

WHY SHOULD KOREAN SHAMANS BE WOMEN?

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Introduction

Why? My title may be misleading, for I have no simple answer to give.¹

Anthony Cohen argues in an ethnography of British communities that things are rarely so simple as they seem on the surface (Cohen 1982: 292). A neat and tidy answer would therefore describe an organisational hatstand on which widely divergent motives, many different social criteria, and the odd red herring would precariously hang. That being so, I propose simply to suggest areas in which gender influences the shaman equation in Korea, namely religion, entertainment, and family life.

To start with, let me note that in Korea today the overwhelming majority of shamanistic practitioners are female, despite Clark's description of male *paksa* and *p'ansu* early this century (Clark 1932/1961) and the government's estimates that in Seoul there were 124 male shamans to 778 female shamans operating in 1975, a female dominance of 86%.² The usual 40% ratio of male shamans found in Cheju should also be treated as an exception, though on this southernmost island it

stems from peculiar gender roles (Yoon 1977: 202). The transvestism argued for by Campbell in male practitioners elsewhere appears irrelevant to the Korean situation (though transvestism is discarded by Mircea Eliade: Campbell 1976: 69-70; Eliade 1964: particularly 76, 258).

The Pak Lineage

Much of my discussion below relates to the lineage of Pak1.³ Pak is a male dancer, musician, and shaman (locally called a *tan'gol*) who in 1980 was appointed a Human Cultural Asset (*in'gan munhwajae*) by the Korean government for his performance of a shaman ritual, *Ssikkim kut* (*ssikkim* => *ssikkida* = to wash; *kut* = ritual).⁴ The Paks have, for living memory, resided on Chindo, an island of 65,000 inhabitants at the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula. I have traced seven shaman generations which preceded Pak1, though my information comes only from living members of the lineage. The Paks claim to belong to a single clan: bearing in mind history this is not unexpectedly the Miryang Paks. Their clan seat lies to the east in Kyōngsang province. Descent, as is the norm in Korean society, has been patrilineal. Similarly, the inheritance of property has followed the same path. Inheritance has partly involved the rights to perform rituals in a geographic area (the *tan'gol p'an*; for definitions and descriptions see Kim T'aegon 1982: 224; Howard 1990: 162). An exceptional case occurred in ego's parents' generation, where an aunt inherited the family area. The area focused on the island's central administrative centre, Chindo-ūp, and Pak's father accordingly set up a new *tan'gol p'an* further west in Chisan district.

Clan exogamy has been practiced, but endogamy has been the unspoken rule, with marriage taking place within a small group of families—sub-lineages of Kim, Ch'ae, Kang, Han, and Yi—involved in entertainment or shamanism. The five Kim spouses identified in the Pak 1 lineage were thought to have

come from a single sub-lineage. This, as I will later show, suggests endogamy by necessity rather than choice. Further, those women who have married into the Pak lineage have tended to become shaman practitioners. Several of them, however, insisted uterine inheritance determined that they should become shamans. Han 1 in 1984 thus continued to operate as a shaman in a limited way, and Kim Soshim remained active until shortly before her death in 1983. Husbands have tended to serve as accompanists. Pak Manjun, Pak Pōmjūn, and Pak Chonggi are consequently all remembered as musicians, a feature which in itself suggests considerable overlap between the occupations of musicians and shamans.

Shamanism in Korea

The folk pantheon of Korea is complex and diverse, combining practices labelled by scholars as 'shaman' (*mu*, *musok*, *mudang*, and so on) with Confucian codes, Buddhist hagiography, and animism. Non-agnatic spirits ensure peace in the world beyond. Direct ancestors are called on for help both here and beyond. There seems to be a consensus amongst scholars that the indigenous phenomena constitute a religion and that in some forms (*musok*, but not superstition as *mishin*; the distinction appears to be recent) they should be described as shamanism. If so, they are akin in some way to Siberian shamanism, North American and African tribal practices. They also become comparable not just with the practices in China recounted by Jordan (1972), Ahern (1973) and Wolf (1974) and in Okinawa by Lebra (1966), but also with other systems of belief such as those discussed by Marwick (Africa, 1952), Spiro (Burma, 1967), Bascom (West Africa, 1969), and Harwood (Safwa, 1970). It ought to be plain that at the global level there is some doubt whether shamanism is either a single and distinct religion or a social complex that can be validly studied cross-culturally. Mircea Eliade's monumental and standard work on the subject, because it presents an ideal

typology for shamanism as a religion rather than a synthesis of extant syncretic systems, may yet prove weakly founded (Eliade 1964, but see also Campbell 1976: 86-7).

To Eliade and I. M. Lewis, a shaman has mastered the "technique of ecstasy." To William Lebra, a shaman has "[1] recognised supernatural powers which are utilized for socially approved ends or goals, and [2] the capacity to enter ... culturally defined trance states" (Eliade 1964: 4; Lewis 1971: 9; Lebra, cited in Kim-Harvey 1979: 4). We may go further to agree with Hultkrantz: a shaman is an intermediary, exhibiting behaviour which supports the belief that he or she is inspired by spirits (Hultkrantz 1978: 30). Boudewijn Walraven is a little more circumspect when he states a Korean shaman does not know ecstasy (Walraven 1983: 243). He thus stretches Lewis' distinction in which a shaman controls spirits while clients may be controlled by spirits (Lewis 1971: 54). Walraven says that in Siberia but not Korea shamans may completely lose consciousness (1983: 258). In 1983 I witnessed one ritual which seemed to suggest otherwise. In Inch'on, a shaman was rescued from a trance that had left her lifeless only through the lengthy and ceaseless administrations of a small team of women.

To the definitions I must add the observation that there are two distinct types of shaman in Korea. Only one type has been adequately considered by the literature.⁵ This type consists of the shamans found in central, northern, and some eastern regions who experience some type of possession, initially through an illness (*shinbyōng*) interpreted as a calling, and later in rituals seen as some form of trance. The second type, characteristic of the southern Chōlla provinces, have no need of ecstasy since they inherit or buy rights to practice in a defined geographical area. The Pak lineage belongs to the latter group, and my first-hand knowledge of Korean shamanism is based primarily on such non-ecstatic practitioners. To Eliade, the latter constitutes "family shamanism", and "is only a plagiaristic aping of the ecstatic technique of the professional shaman" (Eliade 1964: 253). To Lebra, talking about Okinawa, a hereditary specialist is a 'priestess' rather than a 'shaman'

(Lebra 1966: 74-83). Im Sōkchae, perhaps influenced by Lebra, suggests that all Korean shamans should be called 'priests' (Im 1971: 213-217).

Such a distinction may be flawed when the boundary between the two types becomes blurred. Eliade discards too readily the lack of ecstasy among the Nuba in a manner that suggests practices which do not follow his definitions should be considered decadent. Mary Douglas, in contrast, offers a plausible view that allows the use of *mu*, the Korean shaman stem, for both types of practitioners. Unlike Lewis, she starts with the premise that religion is a fair representation of social reality (Douglas 1966; particularly 74 and 80). Therefore, where society is weakly structured, so trance will feature. Douglas considered trance the antithesis of organized society, just as charismatic outpourings are frowned upon in Church of England cathedrals (see also Douglas 1973: 19-39). The implication is that shamans will move from ecstasy to control as society becomes more organised.

Gender and Religion

Amongst scholars working on Korean religion, Jung Young Lee argues extensively that shamanism is for women while Confucianism occupies men. It is unfortunate that his work is so inaccurate (Lee 1975, 1976 and 1981; for criticism of the latter see Walraven 1983: 248-256), but the gender division influences the writings of many others. According to Ch'oe Kilsōng, "In shamanism, the female shaman holds the most important position. This is because male shamans merely assist while females perform in front of guests" (Ch'oe 1981: 125). In Chindo, men (usually accompanists) prepare the paper props for a ritual, cutting out spirit figures, checking the altar, and constructing a suitable imitation bier if the body has already been interned. Women act as intermediaries with the spirit world. Other men supervise offerings at the altar as the ritual progresses, checking that wine libations are replaced

after each section and ensuring that incense continually burns. Only men act as accompanists. They play a mix of melodic and rhythmic instruments, they sing counter melodies to the female shaman, as she dances they improvise *shinawi*, and as she rests they provide musical interludes.

The picture is very neat, too neat. It reflects the Korean propensity for dichotomy. In Korean writings Confucian propriety is placed against a robust and earthy folk tradition; *ūm* [Ch: *yin*] and *yang* contrast positive and negative forces or earth and heaven, dark and light, weak and strong; the aristocracy, *yangban*, counter illiterate commoners, *sangmin*; pious women contrast drunken monks (Akamatsu and Akiba 1938; Brandt 1971; Dix 1987). Favoured dichotomies often hinge on a male/female distinction, so that a religion practiced by women is likely to be presented as uneducated, superstitious, and improper. There is thus a basic contrast between *chesa*, the confucian formal ancestral rites carried out by men, and *kōsa*, offerings made by women to household deities. Confucian texts written during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910) denigrate shaman rituals as *ūmsa*, a term that implies the obscene. Shamans were consequently considered women of casual virtue (YI 1976). Court women were banned from visiting the corrupting houses of shamans in 1431 (Deuchler 1977: 22). Ming dynasty codes adopted in 1471 prohibited "calling down heretical gods" (Young 1980: 78). Yet an uneasy alliance prevailed: shamans were taxed by the authorities.

In Chindo, several rituals today considered backward and undesirable in the past centred on women. In *Tōkkaebi kut*, cloth covered in menstrual blood was used during periods of widespread illness to attract goblins so that they could be expelled from a village (Chōng 1983). In *Myōngsan kut*, a ritual carried out during times of drought, women were instrumental in exhuming the bones of malevolent local ancestors and scattering them across the countryside.

Significantly, in shaman rituals women appear more prepared to don a spirit's clothes and dance than men.

Koreans consider that spirits possess women more readily than they do men. Such a notion is not uncommon elsewhere and may indicate that the capacity to have babies makes women receptacles for human spirits. In Korea, the story of Pari Kongju, the abandoned princess who represents the first shaman in the tales of most contemporary practitioners, confirms such a view. The legend is documented by Kim T'aegon (1966) and, in Western languages, by Park Byeng-sen (1973), Covell (1983: 75-78) and Kendall (1985: 154), and an excerpt is given by Walraven (1985: 82). Similarly, a spirit who speaks through the mouth of a living Chindo person will today invariably speak through a woman. In July 1983 a son was sent to the other world in a ritual held in the Chindo village of Koya. As the son's spirit was washed his sister, who had died a decade earlier, spoke through an old woman. She complained that nobody had ever given her a proper *Ssikkim kut*. The shaman and her accompanists listened attentively. They told the family to prepare new clothes and a special altar; they arranged for the sister's ritual to be held the following night.

Shamanism is not only for women, however. The Christian established church, arguably, has greatest appeal in Britain and Korea to women, yet is governed by men. And in shamanism there are a few male practitioners. I have already cited data from Cheju; the Human Cultural Asset appointed for that island's *Ch'ilmōri tang kut* is male. Two Human Cultural Assets for *Chindo ssikkim kut* are male. A male shaman recently worked with scholars at Wŏn'gwang University in Iri and one of today's most promising young shaman dancers in Kyōnggi province is male. Men are also important sponsors in Chōlla province death rituals. At rituals they assume elements of Confucian rites. In Chindo *Ssikkim kut* the male sponsor, a descendant of the deceased, is initially enclosed within a roped-off compound. From there he welcomes both human guests and invoked spirits.

Yet the stereotype remains. In contemporary mask dramas it also features. In theses on shamanism, it fits case studies like a glove (for example, Young 1980: 281-286; Kim-Harvey 1979). It also appears in the works of the writer Kim

Tongni, particularly his short story *Munyŏdo* and novel *Ūlhwa*.⁶

Ūlhwa concerns a shaman who adopted this name after a shrine where a grandmother spirit first spoke to her. Fate was against *Ūlhwa*. She came from a poor background and, falling pregnant outside marriage, in shame had escaped with her mother to anonymity in a new village. There she became a second wife when her mother died. Her new husband also died, and *Ūlhwa* was blamed for not looking after him. Next, her son became critically ill. He began to recover after a shaman ritual, but *Ūlhwa* immediately fell ill. It was then she began to have visions: the gods descended. Accepting her fate, *Ūlhwa* became a shaman.

The stereotype goes further than this, for *Ūlhwa* is destined to kill her only son. He returns as a Christian ten years after *Ūlhwa* gave him to a Buddhist temple. In the meantime, Kim tells us that *Ūlhwa* has been dragged down by sorcery. She has lost her looks and spends each day drinking and indulging in affairs. She has moved into a house whose previous occupant, a diviner, murdered a child. Her daughter hardly speaks; it is suggested she is mentally ill. In contrast, the local church elder Pak Kunshik comes from an aristocratic *yangban* background and has been active in the resistance against Japanese rule. He observed proper Confucian filial piety when his father died. *Ūlhwa*'s son begins to work at the church. There, he is recognised as the child from the first illicit affair. His paternal family has no other male offspring and so, particularly since they too are *yangban*, he is asked to take up his rightful inheritance.

Ūlhwa eventually burns her son's bible in a ritual to exorcise his 'Jesus devil' and, as he tries to retrieve it, she stabs him.

In sum, the basic gender distinction is that women actually interact with spirits, but never men. Women approach particular spirits and ask for their help. Men, in contrast, show filial respect as they carry out the proper observances for

ancestors, but no ancestor is not allowed to become an active force.

Gender and Entertainment

Korean women who sing and dance in public have bad reputations. Terms such as *kisaeng* and *sadang* today denote little more than prostitutes, though *kisaeng* were once so influential at the court that King T'aejong (reigned 1401-1408) outlawed their sons (Howard 1986: 14-26). Some *kisaeng* are remembered for their artistic achievements (Byong Won Lee 1979: 75-86; McCann 1974: 40-43) and, during the earlier Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392), women entertainers participated as singers and dancers in the government's *Kyobŏn* department during state *p'alwanhoe* and *yŏndŭnghoe* ceremonies (Kim Woo-ok 1980: 45-50). The Japanese ethnographers Akamatsu and Akiba talk of *kwŏnbŏn* training institutes in Namwŏn and Kwangju. Out of ten trainees in Namwŏn, four had shaman backgrounds; out of 21 in Kwangju, ten came from shaman families (cited in Kim Woo-ok 1980: 51-53). In Chindo, the first Human Asset appointed by the government, Yang Hŭngdo, likewise spent most of her life as a *kisaeng*. A fine long narrative (*p'ansori*) singer, Han Aesun, in 1983 identified her natal village to me by stating it has been famous for music because its many aristocratic *yangban* encouraged *kisaeng* to visit.

As with shamans, the stereotype may sometimes run true. Although I claim to be an ethnomusicologist, I fell for it at one *hwan'gap* (60th birthday) celebration in Puan, North Cholla province. I had been invited to play the drum, and I remember talking to a girl who came to dance. She wore a T-shirt on which was printed "Total wholesale property." And so she was.

In rituals around Seoul the male Official Spirit (*Taegam*) descends. The shaman dons appropriate dress and performs *taegam nori*, asking for money from her audience, always

unhappy with the meagre offerings, and joking crudely. Kendall has pointed out that, acting as the Official, the shaman fills men's wine cups (Kendall, forthcoming). Oops! by doing so she suggests the behaviour of *kisaeng*, out to pleasure men. Clearly this is not appropriate behaviour for an important spirit. Yet the relationship between *kisaeng* and shamans does not run through to performance style. Simply put, while women are central to a shaman ritual, they are not important when a *kisaeng* sets out to entertain men. And, possession by spirits, whether it be an initial illness or a later trance, belongs only to shamans.

Many published accounts demonstrate the relationship. Some scholars suggest that repeated exposure to music and dance renders a woman potentially vulnerable to possession by the spirits, that is, to a calling as a shaman (Choi 1987: 129). Chatterbox Mansin (*mansin* = shaman) has a sister-in-law who was observed at one ritual slapping her children because they were moving in time to the drum (Kendall 1985: 63). Yongsu's Mother, a shaman, was an enthusiastic follower of rhumba and jitterbug in her youth (Kendall 1988: 80-81). Suwŏn Mansin initially took a performing arts degree (Kim-Harvey 1979: 184). Hi-ah Park, a Korean now active as a shaman in the States, was a dancer researching at the University of California when she was "possessed" by the gods (Kim and Ch'oe 1983: 84). An inaccurate story about Hi-ah Park, incidentally, affected my own doctoral research. Shamans suddenly became reluctant to talk with me. Remembering Park, they declared that I might also "steal" their knowledge to perform rituals in Britain.

The example from Choi (1987) is potentially misleading. From my perspective, I would prefer to trace any link between shamans and *kisaeng*, or more broadly shamans and musicians, in their social background, not in music or dance. Both traditionally belonged to the same low status group below commoners, *ch'ŏnmin/ch'ŏnin*.⁷ They were, in effect, outcasts. One obvious explanation for their status was they neither owned nor rented land, but such a notion reflects the cash economy which developed half-way through the Chosŏn

dynasty. The *ch'ŏnmin* comprised a hereditary group whose roots stretched further back. From an eleventh century Koryŏ statute forwards, *ch'ŏnmin* were legally unable to move up the social ladder or take any civil service examination (Yi 1980). *Ch'ŏnmin* were defined in terms of occupation: musicians, shamans, butchers, and so on.

The link between shamans and musicians is a shared social background and, until recently, a requirement to work only within their status group. In addition, the link reflects a shared knowledge and interest in music, dance, and ritual. Hence, the similarity between *shinch'ŏng*, institutes for the shamans of particular areas, and the 18th century musicians' *chaen ch'ŏng* in Kyŏnggi province.

By becoming a *kisaeng*, the daughter of a shaman could escape poverty and train herself for a marginally more rewarding life. She might find a husband outside the shaman fraternity, or more likely could become a concubine or second wife to a wealthy *yangban*, whereas in the locality of her parents she could descend no lower down the social scale. In Chindo, Chŏng (Pak I's second wife) had trained as a dancer on the mainland. On her marriage, she agreed to learn shaman rituals. Similarly, members of the Pak lineage remembered the musical skills of several male ancestors (Pak Chonggi was the most famous; Howard 1990: 196-198). And the Ch'ae and Kang families were represented both as musicians and as shamans by Chindo informants. Recently, one Ch'ae and one Kang have been appointed Human Assets for their accompaniment as *Ssikkim kut* rituals.⁸ There has thus been much movement between one occupation and the other. Kendall (forthcoming) cites examples from other scholars: Ch'oe Kilsŏng, who describes the mother of one informant as "a shaman who had been a famous *kisaeng* in Kyŏngju" (1981: 132), Wilson, who talks of a shaman who "had been a *Kisaeng* in her 20s" (1983: 69), and Loken-Kim, who mentions "a pretty child from a shaman family who trained and followed a *kisaeng* life" (n.d.: 2).

The link becomes stronger with the realization that employment potentials for women interested in music have been restricted. Until the late 19th century, and then only with the support of Shin Chaehyo, no woman was trained to sing *p'ansori*. Since *p'ansori* represented the height of vocal music outside the court, no woman could enjoy any prestige as a 'great singer' (*myōngch'ang*). It was also inappropriate for upright women to play instruments either in rural society or amongst the aristocracy. In the Korean countryside today it is still men who make up village bands, and at parties men alone play *kayagūm* (12 string half-tube zither), *ajaeng* (here, an 8-string bowed half-tube zither), *taegūm* (vertical flute), or *t'ungso* (horizontal flute). In contrast, low status *kisaeng* and female shamans are seen in pictures from the 17th century onwards playing instruments. And, from our knowledge of this latter period, it seems reasonable to suppose that earlier extant artefacts which depict music and dance portray women of similar status (for examples, see Pratt 1987: plates 106-7 and 113-117).

Except in Cheju and the southeast of the Korean peninsula, there is little evidence today that women commonly provide the musical accompaniment for shaman rituals. In *Ūlhwa*, the shaman lives with a man who carries her props to, and prepares the stage at, rituals. I have noted similar things in Chindo. That this is so, and that men provide musical accompaniment subservient to female shamans, appears to invert normative gender relations in a Confucian society. Not surprisingly, then, male accompanists and men who co-habit with female shamans come in for much scorn. In some places, they are considered lazy good-for-nothings (Rutt 1961:8). To that intrepid traveller Isabella Bird Bishop, "A man sometimes marries a [shaman] but he is invariably a fellow of the base sort who desires to live in idleness on the earnings of his wife" (Bishop 1897: 425).

Gender and Life

Could it be that female shamans have carried off something of a domestic coup d'etat? In 1983, experienced Chindo shamans charged between 40,000 *wōn* and 60,000 *wōn* a ritual. Male accompanists usually got rather less. In addition, female shamans asked for gifts from clients during a ceremony. Some money was given ostensibly as spirit money to gods, but some was a direct reward for the shaman's performance. Shamans also received an obligatory *mal* (18.039 litres) of rice which, during the ritual, was both offered to ancestors at the altar and sat as the base of the dead's spirit pole (*sōndaec*). Shamans expected to perform a minimum of six ceremonies a month, yet the average monthly farming income was little more than 200,000 *wōn*. Although this may not have been true in the recent past, by the 1980s they therefore enjoyed an economic independence almost unique amongst Korean women. Shaman families had less need for agricultural land yet they had more disposable income. More importantly in the Confucian-oriented Korean society, the purse strings were held by the customarily weaker marriage partner.

The story of Pari Kongju is an example of female filial piety. Thrown out by her sonless parents, she searches the underworld until she finds an elixir to restore them to life. To Kendall, the story pairs with male filial piety. Before males can conduct *chesa* ancestral rites, females (shamans and their clients) lead the dead to the other world (Kendall 1985: 154). Confucian piety extends beyond here, however: in ascending order the Korean must respect first sons, fathers and rulers.

Shamans, far from matching the male-orientated system, break the rules.⁹ They are considered unreliable mothers or wives, notorious spendthrifts, drinkers, and loose—they are thought likely to conduct illicit affairs. I have already noted that shamans and *kisaeng* often become concubines or second wives. In Kim's novel, *Ūlhwa* has one husband and several

lovers. She begins to shake and tremble after sex, a pure sign that her spirits have lost their patience with her indulgence. Other examples are plentiful in Kendall's work. Sŏngjuk Mansin was troubled when her husband returned after 20 years. When he tried to sleep with her, her jealous gods departed in indignation. Yang Mansin could not find a husband, so she stopped her rituals and became a fortune-teller. Her spirits forced her back to shamanism. Yongsu's Mother lost one husband young, and from then on the spirits refused to let her take a second spouse.

In Chindo one important element is added: shamans may live with men, but they do so reluctantly. Kim 1 said she was forced into shamanism because her husband and father-in-law were always too drunk to tend their few fields. Over on the mainland near Haenam, her own father had been no more understanding of her shaman mother. Yi 1 lived at the other end of Sangbojŏn village to his wife, yet they performed as shaman and accompanist at local rituals. Their daughter, Yi 2, left her first husband because he forced her to perform rituals while he enjoyed himself. By 1983 she had a new husband, her accompanist at rituals. She rarely lived with this husband, however, since his first wife and family lived miles away on the other side of the island.

The stereotypical shaman is controlled by, or responsible to, particular spirits. Her spirits require looking after, so her household may be neglected. Kim Tongni therefore makes much of the unkempt state of the shaman's house and garden in *Ūlhwa*. It might be that shamanism attracts women who do not fit the expected (traditional) housewife and mother role well. I find such an idea tempting in the light of recent publications on *Minjung*. Entertainment of the masses, it is suggested, until recently centred on local rituals. The rituals provided a cathartic release from pent-up tension caused by adherence to life styles and behaviour imposed by an elite aristocracy (Cho 1987).¹⁰ If this is so, then shamans can hardly be expected to follow that same etiquette.

It seems that where hereditary shamanism is involved family life must move further away from the Confucian norm. There is evidence that, amongst such families, a daughter may be more prized than a son. And, usually in Korea, failure to produce a son is unlikely to provide grounds for divorce. Again, there is a problem with this line of argument, namely, the nationwide practice of exogamous marriage. In the Pak lineage this is plain: family descent is described in terms of male ancestors and inheritance of the so-called *tan'gol p'an* in terms of daughters-in-law. I indicated earlier that women who become wives in shaman families must be prepared to train as practitioners. Pak 1's first wife, from central Korea, had been reluctant to perform rituals according to several island informants. This, they said, lay behind her dismissal; by the 1980s she lived in Seoul. It appears that, at least in Chindo, only women from the same social group, that is shamans and musicians, have normally been prepared to enter such a marriage.

Eliade, Lewis, and Douglas have all noted that women are marginal members of society (see Campbell 1976: 79-81). Women are subject to the control of men in social institutions. To Lewis, shamanism is a revolt against inequality. To Douglas, trance reflects the marginal nature of shamanism's adherents. Douglas extends the argument from here to demonstrate common boundaries between pollution and danger—the danger of a possessing spirit and the symbols of pollution which women exhibit in their physical make-up.

And so I must move to consider traditional Korean views of women's physical identity. It comes as no surprise that menstrual blood carried an image of pollution, as witnessed in *Tŏkkaebi kut*. At the same time, giving birth brought danger from pollution. In Chŏlla province, the after-birth was burnt, women were isolated, and the household where a child had been born was declared off-limits. The latter is normally said to prevent disease from entering (Han 1977), but it equally avoids pollution escaping. The behaviour of village bands is informative here. First, and in common with many accounts of communal labour teams (*ture* and *p'umashil*), intercourse was prohibited

between husbands and wives during the period when the band was operational. Second, during village cleansing rites such as *maegut*, households where a birth had recently taken place were avoided; people from such a household were not allowed to play with the band. Amongst the membership of bands, spirits were considered polluting, and those who came in close contact—particularly the *chorijung*—accordingly wore masks that disguised their identity.

Physical make-up clearly suggests that shamans should be women. Women are the receptacles for human spirits through birth. The Korean syllable for womb/stomach, *paē*, sounds synonymous to that for boat. This leads to a number of puns but, and more importantly, a boat is the vehicle in which the dead travels to the other world in *Ssikkim kut*. Women, inherently polluted, cleanse their bodies through menstruation. The metaphors for spiritual cleansing and spirit possession clearly need far more elaboration, but I shall leave that for future study.

Conclusion

My conclusion is to transform the organisational hatstand of my introduction into a wardrobe. Most Korean shamans are women because of a number of disparate criteria, not all of which need be present in any given case. From life, the pressure on men to act publicly within the constraints of Confucian ideology is greater than that on women. From life, too, it may be that women who cannot fit the behavioural straight-jacket find in shamanism a release. From life a woman inherits social status, but perhaps from musical knowledge, exposure to performance, and practical expertise comes the ability to entertain. The ideology of pollution is part of both religion and life. But solely from religion comes a closeness to soul, that is the ability to move into trance, the potential to become a spirit vessel, and the knowledge that allows a woman to invoke and listen to spirits.

NOTES

1. This paper is really an exploratory account. I carried out fieldwork in South Chōlla province and the island of Chindo between 1982 and 1984 sponsored by the British Economic and Social Science Research Council. Additional data was collected on subsequent trips. Other scholars have worked far more extensively than me on this topic; since writing the preliminary draft of this paper I have read, and am particularly indebted to, Laurel Kendall's forthcoming paper.
2. This figure should not be considered a true ratio. It reflects male membership in a government-sponsored association. Women are less likely to join such associations. The figure is taken from 1976 Economic Planning Board statistics. More recent *Korea Statistical Yearbooks* do not give figures for shaman practitioners.
3. The lineage chart has been published elsewhere (Howard 1990: 194).
4. For details of the Korean Intangible Cultural Asset system see Howard 1988: 935-961. The composition of the Asset *Ssikkim kut* team and its development are also considered in Howard 1990.
5. Walraven points out "the truth that much of the literature so far consists of oversimplifications", a reflection on the colourful texts by Covell, Huhm and Lee as much as on Korean language accounts (Walraven 1983: 258; see also Covell 1983; Huhm 1980; Lee 1981).
6. A translation by Hyun Song Shin and Eugene Chung of Kim Dong-ni's [Kim Tongni] *Ūihwa* has recently appeared, titled *The Shaman Sorceress* (1989).
7. There is a nice story that illustrates the *ch'ōnmin* status, about a musician who tried to pass himself off as a *yangban*, recounted by Crane (1978: 30).
8. Kang was never appointed a Human Asset, but merely as a future Human Asset (*in'gan munhwajae hubo*). He died in 1988.
9. It is not infrequent that Confucian codes are both strengthened and threatened. Consider the basic stories in the *p'ansori* repertory: *Hūngboga* tells of the meanness of an elder brother—the inheritor of family property—but also of the eventual rich reward of his younger brother; *Ch'unhyangga* tells of the faithfulness of a wife, but she is the daughter of a *kisaeng* who has illegally married a *yangban* man far above her status; *Sugungga*

describes the proper relationship between subject and king, but in the story a hare (as subject) deceives the Dragon King.

10. See also Hyun 1981 for a similar case, though Hyun is concerned primarily with mask dance dramas.

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KOREA: THE LAND OF THE KYE

DIETER EIKEMEIER

Korea, misnamed the Land of the Morning Calm, could much more appropriately be called the Land of the *Kye*. For even in the past, the number of Koreans who ever had the opportunity to enjoy calm mornings must have been small, and their numbers much have become even smaller as Korea became one of the most densely populated areas in the world, a country plagued by noise. There are reasons to believe that at any time between the mid-1920s and the early 1970s, an average of 10% or 12% of the Korean population were involved in *kye* affairs, with their numbers perhaps reaching a peak of 20% early in the period. The number of *kye* members was no smaller than that of Korean Christians during the same period. If we consider Christianity an important part of Korean life during the past decades, the same must be said of the *kye*, though of course Christianity and *kye* affect people in quite different ways.

What is a *Kye*?

I here talk about *kye* as collective enterprises that are concerned with the raising and spending of material means—which today means money. By emphasising the concern with money, I do not take fully into account the Korean usage of the