023)

South Koreans may practice rituals to ward off evil spirits, such as hanging garlic cloves or red peppers outside their homes. (Association for Asian Studies, 2023)

South Koreans think that certain actions or behaviors should be avoided during specified time periods. As an example, cutting one's nails at night is believed to bring bad luck or shorten one's life. (Samly, 2020)

Dreams are significant in South Korean culture, with several superstitions surrounding them. For example, thinking about snakes is thought to represent good fortune and transformation, whereas dreaming about pigs represents prosperity and abundance. (National Folk Museum of Korea, 2024) (Ladner, 2023)

The magpie is one of the birds mentioned in witch-related myths from medieval Europe. Witches utilize magpies as "beds", hence magpies have become associated with witches and their magical abilities. This is one of the reasons magpies are regarded as symbols of good luck and magic in South Korea. (Yong, 2024)

Also in South Korea going outside at dawn on New Year's Day and hearing the chirping of a magpie symbolizes good luck, whereas hearing the sound of a crow means a bad omen. (Yong, 2024)

Koreans believe that receiving shoes as a present is a sign that a loved one is leaving them. Shoes were once uncommon and passed down through families. It is a superstition based on a distortion of the story in which people get shoes as a gift and walk around before leaving. (Ladner, 2023)

People believe that if they shake their legs, good fortune will be shaken off of them. In other words, they believe they are losing prospects in the future. (Ladner, 2023)

The next popular belief in South Korea is Feng Shui. It is based on the Chinese concept of feng shui. Feng Shui is portrayed as traditional wisdom proven by experience, with claims that it can be useful in analyzing a site's energy, however, currently there is no scientific evidence to support the assertion that Feng Shui is always accurate. (Shin, 2024)

The belief that if you whistle at night, a snake will come out evolved as a result of the impact of other countries, and there are numerous stories about attracting snakes with whistles in various media, including movies and literature. People in India perform by moving snakes with flutes or whistles. (Namu wiki, 2023)

After consuming food, digestion starts and blood rushes to the stomach, making you feel tired. If you lie down in this position, you would easily fall asleep, so the Korean superstition that if you lay down after a meal, you will transform into a cow arose since it was viewed as being lethargic. (Hotdog, 2017)

Korean superstitions have a significant impact on South Koreans, affecting many elements of their daily existence. Superstitions frequently influence many South Koreans' actions and choices, ranging from personal to business. Individuals sometimes visit fate tellers or participate in divination prior to making major decisions or beginning new ventures. This dependence on superstitions demonstrates the deeply ingrained character of these beliefs in South Korean culture and society, influencing how people approach life events and make decisions. (Jung, 2023)



### **3 Korean religions**

#### **3.1 Overview of Korean religions**

Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, *Ch'öndogyo* – these diverse faiths have left an impact on culture, society, and spirituality. The blend of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism has significantly shaped values and ways of life in Korean history. It is essential to understand that while these religions have coexisted over time in Korea they have also evolved and adapted along the way. Korea's diverse religious history reflects its past and the influences it has embraced over time. Islam and Hinduism were also regarded as useful topics for research in this thesis, despite the fact that they are considered to be among the top 1% of religious beliefs. (Lu, 2023)

In Korea there existed an acceptance of diverse religious beliefs and a clear distinction, between religion and governance as opposed to many European nations. Furthermore, the influence of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism on Korean society is profound and cannot be overstated. (Kļaviņš, 2020)

These religions will be listed in order of popularity, with the inclusion of those important to this research. The majority of the population, approximately 50%, does not believe in any religion, followed by Christianity, notably Protestantism, with 20%, and Catholicism with 11% of South Koreans. Buddhism comes next, with 17% of followers, which is followed by 2% of South Koreans who believe in other religions such as shamanism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, or other native religions such as *Ch'öndogyo*. (Statista, 2023)

#### **3.2 Christianity in South Korea**

Christianity's presence, in Korea has an intricate history growing in prominence since its introduction during the 18th century. Catholic missionaries initially laid the groundwork followed by missionaries leading to the gradual spread of Christianity across Korea. Today Christianity stands as one of the religions in Korea boasting a following and exerting a significant influence on Korean society. Despite facing persecution in its stages Christianity has now become the widely embraced religion in Korea with a substantial number of adherents shaping various aspects of Korean life – be it social,

cultural, or political. Notably, Protestantism has emerged as a force, within South Korea marked by an array of megachurches and a robust evangelical presence. (Kim A. E., 2000)

### **3.2.1 Christian practices**

Of the wide variety of faiths which, have been affronted by Christianity, which Protestantism, in particular, has also paved a way for new forms of religious expression, such as the rise of megachurches and the acceptance of contemporary worship styles. Such a paradigm has produced an indigenous formation of Korean Christianity. Thus, it has become the actual Christianity itself within the Korean cultural realm.

The influence of Korean Christianity is visible through family values and ethical codes, community relations, and voluntary activities. The most prominent example can be seen in Christians' preference for celebrating Christmas, normally accompanied by going to church, social gatherings, and the carry out of acts of kindness. Moreover, the traditional practice of the observance of Easter is significant for Korean Christians. Anyone can think more about Easter by attending church services and reflections on religion.

Another practice among Christians is frequent prayer. Prayer, as mentioned in the Bible, is a means of connecting the human and God's consciousness. Prayer can be about anything, including gratitude, worry, or a wish for the future. The Bible also states that there is a so-called Jesus Christ's prayer that all Christians must know or incorporate into their prayers to God because Jesus Christ is a member of the Trinity. He came to save everyone from their own sins and rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. (Wycliffe, 1982)

### **3.2.2 Similarities between Christianity in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice**

In South Korea Christianity has become quite influential. It's intriguing to observe the parallels, between aspects of witchcraft and some Christian teachings. Both traditions highlight the significance of prayer and rituals. In Christianity, prayer plays a role in faith. It is seen as a force, for bringing about change and offering protection. Similarly, modern witchcraft includes rituals. Spells to manifest intentions and tap into strength.

Moreover, Christianity and contemporary witchcraft both emphasize encounters and faith in authority. Although their interpretations of this power may vary the idea of seeking connection and guidance, from the divine is a thread in both faith traditions.

Furthermore, both Christianity and modern witchcraft recognize the existence of entities. While Christianity acknowledges angels and demons modern witchcraft often includes beliefs in spirits, gods, and other supernatural beings. (Wycliffe, 1982)

### **3.2.3 Protestantism in South Korea**

Protestantism is one of many paths in Christianity and for South Koreans one the most popular ones among them. Protestantism reached its climax in the later 19th century and became a major force, making it an important component of Korea's diverse religious culture.

The spread of Protestantism in Korea began in the late 19th century when Western missionaries, most notably from America, initiated evangelization by planting churches. Protestantism increased steadily and was deeply rooted within society. The rise of Protestantism can be attributed to various causes such as early missionary activities, the attractiveness of Christianity as a modern and progressive religion, and the socio-political context.

The protestant community in South Korea consists of different groups that have their own traditions and rituals. Multiple denominations such as Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist reflect the evolving nature of Christianity throughout the country. This multiplicity has resulted in several patterns that define present-day protestant practices thus shaping the South Korean religious landscape.

The Korean Christian community is rooted in South Korean Protestantism's tradition of worship and community life. For instance, church services, prayer meetings, and community gatherings serve as focal points for spiritual devotion, fellowship, and mutual support. This communal aspect of Protestant worship not only fosters unity and solidarity amongst the Christian population but also provides a platform for social interaction as well as support networks.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Protestantism has greatly contributed to the religious diversity of South Korea and influenced its cultural ethos leading to the formation of societal values and ethical framework. In other words, the diverse traditions of Protestantism with regard to religion in general manifest specifically how intricate South Korea's spiritual identity is. (Kim A. E., 2000)

### 3.3 Buddhism in South Korea

The principles of Buddhism promoting mindfulness, compassion, and the quest for enlightenment have left an impact on culture. These teachings have influenced facets of life such as art, architecture, and literature and even led to the development of a unique form of Zen Buddhism called *Sŏn* Buddhism, in Korea. Buddhism has played a role, in shaping the social and political aspects of Korean society. During the period of occupation from 1910 to 1945 Korean Buddhism faced a major struggle for survival. The faith endured suppression and persecution resulting in the destruction of temples and monks going into hiding. Despite these hardships, Buddhism maintained its influence on society. Many temples were revived after the end of Japanese rule contributing to the preservation and resurgence of Buddhist customs. (Yun, 2018)

#### 3.3.1 Buddhism practices

The main Buddhist practice in Korea is the practice of prostration, whereby individuals express their deep bow before the Buddha in order to express devotion and reverence. Physical movements, therefore, in this act, are one of the ways of acting out humility and respect towards the lineage of Buddhism.

Another important practice in Korean Buddhism is meditation – more exactly, the practice of seated meditation – since people take time for reflection and spiritual awakening spiritually.

Korean Buddhist monasteries also continue to be great centers for preserving and propagating Buddhist teachings and practices. The monks and nuns that dwell here practice rigorous meditation and study, and their disciplined way of life inspires lay Buddhists who seek to reach a deeper level of spiritual practice.

Buddhist holidays and ceremonies also carry great significance to Buddhist practice in Korea. It marks events such as *Vesak*<sup>3</sup> – celebrating the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha – with fervor, often with rituals and chanting, and acts of generosity.

Alongside these traditional practices, in modern times, Buddhism in Korea has fused mindfulness practices into everyday life and offered meditation classes to the general public. These contemporary expressions of Buddhism reflect modernizing trends in Korean society while keeping in touch with the huge tradition of Buddhist teachings.

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<sup>3</sup> In Korea also known as 석가탄신일 *sŏkkat'ansinil* – a public holiday largely celebrated by many people in South Korea.

The persistence and adaptability of Buddhist practices in Korea demonstrate that the role of Buddhism in the country's spiritual and cultural domain has remained a strong reminder even as the latter circumstances have changed over the years. (Kitagawa, 2024)

### **3.3.2 Similarities between Buddhism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice**

Both Buddhism and witchcraft have some similarities despite their differences. They both focus on the importance of meditation and spiritual reflection. In Buddhism, meditation is a practice to attain peace and enlightenment whereas in witchcraft it is used to connect with the spiritual realm and channel personal energy.

Additionally, both belief systems include the idea of karma, where actions have consequences. In Buddhism karma dictates that actions carry weight and impact experiences while in witchcraft followers often follow the so-called "Threefold Law", which suggests that the energy one sends out into the world will come back, to them threefold. (Van Der Hoeven, 2018)

Buddhism and witchcraft acknowledge the presence of spirits and the interconnectedness of all living creatures. Buddhism recognizes beings promoting compassion, for all sentient beings while witchcraft involves calling upon spiritual entities and honoring the sacredness of nature.

These similarities highlight the array of beliefs and customs, in South Korea, where different religious practices coexist and blend together shaping the spiritual fabric of society. The lasting impact of Buddhism and witchcraft reflects the intricate legacy cherished by the Korean population. (Kitagawa, 2024)

### **3.4 Confucianism in South Korea**

Confucianism also plays a role, in shaping Korean culture and society. Its impact can be seen across aspects of life influencing family dynamics, social norms, education systems, and governance structures. The values of hierarchy, respect for authority, and filial piety promoted by Confucianism shape both morals and the overall societal ethos in South Korea.

In South Korea, Confucian principles continue to guide relationships by outlining the duties and expectations within families. The value placed on piety – showing respect to parents and ancestors – remains a part of Korean traditions, guiding behaviors within families. Additionally, the influence of Confucianism is evident, in customs that prioritize

knowledge acquisition, academic excellence, and the pursuit of learning as core values reflecting the importance placed on self-improvement according to teachings.

The ethical and moral principles of Confucianism have also impacted the societal values of South Korea, with an emphasis on harmony, social order, and ethical conduct. These values have contributed to the development of a cohesive and communal approach to social interactions and community welfare.

Furthermore, Confucianism has historically influenced the governance and legal systems in South Korea. The principles of meritocracy, righteous leadership, and the welfare of the people, rooted in Confucian thought, have historically informed the administrative practices and political ideologies in the country.

In addition to its impact on social structures and norms, Confucianism has influenced the artistic and cultural expressions of South Korea. From literature and art to music and architecture, the values and aesthetics informed by Confucian teachings have left a lasting imprint on the cultural heritage of the nation.

The traditions and rituals associated with Confucianism, such as ancestral rites and commemorations, continue to be observed in South Korea, underscoring the enduring legacy of Confucian influence on the religious and ceremonial practices of the society.

Overall, Confucianism stands as a cornerstone of Korean culture, deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness and societal institutions. Its enduring influence and traditions contribute to the rich and diverse religious landscape of South Korea, reflecting the dynamic interplay of traditional and modern belief systems in shaping the spiritual and cultural identity of the nation. (Wikipedia, 2012)

#### **3.4.1 Similarities between Confucianism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice**

The prevalence of Confucianism in South Korea has helped to shape society's norms and values, and there are some interesting connections between Confucianism and current witchcraft practices.

One notable parallel is how much emphasis is placed on ancestral veneration and familial bonds. According to Confucianism, filial piety and respect for ancestors are vital components of ethical behavior and social peace. Similarly, modern witchcraft frequently includes activities that commemorate ancestors and emphasize the value of staying connected to one's heritage and ancestral spirits.

To further continue, both Confucianism and new witchcraft stress the importance of ritual and ceremonial behaviors. Confucian traditions include rituals for ancestral reverence and communal festivities, but modern witchcraft frequently incorporates rituals for communicating with spiritual entities, casting spells, and celebrating seasonal festivals.

Another notable resemblance is the acknowledgment of the interconnection of all living things. Confucianism fosters harmony in human interactions and societal interdependence, whereas modern witchcraft emphasizes humanity's connection to nature and the spiritual realm.

These analogies highlight the dynamic interplay of ancient and modern views in South Korea, where many religious traditions coexist and shape the cultural and spiritual structure of the country. The connections between Confucianism and modern witchcraft practice reflect the country's religious views, which are deep and multifaceted. (Mwewa, Confucianism, 2023)

### **3.5 Shamanism in South Korea**

Shamanism holds a deeply rooted position, in the cultural fabric of South Korea. It existed before Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced, focusing on spirits – both good and bad – and the rituals used to connect with them. The shamanic practices, in South Korea encompass a range of beliefs and customs including healing, divination, and ceremonies to respect and communicate with ancestors. This tradition is deeply intertwined with heritage. Has endured despite the impact of other belief systems.

One of the distinctive characteristics of shamanism in South Korea is that it focuses on the role of shamans as intermediaries between the human world and the spirit world. *Mudang*, also known as *tan'gol*, who are shamans take a central part in performing rituals and facilitating communication with spirits for guidance, protection, and healing of individuals and communities.

Korean shamanism involves music, dance, and symbolic offerings among others in its rituals and ceremonies creating an environment where spirits can be invoked and spiritual communication takes place.

Curiously enough, Korean shamanism has some commonalities with witchcraft such as connecting with spiritual beings, healing-protective rites, and belief in intermediaries that can speak to spirits from this life. These similarities underscore the various types of religious beliefs and practices existing within different societies.

Shamanism is still a significant aspect of South Korea's cultural heritage despite other religions being quite dominant. In addition, there are regions that have retained their traditions while practicing their customs hence adding onto the country's array of religious diversity. (Jones, 2009)

### **3.5.1 Examples of Shamanic practices in Korean tradition**

For a better understanding of what shamanism means to Koreans, let's look at some examples of shamanic practices and their importance in the cultural landscape of South Korea.

One popular shamanic practice in Korea is *Kut*, the name given to a rite performed by shamans to ask for spirits' advice or blessings. This normally involves complex music, rhythmical drumming, and energetic dancing that make everybody involved feel engrossed. By means of the *Gut* ritual, shamans strive for spiritual communication and healing targeting specific individuals or communities.

There is also another instance where *Ogi Gut* is held as a shamanistic practice. This ceremony is an intricate ritual that sends the souls of the dead to the other world. A *kut* audience expects to cry at some time, regardless of the ritual's claimed goal. According to the author *Choi-Chungmoo*, by inducing sobbing, the shaman demonstrates that she understands the "deep-seated origin of the client's problem," and that she can "to bring it to the attention of the assembled audience in an affecting way."<sup>4</sup>

*Kut* can be mentioned as an example of such activities which are carried out collectively among Koreans living in villages or communities from time immemorial. In the *Kut* ceremonies, there are different symbolic offerings, intonations, and traditional musical instruments that bring people together to participate in a spiritual experience and honor their ancestral spirits. The *Kut* ritual is an example of the communal and participatory nature of shamanic practices which lay emphasis on how spirituality builds cohesive societies with shared identity.

By giving these examples of shamanic practices within Korean tradition, it shows how diverse and complicated shamanism affects South Korea's cultural and spiritual fabric. Shamanism is therefore one of the expressions of deep-rooted beliefs and traditions which shape the religious landscapes of a nation. (Jones, 2009)

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<sup>4</sup> Chungmoo Choi, 171; Alan Carter Covell, *Ecstasy: Shamanism in Korea* (Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym International Corp., 1983), 19-20.



### **3.5.2 Similarities between Shamanism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice**

In the shamanic tradition of South Korea, which emphasizes relating to spiritual beings and facilitating human communication with the spirit world, there are interesting correlations with modern witchcraft.

One major similarity is that the shamans play a crucial role as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual worlds. In this regard, in contemporary witchcraft, it arises through them being mediators between the humankind and spirits world by performing rituals and casting spells of communication or guidance against dangers.

Moreover, Korean shamanism as well as modern-day witchcraft attach great importance to ceremonies and rites promoting healing, safety, and soul interaction. The use of music, dance moves, and symbolic offerings in their shamanic rituals reflect ceremonial techniques employed in modern witchcraft for calling upon spiritual beings or seeking their advice.

Another way, Korean shamanism is similar to modern witchcraft is through the belief that intermediaries have powers to communicate with spirits. Both these traditions hold those individuals who can bridge that gap between man's world and divine existence in high esteem because they are seen as spiritual guides, healers, or even protectors. (Wigington, 2019)

### **3.6 *Ch'öndogyo* in South Korea**

*Ch'öndogyo* is a nativist religious tradition in South Korea developed through a form of religiosity centered in the country which can have roots with its historical development. *Ch'ondo* is an overall movement in religion and philosophy, emphasizing the harmony of human beings and the natural environment. Though the essential aspect of *Ch'öndogyo* lies in indigenous Korean beliefs, Confucian values, and Daoist principles, it creates a unique religious ethos by integrating all.

#### **3.6.1 *Ch'öndogyo* practices**

*Ch'öndogyo's* beliefs revolve around the concept of the Heavenly Lord, or *Ch'öngju*, as the supreme divine being. *Ch'öndogyo* supposes people to respect the natural world and ancestors, who hold both a role in society and relate to nature itself. Ritual practices, such as ancestor veneration and nature reverence, are some of the central events that

*Ch'onda* has imparted in practice, and the point in this is how well he regards the spiritual and natural realms.

From its spiritual beliefs, *Ch'ōndogyo* extends towards social and ethical contributions. The religion focuses on obtaining harmony in society, pining for a conscientious and well-developing spirit. Such programs of benevolence and communal well-being are highly active in the context of nature and social service.

*Ch'ōndogyo* today forms part and parcel of the religious and cultural fabric of South Korea. It remains a distinctive spiritual belief system with its set of morals, offering a different view of spirituality, morality, and social welfare in relation to the current world. The presence of *Ch'ōndogyo* in various social efforts and ethical debates shows how its features are still relevant in shaping contemporary ethical and cultural aspects.

In brief, *Ch'ōndogyo* remains one of the most important components of South Korea's religious spectrum and philosophy of ethics that combines the cultural heritage of the Korean people with spiritual beliefs. Given the harmony between spiritual traditions and moral values deeply rooted in Korean traditions, it contributes to South Korea's religious diversity and cultural ethos. (Heo, 2000) (O'Leary, 2019)

### **3.6.2 Similarities between *Ch'ōndogyo* in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice**

While *Ch'ōndogyo* and modern witchcraft may seem very different at first sight, there are several interesting analogies that are intricate by their clear striking similarities and universal themes and principles, for they will be basically related to two aspects. Emphasis on Nature and Interconnectedness

*Ch'ōndogyo* and modern witchcraft share an exclusive emphasis on nature and the interconnectedness of all life forms. Both belief systems pay homage to nature and declare the intrinsic symbiosis between man and his environment. According to *Ch'ōndogyo's* concepts, human beings and nature are in harmony. Modern witchcraft practitioners, on the other hand, consider nature as a power source of spiritual renewal and harmony.

Both *Ch'ōndogyo* and modern witchcraft extend beyond merely spiritual beliefs to ethical and social contributions. Modern witchcraft practitioners often prioritize social harmony, ethical conduct, and the general good. In the same way, just as *Ch'ōndogyo* encourages benevolence and social welfare, modern witchcraft practitioners emphasize values of empathy, social justice, and communal well-being as part of their social and ethical pursuits.

*Ch'öndogyo* and modern witchcraft practices are dedicated to promoting interfaith dialog and cooperation. While the former seeks to associate with various religious communities for mutual understanding and respect, the latter often urges cooperation of different belief systems and inculcation within spiritual spheres. This dedication to interfaith harmony underpins the religious diversity and cultural ethos within their respective contexts.

In conclusion, the underlying features linking *Ch'öndogyo* and modern witchcraft practice support fundamental beliefs crossing space and time. Both, for themselves, embody a sensuous reverence for nature, a commitment to ethical value, and a dedication to fostering interfaith harmony, which enriches the religious landscape and cultural ethos within their respective contexts. (Heo, 2000) (O'Leary, 2019)

### **3.7 Hinduism in South Korea**

Korean society does not have a significant presence of Hinduism. Besides being open to many religions over time, Hinduism does not have wide acceptance or recognition in Korea but it has had a unique history in South Korea even though it is not widely found throughout the country.

#### **3.7.1 Hinduism practices**

Equally important is that the cultural and ceremonial practices associated with Hinduism, which include rituals, festivals, and symbolic representations, contrast against those of the religious traditions that are common in South Korea thereby contributing to the country's religious and cultural diversity. (Kim C. , 2010)

One of the Hinduistic ceremonial practices and rituals in South Korea is *Yajna*, also known as *Havan* as a sacred fire ritual. This entails invoking deities by offering ghee (clarified butter), herbs, and grains into a purified fire. In certain spiritual communities or gatherings in South Korea, one may find variations of this practice that involve participants carrying out fire ceremonies reminiscent of Hindu havans. These rituals might consist of lighting a sacred fire and presenting symbolic items to purify one's soul spiritually and invite divine blessings. (Astrology, T, 2024)

Additionally, meditation and yoga among other practices are seen as the cultural influence of Hinduism in South Korea. Although meditation yoga has evolved into secular practices emphasizing physical fitness and mental health, their roots can be traced back to ancient Hindustani spirituality. The retention of meditation yoga within the

wellness cultures demonstrates how Hinduism has continually influenced holistic health approaches to life as practiced in Korea. (Mwewa, Hinduism, 2023)

*Diwali*, also known as the Festival of Lights, is an important Hindu festival that signifies the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. In South Korea, some cultural and expatriate communities now recognize *Diwali* as a religious holiday. It is often celebrated by lighting oil lamps, performing arts, and exchanging sweets and presents to show cross-cultural exchange between communities in that country. (Caruso, 2023)

Certain places in South Korea have temples with Hindu god's images and hence may have special events or observances connected to such temples. These can include the reciting of mantras, offering flowers and fruits to deities, and communal devotion by believers. Although these rituals are conducted within specific temple societies they add up to the diverse religious texture which makes up Korean society.

In conclusion, while Hinduism may not be prevalent all throughout South Korea it still influences its various religious fabric albeit subtly.

### **3.7.2 Similarities between Hinduism in South Korea and modern witchcraft practice**

Although Hinduism in South Korea differs from contemporary witchcraft practice at first look there are certain similarities that seem notable regarding their broader spiritual and cultural impacts. Both practices involve many different beliefs, rituals processes, or doctrines; they have made unique contributions to the global religious tapestry.

Just like how Hinduism is embraced in the religious landscape of South Korea, modern witchcraft also stresses the embracing and incorporation of diverse cultural and spiritual influences. It draws from various historical and cultural sources with practitioners often taking elements from different traditions to honor the diversity of spiritual expressions.

Elaborate ritualistic practices for spiritual connection and empowerment are common in both South Korean Hinduism and modern witchcraft practices. Apart from fire rituals, meditation, and temple festivals in Hinduism, modern witchcraft practices such as casting circles, invoking elements, and performing spell work are common practices that harness spiritual energies to manifest intentions.

The cultural influence of Hinduism in South Korea can be seen through meditation as well as yoga which is also part of modern witchcraft practice. Both traditions focus on

holistic approaches to wellness considering physical mental and spiritual well-being as interconnected. The inclusion of meditation and yoga into modern witchcraft shows that these spiritual practices have continued to influence various cultures' spirituality.

This is demonstrated by the way South Korea acknowledges and celebrates Hindu practices like *Diwali* among others; in a similar fashion, contemporary witchcraft practice calls for the adoption of various traditions from different cultures. Those who follow these practices often find inspiration in diverse cultural and spiritual sources, appreciating that all humans have common spiritual themes and connections between faiths.

One of the most significant similarities between Hinduism and modern witchcraft practice is their concern with ancestral and supernatural bondages. While Hinduism honors its ancestors' spirits and emphasizes the connection of physical to divine realities; modern witches acknowledge the presence and guidance of their ancestors, as well as their spiritual intervention into human life.

With these common themes, it can be seen that both Hinduism in South Korea and modern witchcraft contribute towards a rich intricate global spiritual tapestry. These connections between them show how culture mingles with religious values to deepen our understanding of universal themes across humanity's spirituality. (Dimock, 2024)

### **3.8 Islam in South Korea**

The role of Islam in modern Korea is undergoing significant changes, influenced by migration patterns and the spread of da'wah activities. Although this religion is not commonly practiced in South Korea, its presence is significant enough to mention. Arab and Persian seafaring merchants first introduced Islam to the Korean Peninsula in the ninth century. In the early eleventh century, Arab trade missions again arrived in Korea and built a mosque in the city of *Kaesŏng*. Muslims entered the official Korean historical record in 1024 when Arab traders embarked on a large trade mission to the *Koryŏ* kingdom. This opened the door for Central Asian traders and migrants, as well as some Chinese Hui Muslims, to settle in Korea. It is, however, through early contacts that the foundation for Islam in Korea was initiated, and yet it has been a relatively small community which has remained marginalized throughout much of its history. However, the Muslim population in Korea increased due to immigration and greater cultural exchange over the past several years. (Kim S. , 2015) (Kwon, 2014)

### **3.8.1 Islam practices**

The presence of Islam therefore also brings in a distinct set of visions and traditions that add to religious and cultural diversity within South Korea. In this way, the Islamic principles which include monotheism, compassion, justice, and togetherness offer an exclusive spiritual perspective on the Korean social landscape.

Thus, Islam's vision in South Korea entails integration as well as co-existence with other members of society at large. These activities promote understanding as well as enhanced cooperation among different religious or cultural groups because they involve interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange organized by Muslims living in this country who practice their religion diligently. That respect for one another coupled with peaceful coexistence is consistent with South Korean multiculturalism ideology emphasizing diversity.

The religion of Islam in South Korea can be seen through numerous mosques and praying places. People go to the mosque not just to pray but also for their spiritual life, social gathering, and getting knowledge. This ensures that there is a sense of unity among the Muslims in this area and it acts as a way of bringing people from different cultures together.

Islamic festivals also have cultural significance within the Korean Muslim population. During *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*, prayers are said together with communal meals being shared, thus marking another important example of how religion unifies people in society while at the same time strengthening South Korea's multicultural character.

South Korea has benefited from Islamic presence because it has led to the sharing of cultural practices between Muslims and non-Muslims. It helps people learn about Islamic things as organized by the Muslim community during educational programs, cultural programs, or even social outreaches. These initiatives enhance understanding for all communities within South Korea since they serve to share religious occasions together with other cultural aspects associated with such ceremonies.

In line with Islamic principles of charity and social welfare, the South Korean Muslim community actively engages in humanitarian and charitable endeavors, contributing to various initiatives aimed at addressing social concerns, promoting welfare, and extending support to those in need. These efforts reflect the intrinsic values of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility embedded within Islamic teachings.

The evolving role of Islam in modern Korea embodies a narrative of cultural exchange, diversity, and the coalescence of traditional and contemporary values. As the Muslim community continues to grow and establish its presence in Korean society, it contributes to the nation's rich religious mosaic, fostering an environment of inclusivity, understanding, and shared respect for the diversity of religious and cultural traditions. (Hyondo, 2015)

### **3.8.2 Similarities between Islam and modern witchcraft in South Korea**

It is interesting to think about how Islam and modern witchcraft, two completely different religious traditions in South Korea, share similarities in the nation's diversity of religious and cultural traditions.

Both religions emphasize spiritual connectivity and interconnectedness with other realms. For example, *Tawhid* is one of the basic teachings in the Islamic faith that shows its kinship with modern witchcraft. Modern witches draw primarily on spiritual energy from ancestors in order to bring into reality intentions. This implies that all beings are connected more or less. (Saritoprak, 2022)

Additionally, both Islam and contemporary witchcraft adopt a holistic approach toward health, viewing it as being made up of physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. *Tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) are among those activities that show that Islam has quite a lot in common with other healing practices. As a result, new practices such as meditation or energy work were invented to allow witches achieve the emotional, physical, and spiritual balance required for manifesting their intentions. (Saber, 2023) (Islamweb, 2021)

Both Islam and modern witchcraft advocate for culturally inclusive practices where different cultural practices are respected if not incorporated. Islam's history of cultural interchange with many places has resulted in the absorption of diverse cultural practices and traditions into Islamic observances. Similarly, modern witchcraft practitioners take inspiration from a variety of cultural and spiritual factors in their practice, respecting the universal themes that pervade human spiritual experience.

The similarities between Islam and modern witchcraft in South Korea underscore the traditions' common values of spiritual connectedness, holistic wellness, and cultural inclusivity, all of which contribute to the country's rich and diversified spiritual landscape. (Hyondo, 2015)

## 4 Research

### 4.1 Overview of the research

This second phase of my thesis tried to further penetrate this complicated play, moving from mere observation to analysis of the beliefs and perceptions of individuals. By administering a survey to 60 South Korean citizens, I tried to examine the manifestations and presence of witchcraft and Korean beliefs in their daily lives. This is an attempt at a scholarly effort to understand Korean spirituality and contemporary relevance, guided by empirical data and firsthand narratives.

### 4.2 Structure of the survey

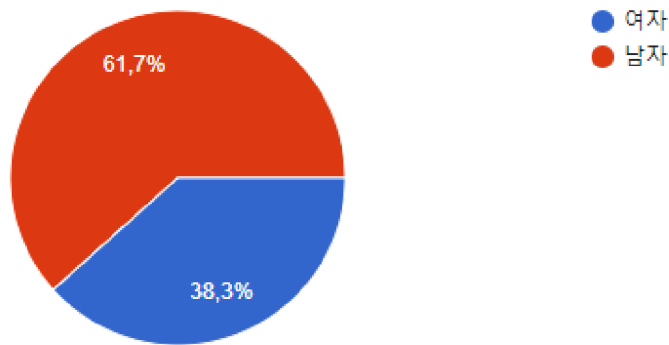
To continue the study for this thesis, I combined all of the information gathered in previous chapters and built a survey with 12 questions. This survey was divided into two sections. The first comprised broad inquiries about the individual, while the second focused on specific questions relevant to the investigation. The second part included information about faiths, followed by superstitions specific to South Korea, and finally witchcraft and its most taboo activities. It was open to the public from April 7th until April 28th, 2024.

### 4.3 What is your sex?

**Structure:** In the first section of the survey, I asked general questions about the individuals. The first was regarding their sex, and according to the survey results, males had the highest participation (61,7%), followed by females (38,3%).

**Analysis:** This does not necessarily change our findings for the topic under consideration, but it is critical to understand the implications of this disparity in sex while evaluating and interpreting the data.



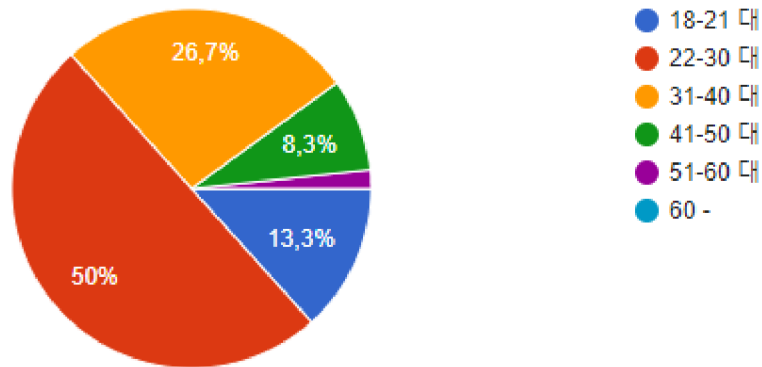


Graph no. 1 – What is your sex?

#### 4.4 What is your age?

**Structure:** The second question in the survey was regarding their age. The category of 22-30-year-old individuals received the most responses in this survey (50%), followed by 31-40-year-old individuals (26,7%), 18-21-year-old adults (13,3%), a smaller percentage of 41-50-year-old respondents (8,3%), and one respondent in the 51-60-year-old category (1,7%).

**Analysis:** This means that this study will be primarily focused on individuals who have an increased tendency to keep their views constant and not change frequently.

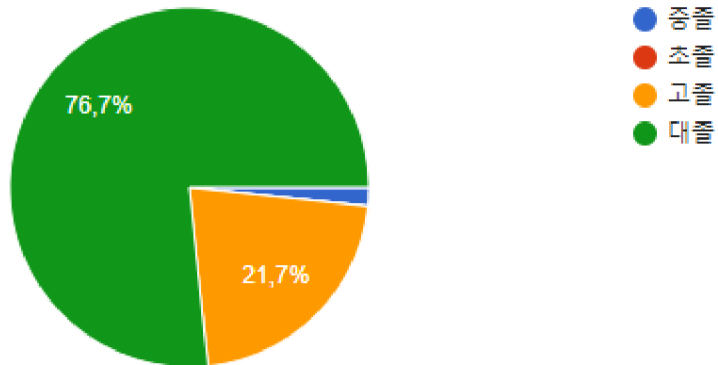


Graph no. 2 – What is your age?

#### 4.5 What is your highest received education?

**Structure:** The third general question was regarding the highest level of education, and as expected, the majority of respondents had a college degree (76,7%), followed by a large number of those who had just completed high school (21,7%). There was only one respondent who had only completed middle school (1,7%).

**Analysis:** I believe this person who selected that they completed middle school is just graduating high school because they are between the ages of 18 and 21 years. The majority of responses will come from those with a high level of education, which means they will most likely have higher critical thinking skills or be more knowledgeable about numerous issues.

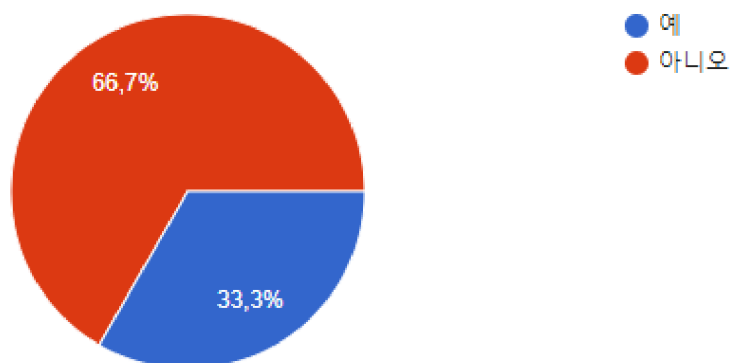


Graph no. 3 – What is your highest received education?

#### 4.6 Do you identify with a particular religion or belief system?

**Structure:** The following questions will focus directly on the research. This particular inquiry concerned their religious beliefs. The majority of respondents were nonbelievers, as expected based on current statistics (66,7%), yet a significant proportion of our respondents were active believers (33,3%).

**Analysis:** Based on these findings, we can conclude that the majority of our respondents do not believe in a higher power and so do not share many characteristics with witchcraft practitioners. They may be more open to such subjects, though, because they are more skeptical of other religions.

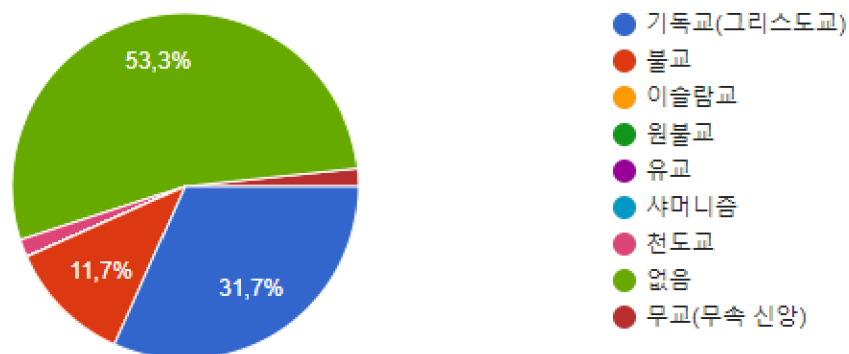


Graph no. 4 – Do you identify with a particular religion or belief system?

#### 4.7 Choose what religion you identify with:

**Structure:** Following up on the last question, I asked respondents to choose from a list of religions significant to South Korea. In this study, we can see that the majority of respondents are not religious (53,3%), followed by Christianity being the most widely believed religion in both the survey and statistics. The next most popular religion was Buddhism (11,7%), and then Ch'öndogyo (1,7%).

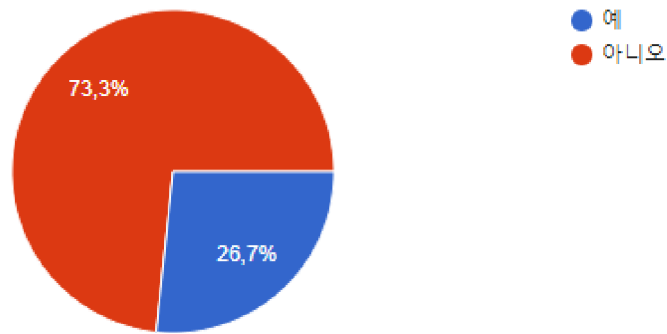
**Analysis:** However, one individual claimed in the survey that they do not believe in their faith, indicating that they were born into it. Additionally, one last respondent (1.7%) identified to be an atheist, which distinguishes them from non-believers in any religion in that they deny the existence of a greater entity or force. This suggests that this responder, who may see supernatural beliefs via a skepticism or rationalism lens, is providing diverse viewpoints on witchcraft among the questioned community. This also implies that one smaller half of our respondents will be more interested in supernatural things, while the other, we may infer, will not be.



Graph no. 5 – Choose which religion you identify with

#### 4.8 Do you follow the traditions and the rules of your religion?

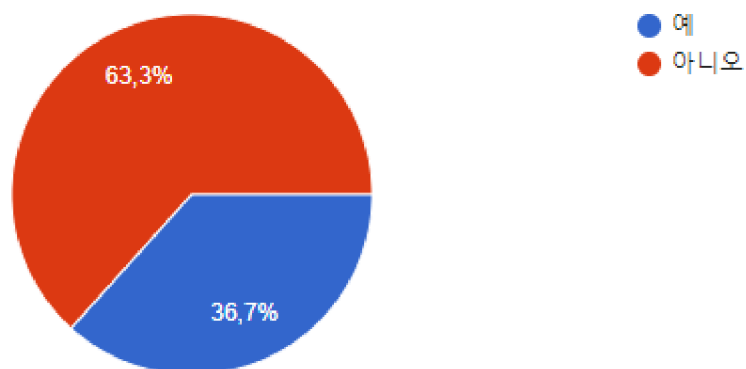
**Analysis:** In relation to this subject, I wanted to investigate the actual relevance of religion in their life and confirm whether my assumptions were valid and whether they are true believers in supernatural phenomena. My assumption was true, and the majority of religious believers were acting on their convictions. The majority of survey participants who chose Buddhism as their religion do not practice it, demonstrating that Buddhism's influence on South Koreans is not very strong in this study. Nevertheless, the majority of participants (73,3%) do not adhere to their religious beliefs, and those that do are largely Christians (26,7%).



Graph no. 6 - Do you follow the traditions and the rules of your religion?

#### 4.9 Do you believe in other things that could be against your faith (superstitions, magic, etc..)?

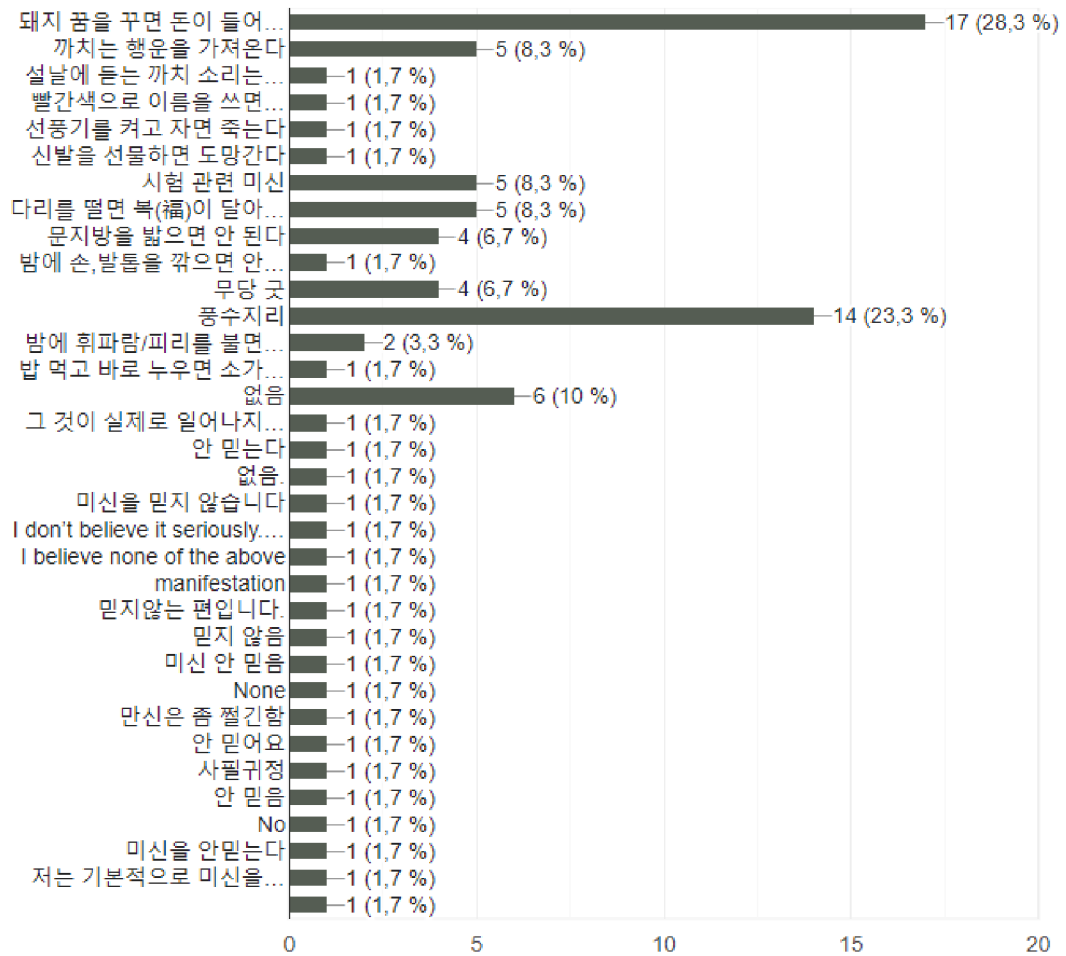
**Analysis:** The survey results show that respondents held a wide range of opinions about magic and superstitions, with the majority disagreeing or outright rejecting such beliefs (63,3%) that conflict with religious beliefs, but a sizable minority hold other views (36,7%), indicating diverse interpretations and practices among the population surveyed. Many of the non-believers demonstrated that the premise of people being more open to themes such as superstitions or even witchcraft holds true and that even if they do not follow a religion, they believe in the supernatural. There may be disagreement on some matters due to differences in personal interpretations of religious teachings or cultural circumstances. For example, some people may strictly interpret religious teachings and hence reject actions that contradict their religion, whilst others may adopt or syncretize magical or superstitious acts with religious beliefs. However, this suggests that South Koreans who participated in this study may be less interested in themes like superstitions and more concerned with their routines or the "real world".



Graph no. 7 – Do you believe in other things that could be against your faith?

#### **4.10 Which superstitions do you believe in?**

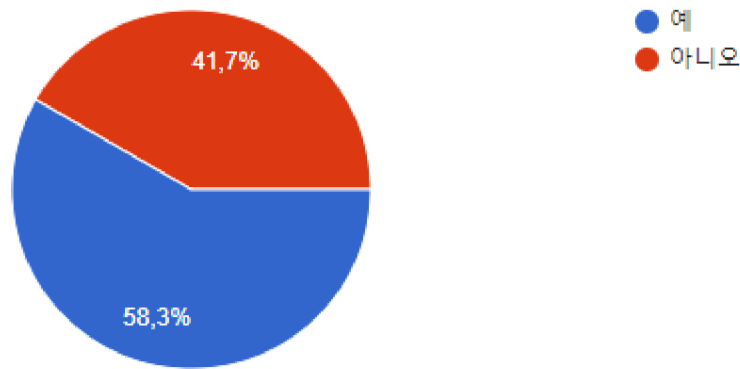
**Analysis:** In this question regarding widespread superstitions in South Korea, it was discovered that the most common belief among participants is that dreaming of a pig brings good luck (28,3%) and feng shui (23,3%). Other popular beliefs were that shaking your leg drives away luck (8,3%), that standing on a threshold is bad (8,3%) and that magpies bring good fortune (8,3%). These selections were chosen by both non-believers and practicing believers of their faith, which surprised me. Believers, such as Christians, are not expected to follow any other views but their own, which makes South Koreans incredibly open-minded and individualistic. However, there were also sincere believers in the faith who did not believe in superstitions and also those who were strongly rational and did not believe in anything at all (38,3%). Education levels, cultural background, exposure to scientific thinking, and other factors may have contributed to their lack of belief in superstitious ideas. Individuals with a high level of education, particularly those who grow up in a non-cultured milieu, are more likely to fight superstitions and explain them using rationalistic concepts. The presence of such a community that rejects superstition demonstrates the diversity of belief systems and worldviews within the studied population. It states that, while superstitions may be influential for some people, others can find meaning and explanation in alternative frameworks that do not rely on supernatural explanations.



Graph no. 8 – Which superstitions do you believe in?

#### 4.11 Do you know what is Witchcraft?

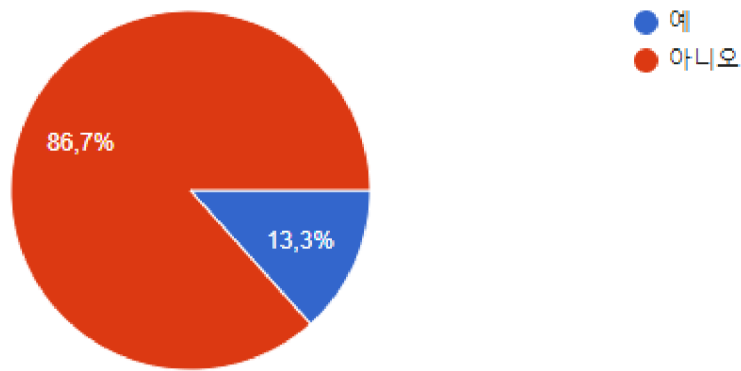
**Analysis:** This section of the survey will focus specifically on witchcraft and the practices that stem from it. Surprisingly, the majority of respondents recognize what witchcraft is (58,3%), and when we look at who those respondents are, we see that some are believers and some are nonbelievers. This information demonstrates that South Koreans may have come across this topic someplace, either through their religious views, personal inquiry, or by meeting someone who practices witchcraft. Although, if we dig deeper into the matter, we cannot presume that the respondent fully understands the term witchcraft as a practice.



Graph no. 9 – Do you know what is Witchcraft?

#### 4.12 Have you ever casted a spell or cursed someone?

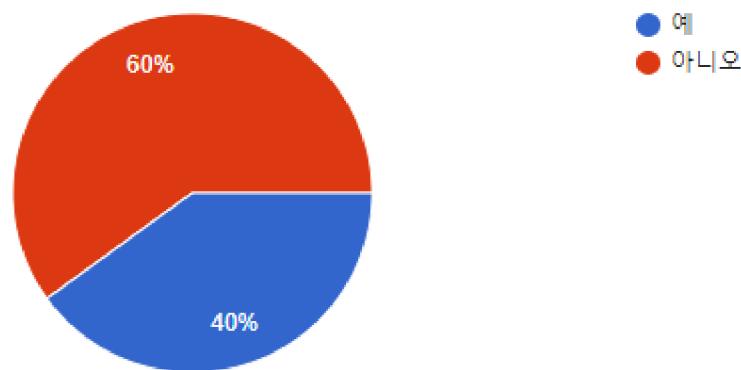
**Analysis:** This question was one of the most essential for the research because it addressed the problem of direct contact or participation in witchcraft. The findings indicate that a modest but significant percentage of individuals (13,3%) have cast a spell or cursed someone. The absence of religious beliefs among spellcasters suggests that the practitioners are followers of alternative spiritualities or belief systems, which may include magical or occult practitioners. Some people may be captivated by esoteric and New Age beliefs, which emphasize personal empowerment, self-discovery, and the manipulation of supernatural forces. Making the decision to conduct spellcasting without the support of religious groups may violate established religious practices or principles. People with nonreligious or atheistic backgrounds may seek other forms of spiritual expression or empowerment outside of organized religion, such as spellcasting, as a means of personal agency or self-expression. Spellcasting could be a coping method for dealing with problems, seeking justice, or influencing the environment. These individuals may be terrified of being perceived as engaging in such activities by the religious community due to social stigma and taboo, hence they may conceal or emphasize their participation in the practice. Social ostracism and condemnation from the religious community may induce these individuals to dread social ostracism and, as a result, conceal or emphasize their participation in such activities.



Graph no. 10 – Have you ever casted a spell or cursed someone?

#### 4.13 Do you believe in ghosts or bad spirits?

**Analysis:** Following the previous question, I inquired about the belief in bad spirits and ghosts, which revealed that the vast majority of participants (60%) did not believe in them. This could have resulted from the rationality and critical thinking of non-believers. However, 40% of believers demonstrate that, despite the fact that there may be many nonbelievers or uneducated participants in witchcraft, witchcraft beliefs remain prevalent in South Korean lives. However, we must not forget that there were religious participants who believed in ill spirits and ghosts, which can be attributed only to their religious views.

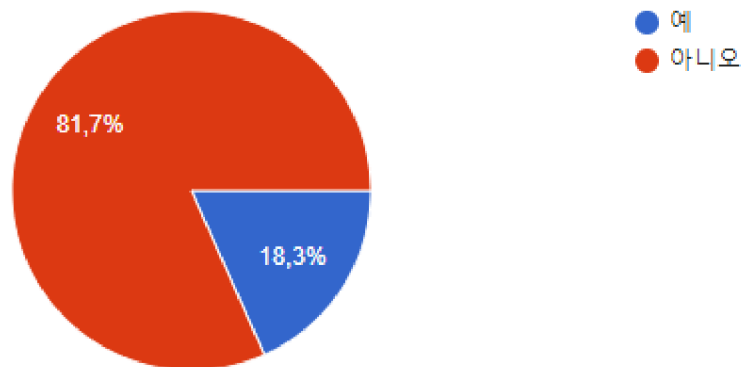


Graph no. 11 – Do you believe in ghosts and bad spirits?



#### 4.14 Do you believe in fortune-telling or angel numbers (Numerology)?

**Analysis:** The survey's final question asked respondents if they believed in numerology. The subject is more accessible to South Koreans, and it demonstrated the opposite effect for this study. The majority of people did not believe in it (81,7%), and only one respondent found the preceding answer to be negative for ghosts and bad spirits, claiming that they too have signs of witchcraft practice in their daily lives. This also suggests that South Koreans only exhibit specific sorts of witchcraft in their daily lives and do not adhere only to trends or traditional beliefs.



Graph no .12 – Do you believe in fortune telling or angel numbers (Numerology)?

#### 4.15 Conclusion

The survey's results, which focused on the signs of witchcraft in South Koreans' daily lives and their overall understanding of the subject, revealed many noteworthy findings.

The questionnaire results reveal, in part, the numerous facets of South Korean belief and behavior, including a sophisticated view of witchcraft and its prevalence in the examined population. The vast majority of responders do not actively engage in witchcraft rituals, yet many admit to casting spells or cursing others. The inference is clear: witchcraft occurs in South Korea, but it is not a universal part of society; rather, it is a facet of some people's lives, typically influenced by alternative spiritualities or belief systems.

Whether South Koreans are aware of witchcraft in their daily lives or not, it is likely that they are, given more than half of respondents indicated that they are familiar with the concept. This could be due to exposure to popular culture, personal research, or engagement with practitioners. As a result, while respondents may be aware of the word "witchcraft," their knowledge of the activity and its effects varies. More research will be

needed to determine the extent of this awareness and its impact on people's attitudes and activities.

In conclusion, the study's findings are extremely interesting to me and valuable in terms of providing information about witchcraft beliefs and their relevance to South Korean society. Though not universally acknowledged, it exists within the country's culture, with different people showing knowledge and engagement to differing degrees. This diversity of beliefs and activities, ranging from superstitions to spellcasting, reflects the complexities of South Korean spiritual life, in which tradition and modernity coexist.

## Conclusion

This study primarily presents substantial factual information about the existence and awareness of witchcraft rituals among South Koreans, as well as their interactions with other forms of religious practice. The research study began by determining whether witchcraft practices have relevance in the lives of Koreans, as well as how widespread awareness of such practices is, with a focus on any cultural taboos that may exist within the subject matter. The impulse for the research was to investigate the likely existence and importance of witchcraft within Korean religions and cultures. I aimed to explore the common perception of witchcraft around the world, as well as a sample analysis of South Koreans' daily lives.

The study's findings show that South Koreans have a varied perspective on witchcraft—some practice it, while others are aware of it but are not necessarily involved. In any event, it becomes clear that witchcraft, as a way of life, is a reality for individuals, who are often motivated by alternative religious or spiritual beliefs.

Furthermore, comparing witchcraft to other forms of religious belief in South Korea revealed some interesting parallels and linkages. Christians, Buddhists, Confucians, Shamanists, *Ch'öndogyo* followers, Hindus, and Muslims share similarities with witchcraft, including ceremonies, trust in higher forces, respect for nature, and interdependence.

My study also showed that South Koreans' current involvement in witchcraft rituals is the consequence of a combination of cultural continuity, personal conviction, and contemporary influences. Whereas in some situations, witchcraft is incompatible with the religious and cultural traditions to which they belong, others include witchcraft rituals in their spiritual life, reflecting a growing dynamic of religion and spirituality in modern culture.

However, this study helped to a better understanding of witchcraft beliefs and practices in the context of South Korean society, emphasizing how diverse spirituality may be and how it is held in ongoing interaction with tradition and modernity. Additional research could be conducted to find the diverse range of spiritual manifestations and belief systems that exist in today's popular culture or to uncover the cultural, social, and individual elements that drive witchcraft belief. This would significantly broaden our understanding of how this occurs within modern South Korea.

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## **List of appendices**

<b>Transcription .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Survey .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Example of a response .....</b>	<b>VI</b>

## Transcription

모음	Roman	자음	Initial	Medial	Final
ㅏ	a	ㄱ	k	k, g (between vowels and after m, n, ng, l), ng (before m, n, l)	k
ㅑ	ya	ㄴ	n	n, l (when preceded or followed by l)	n
ㅓ	ö	ㄷ	t	t, d (between vowels and after m, n, ng)	t
ㅕ	yö	ㄹ	n	r (between vowels), l (before all other consonants and after n, l), n (after other consonants)	l
ㅗ	o	ㅁ	m	m	m
ㅛ	yo	ㅂ	p	b (between vowels and after m, n, ng, l), m (before m, n, l), p (before and after all other consonants)	p
ㅜ	u	ㅅ	s, sh (before wi)	s, sh (before wi), n (before m, n, l)	t
ㅠ	yu	ㅇ	Not romanized	Not romanized, ng (as syllabic final)	ng
ㅡ	ü	ㅈ	ch	j (between vowels, and after m, n, ng) ch (after all other consonants)	t
ㅣ	i	ㅊ	ch'	ch'	
ㅞ	ae	ㅋ	k'	k'	
ㅙ	yae	ㆁ	t'	t'	
ㅚ	e	ㆁ	p'	p'	
ㅜ	ye	ㅎ	h	h	
ㅟ	oe	ㄱ	kk	kk	kk
ㅠ	wi	ㄷ	tt	tt	
ㅢ	üi	ㅍ	pp	pp	
ㅤ	wa	ㅍ	ss	ss	
ㅥ	wae	ㅍ	tch	tch	
ㅦ	wö				
ㅨ	we				

## Survey

귀하의 개인적 배경에 관한 질문입니다. 질문을 잘 읽어 보시고 해당되는 것에 표시하세요.

귀하의 성별은? \*

- 여자
- 남자

귀하의 연령은? \*

- 18-21 대
- 22-30 대
- 31-40 대
- 41-50 대
- 51-60 대
- 60 -

귀하의 학력은? \*

- 중졸
- 초졸
- 고졸
- 대졸

다음은 연구와 관련 질문입니다. 내용을 읽어 보시고 번호에 표시하세요.

믿는 종교를 가지십니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

종교에 표시하세요 \*

- 기독교(그리스도교)
- 불교
- 이슬람교
- 원불교
- 유교
- 샤머니즘
- 천도교
- 없음

종교생활을 실제로 하십니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

신앙에 어긋난 다른 것 (미신, 마법 등)도 믿으십니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

미신을 믿으신다면 무엇을 믿으십니까? \*

- 돼지 꿈을 꾸면 돈이 들어온다
- 까치는 행운을 가져온다
- 설날에 듣는 까치 소리는 길조, 까마귀 소리는 흉조다
- 빨간색으로 이름을 쓰면 죽는다
- 선풍기를 켜고 자면 죽는다
- 신발을 선물하면 도망간다
- 시험 관련 미신
- 다리를 떨면 복(福)이 달아난다
- 문지방을 밟으면 안 된다
- 밤에 손, 발톱을 깎으면 안 된다
- 무당 굿
- 풍수지리
- 밤에 휘파람/피리를 불면 뱀이 나온다
- 밥 먹고 바로 누우면 소가 된다
- Iné: \_\_\_\_\_

마법이 (Witchcraft)무엇인지 아시나요? \*

- 예
- 아니오

누군가에게 주문이나 저주를 시도한 적이 있습니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

귀하는 유령이나 나쁜 영혼을 믿습니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

귀하는 점 치는 것거나 천사의 숫자를 (Angel numbers/Numerology) 믿습니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

## Example of a response

귀하의 개인적 배경에 관한 질문입니다. 질문을 잘 읽어 보시고 해당되는 것에 표시하세요.

귀하의 성별은? \*

- 여자  
 남자

귀하의 연령은? \*

- 18-21 대  
 22-30 대  
 31-40 대  
 41-50 대  
 51-60 대  
 60 -

귀하의 학력은? \*

- 중졸  
 초졸  
 고졸  
 대졸

다음은 연구와 관련 질문입니다. 내용을 읽어 보시고 번호에 표시하세요.

믿는 종교를 가지십니까? \*

- 예  
 아니오



종교에 표시하세요 \*

- 기독교(그리스도교)
- 불교
- 이슬람교
- 원불교
- 유교
- 샤머니즘
- 천도교
- 없음

종교생활을 실제로 하십니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

신앙에 어긋난 다른 것 (미신, 마법 등)도 믿으십니까? \*

- 예
- 아니오

미신을 믿으신다면 무엇을 믿으십니까? \*

- 돼지 꿈을 꾸면 돈이 들어온다
- 까치는 행운을 가져온다
- 설날에 듣는 까치 소리는 길조, 까마귀 소리는 흉조다
- 빨간색으로 이름을 쓰면 죽는다
- 선풍기를 켜고 자면 죽는다
- 신발을 선물하면 도망간다
- 시험 관련 미신
- 다리를 떨면 복(福)이 달아난다
- 문지방을 밟으면 안 된다
- 밤에 손발톱을 깎으면 안 된다
- 무당 굿
- 풍수지리
- 밤에 휘파람/피리를 불면 뱀이 나온다
- 밥 먹고 바로 누우면 소가 된다

Iné: 없음

마법이 (Witchcraft) 무엇인지 아시나요? \*

- 예  
 아니오

누군가에게 주문이나 저주를 시도한 적이 있습니까? \*

- 예  
 아니오

귀하는 유령이나 나쁜 영혼을 믿습니까? \*

- 예  
 아니오

귀하는 점 치는 것거나 천사의 숫자를 (Angel numbers/Numerology) 믿습니까? \*

- 예  
 아니오