

대항문화로서의 전통음식의 재탄생

The Reinvention of Traditional Cuisine as Counterculture

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요약

이 글은 자본주의 사회에서 전통음식이 과거에 대한 “향수”를 자극하며 재창조되고 소비되는 방식에 대해 논의한다. 이 글은 사찰음식과 안동음식이 재탄생한 과정 등의 사례 분석을 통해 오늘날 전통음식이 상품화되는 과정에서 탈맥락화의 과정을 거친다고 주장한다. 또한 고대 중국 사회에서 채식문화가 불교문화의 일부로 인정받기 시작한 과정을 되짚으며 불교의 채식문화가 여러 환경요인에 의해 발명된 문화라는 점을 밝히려 한다. 고대 중국사회에서 채식문화가 불교사상을 전파하기 좋은 도구로 자리 잡았다면 오늘날 사찰음식은 불교사상의 전파보다는 상품화와 소비를 가능하게 하고 있다. 이 논문은 현대 한국사회에서 전통음식이 다시 인기를 끌고 있는 현상에 초점을 맞추어 이와 같은 현상이 현대 한국사회의 소비자들의 심리와 요구를 어떻게 반영하는가를 살펴본다. 그리고 현대 한국사회에서 각광을 받고 있는 전통음식 문화가 자본주의 사회 내에서 대항문화로서 자리매김할 수 있을지에 대해 논의한다.

■ 중심어 : | 전통음식 | 불교 | 사찰음식 | 안동음식 | 헛제삿밥 | 탈맥락화 |

Abstract

This paper discusses how the traditional cuisine of Korea capitalizes on “nostalgia” for the past. While examining the (re)invention of Buddhist cuisine and Andong food, this paper contends that traditional Korean cuisine is commodified through a process of de-contextualization. This paper first discusses the possibility that the idea of traditional cuisine is an invention in the first place. The history of temple food, for instance, suggests that it was created as a vehicle for circulating and implementing the ruling ideology in the ancient societies of China. This paper then turns to the issue of the growing influence of traditional cuisine in contemporary Korean culture, which is related to the public’s demand for healthy food and also tied with the South Korean society’s need for promoting a national cuisine in the age of globalization. The rise of traditional cuisine is a sign that people are seeking to reform their eating habits and form a counterculture. Yet, another side of the story is that consumers end up taking part in the self-expanding capitalist market with more consumer choices rather than forming a genuine counterculture. In this respect, the reinvention of temple food is closely related to what Jean and John L. Comaroff call the “emergence of consumption as a privileged site for the fabrication of self and society, of culture and identity.”

■ keyword : | Traditional Food | Buddhist Temple Food | Andong | Hut-jesa-Bab | Decontextualization | Food Choice | Consumerism | Counterculture |

I. Introduction

Barugongyang is a temple food restaurant located on the fifth floor of the Templestay Information Center. The Templestay Information Center is housed in a modern, chic, grey building. Ethnic elements are also infused in its modern architecture as we can see in [picture 1]. For instance, its front gate consists of two plates. The exterior is made of glass and is attached to a wooden frame carved into a flower motif. Inside, we can also see lamps in a lotus shape.



Picture 1 Templestay Information Center



Picture 2. Jogyesa Temple in Seoul

On the first floor of the Templestay Information Center, there is an information center. Here, one can find brochures on temple stay in several languages. There are also two restaurants in this building. Entering *Barugongyang* on the fifth floor, one can see a picture of Richard Gere on the reception desk. Some may find this too vulgar, whereas others might share the pride of the restaurant in attracting a Hollywood star and proving the competitiveness of Korean food. In Seoul, photographs of celebrities who have visited are often hung on restaurant walls to attract customers; and, in the use of this tactic, temple food restaurants are no exception. Monastic Cuisine *Barugongyang Kong* (bean) is on the second floor and is more casual than Monastic Cuisine *Barugongyang* on the fifth floor. The Education Center and the office are located in between the two restaurants.

This building serves a different purpose from the Buddhist temple across the street. Whereas the temple is a place for religious events, the Templestay Center serves a more commercial purpose. For example, there are information center, gift shop and restaurants in this building. The [picture 2] may suggest that most people are heading towards the temple, but in fact the Templestay Center can be more inviting and open for those who are from other countries. The most noticeable difference is the way that food is consumed. Whereas you can get lunch at the temple for 2,000 won¹, a relatively cheap price, you need to pay almost double the price if you go to the restaurants in the Templestay Center.

An air of sophistication permeates *Barugongyang* which is on the fifth floor of the Templestay Information Center. There is a sheet on each table, where four guidelines from the Dharmagupta Vinaya are printed: “to eat proper food at the right time,” “to eat food in season,” “to have a balanced diet” and “not to overeat and to abstain from meat.” This might seem a little didactic to some people. However, considering that there is a general understanding that the culture of temple food embodies the philosophy of Buddhism, it is not so surprising that customers are led to meditate on the act of choosing and having meals at this place.

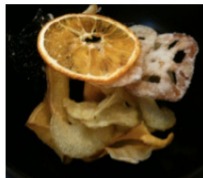
For lunch, there are four set course meals starting with the 10-course option. The more the number of courses, the more expensive the meal. The most expensive menu has 17 courses. The interesting thing is the name of each course option. The cheapest set menu, which offers only 10 courses, is named the “Paramita (婆羅蜜) Course.” Here, Paramita means “the state of perfection.” The 15-course meal, in

1. This lunch which is served at the temple is called Manbalgongyang, a ritual whose aim is to feed as many people as possible. This lunch ticket is available for those with membership cards for the Jogye order.

contrast, is called the “Englishtenment Course.” And the 17-course meal is named “Barugongyang Course.” Since “Barugongyang” refers to “a formal monastic meal,” it may feel like there is a slight decline in the degree of spiritual enlightenment as the course gets expensive. Nevertheless, the price and the number of courses demonstrate that the temple food has been transformed into gourmet food (see [picture 3] and [picture 4]).



Picture 3 Main course



Picture 4 Dessert

In recent years, traditional food has gained in popularity in Korea as people have come to regard what they eat as being closely related to their life style. For this reason, an individual’s choice of food is now considered as a form of self-expression. People now read political and spiritual messages in the food products available in the food market. Meanwhile, it is important to note that contemporary Korean food culture has been largely shaped by capitalist ideology and pop culture. For example, during the time when South Koreans considered their nation to be developing, western food was received more favorably than today. People associated western cuisine with affluence and a level of sophistication that they want to emulate. However, nowadays they are becoming more critical about the eating culture associated with the West, which I interpret as a sign that attitudes toward capitalist culture and life-style are undergoing a major change.

People recognize that their spiritual and physical healths are endangered especially when it comes to the safety of food. For instance, after the outbreak of

“bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE),” “Kimchi containing parasites, and rotten dumpling and bird flu” (Food Bank 2005, qtd.[18]), there is a growing suspicion within the country about the safety of food products. Ethical issues related to the production, circulation and consumption of food products have become important in the shaping of eating habit in Korean culture.

The revival of traditional cuisines suggests that consumers try to have a sense of belonging by consuming the food that is associated with the idea about the past. In this respect, this paper aims to examine how the “nostalgic desire” which Fredric Jameson discusses in “Postmodernism and Consumer Society[11]” operates in the production and consumption of traditional cuisine in Korea. Therefore, the paper will seek out the reasons for the contemporary demand for “nostalgia” products[11]. The rise of traditional cuisine in contemporary Korean culture suggests that people seek a sense of belonging and continuity in their choice of food, showing resistance to the rapidly changing lifestyles in capitalist society.

II. (Re)Invention of Tradition

Eric Hobsbawm draws our attention to the fictionality of so-called traditions and memories of the past when he writes, “Traditions which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented[9]”. Hobsbawm also illuminates why people tend to invent traditions. It is because in “a set of practices,” people find a sense of “continuity with the past[9]”. In other words, where there is a demand for this sense of “continuity,” traditional culture could play a crucial role in the society providing a sense of membership to its people[9]. Posed in this way, the revival of traditional cuisines

as trendy choices suggests that people often try to compensate for a contemporary sense of confusion and discontinuity by consuming those foods that are associated with the ideas about the past. And they also try to attain a sense of belonging to their nation by consuming the products that embody the national history. This paper argues that consumers try to attain membership to “pseudo-communities” by consuming traditional food[9].

In this paper, I will explore the history of temple food and Andong food, focusing on the changes that took place in the process of institutionalization of the traditional foods. Also, by looking at how temple food is being reinvented in the contemporary culture, I will also attempt to show that there is an irony in consuming a culture that has already been manufactured in the first place.

The first question that I raise is whether these cuisines that are believed to embody certain ideologies are truly related to the traditions or traditional values of Korea. In order to find out the way that tradition is being discovered in the food market, this paper carries out a case study of Buddhist cuisine and Andong food. These products are believed to be associated with particular ideologies, namely Buddhism and Confucianism.

I argue that Buddhist temple food and the local food of Andong are receiving more attention from the media and the food industry because there is a growing demand for traditional cuisine, which evokes people’s nostalgia. At the same time, these food trends express people’s dissatisfaction with current eating habits, which are fostered by capitalist ideology and pop culture.

1. The Invention of Tradition

There are many overlapping features between Buddhist temple food and traditional food in Korea.

Local food is often viewed as traditional food in Korea. Temple food and traditional food in Korea are credited for their fermenting skills and their use of vegetables, which makes them relatively healthy compared to other meat-based cuisines. In this section, I am going to talk about the circumstance that led to the diversification of temple food during the Joseon dynasty. I also want to note that even though one makes a distinction and confine temple food to a range of foods that are cooked and shared at Buddhist temples, it should not be neglected these temples were located in mountains, limiting the food supply. Later in this section, I am going to make a comparison between temple food and Andong food, to show how temple food is being reinvented.

Buddhism was introduced to Korea from China during the Three Kingdom period (300s–600s). During Goryon dynasty, which preceded the Joseon dynasty, Buddhist cuisine took its form with the patronage of the royal court which recognized Buddhism as the state religion[16]. The fermenting skills, which became the characteristic of temple food were developed in this period[16]. Buddhism began to decline in the Joseon dynasty while Confucianism was endorsed by the government as a state religion. Seungsook Moon points out that during this time, “As Buddhism lost its wealthy and powerful patronage by royal court and nobility, opulent Buddhist ceremonies accompanied by luxurious temple food disappeared” as well[16]. As a result, it adapted to the material condition of its environment, which became the basis for “rustic vegetarian cuisine” that we find in temple food today.

According to Moon, it was during the Japanese colonization that debates flared over the celibacy of its monks, which eventually split the Korean Buddhism into the Jogye Order and the Taego Order. And the division in Buddhism has hindered its growth

until now[16]. In addition, Moon points out there are “heterogenous views” on temple food[16]. Moon writes:

Two factors were significant to the emergence of temple food as an integral part of the monastic culture. First unlike Buddhist temples in South Asia that were built in residential neighborhoods, temples in Korea were mostly located in mountains away from populous residential areas due to the history of the persecution of Buddhism. Hence, while monks in South Asia obtained their daily food through alms collections from local villagers, monks and nuns in Korea cultivated or collected their own food. Second, as mentioned above, Korea Buddhism stressed meditation as the vehicle to achieve enlightenment, and monks and nuns devoted their lives to meditative training (suhaeng) (KBCEG 2006). (qtd.[16])

We should understand the historical background of temple food that Buddhism was oppressed by the state since the Joseon dynasty. To avoid the persecution, the temples were located in mountains, which eventually led to the localization as well as diversification of temple food. Moon’s observation allows us to discuss two important aspects of temple food today. One is the culinary diversification of temple food as a result of isolation and adaptation to its material condition. The second feature is that despite its diversification temple food is understood as the “vehicle to achieve enlightenment[16]”.

On the other hand, Temple food is becoming a brand with strong attributes as a healthy food for physical and spiritual nourishment. These days, one can easily come across cookbooks on temple food written by Buddhist monks, and there are temple food restaurants run by these experts as well. Naming plays a central role in this process. For example, Baru is used as a brand name for a temple food restaurant run by a Buddhist organization. Meanwhile, one could

also find that Buddhist organizations are actively participating in commercializing the temple food culture. For instance, visitors to the Templestay Information Center could see Baru set is on sale. Despite its original meaning, “special bowls made for the monks[8]”. Baru bowls are made into commodities in the gift shops affiliated with the Buddhist organization.

According to Dae An, the term Baru comes from the story that tells how Buddha was offered a first meal by two merchants, whose names were Tapussa and Bhallika, using a Baru, a special bowl for offering food[20]. Dae An also notes that it can also be explained differently; the word Baru is made of two foreign words. Its first syllable ‘Ba’(鉢) comes from the Sanskrit word Patra, and its second syllable is the Chinese letter ‘盂’ (bowl)[20]. As the words show, in the formation of Korean temple food, both Indian and Chinese Buddhism have played significant roles.

There are numerous orders in the Buddhist organization, suggesting that it would be hard to have a unified view on the practice and discipline of temple food. In ancient China, the vegetarian diet was implemented into the Buddhist food culture under the guidance of political leaders (emperors). In this way, Buddhist doctrine functioned as a binding force of the nation, placating people who had been forced to eat vegetables only as a result of material conditions. The history of temple food suggests that food used to be a vehicle for circulating and implementing the ruling ideology in the ancient societies of China.

Scholars have not reached agreement on “when Buddhism first entered China[19]”, since Buddhism was introduced through many channels. In fact, most scholars agree that the stories concerning the arrival of Buddhism in China are fictions, as they were invented later, and their purpose was to legitimize the authority of Buddhism in Chinese society. For

example, one story tells that the Emperor Ming dreamed of “a golden Buddha flying over his palace” (qtd.[19]). When we consider that this story was invented while Buddhism had growing influence, we can see that attempts were made to integrate Indian Buddhism into Chinese history. Xia-nian Haung argues that Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism differ from each other in their views on meat eating[24].

A view on meat-eating of Indian Buddhism manifests the traditional ideas of respecting life and the purity of Buddha’s teaching. It shows that traditional Chinese ideas such as filial piety, care of health of evolution of nature and mankind have permeated into Sakyamuni’s doctrines[24]. On the other hand, there are evidences that in the early days of Buddhism in India, meat was not strictly prohibited. Some records suggest that in the old days it was fine to eat meat as long as a person did not participate in killing animals. E. W. Hopkins even suggests that Buddha might have “died of eating pork, the flesh of a wild boar”:

...the words *silkara- imaddava*, ‘boar-tender’ (-loin ?) was interpreted either as a sauce or as a vegetable eaten by a boar; some said bamboo-sprouts, other said a kind of mushroom, although no sauce or vegetable is known by the name of ‘boar-tender[10].’

Although Hopkins’ view may need more support, Huang also argues that the tradition of “not eating meat [was] established in the Emperor Wu period” and was passed down to the “next generations[10]”. We have to take into account that while agriculture developed in China, there was a huge gulf between the ruling and the ruled class in their economic powers, which distinguished their eating habits. The ruled, who were mostly farmers, ate only a small amount of greens whereas the ruling class was able

to afford meat. In this way, whether a person ate meat or not was closely related to his or her social class.

2. The Reinvention of Tradition

It is not surprising that people seem more conscious of their choice of food in developed countries. More people are recognizing that ethical issues are involved in the consumption of food. Moon points out that temple food took on importance in the media from the mid-1990s as the public grew dissatisfied with the food supply chain, believing it to be simply serving the commercial interests of the multi-national corporations. Also, in South Korea, in the past 10 years, eating meat has become both morally and politically problematic since the South Korean government decided to resume the import of U.S. beef despite the risk of mad-cow disease.

Moon has noted that temple food arose in the culture of Korea due to the growing concern for a healthy diet[16]. In Korea, there are many overlapping features between Buddhist temple food and other traditional foods. In fact, they share the characteristics of Korean cuisine (*Hansik*) with their use of fermenting properties and also the fact that they are regarded as representative of Korean culture. Consumers find the national class and cultural identities reflected in the kinds of food they eat. In this respect, the rise of temple food and Andong food as an important culinary trend in contemporary Korea is being framed as if it were a show of resistance against consumerism and globalism. But the idea that traditional food embodies certain ideas or traditions may in fact be simply a myth or sweet lie invented by the food industry to satisfy middle class consumers.

In the first chapter of *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism* (2001), Jean and John L.

Comaroff point to the reversed relationship between consumption and production. For them, “[t]he emergence of consumption as a privileged site for the fabrication of self and society, of culture and identity,” sheds light on this process[4]. Temple food is closely related to the formation of the middle class in the food market. It also suggests that food is a site for the negotiation of identities and desires. In this respect, it is important that the commercialization of temple food first became an issue in the late 1990s with a growing demand for more traditional, healthier food. Similarly, Andong food arose in the wake of the commodification of Korean tradition, along with the rise of the tourism industry. In other words, traditional foods were invented as their value as cultural products and alternative choices for sophisticated consumers were first recognized.

III. The Decontextualization of Andong Food

The culture of Andong food demonstrates the fact that food culture provides middle class consumers with the fantasy that they can regain a meaningful attachment to a forgotten past. However, it is important to discuss the dynamics between economic growth and consumer food preferences. There have been some changes in the reception of fast food brands, such as McDonalds and Burger King, and this reflects how people feel about the capitalist culture and their roles as consumers.

The traditional cuisine of Andong shows that local food is consumed with a strong reference to its cultural heritage. Andong, where historical sites are preserved, is being promoted as “the Capital of the Korean Spirit” (*Andong Tourism*). On the other hand, Young Dong Bae contends that the local food of

Andong was not regarded as unique or distinctive until the early 1970s[21]. Besides, as spiritual aspect of Andong food has been increasingly important, Andong Steamed Chicken was invented in the 1990s, targeting college students around the area of Andong. As Hobsbawm notes, this is a kind of food that is “deliberately invented and constructed by a single initiator[9]”. By establishing a tie with its local culture and therefore becoming a medium which social and cultural significance are transferred, the local cuisine of Andong became a “symbolate” which helped separate its image from that of other food[9]. Without the idea of Andong as the home of Confucianism and a place where traditional life is preserved, the traditional cuisine of Andong could not have been so successfully commercialized. In this respect, it suggests to us why and how temple food is gaining attention.

Young Dong Bae also points out, “The major driving force of the commercialization of Andong’s traditional food is the activation of tourism, though each item has a slightly different background[21]”. He examines how the traditional food gets “decontextualized” by tracing the way that Andong Soju, Hut-jesa Bab & Gunjin Noodle, Andong Mackerel and Andong Steamed Chicken are promoted as local foods outside Andong. For instance, Hut-jesa Bab (a mock ancestral memorial service meal) did not exist until a particular restaurant owner came up with the name. There was a tradition of having meals when people got hungry at night in winter, usually mixing rice with seasoned vegetables, which was called Hut-jisin-bob (mock food for the spirits of the terrain). Despite these similar names, Hut-jisin-bob was very different from the notion of Jesa Bab (memorial service meal for ancestors), which uses a specific way of setting up the dishes. In this way, this was invented by someone who had the intention of

going along with the municipal policy that promoted traditional food.

As we can see, decontextualization is closely related to the local food commercialization. Changes have been made to make the traditional food more appealing to those who wish to consume an authentic ethnic culture. Jameson points out that “[t]he formational function of the media would thus be to help us forget, to serve as the very agents and mechanisms for our historical amnesia[11]”. Here, the term “historical amnesia” is important, since it is possible to see that there is a kind of “amnesia” taking place in the commercialization of traditional food[11]. It is often emphasized that eating is a pseudo-religious practice and a vicarious form of meditation for Buddhist monks.

Just as the media associates Andong food with Confucianism because of its association with Andong, even when Confucian doctrine plays no role in its practice, temple food is identified with Buddhism. Also, the temple food movement is supported by the government, which recognizes its value as a cultural product to generate tourism in Korea. Like Andong food, decontextualization may be detected in the representation of temple food. For example, each menu or course item is named after a Buddhist doctrine without bearing any reference to this idea. Also, the fact that temple food is practiced outside Buddhist temples also suggests that it is being decontextualized in the process of becoming a commodity in capitalist society.

IV. The Practice of Temple Food: Nostalgia for jangajji

Dae-nyeong Yun, a South Korean novelist, writes about his encounter with temple food in a short essay

entitled jangajji. Jangajji is the name for the side dish made of pickled vegetables. He writes about a year he spent at a Buddhist temple. One day, the head monk discovered that Yun ate chicken and punished him by restricting the number of dishes that were served at his table. Yun was served only one type of jangajji as a side dish with his meal. Eventually, however, he began to enjoy his meal and felt as if he had been purified. He confesses that the experience gave him a taste for simple meals. The following passage is from the chapter on jangajji:

As strange as it may sound, they say that they “decimate living cells.” If vegetables are not completely dry, the paste and the jangajji may go bad. With the digestive process of the enzymes in the paste, the ingredients of the jangajji no longer function as their original cells but turn into delicious food with a richer flavor. They came out from the enlightenment while being secluded in a jar. So they carry a different gravity and presence from other foods[22].

Here, the writer is making an allusion to the Buddhist monks with his description of jangajji. He is implying that there is an analogy between jangajji and Buddhist monks because they are both blessed by their secluded lives, which leads them to spiritual enlightenment. As this essay suggests, in the culture of Buddhist temple food, eating can be a form of religious practice; it promises spiritual growth to people. Yun’s story ends with a later episode in which he fails to purchase some real jangajji at a traditional market. The item he buys turns out to be a fake, which he re-names jangji. I suggest that we can read this story as an allegory of how the food industry fails to satisfy today’s consumers. This explains the demand for more authentic food. At the same time, Yun’s desperate search for the taste of temple food appears to contribute to the process of commercialization.

Jean and John L. Comaroff state that "consumption" is "the moving spirit of the late twentieth century[4]". With this in mind, we can go back to Yun's essay on jangajji, in which he romanticizes his experience at the Buddhist temple and expresses disappointment in the kind of jangajji he discovered at one of the traditional markets in Seoul. When he laments over the poorly made, low quality, un-authentic jangji, the readers are made to share his nostalgia for the past and the tradition that has been lost in the course of Korean industrialization. At the same time, however, I want to point out that this is also the lamentation of a consumer and in a way, a demand for traditional food. Simply put, making jangajji is not impossible. What Yun needs to do, if he really misses its taste, is to buy white radish and preserve it with soy sauce for a while. Instead, he searches the entire market to check if they are selling what he wants. His story shows what kind of "consumerist spirit" dominates the lives of Koreans.

Another point that we can make from Yun's account is that jangji, which for Yun is a pseudo product of Jangajji, is abhorrent to the writer. There is a comic element in his reaction to this jangji because of the discrepancy between the Buddhist temple and the market. Ironically, the traditional market is the closest place where he can try to find the food which once healed and purified him. In a sense, he is making an effort to revisit his memory by going to the market and tasting the food he found most similar to that he previously experienced. Without the element of "tradition," these two places are in fact antithetical, and readers find Yun trapped in between two realities that cannot be equated with or substituted with each other. Is his story what Fredric Jameson called "a pointless satire[11]" While discussing the "nostalgia" films, Jameson explains that pastiche "satisfies a deep (might I even say

repressed?) longing to experience them again[11]". In Yun's essay, jangajji works as a metonymy of the past which cannot be retrieved in capitalist society. And the writer finds it hard to believe that the market fails to satisfy him by providing him with the perfect imitation of jangajji.

V. Conclusion

If Buddhist cuisine has made it easier for ordinary people to accept a vegetarian diet and accept their roles as subjects in the past, nowadays it is accommodating itself to the needs of consumers. The reference to Fredric Jameson substantiates our understanding of the reinvention of traditional cuisines as capitalizing on the "nostalgia" of consumers. However, one needs to take into account the fact that "nostalgia" is inevitably a vague word, because it only shows how people feel about the past. It is possible that the products that are said to embody traditional values are not necessarily realistic in their representations of tradition. In his essay "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", Fredric Jameson points out that films such as "Chinatown" and "Star Wars" use certain images that resonate with what people imagine about the past. Here, Jameson also points out how the film embodies "[f]alse realisms" by showing clips of images or texts that have no meanings after all[11].

Temple food is still a product of capitalist ideology. It is bought as an alternative option by middle class consumers. These people previously mobilized politically around the issue of imported beef from the U.S., but afterwards dispersed and returned to their roles as consumers. In fact, the popularity of temple food shows how religious organizations are working closely with the food market in trying to cater to

middle class consumers. Visitors to the temple food restaurants buy the fantasy that they have chosen traditional food instead of manufactured food at a franchise restaurant. In the end, temple food has become trendy not as a political gesture but as a luxury good that reflects the middle class desire to stay healthy while enriching their lives with spiritual training. In this process, it has been decontextualized in a similar fashion to the way that Andong food has become a trendy choice for consumers.

The decontextualization of Andong food shows how local cuisine can be turned into a saleable commodity. People give more meaning to food when they recognize their choice as a form of expression. The local cuisine of Andong is attached to the name “Andong” which mystifies the act of eating. People believe they have become more meaningful when they eat other foods. In fact, when the food is presented with a certain name, people give it more respect. In this light, there is a demand for renaming food so that it can carry spiritual significance, in order to cater to the taste of the middle class. This middle class is making the demand that there should be more alternatives, even though the demands are to be fulfilled within the capitalist system. For instance, some people go to a traditional food restaurant and think that they found an alternative to franchise restaurants. At the same time, temple food is often promoted as a possible solution to the current culture of consumption, as its ideological charge creates the hope that people can change their eating habit by adopting the state of mind and attitude required of the Buddhist monk. These discussions are taking place side by side with a growing criticism of Western traditions. Temple food attracts consumers who have been disappointed by the current food industry. They refuse to endorse the fast food culture represented by Coca-Cola and McDonald’s. Instead, the consumers of

temple food regard temple food as an alternative choice or counter-culture within contemporary capitalist culture.

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