Introduction to **KOREAN SPIRITUALITY**

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Edited by
Seo Jinseok
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University of Latvia

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Only through deep and nonbiased understanding of nuances pertaining to different traditions are we able to adequately react to culture differences manifested in the world outlook and mentality. Indeed, certain phenomena have developed over a longer period of time and have been maintained since ancient times. Moreover, in the secular Western civilisation of today they are a heritage of the religious world outlook of the past to the same extent as they are in the environment of residents of the Near and Middle East actively practising their religion. It is clearly manifest even in the works of the leading US thinkers who have developed the new ideological doctrines after the Cold War. The theory of clash of civilisations by Samuel Phillips Huntington, regardless of all politically correct disclaimers, unconsciously continues the idea voiced by the founder of the dualistic explanation of Western history – Augustine of Hippo (354–430) born in North Africa – on the permanent fight on the earth between the 'God's children' and 'Devil's servants', formulated in his work "The City of God" ("De civitate Dei"). Yoshihiro Francis Fukuyama, as well as other similar contemporary Western thinkers in their turn, by justifying the exclusive correctness of the social model of globalised capitalism, which, in their opinion, concludes the chain of development of humankind, in a way continue the eschatological outlook of the medieval Catholicism and militant Protestantism of the early modern period regarding the arrival of the 'last period of time'. Unfortunately, also in the Islamic countries the original tolerance has been replaced by activities of groups formed by aggressive fundamentalists, which plan total subordination or destruction of other cultures. Thereby, the best traditions of the once-so-tolerant Islam civilisation are fully destroyed. This is exactly why researchers of the strategic development of certain Middle Eastern countries have, among others, set forth the task of restricting "...the use of religion (a constant) to serve politics (a variable) and in the subordination of religion – with all its enormous spiritual power – to the world of politics, with all its manoeuvring,

bargains and deals."[1] A fundamentalism that cripples the spiritual message of any religion is not at all conservative. On the contrary, it is another, albeit dangerous and senseless type of modernism. In fact, religious fundamentalism is a product of globalisation, and it is disseminated by means of modern technologies.

A real alternative to this world outlook may be the religious mentality of the Far East, which has maintained the tradition of harmony and coexistence regardless all shocks and challenges of the 20th and 21st centuries. In this context, the Korean model is particularly interesting, taking into account that this country has traditionally been an extremely flexible place of cultural synthesis, able to unite the elements of Western financially-economic and technological ideas with the integration within the framework of the family, kin, community and work teams characteristic to the East. It was exactly this capacity, which largely determined the recent development of Korea as a giant of science and economy. The repressions against religions executed in the past by the politically-economic elite never resulted in mass psychoses similar to European crusades or religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries and the public schism. The tragedy of modern Korean history with the contraposition of the 'North' and the 'South' is also largely a consequence of the mistakes committed by the US military expansion and transplantation of Western ideological fundamentalism both in the camps of Korean 'communists' and 'capitalists'.

Since the 1990s, numerous studies have been devoted to Korean religions, taking into account that even South Korea as one of the world's leading industrial powers always attached a great significance to tradition. From a viewpoint of intellectual history, Korea is in many aspects a country of paradoxes, where apparently contradictory spiritual teachings used to coexist side by side over a long period of time, which could not have been possible, for example, in the Western society with its exaggerated dualism of 'the good' and 'the evil'. A typical evidence to be quoted in this regard is an observation taken down during his expedition of 1886 by a missionary Homer B. Hulbert: ".... As a general thing we may say that the all-round Korean will be a Confucian when in society, a Buddhist when he philosophises and a spirit worshipper when he is in trouble."[2] From the modern perspective, we can agree here with Robert Koehler that "... one overriding religious tendency in

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[1] Al-Suwaidi, J. S. The Mirage. Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center of Strategic Studies and Research, 2015, p. 140.

[2] Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 376.

the Korean population, and it is a preference for syncretism, seeking essential and common truths amidst diverse and often competing doctrines."[3]

The religious culture of Korea is multi-layered, it comprises different periods of history, different strata of the society, local and imported teachings, teachings, which have undergone extreme national and universal evolution over time, and teachings, which have strictly maintained ancient elements.

A religion, which has retained a marked continuity and extremely ancient principles until this very day at the same time effectively adjusting to the needs of a modern society and fully integrating into it is the Korean Shamanism. Shamanism (*musok* or *mugyo*) was practiced in Korea before the arrival of Buddhism in the Three Kingdom Period (57 BC–AD 668). Korean Buddhism adopted a lot of shamanistic practices. But shamanism continued also after the adoption of Confucianism – a ruling teaching at the Joseon Dynasty. And despite the modernization of the society and the great historical changes this ancient set of beliefs survived the introduction of Catholic and Protestant Christianity. The term 'Shamanism' comes from the Tungusic languages of Siberia and much like stated by Kim Tae-go, is explained as "a traditional, religious phenomenon tied closely with nature and the surrounding world, in which a practitioner endowed with the special ability to enter a state of trance-possession can communicate with supernatural beings. This transcendental power allows the practitioner, the shaman, to satisfy human cravings for explanation, understanding and prophecy."[4] The extreme viability of Korean shamanism, like the existence of applied magic, interpretation of dreams, folk healing and fortune telling in modern Europe or Middle East may be explained with the practical assignments, which are topical in the daily lives of people and which have always been solved by shamans. Having dropped many a theoretical scientific interpretation it seems that the essence of Korean shamanism has been most accurately justified by Seo Jinseok treating is as "the vernacular religion of Korea".[5] This to a certain extent coincides with opinions of other scholars, for example, Im Seokje, who concludes that "... Korean shamanism is not a religion established by revelation from god or prophet, but a religion generated spontaneously. It was created from a variety

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[3] Koehler, R. Religion in Korea. Harmony and Coexistence. Seoul: Seoul Selection. The Korea Foundation, 2012, p. 6.

[4] Ibid., p. 10.

[5] Jinseok, S. New Perspective of Korean indigenous religion as a vernacular religion in the context of idolising political characters. In Cho Eunsuk et al. (eds.). The Present State and Future Direction of Korean Studies in Socio-Cultural Context in the Central and Eastern Europe. Ljublana: Faculty of Arts, 2018, p. 60.

of knowledge and philosophy obtained by normal people in daily life through experience and exploration, namely displays of the character of the religious system composed of collective elements commonly shared among the nation on the basis of human experience."[6] As a vernacular religion, Korean shamanism is extremely interesting from a methodological viewpoint when studied in comparison with the religious traditions of the world, having undergone a transplantation of new monotheistic religions (Christianity or Islam) as a result of expansive foreign missions. This is true about many peoples in Africa before introduction of Islam resulting from the Arab expansion or Latin America where to Christianity was brought by Spanish and Portuguese colonisers, and the USA, where Indians were turned to Christianity as a result of activities of European missionaries. Despite the dominance of messianic, prophetic, revelation- and millenarianism-oriented Abraham's religions – Christianity and Islam – the ancient elements of 'paganism', as they were referred to by the representatives of the newly introduced religions, were preserved in all these places. This is vividly noticeable in local religious practices of Latin America in the Andes where sacrifices of gratitude are still brought today for Mother Earth, Rain God, God of Lightning, etc. under the veil of Catholicism.[7] Unlike Latin America, where the Catholic faith was brought as a result of aggressive conquering, in Korea it began in the 17th century through the books written by the Jesuit missionaries in China and later on the initiative of a group of *yahngban*, who were dissatisfied with the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy.[8] And even though Catholicism was viewed by the Confucian rulers with horror and Catholics underwent bloody persecutions, the Protestantism in Korea was a real success story. Protestant missionaries from the West entered Korea in the 19th century as diplomats, doctors and educators, often with the support of royal authorities. They founded the first modern hospitals, schools and universities.[9] Moreover, the number of Protestants among the population grew very fast and with time Christianity became an important factor of the Korean national identity in its fight against the Japanese colonial rule. Paradoxically,

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6 Jinseok, S. New Perspective of Korean indigenous religion as a vernacular religion in the context of idolising political characters. In Cho Eunsuk et al. (eds.). The Present State and Future Direction of Korean Studies in Socio-Cultural Context in the Central and Eastern Europe. Ljublana: Faculty of Arts, 2018, p. 60.

7 Rösing, I. Die heidnischen Katholiken und das Vaterunser im Rückwärtsgang. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2001, pp. 64–65.

8 Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 29.

9 Koehler, R. Religion in Korea. Harmony and Coexistence. Seoul: Seoul Selection. The Korea Foundation, 2012, p. 77.

Protestantism taking root amongst the Korean people was facilitated to a certain extent by the traditional shamanism! This is a vivid example of the Korean ability to synthesise absolutely different spiritual teachings in the name of a new national, social or ethical goal. In contrast to Latin America, where representatives of the Catholic church tolerated syncretism (or 'hidden paganism') in beliefs of local Indians only conditionally, in the hope for rooting of the 'real' Catholicism over a longer period of time[10], Christianity in Korea truly underwent an unseen flourishing by virtue of local nationalism and individually emotional religious interpretation, which was not controlled from outside, and thus modern Korean Protestants even believe that Christianity has declined in the West and that Korea is now the last bastion of the true faith. Moreover, like Europeans and Americans once used to do, Korea now sends missionaries not only to Africa, Latin America and Asia, but also to Europe and USA![11] So, what is the role of shamanism in the victory of protestant Christianity in Korea?

Or more precisely – what explains the role of shamanism as a promoter of Protestant Christianity? According to Donald Baker, "Protestant worship services were the only religious rituals in Korea that included communal singing and also were the only communal religious rituals, outside of those associated with shamanism and folk religion, that were conducted primarily in the language of everyday life."[12] However, is that all? Coexistence of the traditional Korean shamanism and the Asian spiritual teachings, which underwent a long evolution in this country (Buddhism, Confucianism), with the Western Christian denominations is one of the most important issues regarding the place and role of the Korean intellectual heritage in the context of intercultural relations of the East and the West. To understand it, certain aspects have to be highlighted, which separate world outlooks of the Western and Far East societies. Contrary to self-sufficient Asian spiritual teachings, which start the exploration of the world and the universe from self-exploration and the perfection of one's own inner substance (Confucianism as well as Buddhism), the 'Western Thinking', is obviously 'deficient'. It developed the idea that we can observe, understand, imagine and evaluate ourselves only

[10] Rösing, I. Die heidnischen Katholiken und das Vaterunser im Rückwärtsgang. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2001.

[11] Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 161.

[12] Baker, D. Sibling. Rivalry in Twentieth-Century Korea: Comparative Growth Rates of Catholic and Protestant Communities. In Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 292

through comparison with the other, 'existing outside of us', imaginary or actual phenomena. At the same time, unlike the Far Eastern self-organisation and governance teachings, which were largely based on empirical survival and co-habitation practices rather than religious and political doctrines, the Western spiritual environment has always been permanently unready, immature, always generating eternal change, catastrophes, reforms and revolutions, imposing its model of globalisation upon the world. The Asian spiritual teachings are generally more based on practical persistent improvement of own ethical and psycho-physical qualities, rather than eschatological doctrine of the 'sinfulness of this world' and the following 'reward'. Besides, the original sin theory of Christianity denies happiness of this life, which is not the case of Eastern thought.[13] These differences are the ones which account for the large proportion of melancholy and depression even in economically rich and socially secure Western societies, while a cardinally different attitude to life has allowed the Koreans, Chinese and Japanese to retain the principal characteristics of their lifestyle and stability of social relations even during the most difficult periods of catastrophes of modern history. Regardless of these commonly known eastern-western differences, the Korean synthetic approach unifying different world outlooks has made its Christian community the second largest in Asia after Philippines. It is very interesting how the doctrine of original sin, one of the most specific and dramatic features of the European (and Western) religious mentality, has been integrated into the Korean world outlook. The idea of original sin "… allowed Korean converts to Christianity to escape the conundrum of trying to reconcile belief in human perfectibility with the experience of moral failure by abandoning the traditional belief that human beings could reach moral perfection through their own efforts. Instead, Christianity in both its forms offered what was to Koreans a relatively novel solution – supernatural assistance from God above."[14] This, however, did not smooth out the most significant differences between the Korean religious mentality and the religious doctrine born under the wing of the official Western church. We can notice this gap when comparing, for example, the sacral understanding of nature characteristic to the Korean folk culture with the outlook of Western Christian church regarding separation of God and nature (like spirit and

[13] Li Qingben, Cui Lianrui. Comparison of Chinese and Western Literature. Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2008, p. 40.

[14] Baker, D. Sibling Rivalry in Twentieth-Century Korea: Comparative Growth Rates of Catholic and Protestant Communities. In Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, pp. 292–293.

flesh), which has always sought the demonic and evil opposition to the good and divine. Since the High Middle Ages, only cultivated nature – a crop field, a cloister garden, etc. – was acknowledged as being 'good' in the mind of a European representing secular and religious power, instead of a wild forest, desert, steppe or sea, here a demon was staring from behind of every tree.[15] One can fully agree with the German scientists and doctors Peter Jentschura and Josef Lohkämper, that "...Christianity granted to its God the rule over just one half of the natural kingdom. The other half is ruled by the Satan, the devil. It is understandable that such duality results in conflicts."[16] Numerous reports on weird natural phenomena, comets, fearsome cripples, mentally ill tramps, monsters and anomalous animals served as evidence of the works of either the God or Satan and precursors of apocalypse in the European historiography of the early modern period, continuing up to the 17th century. Demonology and witch trials are an element of this world outlook. In the 16th century even small children were subjected to demonization. For example, the beginner of Reformation Martin Luther (1483–1546) was convinced that a small child whose behaviour failed to meet a putative or customary canon was a 'devil's incarnation', because "it is within Satan's power to secretly take children from women and substitute them with demons", which could be seen already from how intensively these "bloodcurdling infants suckled their mother's breast".[17] One can fully agree with the opinion of Chong Bum Kim who stresses that "… Korean folk religion seemed to have had a more positive view of the natural world than that prevailing in the West. The forest for instance, was not the abode of evil spirits and frightening creatures such as witches, goblins, and dragons, as the Western literary imagination often presented it. On the contrary in Korean folklore, it was a place of hidden paradises and sacred sites."[18] It should be remembered, however, that huge differences are revealed when comparing the official ideology of the European church, which is related to the politically economic powers, and the religiousness of the Korean people, not the European and Korean folk cultures, which have a lot in common, if we analyse, for example, the world outlook

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[15] Fumagalli, V. Der lebende Stein. Stadt und Natur im Mittelalter. Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1989, pp. 97–99.

[16] Jentschura, P. and Lohkämper, J. Gesundheit durch Entschlackung. Münster: Verlag Peter Jentschura, 1998, p. 26.

[17] Peuckert, W.-E. Deutscher Volksglaube des Spätmittelalters. Stuttgart: W. Spemann Verlag, 1942, p. 168.

[18] Chong Bum Kim. Preaching the Apocalypse in Colonial Korea: The Protestant Millennialism of Kil Sŏn-ju. In Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, p. 155.

of peasant population. Christianity took root in Europe only during the Middle Ages and the process reached the lower strata of the society after a very long period of time. The ancient Germanic, Celtic, Slavic and Baltic, etc. paganism used to exist along with the official ideology of the Christian church and landlords, with chronicles and archive materials providing abundant evidence of this. Like in China and Korea, in certain regions of Europe, which were affected by Christianity much later (for example, Baltic), Jesuits sent their missionaries to introduce the 'true Christianity' in the 'pagan environment'. In this context Jesuit reports on pre-Christian rituals in Latvia during the 17th–18th centuries are especially interesting. Most of the reports preserved are about the people in Eastern Latvia who had long lived in closed communities in forests and marshlands and whose peasantry continued to preserve much of the ancient traditions.[19] Sacred trees and sacred forests existed there even in the 17th and 18th centuries.[20] For instance, the annual report of 1725 of the Jesuit Council, along with conclusions on worshipping trees, quotes the following prayer addressed to a linden, "Good morning linden, how are you? I brought you a gift: do not touch my children, do not touch my cattle, my pigs, do not touch my health and bring me no harm."[21] Nobody laughed at the sacred trees or otherwise showed any disrespect, because the people strongly believed that a misfortune might arise as a result. By establishing a sacred tree, the man established a protector for himself who protected him in difficult times.[22] Furthermore, we learn that men worshipped oaks and women – lindens, which fully coincides with the mythological Latvian folksongs representing extremely ancient beliefs of the Indo-European world. Pieces of wax, crumbs of metal, coins, food (eggs) were sacrificed to the idol trees. All gifts were brought at concrete times and buried under the roots of the tree. The process was accompanied by ritual wording.[23] The Jesuit reports also show[24] that there were certain differences in the worship

[19] Klavins, K. "Les arbres saints" de Lettonie dans le contexte de la pensée mythologique et écologique: digression dans le passé. In *Mythes et mythologies. Actes du Colloque international des 1er, 6 et 7 mars 2008 à Amiens.* Amiens, Presses du Centre d'Etudes Médiévales. Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, 2008.

[20] Kleijntjenss, Jozefs. *Latvijas vēstures avoti jezuītu ordeņa archīvos*. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures Institūta apgādiens, 1940.

[21] Ibid., p. 391.

[22] Ibid., p. 288.

[23] Ibid., p. 287.

[24] E.g. the report of 1606 by Jesuit Joannis Stribingius regarding the worship of trees in the vicinity of Rēzekne. See Mannhardt, Wilhelm. Letto-Preussische Götterlehre. Rīga: Latviešu literāriskās biedrības izdevums, 1936, pp. 441–445.

of the holy trees. For example, there were common as well as special trees at the same time. Furthermore, separate families ('the best families') had their own trees protected from access by other families by means of magic. Therefore, witchcraft was also practiced to prevent other families from getting anything from these trees. From the point of view of social history, differences appeared between families probably due to their economic status. Family trees were visited twice a year – at Midsummer and in autumn. Trees were also sacrificed to in order to produce rain, to ensure good fishing, etc. The same trends can be seen in the Latin American and African materials regarding the lifestyles of the traditional societies on these continents. At the same time, gifts to trees in Latvia were given, to do homage to the Baltic pagan gods such as the god of thunder (Pērkons). French scholar Jacques Brosse[25] stresses that the worship of Pērkons was closely related to the oak for Latvians, reflecting motifs of a more general fighting between gods (e.g., a disagreement between the sun and thunder). Having examined Jesuit reports, Jānis Plaudis concludes that information about tree worship in Latvia is found over a very long period of time: from the middle of the 17th century up to the year 1759. Furthermore, everybody participated in the sacral rituals there so there was no need for special persons. The huge sanctuary of nature was open to everyone who entered it.[26] All of the abovementioned information proves the existence of long-term practice of vernacular religion in Europe, which is very similar to the Korean shamanism as well as to the Korean folk-religion in general. A vivid example of this is the worship of divine trees in Korea, that are usually found at the entrance or the centre of a village. According to Choi Joon-sik, "The *sindansu* (divine tree that appears in the myth of King Dangun) might well be considered as the archetype of Korean divine trees. In that story, this tree on the peak of a holy mountain serves as a ladder when Hwanung, a son of the Emperor of Heaven, descends to Earth. It seems only logical then that people believed that such a tree would protect them from outside evils."[27] The Korean mythology itself, which also reflects the primordial folk beliefs, has many similarities with the myths of some European peoples. For example, the aforementioned Hwanung is interpreted as "… representing an outside group that worships the heavenly deity and Ungnyeo

[25] Brosse, Jacques. Mythologie des arbres. Paris: Éditions Payot & Rivages, 2001, p. 114.

[26] Plaudis. Jānis. Jezuītu ziņojumi par tradicionālās reliģijas piekopšanu Lagalē. Literatūra un kultūra: process, mijiedarbība, problēmas. Pilsētas teksts literatūrā un kultūrā. Maija Burima (ed.). Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitāte, 2007, p. 286.

[27] Choi Joon-sik. Folk-religion. The Customs in Korea. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2006, p. 111.

(Bear Woman) as a symbol of an indigenous, bear-totem tribe."[28] That is, according to the Korean Foundation Myth, the heavenly king Hwanung had a relationship with the bear-woman, as a result of which they had a son born named Dangun – the legendary founder of the first Korean kingdom.[29] Similar tales of mythical warrior-heroes, born as a result of relationships between bears and people, can be found in the mythology and folklore of European peoples, for example, in Pyrenees and the Baltics. While the French Jean de l'Ours, Basque Xan de l'Ours or the Catalan Joan de l'Ós appear as folk heroes only in fairytales, stories and legends[30], in Latvia, thanks to the epic poem "Bearslayer" (1888) by the poet Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902), this hero of folktales became the cornerstone of the Latvian national identity during the time when Latvians were emerging as a modern nation, thus becoming one of the major foundation myths for the Republic of Latvia founded in 1918. The Bearslayer even keeps his bear ears as a token of his half-bear origin. The origin of this folk hero is described as follows in the epic poem of A. Pumpurs:

.... deep within the forest wild,
Strong suckling at a she-bear's milky breast,
Was found a strange and mighty human child.
And of this child foretold the god's firm will
As hero, later, lofty he could climb
His name with fear all wicked ones would fill,
All evil-doers, in the coming time.[31]

Notably, in Korea, the analogies of the Foundation Myth also appear in popular beliefs, as reflected in legends and tales, which is evidence that the bear phenomenon is rooted in the most ancient layers of the folk-religion. For example, the Gomanaru Pine Forest (home of Ungsindan Shrine) has a connection with a legend about a she-bear who fell in love with a young man. "The bear trapped the man in her cave and bore cubs with him. But,

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[28] Lee, Peter H. An anthology of traditional Korean literature. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017, p. 513.

[29] Lee, Peter H. An anthology of traditional Korean literature. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017, p. 526.

[30] Duhourcau, B. Guide Des Pyrénées Mystérieuses. Paris: Sand & Tchou, 1978; Anonymes, Histoires et Légendes du Languedoc Mystérieux. Paris: Sand & Tchou, 1976.

[31] Pumpurs, A. Bearslayer: The Latvian Legend (A. Cropley, transl.). In: A. Cropley, A. Cimdiņa and K. Klavins (eds.). Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2007, p. 41.

longing for human society, the man escaped across the river, which led the bear and her cubs to plunge into the Geumgang in despair and drown. The restless spirits of the bears brought powerful storms that often sunk ships, so the residents built Ungsindan and held rituals there to appease them. This apparently led to the area being called Gomanaru or Gomnaru, meaning 'Bear Ferry'.[32]

It should be taken into account that folk beliefs and daily religious rituals of the community in Korea, much like in many places in European peasant communities before modernisation, were related to practical magic, which was related to sacrificing for spirits, gaining blessing thereof, ancestor cults, honouring of the deceased, etc. At the same time, account should be given to the fact that several rituals and beliefs in Korea during the Joseon Dynasty emerged as a form of protest against the social elites of the time, similarly as in Eastern Europe, where serfdom existed as late as in 18th and 19th centuries. One of these were mask dance plays, which also count among the traditions of folk-religion.[33] It should be noted that Joseon Dynasty was a hierarchical society based on birth and bloodlines, and it was obvious that people with lower status were under severe lifelong oppression. Only during the mask dance plays the lower-class people were allowed to shout loudly while striking gongs any place they wanted.[34] Similarly, in Europe, where mask carnivals contained expressions of wishes related to vegetation and fertility, also in Korea, for example, the "defeat of an old monk wearing a black mask by the young rake Chwibari in red mask, represents the victory of summer over winter."[35]

Despite the fast modernisation and industrialisation of the 20th century, many of the ancient beliefs and customs (sometimes in a modified form) in Korea have been preserved to this very day. With regard to the traditional understanding of death in Korean society, the Neo-Confucian funerary rites, which still dominate the funerary scene today, were certainly very important.[36] However, shamanism also considers dead ancestors to be members of the family. And today still: "If the financial situation of the household permits

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[32] Morning Calm. Korean Air. November 2018, Vol. 42, No. 11, pp. 52–53.

[33] Janson, A. Die lettischen Maskenumzüge. Riga: Selbstverlag, 1933.

[34] Choi Joon-sik. Folk-religion. The Customs in Korea. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2006, p. 140.

[35] Lee, Peter H. An anthology of traditional Korean literature. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017, p. 524.

[36] Yi Yong Bhum. Death a beginning of a New Life. In Lee Pyung Rae, et al. (eds.). Death in Asia. From India to Mongolia. Irvine: Seoul Selection, 2015, p. 260.

it, the family must worship their ancestors through *gut* so that the living and the dead reap the benefits of the family prosperity."[37]

In Korea, a ritual called *jesa* provides for feeding the spirits of dead ancestors. It is known that "In order for the ancestral to enjoy sacrifices, people open the lid of the rice bowl, and stick the spoon and chopsticks into the rice bowl. While the spirit has his meal, the participants may stand waiting…" The last stage is *sashin*, to bid farewell to the spirit and send it back to where it belongs."[38] It is difficult to tell, what do these rituals contain from the time before the Confucianism, but in any case, ancestral worship in Korea existed before.[39] Like in Korea, also in European pagan societies sharing food and drink with the dead members of the family was intended to propitiate them and win their help. In the ancient material of Western Europe, the practice of sharing food and drink with the dead as mentioned by Caesarius of Arles, Gregory of Tours, Burchard of Worms and others. The cult of the dead was the most vital and ancient one in north-eastern countries of Europe, which were affected by Christianity comparatively lately. Latvia may be repeatedly provided as an example, with information on graveyard feasts honouring the dead in can be found in written sources dating back to the fifteenth century.[40] In the autumn at 'Soul time' (in most cases in October) special Soul feasts ere celebrated, in the belief that dead relatives, friends, and acquaintances would attend.[41] Seventeenth-century church visitation records include a reference to food, eggs, and beer being left on graves with a written request asking: "Old folks, please help our barley and rye to grow well, and our horses and farm animals grow strong!"[42]. If the ancestor worship took place in the farmhouse or in a farm outbuilding, then one of the first things the worshipers did was to invite the dead souls in. When the mistress of the house had set the table, the master lit candles or kindling and called the dead ancestors by name, asking them to come dine and drink. The farmers, hoping to receive especially benevolent treatment from the dead, saddled their horses and rode to the graveyard or to the nearest tavern in order to bring back the dead souls so that they could partake of the prepared feast. The purpose of

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[37] Ibid., p. 274.

[38] Choi Joon-sik. Folk-religion. The Customs in Korea. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2006, pp. 71–72.

[39] Ibid., p. 67.

[40] See https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/ancestors-baltic-cult-ancestors [last viewed 04.07.2019].

[41] Pumpurs, A. Bearslayer: The Latvian Legend (A. Cropley, transl.), A. Cropley, A. Cimdiņa and K. Klavins (eds.). Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2007, p. 337.

[42] Šmits, Pēteris (ed.). Latviešu tautas ticējumi. 4 vols. Riga, Latvia, 1941, 32523.

lighting candles or kindling at the beginning of the feast was "to provide the dead souls with better lighting for dining."[43]

Also, like in Europe, Latin America and elsewhere, in Korea, too, fortune telling and divination practices grew into the Christianity, in certain cases adopting terminology of the Bible and external façade of Christianity while keeping the essence of ancient Korean beliefs. Yee-Heum Yoon shows that shamanistic practices continue within the Korean protestant movement in the form of *Gajeong-jedan*: 'family altars'.[44] According to his information "Fortune telling altars are used mainly for curing and bringing good luck. The nature of these activities is more like traditional *gibok,* rather than the belief system of Christianity. The main difference is that the diviner uses the bible as a tool for prognostication: opening it at random and predicting the future from the first sentence that he reads. ... Diviners make interpretations based on their own personal religious experiences. These interpretations tend to be anti-doctrinal and anti-intellectual. The spirit and attitude of this movement, then, is not born from mainstream Christianity but rather from the ethos of *gibok*."[45] To make a comparison by using the example of Latvia in Europe we see that here in the areas of practical magic, folk medicine and fortune telling the elements of pre-Christian religion (or ancient Baltic paganism) actively synthesised with the heritage brought by European Christian civilisation in the 18th century, when great influence was gained by the Brethren congregations (Moravians). The movement of Brethren congregations (Unity of the Brethren; *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde* in German), or Herrnhuters (*hernhūtieši* in Latvian), which was introduced to Latvia from Germany was an active, fundamentalist Protestant organisation, which very actively supported education and the building of self-confidence and local pride. The Bohemian Brethren, who had been forced to leave their homes because of Catholic persecution, had found refuge in Saxony on the estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760). Zinzendorf founded a united congregation in 1727, which took its name from Herrnhut, the town the refugees had established. Herrnhuters went on faraway missions, eventually gaining great influence across the world, which can in a way be compared to the achievements of the Jesuits before them. The Herrnhuters not only preached Christianity but also organised a unique form of local

[43] Ibid., 32545.

[44] Yee-Heum Yoon. The diversity and Continuity of Shamanism in Korean Religious History. In Mihál Hoppál and Gábor Kósa (eds.). Rediscovery of Shamanic Heritage. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2003, p. 261.

[45] Ibid., pp. 261–262.

government by creating congregations that were not directly affiliated with the official church. Due to this the movement gained great attraction among Latvian peasants who were hostile towards the official Lutheran Church, which was strange to the people, analogously to how Koreans distanced themselves from the Catholic Church whose priests reminded them too much of *yangban* scholars.[46] Latvian peasants looked down upon orthodox religious literature as being *wisdom of the head*, whereas they considered Herrnhuter texts to contain *so much nourishment as if presented by an abundant mother's hand*.[47] Trends in Western and Near Eastern mysticism definitely shaped the spiritual façade of the Brethren congregation, behind which, upon closer inspection, one can detect ancient traditions of Latvian folklore and mentality. Magic formulas, which occupy an extremely important place in hand-written literature among Latvian Herrnhuters, are an extremely interesting element of synthesis of cultures and traditions. The so-called 'heaven books' from Germany, which listed the unlucky days of the year and magic formulas for the treatment of various illnesses and afflictions, played a prominent role in Herrnhuter activity.[48] The author of this article has recently had the good fortune to obtain several booklets of magic formulas from Palsmane parish in Latvia, which once was a part of Smiltene district in Latvia and a centre of Herrnhuter activity. Among the booklets are also two 'heaven books' that offer a glimpse into the contents of such books and their use in magic. Neither book is dated, but judging by the paper and handwriting, they could be from the second half of the 19th century. One of the books was written as the continuation of a booklet of magic formulas and contains formulas against various illnesses, accidents, and threats. In addition to the decorative invocations of Biblical terminology, the magical formulas written there in a different handwriting contain many concepts and statements testifying to the influence of ancient Latvian folk magic, mythology, and folklore. For example, the bee charm begins with a phrase that resembles a folk song: "Little bee, come in my garden, come and live with the blossoms; bee queens, bee queens, come in my garden…" (information from a Herrnhuter book of magic, the author's personal property).

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[46] Baker, D. Sibling Rivalry in Twentieth-Century Korea: Comparative Growth Rates of Catholic and Protestant Communities. In Buswell, Robert E.; Lee, Timothy S. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2006, p. 293.

[47] Apīnis A. Neprasot atļauju. Latviešu rokraksta literatūra 18. un 19. gadsimtā. Rīga: Liesma, 1987, p. 81.

[48] Straubergs K. Latviešu buramie vārdi. Rīga: Latviešu folkloras krātuves izdevums, 1939, pp. 183–184.

The advice against water-borne epidemics sounds quite practical: "Take the white bits from chicken shit and scatter them in the problem and thereby be rid of it" (information from a Herrnhuter book of magic, the author's personal property).

The hernia charm mentions the traditional Latvian pagan magical number 'three-times-nine': "Three times 9 springs, three times 9 lakes, the sea shore so deep that fire sustains it day and night" (information from a Herrnhuter book of magic, the author's personal property). A cancer charm says: "I charm away the cancer, three times nine stones from the sea will come to where 4 veins divide..." (information from a Herrnhuter book of magic, the author's personal property).

An iron charm teaches: "You become as mute as the iron man, iron shirt, iron trousers, iron socks, iron slippers, iron neckerchief, iron coat, iron mittens, iron hat. Thunder will come from Riga, it will kick you into a hole for three times nine posts, three times nine pieces blasted in half…" (information from a Herrnhuter book of magic, the author's personal property). It is interesting that the notion of an 'iron man' is also often featured in Latvian folk songs.

Comparing the victory of Protestant Christianity in Latvia and Korea there are many similarities regarding emotional perception, which was seen by Korean and Latvian peasants specifically in Protestantism (in the Latvian case, in the Herrnhuter movement). Koreans were fascinated by Protestantism exactly because they understood it as very individual and passionate. "Many Koreans preferred the individual variations and the personal emotional release allowed in revival meetings because this as the sort of religiosity they had grown accustomed to through shamanic rituals."[49] In Latvia, in its turn, Herrnhuter mysticism first manifested itself in the seeing of visions, the interpretation of dreams, the active search for personal connection to the spiritual world (and also to God, who was very central to the Brethren tradition), as well as episodes of hysteria-like spiritual ecstasy, during which it was believed that the affected person could interpret God's word. In his 1878 work "The Brethren Congregation in Livonia" ("Brāļu draudze Vidzemē"), author Matīss Kaudzīte described these processes:

> *... because everyone began having visions, they fainted and lay as if they had died, and when they awoke they told of having received mercy and*

[49] Jinseok, S. New Perspective of Korean indigenous religion as a vernacular religion in the context of idolising political characters. In Cho Eunsuk et al. (eds.). The Present State and Future Direction of Korean Studies in Socio-Cultural Context in the Central and Eastern Europe. Ljublana: Faculty of Arts, 2018, p. 61.

of having been in heaven, where they had been appointed as prophets; the sensory organs of others had been overloaded so greatly that they trembled and quaked, almost as if plagued by a disease, during the reading of holy texts and fell to the floor, cried, wailed, and spoke in a delirium, calling the names of deceased people whom they had supposedly seen either in heaven or in hell..[50]

This description sounds very similar to the state of trance-possession of shamans achieved in order to contact the world of spirits. And yet, there is no evidence of such spiritual practices in Latvia before the introduction of Herrnhuter movement, which in the particular context rather seems to be an exalted manifestation of European Christian visionary experience than rebirth of traditional beliefs in new circumstances.

At the same time there are considerable differences between the Korean and European modern perception of Protestantism, which stem from absolutely different attitudes towards the family, community, collective and life attitude in general. While in the West modern manifestations of Protestantism frequently resulted in Puritanism, aggressive individualism and increased trends of 'exceptionalism', which only facilitated deterioration of rural communities in the circumstances of early capitalism,[51] in Korea the importance of the family, community and collective was preserved. This is chiefly due to influences from other traditions, for example, Confucianism, but not only. It was not acceptable for Koreans that the original sin theory of Christianity denies happiness of this life, which is not the case of Chinese thought either.[52] As a result, Korean Protestantism has a number of regional characters, such as "the emphasis of physical good fortune in this world rather than in an after-world" as well as a number of rituals, which originated from shamanism (for example, the utilisation of shamanistic sorcery during rituals). One can fully agree with Seo Jinseok that "None of these are grounded on biblical teachings nor are they regularly emphasised in other Christian countries, and thus are found only in Korean Protestantism, particularly Pentecostal churches." It might be that the use of Christianity was a way to find harmony in the once strictly

[50] Kaudzīte M. Brāļu draudze Vidzemē. Rīga, 1878, p. 32.

[51] Vivid evidence of this is provided in the first realistic Latvian novel, written in 1879 by the Kaudzīte brothers. See: Reinis Kaudzīte und Matīss Kaudzīte, Landvermesserzeiten, Roman, Aus dem Lettischen übersetzt von Valdis Bisenieks, Edition und wissenschaftliche Redaktion Kaspars Kļaviņš (in German), Publisher: Verlag Kaspars Kļaviņš, Salzburg, 2012.

[52] Li Qingben, Cui Lianrui. Comparison of Chinese and Western Literature. Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2008, p. 40.

regulated Korean society between the masculine, hierarchical, community-bound features of Neo-Confucianism and the feminine, egalitarian, informal and family-bound principles of Shamanism.[53] On the other hand, for Koreans, who were once ardently practicing Buddhism, Christianity could have been attractive as a religion which, similarly to Buddhism, posited the existence of 'afterworld'[54], contrary to Confucianism, "… which is basically agnostic about the prospect of any life after death" and teaches that a man "… can 'live eternally' through the succession of his descendants."[55] An attitude of merging and harmoniously synthesizing different teachings and religions (Chinese, Indian and Western) is characteristic of the entire Korean spiritual tradition which finds its expression both on the level of everyday consciousness influenced by folk-religion as well as that of professional philosophy. Korean philosophy also reveals an extraordinarily flexible ability to synthesize the principles of different schools of Buddhism: the Chan Buddhism approach to meditation with its emphasis of sudden enlightenment, with the more gradual meditation approaches."[56] One can agree with Oliver Leaman that "The attempt at syncretising different philosophical trends as something of a theme in Korean philosophy…"[57]

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[53] Choi Joon-sik. Folk-religion. The Customs in Korea. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2006, p. 37.

[54] Ibid., p. 84.

[55] Choi Joon-sik. Folk-religion. The Customs in Korea. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2006, p. 84.

[56] Leaman, O. Key Concepts in Eastern Philosophy. London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 169.

[57] Ibid.

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PERIODICALS

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Outlines of Korean Shamanism

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Introduction[1]

My first contact with Korean shamanism was made even before my birth. I am not referring to an old stereotypical statement that Korean society, where I was 'destined' to be born, has been vastly influenced by shamanism since the beginning of its history. Against a totally individual background, all the lifestyles and habits of family members were lived on the basis of traditional practises that originated from Korean shamanism. In my childhood my mother told me that she was a Buddhist but quite frequently used to go to a shamanic shrine, to make an offering in front of a painting of a big tiger that was believed to be a mountain guardian and pray to the tiger for the welfare of family members. Undoubtedly such was the typical lifestyle of women of her generation – the inclination to Buddhism, a national religion introduced from India by way of China, and at the same time customary adherence to shamanic practices, which are also still observed among sincere Christians in Korea.

Regardless of her earnest devotion to a number of celestial bodies, I was very weak and finally after a diagnosis from doctors it was announced that I would not survive even to 20. To make it worse, my family's fortune went downhill unexpectedly, thus my mother had no choice but to visit a shaman for advice and consultation. She expected that the shaman would propose an offering to the Buddhist temple or that she should organise a *gut*, the traditional shamanic ritual, which would with the help of good spirits heal my disease and drive out malicious spirits who controlled my family. However, what my mother received from the shaman was totally unexpected and unbelievable advice: "You have to go to church. Otherwise your whole family will perish." My mother,

[1] When transcribing Korean words, the Romanization of the Korean language that came into effect in 2000 will be observed for transcription in most cases with the exception of some globalized family names such as Kim, Choi, Park and Lee, if not notified specially by the author clearly in the text. The original name will be added in Hangeul (the Korean alphabet) in parentheses to avoid confusion.

who hadn't had any contact with Western culture, much less Christianity until then, was really reluctant to listen to the shaman's advice. However, my mother finally found a friendly Methodist Church nearby where a warm-hearted deaconess instructed her in a new way of life worshiping the Christian God and took care of my family, who trod the first step towards the church after quitting 'the old habit of paganism'. Since it was really hard for mother to quit immediately the old habit of paying regular visits to Buddhist temples and shamanic shrines at the same time, she still stubbornly went to these places after converting to Christianity, but the deaconess – I am not sure whether she is still alive or not – never prohibited her from going to temple, and even volunteered to take care of 2-year-old me while mother was in the temple praying to the 'pagan' god. Probably the advice of the shaman was right. As soon as my family members converted to Christianity, the economic situation of the family rapidly improved: my brother was born and I thrived, even to twice the lifespan predicted by the doctor. Finally, my mother was convinced of the virtue of the Christian Church, quit her old habits and is now a deaconess devoted to the Pentecostal church. My brother is preparing to become a protestant minister.

In comparison with the former deaconess, who was tolerant of the traditional shamanic practice, my mother has a totally different perspective on shamanism. She treats shamanism and all sorts of related thing with disdain because she strongly believes that her old habit of shamanism caused my family's misfortune. This misfortune was organised in advance by God to give my family the chance to abandon 'the old and evil way of life' and force us to follow a righteous way of living. According to her conviction, the illness and adversity that my family had to suffer was designed by God himself and through an initiation in the church our family could be saved from the eternal punishment of falling into hell. She really despises the painting or any configuration of the tiger in front of which she bowed to wish for good luck. She confirmed that she has wasted her life with the irrational habit of worshiping shamanic gods.

As I grew up, I became interested in shamanism and the general processes by which an ethnic religion builds up a national culture in other countries. I realised that my mother's Christian conviction is very similar to the traditional viewpoint of Korean shamanism – a person who is destined to be a shaman has to go through a serious disease or a series of misfortunes in exactly the way my family had, and he or she has to address themselves to a master to be healed from disease or relieved from misfortune through an initiation ritual, then start a new life as a prophet or shaman in order to pass on the words of the spirits or gods. Even after initiation, the shaman should maintain a good rapport with the gods because laziness can cause a repetition

of the bad luck. My mother had a firm belief that I had to find a way to live as a 'servant of the Lord' as I was given a calling from God like other would-be shamans who were destined to work for a god, a vocation decided in advance even before birth. Specifically, the misfortune and disease my family suffered were spiritual diseases that shamans should go through before initiation, and our conversion to Christianity, the initiation.

My mother is still convinced that God will return us to the previous situation if I do not do my best to maintain a good relationship with God or attempt to make any reconciliation with Korean traditional belief. That is why my mother expresses discontent whenever I prepare for fieldwork or excursion to collect materials about Korean mythology and shamanism. When I wanted to study subject at university, she even expressed abhorrence for Korean traditional percussion music, *samulnori* – which is one of the most popular Korean musical genres abroad –, due to the strong emotional association with the *gut* ritual, in which the instruments are played boisterously. For her, Korean shamanism was the basis of all cultural genres and traditional practices, thus all traditional elements are unsuitable for true Christianity.

Her unconditional abhorrence softened when I presented a play about Jesus Christ and his life with my friends in Korean traditional style at my church. The stage was ornamented with dazzlingly colourful clothes, which were reminiscent of the scenery of a shamanic shrine or sacred tree located on a country crossroads, accompanied by sounds of loud percussion, the same rhythm of which is played during the *gut* ritual. I cannot say that the performance was successful; however, I succeeded in constructing a new perspective on traditional culture at least for my mother.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the majority of Christians share my mother's viewpoint on traditional culture. All kinds of practices and behaviours are reminiscent of shamanic activities (as is Korean folk tradition) and these were condemned by the church, which attempted to erase them. Regardless of my mother's personal wish that I would be closer to God, I was 'astray' from Christian society as I was attracted by the mythology of Korea as well as other nations. This doesn't mean that I totally abandoned my religion. I just could not reach a compromise with the structure established by Korean Christianity that degrades Korean tradition and forces lay people to adhere to a Western lifestyle introduced from Christian countries, which is believed to be more rational, modernised and proper for the cultivation of Korean culture. Probably my family background led me to seek a way of conciliation and harmony between Western culture and Korean shamanism.

In a very similar way to elsewhere, shamanism is the most essential element when establishing the esoteric and exoteric image of Korea and has

historically affected an important influence on Korean society, including my own family. In addition, the fact that it is a traditional belief originating on Korean soil means that elements that compose the cultural substrata of the Korean people, such as their views on gods, nature and society, are condensed. A variety of foreign religions or philosophies, for example Confucianism from China and Buddhism from India, developed at different paces moving outside the origin country and adjusting to the spiritual necessities of Korea, while at the same time preserving original elements of Korean culture.

This can be compared with the phenomenon of a drop falling on the surface of water. Further from the centre, where the most drastic reaction to the original impulse occurs, a smaller wave is formed. If the country of origin is the centre of the wave, where stimuli and alteration constantly occur due to a consistent impulse, Korea, located at the margin from the cultural point of view, could preserve the original or orthodox form of the philosophy or religion undamaged by an excessive intervention. The doctrine of foreign culture, when introduced to Korea, develops in a novel direction separately from the source, where the archetype is preserved regardless of changes in the new country, finally being covered by the wrapping paper of Korean shamanism.

Therefore, Korean shamanism is always an essential tool for understanding Korean culture. After the introduction of Buddhism in the 4th century and rise of Confucianism since the establishment of Joseon dynasty in the 14th century, the dilemma caused by the confrontation of shamanism with other religions has been at the centre of scholarly discussion. While until the 19th century the object of comparison was Buddhism and Confucianism, which affected crucial influences in North East Asia, Christianity has also entered the orbit in the same way as previous religions, and the direct influence of shamanism on Christianity is attracting scholarship today as well. Christianity will probably not be able to remain untouched by Korean shamanism.

The strong association between shamanism and other traditional religions created an original exoteric image of Korea, but how will it eventually react with Western culture, and will it be possible for Korean shamanism to find its way in a new era when the introduction of more diversified techniques and philosophies is anticipated?

While former studies of Korean shamanism mainly concentrated on diachronic research such as conceptualisation, characteristics and historical transition, I will attempt to concentrate on the role of shamanism in modulating Korean culture in its inter-cultural contacts. I will also look at this question in a practical futuristic context for the new era in which a cultural asset can generate an economic advantage apart from also being cultural heritage or a relic.

1. Outlines of Korean shamanism

I am going to initiate a discussion on the argument as to the nature of Korean shamanism. Is there any original form or archetype valid in Korean shamanism? If so, where did it come from? Did it develop under influence from outside or is it an indigenous form of religion that originated innately solely on Korean soil?

1.1. The shaman and shamanism according to Eliade and others

As we start our discussion, we will have to take a glimpse at Mircea Eliade's definition. Eliade opened eyes of Westerners to shamanistic tradition in remote regions and initiated synthetic and masterful research on the essence of world shamanism. Eliade tried to define or conceptualize a shaman's function and performances in various ways in his book *Shamanism*, for example;

1) A person who represents the signs of vocation or at least of a religious crisis and are separated from the rest of the community by the intensity of their own religious experience. (Eliade 1974: 8).
2) A man who has immediate, concrete experiences with gods and spirits; he or she interacts with them, prays to them, implores them, but does not 'control' more than a limited number of them (ibid.: 88).

Although research on shamanism has developed rapidly since Eliade published his influential monograph, his definition of shamanism as 'a technique of ecstasy' is the one employed most frequently.

Shamanism is usually perceived to be a form of belief, a mixture of animism and totemism, thus given a variety of appellations such as paganism, a national religion. It is very problematic to identify the nature of shamanism and shamans with a few words only, because the phenomena or behaviour given the name 'shamanism' by local people and scholars in one country can display more different features and peculiarities than other regions. As asserted by Thomas A. DuBois, "a single tradition may possess distinct professionals sharing portions of this supposedly singular shaman role" (DuBois 2009: 41). Eliade's *Shamanism* was the great prototype and scholarly authority for neo-shamanism to follow; however, as Daniel Noel has claimed, it was in actuality "an authoritative *imagining* more than a factual account of what traditional indigenous shamanisms had been or might still be outside of Western culture" (Noel 1997: 42). Âke Hultkrantz has pointed out too, that "there are places where other phenomena appear which, through their peculiar association with the shaman, may nevertheless be called shamanic. This means that we must depend less upon etymological explanations than

upon phenomenological consideration" (Hultkrantz 1973: 27). This factor created many scholarly disputes about the credibility of Eliade's definition, including in Korea, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In addition to Eliade's definition of shamanism as a form of religion, shamans as religious specialists have usually been conceptualised as individuals who have the special power of being able to contact gods or spirits by way of trance, ecstasy or possession. Here are some more examples of how the shaman and the function are defined by other scholars.

Merete D. Jakobsen interprets a shaman as a master of spirits in the traditional society who conducts the role of communicating with spirits on behalf of an individual or society; "The shaman is in charge of this communication" (Jakobsen 1999: 9). According to Thomas DuBois, the shaman is "an expert guide or authority in cosmic journeys" (DuBois 2009: 41) and he or she "performs tasks for the good of clients or the community at large: negotiating or effecting cures, divining the future, leading the souls of the dead to their proper afterlife destination, securing luck or misfortune for individuals or their enemies" (ibid.: 82). Richard McBride, who carried out extensive research on Korean shamanism, says that "shamanism" is commonly defined as a belief in a world imperceptible for mortal humans; inhabited by supernatural being such as gods, demons, and ancestral spirits responsive only to "shamans". They are also defined as religious specialists who use magic for the purpose of curing the sick, divining the hidden, and controlling events (McBride 2006: 2). The assertion of Anna-Leena Siikala, who has conducted research on shamanism of Finno-Ugric peoples, can be applied to the general definition of shamanism, including Korea.

> *The Siberian shaman's function as mediator between the normal and the supernormal world is based on the systems of beliefs according to which difficulties threatening the even peace of life are caused by representatives of the spirit world, and can be forestalled and eliminated with the help of benevolent spirits* (Siikala 1992: 26).

> *The classic shamanism of Northern Asia is characterized by an ecstatic technique based on the use of drums and rhythmic singing by which the shaman enters an altered state of consciousness in order to make contact with his spirit helpers. During his trance, he is considered capable of direct communication with representatives of the 'other world'. He may summon his spirit helpers to the place where the shamanic session is being held or take their form in order to journey to the supernatural world* (Siikala 2002: 43).

An important issue to point out, and commonly shared in their assertions, is the shaman's ability to 'communicate' with the other world inhabited by gods and spirits. It is possible for shamans to see, talk and deliver a wish directly to souls or gods belonging to the other world, although it is impossible to regulate anything that passes between humans and gods, for example, to deliver a soul to salvation or relieve one from sin. Shamans are just messengers for the other world.

It is true that shamans used to exhibit mysterious behaviour. Historically when medical techniques were not very well developed, shamans wielded the skill to cure disease or drive out evil spirits who targeted a patient or person in trouble. While the shaman drives out a spirit, the audience can observe many unexplainable phenomena – the shaman speaking in a strange voice, predicting the future from natural omens and so on. Korean shamans especially are reputed to possess the skill of dancing on a sharp blade and driving out evil with animal blood. These mysterious occurrences can happen only when the shaman is in a state of trance or possession, but the trance itself is not the ultimate goal. It is a way to lead shamans to a state that enables them to contact souls and gods.

In this respect we are facing other concepts that can cause some confusion when understanding the role of the shaman: the role of the religious leader, the priest, magician or sorcerer. In most cases these roles share similar functions and aspects with shamans, and actually the experience of ecstasy or trance is emphasised in other established religions as well. For instance, a skill analogous to trance is also observed in Korean Christian churches, where religious leaders hand over the word of God to lay people and display a mysterious skill akin to those of shamans, such as miraculous healing and speaking in the Holy Tongue. Is it possible to name them shamans for their skills of trance employed for healing and driving out evil spirits?

The term shamanism is also used as a substitute for terms associated with sorcery such as 'wizard', 'sorcerer', 'witch', 'witch doctor', 'medicine man', etc. (McBride 2006: 3). Then what is the difference between shamans and religious leaders who employ techniques of ecstasy? The religious leader or priest is endowed more with social agreement. They have to be ordained or given a socially accepted certificate by an established institution or seminary after finishing obligatory educational training, in whatever form that comes.

On the difference between the sorcerer or magician and the shaman, Eliade asserts that magic and magicians are to be found more or less all over the world, whereas shamanism exhibits a particular magical specialty, on which we shall later dwell at length: 'mastery over fire', 'magical flight'

and so on. He emphasized that the shaman is a magician in terms of this fact, however not every magician can properly be termed as shaman (Eliade 1974: 5).

The most important difference between magician and shamans explored by Jakobsen is that "the magician might use his power over spirits for personal gain, while the shaman, ideally, is using his skills on behalf of other people, or society as a whole" (Jakobsen 1999: 5).

If a spiritual phenomenon, such as ecstasy gains a social agreement regarding its religious eligibility according to the traditional norms of a society, it can be accepted with a more open disposition. The behaviour of sorcerers is not normally ordained, thus, their activities are limited in a special location or group, even though they have a skilful ability to manipulate ecstatic techniques. Shamans are given similar attributes and are endowed with 'social agreement', although not definitely recognised by authority, as official leaders able to preside over religious ceremonies and fulfil the functions of priests in a society where an official religion is not established.

One of the important functions of religion that makes people pursue it might be communication with the supernatural world, representing the greatest values whatever the purpose of communication is – nirvana, salvation or fortune in this life. In this context shamans were the initiating religious representatives who made a path for people to communicate with the other world using special methods originated from circumstances and local needs. Furthermore, they enjoy a more charismatic authority in society. According to Ioan M. Lewis "a number of anthropologists have considered the social role of the possessed priest or 'shaman', and on the manner in which religious ecstasy may serve as the basis for a charismatic leader's authority" (Lewis 1971: 27).

Before the introduction of an established religion, shamanism also functions as a carrier of religious formalities as well as the general traditional way of life by conducting rituals and ceremonies, such as the acceptance and initiation of other shamans and shamanic customs.

Summarizing the aforementioned definition and conceptualization, the shaman can be interpreted as an individual with religious charisma authorised by the technique of ecstasy who conducts rituals and ceremonies in the traditionally acknowledged way.

1.2. Conceptualisations of shamanism in Korea

1.2.1. Korean shamanism and Eliade

Ülo Valk, a folklorist in Estonia, has observed such a commonality in the theme and structure of Korean myths and narratives shared with Eurasian shamanism.

> *We find a number of common peculiarities with European and even Estonian folklore in Korean myths; such as the rope connecting heaven and earth or the rainbow whose direct relevant in our tradition is the silver perch and the golden pole from the songs of St Martin's and St Catherine's days through which the beggars from Heaven climb down to Earth to bring blessing to people. Those examples from the far are unified by the shamanistic world view of Eurasian native peoples as a common background system by way of which dwellers from multi-layered universe can move up-and-down and communicate with each other* (Valk 2011: 250–251).

As mentioned by Valk, the function of shamans conducting communication between the earthly and heavenly worlds is found in the shamanisms of other countries. Due to this universal similarity and geographic relationship, the research on Korean shamanism was predominantly influenced by the conceptualisation of Western scholars, represented by Eliade who underlined the possibility of formation of Korean shamanism under the influence of other regions such as, China, South or North Asia. Eliade has actually mentioned the character of Korean shamanism, though briefly, in his book *Shamanism* and claimed that the phenomenon of shamanism in North East Asia including Korea displays elements of southern origin, specifically Buddhist (Lamaist) elements (Eliade 1974: 496).

> *In Korea, where shamanism is documented as early as the Han period, male shamans wear women's dress and are far outnumbered by shamanesses. It is difficult to determine the 'origin' of Korean Shamanism, it may include southern elements but the presence of stag horns on the shaman's headdress of the Han period indicates relations with the stag cult characteristic of the ancient Turks. In addition, the cult of the stag is typical hunter and nomad culture, in which shamanesses do not appear to play much of a role. The present predominance of shamanesses in Korea may be the result of either of a deterioration in traditional shamanism or of influences from the south* (ibid.: 462).

In reality, Eliade cited Charles Haguenauer, a French scholar who carried out cultural research in Korea, and Carl Hentze, who conceived of Korean culture as part of Chinese culture and conducted research on Korea on the basis of Chinese studies. Eliade himself recognized the difficulty of determining the origin of Korean shamanism; however, despite this, the inflow from other cultures was highlighted in the end.

The association of Korean shamanism with Eliade's conceptualization was begun at the beginning of the 20th century by foreign researchers, including a Japanese man Akiba Takashi (1888–1954), who studied with many leading scholars, such as B. Malinowski, and documented most of the *muga* and shamanic materials circulated today. Akiba's study focused on the functional aspects of Korean shamanism rather than the religious aspects, comparing them with other shamanistic practices in Japan, Manchuria, Mongolia and Siberia. This pursuit of universality through a comparative approach provided Korean religious studies with an opportunity to break from provincialism and be a part of the global academic community. This tendency has also been emphasised more and more since 1970, when Western religious studies by Eliade and his followers were introduced to Korean scholarship (Kim C. 2010: 33).

1.2.2. Korean shamanism and the technique of ecstasy

One of the main arguments regarding the universal conceptualisation of shamanism is the notion of ecstasy and trance, which represents the basic function of shamans. Korean scholars argued whether trance or possession by a spirit in a narrow sense as mentioned by Eliade really happens during the ritual. Many scholars actually deny the prerequisite of trance and possession for Korean shamanism.

Jo Heungyun (조흥윤) confirms that "Korean shamans are not always possessed by a spirit even when delivering *gongsu*, words from the gods. This shows that the presence of gods and the experience of trance do not always accompany shamanic rituals. Shamans merely recite standard texts according to which they create words of blessing and reflect the guidance of spirits" (Jo H. 1994: 33).

Usually, methods that enable spiritual contact with the other world, like trance, ecstasy or possession, are emphasised in the conceptualisation of shamanism. They share conceptual similarities with each other in many ways – they are related with the temporary absence of one's soul or possession by a supernatural being. As per the argument of the aforementioned Jo Heungyun, trance or possession by a spirit is not an essential prerequisite of shamanic rituals.

The representative modal phenomena of shamanism exemplified by ecstasy, trance and possession are observed in the techniques of spiritualism used by some religious leaders, or even in the behaviour seen in the churches of Korea. Therefore, it is hazardous to limit the core of shamanism only to the aforementioned psychological phenomena. Yang Minjong (양민종) says that "after the premise of Eliade – which awkwardly prescribes the characteristics of shamanism and generalises it as 'one of the most archaic archetypes

among all spiritual techniques possessed by people' – gained a foothold with Western scholars, research on shamanism enjoyed great popularity, although it was followed by the strange tendency to conduct research only to verify Eliade's theory using materials collected from various localities and cultural spheres" (Yang M. 2006: 301). This means that the phenomena observed at diverse places were fitted into the framework of his theory rather than being used to develop new understandings of shamanism. McBride asks, "if, as Eliade contends, 'ecstasy' is the operative factor in shamanism, since nearly everyone sang and danced in calendrical village festivals in ancient Korea, does that make everyone a shaman?" (McBride 2006: 29).

There are other arguments regarding the essence of ecstasy and trance. The most distinctive characteristic of Korean shamanism is that the trance behaviour is primarily manifested not only by the shaman, but by the client, too (Kim C. 2003: 27).

In my fieldwork, I have observed that a client was invited by the shaman to hold a branch picked up from the wood to experience possession by the spirit of the client's late mother. The son did not succeed in experiencing possession during the trance as expected, however encounters between clients and souls in the state of trance are organised repeatedly in the process.

Many scholars argue that the chief presumption of ecstasy and possession cannot be applied to the case of Korean shamanism. The behaviour of the shaman during the ceremony resembles the state of ecstasy, therefore many people make a hazardous conclusion that the Korean *mudang* (shaman in Korean) is equal to the shaman of Eliade's definition. Im Seokje (임석제) says that "the state experienced by a *mudang* is qualitatively different from ecstasy. It is nothing but a state of extreme excitement. The *mudang* can comprehend the situation sanely and control his or her behaviour at will" (Im S. 1991: 92). Hultkrantz says "we can be certain that shamanism is always associated with ecstasy, but the degree of this ecstasy is not fixed. A shaman may seem to act in a lucid state when, in actual fact, his mind is occupied with interior visions" (Hultkrantz 1973: 28).

1.2.3. Korean and Siberian shamanism

Another prevailing argument was the premise that Korean shamanism developed under the influence of Siberian, North Asian and Chinese shamanism. In the reality of Korean shamanism, much dissimilarity is displayed, which many Korean scholars have attempted to illuminate.

Lee Jeongjae (이정재) argues that the worldview and cosmology of the Siberian peoples and other associated elements, such as the relationship with god(s) of nature, animal gods, spiritualism, the afterlife, symbolism, are

religious phenomena compatible with the economy of a society maintained by hunting. In contrast to this, Korean shamanism is totally different from the Siberian worldviews and cosmologies because this society was formed within an advanced agricultural economy and a well-developed monarchy. A similar belief system is commonly shared by many religious phenomena within Siberian shamanism, Korean shamanism, totemism, animism, manitoism and even advanced religions. Thus, it is somewhat unreasonable to claim a Siberian origin for Korean shamanism based only on universal similarity (Lee 1997: 465–470).

Much research has been conducted to discover the differences between the belief systems of Korea, North Asia and Siberia. Yun Soyeong (윤소영) claims that "a clear line was drawn in Siberian shamanism between good and evil gods, although the line was not that clear in Korean shamanism. During the process of initiation, Siberian shamans undergo extreme experiences, while in Korea people experience a less serious but lingering illness" (Yun 2006: 40). Daniel Kister argues that "Manchu gods and spirits are not the playful gods or engagingly human ancestral spirits that interact with participants in a typical *gut*. Manchu ancestors were, of course, also once human; but they do not interact with the living in the rite in a human way. The deities and ancestral spirits are simply there on their altars to be worshipped" (Kister 2010: 69).

Then how would it be proper to understand and conceptualize Korean shamanism? Would be it possible to suggest that Korean phenomenon is a form of archetype of shamanism, if it is true that Korean shamanism originated spontaneously without direct mediation from outside?

The definition becomes clearer with the illustration of the Chinese character 巫 showing the general function of shamans: the pictogram shows a person dancing between heaven and earth around the world tree or world pillar which connect the two worlds[2]. The conception of mediator comes clear with this assertion by Merete Jakobsen that "although the concept (of shamanism) derives from the Tungus of Siberia, the role of the shaman as a mediator between the human world and the world of the spirits is known worldwide and therefore justifies the use of shamanism as a more general term" (Jakobsen 1999: 1).

Truly the term 'shamanism' was created under strong local influence; but would it be appropriate to utilise it as a general loan word, for instance, like the Finnish word 'sauna', the Russian 'vodka' or Spanish 'burrito'?

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[2] In Korean the term mu sometimes means the female shaman to differentiate them from male shamans, called gyeok. A clear separation is displayed between female and male tasks.

Kim Chongho (김종호) attests that "'shamanism' has been a conventional English label for areas of Korean religious practices, and is also used as a label for a supposed ancient religion pre-dating the introduction of Buddhism into Korean society. Thus, it seems that the definition of 'Korean shamanism' is really problematic" (Kim C. 2003: 27).

Following on from the above, there has been a debate on the proper naming of shamanism in the Korean context. How was Korean shamanism understood by the first Korean scholars? Analysis of vocabulary related with Korean shamanism displays the transition of the conceptualization. Korean shamanism is given a variety of appellations in Korean: *musok*, *mugyo*, *tochaksinang* (aboriginal belief), *mingansinang* (the belief of ordinary people), *minsoksinang* (the folk belief).

Musok, with the ending *sok*, means 'customs or culture' and refers to the custom of shamanism, whereas *mugyo*, with the ending *gyo*, 'religion', highlights the meaning of shamanism as a religion. Kim Taegon (김태곤, 1937–1996) emphasised the religious aspect of *mugyo*, which he defined as "a religious phenomenon handed down to the people predominantly by shamans" (Kim T. 2006: 18). According to Yu Dongsik (유동식), "*musok* is a remnant of an ancient religion and a contemporary folk religion, while *mugyo* is a historical religious phenomenon that passed ceremonies consistently through cultural history from ancient mythology, ending with the contemporary *musok*" (Yu D. 1975: 16). Therefore, the word *muism* is often employed in scholarship to denote Korean shamanism with religious significance. In any case, I am going to use the term 'Korean shamanism' in this work to denote the overall phenomena, behaviours and costumes related with shamanism in Korea.

Kim Kwangok (김광옥) confirms that "shamanism can be regarded as a native religion, while such 'major' religions as Christianity and Buddhism are of foreign origin. In this regard shamanism is chosen as a symbol of the pure Korean cultural tradition" (Kim K. 1994: 209). Korean shamanism also has enormous significance in bearing and transmitting the norms and moralities of Korean culture.

1.3. Korean shamanism as folklore (as *musok*)

As mentioned in 1.2.3. above, Korean shamanism both functions as a folklore and religion. First of all, *musok* is the conceptualization of Korean shamanism that shows it has significance as a set of customs and/or culture. *Musok* shows that Korean shamanism functions as part of the folklore or folk customs which established the foundation of Korean culture.

The significance of Korean shamanism lies in the fact that it is an important constituent of the cultural grammar of the Korean people, alongside

Confucianism. Nevertheless, Korean shamanism did not educate people systemically with a script, as did Confucianism and Buddhism, it was fused into the Korean mentality by imperceptible degrees and finally operated as a normative stratum. Thus, actually, at the beginning of Korean folklore study, initiated by foreign scholars, Korean shamanism was predominantly comprehended as an obvious part of tradition or folklore, formulated under natural circumstances, and the native philosophy of the Korean people – a viewpoint that prevails to this day.

The majority of Korean people would highlight the significance of *musok* as the main body through which Korean traditional culture is created or conserved, for example oral narrative, folksongs, folk paintings, costumes and a native mythology providing some interesting stories and narratives regarding the other worlds and supernatural being. *Musok* was imagined or created anonymously by the ancestors and transmitted orally through generations allowing the emergence of new variations.

Above all, Korean shamanism is a manifestation of Korean religiosity, although, in addition to religious belief it contains a broad range of various cultural components. If we take a glimpse at *gut*, a religious ceremony that is representative of Korean shamanism, we see that it holds numerous elements of song, music, theatre, tools, costumes, chants, ornaments, as well as fortune telling, oracular predictions, entertainment, and the culinary. From this point of view, it would be more proper to consider shamanism as a compilation of Korean cultural factors rather than as a religion.

Korean shamanism displays the characteristic of folklore defined by Edwin Hartland in many perspectives, which deals with the mental and spiritual side of humanity. People collected and stored a considerable amount of knowledge of a certain kind in order to pass on from one generation to another a definite social organization and certain invariable rules of procedure in all areas of life. “The knowledge, organization, and rules thus gathered and formulated are preserved in the memory, and communicated by word of mouth and by actions of various kinds. To this mode of preservation and communication, as well as to the things thus preserved and communicated, the name of tradition is given” (Hartland 1904: 2–3).

Korean shamanism is also folklore in the sense asserted by Jan Harold Brunvand, as it is “the traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understandings, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples” (Brunvand 1986: 4).

The rituals and ceremonies of Korean shamanism have the canons and regulations formulated simultaneously without an excessive intervention of

control or command from official authority. Existence gains a significance and reality only by means of physical occurrence during the performance of these rituals and ceremonies in the presence of an audience. Its association with divine realms and prophecy loses meaning as soon as the performance is over, at least, before the techniques of recording and documentation were invented. Prophecy has no script or text about the doctrine or canon accessible to believers while the performance is not held. Therefore the performance of Korean shamanism is a tradition, defined by Francisco Vaz Da Silva as an "open-ended process shaped by the interplay between individually-generated variations, on the one hand, and selection criteria upheld by historically changing communities, on the other" (Vaz Da Silva 2012: 51), which comprises an important factor to qualify Korean shamanism as a folklore.

Analysis of the characteristics of Korean shamanism should not be confined to the technique of ecstasy or mediation between heaven and earth. Korean shamanism has acted as a womb for art, including literature, as a mould for personal relationships, for society, education and healing, and as a receptacle for the history of religions. As Jeong Jinhong (정진홍) confirmed, "whenever Korean shamanism faced the possibility of extinction, it used innovation as a way of asserting its right to continued existence" (Jeong J. 2004: 10).

1.4. Korean shamanism as a religion (as *mugyo*)

The arguments on the prerequisites of trance and ecstasy in shamanic ritual aroused new debates in Korean scholarship: as what would Korean shamanism be considered more eligible, as a religion or just a form of custom? Is it possible to label Korean shamanism a national religion, or a Korean religion? Then what would be eligible to be called a Korean religion?

John C. Messenger points out that "religious belief, to be so defined, must involve supernatural entities toward which sacred attitudes are directed by groups of people" (Messenger 1972: 218). Keel Heesung (길희성) asserts that anything which a significant collectivity of the Korean people, has regarded, is valued, pursued, or to which people devote themselves or worship as sacred should be included in the study of Korean religion (Keel H. 2010: 13). According to Kim Chongsuh (김종서), the concept of 'Korean religion' should emerge from the religious experiences of the Korean people. If 'religion' in Korean literally means 'the fundamental teachings of human life', 'Korean religion' can be understood as 'the symbolic system of the fundamental teachings that Koreans believe and according to which they act and lead their lives' (Kim C. 2010: 24).

In fact, there is literary evidence that Korea was once governed by shamanistic rulers. During the Silla kingdom (BC 57–AD 935) sacerdotal

functions were particularly integral to kingship – the second king of Silla, Namhae Geoseogan, was also called Chachaung or High shaman (Chang 1988: 31). The Silla kingdom, one of three kingdoms that ruled over the Korean peninsula, was the last kingdom to accept Buddhism as the national religion. The Silla acknowledged Buddhism only in 527, whereas other kingdoms accepted it at the end of the 4th century. Thus, the religious life of the people in this kingdom would probably have been maintained on the basis of shamanism or local belief for quite a while, even after Buddhism was adopted and developed in other kingdoms.

As a matter of fact, Korean shamanism was not given the status of official national religion in Korea after the unification of Korean peninsula during the Silla kingdom (676), but rather seemed, at least outwardly, the subject of persecution and disregard for centuries. Officially, shamanism was banned by establishing laws prohibiting it and expelling shamans from the cities. The record of the ban on shamanic activities can be found in old documents.

> *There was an old shaman living in the east side of my house who made me feel very upset, because she gathered men and women and told bizarre stories all the time, however I couldn't beat her down. One day our government made the decision to expel all shamans from Seoul.*[3]

This excerpt was taken from *Donggukisanggukjip* (동국이상국집, 1241) by Yi Gyubo (이규보), a Goryeo dynasty (918–1392) scholar. In respect of this record, shamanism was the object of criticism and persecution before the acceptance of Confucianism as the national religion in the 14th century. However, the reason for this persecution was not a problem of belief or doctrine itself, but the lewd, deceitful and dissipative life of the shamans. After this excerpt Yi Gyubo clearly noted that even a subject or government administrator would be ruined if they tried to lure people with capricious and wicked things, therefore shamanism itself was not the object of hatred or persecution. Moreover, it was problematic to root out shamanism because it was a basic substratum of Korean culture. Despite the official ban and the negative image of shamanism in society, the royal court used to appoint a national shaman and summon other shamans to organise ceremonies with shamanic attributes as rites in order to pray for rain, festivals for local gods, etc. The tendency to degrade shamanism was accelerated after the

[3] Yi Gyubo (translated by Jin Seonggyu 진성규), *Donggukisanggukjip*, KRPIA.CO.KR, ⓒ 2012, Nurimedia. All Rights Reserved. Available at http://www.krpia.co.kr/pcontent/?svcid=KR&proid=5 [last viewed 04.07.2019].

establishment of the Joseon dynasty in 1392, which made Confucianism the main philosophy for management of the nation. The aristocrats in the Korean upper class, who cultivated their knowledge in China and became addicted to China-centrism, disdained shamanism, a stratum of Korean religiosity, without proper understanding, and pressured the government to erase the tradition and degraded shamans to the lowest classes so that they could not be treated as normal people. This operation was accelerated during the Joseon dynasty (Im S. 1991: 10).

After the foundation of the Republic of Korea following the Korean War, all citizens were granted the liberty to choose a religion, yet shamanism still failed to establish a position in Korean society because of the view of shamanism as superstitious and that it deluded citizens, or was a primitive folk culture, as per the misleading assertions of Japanese researchers who intended to produce the academic groundwork for the colonisation of Korea in the first half of the 20th century. According to the study by Han Dohyun, Japanese colonial scholars categorise shamanism within the evolution of religion, labelling Korean shamanism as undeveloped, Japanese Shinto as developed, and maintaining that both stem from the same root. Shamanism, these scholars asserted, had kept elements of a primitive religion, and this enabled colonial scholars to put Korea below Japan on the evolutionary scale of civilization (Han D. 2000: 36).

The position of Korean shamanism is still very ambiguous. Although there are plenty of shamanic shrines in every city, visited by people for religious purposes, shamanism is not officially acknowledged as a religion. Shamans are not registered as representatives of a religious institution, for example, as Buddhist monks, priests or pastors (ministers) are, because there is no lawful category in which to include them. All major religions are maintained by the Department of Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, which is divided into two subdivisions according to the character of the religion[4]. However, Korean shamanism is not recognised as an official religion registered at the Ministry, and therefore as of 2012 there is no subdivision allocated to oversee the affairs of shamanism.

Shamans cannot register their profession as religious either; therefore, they open shrines or conduct ceremonies as members of a union of shamans.

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[4] The first religious affairs officer – Buddhism. Available at http://www.mcst.go.kr/web/introCourt/introStaff/popStaff.jsp?dept=1371333 [last viewed 04.07.2019].
The second religious affairs officer – Foreign religions (Protestantism & Catholic), Confucianism and other national religions (excluding shamanism). Available at http://www.mcst.go.kr/web/introCourt/introStaff/popStaff.jsp?dept=1371334 [last viewed 04.07.2019].

There are a few congregations of shamans, such as *Gyeongsinyeonhaphoe* (경신연합회, the Association of People Admiring God), or *Musoginyeonhap* (무속인연합, the Association of Korean Shamans), under which shamans can register themselves as a member of a congregation in a city or town. Congregations of shamans are different from Orders in Buddhism and denominations in Christianity, because the division is based on private interests and personal relationships.

1.4.1. Shamanism as a folk religion

Koreans still tend to consider Korean shamanism a folk religion or primitive religion. At first, folk religion might mean a religion the origin of which is not known exactly, but formed spontaneously in involuntary and unintentional method without a birth or manifestation of a prophet or religious leader. The theology and canon reflect the native philosophy of the Korean people toward circumstances within nature and a somewhat childish or immature imagination about gods which, however, possesses a high rhetorical value teaching Koreans a code of behaviour, as well as the principals of how to maintain Korean society established for millennia by the inhabitants of the peninsula.

Don Yoder says that folk religion is the totality of all the religious views and practices that exist among the people apart from and in parallel to the strictly theological and liturgical forms of the official religion. Under this heading the passive phenomena of folk religion (witchcraft and magic, for example) could be included as well as active or creative phenomena (religious folk music, folk costume, folk art, even folk theology), and the reinterpretations or expressions of the official religion at the folk level. This definition therefore includes both the elements related to official ecclesiastical forms on the one hand as well as the on the other elements that have a partially independent existence outside the boundary of orthodoxy (Yoder 1974: 14–15).

Im Seokje asserts that "from the viewpoint of religious study, Korean shamanism is not a religion established by a revelation from a god or prophet, but a religion generated spontaneously. It was created from a variety of knowledge and philosophy obtained by normal people in daily life through experience and exploration, namely displays of the character of the religious system composed of collective elements commonly shared among the nation on the basis of human experience" (Im S. 1991: 15).

The understanding of folk religion in Korea can be observed through the joint study of Kim Myeongja (김명자) and Jang Jangsik (장장식), who identified distinctive peculiarities in Korean folk religion: 1) religious rituals are transmitted orally, 2) the object of worship is polytheistic, 3) physical

good fortune in this world is the most important goal, 4) sorcery techniques are employed to pursue goals, 5) religious rituals are mixed, so establishing a multilayered doctrinal structure, 6) personal efforts are emphasised because participation in sessions is very significant in the canon (see Kim M. & Jang J. 2004).

The manifestation of folk religion is not restricted only to shamanism. The elements pointed out by Kim and Jang, or Yoder can appear in the system of official or institutionalized religions such as Buddhism and Christianity. Jang Namhyeok (장남혁) identified a division in Christianity in order to differentiate folklorized, from official, Christianity. Jang Namhyeok classified the Protestantism of Korea as official Christianity operating on the basis of faith and disciplines decreed by an institute or a system initiated and directed by a group of religious specialists; while he defined folk Christianity as Christianity based on activities or religious behaviour maintained regardless of the direction of specialists, including behaviour that is somewhat emancipated from the intermediation of an institutional authority. Korean folk Christianity involves belief or activity managed by lay people without special status verified by a denomination or seminary. Followers of folk Christianity are more interested in obtaining spiritual power and assistance from religion than contemplating and obeying legitimate disciplines (Jang N. 2002: 58). The attributes of folk religion are apparently found in folk Christianity. The influence of Korean traditional shamanism on the growth of Christianity and behaviour of Korean Christians is already studied academically in Korea and abroad (see Kim E. 2000; Jang N. 2002; Lee Y. 2009: 7–14; Kim Y. 1987) and will be discussed further in separate articles subsequently.

1.4.2. Shamanism as a primitive religion

Another aspect to take into account in relation to the religiosity of Korean shamanism is primitive religion. Korean shamanism is often postulated to be a very primitive form of religion. Indeed, the conception of deities in Korean shamanism is not systemized: there is no holy script or hierarchy of gods arranged in order, and the objects of belief remain obscure. Korean shamanism does not have a form of religious service, genesis or apocalypse. Therefore, Korean shamanism used to be associated with demonism or barbaric paganism.

The travel accounts of Isabella Bird Bishop (1831–1904), a British female traveller who made four trips to Korea from 1894 onwards, are significant in this regard. She disparaged Korean shamanism with the affirmation that Chinese mythology had been transformed into a vulgar superstition in Korea. Bishop attempted to give general information about Korean shamanism and

general folk belief with illustrations of organisation, classification of shamans and gods by function and rank, historical background and the process of initiation into shamanhood. Bishop says, about the spirits of Korea's national religion, that there is an obscure but arranged structure among the spirits although demons are impossible to categorise by sex, and that as characters they were like a bunch of ghosts. Due to her Christian worldview, she connected shamanism with sorcery and demonism. She wrote that "the term shaman may be applied to all persons, male or female, whose profession it is to have direct dealings with demons, and to possess the power of securing their good-will and averting their malignant influences by various magical rites, charms, and incantations, to cure diseases by exorcisms, to predict future events, and to interpret dreams" (Bishop 1898: 225).

Generally, she associated the traditional religion of Korea with demonism – the worship of insignificant spirits, although she also underlined the existence of good spirits.

> *These legions of spirits in Korean belief are of two classes, the first alone answering to our conception of demons. There are the self-existent spirits, unseen enemies of man, whose designs are always malignant or malicious, and spirits of departed persons, who, having died in poverty and manifold distresses, are unclothed, hungry, and shivering vagrants, bringing untold calamities on those who neglect to supply their wants. It is true, however, that about 80 per cent of the legions of spirits are malignant. The second class consists also of self existent spirits, whose natures are partly kindly, and of departed spirits of prosperous and good people, but even these are easily offended act with extraordinary capriciousness. These, however, by due intercession and offerings, may be induced to assist man in obtaining his desires, and may aid him to escape from the afflictive power of the evil demons. The comfort and prosperity of every individual depend on his ability to win and keep the favour of the latter class* (ibid.: 229).

Charles Allen Clark (1878–1961), a missionary who used research methodology based on synthetic training within comparative religious studies, attempted to sort the spirits of Korean shamanism into 6 categories and investigated the characters of each spirit. However, he stated that Korean shamanism was a religion of horror with the conclusion that only a tiny minority of spirits are good, while almost all others are evil; Clark expressed a wish that shamanism would disappear from Korea forever (requoted from Jo H. 1994: 23).

If only some tangible factors are respected, Korean shamanism has great similarity with the notion of religion in primitive culture indicated by Edward Tylor. Tylor attempted to discover the representative peculiarities of numerous tribes and nations, the development of which was perceived to be low and falling behind, based on the knowledge and awareness of the period when Tylor wrote the book *The Primitive Culture*, i.e. in the late 19th century.

The statement of spiritual beings in the primitive religion is accountable for the conceptualization of spirits in Korean shamanism.

> *[they] are held to a affect or control the events of the material world, and man's life here and hereafter; and it being considered that they hold intercourse with men, and receive pleasure or displeasure from human actions, the belief in their existence leads naturally, and it might almost be said inevitably, sooner or later to active reverence and propitiation* (Tylor 1871: 11).

According to Tylor, the general doctrine of disease- and oracle-spirits, which is one of the most apparent features of Korean shamanism, appears to have its earliest, broadest, and most consistent position within the limit of savagery (ibid.: 210–211). The theology of Korean shamanism observed by a number of foreign traveller and missionaries to Korea also tallies with Tylor's premise of primitive religion that "the details of demoniacal possession among barbaric and civilized nations need no elaborate description, so simply do they continue the savage cases. … The possession-theory belongs originally to the lower culture, and is gradually superseded by higher medical knowledge" (ibid.: 221).

However, Tylor's theory has weaknesses and shortcomings in itself which provoked much criticism and argument among scholars of later generations, because he had a strong belief that all cultures and religions will follow the same pace of evolution, the apex of which should be Christianity. Sabina Magliocco argues that "a strong anti-religion bias runs through Tylor's work, as he postulated that eventually all religion would be replaced by science as progress brought education and enlightenment to the world's peoples. Tylor considered belief in God itself to be a survival from a time in which scientific explanations for natural phenomena had not yet been developed" (Magliocco 2012: 139).

The discourse of Tylor, despite many problems, still provides us with a precious measure with which to contemplate the quintessence of religion. He stated that "one great element of religion, that moral element which among the higher nations forms its most vital part, is indeed little represented in the religion of the lower races" (Tylor 1871: 11). This means that the moral element is the more important criterion to decide the significance of religion.

According to Tylor, "as in general the animistic doctrine of the lower races is not yet an ethical institution, but a philosophy of man and nature, to savage dualism is not yet a theory of abstract moral principles, but a theory of pleasure or pain, profit or loss, affecting the individual man, his family, or at the utmost stretch people" (ibid.: 404).

At first glance, this perspective is very similar to the philosophy of Korean shamanism, coveting only health and welfare in this life. This background generated a tendency among the Korean people to covet the blessings and riches of worldly life rather than praying for salvation or reincarnation in the afterlife. From this perspective Korean shamanism teaches that worldly life takes precedence over the afterlife or salvation, as reflected in a Korean proverb that "it is better to reside in this world, even if you live in doggy dung, than to live in the afterworld".

"Korean shamanism is sometimes criticized for limiting religious activity to nothing but asking favours from the gods" as pointed out by D. Kister (Kister 2010: 86). The Korean nation did not designate a god as a messiah, a leader of enlightenment, an ancestor or the heroic symbol, but set up religion as a tool to be employed for the necessities of daily life.

In Korean shamanism, the notion of salvation plays almost no part in comparison with other religions. In contrast to other religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism the relief of salvation is granted to believers only through a life of faith, while an austerely religious life is not required in Korean shamanism. Salvation or Nirvana does not depend on good deeds and religious devotion during one's life. Every soul will be granted a new path in the afterlife, whether it is a good soul or not; however, the naturally given status after death can be altered by the efforts of family members and offspring if they perform many rites and ceremonies.

Kim Taegon, a prominent folklorist in the field of Korean shamanism explains that this idea was probably formed because Korean shamanism remains a primitive religion undamaged by systemised religions, thus the understanding of the afterlife or salvation remains as it originally was, namely that a soul arrives in the afterlife as an automatic consequence in accordance with the spontaneous operation of nature. Therefore, "Korean shamanism conserved beliefs regarding the afterlife in its original form unpermeated by the artificial rhetoric that salvation is granted according to Man's deeds. The viewpoint of salvation in Korean shamanism seems to be based on the moral principles of human nature" (Kim T. 2006: 83–84).

How the introduction of the moral element separates the religions of the world, united as they are throughout by one animistic principle, into two great classes, those lower systems whose best result is to supply a crude childlike

natural philosophy, and those higher faiths which implant on this "the law of righteousness and of holiness, the inspiration of duty and of love" (Tylor 1871: 447). The grounds for criticism against shamanism was reasoned in a stereotype that it was a religion (or religious practice) meant to be employed only for individual purpose to realize one's wish or plan, or sometimes that it is related to a wicked sorcery, as observed by Bishop and Clark, devoid of general moral principles.

It is very hazardous to conclude that Korean shamanism failed to demonstrate any guidance or model for moral principles. The essence of the moral principle or ethic institution of Korean shamanism is exemplified with the implicit tenet for maintenance of social order and communal welfare.

Kim Taegon attempted to conceptualise the essence of shamanic rites in a different way – the eternal maintenance of existence. He considers that "the purpose of rituals is to send the souls of people out to the afterworld, because the soul inside a body never disappears even though the body ceases to exist after death. During life, the body, of a material nature with dimension, is a momentary existence that can last only for a limited time, namely, a tangible existence, while the soul is an intangible eternal existence that exists forever, regardless of the extinction of the spatial attribute" (Kim T. 1997: 296).

The eternal maintenance of existence is not confined only to the personal. Traditional Korean shamanic rites predominantly stress reconciliation with the community of ancestors. Jakobsen also emphasised that in Korean shamanism "the relationship to the dead family members and their influence on the well-being of the living is the central point. The family is the centre of concern" (Jakobsen 1999: 210). The welfare of descendants and family is secured by wishing for an auspicious abode for the ancestors, while evil spirits are cast out from the town during communal ceremonies or festivals that secure the welfare of the entire community. Therefore, the function of maintaining the community in Korean shamanism is more prominent than the function of mediating between the divine and human realms. DuBois attested this premise about the situation in Korea with a statement regarding a generic shamanic function; "Spirits – animate and conscious entities associated with physical beings – exist as invisible components of the visible world and offer the shaman interlocutors with whom to negotiate the issues that face the human community: the onset of disease or ill luck, the need for hunting success, the desire to know with clarity the realities of the present or the future" (DuBois 2009: 55).

The rites for casting out evil spirits that cause diseases and misfortune, or for healing people, are not illustrated only by the process of exorcism through personal interaction with spirits. More important is the process of

seeking the reason for the damaged relationship in order to solve the problems and send the mortifying spirits back. The notion of communal spirits can also be found at the heart of Korean shamanism, since the relationship with a person's surroundings, such as family members, community and ancestors, is always emphasised; attempts to comprehend the hidden history of a spirit are made in this context. Don Baker highlights that Koreans have the tendency to seek solutions to ubiquitous human problems by transcending individuality through identification with a larger community (Baker 2008: 8). The tendency of shamanism to stress the maintenance of the community's welfare generated common denominators with Confucianism, which ruled during the Joseon dynasty and finally paved the way for shamanism to take its position as a cultural substratum.

The close association of Korean shamanism with the maintenance of the community was also observed by a number of foreign scholars.

> *Physical security and well-being in the earthly realities of human existence are core values in Korean culture, and physical presence is important in human relationships. The blessings sought in a gut do not involve a mystic other world; they are down-to-earth blessings in the present* (Kister 2010: 258).

> *Since the goal of kut (gut) is to appease disruptive spirits and to solicit assurances of prosperity for the family or the community, the shaman works to maintain or re-establish order…. In this manner, the kut reflect more realistically the complex interrelationships and obligations, alliances, and animosities of familial and village life* (Tangherlini 1999: 133–134).

> *The musok is a cult, oriented towards the living human being, and its main purpose is the happiness, and harmony. By the help of shamanistic rituals, it wants to maintain the social and moral order in the world* (Hoppál 2007: 16).

There is no tension between the transcendental and worldly realms. In Korean shamanism the transcendental realm can cause an influence but does not load people with ethics and moralities to follow in this life. The transcendental realm is an origin of horror, which intervenes with people's good fortune arbitrarily, as asserted by Jeong Subok (Jeong S. 2012: 306–307).

However, the obvious entity of the communal spirits is not a quality solemnly valid in Korean shamanism. The general association of shamanism

with the function to maintain the community was discussed by other scholars, too.

Siikala and Ulyashev discussed about the performance of shamans in the sense that "the shamanship, the ability to act as shaman, has no value without the audience which calls for the performance. The new terms hide the basis of the shaman's activities; his connection to the society he serves" (Siikala & Ulyashev 2011: 179). Hoppál dilated upon this discussion with the assertion that practical actions performed by the *folk* which forms one *communitas* is more prominent than the religiosity itself in shamanhood. (Hoppál 2007: 14).

Tylor additionally justified that there is "the doctrines and rites of the higher races which show survival of the old in the midst of the new, modification of the old to bring it into conformity with the new, abandonment of the old because it is no longer compatible with the new." (Tylor 1871: 84) which can display the existence of element of primitive religions in the format accustomed to a circumstance. Although it might seem that the old religious habit which was alleged to be pre-modern and incompatible with new society was abandoned, the pristine attribute can manifest in a new appearance adjusting itself to the new necessities.

Such premise can also be applied to interpret behaviour in the official or established religions in Korea. They were greatly influenced by Korean shamanism through which other elements, totally invalid or incoherent according to the original orthodoxy, infiltrated the system and finally were tinged with a Korean character. The syncretism of shamanism in Buddhism was evident since it was introduced to Korea. The local shamanism which felt the lack of ceremony and decorum in comparison with Buddhism used to adopt ceremonial formalities and divine characters from Buddhism to cover fundamental shortcomings. A variety of representatives in Buddhist theology – such as Jijangbosal, a Korean parallel to Ksitigarbha, the Buddhist guardian who leads spirits to nirvana, and Siwang, the judge at the threshold of the afterworld – were absorbed into Korean shamanism and founded a more complicated conceptual structure. This is the syncretism of Buddhism in shamanism (Kim S. 2005: 85).

On the other hand, there are also cases of shamanistic tradition and behaviour being adapted into the Buddhist canon. The adaptation of local belief in Buddhism is not a speciality found solely in Korea, considering the syncretism with Taoism in China and Shinto in Japan. The most apparent example of Korean syncretism is the Buddhist festival Palgwanhoe, held during the Goryeo dynasty. It was outwardly a Buddhist festival held in Buddhist temples under the conduct of royal families, however it was a festival with shamanistic characters imparted from the tradition of ancient

dynasties before the introduction of Buddhism. Actually, the Palgwanhoe signified more as a feast that official shamans participated in to wish for worldly good luck rather than as a Buddhist tradition (ibid.: 78). Today the diversity of shamanic deities, such as Sansin (mountain god), Yongwangsin (sea god), Mungansin (the guardian of gates), Umulsin (the guardian of wells), that have been transformed into Buddhist deities are frequently observed and we still find special pavilions designed for Korean local gods prepared in the grounds of temples. Additionally, worship ceremonies the individual purposes of which object is not Buddha, are organized frequently, for instance the performance of worship for Sansin to prevent natural disasters, for Chilseong (The gods of Big Dippers) to conceive a child and for Yongwang to make provision against accidents at sea and to wish for a good haul of fish (Kim T. 1983: 341). Especially *jangseungje*, a ritual ceremony held before erecting a *jangseung*, a Korean shamanic totem, is organized in some Buddhist temples. The *jangseungje* in Daeheungsa temple in Namhae is considered as one of the most representative examples of localization of Buddhism in the sphere of folk belief (ibid.: 342).

The syncretism of Christianity with shamanism was discussed in the reflection on folk religion in the previous part of this text.

1.4.3. Shamanism as vernacular religion

The term 'vernacular' is frequently used to describe everyday language, including slang, as used by the people. The vernacular is different from the literary or official language: it is the way people really talk with each other, for example how family members talk at home; the characteristic language of a particular group; appropriate everyday language.

As defined by Leonard N. Primiano, "the vernacular religion is religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret and practice it". The study of vernacular religion appreciates religion as "an historic, as well as contemporary, process and marks religion in everyday life as a construction of mental, verbal, and material expressions. Vernacular religious theory understands religion as the continuous art of individual interpretation and negotiation of any number of influential sources" (Primiano 2012: 384).

Vernacular beliefs are "not grounded in institutionalised truths but in individual creativity, expressed in a variety of local and social contexts and shaped by the power of tradition" (Bowman & Valk 2012: 17) and generate a very special viewpoint on gods, which further influences rhetoric.

Since Korean shamanism had a significant role in the individualisation and interpretation of understanding 'official or institutional religion' according to local necessities, as proven by the cases of syncretism with Buddhism and

Christianity. Korean shamanism has many features of vernacular religion, although no study has yet approach it from this viewpoint in Korea.

At the first glance, the difference between folk religion and vernacular religion looks quite small, even insignificant. If the former signifies something passive that originated spontaneously in a community, afterwards granted the name tradition, the latter emphasises something a little more active and on-going that encourages people to interpret new philosophies or religions introduced from outside and employ them within a community or nation according to their own conditions. Korean shamanism truly contains many components that are generated spontaneously and which are unrecognised by people, although they could have the appellation tradition; but at the same time Korean shamanism is a system with a religious temper and religious behaviour, a counteraction against exterior stimuli as well as an original form of mental, verbal and material expressions discernible among individuals or communal units.

1.4.4. Syncretism with foreign religion

Undoubtedly in Buddhism and Confucianism many hybrid characteristics specific to Korea are perceived as a result of the relationship with shamanism, while it is almost impossible to observe empirically the active function of shamanism as a vernacular religion. However, in the case of Christianity, introduced to Korea just 200 years ago, and especially of Protestantism in which the individual's interaction with God is emphasised, the active and on-going intervention of Korean shamanism as a vernacular religion is more discernible. Many researchers of religion state that Protestantism owes its rapid rise in Korea to the influence of Korean shamanism.

At the end of the twentieth century there were an estimated 12 260 321 protestant Christians in the Republic of Korea. One hundred years earlier, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were fewer than 20 000 Protestants in all of Korea: a hundred years later, that small Christian community had become 266 times larger. Once greatly outnumbered by clients of shamans and patrons of Buddhist temples, Christians claimed that in 2001 their community embraced over one third of the entire South Korean population.

Donald Baker points out that Protestantism gained predominance so easily in its rivalry with Catholicism because Korean people felt more attracted by the approach to worship practiced in Protestantism, which is very individual and passionate. For that reason, Korean laypeople were predisposed to Protestantism rather than Catholicism, which was mainly adopted by people of upper social class adhering to Sino-centralism. Many

Koreans preferred the individual variations and the personal emotional release allowed in revival meetings because this was the sort of religiosity they had grown accustomed to through shamanic rituals (in Buswell & Lee 2007: 293).

Korean Protestantism has a number of regional characters, such as 1) the emphasis of physical good fortune in this world rather than in an after-world, 2) the original (or individual) interpretation of the relationship between God and laypeople, 3) the interpretation of spiritual realms, 4) the emphasis of the individual experience of Holy Spirit, 5) the utilisation of shamanistic sorcery during rituals and 6) identifying sermons of ministers with *gongsu*, the words spoken during the shamanic rituals by shamans in trance status. None of these are grounded on biblical teachings nor are they regularly emphasised in other Christian countries, and thus are found only in Korean Protestantism, particularly Pentecostal churches.

This is the reason why quite a few of the academic works on Korean shamanism focus on interrelationships within the context of shamanism.

Summarising the research conducted, Korean shamanism has the following fundamental characteristics by which newly introduced philosophies, ideologies and religions are modified.

1) religious rituals are transmitted orally
2) the object of worship is polytheistic
3) physical good fortune in this world is the most important goal
4) sorcery techniques are employed to pursue goals
5) religious rituals are mixed, so establishing a multi-layered doctrinal structure
6) personal efforts are emphasised because participation in sessions is very significant in the canon (see Kim M. & Jang J. 2004)
7) emphasis on communal sprits.
8) emphasis on role of religious leader as the representative of God's charges
9) importance of extreme excitement

The elements can appear in the system of official or institutionalised religions such as Buddhism and Christianity. Jang Namhyeok has classified the Protestantism of Korea as follows: official Christianity operating on the basis of faith and disciplines decreed by an institute or system initiated and directed by a group of religious specialists, and, folk Christianity based on activities or religious behaviour maintained regardless of the direction of specialists, including behaviour that is somewhat emancipated from the intermediation of an institutional authority. The folk Christianity of Korea involves belief or activity managed by lay people without special status

verified by a denomination or seminary. Followers of folk Christianity are more interested in obtaining spiritual power and assistance from religion than in contemplation or obeying legitimate disciplines (Jang 2002: 58). While official Christianity fulfils all processes based on creeds legitimated in seminaries, which leads to trust in the truthfulness of every expression and word in the Bible, folk Christianity accents the personal experiences of lay people, which generates a format similar to Korean shamanism.

It is very difficult to deal with the overall influence of Korean shamanism as a vernacular religion on religions within the short time allocated for today. For that I would like to introduce a book as a good example to demonstrate how Protestantism is filtered through Korean vernacular religion to generate a hybrid character that is finally absorbed into the system of the institutionalised church. It is the book written by a layperson who asserts that she travelled to Heaven and Hell.

In 2011, a book named Heaven and Hell Observed by the Deaconess Gu Sunyeon was published (Gu 2011). The book is a testimony of a deaconess, a layperson who declared she had been invited to Heaven and Hell by a divine power, and it contains a great variety of the aforementioned elements of vernacular religion found in Korean folk Christianity.

Gu says that she was led by two angels when praying after the serious injury of her husband in a car accident that was allegedly caused because he went to a ski resort instead of church on Sunday. She describes the thrilling scenes observed during the unearthly journey. In the Heaven visited by Gu, flowers and donkeys sing songs praising God, and during her journey she was accompanied by noted biblical heroes such as Abraham, Moses and Enoch, who appeared to Gu in turn and gave her advice, presumably in Korean. She described Hell as a complex of infernos for thieves, narcotic addicts and the sexually vulgar, and so on, which are very similar to hells described in the folk religions of other nations, too.

Then I was walking with angels on the golden path to meet the Lord. Oh God, the flowers around us began to sing praises and talk to us! While I was thinking “by what miracle could the flowers talk?” an angel realized my thoughts and said: “The flowers of the world where you live blossom, fade and fall, but the flowers of Heaven never fall and praise God eternally.” “Yes. I understood.” (Gu 2011: 29)

The author is a deaconess without a status legitimised by Protestant authorities, but her experience is accepted as real and legitimate testimony. She thus leads prayer meetings organised by official churches in which she gives her testimony. She declared that she declines all kinds of debates or critics based on the official theology in the foreword of her book.

As everybody knows, I am an 'ignorant' deaconess who did not even cross the threshold of a seminary. I am incapable of answering, if questioned by ministers or theologians of great learning and experience with their theological standards (in the foreword, ibid: 9).

In her book, the following fundamental shamanic attributes representative to folk Christianity can be detected:

(1) The personal encounter with God in a state similar to trance, (2) the delivery of messages from God, (3) the unconditional charisma of her words as *gongsu*, (4) craving for physical fortune and the belief that the failure to fulfil obligations can cause misfortune, (5) belief or activity managed by lay people without special status verified by a denomination or seminary, and (6) employment of techniques similar to shamanic sorcery.

Gu's testimony has been condemned by many theologians and participation in her meetings has been banned by the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches of Korea for the following reason:

Her testimony is illogical and unbiblical. Gu says that there are social classes and discrimination against residents in Heaven based on the number of offerings and effort to disseminate the Gospel that they gave while on earth. Her assertion about Heaven is overwhelmingly related with the notion of give and take and a craving for material fortune in this world. The idea that God's blessing and salvation are given as compensation for good deeds is against the teaching of the Gospel. Her remembrance of Heaven as having flowers that talk and donkeys that sing "Joy to the World" in unmeasured rhythm and melody is childish. For its part, Hell, described by her as a place where hands are cut off for theft and as an area divided into various sections according to crimes committed, such as drinking, smoking, drug taking, is highly exaggerated and retaliatory. Be that as it may, her childish and unbiblical testimony has gained a high reputation because she preaches such simple messages as 'to serve ministers and make offerings as often as possible' in a highly elated atmosphere filled with song and dance.

However, because of the opposition of other churches against the ban, the General Assembly hesitated in executing its decision to ban her meetings. Recently the General Assembly of Korean Presbyterian Churches officially banned sales of her book, which contains contents improper for Christianity and demanded to the publisher to withdraw all books in the market, although they did not condemn her testimony as heresy and Gu continues missionary works in churches. Her activities were acknowledged as being eligible conduct in the perspective of the creeds of institutionalised churches, although she has committed a few mistakes.

Why is Korean Protestantism so vulnerable to the interference of vernacular religion? In my opinion, this can be explained in the context of there being no centralised body to control churches and congregations who are divided into numerous factions, something that ultimately gives rise to individual interpretations among laypeople. In this sense there are fewer interventions from vernacular religion in Korean Catholicism, which is equipped with a centralised system. In the case of Catholicism, the central body of clergy acknowledges the value of Korean traditional or vernacular religion, conducts research, filters out what is inappropriate in advance, and voluntarily absorbs favoured traditional elements into the system.

Panchenko, who conducts research on vernacular religion in Russia, asserts that the very domain of religion is socially constructed and that counter-intuitive categories and agents are arranged in the collective imagination according to the particular needs of various social groups (Panchenko 2000: 59).

Deeper research into Korean shamanism as a vernacular religion will open up the possibility to, 1) discover a new value for Korean shamanism, which has been degraded into an unsystemised primitive religion or superstition, 2) discuss integration between religions, and 3) comprehend the original energy maintaining Korean society and the further direction of cultural development.

The ultimate function of Korean vernacular religion is concentrated on the generation of *shinmyeong*, i.e. fun, exhilaration, mirth. *Shinmyeong* is the basic energy that enables people to meet gods in Korean shamanism. *Shinmyeong* used to be considered a parallel to the ecstasy mentioned by Eliade. Korean shamans encounter gods through extreme dances and songs that arouse the *shinmyeong*, making it one of the most important mediators between gods and human beings. But *shinmyeong* resides in the daily lives of Korean people, not just in the trance experienced by shamans. A life worth living requires *shinmyeong*. To vitalise and animate depleted or extinguished energy either for living or dead people is one of the most significant – and vernacular – functions of Korean shamanic rituals. It is a function that does not ignore the equalities of all natures in the Earth, encouraging them to reveal their own original identities in a playground of rituals and finally to filter out or reconcile instinctive demands. Such logic and examples are abundant in Korean culture giving *shinmyeong* the function of an inborn energy for the Korean people.

Here we find the essence mythos, which the Korean people tried to preserve through vernacular religion. Traditional Korean shamanic festivals predominantly stress reconciliation with the community and the ancestors. The welfare of a family and its descendants is secured by seeking an auspicious

abode for the ancestors, while evil spirits are cast out from the village during communal ceremonies or festivals that secure the welfare of the entire community. In comparison with other countries, the function of maintaining the community is more prominent in Korean shamanism than the function of mediating between the divine and human realms. Rites for casting out evil spirits or healing people are epitomised not only by a process of personal interaction with spirits; more important is the process of seeking reasons for the damaged relationship in order to solve the problem and send the deadly spirits away. At the heart of Korean shamanism, moreover, is the notion of communal spirits. People's relationships with their surroundings, i.e. family members, the community and the ancestors, is always stressed meaning that any attempt to understand the details of spirit activity should be seen in this context. As pointed out by Don Baker, Koreans have tended to seek solutions to ubiquitous human problems by transcending individuality through identification with a larger community (Baker 2008: 8). Despite its rejection by Confucian officialdom, the tendency of shamanism to stress the maintenance of community's welfare actually amounts to a common denominator with the Confucianism that was the dominant cultural force during the Joseon Dynasty. It allowed shamanism to maintain its position as cultural substratum even during that era. Even a rite with an individual purpose, such as wishes for enhanced welfare or recovery from an illness or injury is actually meant to normalise the relationship with ancestors or spirits. In the case of healing rites, the purpose is not confined to simply casting out the origin of the disease or misfortune. Priority is given to reconciliation of the relationship between the person involved and the ghost or spirit who is believed to be the source of the misfortune.

1.5. Gods in Korean shamanism

As it seems, in the aforementioned discussion regarding debates on conceptualization of shamanism as *mugyo* and *musok*, the majority of trials were made to comprehend Korean shamanism as a manifestation of people's culture or customs as well as an institutionally established religion. Therefore, in short, *musok* is a code of behaviour, canons, practice, etc., which constitute the cultural dimension of Korean shamanism, and *mugyo* is a doctrine, principle and creed comprising religiosity.

The main purpose of Korean shamanism is undoubtedly intermediation between the human and the divine realms, the latter being an abode for transcendental and immortal beings. The verbal transmission of stories regarding the divine world during the performance of rituals is one of the most important tasks of shamans. In this circumstance Korean shamanism bequeathed a theology formulated on traditional belief.

Yi Yongbeom asserts that "In Korean shamanism, the local deities signify as a frame for interpreting the value of life to assist people to understand the condition and problems in this life and finally to confront them. We might say that the world of deities described in Korean shamanism is the system which interprets and explains the basic conditions, circumstances, experiences and questions loaded on human beings" (Yi Y. 2002: 230).

As argued by Bishop and Clark, the standpoint of gods in Korean folk belief seems very complex and vague and this accounts for why it was predominantly entitled 'demonism' or 'totemism'. Every god is manifested with a variety of attributes and functions, and exists in multiple forms and variations, as is typical to folklore.

First of all, in Korean vernacular, the shaman has a special alternative name *mansin*, meaning 'ten thousand gods', which further illustrates the variety of Korean deities. It is not very clear whether the number of deities worshipped by the ancestors actually reached ten thousand or not, however, the quantities are calculated differently by each scholar, because every locality and ceremony have its own accounts of gods and a character can make other appearances with different attributes in other rituals.

Yi Yongbeom sorted Korean deities into three categories in his research: 1) territorial gods (characters affiliated with a special locality, such as the cosmos, localities and houses); 2) human gods (humans deified after death, such as apotheosized historical persona, heroes, shamans and the spirits of ancestors); and 3) spirits without personalities (such as evil energies, baleful influences). Yi says the hierarchy of gods is centred on the territorial gods and the human gods endowed with special personalities, and also on spirits without personalities located at the margin. Those spirits are ominous energies or forces which can cause harm to people. They are objects to avoid because they cannot build a direct relationship with people but only bring hazard (ibid.: 252).

Yang Jongseung, who pioneered the research on Korean traditional deities, identified 190 main characters and 292 sub-characters (variations of the main deities) from among the shamanistic deities whose imageries are illustrated in folk paintings (see Yang J. 1996) and classified Korean shamanistic deities into the following types according to their main functions; 1) gods related to shamans (who aid shamans with miraculous efficacy); 2) gods related to people (who are engaged in matters of basic human welfare such as life and death, work, daily life, fortune or fate); 3) gods related to nature (who are associated with natural environments and directions); and 4) gods related to the afterlife (who oversee the spirits and reincarnation and control the afterlife) (see Yang J. 1996). The classification by Yang also resembles the categorization by Kim Taegon, a leading scholar in the study of Korean

shamanism, who sorted out 273 characters from many sources like deities appearing in *gut* rituals, shamanic portraits, deities worshipped during village festivals and house guardians (Kim T. 1981: 280).

I categorised the representative gods of Korean mythologies according to function and characteristics, as follows:

1) Superior gods in heaven such as Okhwangsangje (옥황상제), the Highest God, Yeomladaewang (염라대왕), the god judging the destination of souls according to deeds performed in the previous life, Chilseong (칠성), the god of destiny, and Ilwolseongsin (일월성신), the god of the sun and moon.
2) The guardian spirits of nature, such as Sansin (산신), the mountain god, Yongwang (용왕), the god of the sea.
3) Guardians who take responsibility for life, birth, death and the delivery of souls, such as Princess Bari (the Abandoned Princess) who is in charge of delivering souls to paradise, Samsin (삼신), a goddess described as an old women who takes care of childbirth and offspring, and Jeoseungsaja (저승사자), who is relevant in terms of psychopomp.
4) Guardian spirits of the house, such as Jowang (조왕), the guardian of the kitchen, Seongju (성주), the guardian of the rafters, Cheukgan (측간), the guardian of toilets, and Teoju (터주), the guardian of the garden. They are closely related to the daily and practical lives of residents and are engaged in the maintenance of life and the health of families. Shrines were made in every corner of the house to worship guardians and for use in seasonal rituals.
5) Deified historical people, such as Sakyamuni and Maytreya, characters borrowed from Buddhism, Guan Yu (160 – 219), a renowned general during the late Eastern Han dynasty and an important hero in the "Romance in the Three Kingdoms" published in the 14th century in China, and Choi Yeong (최영, 1316–1388), a general and politician during the late Goryeo dynasty, all of whom are believed to protect people from evil spirits.
6) Evil spirits wandering in this world. Demons (*Japgwi*) or goblins (*Dokkaebi*) living in villages and natural habitat, as do helpers for the gods, such as tigers serving Sansin and Seonnyeo (선녀), and the servants of the gods in heaven.

Korean indigenous religion, which was transmitted in an individualised or decentralised layout without a specific Supreme Being, initiator, prophet and organiser, used to create or introduce a variety of human gods according to the individual and communal purposes of followers. The gods in Korean indigenous belief can be classified in the following way:

1. Gods whose disposition and characters are borrowed or adopted from Taoist and Buddhist gods, but in the end localised to Korean circumstances – for example the Jade Emperor, Ksitigharbha, Avalokitesvara, Maitreya. Only principal personalities and names were borrowed from Taoism and Buddhism, afterwards they were endowed with functions and attributes beneficial to the Korean people.
2. Great men, who had high reputations in Korea and neighbouring countries during their lives and became deified afterwards, were real historical figures who lived in Korea and are documented in chronicles or annals, for example Kim Yusin, Nam I, Yim Gyeongeop, Choi Yeong and King Danjong.
3. Spiritual beings detached from the human realm found in Korean legends or local myths, or gods devised or created by way of a phraseme.
    1) Samsin, Princess Bari, Sansin – the native gods found mainly in Korean belief, shamanic songs, local legends.
    2) Master Gwak, the General Jakdu (Blade), professor Geography – Gods who were devised using sounds or terms related to the specific functions and attributes necessary for followers. Some fundamental functions and abilities are displayed in names, however very little is known about auxiliary function and external aspects.

The subject of my presentation predominantly belongs to the second category, under which are also classified such historical figures who manifested unparalleled abilities and deaths in tragic situations.

The hierarchy of gods resembles the lineage among gods in Greek or Roman myths, although in reality they are ascribed more humane and practical attributes. Korean gods are very much associated with the basic necessities of daily life: there are no deities related to abstract concepts such as a god of love, of peace or of war. The generals and historical characters deified after death do not control a specific field or domain (for example, Guan Yu is not a god of war and Choi Yeong is not a military guardian); they are not different from conventional gods worshiped in shrines and to whom people wish for good luck and happiness in the physical life.

Deities in Korean shamanism are not omniscient. Their spiritual power can be manifested in a range of special vocations rendered to a god. There is no intervention, interference or intercourse among gods. A god never gives a command or instruction to other gods and is not obliged to obey what others say. They don't ask for co-operation or collaboration (Im S. 1991: 30). This attribute may look to possess only an aspect of the undeveloped and primitive, but according to the assertion of Im Seokje, gods within Korean shamanism

display ambivalence, with the same god having a good and bad character, according to the situation that is found only in Korea (ibid.: 42).

The function or characteristics of a god are always prone to change according to the situation. Even a good god can make a retaliatory decision or behave in an unexpected way if they are not dealt with properly. The Korean people had to strive to maintain a good rapport with the gods all the time to avoid unnecessary revenge or petulant harm. The relationship between people and gods is comprehended as an obligatory relationship only to prevent possible future misfortune. Good consequences are secured if the obligation is faithfully carried out, otherwise serious punishment will follow. The worldview of Korean shamanism teaches that humans should not incur various gods' anger, and that if this happens, humans should placate the anger by way of *gut*. Korean shamanism does not speak about power in the abstract. On the contrary, Korean shamanism emphasises rituals in which one should experience the strength of transcendental power in reality.

The standard to distinguish good and evil gods is very vague, therefore it is very problematic to evaluate Korean shamanism according to the principles of other religions. It is noteworthy to mention Yi Yongbeom, who claimed that "one should avoid categorizing Korean deities according to names or functions because such a method disturbs comprehension of the generic world of Korean deities" (Yi Y. 2002: 233). Jo Heungyun identified the peculiarity of Korean theology as the multifariousness of characters, exemplified by the entangled involvement of gods and their functions. Even a single god can appear with a variety of characters and functions. Jo Heungyun compares this aspect with the World of the Flower Garland (*Huayan*) described in Buddhism. There are an abundant number of smaller towers attached to an immense main tower, and every small tower is elaborated as profoundly as the main tower, which is as large as the sky. Uncountable numerous towers exist in harmony and concord with each of the originalities preserved intact (Jo H. 1994: 26).

Furthermore, the personae and protagonists in Korean shamanism frequently seem to be a mixture of Buddhism and Chinese mythology. Sakyamuni or Maytreya, characters reflecting Gautama Buddha but personified according to the Korean situation, make appearances in many myths, such as the myth of creation and the myth of Jeseok Buddha; while the highest hierarchy of gods is occupied by characteristics allegedly borrowed from Chinese mythology, such as Okhwangsangje (the highest Emperor of Jade), Chilseong (the god of the Seven Stars). Shamans also worship many historical Chinese personae as gods. Korean shamanism as a mixture of numerous beliefs of foreign origins was also observed by Bishop who wrote

in the travel account that "it may be assumed, taking tradition for a guide, as certain of the litanies used in exorcism and invocation were introduced along with Buddhism from China, that Korean imagination has grafted its own fancies on those which are of foreign origin, and which are of by no means distant kinship to those of the shamanism of northern Asia" (Bishop 1898: 222).

In Korean myths, there are many distinctive aspects reminiscent of Taoism – the traditional religious and philosophical system of China – not to mention reminiscent of Indian mythologies. Taoism was introduced into Korea by the Goguryeo kingdom in the year 624, therefore the culture of the Goguryeo period has left many Taoist footprints in Korean tradition. Many scholars, including Yu Chaishin (유재신), interpret the myth of Dangun, the progenitor of the Korean nation, and Jumong, the founder of Goguryeo dynasty, as the assimilation of Taoist cosmology into Korean culture. Korean Taoism, which can more accurately be described as Shamanistic Taoism, occupied the place of a state religion in the Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla kingdoms until those kingdoms were united by Goryeo (Yu C. 1988: 113).

The ultimate objective of Taoist philosophy is not emancipation from worldly attachments as in Buddhism, but to reach a better life. Contrary to Buddhism, which strives to escape from the routine of reincarnation, a Taoist desires to become a saint with perennial vitality and eternal life. The philosophy of Taoism, that a human can obtain unimaginable ability after establishing contact with the power of the cosmos and nature, was easy to blend with Korean shamanism (Jeong S. 2012: 325).

Actually, however, those gods are borrowed only for names to build up religious and historical credibility, and bear characteristics reflecting the mentality and worldview of the Korean people.

1.6. Who become gods in Korean shamanism

The impeachment of president Park Geunhye in the spring of 2017 aroused many sensational issues in Korea as well as in other countries. I do not intend to discuss the chronic political and economic dilemmas in Korean society, but the sequences of incidents truly manifested the existence of peculiar phenomenon among Korean people – religious obedience to political figures that goes beyond individual political preferences for either conservative or progressive.

Koreans were already shocked to observe rites organised in the city of Gumi (the hometown of Park Junghee) to idolise late president Park, the father of recently impeached president Park Geunhye, whose life ended in a tragic and brutal way with his assassination in 1979.

Portraying political characters with religious images is a relatively common phenomenon in under-developed countries. Apart from North Korea, such similar cases were often observed in African countries as well. The fact that an analogous phenomenon is also observed in South Korea, which has entered the highest rank of countries with developed economies, testifies to the existence of a huge discrepancy between the exoteric factors calculable with numeric figures and esoteric factors that are comprehensible only to Korean people.

The deification of political characters was very often witnessed in the Confucianism and Shamanist religious communities in Korea. In this presentation I would like to use Eliade's theory to conceptualise the Korean indigenous religion, which has been called Shamanism, as a vernacular religion.

According to Seo Jongwon, who has been conducting research into the tradition of deification in the Korean indigenous religion, the object of deification should meet the following qualifications:

1. War general or leaders with power.
2. Exemplary life, historical achievement.
3. Unfair death and reinstatement.
4. Distinguished spiritual power.

Those who qualify for deification should undergo a series of processes which are exemplified by scholars as follows:

1. By Hong Taehan arranged the transition of processes according to historical developments.
    1) An appropriate person is chosen by inhabitants of the region.
    2) Personal traits and functions highly desirable for the survival or continuation of the community are bestowed on the object.
    3) The object becomes the local god or hero through rites.
2. Yun Inseon

According to Yun, the deification of historical figures with the aforementioned qualifications is completed through a harmonious interrelationship between the following elements:

1) Narrative – oral contents revealing the achievements and history of the person.
2) Rites – the formal framework for the transmission of the narrative (*gut*, *bonpuri,* ritual, ceremonies, festivals).
3) Representation in images – the image of the god is produced and his ability is shown through his positioning at the centre within paintings and symbols of other fellow gods displayed at the altar or shrine.

To explain using the example of general Nam I, one of the most popularised human gods in Korean indigenous religion: Nam I finishes his

life in tragic way without being given the status of deity. His divine character was manifested in his special birth, although perhaps because he displayed many shortcomings in personal behaviour during his earthly life he failed to qualify as a deity despite a series of supporters. However, on the stage of rites where the shamans and local inhabitants communicate, he was born as a god with perfect divine attributes.

The current deification of president Park Junghee can be compared to the typical process for human gods who lack divine attributes (like Nam I). The ceremony held in Gumi city was designed to complete the process of deification and the process of representing him in images through activities that commemorate his birth and death and by building memorials around his birthplace.

I. The deification of Park Junghee

A. Park Junghee and cargo cult

Scholars conducting research on Korean religiosity and religious practices commonly assert that the religiosity of the Korean people is converging in *giboksinang*, which means the adherence to the pursuit of material wealth in this world rather than in the afterworld through religious rituals. For the Korean people who suffered from poverty and starvation for centuries due to ceaseless wars and invasions, daily food was directly connected with survival itself; it is quite significant that expressions relating to eating and nutrition still compose the majority of everyday greetings in Korean. The *giboksinang* is actually also related with earning money, obtaining authority and power in this world. This factor shows an aspect of cargo cult disseminated among the Korean people, and that physical wellbeing and the growth of incomes are more desired through religious rituals than religious value.

Park Junghee and Protestantism are strongly linked with cargo cult, the manifestation of *giboksinang*, which is deep-rooted in Korean culture. Christianity, especially Protestantism, was 'holy cargo' delivered to devastated Korea during the difficult period of the Japanese Occupation and subsequent Korean War. The 'holy cargo' introduced new philosophy, new ideology and advanced techniques from the West, as well as economic prosperity, financial support from the US, as well as ultimately the anticipation that the US would liberate Korea from the spell of communism, thought of as a great evil to humanity. In fact, the political figures in the first phase of modern Korean history, such as Lee Syngman and Park Junghee, introduced the older generation to new possibilities of tasting escape from poverty and the accumulation of capital through co-operation with Protestantism and the

USA, the avatar of the religion. Park Junghee was a Buddhist, although he took part in many Christian ceremonies to infuse them with religious charisma.

As a matter of fact, there was already a religion with a function similar to Christianity in Korea at the end of the 19th century – Cheondogyo, an autogenous Korean national religion. In Cheondogyo, which developed based on Korean traditional religious philosophy and is exemplified by the god Hanul, there is a specific Supreme Being, a prophet and a well-organised system that differentiated it from shamanism. Actually, the religion gained the strong support of the peasant class, once contributing to a revolution led by laypeople and disseminating a new philosophy with European standards like equality, although it did not achieve ultimate success because it failed to bring in the most desired consequences achieved by Protestantism such as the accumulation of wealth and social stability. The adherence to Protestantism was like a cargo cult to the Korean people who did not feel satisfied with traditional religions like Confucianism and Buddhism and individualised shamanic rituals, leading politicians to utilise these attributes of Protestantism to gain popularity in modern history.

The post-war generation, who experienced this cargo cult, wanted to graft the life of Jesus Christ onto the modern history of Korea. This background explains the bizarre phenomenon called Taegeukgi, in which the national flag of the Republic of Korea, the US Stars and Stripes and the Protestant Cross, even the national flag of Israel were observed together among demonstrators who opposed the impeachment of president Park.

B. The life of Park Junghee and the preconditions for deification

- The functional characteristics

In this part I would like to compare the life of Park Junghee with other historic figures in terms of the prerequisite qualifications for deification. The following table illustrates common qualifications among traditional human gods and Park Junghee.

	Choi Yeong (1316–1388)	**Nam I (1441–1468)**	**Danjong (1441–1457)**	**Yim Gyeongeop (1594–1646)**	**Park Junghee (1917–1979)**
Status	General	General	King	General	General, president
Narrative about birth		Centipede, snake	Born from the side of mother, as was Gautama		Auspicious location according to feng shui

	Choi Yeong (1316–1388)	**Nam I (1441–1468)**	**Danjong (1441–1457)**	**Yim Gyeongeop (1594–1646)**	**Park Junghee (1917–1979)**
Special abilities	Defeat over intruders	Ability to communicate with ghosts	Ability to control rain	Defeat over intruders, forecasting the weather, controlling the sea	Military charisma. The demolition of poverty
Achievement in life	Subjugation of the enemy forces, the virtue of uprightness.	Suppression of rebellions	Integrity and uprightness while living in exile. Comparison with King Sejo, the successor who led the assassination of Danjong	Construction of Nagan fortress, Teaching how to catch yellow corvina	Reformation of Korean nation, political charisma
Factor for death and restoration of status	Political intrigue, status restored	Intrigue by a comrade, status restored	Assassination by successor, the Uncle. status restored	Political intrigue, status restored	Assassination, election of his daughter assumed to be restoration but failed
Divine attributes after death	The legend of red grave, warrior god	Warrior god	Mountain god	God commanding big catches of fish and waves	Half man, half god

- The local background

Gumi, the birthplace of Park Junghee and the south-eastern part of the Republic of Korea lie in the region that gained the biggest benefits from rapid economic growth under Park's leadership. It is impossible for older-generation people to forget his achievement because they witnessed the great transformation of the economy and also remember the history of exploitation, wars and poverty. However, it has been extremely difficult to find a rational method to merge the diverse opinions on his personal achievement due to the economic discrepancies across the provinces, the negligence of human rights during his regime and alienation of the south-west part of South Korea and how this led to regional conflicts. It still seems unattainable to idolise Park as an absolute great man by way of political compromise, social unification

or objective academic research as is wished by his followers. Therefore, quite possibly the traditional method which is embedded in the vernacular faith of Korea and also has played role in transferring communal values to later generation was chosen by the local government, which longed to establish a foundation for the deification of Park's family.

II. Analysis of the process of deification

Now I will exemplify the following basic components to illuminate the aforementioned factors of the narrative, rites and representation in images required for the process of deification.

A. Narratives

The narrative takes the most important part in the deification of a historic figure irrespective of nation or culture. Legends regarding birth and childhood play a significant role in dignifying the celestial attribute.

Gumi city, which leads the deification process for Park's family, is collecting narratives related to Park's birth and life, and will publish them on the Internet. A number of legends which are believed to reveal Park's pre-destined fate to become president were collected and published on the Internet homepage of the President Park Junghee Memorial Foundation, although finally deleted from the site as antipathy grew among other citizens:

> *A fengsui expert who visited the birthplace of the future president has said that 'a great man will be born in this place', and later another fengsui expert who met president Park confessed that it is of no use to buy this land because a great person was already born here'.*

> *The chief monk of a nearby temple described the land where the birthplace will be located as the shape of 'a crow preparing to take the nest from magpies'. He said that Park will take the nation with a coup d'état because he inherited the energy.*

The above are excerpts from the materials once posted on the Internet homepage, but now deleted.

In addition to these, many narratives still circulate among the followers regarding Park's boyhood spent in the military academy in Japan, which would in future be used to justify the coup d'état, for example:

> *I remember that it was in the spring in 1966. President Park had a sinus infection. One day he spared one day to see a doctor during the day.*

Before the operation he asked the doctor how many hours the operation would take and the doctor said that it wouldn't need much time, but that it would take more time to wake from the anaesthetic. Then Park ordered him to operate without anaesthetic because he doesn't have time to waste. The doctor refused saying that it will be very painful, however the president was so stubborn that the doctor had to operate without anaesthetic. We cannot image how astonished the doctor was to see that the president didn't make any sound during the operation despite the great pain.

B. Rites

Rituals commemorating birth and death have been held before, but the official commemorative ceremony of Park's birth took place in 2012 for the first time when his daughter Park Geunhye announced her candidacy for the presidential election, bringing the cult of Park Junghee to its peak. Ritual has the significant function of converting the deific attributes of a person, as narrated in legends about them, into the collective memory and into authoritative belief. Today ceremonies to commemorate the birth on 14 November, and the death on October 26, are held in Gumi city each year. The commemorative ceremony for Park's birth is called *sungmoje* in Korean, meaning 'the ceremony yearning for the president'.

Gumi had the plan to hold a magnificent centennial celebration of the birth in 2017, which would have cost around 4 million US dollars; however ultimately it was held on a smaller scale since his daughter had been impeached, after which the critical view of his regime increased. The commemorative ceremony for his birth was organised as a mixture of Confucian ceremonies dedicated to the Joseon dynasty Royal family, and traditional prayer rituals based on Confucian customs. The attribute highlighted most frequently during the ceremony was the sacredness of Park Junghee, who has both divine and mortal qualities in the manner of a demi-god.

Kim Haegyu, from the President Park Junghee memorial foundation, clarified the background for assigning this appellation in response to my Email interview, saying that "it was a linguistic expression to evaluate highly his great achievement because president Park has established economic growth for the Republic of Korea".

According to traditional belief, the conception of demi-god is extremely difficult to clarify. The figures found in the aforementioned table regarding the classification of gods in Korean belief and worship co-exist with people in the same realm, with the function of mediating celestial and mortal worlds,

although they actually exist only at the border and don't display the attributes of both existences at the same time.

In *Jongmyojerye*, which displays a similar format, the Joseon dynasty royal family is the object of the ceremony not as demi-gods but as ancestor spirits who dwell in a world totally different from the mortal realm. In this ceremony the deceased kings are represented as features symbolic to history and clans.

C. Representation in images

Image of the figure in divine character along with representation of his abilities are emphasised by centralising the related paintings to differentiate the demi-god from fellow gods in the shrine.

Likewise, other human gods – historical figures who are only partially qualified with celestial attributes – are later endowed with adjusted, supplemented and near-complete images of gods throughout this process.

Representation of president Park Junghee in images has been arranged since the mid-1990s. His birthplace was designated a local cultural heritage site by Gyeongsangbukdo province. Actually, the designation of the birthplaces of real people is not new. Eumseong County, where Ban Kimoon the former general secretary of the United Nations was born, is now trying to add his birthplace to the list of local cultural heritage. Bongha village, where the 16th president Roh Muhyeon lived until his suicide, is still visited by admirers, although there are no plans to enhance his celestial attributes, unlike other historical figures.

In fact, Gumi city has spent a fortune holding commemorative ceremonies for president Park Junghee. His birthplace has already been restored with the addition of a statue and a memorial hall, and, lately, a huge complex near the birthplace was opened to the public.

D. Reappearance as a deified hero

If the specific characteristics that manifest the divinity of a demi-god are acknowledged by the majority of community members and are endowed with virtue of authentic truth, the hero can be granted the possibility to become a perfect absolute, who can manoeuvre the salvation and eternal life of a spirit. This bizarre belief is also found in many forms of pseudo Christianity, and in many ways the atmosphere during the commemorative ceremony in Gumi has similar attributes. After the ceremony Park's followers used to bow in front of portraits of his spouse, while some fans of his family showed up with a sign on which Park Geunhye was portrayed as a pure Saint Mary, which stunned many people.

As a matter of fact, in Gyeongsang provinces where the piety for Park has been strong, there are laypeople who arranged a shrine for Park's spouse; in addition some shamans worship deified historical figures such as Park or General McArthur, which is in line with the traditional mode applied to recognised figures like Choi Yeong and Yim Gyeongeop. Similar occurrences were also found in Protestant practices, for example Park Geunhye was also identified with Saint Mary or Jesus Christ or even deified in some churches, which gave rise to immense controversy in the Korean Church.

1.7. Connections between shamanism and Korean nationalism

The relationship between national identity and folk culture has been pointed out by a number of scholars, since the German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder first identified national bodies of folk poetry; subsequently other scholars in one country after another searched for the soul of the people exposed in native dialects, the folktales and folksongs transmitted in those dialects, the literature developing the themes of the folklore, and the history glorifying the deeds of national heroes (Dorson 1972: 15). The enhancement of national identity through the collection folklore was witnessed in many countries, such as Finland, Serbia, Estonia, Latvia and Norway.

Ethnological analysis of the cultural distinctiveness of regions and nations and the foregrounding of folklore in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries helped to foster an ancestral regime in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when artefacts and expressions were converted into cultural property and heritage. (Bendix & Hafstein 2009: 5).

This tendency to reform and resignify what was traditional and what was folk culture to enhance the national identity was also observed in Korea, although rather differently from Finland or Estonia, i.e. with a political purpose. The most representative example of intentionally systematized enlightenment through folk culture was *Gukpung 1981*, the Grand Festival of Traditional Culture, organized in 1981 under the military dictatorship led by president Chun Doohwan (1980–1988), who attempted to rationalize his regime, obtained through a military coup and massacre, by way of inspiration to national identity through folk performances.

The festival was held in the centre of Seoul for 5 days from 28 May to 1 June with the slogan "The power and passion of youth creates a new history". Around 6000 students from 198 universities and 7000 citizens from all South Korea participated (or rather were mobilized, according to later testimony by participants) in the festival, a variety of events, contests, traditional markets were displayed with folklore as the central theme (Gang D. 2006: 52). After the closing of the festival, the allowing of mass gatherings,

which had previously been strictly forbidden (the public curfew was lifted during the festival) and the new consciousness of folklore and national culture, were positively evaluated by the mass media. However, this folk consciousness was later criticised as 'a fabricated or manipulated folklore' at a symposium of Korean folklorists held the following year[5], because of the mobilization of university students by force and the manipulation of folk culture to rationalize the unjust regime. Since that first festival no others have been held.

Although the first attempt ended unsuccessfully, it displayed the basic faculty of folklore commonly comprehended – the implantation of national identity and orchestration of allegiance to society and community.

An image of a group is mainly formed by folklore, according to Hugh Jansen who categorised the function of folklore as consisting of esoteric and exoteric images. Jansen argues that:

> *a group's image of itself, and its image of other groups, is reflected in its folklore repertoire. Folklore is that portion of a group's culture and belief that does not derive from formal, institutionalized educational forces, indeed that frequently exists despite such forces. The esoteric part of this stems from the group sense of belonging and serves to defend and strengthen that sense. Sometimes the esoteric aspect arises from the special knowledge of a group and, intentionally or not, aids in preserving that knowledge. This phase of the esoteric is most evident in verbal expression of folk belief. There is a general assumption that the folklore of a group has certain inherent qualities (perhaps virtues) because it belongs to or has been shaped by that group* (Jansen 1965: 43–51).

The esoteric image of a nation is strongly connected with the sense of belonging to a group and provides a standard by which to decide whether to disapprove or accept an alien factor. A sense of belonging is the basic requirement for community spirit, which expands into manifestation of nationalism. The role of folklore in forming a community or strengthening the sense of belonging was also discussed by William Bascom. In addition to the obvious function of entertainment or amusement, he asserts that a function of folklore is "that which it plays in validating culture, in justifying its rituals

[5] The article "The fabricated folklore overwhelming in Korea (관치는 模造民俗)", Donggailbo《동아일보》, 1982.09.09.

and institutions to those who perform and observe them" (Bascom 1965: 292) and "that which it plays in education, particularly, but not exclusively, in non-literate societies" (ibid.: 293). Finally, "folklore fulfils the important but often overlooked function of maintaining conformity to accepted patterns of behaviour" (ibid.: 294). Shamanism, apparently a part of folklore in Korea, has affected such a function in crucial situations.

Nevertheless, Korean shamanism could not be formed as an authorised official national religion in Korea, although undoubtedly it served as a resource of Korean nationalism. All religions and cultures of foreign origin were filtered and selected through criteria moulded by shamanism, which finally identified Koreanness – the characteristics and attributes eligible to be part of an authentic Korean tradition and society, as declared by Hoppál: "one of the important characteristics of Korean culture, wanting to distinguish its individual features from Chinese and Japanese culture, is the individual shamanism" (Hoppál 2007: 9). Hoppál also claimed that "the preservation of cultural heritage itself is a great role played by the shaman" (Hoppál 1992: 128), a statement that is especially valid in Korea.

Hereby another conception of the application of folklore is introduced, that of ethno-symbolism. Ethno-symbolism is a concept created by Anthony Smith which says that a national symbol originating from folklore, for example myth or common memory, constitutes a standard by which to differentiate a nation (see Smith 1999 & Seo J. 2012).

National symbols are constructed from materials that bear the prestige of the past and thus have a power to unify a nation or ethnic society (Siikala & Ulyashev 2011: 21). *Jangseung*, the Korean totem pole, is a symbolic statue manifesting the faith of Korean shamanism. It is one of the most significant ethno-symbolic constituents of Koreanness alongside folksong, language and costume. *Jangseung* were mostly carved out of wood and erected at the entrance to villages as guardian gods protecting village dwellers from evil spirits and disasters. *Jangseung*, which used to be a symbol of Korean religiosity, was related with the conservation and revival of Korean nationality during periods of hardship especially in the modern time, which manifestation is shared with the tradition of Lithuanian crosses were built for religious and the national purpose during critical times.

As asserted by Siikala and Ulyashev, the revival of tradition is a mark of the battle of survival of small minorities. This aspect authenticates the assertion of Siikala and Ulyashev that "because of the suppression of the Stalinist regime and the ensuing absence of the written culture of many Finno-Ugric groups, orally preserved traditions and ethnic religions seemed to provide the foundation for a national culture. … These tendencies are

typical not only of Siberian minorities or Finno-Ugric peoples; they are a global sign of the times" (ibid.: 29). The role of *jangseung* in ethno-symbolism will be discussed in a separate article.

In fact, Korean shamanism itself was once strongly connected with patriotism and nationalism. It is well known that shamans were invited to pray for rulers, their families and national affairs, even during the Joseon dynasty when shamanism was officially banned. The patriotic aspect of Korean shamanism was revealed most obviously during Japanese colonisation. Japanese colonists realised that Korean shamanism has many patriotic and nationalistic emotions encoded in the form of symbols. Japanese authority approved shamanic ceremonies tacitly, if organised in private, but prohibited the *gut* for communities or villages in fear of motivating solidarity with the Resistance.

According to Hyun-key Kim, numerous records exist and also ethnographies by Western-trained Japanese anthropologists, such as Akiba, describing shamanistic practices, mainly the private kind. Private shamanistic practices appear to have been prevalent, with nationalistic sentiments hidden beneath a veneer of 'primitive' ritual and prayers for individual good fortune during the Japanese occupation (1910–1945). However, he argued that the sentiments underlying *musok* have always been those of Korean national identity and cultural nationalism, in the sense of adhering to something 'uniquely Korean' (Kim H. 1999: 341) – namely, Koreanness.

In addition to this external and active participation in the Resistance, there has been an invisible influence on nationalism through symbolism and emotional sanction of external cultural stimuli. Shamanism was always connected with the identification of the alienated classes in Korean society and is a religion which pursues reconciliation and harmony among sky, earth and people to gain heavenly blessing and to find equality with others. Thus, as seen here, Korean shamanism, highlighting equality and philanthropy, always stood on the side of the suppressed and subdued classes like paupers, women, serfs and farmers, and encouraged the Korean people to endure anger and to share social benefit with neighbours at critical moments, such as the occupation by Japan or governance by an authoritative Administration. Shamans were located between the human and spirit realms. As asserted by DuBois, they were "set apart from other people by these mediating activities performed at the edge of the human community and the threshold of the spirit world. The shaman can easily experience a sense of alienation from both human and spirit realms" (DuBois 2009: 82). Especially in Korea the shaman functioned among marginal people as the stimulus to build an identity, which finally led to the establishment of an overall Korean nationality.

Shamanism is based on the belief that human beings can communicate with divine beings and assure their help in solving worldly problems. The notion that people can interact with superhuman beings in the same way as with mortal humans – through negotiation, compromise, bribery and conflict – is very significant in shamanic practices (Kim K. 1994: 209). Furthermore, the shaman is a mediator of in these conflicts. Part of the ceremonial behaviour of shamans is the role of mediator in confrontations between 'death and resurrection', 'gods and people' and 'friends and enemies' (Kim Y. 2005: 51). The shamans and the ordinary people are not separated or classified with hierarchy. They are really with the same right or at least acting together in a ritual (Hoppál 2007: 13). This provides an ideological basis for the struggle against absolute power and state authority.

This ideology led students and the intelligentsia of Korea to mass activity or demonstration against the state authority between 1970 and 1980 when décor and elements taken from shamanism were presented as symbols of national struggle. *Jangseung* used to be at the centre of this struggle, fought in universities, and the ceremonies of *gut* always took part in the consolation of political sacrifices as witnessed in many crucial incidents. Korean shamanism was used by students for political expression because they felt that the soul of shamanism was the most important part of the culture of suppressed people. As noticed by Tangherlini, "the students refer to the subversive elements of Korean shamanism – the forceful seizing of the discursive space by a marginalized member of the community. Just as the shaman moves to the center and defines the discourse and enacts the political organization of the domestic or village space, the students engage a similar subversion, positioning the *minjung* (the general public – by the author) as the center of the discursive space. The social order is then defined according to their perspective" (Tangherlini 1999: 136).

Composing the most suitable representative character for a nation relies heavily on the esoteric and exoteric images together. A mixture of these two images performs a crucial role in forming the overall image of a nation. Such images are often formed spontaneously without the intentional interference of an authority. The image loses validity as soon as a government or other national authority attempts to create an image by way of compelling force or fabrication, as witnessed in regimes of tyranny and dictatorship such as the case of *Gukpung* in Korea.

2. Narrative genres of Korean shamanism

Resources regarding Korean shamanism began to be collected and documented at the beginning of the 20th century, initially predominantly by

Japanese colonial scholars, although more synthetic and intensive research was conducted from the 1960s. The lyrics of shamanic narratives have already been published, and rituals and ceremonies have been archived by a number of cultural institutions. Nevertheless, while the number of manuscripts preserved in the archives grows continuously, the activities of shamans still depend on oral narratives handed down from former generations. The first collection of texts on the shamanic myths was published in the 1930s (Im S. 1991: 68), documenting around 1000 years later the myths of the establishment of kingdoms that had already been documented in chronicles such as *Samguksagi* (1145) and *Samgukyusa* (1281).

Shamanic oral narratives were transmitted via a genre called *muga* in Korean. *Muga* is the sacred song chanted by shamans during rituals and the most crucial key for comprehending Korean shamans' narrative tradition. The *muga* contains the Korean people's point of view on gods, the cosmos, spirits and the afterworld and systematises the philosophy on the origin of existence, expressing it in verbal language, thus it can be considered the unwritten Holy script of Korean shamanism (Kim T. 2006: 89).

Groups without history in a written form have often reflected on their own past by revitalising oral traditions and creating new forms of traditions, of which activity is equally manifested in both myth and religion as well as in daily life and everyday routines (Siikala & Ulyashev 2011: 20). The *muga* – which declares the stories of gods to be a form of revitalisation of tradition during a period when the Korean writing system was not fully accredited as an official method for documentation and the recording mechanism – was either not invented or not utilized actively. *Muga* transfers the allomotif and theme of myths in the format of songs, to the next generation, and now supplies the Korean people with a valuable warehouse of story, disclosing the key to the meaning of existence for people and nature. *Muga* has many attributes distinctive to folklore, as discussed in chapter 2, for example, anonymous creation, oral transmission and the function of preserving and recreating national culture, etc. However, unlike other folklore, it is a song performed for gods in religious rituals rather than for an audience. Thus, in performances the attention or entertainment of the audience is not the most important factor for performances.

The value of *muga* was studied by many foreign scholars. Thomas DuBois has evaluated that in Korean *muga*'s "symbolic directions and stock phrases and epithets help render the oration both recognizable and efficacious to human and supernatural audience alike. Delivered in the proper manner, such orations helped the ritual progress from one stage to the next, demonstrating at the same time both the authority and the verbal dexterity of the shaman"

(DuBois 2009: 207). *Muga* is the myth, which is recited to music, is the history of a personified god and is a component of the ritual and constitute a vital constituent required to enhance the efficiency of ceremonies. Singing *muga* is one of the most important tasks for Korean shamans who accomplish a function as "a poet, singer of songs and a narrator of shamanic legends and myths" (Hoppál 2007: 133).

Muga tells us the story of the gods as well and explaining their roles. The shaman tells the story not only through narration, but also directly conveys the gods' voice imitating their activities and behaviour while chanting *muga*. The costumes and tools used during the ceremonies are symbols of god and his agency steering possession and spiritual contacts. In fact, the shaman asks the gods and spirits to visit the place of ceremony wearing costumes symbolizing the dignity of gods or worn by the deceased and allows clients to hold the personal belongings or costumes of the dead to provide a meeting with the spirits. These phenomena take place while chanting *muga*. Kim Yeongil (김영일), therefore, defined "the shaman as a man who 'explains' a myth" (Kim Y. 2005: 32).

In this way, *muga* is also called by other terms, such as *bonpuri*, *boncho* or *bonhae*, the '*bon-*' stem of which is defined as the origin of all nature including the gods. The term *muga* itself is a compound word composed of *mu*, 'shaman', and *ga*, 'song', which when combined means the song chanted by shamans during *gut*. For the descriptive function of *muga* to explain the genesis of the world, the origin of the gods and celestial beings, the birth of heroes, all of which are related to the nature of other world, the story element is undoubtedly myth representing a basic function of myth as described by Clyde Kluckhohn: "Mythology answered the insistent human *how*? and *why*? How and why was the world made? How and why were living creatures brought into being? Why, if there was life must there be death?" (Kluckhohn 1968: 137)

2.1. *Muga* as a resource of mythology

Undoubtedly, every nation has its repertoire of myths and legends, with sacred attributes, to describe the beginning of an ethnic group or society and its sacredness. Korea also has an abundant collection of mythology explaining the very beginning of the Korean nation, represented by Dangun, the geographical configuration, divine beings or the lives of deified historical persona. The myth of Dangun, explaining the initiation of Korean nation and the foundation of national philosophy and civilization, has been valuable heritage for the Korean people regardless of transition of dynasties, classes, ideologies or changing political power throughout their 5000-year history.

Other sacred stories about the activities and roles of divine being of the transcendental world have been transmitted to the present through oral or written expression. Unquestionably, *muga* is a valuable reservoir for Korean mythology.

However, Korean myths were often downgraded and intentionally disparaged for many reasons predominantly by foreign scholars as well as Korean scholars who attempt to comprehend Korean myths according to Western speculation.

As noted in sections 2–4, this very distinctive attribute of Korean myth reflected – in traditional Korean theology – the fact that the function or characteristics of a god are always prone to change according to the situation, and that good gods can make a retaliatory decision or behave in an unexpected way if they are not dealt with properly, might seem even childish and immature in comparison with the mythology of other countries where the mystery realms inhabited by gods are described on a large scale. In her travel account Bishop also criticized the way in which the arranged structure among the spirits is obscure, and that as characters they are like a group of ghosts.

Dishonour to the traditional mythology of Korea was committed synthetically and systemically during the Japanese occupation period (1910–1945). Japanese researchers ascribed the origin of shamanic gods to China and India and described Korean myths as legend in order to propose that there was no normal mythology in Korea. This was done with the purpose of degrading Korean culture, reflecting the view of the colonialists that Korea was nothing but the object of colonialism by external forces (Jo 1994: 371). After the liberalization, Korean folklorists still had to face the dilemma of how to perceive the real essence of Korea mythology, and inherited the tendency of former Japanese scholars, who accented the elements of primitive religion in Korean shamanism; thus, Korea was put below Japan on the evolutionary scale of civilization. In these circumstances, the mythology illustrating the national identity and foundation of Korean history was considered a branch of sacred folk tales or legends awaiting evolution into the developed stage.

However, the contemporary genre theories of traditional narratives attest that such a conventional and biased conception of mythology, reflected in the view of Japanese colonialists and their followers, is insignificant in understanding the essence of myths.

The conceptualization of Jan Harold Brunvand might be regarded as a conventional conceptualization of myth: “myths are regarded as sacred and legends as either sacred or secular; myths are set in the remote past, in the

otherworld, or an earlier world, and legends in the historical past. Myths have as their principal characters gods or animals, while legends generally have humans in the major roles" (Brunvand 1986: 136).

According to Brunvand's statement, Korean myth, which is based predominantly on the story of real historical heroes and real people, might be very problematic to place in the categories of mythology. However, Brunvand himself highlighted that it is not always possible to draw a clear line to decide whether a given narrative should be labelled as a myth, a legend, or a folk tale. It is particularly unnatural to make such a differentiation if they exist outside our own tradition (ibid.: 137).

As stated by Brunvand, it is not possible to categorise genres using a method that reflects only the content and peripheral structure. As Linda Dégh has pointed out, "the form, contents, and function of the stories belonging to different genres are always variable. Identical stories can be found within different genres. They may be shaped into fictitious, credible, revered, or ridiculed treatments. What is a tale for one culture may be an origin legend for another; a twist in a tragic story for one can render it extremely funny for another" (Dégh 1972: 59).

The designating a genre makes sense only as a reflection of the regional conditions and circumstances of the given ethnic society. Dan Ben-Amos attested that "the premise that thematic similarity implies generic identity may be valid in regard to the oral literature of a single culture within a definite period, but it is simply incongruent with the facts of folk-literatures of different peoples or of the same society during distinct historical periods" (Ben-Amos 1982: 42), and also that "the logical principles which underlie this categorization of oral tradition are those which are meaningful to the members of the group and can guide them in their personal relationship and ritualistic actions" (ibid.: 48).

When contemplating the statements of other scholars, more attention should be paid to the role and meaning of the text in the relation to the community, than to the form of the text. The most important factor in deciding a genre is not simply form, but the value and interpretative gravity given to the text by the community members.

The most significant myths in Korea about the founders of the three kingdoms, such as Jumong, Kim Suro, Bak Hyeokgeose and Dangun, may look akin to the legends or fairy tales about the heroic establishment of historical personae because the plot is set in a real historical past and the major roles are played by humans. There is evidence about the place and periods of episodes which, in fact, may seem unparalleled to other myths describing the mysterious world inaccessible and inexplicable for normal

people. However, each myth explains the origin of the main civilizations that flourished on the Korean peninsula. Myths transmit central cultural messages. Through repetition, key categories of the cosmos and society are identified and established, and the relations among them are internalized.

Hagar Salamon & Harvey E. Goldberg pointed out in joint research that "the sanctified dimension of myth makes it distinct from other genres of narrative such as folktales or legends that are not perceived as sacred, even though in some instances these forms of expression may overlap" (Salamon & Goldberg 2012: 125). Johnson Messenger asserted that "in primitive and peasant societies, myths and legends are part of oral tradition and specify the supernatural entities believed to exist, describe the origins of things, explain the nature of reality, and assert the proper organization of values" (Messenger 1972: 220). According to those convictions it is not unique to Korea that a special format overlaps in both myth and legend, so that to speak about the form itself cannot be employed as an impartial standard to distinguish them.

Myth is not merely a story about gods. It supplies an explanation about the genesis of life and the meaning of existence for human beings, provided in oral format for the Korean people. Therefore, the text of *muga* – in which a variety of stories including the creation of human being, the origin of nature and life, etc., is conceived – can be categorised as a branch of myth. One of the main roles of oral-traditional poetry in culture is to build a bond between past and present, as well as to maintain a group identity (Hoppál 2007: 134). Thus, we might conclude that *muga* is a precious reservoir of myths which explain the beginnings of the Korean nation, civilization and community.

There are various ideas about how to define and conceptualise the boundaries of folk narrative genres, but in Korean folkloristics they are arranged under the category of narrative literature (arranged by Choe Unsik, see Choe U. 2004). This categorization was accepted to be the most suitable for the conceptualization of oral narrative in the Korean vernacular.

1) Myth (*sinhwa*) – a sanctified story (about the establishment of dynasties and shamanic gods). The outcome of primeval society as transferred to the unit of the nation, country. Myth is divided into two sub-categories: myth about the establishment of dynasties that were written down as a part of history in chronicles using Chinese characters; and shamanic myths transmitted in oral form among shamans. In the Korean vernacular, the term *sinhwa*, which literally means 'the story of the gods' mainly refers to myths about the establishment of dynasties, while on the other hand shamanic myths are called '*bonpuri*' or '*bonhae*' – origin myths.

2) Legend (*jeonseol*) – a story with concrete evidence of time and place that is believed to be sacred and true. Because of this evidence, these stories are transferred within a particular area and function as good mediators, building kinship between residents.
3) Tale (*mindam*) – a story handed down orally among ordinary people, a fiction told to pass the time that has no place, epoch or characters designated.

2.2. *Muga* as a genre of folksong and the problem of the heroic epic

The conditions by which an oral epic is identified in the Mandé peoples of Western Africa and Zaire, as covered by Isidore Okpewho in his study, may also be applicable to the Korean case: the structure of storytelling, narration, and performance in a musical form. In the foreword to his article, Okpewho says that "an oral epic is fundamentally a song about the fantastic deeds of a man or men endowed with something more than human might and operating in something more than the human world. It is narrated or performed to the background of music by (usually) an unlettered singer working alone or with some help from a group of accompanists" (Okpewho 1977: 171). Okpewho attempted to claim the existence of the oral epic in Africa, despite the lingering stereotype of Western countries that the epic 'in the normal sense of the world' is alien to Africa. Similarly to the discussion about the credibility of Korean mythology deliberated upon in the previous part, the existence of oral epic in general conceptualization of Korean mythology was also denied or doubted in Korean academic circles. This was for various reasons, although they were not related to dishonour or degradation, but rather related to form and conceptualization.

In the European conception, the heroic epic is transmitted in the form of song and has a specific metrical form constructed in accordance with the linguistic conditions of the country, controlled by the laws of folk narrative, as stated by Axel Olrik, which limit "the freedom of composition of oral literature in a much different and more rigid way than in our written literature" (Olrik 1965: 131). Felix J. Oinas understands that heroic epics are narrative poems dealing with the adventures of extraordinary people. They are created and handed down orally in a traditionally formulaic and ornamental style which distinguished them from literary epics attributed to individual authors (Oinas 1972: 99).

In fact, the phrases 'oral epic' and 'lyrical epic' as genres of folk song are quite alien to Korean folklore and literature. We will have to deliberate with the conceptualization of folksong in the Korean vernacular.

2.2.1. Lyrical folk songs in Korean tradition

Minyo, folksong in Korean, is sorted into several categories according to function and content, which is little different to other countries. *Minyo* is divided into several categories according to many factors, for example the gender of the players, the occasion, the function, the method of performance, the period, the region and the rhyme scheme. According to the study by Jo Dongil, the folklorist with the highest authority in the field of Korean folk song, Korean folk songs can be classified in three categories; 1) *gyosulmingyo* (descriptive songs), 2) *seojeongminyo* (lyrical songs), and 3) *seosaminyo* (narrative songs) (see Jo D. 1970).

Gyosulminyo descriptive songs are songs that describe or convey information about an object, and can be exemplified by *taryeong*. *Taryeong* conveys contents related to one theme without a plot or outline. Every object around people, such as animals, plants, or chores, are used for the theme of *taryeong*, but according to period and region many different repertoires were created, such as depicting erotic activities or describing the sorrowful condition of women.

The *seojeongminyo* lyrical song is exemplified by *minyo*, a song expressing the subjective emotion and sentiment of the singers. This type mainly consists of repertoires of song by married women and old men contemplating their lives.

Among the *seosaminyo* narrative songs is *minyo*, a song type with a storytelling structure. Jo Dongil explains that *minyo* have stories about real people and occurrences (Jo D. 1970: 16). He added that "the research on *seosaminyo* has been very scanty. The relevant materials are being collected, however the basic difference from *seojeongminyo* is not comprehended and the object of study is aimed in the wrong direction" (ibid.: 18). Although there are repertoires of *seosaminyo* with plots similar to the life-stories of gods or heroes, with a scale and structures comparable to *Kalevala*, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the majority of *seosaminyo* are, according to Jo Dongil, closer to ballads than heroic epics in European conceptualization. Folksongs registered under the category of *seosaminyo* mainly deal with labour songs which don't have any attributes of the heroic epic. Jo Dongil attests that *seosaminyo* is closer to ballad than to heroic epic because it depicts only a singular occurrence or describes one subject, although it is a story told in the form of song. It conveys the contents related to one theme without the plot or outline. Every object around people, such as an animal, plant, or chores, are used for the theme, but according to the periods and regions, a lot of different repertoires can be created, such as depicting erotic activities or describing the sorrowful condition of women. Jo Dongil says that "*seosaminyo* is the song

reflecting the lifestyle and philosophy of normal women which differentiate them from European ballad" (ibid.: 156).

Actually, in Korean vernacular the lyrical epic is very closely related with the descriptive or narrative *minyo*, a story about the adventures and journey of a heroic protagonist which contributed to the foundation of literature. In Korean tradition, the oral epic merely contributed to the formation of written literature, because the languages employed for both the oral and written mode were fundamentally different – Chinese characters where used for the written form while Korean was used for the oral epic. Up until the middle of the 19th century, literature mainly meant written literature in Chinese characters with usage of Korean confined to creating and chanting oral poetry.

The stories about the founders or initiators of kingdoms and dynasties, which were probably transmitted orally, have lost the original format of formulaic and metrical style after being written down in annual annals and chronicles in Chinese characters and are generally classified under the category of history and written literature – the genre of court literature describing the origins of royal families and the lineages of dynasties. Some *muga* texts still deal with the adventure or life story of a hero, although the main character, whose achievements are described in the text, is not the hero himself or herself but only gives the birth of the true hero whose story is *de facto* almost insignificant, thus in a strict sense it is inadequate to use the oral epic to denote Korean *seosaminyo* according to the European conceptualization.

Therefore, in Korean vernacular, there are some sub-genres parallel to the lyrical epic to be found in *seosaminyo*, such as *janggun seolhwa, pansori* (see below, 2.3.), *bonpuri* and *boncho*; an explanation of their beginnings is discussed in the previous chapter. Here, the term *janggun seolhwa* means legends narrated orally about Korean generals who actually existed and played an active part in Korean history, represented for example by the stories about Kim Yusin (김유신, 595673), the general who unified the Korean peninsula in the 7th century for the first time in Korean history; about Nam Yi (남이, 1441–1468), a military officer who ended his life in tragedy; and about Gwak Jae-u (곽재우, 1552–1617), the leader of a militia. Characters from those stories have been born again as protagonists in novels created by more recent writers, while some generals whose lives generally finished in a tragic way are occasionally deified by shamans. The story is transmitted in oral form with the original formulaic and ornamental style displaying the specific metrical form, thus at first glance the *janggun seolhwa* shares the most similar form with conventional oral epics at the first glance.

2.2.2. Heroism in *muga*

The European heroic epic is probably alien to Korea because of the different characters and roles described in mythology, among others. Korean heroes are not always rewarded with happiness, as frequently occurs in European epics. On the contrary, many legends depict unsuccessful generals whose lives end in tragedy. According to O Segil (오세길), "the transmission of legends about unsuccessful generals with tragic plots stem from the consciousness of people belonging to the lowest social stratum. For those people, heroes provide solid support. People tried to take strength for resistance from the historical description of misfortune. This show the openness of Korean heroic stories and that they are not limited to the typical structure of the heroic epic with its dichotomous elements, such as royal birth and humility, the confrontation of nobility and lower social status" (O S. 1998: 107).

However, since the end of the 19th century, a few attempts have been made to discover heroism in Korean mythology in a narrow sense according to the European understanding, mainly focussing on the story of Dangun, the founder of the Korean nation and other initiators of dynasties transmitted in the written form to assist in the construction of Korean nationalism when Korea was under Japanese colonial rule. An intensive attempt to unearth heroes in Korean mythology was made in the 21st century, mainly to exploit Korean culture for economic benefit (which will be dealt with later in this thesis).

Above all the hero is a protagonist within the narrative, the main character who leads the plot with all stories developed around him. The hero is responsible for society and has to find a way to solve the problem. He leaves on a journey in search of a way to do this, during which he encounters many situations that identify his true self, meeting helpers on the journey who provide the hero with tools or advice. The journey is generally motivated by the lack of something very crucial in life, therefore the hero is expected to some kind of solution with him.

Kim Yeolgyu, a distinguished scholar in the field of Korean traditional heroic narrative explains that a "hero is a person who undergoes by himself the tasks – misfortune and agonies, hardships and obligations – necessitated by the circumstances for the sake of an ethnic group or society and accomplishes all tasks with a great and solemn ability, which is a heroic deed. From the perspective of a nation, he should possess a noble nature in order to secure the safety and prosperity of a whole community's future and a courage to put his plan into practice at his own risk even under the difficult circumstance of a nation as yet unformed" (Kim Y. 1977: 250).

The heroes described in narratives are distinguished by certain characteristics that many scholars, such as Vladimir Propp (see Ulicka 2000)

and Lord Raglan, attempted to systemize. Lord Raglan tried to make a list of the hero's characteristics, as found in traditional narrative stories:

1) His mother is a royal virgin.
2) His father is a king, and
3) Often a near relative of his mother, but
4) The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
5) He is also reputed to be the son of a god.
6) At birth an attempt is made, often by his father, to kill him, but
7) He is spirited away, and
8) Reared by foster parents in a far country.
9) We are told nothing of his childhood, but
10) On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
11) After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,
12) He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
13) Becomes king.
14) For a time, he reigns uneventfully, and
15) Prescribes laws, but
16) Later he loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects, and
17) Is driven from the throne and city.
18) He meets with a mysterious death,
19) Often at the top of a hill.
20) His children, if any, do not succeed him.
21) His body is not buried, but nevertheless
22) He has one or more holy sepulchres (Raglan 1965: 145).

Raglan says the hero has to qualify for the throne in two ways. "He must pass an examination in such subjects as rain-making and riddle-guessing, and he must win a victory over the reigning king" (ibid.: 153).

The most representative Korean example displaying the structure of traditional narrative discussed by Raglan is the story of Princess Bari (or the Abandoned Princess). Princess Bari, the guardian deity of Korean shamans, is one of the most important characters of *muga*. The eponymous story deals with the seventh daughter of a king who finds out that the parents who dumped her fell ill and departs on a journey to locate medicines to heal themselves. Her journey and all of the stages she must go through on her way are illustrated in great detail. The epic has a very well-constructed plot of the 'journey of heroes' type (for more details, see Seo D. 2000; Seo J. 2007).

However, the arrangement by Raglan is not valid for all cases. In the Korean epic, such incidents are experienced not by the hero him or herself, but by women who are destined to bear a future hero, thus in this sense the Princess Bari story is exceptional in that the whole plot is experienced and undertaken

by one protagonist. The predominant role played by women in *muga* may be explained by the active participation of women – namely, shamans – in the process of transmission of texts. Emphasizing the tragic image of protagonists could occur because *muga* was transmitted mainly by shamans, who were positioned in the lowest social class. The social discrimination experienced by female shamans deprived of many fundamental rights by the rigid authority of Confucianism was also reflected in the repertoire.

In the typology of protagonists of Korean mythology, the cultural hero is very salient. They are heroes of myths about cultural origins that illuminate how the normative laws, customs, techniques and principles originated. In those myths, a special person who initiated an agriculture or hunting technique, a river improvement, or invented a tool is deified. Constituents reminiscent of cultural heroes are found in Dangun myth about Dangun, who descended to Earth with other gods and controlled the cultivation of plants, the span of life, disease, punishment, virtue and vices, etc. (Lee J. 2001: 69). The similarity to the shamanic hero can be traced in the myth of Jumong, the founder of Goguryeo, previously transmitted orally as *muga* is today, which became representative of Korean court literature after it was documented in written form as certified by Kim Yeolgyu (Kim Y. 1977).

The song of creation describes the process of finding fire through mice and grasshoppers intimate with people's lives, rather than the origin of people and the world.

> *At first, Maitreya had neither clothes nor material to make them. So he cut long arrowroots in the mountain, boiled them, peeled their bark, installed a loom in the cloud, wove fabric, and made a long and wide-sleeved monk's robe. With one foot and three inches of hemp he made a peaked hat* (Seo D. 2000: 33).

Maitreya appears here in the form of a hero of cultural origin conveying the technique of weaving and clay firing in a different way than he appears as the original Sakyanumi in 'real' Buddhism.

The shamanic heroes in Korean folklore which I intend to analyse here are people representing a function of shamanism that establishes contact between the human and divine worlds. They do not deliver mandates from gods in a state of ecstasy or sacrifice the blood of animals as shamans do in reality. From this point of view, if only the modal aspects are observed, the shamanic heroes discussed in this dissertation can be similar to typical supernaturally endowed protagonists or magicians who appear in European folktales and other narrative genres.

According to Kim Yeongil, "Korean shamanic heroes are different from the protagonists of fairy tales. What protagonists in fairy tales seek is an individual value, however, Korean shamanic heroes seek something that is of value to the community. Those heroes have to confront gods for the community's sake and afterwards become deified by people for their deeds" (Kim Y. 2005: 72–73). Kim Yeolgyu says "Korean shamans have the religious function of telling fortunes and presiding over religious ceremonies and also possess the attributes of warriors" (Kim Y. 1977: 250). The warrior-like attribute of challenging evil spirits, the ability to communicate with the divine realm and the duty to maintain the welfare of the community – Korean shamans with these characteristics are close to the imagery of heroes who establish and defend a nation in an epic tales.

The shamanic epic is understood differently in the European tradition than pointed by Kim Yeonggil. According to Oinas, "the shamanistic epic deals with deeds that are not heroic in the common sense, but are accomplished by magical, non-human means" (Oinas 1972: 101). In this sense the leading protagonists Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen in the Kalevala, the Finnish–Karelian epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot, is a magician who uses magic words. But in the context of books, both protagonists display many characteristics similar to Korean shamans as well magical skill. They know how to manipulate with songs. Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen are noted for their ability to sing, that is, for the use of charms, as among Korean shamans.

2.2.3. Internal exchange among *muga* and other narrative genres

In their appearance, the heroes in the myths about initiators of dynasties, or about kings or the founders of nations may seem unrelated to their shamanic heroes. However, many archetypes transformed from shamanic myths are found in these narratives.

Jo Heungyun asserts that "even the characters of protagonists appearing in Korean heroic myths (describing the establishment of a dynasty and the birth of the initiator) were formed under the strong influence of Korean shamanism. For instance, he says that the process by which Ungnyeo becomes a woman and weds a heavenly god in the myth of Dangun mirrors the initiation of shamans after being possessed by a spirit; thus Dangun, who was born with the blessing of heavenly god, is also a shaman" (Jo H. 1994: 36).

Korean myths, whether they are about god or other similar prime movers, have a structure similar to the functions and attributes of shamanic narratives; people portrayed in myth are therefore reconfigurations of shamans. This shows that the protagonists of Korean mythology apparently developed under the influence of Korean shamanism, as previously discussed.

The analogous variants within the popular *pansori* and *mindam* narratives are also found in *muga*; for instance, the story of Sim Cheong is found in *pansori* repertoires as well as those of *muga* performed on the eastern coast of Korea. In addition, there is a *muga* with a similar plot reminiscent of the story of the sisters Kongjwi and Patjwi, one of the most renowned fairy tales in Korea.

> *...One day he went to the pond and suddenly saw three beautiful blossoms blooming there. The covetous Kwangyangsang plucked three flowers and hung them over his gate, but every time he entered or left through the gate, the flowers hit his head. "Crazy flowers," he said and threw the flowers into the fire. The next morning a grandmother from Green Moss Mountain came to get some embers from Kwangyangsang's house. When she looked in the firebox, there was no fire but there were three gems.* [Excerpt from the muga, Origin Myth of the Messenger] (Seo D. 2000: 208).

> *...After some days, the officer Kim felt bad and came home earlier. While taking a stroll around a pond, he found a very strange lotus blossoming in the middle of a pond. Its stem was very long and the flower was extraordinarily beautiful. Kim asked a servant to pluck the lotus and plant it in front of the house, so that he could take of care of the flower. Patjwi, after observing the beautiful flower, felt that it was not ordinary. Therefore, when the husband went outside, Patjwi used to come to the flower to see. Once, when Patjwi wanted to go outside, the flower pulled out her hair, as if it had a hand. Patjwi understood that Kongjwi's body was incarnated in the shape of the flower and threw the miraculous flower into the fire ... An old woman in the neighbourhood came to Kim to ask for embers. She had a good relationship with Kim's family, thus as usual, came to take embers from the fireplace of the rear house in the garden. However, the fireplace was totally extinguished and was full of gems. The old woman took the gems into her apron, came home and put them in a box* [Excerpt from fairy tales Kongjwi and Patjwi] (Kim D. 1983: 319).

These excerpts describe the moment when punishment for murder is initiated against offenders: Kwangyangsang killed the sons of an emperor who visited his house for help, and Patjwi killed her stepsister Kongjwi in order to marry the officer Kim.

The similarity between these variants shows that they possibly developed under a mutual influence. Against this backdrop it is possible to draw the inference that the historical protagonists documented in the chronicles once

used to be heroes whose stories were transmitted in oral performances similar to *muga*. These epic narratives have been transmitted in a fixed form as they have been documented in chronicles and annals. Presumably foundation myths were transmitted orally before intensive documentation began in the 12th century, when *Samguksagi* and *Samgukyusa* were prepared. Because most of the *muga* repertoire has a similar structure and content, it is quite possible that *muga* influenced the formation of other epic genres in Korea. A simple plot may be expanded or reduced to a brief version or even a formless fragment. Such essential changes can happen to folk narratives not only when adjusting to different cultures and epochs but also when following internal changes within the same cultural boundary (Dégh 1972: 59).

2.3. The formulaic structure of *muga*

2.3.1. *Pansori* and *muga*

The most representative genres that can be assigned to the category of European style oral epic still practiced in Korea are *pansori* and *muga*. There are a few more genres somewhat similar to the oral epic in style, such as *gasa* and *gagok*, both branches of poetry performed in a musical form, although they are based on literature created by a writer with content describing the writer's own feelings, rather than describing the historical stories or biographies of renowned people. *Gasa* refers to vocal music and long narrative singing created in the form of poetry using a special method according to certain melody and rhythm, with *gagok* as a shorter variation of *gasa*. Those two genres comprise a separate musical genre called *jeongga*, a concept opposite to folksong. *Jeongga* was performed by aristocrats to cultivate character and mind (Mun H. & Kim, H. 2008: 12).

Jo Dongil positioned *pansori* and *muga* in the category of *seosaminyo*. In general, *seosaminyo* is distinguished with the peculiarity that it can be performed universally by ordinary people without special training or abilities, whereas *pansori* and *muga* are quite exceptional in this way (Jo D. 1970: 17). In addition, *seosaminyo* is usually composed of a series of short related pieces with a similar plot and contents; on the other hand, *muga* and *pansori* are synthetic genres with dramatic structures that can be evaluated as independent (ibid.: 156).

Pansori, generally defined as a one-man opera in English, tells a themed story in the form of musical theatre and has a more secular character. *Pansori* refers to narrative, song-style, music in which a singer conveys a long story with singing, narration and gestures accompanied by a drummer. Its structure is that of presenting songs and narration alternately.

In *pansori* a story of heroes or of people with special characteristics is told, while *muga*, a performance in a similar fashion, conveys the origin of the gods. Both genres are necessarily accompanied by drummers (or musicians) as part of a performance. A variety of stories, actions and situation is described and imitated; therefore at least a couple of hours are required for the performance of the entire song. Notwithstanding the modal similarity, *pansori* has a more secular character and *muga*, in contrast, definitely a sacralised character.

Pansori is estimated to have emerged between the 17th and 18th centuries in the south western region of Korea and suffered many transformations to survive. In order to cope with the tastes and the standards of the sophisticated audience, the singers had to make every effort to develop their musical talents and expand the content of numbers. As a result, a total of 12 *pansori* numbers were established at the end of 18th century, however only 5 remain today (see Academy of Korean studies 2009).

The system of versification for *muga* is not different from the normal versification of other *minyo*. According to the arrangement of Park Migyeong (박미경), the majority of lines are divided into two parts; and each part can be divided into 6 syllables (Park M. 1996: 88). The drumming technique employed during the ritual corresponds to the general method observed by Siikala, which is to say that it is "by and large uniform throughout; a slow, soft initial phase is followed by an increase in tempo and volume" (Siikala 1992: 34).

Muga has no special stylistic setup, however to speak about a formal structure, two lines usually make up a couplet. Overall, almost all repertoires are performed in the same style, and the melodies are not distinguished according to content. The *muga* expressive form is basically the rhythm of 4 syllables in succession, and is adjusted for the sake of recitation with meaningless sounds 'ah' and 'eh' inserted to maintain the basic rhythm (Chang C. 1988: 39).

Lee Heonhong (이헌홍) asserts that "oral narrative, such as *pansori*, *muga* and other descriptive and narrative folksongs, were formed under the influence of preference, the level of musical education of singers and audience, and the atmosphere of the place of performance based on the plot" (Lee H. 1982: 142).

One of the characteristics commonly found in *muga* is the repetition of identical occurrences and a lack of omission (Park M. 1996: 125). When telling the story of Princess Bari, the stories of how her 6 sisters were delivered are repeated at length. In the origin myth of Jeseok (제석) Buddha, the hardships and trials that his mother has to go through before the birth of

the main protagonists are described in detail. For this reason, the contents of *muga* are mainly comprised of the same story repeated regularly, which is not customary in *pansori* performances.

According to Hoppál, repetition can be a very archaic type of communication, which is an archetype of sacred effectiveness (Hoppál 2007: 141). Omitting or shortening the narration of an occurrence for the sake of an audience is not allowed because the story is sacred and relates to the gods. The salient description of dialogues and movement in *muga* narrative can be comprehended as a reproduction of divine activities. It is a method by which to create a concrete figure of the gods' behaviour (Kim J. 1994: 122–123). Therefore, the plot is much simpler than *pansori*, although it requires as much time as *pansori* to perform.

2.3.2. *Muga* and performance

Both genres, *muga* and *pansori*, can be regarded as folk drama according to Roger Abrahams' logic that they are traditional plays that rely on dialogue to establish their meaning and that they tell a story which is already known to the audience through dialogue and action (Abrahams 1972: 353).

Im Seokje arranged the common elements and the form of performance found in repertories of *muga* in Korea:

The introductory part

1) Announcement about the shaman – the leader of the ceremony.
2) Narration of how the leader performs the devotions for the ceremony.
3) Narration of how the food was prepared and prayer for its acceptance.
4) Prayer for fortune in this world and prevention of calamity for the following year.

The main part

1) The origin of the invited god.
2) Entertainment for the invited gods.
3) Gratitude for realising wishes, thanks for the blessings of the gods.
4) The invitation of minor spirits to the feast.

The concluding part

1) An introductory song before singing the *muga*.
2) An after-song performed after the *muga*.
3) Oracles or oracular manifestation (*gongsu*)
4) Fortune telling
5) Sending off gods and spirits (Im S.1991: 71).

For this reason, the text of a *muga* is quite long and it takes lot of time to perform a *muga* in the ceremony. Kim Joonki (김준기) has said that "the division of *muga* into three parts of introduction, narration and prayer coincides

with the three-stage structure, as well as the principles and contents, of the *gut* ceremony" (Kim J. 1994: 136). Specifically, a *muga* shows a compressed form of the *gut* ceremony itself. The performance of Korean shamanism is exemplified in the *gut* ceremony. It has multi-faceted features as a profane performance for an audience and a sacred ceremony for the gods, and *muga* comprises an essential part of the performance.

The rhetoric of Korean shamanism was delivered from the mouths of shamans by way of performance in rituals. The *gut* ritual, where the words of gods are expressed and revitalized through costumes, dialogues, the changing *muga* provides audiences with the chance to learn the rhetoric of shamanism and observe the manifestation of gods. It is a complete "traditional complex of thought, content, and processes which ultimately can never be fixed or recorded in its entirety; it lives only in its performance or communication as people interact with one another", which reflects the basic characteristics of folklore as given by Brunvand (Brunvand 1986: 4). The *gut* ritual is the space where oral text is vitalized and animated by the integral communication between shamans and audiences – namely, performance. Lauri Honko says that performance is the conceptualization of oral text. "The text must be extended through several notations concerning the verbal and non-verbal interaction between the performer and the audience, paralinguistic expressions such as gesture and body movement (kinesics), the utilisation of space (proxemics) and artefacts (instruments, ritual objects) and different forms of integral or collateral action (dance, pantomime, ritual, song, orchestra)" (Honko 2000: 13).

The text of *muga*, which was originally designed to be performed orally can be revitalized physically solely by way of *gut* performance. Peter Seitel says that "the ultimate coherence of a text, its meaning, is achieved by a combination of logical, stylistic, and thematic relationships specific to a particular time and place" (Seitel 2012: 77). In that sense the *gut* ritual is the platform which the text of *muga*, dedicated to gods and meant to declare the sacred message, is expressed and therefore the performance itself is inseparable from *muga*.

As Richard Bauman highlighted, communication is one of the most visible functions of performance. "The features that draw the attention of our observers, then, serve as metapragmatic signals that alert co-participants that the speaker, as performer, is taking responsibility for a display of communicative competence, subject to evaluation for the virtuosic skill, communicative efficacy, and affecting power with which the act of expression is carried out" (Bauman 2012: 99). Peter Seitel asserts that "in folklore texts, establishing a framing logic is usually more subtle, but it is equally dependent on the audience's cultural knowledge" (Seitel 2012: 78).

However, the communication in performance highlighted by Bauman is not essential in the case of *gut*, because audiences usually don't have the right to evaluate or criticize the ritual. Clients who ask for the ritual for their own purposes, usually drowse while listening to *muga,* or make offerings at the required moment, marked by the shamans performing the *muga,* thus it is impossible to ask for an interesting part to be repeated or clap to compliment the shaman's skill. They don't much care about the contents or the skill of performance. And on the reflection, neither is the cultural audience essential.

During *gut*, the textuality of the *muga,* "the web of contextual relationships within which folklore is bound as a social, cultural and discursive phenomenon" (as Bauman defined textuality, 2012: 112), is animated as communication with the audience and as the combination of dialogue, music and action. However, the role of the audience is actually rather passive and insignificant in the performance comparison with shamans.

Gut was consistently a festival for village dwellers; there are even village *gut*s that developed into official regional festivals. The festival or event shows the original character and exoteric images in traditional way. A group of people formed into a community under various conditions would solidify the system by way of communal rituals and festivals in which members feel a stronger emotional identity and affiliation. Korean shamanism was an essential factor in the weaving of communal affiliation and constitutes a peculiar characteristic of Korean society founded on the traditions of Confucianism. As pointed out by Dorothy Noyes, "recurrent exposure to community-marked narratives and images instils compelling memories into individuals; recurrent participation in communal performance incorporates the community into the body such that individuals identify with it not of choice but from a sense of inevitability" (Noyes 2012: 24).

3. History of research into Korean shamanism

The oldest remarks on Korean shamanism can also be found in the myth of Dangun. There is no direct mention or allusion to shamans in appearance, although the myth has many reliable hints about the vestige of shamanism.

Research on Korean shamanism was conducted in various ways according to the subject area; some of the research has already been published while more is on-going. However, Kim Seongnae, professor in the Religious Studies Department of Sogang University, has ordered the tendencies of shamanism research into the following categories (Kim S. 2002: 360–362).

1) A tendency of nationalism resulting from defiance of the predomination of Western culture over Korea and cultural colonization. This is

associated with the attempt to rediscover the value and merit of national cultural identity stemming from the Korean traditional belief.

2) Materialistic culturology focused on comparative research on shamanism in North East Asia.
3) Speculative study on the archetype of shamanism as it relates to the nationalism and religiosity of the Korean people.
4) The approach to shamanism as a prototype of the Korean psyche to detect the core of Korean culture and to uncover the collective subconscious of the Korean people in order to develop Korean culture and to relocate Korean shamanism as a sanctuary which set up the worldview and ethical code of the Korean people.

The tendencies and inclinations of the study of Korean shamanism can be divided into two major categories:

1) Western orientalism and cultural colonisation

These studies are associated with the attempt to rediscover value and merit in the cultural identity of Korea through traditional belief. Their materialistic culturology focused on comparative research on shamanism in North East Asia. These studies mainly highlight Westernisation and the rivalry of the imperial powers over Korean territory that occurred at the end of the 19th century, as well as the period when Japan reinforced her intention to colonise Korea at the beginning of the 20th century.

2) Speculative study of the archetype of shamanism discussing the origin of Korean nationalism and religiosity of the Korean people.

Shamanism was approached as a prototype of the Korean psyche as a way of detecting the core of Korean culture uncovering the collective subconscious of the Korean people in order to develop Koreanness and to relocate Korean shamanism as a form of sanctuary with which to set up a worldview and ethical code for the Korean people.

3.1. An interdisciplinary perspective on Korean shamanism and the history of its research

Study of Korean shamanism conducted since the beginning of the 20th century relates to those tendencies classified below in general and the period can be arranged according to fluctuations in significance among them relying on the circumstances and conditions of the time, as follows:

- The period of the study of the religiosity and historicism of shamanism: from the end of the 19th century to 1920s

Korea lay in the arena of rivalry between the surrounding great imperial powers, such as Russia, China, Japan and the USA, which restlessly buffeted

the vulnerable nation and forced Korean scholars to concern themselves with the future of the nation. The colonisation by Japan *de jure* was finally completed in 1910, although cultural and administrative colonisation had already begun prior to this.

At the beginning of this period a number of reports or travel accounts were published by Westerners, with in the vanguard missionaries whose approach to Korean shamanism was to disseminate Christianity. They committed a series of mistakes by linking Korean shamanism with superstition and understood Korean shamanism to be one of the primitive religious phenomena that were widespread in North East Asia.

Unlike the narrowly focused studies of Western missionaries and travellers toward the end of the 19th century, the Russian materials on religion are more varied and set within a wider study of Korean society and culture. However, the Russian studies reflect the concerns of an aggressive, expansionist policy, and are presented in the form of objective reports. The representative work of this group is a massive 1256-page book in three parts called *Opisanie Korei* (Description of Korea), published in 1900 by the Russian Ministry of Finance. This book contains a separate chapter titled 'Korean Religions' in which there is a subdivision for shamanism, this section including all popular religions with stress on shamanism's pantheistic characteristics (Kim C. 1944: 145–146).

This period, at the dawn of the 20th century, was also significant in establishing the identity of Korean nationality. During this period shamanism was researched as an essential symbol of the original traditional culture of Korea. This tendency was stimulated by the self-enlightenment movement of modern intellectuals in opposition to the cultural and political colonisation of Japanese imperialism, and was begun on purpose in support of the independence and cultural development movements after annexation to Japan. Research with these leanings was conducted by the majority of the first ethnologists, such as Park Eunsik (박은식) and Sin Chaeho (신채호). Additionally, Lee Neunghwa (이능화) and Choi Namseon (최남선), the pioneers of Korean studies, gained a reputation with their study conducted on the basis of bibliographic research.

- The period of study of shamanism as a national culture: 1930s–1950s.

Before the end of World War II, the Japanese policy of colonisation of Korea saw many changes. After the movement of March 1, 1919, in which the Korean people declared the independence of Korea from Japan, although it was not completely successful, Japanese colonists began to manoeuvre to find a way to alter the method of control to become culturally oriented. However,

within a couple of decades of World War II this accelerated and it was necessary to find an academic background to strengthen control and further exploit the Korean people, therefore Korean shamanism was approached from a different angle.

During this period the study of shamanism was made by Korean as well as Japanese scholars, who displayed differing interest in the subject. In comparison with the previous period, the research was conducted by more professional scholars trained in the field of folklore and social anthropology using the positivist method of fieldwork and documentation. The most brilliant scholar was Son Jintae, who approached shamanism as a national culture and paved a way for interdisciplinary research.

The activity of some foreign scholars, mainly from Japan, who considered Korean shamanism primitive and felt it should be domesticated by a superior nation, and who conducted research for the purpose of degrading the value of Korean national culture, was very distinct in this period. Japanese studies in this period, though in their case the purpose was to bolster their colonial regime, were produced or sponsored by such official bodies as the Imperial Academy, the Historical Society of Joseon, and the Office of the Government-general (Kim I. 1988: 17).

- The period of study of shamanism as an archetypal religion and psychological base: 1950s–1970s.

Despite colonisation by Japan being at an end, the Korean peninsula became devastated by the Korean War, which finally caused the division of the nation; thus, it was necessary to build a moral and mental foundation for national culture.

Study of shamanism was stimulated by the attempt to seek cultural originality in shamanism in the psychological, religious and social environments. Korean shamanism was felt to be a historical religious phenomenon positioned in Korean social sub-strata from ancient times until the modern age and a branch of wider shamanism, in other words a primitive religion dispersed throughout Eurasia. These studies focused on the psychological aspect and explained shamanism as a form of archetypal collective subconscious, or the prototype of the religious disposition. The gravity of shamanism was then enlarged to encompass the scope of a national character, a religious tradition and a social code of behaviour because it was believed to be an archetypal structure for Korean culture.

The intensive collection of *muga* commenced, which eventually increased the number of articles and dissertations on shamanism. This period is represented by the most brilliant folklorists and researchers into shamanism,

such as Kim Taegon, Jo Heungyun, Yu Dongsik and Im Seokje, the works of whom are quoted in this dissertation.

- The question of social function and structural functionalism: 1970s–1980s.

The overall situation of Korea in this period is represented by military dictatorship and intense Westernisation. Shamanism was habitually labelled by the government and followers of Western culture a superstition or folk religion which might mislead people. In contrast to Buddhism and Christianity, which enjoyed rapid growth under the patronage of the government of the Republic of Korea, which wanted to display a lenient policy and grant people the liberty to choose a religion – with the purpose of highlighting the merits of a Capitalist government in contrast to the North Korean regime –, shamanism was the object of persecution and many shamans were forced to cease their activities.

In spite of the unfavourable circumstances, academic interest in Korean shamanism in this period grew significantly. The collecting of the previous period yielded a prosperous academic result and inspired interdisciplinary study.

The social function of Korean shamanism was emphasised in order to describe the practical utility of shamanism in a concrete social relationship. Shamanism was converted from a religious experience and behaviour (ritual, ceremonial) to a system formed in historical and social circumstances. This research direction was followed by Im Seokje and Yim Dawnhee (임돈희) as well as foreign scholars like Roger Janelli (Janelli & Yim 2002) and Youngsook Kim Harvey (Kim Y. 1979 & 1987), who studied anthropology in the USA.

- The people's culture and social activism approach: 1990s–…

Hoppál evaluates this period as a threshold for the development of research into the Korean shamanism tradition. The academic interest in shamanism was largely owed to the fact that South Korea has already become one of the world's leading industrial powers and attached great significance to tradition even at the time of the military dictatorship (Hoppál 2007: 9).

In this period Korean shamanism was approached as a practical means of political resistance and a centralised symbol of popular consciousness, rather than an object of academic research, and thus researchers identified themselves with 'the people', producing a class-manipulating shamanism that emphasised social activism in order to participate in history as an insider.

The aesthetics of shamanic rituals and festivals were put into a symbolic model to establish an ideal community with democracy and equality. The

national authenticity of shamanism was reconsidered to cope with the possible impending extinction of true 'Koreanness' in the turmoil of the constrictive economic growth and military dictatorship which were believed to be negative consequences of Western-based industrialisation.

However, as the position of Korean culture gained ground, a new significance was finally ascribed to Korean shamanism, one that sees it as composed of an original independent shamanistic branch in North East Asia separate from China and Japan. The number of foreigners conducting comparative studies on the originality and character of Korean shamanism as a cultural substratum is increasing. Laurel Kendall is an anthropologist who has made a particular study of Korean shamanism and its relationship to women; she has conducted many fieldwork trips with shamans (Kendall 1977). Don Baker, a writer on Korean spirituality and the cultural and religious history of Korea, has made diachronic studies on the interrelations and history of the main religions in Korea in an attempt to codify the value of Korean shamanism as a cultural substratum (Baker 2008). Additionally, Boudewijn Walraven at the Institute for Area Studies of Leiden University has also gained a high reputation as an expert in the investigation of Korean shamanism from the perspective of Europeans.

3.2. Current developments: shamanism as economic resource and cultural content

In general, the activity of assembling a 'national treasure is followed by sorting out and disciplining the national cultural wealth (Noyes 2012: 20). This tendency was not very evident in the initial stage of folklore study in Korea but has accelerated since the end of the 20th century.

After the advent of the 21st century the cultural content industry was recognised as an important economic sector, capable of bringing significant benefit. This consequently stimulated the research on shamanism to take a different approach, since the value of mythology was rediscovered as a way of gaining economic benefits as well as of promoting Korean culture. This tendency is also followed in the academic field. Additionally, as the debate on the ownership of or dominion over ancient history and folklore emerged among North East Asian countries, the promotion of Korea through cultural contents gained direct association with national image.

The Korean people realised the advantage of folklore and shamanic myth, undervalued until then, as a valuable common national property or heritage. Here cultural property, as defined by Bendix and Hafstein in their study, is "a national concept at its inception, used in the context of claims for the restitution of historical artefacts from one state to another. Cultural

heritage, on the other hand, is the preferred term in contexts that stress the general safeguarding of artefacts, buildings, sites, and, most recently, cultural practises" (Bendix & Hafstein 2009: 6).

Martin Skrydstrup says that "'cultural property' is both a *discursive register* involving codified rights, enabling and hindering communities and nations to make claims in the name of culture, and an *institution* dedicated to the rights of distribution and allocation of tangibles and intangibles" (Skrydstrup 2012: 522).

The value of folklore as a cultural heritage that draws the esoteric and exoteric boundary of Korea and helps to preserve Koreanness is intensifying more and more. As discussed, folklore is one of the most important factors in forming nationalism. Recently in Korea folklore was granted a new value over and above that of nationalism, that of an economic necessity. If nationalism was confined to the emotional range, to designate a boundary and build a legitimate national background, then nationalism itself began to be endowed with the merit of being a new economic sector, gaining a practical income or benefit as well as acting as a historical umbrella to verify authority in the political arena. As discussed by Brynjulf Alver, "in some instances folklore and folklore scholarship actually hinder national consolidation and become a troublesome or even dangerous political force" (Alver 1989: 18).

Very recently, many nations initiated mechanisms that would allow them to set up processes of ownership verification for folkloric assets, which is also advocated by a series of academic works on the copyrighting of folklore, exemplified by Eduard Gavrilov's statement that "the protection of works of folklore should either be incorporated in copyright or at least associated with it" (Gavrilov 2005: 341).

One of the first steps in legislative verification was found in Tunis, which established a model law on copyright for developing countries, drawn up jointly by UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Countries in 1976. According to this model law, national folklore is protected because in developing countries national folklore constitutes an appreciable part of the cultural heritage and is susceptible to economic exploitation, the fruits of which should not be denied to those countries.[6]

With the growth of interest in cultural content, folklore also began to be seen as a branch of industry. Many countries are making inroads into the

[6] Tunis Model Law on copyright for developing countries. Available at: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/31318/11866635053tunis_model_law_enweb.pdf/tunis_model_law_en-web.pdf [last viewed 07.12.2012].

world market with cultural content that contains the mentality and emotion of the nation.

The concept of cultural industry was formed in the 1940s by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno from the Frankfurt School, with the rather negative view that the media will have control over the mentality of its audience (see Horkheimer & Adorno 1987).

Apparently, there are many negative opinions about this conceptualisation, which, although it is now well known, was a new concept at the time of the Frankfurt School. We can partly agree with their argument; however, the cultural industry is now thought of as moving in a totally different direction to their prediction. Put briefly, in the 21st century, culture has become an industry generating immense benefits.

The cultural content, which could be seen as software transferred through hardware called the culture industry, has already become a treasure trove that many people started exploring almost in the same way as a vein of gold or oil field. However, it is different from earlier oil or gold because value is added by way of creative works and imagination, operating intellectually rather than by manual labour.

Accordingly, with the resurgence of academic interest in Korean study and other interrelated studies, the discussion on Korean shamanism which was confined to fields of historicism and folklore, was extended more widely to cover religious studies, literature, anthropology, psychoanalysis, dramatics and musicology, and so on.

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PERIODICALS

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Poetry in Hanmun (漢詩 hansi), Religous Motives and Cultural Universalism in Pre-modern Korea

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Few people realize today that the nature of "classical" or "traditional" poetry written in Chinese radically differs from national or ethnic characteristics. In China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam or Taiwan, modern national states who claim classical verse written in pre-modern literary Chinese as a more or less substantial part of their cultural heritage, the tradition of classical poetry is often perceived as emblematic of ancient civilization, but subordinated to the narrative of national history and culture. In fact, this poetic heritage, which in Korea covers periods of history between the 10th century AD and the second half of the 19th century AD remains as inseparable from the characteristics of an East Asian civilization centred around the cults of ancient rulers and later of emperors and their dynastic ancestries as it remains untypical for local, regional or national traditions, customs and tastes. In China until the 20th century one used to speak of poetry in historical contexts by referring essentially to the names of imperial and royal dynasties. After the 9th cent. AD also the literary elites of Korean kingdoms accepted this standard and transferred it into their specific tradition. This had its logical ground in the historical conditions under whom poetry used to be transmitted and perceived by those who accessed it in the form of literary, not spoken language. At least since the early commentaries to the Classic of Poetry (*Shijing*) written during the Warring States period (the 5th to the 3rd century BCE) and thereupon followed by a long tradition, and with respect to poetic literary conventions established at the courts of the Han-Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) and its followers, poetic text culture remained under the strong influence of styles associated with the cultural charism of court-life under one of the dynasties ruling over Chinese soil. Accordingly, poetry critics in Korea since the Mid-Joseon dynasty, brought about change in the previous convention of accepting only one particular dynasty's poetic style as universal model for sophisticated poetry by beginning to differentiate

and objectively evaluate the qualities of High-Tang (the mid-7th to the mid-8th century) style and of Song Dynasty (the 10th to the 13th century) Jiangxi-style.[1] These were both universal and cosmopolitan poetic charisms, those under their direct influence were comparatively few and anyone influenced by this transforming and edifying force of poetic style would influence and educate others within those almost intimately narrow circles as well. Encoded into the practice of poetry was righteous conduct 義 (의, *ui*; Chin.: *yi*) as ultimate precondition of legitimate and worthy expression anytime and anywhere. It was high-class-poetry adapted to elite aesthetics without exception, even though both Tang- and Song-styles would allow for some latitude in opening-up from time to time to particles or rhetoric figures from the vernacular. Moreover, in defining emotional and subjective orientations of this poetic style both authors and critics preferred loyalty over love, male over female and wisdom over expressiveness.

The characteristic universalism embedded in this concept of poetry – despite the obvious shortcomings, we ought to respect for the same reasons as those we rely on when accepting artistic licence for modern works – gives a high regard to East Asian civilization. It is grounded in the ethic claim for poetic language to be the only medium with the capacity to reveal 'human nature' and the 'principle behind things'. This is well expressed in the words of the Korean poet Yi I (李珥 / 이이 , 1536–1584), an outstanding Sarim representative. Sarim (사림, hanja: 士林) was a group of scholars, who inspired by the teachings of the Song thinker and statesman Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), opposed meritorious retainers at Joseon's court. In order to pursue self-cultivation these scholars preferred life in exile to engagement in court-politics and writing poetry to managing state institutions. But they did not conceive of themselves as isolated individuals leading a life of religious devotion or philosophical self-sufficiency. On the contrary, their personal *absence* from court business was a form of open protest and their distant voices were heard at any place to where their poems in printed form or hand-copied were distributed. This created an aura of aloofness which survived the arrogance and disdain of those who dominated the political business of the day. Yi I believed in poetry as a way of purifying the mind and cultivating true loyalty which, sooner or later would have to restore goodness in the world. In the following quotation he to a certain degree adapts positions that centuries earlier in China had been taken by Northern Song literary critics

[1] Jo, Yoong-hee: *Poetic Criticism in the Mid-Joseon Period. Focusing on Arguments about Tang and Song Styles of Poetry in the Early 17th Century.* Korea Journal, Vol. 45, No. 2, 2005, pp. 275–283.

against the bloomy and ornamental style of late Tang court-poets and in favour of a more straightforward, though scholarly even more sophisticated poetic language. Both cases, the Northern Song critics and Yi I as representative of the Confucian revolution at the Mid-Joseon court, exemplify energetic Confucian advances in favour of a transition of court-etiquette that was still under the influence of aristocratic blood-lines and monasticism. Stagnation in the unending struggles between factions at court should be prevented by promoting an original poetic style that addressed problems in a more outspoken way, thereby expressing a sense of personal responsibility of the poet/official. Behind these historical moves in Korea and in China was the Confucian believe in the universal value of sincerity 仁 (인 *in*; chin.: *ren*), which today still remains a strong factor in East Asian social etiquettes and diplomatic culture:

> *Language is the essence of human sound, and poetry is the essence of language. Since poetry is based on human nature, it cannot be untrue. Nature is what makes the vocal sound high or low. The three hundred poems in Shijing (The Book of Odes) express sincere human emotion, penetrate the principle behind things, and convey a good-natured, generous and loyal mind, which results in righteousness; they are the basis of poetry. As the generations pass and the state of the world is thrown into turbulence, not all things expressed through poetry can be said to be based on a righteous nature, and many put much effort into pleasing the eye with sparse poetic frills.*[2]

It must be emphasized that Yi I's conceptualization of poetry as 'essence of language' and synthesis of human sound and human nature not in the sense of a particular ethnic or national idiom but as medium of universal humaneness refers to poetry written in *hanmun* 한문 (hanja: 漢文), the idiom usually referred to in Western languages as 'classical Chinese'. The Korean term *hansi* 漢詩 (hangul: 한시) equally refers to poetry as an expression of the civilizing force created by collective attempt to restore the splendour of the Han-dynasty, the first long-lasting empire over Chinese and East Asian soils and the first imperial power that had challenged political independence and cultural autonomy on the Korean peninsula in the first century BC. Traditional styles of *Korean* poetry, however, display much greater diversity. The earliest anthology of Korean poetry, the *Samdaemok* 三代目, "Register

[2] Jo: p. 269.

of three Ages" published on the order of Queen Jinseong of Silla in 888 AD, contained poems in *hyanga* 향가, 鄕歌 style. Today only twenty-five titles and texts are transmitted. The texts were created using Chinese characters according to the rules of the Idu writing system. This meant that court-officials applied Chinese characters to transcribe Korean vernacular pronunciations in a way that the texts would be readable only to the specialists themselves. The term *hyanga* translates as 'vernacular' or 'native songs', which to some scholars makes the project of their publication by the court appear as an imitation of the first part of the "Canon of Poetry" (詩經 *Shijing*), the "Airs of the States" (國風 *Guo feng*) which contains textualizations of folk-songs from major regional states of pre-imperial China (the 11th to the 6th century BC). These texts were not meant to be read by those who had sung them but by those who transferred them to the state of literature and their likes. Notably, about a millenia after "Poetry" (詩 *shi*), how the most ancient anthology of Chinese verse was originally called, had been canonized by Han emperors, a Silla Queen whose government was struggling to prevent the kingdom from political disintegration ordered her scholars to transform vernacular songs of local shades into literary texts for performance at court. This is not only an early example of Korean rulers trying to implement elements of Chinese statecraft into their own aristocratic traditions but also a clear indication of trust into the universality of court etiquette versus the particularism of local and regional customs. The originally effervescent songs from the huge diversity of Korean vernaculars were transformed into texts written in a clumsy and provisional scripture by scholar-officials mainly to archive them and to use those texts in order to flesh out a balanced and controlled ritual hierarchy of the royal court.

Under the subsequent Goryeo-dynasty (918–1392) the Korean peninsula was reunited, though conditions remained quite transitional, and Confucianism became, together with *hanmun*, 'Classical Chinese', an important soft-power weapon in the struggle of the central court against the particularism established among regional aristocrats. In 958 the court-examination system of the Tang-Dynasty (618–906) was implemented by Goryeo "to provide new civilian officials to the bureaucracy to replace the old military officials and local strongman who had participated in the founding of the Goryeo."[3] In consequence, until 1894 candidates were evaluated with respect to their ability to compose *hansi*, poetry in *hanmun*.

[3] Gimello, Robert M.; Koh, Seung-hak; McBride, Richard D.; Buswell, Robert I.; Kim, Hwansoo Ilmee; Kim, Yong-tae. The State, Religion, and Thinkers in Korean Buddhism. Dongguk University Press, 2014, p. 65.

However, simultaneously, the popularity of a poetic form called *changga* replaced that of the *hjanga*. *Changga* 長歌; or *byeolgok* 별곡 now came into fashion and the sensual, sometimes quite outspoken *erotic contents* and passionate moods of these new folk-songs, borne by female voices, constituted the core of an oral poetic culture of the Goryeo people that flourished in stark aesthetic contrast to the restrained, moralizing, male-subject-centered *hanmun* style which tends to sublimate sensuality and passion in landscape imagery. Those popular songs were first transmitted orally and recorded in the new *hangeul* writing system. However, almost immediately after the latter had been invented in the mid-15th century under King Sejong of the Joseon-Dynasty Confucian puritans at the Joseon-court were not only highly sceptical of the use of *hangul*, which they ranted e*onmun*, 'vulgar texts', but also managed to practically exclude from official culture soon after its invention. The Confucian inquisition also organized a cultural purge that resulted in the destruction of written documents of 'illicit' character. Only twelve pieces of *Changga* folk-songs escaped censorship – obviously because they remained undetected in two books on music – to be rediscovered only centuries later by modern scholars.

What does this tell us about the meaning of *hansi* or 'Sino-Korean' poetry in terms of its Koreanness? Without any direct impression of this style we can recognize that, taken as a mere fact of literary tradition in Korea, *hansi* poetry constitutes an important element in a century-long transition of Korean culture from a state of segmented, vernacular and certainly more sensual and spontaneous nature of society toward a hierarchical, cosmopolitan, clearly more disciplined and abstract one which emerged from the adaptation of Classical Chinese as a code of aesthetics and ethics maintained by the kingdom's elites.

Other styles emerged during the Joseon period to complete, along with *hansi*, the poetic tradition of pre-modern Korea. These styles were *sijo* (*hangeul*: 시조; *hanja*: 時調) and *gasa* (*hangeul*: 가사; *hanja*: 歌詞). The *sijo* is a concise form of verse not transgressing the three-line metre and leaning toward metaphysical and philosophical contents integrated in seasonal processes. It is, therefore, sometimes likened to the Japanese *haiku*. The *gasa* follow much more unrestrained and simple prosodic rules, it is usually extensive and proceeds with a narrative gesture. It contains a high degree of reflectivity and therefore sometimes comes close to the idea of an essay in poetic guise.

Contemplating the panorama of these different poetic styles one still wonders how *hansi*-poetry stands out among the other styles and whether it might differ in any substantial way from the *shi*-poetry we know as the

centrifugal continuum of the Chinese literary tradition. Almost any translator or editor of Korean *hansi* tries to find an answer to this question. The modern poet Kim Jong-gil (1926–2017), who during his youth still had experienced the living tradition of reciting and composing Hansi, published his anthology "Slow Chrysanthemums. Classical Korean Poems in Chinese" in 1983. In the foreword he acknowledges that the distinction between Korean Hansi and traditional Chinese *shi*-style is *not* natural:

> *It still remains very difficult, however, to draw a feasible distinction between traditional Chinese poetry and classical poetry in the medium of Chinese. Almost all the themes and sentiments of the latter, for example, are found in the former almost exactly in the same manner. Hence such differences as there may be between the two very similar poetries are to be discovered not so much in their typical properties as in the degree to which such properties occur. Readers may notice at once the frequent appearance of mountains in Korean poetry in Chinese, while they will but rarely encounter in it the great rivers and expansive lakes which frequently appear in its Chinese counterpart. This difference, of course, derives from the geographical differences between China and Korea; and it is perhaps too obvious a feature to deserve dwelling upon. ....*[4]

The essential problem here seems to be how geographical features, like the vastness of lakes and the greatness of rivers, become meaningful. The majority of China's traditional literati of any historical period, for example, received concepts of 'vastness' 遠 *yuan*, 'mightiness' 大 *da*, 'limpidity' 淡 *dan* and the like directly from poetic and philosophical classics. The descriptions provided by these of only a few scenic spots, compared to the immensity and diversity of the empire's geography, would inform their minds and instigate a mental process in the perception of any natural environment the readers would encounter during their life-time. Of course, this mental process any student of poetry in traditional China underwent was not significantly different from the one experienced by Korean poets on their way of becoming masters of the art of writing *hansi*. The fact that their landscapes were in Korea not in China was not at all pivotal. Even less so as nature and landscape, according to the original Daoist conceptions, functioned as universal features of a world view likely to ignore whatever a mountain, a lake, a stream with their particular

[4] Kim, Jong-gil: Slow Chrysanthemums. Classical Korean Poetry translated and introduced by Kim Jong-gil. Anvil, 1987, p. 20

populations of gods, spirits and ancestor-souls might have had to contribute to local or regional identities. As matrix of being landscape in East Asian literati arts – first of all in poetry – was not to generate any particular local, religious, personal aspect of the world but its totality. Kim Uchang, in a series of essays on East Asian landscape aesthetics, has pointed out "the paucity of larger allegorical stories" integrated into landscape depictions, directly tying them to particular, local religious traditions. Instead, Kim continues, there are only "significant motives: let us say, four plants representing the princely man's virtues or configurative designs of landscapes, with mountains, rivers, trees and rocks as places of contemplation and habitation."[5]

This paucity of religous allegory which has a strong counterpart in European landscape poetics with its long and controversial debates on the function of the allegorical as artistic vehicle of a 'higher' transcendental truth inhabiting the sensual experience of being in the form of landscape must not be misunderstood as absence of religous meaning in East Asian landscapes. At its heart is rather an essentially Confucian idea of wisdom generated by constantly paying attention to the just handling of human affairs but sublimated in finding a sense for the spiritual world *at far distance*:

> 務民之義，敬鬼神而遠之，可謂知矣。
> "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."[6]

Let us now first have a look at a text, a quatrain in the *jueju* style invented by poets of the Tang dynasty and attributed to Choi Chiwon 崔致遠 (최치원; the 857th–10th cent. AD), a Confucian scholar of the late Silla dynasty that first had succeeded to unify Korea, however, the power-balance the Silla court sought to establish, proved unsustainable. Choi, who had studied Confucian wisdom and statecraft in China, strove for reforms of the late Silla court, but remained ultimately unsuccessful. He then spent the last years of his life as a hermit-scholar near a Buddhist mountain monastery. This poem is an immediate, although not necessarily an instant response to the author's failure as servant of the state and outstanding piece of East Asian landscape lyricism and a subtle aesthetic fusion of mundane and spiritual experience:

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[5] Kim, Uchang: *Landscape and Mind. Essays on East Asian Landscape Painting.* Thinking Tree Publishing Co., pp. 113–114.

[6] *Analects of Confucius* (*Lunyu* 論語，chapter *Yongye*雍也, 22). Available at https://ctext.org/confucianism?searchu=%E9%81%A0 [last viewed 27.10.2018]

題伽倻山讀書堂瀑布	At My Study in Mount Kaya
崔致遠	Choi Chiwon
狂噴壘石吼重巒， 人語難分咫尺間。 常恐是非聲到耳， 故教流水盡籠山。	The frenzied rush through the rocks roars at the peaks. And drowns out the human words close at hand. As I always fear disputes over right and wrong, I have arranged the waters to cage in these mountains.

The language is comparatively simple and open. A learned reader can hardly miss the intention wrapped in the landscape-imagery of the verse. The text gives the impression that at previous occasions during a period of time that lies behind him the subject/author had pushed his worldly experience – to which he gives no detailed explanation except for the mentioning of "disputes over right and wrong" – to the utmost limit. Because in *hansi* poetics, like in classical Chinese poetry, a familiarity of the reader with the biography of the author as general or specific context of his poetic utterances is taken for granted, we are supposed to imagine the author in his former years as student and official, first, by devoting long years of his life to studying Confucianism and statecraft at the Tang capital Chang'an and then by offering his services as a re-patriate with extraordinary skills and experience abroad to the Queen of Silla. The ultimate failure of his high ambitions, however, doesn't force him to give up his essential way of life which consists in pursuing the ideal of self-cultivation typical for Chinese refined culture under Tang. This ideal reflects the ambiguity of Confucian loyalty and Buddhist spiritual freedom which achieves sublime expression in the landscape poem. In the first couplet, wild nature is not only hoarse and uncivilized but it also excludes human words and the communality they potentially create. The term 人語 *in eo*, 'human talk/words', alludes to the Tang poet Wang Wei's 王維 (699–759) famous quatrain "Deer gate", 鹿柴 *Lu chai*, which was already legendary in literati circles of Chang'an during the years Choi spent there as student. It is very likely that Choi's approach to *Seon*- (chin.: *Chan*-) Buddhism was similar to that of Wang Wei and a large majority of those sophisticated elite officials who served in the imperial bureaucracy of the capital. *Seon* seemed to show a way to mentally transcend the moral dilemma of unconditional loyalty (to the emperor) and truth (independence from any form of power) into 'emptiness' 空 (chin.: *kong*; Korean: *gong*), which since the era of Tang was known among East Asian literati as the translation into Chinese of the Sanskrit terms *śūnya* or *śūnyatā*: "the essential unsubstantiality and

illusoriness of all phenomena"[7]. Wang Wei's quatrain to which Choi's allusion leads us is regularly explained as a poetic reflection of this idea:

鹿柴	Deer Gate
空山不見人	On the empty mountain no one is in sight,
但聞人語聲	But voices are heard.
反景入深林	Reflected light [of the setting sun] penetrates the thick forest,
復照青苔上	And shines again on green moss.

In her critical study "The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei's Poetry", however, Yang Jingqing opposes the dominating opinion:

"Buddhist practice may have played only a small role in his [Wang Wei's] life. We do not know whether he had the Buddhist notion of emptiness in his mind when he saw the 'empty mountain' and described it in his poem. All we know is that this poem, the fifth of the "Wang River Collection", was about a scenic spot on his Wang River estate. Available sources do not show that this Deer Enclosure [Gate] had anything to do with Buddhism or that it was a place where Wang Wei usually practiced meditation."[8]

While Yang has the right to doubt the givenness of Wang's intention to describe the poetic scenery as place of *seon* – enlightenment, because the term 空山, in classical Chinese firstly means an abandoned mountain or simply an untouched mountain wilderness and only after the Tang and with the increasing influence of *chan* – ideas as metaphors in poetic discourses also adopted the meaning of 'emptiness of the mightiest' as a form of enlightenment, the term 人語 – Korean: *in eo*; chin.: *ren yu;* 'human words', 'human talk', '[human] voices' – which Choi uses for his allusion – clearly refers to the world of human communication as opposed to the spiritual sphere of mountains. In the perception of the reader this must suggest *distance* and detachment from the human world in the perspective of the mountain-dweller.

If Choi's explicit reference to Gaya, a particular place he had personally chosen to spend his remaining years close to Buddhist sacred sites, makes it much easier to believe in his intention to achieve *seon* – enlightenment in order to overcome the pain of his failed, life-long ambitions we can take this

[7] Kroll, Paul W. A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese. Revised edition. (Brill, 2017), p. 241.

[8] Yang, Jingqing: The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei's Poetry. A critical study. The Chinese University Press, 2007, p. 143.

as indication of an already wide-spread convention to read Wang Wei‘s poetry in the spirit of *Seon*. All the more interesting, then, is it to follow Choi to the end of his poem. In the second couplet resonates the “disputes over right and wrong” 是非 *si bi,* meaning fruitless debates at court, intrigues and what else may decompose the morality and resoluteness of the upright Confucian advisor. The last line clearly presents a conclusion; the essence of what the subject has learned by experience is introduced with the deductive 故 *go*, ‘therefore’. The idiomatic term 流水 *ryu su*, lit.: ‘flowing waters’, refers to what does not become putrid. This meaning still today is conserved in the Chinese proverb 流水不腐, *liu shui* [*ryu su*] *bu fu* – “Flowing waters do not putrefy”. Thus, fresh, flowing waters remain vehement in the folds of the heart as they ‘rush’ and ‘roar’ among ‘rocks’ and ‘peaks’. The landscape of outward nature, now, is not anymore a metaphor of the outward world – as seen from ‘inwards’ Gaya-mountain – but has been transformed into an image of the innermost, most rigid nature of the poetic subject. Not so much is left, after completing the reading of the quatrain, of *seon* – enlightenment as a religious motive, *even though* it seems quite reasonable to assume that Choi had been under direct influence of poetic fashions and the already popular legend of Wang Wei as a *seon*-recluse-poet. The semantics of landscape in this poem are clearly universal in a mundane sense. The poem is artistically refined and distils words to create meaningful images. In this respect, it is an offspring of Late Tang poetic style, a convention quite different from Wang Wei’s way of writing and generally not too much appreciated by later critics in Korea and in China as well. What distinguishes the poem from what we know about Late Tang poetry and its leaning toward worldly wisdom, scepticism and disillusion and what I deem to be ‘Korean’, at least in historical context, is the proud passion of an experienced man who has given up on all his merits and still doesn’t feel compelled to escape into allusive grumbling and erudite bitterness. Choe’s bearing comparison with a magician who, after the experiment of reforming Korean politics with the help of Chinese soft-power has failed, starts over and begins a new one based on a radically different formula. His final line “I have arranged the waters to cage in these mountains” 故教流水盡籠山 expresses an unrelenting sense of independence. It is he himself who has decided and wants to prove capable of manipulating outer conditions so as to accommodate them to his own sense of being. He believes in his ability to ‘arrange the waters’ – his personal, remaining life-energy – and led them achieve their ultimate fulfilment in the purity of the mountains.

This impression has been anticipated by the German translator and sinologist Ernst Schwarz, who, in 1973, published the first and so far only translation-anthology in German language of what he calls ‘Sino-Korean

poetry', "Lob des Steinquells"/"Lore of the Stony Spring".[9] Schwarz couches the idea in more general terms and on a wider background of reading-experience than my own one: "Classical Chinese poetry often suffers from two exaggerations: a subtle restraint and formal hyper-sophistication … ; to this still adds a passion for quotations and historical allusion that often, under the pressure of erudition, flatten the emotion beyond recognition. … For the Korean poem is keener, more immediate, more passionate, not as detached and worldly-wise [as its Chinese counterpart] it is also more powerful and more fervid in its denouncement of injustice."

Schwarz wrote while holding a chair of sinology at Humboldt University in East-Berlin, the capital of the former German Democratic Republic. However, I do not think that his assessment of *hansi* as being "more powerful and more fervid in its denouncement of injustice" was merely ideological. Injustice is a huge topic in East Asian lyricism, and often this is attributed to the civilizing impact Confucianism, emanating from China, has had on political and social culture. In this respect, it seems, Confucianism in East Asia observes the role Christianity has played for a long period in European civilization. The role of an ideology which provides society with a set of comparatively stable values that transcend the egoisms of any particular group of interest, bridging the graves between the poor and the rich, those being ruled and those in power and thus replacing naked cynicism with a sense of responsibility. But Confucianism also starkly differed from Christianity, which within its historical sphere of cultural dominance regularly inspired to challenge the status quo of social and political power. In pre-modern East Asia, the cultural influence of Confucianism on elites ruling and managing the state has basically immunized the latter against religiously motivated criticism. Thus, the engagement of the lyrical voice against injustice can also be interpreted as response to those many negative aspects in the relations between the state and the population it governs that are produced by a bureaucracy the weight of which was a heavy, often unbearable burden on society. In Joseon Korea not less than in China the bureaucracy that balanced and controlled the complicated positions of interest had to be legitimated by the cultural prestige of Confucian etiquette not less than modern welfare-state bureaucracies must claim to be the safeguards of 'social stability'. In this view the critical lyrical voices of classical Korean *hansi* poets perhaps at times sound 'fervent' to us but they certainly remained as powerless as those of their Chinese counter-parts. Conspicuously the compassion of poets never

[9] Schwarz, Ernst: Lob des Steinquells. Klassische koreanische Lyrik. Insel Verlag, 1988, p. 27.

led them to doubt the cosmo-sociological order they mostly served as officials and by which they ultimately abided in their personal longing for promotion and happiness. Managers of the state machinery in their major profession, the majority of *hansi* poets remained deeply suspicious against any religious movement that had the potential to mobilize masses. Étiennes Balazs has attributed to the group of elite families that participated in *hansi* poetic culture and saw themselves as representatives of a universal culture the ultimate aim "to maintain the status quo of the social hierarchy. Ancestor worship, divested of its earlier religious character, geared the social mechanism, regulating every detail of social relations. Respectfulness, humility, deference, docility, complete submission and subordination to elders and betters – these were the dominant features of the Confucian ethic that helped to cement the hierarchy, creating a patriarchal, paternalistic world in which gradations of rank, from the sovereign downward, were marked by the reciprocal relations of favor and obligation, and individual rights, initiative, and liberty were entirely lacking."[10]

It was a social reality of the kind described above that produced both light and shadowy sides of classical lyricism in East Asia aptly described by Ernst Schwarz as "subtle restraint and formal hyper-sophistication". The deep attachment to a cultural universalism the ratio of which by far outweighed religious passion and put into its own perspectives the sacredness of place and being was at the very heart of landscape conceptions in East Asian poetry and painting:

> *Whatever the chronology may be, it is safe to say that landscape painting has a great deal to do with the kind of secularism as represented by Confucianism, which saw, along with Taoism, in nature the supreme matrix of creation, not in some transcendental realm. For the totality of nature as an object of this creative source is best represented in pictorial terms in a landscape covering as large an expanse of space as is possible, while other representational topoi taken from nature may be said to constitute episodes from this landscape as all that there is.*
>
> *To say this is to attribute spiritual significance to landscape painting – or the experience of landscape, pictorial forms or in actual peregrination in the wilderness. Travelling in scenic mountains and waters, and recording the experience in painting, poems and essays were wide spread among*

[10] Balazs, Etienne: Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy. Edited and with an introduction by Arthur F. Wright. Yale University Press, 1964, p. 155.

the pre-modern Koreans. The experience had, if not religious, at least quasi-transcendental significance.[11]

With the following brief discussion of a quatrain by the Joseon-scholar and poet Kim Goeng-pil 金宏弼 (1454–1504) I will provide an example of the direction secularization took in Korean landscape poetics from early stages represented by Choi to full stylistic maturity. While the topic of both poems is basically the same – retreat from officialdom – Kim does neither mention the turmoil of the world that actually must have pressed him to quit it nor do his verse attempt to reproduce the spiritual aura of a *particular* locality he personally loves and experiences in the subjective *welt* of the poem.

書懷	My Way transl.: Kim Jong-gil
處獨居閑絕往還 只呼明月照孤寒 憑君莫問生涯事 萬頃烟波數叠山	I live in peace and quiet, confining myself to home; Only the moon is invited to shine on my loneliness. Please do not ask me how I am getting along: There are endless misty waves and hills on hills.[12]

In further discussing this text I will not indulge in aspects of the author's biography similar to those that have provided a fruitful background in approaching Choi's poem. As hermeneutic method in this case it seems as inappropriate, or at least doubtable, as the inclination of many critics of Wang Wei's "Deer Gate" to imagine the author meditating a landscape he regularly explored as *seon*-practitioner on this particular purpose. Although it is not mentioned with a single word, the poem evolutions as the mere idea into images of an immense *absence*. Landscape or nature, as the matrix of this absence, of course, signify DAO and the subjective state of mind and social status as "recluse" 隱者 *eun ja*, which is obviously displayed in the opening line, indicates sublime spirituality. The landscape shines in the aura of its one and only dweller, the one who, in line three, the point where a quatrain is supposed to reveal its plot, refuses to answer the question about 生涯事 *saeng ae sa*, "things that would keep him busy until the end of his life". Personal fate, life-long struggle, failure or success and where all this might lead to in the end – thus the core-problems of religious life and religious ways

[11] Kim, Uchang: p. 115.
[12] Kim, Jong-gil: p. 58.

of life – are not at all topical in this poem. Instead, within a short series of images – living peaceful, quiet; loneliness facing the full moon; misty waves, hills on hills – a universal and self-confident secular wisdom takes possession of a mind which, thereby, disengages itself from anything particular in the world. This was the wisdom of the intellectual elites of pre-modern East Asian bureaucratic civilization, a wisdom that slurred over vernacular experience and the intertwined religious realities, because it was deeply anchored in loyalty and devotion to the sacrosanct authority of secular power.

With the next and last poem to be discussed here, I would point to another aspect of *hansi* which, in my limited view, however, seems to be typical for Korean mentality adapting to the poetic culture contemporaries estimated for its universal rather than for a 'Chinese' sophistication. The following poem consists of eight lines (four couplets) in 'regulated verse' (chin.: 律詩 *lü shi*; hanja: *ryul si*) and is attributed to Kim Geuk-Gi 金克己, a literati-official and poet who lived over the turn from the 12th to the 13th century. Kim Jong-gil translates the title roughly "At a Station House", foreshadowing the poem's belonging to the subgenre of travel poetry. The first two characters 高原 *go won,* read as the name of a settlement in the most northern part of Korea. Thus, it obviously is a place-name referring to a station resort nearby Kowon, and since the poem reveals that the subject is on his way back from a three-year journey in China, the title might be expected to foreshadow a mental transition in the poem experienced by the traveller when returning from China back to his native soil.

高原驛	At a Station House transl. Kim Jong-gil[13]
百歲浮生逼五旬	Though nearing fifty years in the life-span of a man,
奇區世路少通津	Little luck have I had in my ill-fated career.
三年去國成何事	What have I achieved during the years away from home?
萬里歸家只此身	I have come back empty-handed from so far away.
林鳥有情啼向客	Still the forest birds warble kindly to me;
野花無語笑留人	The wild flowers, wordless, smile to make me stay.
詩魔處觸來相惱	So, the devil of poverty nags at me everywhere:
不待窮愁已苦辛	Together with poverty, that is my troubles' cause.

In contrast to the poets of the Tang-Dynasty those of Song are generally famous for their subtle irony, self-criticism and a good sense of humour.

[13] Kim, Jong-gil: p. 41.

There can be no doubt that Kim was inspired by the flavour of poetic culture he had experience in the vibrant urban areas of the late 12th, early 13th century China. What we find here in his own words, however, seems to confirm this hypothesis but also allows to make some more particular observations.

To be sure, the poem strictly follows the formal rules of 'regulated verse', which means it should be divided, first, into four couplets and, second, into an opening couplet, two central couplets (for the culmination of synergies produced by restricted parallel word order) and, last, a concluding couplet. The opening couplet of this poem establishes an outlook on the subject's personal life, which, in the most objective sense, now comes closer to its end than it formerly used to be to its beginning, but achievements remain unsatisfying. In a merely technical sense, culmination of synergetic strands of meaning in the two central couplets is achieved by juxtaposing measures of time – 三年*sam nen*: three years (of travelling) – and space – 萬里 *man ri*: ten-thousand 'miles' for coming home, and conventional representations of features of natural environment – birds and flowers. But closer reading reveals that by the third couplet the traveller, who was formerly presented as an ambitious yet unsuccessful student, now observes himself in the pose of a sentimental day-dreamer who appears quite content with the beauty of flowers that even don't need words, only a smile, to 'make' the traveller 'stay' and forget about his high-flying goals. This makes that the strongest words in the concluding couplet, the 'devil of poetry' – 詩魔 *si ma* is similar in meaning to the European idea of a demon or genius of poetry – and "troubles" – 苦辛 *go sin* – are highly charged with irony.

The translation of the final line is not precise enough in my understanding. Instead of "Together with poverty, that is my troubles' cause", it should rather say "Before poverty struck me, that already caused me troubles". This does no harm to the ingenuity of Kim's translation in general, but the detail reveals the basic poetic intention to strip off completely the conventional costume of lamenting unsuccessfulness and to invite the reader with a wink to enjoy the pleasures of life wherever they 'warble' and 'smile at one'.

It is noteworthy here that this text, although strictly adherent to formal requirements and deeply imbued with the witty, ironical modern spirit of the epoch, gets easily along without those complicated literary allusions that transform into a thorny thicket many a 'regulated verse' poem written by the Chinese contemporaries. Compared to the latter, Kim was obviously less interested in intertextual subtleties and among the Korean poets he doesn't seem to make an exception in this respect. Instead a profound engagement with new fashionable techniques of literary allusion, the passion of the Chinese Jiangxi-poets of whom Kim must have learned a lot, Kim seems to reflect

on a quite personal experience: the traveller‘s return home perceived as a transition from China or ‘the world’ of urban civilization and knowledge back to Korea. Despite a certain frustration about missing achievements, this poem does not praise any form of withdrawal from the world, spiritual detachment, lofty superiority in face of misty vastness that swallows particular realities. On the contrary, the heart seems touched by a sensation of proximity and welcomes the peculiarity of home in crossing a swell – also an inner swell – that separates the latter from that world of cultural universalism to which Korea and its elites already had partly adapted.

East Asian classical poetry written in Chinese, to which *hansi* as one of the many forms of pre-modern Korean lyricism belongs, is indeed a mirror of a civilization the primary values and orientations of which were anchored in the authority of a centralized imperial bureaucracy which served as model for governments in autonomous states like Korea, Japan and Vietnam. The peculiarities of vernacular languages, cultures, religious customs and believes are reflected by this mirror in many ways, always at a certain distance, sometimes with awe, but rarely expressing devotion, sometimes with disdain, but never indulging in religious zeal entailed by controversial confession, sometimes poets display mere interest as observers who also were charged with administering public facilities and balancing the diversity of interests in areas remote from the seat of the government. All in all, the haughtiness of a class of landlords who saw themselves as bulwark of loyalty to a ruler whose throne symbolized unwobbling balance of cosmic energy is echoed by the aesthetics of ‘landscape as a transcendental substitute’ and in their pervasive dominance over poetic imagination. But beneath the haughtiness of those detached poetic minds often lingers a vivid sense of humour and an easy-goingness that, together with a sensibility for native culture and identity, makes Korean *hansi* poetry a rich source for the exploration of the universality of East Asian civilization today.

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Supernatural Wars in a Korean Rural Village: The Hegemonic Fights with Confucius, Ancestors, Local Gods, and Yahweh

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Introduction

The current paper is dedicated to a descriptive ethnography about supernatural wars in a rural village near Jeonju City (全州市). The hegemonic spiritual war continues since the young Christian missionary (宣教師) came into the village in 1970. A tension between the Confucian followers and the Christian followers in the village still persists.

1. Village setting

Pyung-chon village (平村, peaceful village) is located about 8 km south from Jeonju City, the capital city of Jeonbuk Province (全羅北道). Since the village is in a basin surrounded by the mountains of 200~500 m, the villagers came to Jeonju through narrow passes only on foot until a bus route opened in 1975. It took about 2 hours on foot to Jeonju, but takes about 30 minutes by bus. Since the basin opens only southward, the bus route detours south, then turns around the mountains to reach Jeonju.

The village has been dominated by Yi (李) clan for the last 400 years. They are the descendants of a Chinese general, one of Tang (唐)'s royal family, who came to occupy Baekje (百濟) in the 660 A.D. with Tang's Army. After the destruction of Baekje, the general settled in Korea and his descendants now number about 100 thousand in Korea. One of his descendants came to the village about 400 years ago in order to avoid Chosun-Japan war (壬辰倭亂) in the 1590s, and soon dominated the region. His brother was the Governor (觀察使) of Jeonju at the time. They soon constructed a Confucian school (書院) in the village and prohibited their clans from visiting Buddhist temples (寺刹). However, they allowed a shaman (巫堂) to live in the village to deal with misfortunes, diseases, bad spirits or fortune-telling, which could not

Figure 1. Location of Pyungchon village nearby Jeonju city with 630 000 residents.

Figure 2. Shrine of village Confucian school

Figure 3. Village Confucian school

be resolved by the Confucian scholars. Usually, women or the lower classes relied on the shaman residing in the village (Lee 1983).[1]

The number of households (家口) of the village was 43 in 1970 (240 persons), while today nearly 30 (~80 persons) remain. The village is surrounded by approximately 30 ha of farmland, about one ha (15 畝) per household. Traditionally, they focused on rice cultivation, while at present the cash crops prevail, such as garden plants, even though most of the farmland still is the paddy field (Yi 1984).[2] Six households moved into the village from Jeonju and commute to Jeonju city. Almost the entire young generation has moved to cities to attend school, not to return to the village.

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[1] Lee, J. M. A Study on Landscape Change of Wonpyungchon (in Korean). M.A. Thesis, Dept. of Geography, Seoul National University, 1983.
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[2] Yi, J. D. Change of Agricultural Labor by Rice Cultivation Technological Transformation: Case Study of Wonpyungchon (in Korean). M.A. Thesis, Dept. of Anthropology, Seoul National University, 1984.
이정덕,「수도작기술변화에 따른 농업노동의 변화 : 원평촌의 사례연구」, 서울대 인류학과 석사논문, 1984.

2. Supernatural worlds before introduction of Christianity

The village had been a Confucian village until the 1970s. The Confucian school (普光書院) is still located in the village centre and adorned with the portraits of Confucius (孔子), Mencius (孟子) and others (顔子, etc.). The tablets of Confucian scholars related to the village are also kept in the shrine of the school. This school lost the function of schooling from the period of Japanese colonialism, but retains the function of Confucian ritual (about the nearby Confucian schools including this school, see Committee, 2004).[3] The school still organizes an annual service in honour of Confucius in May, and about 20 elders in the region attend this annual ritual. They usually belong to a literati class (儒林) and the leaders of their clans. However, the main organizers and attenders are the leaders of the Yi clan, because the school was established by the Yi clan and the tablets of two locally famous scholars of the Yi clan are kept in the shrine.

There are several clan organizations in the village. The main umbrella organization (宗中) includes all the descendants of the village ancestor of the Yi clan. However, the number of descendants who attend the clan ancestral ceremony fell from hundreds to tens and also from all ages to the old age group. Small clan organizations (門中, 小宗中) also perform their own clan ancestral worship (時祭) in front of the ancestral graves or at the ancestral sites or halls.

In the realm of household, most clan members gather to service ancestral rites (祭祀) and to visit the graves to worship ancestors. They call on the clan elders on the lunar New Year's Day to kowtow (歲拜) and share ritual foods. The gravesites are chosen according to the theory of geomancy (風水地理). For example, one grave, which is believed to be a good fortune site, is located on a head of snake-shaped place (蛇頭形) and has a symbolically good omen (oak forest) on the front side. Many villagers believe that the sons of the person resting in this grave have succeeded because of the good feng shui (風水) effects (氣) of the grave upon the descendants. In the olden times, some villagers considered flood, drought, or disasters of the village

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[3] Committee for Jeonju Confucian School Records
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Figure 4. Worship of ancestors

Figure 5. Ancestral shrine

Figure 6. Clan's worship of ancestors

as the punishment (天罰) by the sky (or heaven), whereas nobody believes in the sky punishment today.

Since the mountains block an easy communication with urban areas, the village continued the animistic beliefs, especially on the side of women, until the 1970s, while male adults focused on ancestors' worship and Confucian rituals. Each house had various kinds of spirits, such as ancestral spirit (祖上神), house spirit (城主神, 家宅神), kitchen spirit (竈王, 火神, 財物神), spirit for baby (産神), land spirit (地神, 大監), gate spirit (門神), well spirit (水神), toilet spirit (廁神), etc. The two big trees at the entrance to the village were considered to be the gods village protectors (堂山木), which were serviced in every lunar January 15 until the 1960s, and a big rock at the bottom of the village was also considered as a god to safeguard the villagers (堂山岩). There was a village property and the organization established for worship of the village protector-gods (trees), which organized the worship ritual and festival in January until the 1960s. The leaders of village clans headed the ritual (堂祭), but usually did not join in the festival (農樂& 舞). The common and young villagers were the main participants of the festival.

Figure 7. Village Protection Tree God

Some villagers also believed in all kinds of other spirits (鬼神, 魂, 神) such as trees, water, mountains, goblins, etc. The shaman who had lived during Japanese rule moved out of the village in the 1940s, because the female shaman and her family were stigmatized as a low caste by other villagers. However, another shaman still resides in a nearby village, and she worships the mountain gods (山神) and the hero-god (英雄神) (Yi, et al. 1983).[4]

Even though some, especially old women, visit Buddhist temples (佛敎 寺刹) personally, there is no Buddhist attender in the village. The genealogy (族譜), which carries all the names of village clan descendants, discloses that the Yi founder of the village prohibited Yi clan from attending Buddhist temple. The Yi founder and his brothers were firm followers of Confucianism.

[4] Yi, J. D. et. al., 1983, "Report of Fieldwork in Wonpyungchon" (in Korean), Dept. of Anthropology, Seoul National University.
이정덕 외.「현지조사 보고서」, 서울대 인류학과 현지답사 조사노트, 1983.

Figure 8. Village Maitreya God

3. Introduction of Yahweh (여호와, 天主)

In 1970, a young college student from this village came back the village to start a Christian worship. She was not a member of the Yi clan but soon recruited a young Christian seminary student of the Yi clan. They invited a missionary (傳道師) and met weekly for the Christian service (禮拜) held in a room. When they gathered to study and to worship Yahweh, the villagers thought they were unethical because they rejected the ancestral worship (regarding the earlier spread of Christianity in Jeolla Province, see Kim 2002 & Song 2005).[5]

[5] Kim, J. H. The Diffusion and Impact of Christianity in Jeolla Province in Late Chosun (in Korean). M.A. Thesis, Dept. of History, Chonbuk National University, 2002.
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송현숙, 「해방 이전 호남지방의 장로교 확산과정」『한국기독교와 역사』 23호, 2005

They soon decided to build a tent church (天幕敎會). When they constructed a tent church near the village protector-god tree, many residents were angered and threw stones at the tent. The followers of Christianism were unrelenting and repaired any damages to the tent. Within a year, nine old people of the village died and most of the villagers thought that the village protector-god was angered at the tent church. The villagers, mostly led by the old literati, destroyed the tent church eight times. Whenever the tent was destroyed, the young followers of Christianism reconstructed the tent.

The old people truly believed that the village god was angered and expected more disaster for the village. They thought that the young followers of Christianism disregarded the grace from their parent (and also ancestors) and broke fundamental human ethics (天倫 侵害). They said, "only a crazy person can do so", or "they are infected by bad Western madmen". On the other hand, the followers of Christianism were assured that "the rural villagers still believe in the superstition (迷信)", or "the old people only stick to the wrong and meaningless tradition (傳統)".

The young evangelists were the sons or daughters of the villagers who were usually among the poor. However, the young followers' studies in urban schools and had more knowledge about modern science, humanities, and other scholarships. They learned about Christianity in college environment and considered Christianity as a more advanced religion, and they experienced sufficient debates against Christianity. In Korean urban areas, the influence of Confucian organizations had already disappeared, even though most urban dwellers still practiced annual ancestral ritual (祭祀) in everyday life. Ancestor worship and the respect for the old are just customs. In the case of Jeonju, about 30 % of the residents already attended the churches. The Christians are the most powerful group in terms of religion in Jeonju. They considered Confucianism, Buddhism, or traditional folk beliefs a retarded and superstitious tradition. As the villagers still depended on Confucian ideology, ancestor worship or local spirits, the evangelists thought that villagers could not improve themselves. Pagan idols, from the perspective of the Christians, should be challenged and destroyed by the only God (唯一神), Yahweh. The young evangelists did not deny the ancestors themselves, but rejected the worship for the ancestors as spirits (about the general situation of Christianity in rural area, see Lee 1992).[6]

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[6] Lee, W. K. The Condition of Korean Rural Churches (in Korean). *Christian Thoughts*, Vol. 399, 1992.
이원규,「한국 농촌교회의 실태」,『기독교사상』, 399호, 1992.

Figure 9. Village church

Figure 10. Sunday worship at village church

4. The War of Position (陣地戰) among Gods

There was a war of positions between the old leaders of clans and the young evangelists that commenced in 1970. However, after 1970, there was no physical violence between them. They just missaid, reprehended, or criticized each other. The main focus from the Confucian perspective was placed on the immoral behaviour of Christianity followers in their ancestral rituals. Most villagers agreed upon this point. Even though the evangelist thought the Confucian rituals were superstitious, they could not persuade the villagers to agree. The focus from the evangelists' point of view was on the almighty power (全知全能) of Yahweh. They used the term *hananim* (the only god in Korean), because Yahweh was not familiar with the rural inhabitants.

The poor and women, especially old women, who were not the main stream of Confucian order, were less hostile toward the young evangelists. The old women depended more on house spirits (家神) or on local gods (鬼神, 神) than on their husbands' ancestors. They often invited a shaman to deal with supernatural spirits which caused misfortune or disease, or prayed to house spirits or local gods for fortune, health, or good harvest. Some of old women joined the church because they thought *hananim* (the only god, Yahweh) would do same tasks as local gods but with much greater power. Only a few old women and poor men joined the church in the 1970s.

For example, an old woman joined the church and her husband, a Confucian follower, did not prevent her from going to church. Although she attended the Christian services on Sunday, she did not accept the core ideology of Christianity (e.g., Confucian worship is an idol worship, there is the only god and all the other gods are idols or Satans). She just considered *hananim* as one super-god and could coexist with Confucian ancestors or any other spirits or gods. She just switched her prayer object from the local spirits and gods to *hananim,* or she prayed to *hananim* and also to local spirits and gods together. She also did not have a problem to provide ritual foods for the ancestral worship or to attend the worship at home or ot a grave. Yet some Confucian husbands banned her wives from attending the church.

A long-lasting tie prevailed between the Confucian leaders and the young evangelists. Even though the Confucian group had a moral upper hand among the villagers, they could not purge the Christian followers from their midst. Since the law prohibited personal violence, they just hoped that their adversaries would become exhausted and give up. However, no one surrendered their ideology. The young evangelists were unshakeable and won a few women and poor followers over, and decided to construct a real church from blocks with support from the churches in Jeonju in 1972. The young

evangelists also made money by selling rice cakes, rice breads, and other products in Jeonju, and they constructed the building themselves.

The old Confucian leaders repeatedly threatened to destroy the building, nevertheless, they failed to execute the destruction. Were they to tear down the building, they should be arrested by the police. Although the evangelists were a minority and under continuous moral attacks, they were protected by the law and the police, and also resorted to the urban churches for money and support.

5. Yahweh finally gains the upper hand

The church was constructed in 1973. This religion could imprint its existence upon the villagers not only by the physical existence (the biggest building in the village) but also by continuous ringing of bells and singing through a loudspeaker across the village, celebrating each service on Wednesday and Sunday. The existence of the tallest and biggest building and the sound of worship on every Wednesday and Sunday created a new environment in the war of positions among gods. The local spirits and gods, who had been losing their influence even before the introduction of Yahweh, were further diminished and disappeared entirely in the 1970s. Their followers, usually old women, just gave up the local practices, and were converted to (pseudo) Christianity, or passed away due to old age. The legitimacy of local spirits and gods lost its grounds because they were attacked as a superstition by school education and all kinds of other discourses during the colonial government and the Korean governments. Local spirits and gods could recruit the new generations no more.

Only more systematic ideology survived, including Confucian ancestral worship and ethics, and Christian worship and ethics. The front became simplified between the two groups in the village, and the main question remained: who will win over the female group which were not the wholehearted participants of Confucian order.

As opposed to the local gods, the church could recruit the inhabitants one by one, even if the speed was negligible. In one case, a wife tried to borrow money but nobody helped her except the evangelists. She could borrow a straw-bag of rice from an evangelist. She attended the church, but her husband and brother-in-law prohibited her from going. Subsequently, she developed a very serious headache. One day, she prayed very hard and (in her visual hallucination) two persons in white gowns appeared in front of her and pushed her head forcefully. As reported, her heart became very hot and the headache soon disappeared. She became a devout Christian after the experience.

Another woman attended the church because she wanted to escape from homework for a short time or to ponder undisturbed. The old women left alone after the death of their husbands were the best targets for recruitment by the evangelists, because no rejection from their husbands interfered. Young children and students who did not hold on to the Confucian ideology also attended the church, if their parents did not oppose.

In the case of adult males, a few urban educated or experienced people from the Yi clan also converted to Christianity and some villagers other than Yi clan also attended the church. Several male adults turned to the church after they experienced a disease, because only the pastor of the church helped them, or they thought they were cured by Yahweh. Another person from the Yi clan attended the church because he was converted to Christian mindset during his military service. He was seriously criticized as unethical by the leaders of the Yi clan, because he gave up the ritual service for his ancestors. He endured the criticism and did his best for the village. After several years, the leaders of the Yi clan ceased to criticize him, moreover, they praised his sincerity and efforts for the village. Subsequently, he became the elder of the church and the status of the church rose steadily. Through various courses, the church could recruit numerous followers from women, men, and young generation. At present, about 30 people (including people from other villagers) attend the church. The number is still increasing one by one, albeit slowly.

However, the leaders of clan organizations had a difficulty to recruit young generation in Confucian school organization, clan organization, and clan ancestral worship. The leaders died one by one. Most of the leaders who opposed the church very vehemently, passed away. The people who attended clan ancestral worship soon became scarce. About 40 years ago, the village ancestral worship (時祭) could attract 50 to 100 people not only from the village but also from many urban areas, even Seoul. At present. it attracts only 10 old people, and there is no participation from the young generation. The clan leaders are concerned about the possibility of the disappearance of clan's ancestral worship. The young generation do not consider the clan's ancestral organization or worship and the Confucian school organization as a necessity, viewing these as unnecessary traditions pertaining solely to the old generation.

The church attracts primarily the young members, their flock increases very gradually, but the church has recruited most of the energetic people in the village. From the late 1980s, the church followers could become the village leaders, and did a better job for the village than the Confucian followers. From the 1990s, the pastor was generally accepted as an important leader in the village. Even the clan leaders did not oppose the pastor's activities in the

village, even though they still thought the ancestral worship was one of the fundamental cornerstones of ethics, and the church violated it. The church today is the best organized group in the village, being the single institution under the unified leadership there. The clan leadership is not concolidated, and remains less active in the village and resolution of neighbours' problems. The clan leaders rather tend to focus upon the ancestral issues than village issues.

The church has become the most powerful group in the village today. Nevertheless, it failed to acquire the moral leadership from the Confucian group. The Confucian leaders just accept the reality, still resenting the ethical code of Christianity. Through the war of positions, the church could recruit them one by one. The church was the single institution to exert the persistent efforts in converting and recruiting new members. The church today has the upper hand in the village politics, yet the followers of Christianity do not achieve the hegemony and the moral leadership. The majority of adult males still prefer Confucian ethics because they adhere to the ancestral worship and rituals. On the other hand, they are not organized and act individually, refusing to support the church, at the same time they tend to think that religion is a personal choice. The clan organizations fail to provide any tenacious efforts to convert Christians to Confucianism, while the church maintains a constant organization and efforts to convert Confucius followers to Christianity.

The cultural war of positions still reigns in the village between the two groups worshipping two different gods and worldviews. Yet, the Christians got the upper hand and apparently their hegemony is gradually increasing to become dominant in the village someday.

Heroines in Korean Myths[1]

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Introduction

When the hen sings, the home goes to ruin.
Three years as a deaf, three years as a dumb.

These proverbs provide a sound perception of the situation of the state of women in the Korean society. The first proverb showed how women were not allowed to open their mouths at home, manifestly revealing how women's right of self-expression was ignored. The second saying foretells a married woman's destiny: in her husband's home, she has to live like a deaf and dumb, who cannot speak and does not hear anything. As illustrated by these proverbs, women were not allowed to express their wishes or rights and they lived their whole lives like prisoners in their own homes. In other words, the women had only responsibilities but no rights. Even at the beginning of the 20th century the women cound not gain a higher position in society and educate themselves, and due to the Confucianist way of life, the lives of women were much more restricted compared to men.

Most of the famous people in the Korean history are men – the number of women among the people of renown is staggeringly negligible. The respected women were those loyal to the social organisation as wives or mothers.

It would be wrong to say that no efforts among women were made to improve their situation and gain a role in the society. The amount of high literature written by women (which still remains popular today) is of a particular note. Be it as it may, even today people do not know much about these writers, because they have become known under somebody else's name or under a pen name. Some of the female writers eventually committed suicide or stopped writing due to the social restrictions or because of the

[1] This research is connected to the grant no 6518 of Estonian Science Foundation.

harsh criticism doled out by men. The traditional Korean society in a sense was a very oppressive place for women.

However, considering the folklore, the role of women is revealed as very different and their contribution remarkable. Folklore became a medium, which women, who yearned for the right to express themselves, could use to fulfil their creative needs. Beautiful songs, dances and folklore, where also female voices can be heard, are part of the legacy passed on from generation to generation, and they clearly show the creative powers of female authors.

The current artice considers one of the genres of folklore – myths, or, in other words, the tales of gods. The present-day Korea retains many catching legends, fairy-tales and old myths in circulation. The tales of gods are widespread all over Korea. Researchers attest that the myths are invaluable in influencing people's thought and mindset, as well as intellectual activities. They also provide a sound perspective of society and its structure at the time when the myths were created. Assuming that the original form and content of the myths has remained unchanged from the time when they began to be canonised and passed on, it could be possible that Korean myths directly describe the structure and the face of the class society of the respective period. The most important Korean myths do not hold many female characters. A quick glance at the tales reveals that most of the characters are men and the myths tell a story about male rulers or the deeds of a divine hero. Did the situation of women living in the world of gods resemble that of the mortal women?

The most significant and venerated character of a myth is the hero. Considering the heroic myths of Ancient Greece and Rome and the Scandinavian myths of gods, obviously, most of the characters in these stories are also men. Yet in these stories, female characters who have a leading part in the narrative are present, even though their number is smaller compared to men.

The hero of the myth is clearly distinguished from the rest of the cast. A number of different characters play their part in oral folklore. Many objects in the tale can also be turned into characters, for example, animals, nature and plants. The hero's character is set as a role model for the youth, setting their future goal as following the path of the heroes. Young people seek role models among heroes because people respect heroes as the leaders of state and people.

The development of this attitude might be linked to the worship and veneration of gods, which differs from ordinary respect in importance and volume. The hero is not only an object of respect but also of awe. Awe entails also obedience, which surpasses fealty to the state. Although national heroes

as well as long dead ancestors also become objects of respect and veneration, heroes receive more than just honour or rituals shown in the way they are buried and commemorated. It is important to establish why heroes receive a more unique place compared to common people and ancestors, who are only venerated or honoured on the emotional level (Gaster 1984: 116).

The hero is usually given positive divine characteristics and is respected deeply as a person, who has witnessed numerous legends and events, ascending from human universe to a higher world or entering heaven as a living person. This type of mythical heroes in Korean tales includes the founder of the first kingdom, Dangun[2]; Jumong[3], the founder of the Goguryeo[4] dynasty; Park Hyeokgeose[5], who was the founder of Silla[6] dynasty, etc. The characteristics and divinity of these heroes substantially differ from those of European heroes. The difference will be considered in greater detail below.

How are the Korean women, who were taught to live a life as deaf and dumb, and without the right of self-expression, conveyed in myths? Are the women in myths shown only as faithful and good wives and mothers in their own social class?

The aim here is to analyse the structure of myths, emphasise the heroism of women, which instilled courage and hope in other women at that time, and to prove thereby that Korean myths are not only a passive reflection of the prevailing social situation, but have an active function influencing the society in a particular way arranging the illogical social organisation. In addition, the article will explore the heroism of Korean women in myths, which value beauty and dignity, and where the actions of women play a significant role.

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[2] Dangun Wanggeom, the descendent of the god of heaven and the mythical founder of the first kingdom of Gojoseon (2333?–108 BC), which was located around Liaoning province in Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula. Although the name Dangun usually refers to the founder of the kingdom, it is believed that it was the title used for all the rulers of Gojoseon ((EE 1990: 51–60).

[3] Jumong, the king of Goguryeo (58–19 AD, ruled the country 37–19 AD), who was also called Dongmyeongseongwong or Dongmyeong-wong, was the founder of Goguryeo, which was the northernmost of the three Korean kingdoms and its first ruler. On the stele of Gwanggaeto (which was erected by king Jangsu in 414 as a memorial to his deceased father and which is one of the few surviving original sources) he is called king Chumo (Chumo-wang). In other sources we can see other variants of names like Jumong with the family name Go; Chumo, Sanghae, Chumong, Jungmo or Domo (EE 1990: 51–60).

[4] Goguryeo (37 BC – 668 AD) was one of the three early feudal kingdoms (EE 1990: 51–60).

[5] Park Hyeokgeose (69 BC – 4 AD, ruled 57 BC– 4 AD) was the founder of Silla and its first ruler and the forefather of all Paki tribes (EE 1990: 51–60).

[6] Silla was one of the three Korean kingdoms (EE 1990: 51–60).

1. Women in Korean myths

1.1. General overview of Korean myths

With its 5000 years of history, Korea holds an immense treasure trove of oral folklore, which include *shinhwa* (myth), *jeonseol* (legend) and *mindam* (fairy tale). Naturally, there are many myths, which tell the story of the beginnings of the Korean nation and its origin. This type of myths can be found in every region and in every period of history. European myths are often about gods, who live in heaven or in some divine world, which is completely different from that inhabited by mortals. These gods live in a strange and mysterious world in an unspecified period. Most of these legends are stories about the creation of the earth or the sky. In Korean myths, the humanity of the characters is emphasised more pronouncedly than their divinity. A common topic depicted in these tales is describing encounters between god and people. For instance, gods come down to earth with the aim of creating a state and to interact with people (Butkus & Ermanytė 1999: 104). It means that part of the action of the tale takes place in terrestrial world, not in a separate divine world.

The narratives about gods started to be written down already a thousand years ago, but debates about their authenticity and plausibility still continue. The majority of the best-known Korean myths are connected to the birth of the kings of the first dynasty, which, like in European mythology, bear more resemblance to legends.

Although Korean myths are clearly historical, the heroes, namely, the kings, are divine personalities. In the narrative, the godly being ultimately becomes human. The elements of ceremonies, which were destined for the kings, who came into being in this manner, have been integrated into the structure and content of present-day divine liturgy. No single system or set of rules exists, which could be applied to all the myths of the world, permitting comparison and studies in a uniform manner. According to Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko, it is important to study how myths are used in the society, without applying a uniform standardised system, but by taking into account the regional differences. In studying myths, it is essential to first of all compare the structure of the creation myths, which are said to establish the divine order, and cosmogonic myths. Categorising myths by their content can only be applied to myths of a specific period and in one cultural space. This type of classification is not suitable for folklore, as it has been created by different members of society over a long period of time. In describing the genre, not form of the myths is the most important factor, but the way people understand them.

In order to understand myths, one should not concentrate on the stereotype, but rather upon the point of view, or, in other words, the way people react to them (Honko 1984: 50). In this article, I have mainly taken into consideration the views of renowned theorists like Dan Ben-Amose (1982), Ruth H. Finnegani (1992), Lauri Honko (1984, 1989) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1964).

Korean myth is a story which describes the origin of the people, how god descends upon the earth and the beginning of history. This means that a myth is more than just a legend or fairy tale, because it tells a tale of the direction of life of Korean people and its intellectual foundation. The structure of these myths does not differ much from that of European cosmogonic myths.

Korean myths can be divided into two: those that have been published in books and oral myths. Written myths are usually related to the founders of the nation and dynasty. Oral myths, on the other hand, are epic myths, which have been passed on by shamans, who have performed them in their rituals. The foundation myths of dynasty are written down in ancient Korean chronicles, like Samguk Sagi[7] and Samguk Yusa[8], which describe the foundation process of the nation or a dynasty, and share light on the origin of the royal family name. Myths explaining the origin of family names are characteristic to Korean values, which hold family and kinship as the foundation of society. This genre of myth has a significant role and is also very unique.

Another very important genre of myth besides the foundation myths is the shaman chant *muga*. Although people began to write *mugas* down from the year 1930, they actually have a very long history. The shaman myth, *muga,* began to form through ancient worship ceremonies or celebrations (approximately 2000 years ago). In the course of history, it has at times been very popular and at some periods forgotten by people. The main content of the shaman myths, which have survived and have been passed on, formed in the process of old religious rites and celebrations and were transformed by integrating elements of Buddhist legends as well as tales of real historical figures. Some of the myths became sources for novels and fairy-tales.

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[7] Samguk Sagi (The Annals of Three Kingdoms) is the oldest surviving historical record of the history of the three kingdoms of Korea (it was finished in 1145 and is written in Classical Chinese, which was used by the Korean nobility at the time).

[8] Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of the Tree Kingdoms) is the collection of legends, folk-tales and historical accounts of the three kingdoms of Korea (Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla), which covers the periods and rulers before and during the period of the three kingdoms. The chronicle is written in Classical Chinese at the end of the 13th century.

In short, they have a common source, but the sources for particular narratives and materials are different.

1.2. Women in Korean myths

As was mentioned earlier, the majority of the tales are related to the actions of male heroes. However, there are also women in the tales, but compared to the role of men, their part is extremely small. The female motif is mainly used for emphasising the importance of a perfect family and marriage. Study of Korean myths shows that the relationship between the spouses is the most important one in the story, not the relationship between the father and the son, which is very significant. In a marriage relationship the woman's place is similar to that of a man. In the foundation myths of the state many plots are connected to the father-and-son relationship, but this can be seen mainly when the characters set out on a quest to reunite their family. The plot, where the prince sets out on a quest to find his father is also a common theme in Korean myths. On the other hand, when we look at tales about heroes (the result of a marriage between a man and a woman) then the main part of the narrative describes the events and circumstances which led to the birth of the hero, and which plays a more important role than the story about the hero himself. For example, if a myth tells a story about character A, then part of the story, which is directly linked to the activity of A, forms the last part of the myth foretelling A's birth. The main part of the tale is about the character's parents. In Korean myths one can often find motifs, where parents pray for the birth of a son (especially in shaman myths); and forsaking the child, who is chosen by heaven, brings about a dreadful fate. This is an important schema in the structure of Korean myths. The family, which is the pillar of society in Korea, has a higher position than other values. This is the reason, why the disintegration of a family due to the relations between the first and the secondary wife is strongly condemned. This reflects the social order of past times. Even though the role of women in myths is relatively insignificant it must be said that they have not been derogated or neglected.

The most common trait of a female character in a myth is standing at the point where earth and heaven meet. Women have the function of unifiers when the two worlds cross. As was mentioned earlier, it is characteristic to Korean myths that they do not tell a story about other worlds separated from the earthly world, but they describe the divine god's descent to this world, the creation of a state or harmony between the human race and the gods. It is important to recognise that women play the most important role in connecting these two worlds.

The best example is the myth about the forefather of the Korean people and the first king, Dangun. Hwanung, the son of a heavenly god, came down to earth to rule the world with virtue and there he met a bear and a tiger, who wanted to become human beings. Hwanung told them to live one hundred days by eating only garlic and mugwort. The tiger could not bear living like that for a hundred days and ran away. But the bear lived one hundred days in this way and Hwanung transformed the bear into a woman called Ungneyo. Ungneyo wanted to have a son, so Hwanung transformed itself into a man and married Ungnyeo. Dangun, the son of Ungneyo and Hwanung, became the king who created the Korean nation. The two worlds could not have been united had it not been for Ungnyeo, even though the god descended from the heaven to earth. The two worlds were united through Ungnyeo, who put a foundation to new history. Therefore, it is quite natural that Ungnyeo receives more attention in this story than Dangun himself. In this sense Ungnyeo resembles the mythic perception of the central world tree of many nations.

The role of a woman as a unifier is not limited only to this myth. Let us take a closer look at the myth of Jumong, which is about the life of Jumong, the first king of Goguryeo (one of the Korean kingdoms). Jumong's mother, the water god's daughter, Yuhwa, was banished into the earthly world, after marrying Hae Mosu, the son of the god of heaven. She gives birth to Jumong, the first king of Goguryeo. Yuhwa is the unifier, who unites the god of heaven, like in the case of Hwanung, and by contrast, also a water god. She is the instigator, who puts a foundation to a new history in another world. As a rule, men are depicted as gods, who come to the world of humans, women, on the other hand, are usually inhabitants of this world. The Samseong myth of Jeju island, which tells a story about three women, who are sent to three divine men who were born on the island (Seo 1980: 50), is slightly different. These three divine men, who did not descend from the sky, were said to have been emerged from beneath the ground and are in principal similar to heavenly gods. The three women have been sent there from unnamed neighbouring countries to marry the gods, again playing a similar unifier role between the earth and the sky like in the case of Ungnyeo and Yuhwa.

The position of women as unifiers in Korean myths cannot be defined clearly or unambiguously, but it can be compared to the role of Jesus in unifying the creator (God) and his creation (nature). The role of women is to assimilate or unite the antipodes: heaven and earth, god and human, nature and human nature, chaos and order. In European myths heroes form the unifying link between the heaven and earth, but the Korean hero is usually the result of uniting the antipodes. The unifier is not the hero, but a character separate from the hero, who is usually a woman.

It is important to point out that women's role in myths as unifiers of antipodes is very similar to the activities of present-day shamans, who still influence the Korean culture. Until the birth of Jumong, Yuhwa's actions can be compared to that of shamans: there is the encounter with gods, who reveal a mysterious revelation, which is followed by the banishment from the society and isolation. It is possible that this is one way of rationalising shaman's divinity (Jo 1983: 50). Shamans are like priests, who similarly to the women in the myths, unite the heaven and earth. This will be analysed in more detail in the next section. [9]

2. The analysis of the characteristics of women in Korean myths

2.1. Danggeumagi, Princess Bari and Väinamöinen

So far, I have given a general overview of the role of women in Korean myths. The dominant form of myth in Korea is the written myth, which usually depicts women as just passive unifiers of antipodes. Finding myths, where women are shown as independent characters or heroines, whose actions can be compared to that of men, is very difficult. In order to find such myths, one should turn not to the written myths but to the myths, which have been passed on orally by the shamans. As was said earlier, the tradition of oral myths was handed down by shamans, who acted as the unifiers between the god and the earth. Shamans were usually women, and that placed them under double social pressure: being a woman[10] and the member of the lowest social class in Korean society. Although foundation myths of states and dynasty are dominant form of Korean myths, the influence of shaman myths on Korean oral folklore is far from being insignificant.

In this part of the article I will concentrate on the analysis of two myths, where women's actions and influence are considerable: the myths of Jeseok Bonpuri (Danggeumagi) and Princess Bari, which are considered to be of shaman origin. The value of these myths does not lie only in the fact that they give a good overview of the life and religion of by gone times of Korea. They form the main content of the best-known fairy tales and have an immense role as a source for themes in literature and art even today.

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[9] I is recomended to read the book *Myths of Korea* compiled by Seo Dae-seok published in Jimoondang Publishing, in 2000 to grasp the basic stories of myths which will referred in the next chapters. They are available in Lithuanian and Estonian, too.

[10] Only a woman could become a shaman. When a man performed shamanistic rituals he had to use woman's clothing.

Jeseok Bonpuri is the story of Danggeumagi's life. Danggeumagi is the mother of Jeseok-bodhisattvas, who are involved in the fates of dead people. In this myth, the function of woman is not much different from that of female characters of many other myths. The myth is not directly about the lives of Jeseok-bodhisattvas or their birth, but is more about the life of their mother, Danggeumagi. Like Yuhwa and Ungnyeo, Danggeumagi is the central character of the tale because she will become the unifier of the heaven (which is symbolised by India) and the world of humans. However, compared to other women, Danggeumagi's role is much more important than in other myths. She is not only the unifier of the heaven and earth, but she connects three different cultural spaces – India, China and Korea. What is more, Danggeumagi is shown as being the embodiment of a valuable trait – wisdom; she is talented in many things.

In the other myth that will be analysed, the bravery of princess Bari is clearly emphasised and its structure is not much different from that of European epic hero myths. The character of princess Bari can be compared with European mythical heroes like Väinamöinen of Finland, Lāčplēsis of Latvia and Estonian Kalevipoeg, who do not hesitate to go into the other world or hell to achieve their goal. In *Kalevala*, Väinamöinen is the link between the heaven and earth and at the same time he remains at the centre of the narrative. Similarly, Bari's actions and role in the myth entails the role of Korean mythical heroines as a modest unifier, but there is also the function of a leading character who directs the whole tale. The main similarity between princess Bari and *Kalevala* is the fact that they both tell about the shaman origin. The myth of princess Bari was handed down only from shaman to shaman as *Kalevala* was also told only by people called *tietäja*, who lived scattered around North Finland and Karelia. Väinamöinen in *Kalevala* bears surprising resemblance to *tietäja,* who is the singer of myths and the role of *tietäja* seems to be close to the role of Korean shaman (Lönnrot 1999). *Tietäja* performed incantations and magical rituals in a state of dream-like trance. *Tietäja* played an extremely important role in the survival of Finno-Ugric religion and folk traditions up to the beginning of the 20th century. Their songs can still be found in Finnish folklore, and Väinamöinen, who sings a mysterious song, is in many ways similar to *tietäja*[11].

[11] More information about *tietäja* see Siikala 2002.

2.2. The comparison of Jeseok Bonpur and Princess Bari

The axis of the myths is similar – different syntagmatic elements are added to it based on the specific myth. The components of the axis are the following:

- perfect and strong family,
- lack and preparation
- abandonment
- the key for return
- the ordeal
- the first obtainment
- complication
- the second obtainment
- the final return to perfection

The structure of these myths is significantly different form the foundation of state myths or the epic myths, because these myths usually deal with family problems and discord within the family. The structure of the two myths under scrutiny is similar to the structure of the heroic myths and epic myths of Eastern or Northern Europe; they also show many similarities to the structure of tales of magic. According to V. Propp, the content of the myth and the fairy tale differs only in their social function, but from the side of the plot and the motif the myths belong to the same category as the tale of magic (Propp 2000: 48).

I find that by analysing the two myths in general and also by comparing of each character's personal characteristics one will get a better overview of the invisible heroism of women in Korean myths and their social value. The versions of the myths have been taken from the book *Myths of Korea*, which was published by the collector of the myths, Seo Daeseok, in 2000 (Seo 2000). As there are numerous versions of each myth, depending on the region and the time of collection, it is impossible to assemble and compare all of them. I believe that the difference between myths derives from the variants of paradigmatic elements but the structure is similar in all of them. I decided to use Seo Daeseok's collection because it is acknowledged as the most authentic source.

2.3. Perfect and strong family

This element is connected to the birth of the hero. Both Danggeumagi and princess Bari are born in wealthy conditions, one as a princess and the other a descendent of an important noble. The daughter of the greatest leader of the people, Danggeumagi, has everything she needs. She has a family, parents and brothers. Bari is born as a princess in Ogu, which is a kingdom

with an unspecified location. We can see that the characters come from similar backgrounds.

All myths must end with the restoration of the perfect situation, but it does not mean perfection and wholeness only in the sense of the family. The Danggeumagi myth starts with a long description of the birth of Shakyamuni and the events that occurred before Danggeumagi was born. This way the scene is set for the relationship between Shakyamuni and Danggeumagi. The description of the birth and growing up of Shakyamuni in the beginning of the myth is just as important as the story about Danggeumagi. The analysis of the characters shows that they are not part of this world, but belong to the heavenly, divine world, which means that the circumstances of their birth differ from that of common people. We can say that the perfection that Danggeumagi has to strive for is not only restoring her family, but meeting Shakyamuni, which was predestined before Danggeumagi's birth. This means that the perfection of the family is only the first stage, which is followed by a serious complication before reaching the final solution.

Danggeumagi's father was a noble, who was sent from China to rule Korea. That relation of power is not to be interpreted as grovelling before China. It is a common feature in other nation's myths to demonstrate their legitimacy. There are also many elements in European myths, which are used for asserting the legitimacy and descent of the state from Roman emperors – the great figures and cultural standards at that time. The use of this type of element shows that Danggeumagi's family origin is not restricted only to the Korean peninsula, but it comes from the cultural heritage of Northeast Asia.

The myth starts by describing Shakyamuni's heritage and background. He is the descendent of a king of Buddhist India, and as we can assume from the context, he is also Shakyamuni[12], the founder of Buddhism, although he is described as living in Korean environment. While reading this myth it is very difficult to envisage Indian culture or living conditions. The motif of the Indian princess is used in order to emphasise the legitimacy of the culture. Hence, the narrative of this myth is about the encounter of India (the rightful Buddhist state) and Korea (a state, where Buddhism was transformed into a new culture). Thus, we can conclude that in this myth the search is not only for perfection of family or a state, but also for religious and spiritual perfection.

[12] Siddhārtha Gautama (later named Buddha, Buddha Gautama, Buddha Šākja-muni [Sakyamuni]), according to traditional dating he lived 563–483 BC) was the founder of Buddhism.

We encounter Shakyamuni's character also in princess Bari's myth. The Shakyamuni in Danggeumagi's myth is a divine character, who has mysterious or magical powers and who is named after the founder of Buddhism. However, the Shakyamuni in the myth of princess Bari is quite close to the real Buddha.

2.4. Lack and preparation

According to Vladimir Propp, the main function of miraculous or mysterious tales of magic is the lack of something (princess Bari does not have a child; in the myth of Danggeumagi there is no daughter). The lack itself is not enough. The problem arises when the characters begin to realise the complications related to the lack. In most cases the characters or heroes set out on a quest to liquidate the lack or find the missing object (Propp 2000: 99).

In the Danggeumagi myth there are many princes but the problem lies in the lack of a daughter. In the case of princess Bari, the problem arises from the fact that there is no heir to inherit the kingdom. We see the same motif in the beginning of Danggeumagi's myth when we study the circumstances of Shakyamuni's birth.

The lack of something and the need to liquidate the lack prevents reaching the state of perfection. This is how a specific and necessary purpose is formed, which the characters try to obtain – the aim to create a perfect family, which had a central position in the culture. In the case of the two heroines the aforementioned lack is already predestined from above, so they would reach the final destination like the starting point. This determines the reasons for their heroic actions and behaviour.

The dream that the parents see before the birth of the protagonist, is about the character's absence. The parents of both characters experience this dream during pregnancy. Danggeumagi has to enter this world as a heavenly fairy, whose fate is to be reborn again because of her guilt. This, as well as the lack in her parents' family, gives the heavenly fairy a chance to fulfil the long-prepared rebirth. This situation can be compared to the situation of a hero, who is sent from another world and is born with a special and secret mission.

Shakyamuni is connected to the mysterious birth of Bari. The birth of the princess emphasises the predetermined restoring of perfection, which is common in Korean myths. In princess Bari's myth the shamans warned the parents of the predestined fate, but the princess's father, king Ogu, did not give heed to it and organised his wedding as he himself wanted. Every time his wife showed signs of pregnancy, he asked for a new foretelling,

although he knew in his heart what was bound to happen. Despite all that, he ignored the predictions of shamans, which brought about the terrible result of the abandoned princess going into the underworld. In this instance we can observe how the shamans ridiculed the king and the noblemen, who pretended not to follow the beliefs and practices of shamans, although they actually did do it. It also seems like a warning from the shamans to the Korean society.

2.5. Abandonment

Abandonment is a common motif in both myths. In myths of all nations the heroes toughen by being through a difficult ordeal; and fighting is not a typical narrative element of just myths but of the entire oral folklore. According to Joseph Campbell, the main basis for leaving the family and separation is the fundamental change of focus from the outer to the inner world. The heroes isolate themselves into the unknown world of secrets (Thury & Devinney 2005: 137).

The king abandons Bari right after her birth, because there are already six daughters in the family. As a result of the abandonment the princess will live in another world. Danggeumagi is abandoned twice in her life. In her childhood her father and brothers are banished because of a conspiracy, after which her mother also leaves home to pray for the release of her family, leaving Danggeumagi all on her own. Danggeumagi's separation from her family is not any different from princess Bari being abandoned. In addition to that, after meeting Shakyamuni, Danggeumagi gives birth to a child and finds herself being imprisoned in a cave, being thrown into a situation, which is the complete opposite to what had happened so far. We could say that being imprisoned and being abandoned are the same, because they both entail separation.

Due to being separated Danggeumagi manages to meet Shakyamuni once again. In the case of princess Bari, meeting Shakyamuni, who is sure of her devotion, provides a chance to speed up the tasks which have to be fulfilled in order to achieve the predestined fate.

2.6. The key for return

Both characters were abandoned and brought up in another family and they wanted to return to the earlier perfect situation – to return to their family (according to the plot the second family is only temporary). In this part of the myth the characters are given keys for return and then another tale follows.

The keys for return in these myths are different. In the myth of princess Bari, the illness of the parents offers her the long-awaited chance to meet

them and Shakyamuni tells her how to solve the problems of her return. Danggeumagi, however, manages to hear how to obtain a perfect family and she sets on her way to get it.

Shakyamuni, who plays a part in both of these myths, differs from the helper described by Vladimir Propp. The helper is a character, who gives advice or teachings about magic and other miraculous powers which are needed to complete the task. After the character gets the needed advice, the course of the tale changes. The meeting of the mysterious helper plays a significant role in the plot of the myth and is the key condition for solving the problem (Propp 2000: 102). In case of European tales of magic the occurrence of a helper is unexpected and the likeliness that such an encounter will take place is very small. There is no chain of logic and the mentioned encounter in the myth takes place coincidentally (Propp 2000: 100). In these two myths the reason for the occurrence of the helpers was predetermined already before the birth of the characters.

It was Danggeumagi destiny to meet Shakyamuni, as it was told in the beginning the myth. Shakyamuni meets the woman, because he finds her excellent calligraphic piece of writing (upon finding the letter Shakyamuni exclaims, that this is the handwriting of a hero). Bari's meeting with Shakyamuni can only take place because of the fact that Shakyamuni acknowledges her to be a woman of extraordinary mental skills.

2.7. The ordeal

Testing the hero on the quest is a common element of myths, which shows the uniqueness of the character. The ordeal brings a lot of admiration to the hero. This is a moment of initiation, during which the character is reborn as a hero, who has a paternalistic and brave character (Thury & Devinney 2005: 141).

Danggeumagi has to pass a test of giving rice to an old monk, who was actually her future husband Shakyamuni in a transformed shape. The task is not an easy one. Shakyamuni demands that Danggeumagi lets go of the hypocrisy and pride of a noble. He shows the woman that the most important things in life are not respectability or wealth, but devotion form one's heart. Here we recognise the voice of a shaman who is passing on the myths. Danggeumagi passes the test only after she lets go of noble respectability and self-centeredness and is granted the right to go to the next stage, which is the temporary liquidation of lack. The passing of Shakyamuni's difficult test brings about a temporary restoration of a perfect family.

Bari acts very courageously at her test, and by marrying a monster she leaves behind woman's feeling of shame.

2.8. The first obtainment

At this point it seems that the problem is solved. But as it turns out, a new element appears which takes the tale to a new level. This is similar to V. Propp's liquidation of lack: the prince wins a dragon in a fight and saves the princess; Väinamöinen manages to catch Sampo for a moment. After the first successful test there is a new complication due to an unexpected turn of events, which will lead to final perfection.

Danggeumagi enjoys happy moments after her parents are released, but she also goes on a new quest to find the main perfection – meeting Shakyamuni. She is carrying Shakyamuni's son. This is a crucial moment, which signifies the second abandonment and the beginning of a new quest.

The situation of princess Bari is similar to that of Danggeumagi. She manages to find and get hold of an elixir, which can cure her parents. She also marries Mujang, which creates a new purpose.

2.9. Complication

This is a stage which, according to V. Propp, is an inherent element of tales of magic. At this point the action of the myth takes an unexpected turn because of a complication, which brings all back to the starting point the story and the same problem which the hero already had to solve in the beginning of the myth arises once again (Propp 2000: 119). Bari and Danggeumagi find out the whole truth about their fate and are therefore given a new purpose.

This phenomenon is more apparent in case of Danggeumagi than princess Bari. Danggeumagi's parents abandon her once more, because she gives birth to three unwanted children. Danggeumagi no longer lives the life of a wealthy noble's daughter, but in poverty, and it is very similar to the circumstances in which princess Bari is forced into after her birth. Also, Bari is left abandoned in an unknown world, but the child is found (thanks to Shakyamuni) by Bari's grandparents. The fact that the couple finds the girl and takes her to live with them is, like the rest of Bari's life, predetermined. Danggeumagi's children grow up with the help of a mysterious power and the same power helps her as well.

We can detect the elements of complication also in princess Bari's story. At the end of the myth there is a line which describes how Bari "came alone, but goes back with nine", which illustrates how Bari changed from a princess into person on a completely different level. The world where Bari married Mujang was like the heaven – full of life-giving plants and water of life – there was no need to be afraid of death. When Bari came back to her family, she returned to the mortal world, entering the dark caves of death. In the Korean society it is a great sin to get married without the consent

of the parents, especially in case of women. This is why Bari was ready to bear the punishment for her misconduct. Her children could have been the reason and an opportunity for complication, but the myth comes to an end without a difficult complication.

2.10. The second obtainment

The quests of the heroes continue after the complication. By this time, they have been reborn by acquiring a new social position and are preparing for a new ordeal. Danggeumagi goes to India to meet her husband Shakyamuni and princess Bari returns to her dead parents with her husband and children. At this stage there are many elements, which emphasise their heroic character. After a long journey Danggeumagi reaches India and she manages to meet her husband, who has transformed into a young man. The man presents the woman with difficult tasks. Danggeumagi names her sons in India and Shakyamuni calls his wife a sagacious person. The first meeting of Danggeumagi and Shakyamuni takes place thanks to a piece of writing done in a special calligraphic form and this motif is repeated also at the end of the story. The phrase 'sagacious person' is used only by a man. In the Korean earlier society, the phrase 'sagacious person' meant much more than just a 'wise person'. In Korea, wisdom and knowledge are the most important characteristics of a person, and the term 'hero' is used to denote a person, who is extremely wise and who has the necessary knowledge for leading a state. Therefore, we can say that the people who passed on the myth wanted to create new heroines, who would be suitable in the circumstances which were prevailing in the Korean society at the time.

Princess Bari gets the chance to secure her future by her father, the king, which brings out the heroic nature of the character even more clearly. Bari is a heroine who saves her parents and the state and in addition becomes the spiritual leader, who helps people pass from earth to the skies.

2.11. The final return to perfection

The two myths taken as an example ended with the return to final perfection. A strong family, which was Danggeumagi's main purpose, becomes a reality, as she met Shakyamuni, ascended to the heaven as a living person and became the mother of Jeseok-bodhisattvas who helped spirits. Here we do not see much difference between her and the female characters, who in written myths represent the unifiers of antipodes.

The narrative of Danggeumagi's life does not differ structurally from that of princess Bari. When we look at Danggeumagi's myth we can say that its structure is exactly the same as in epic myths. Emphasising Danggeumagi's

kindness and bravery, which is constantly repeated in the myth, can be seen as a clear attempt to highlight the character as a heroine, who was lacking in the Korean society. This is also a signal and warning to Korean old and feeble social order from the shamans, who had to live under social pressure.

Princess Bari does not remain just a passive unifier, but becomes a goddess, who leads the spirits to the heavens and this is the greatest difference from the myth of Danggeumagi. Her role and actions cross the limits of stereotypical presentation of women and can be compared to Western heroes of myths such as Väinamöinen.

Conclusion

As was already mentioned in the introduction, the venerated heroes and their actions are models of behaviour to the people and the society. The actions of a hero, which are considered to be sacred and respectable, give legitimacy to the developments of the society. Even Adolf Hitler and Kim Il-sŏng used myths in order to show that the artificially created society of violence had legitimate basis. The divine hero, who lives in the thoughts of people, creates harmony and forms a basis for the intellectual activities; and the myth forms an essential foundation to the structure of society.

In Korean myths, the women are usually portrayed as passive unifiers, whose main function is to give birth to heroes. But among myths, which have been passed on over a long period of time, we can find examples of a nature and structure similar to European myths. The number of these myths might have been larger earlier, but they have disappeared, because men or nobles have dominated the Korean society for a long time.

The myths of heroines were not only simple reflections of the Korean society at that time, but messages against the prevailing order of the society from shamans, who belonged to the lowest class of society and lived under double-pressure. Their main message was that all people are born equal and with the same rights as humans. They ridiculed the hypocritical people of the noble class, who, on the one hand, condemned shamans, but on the other still followed their words.

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Modern Literature after the 1960s in Korea

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Introduction

Last year, 2015, marked the 70th anniversary of Korea's independence from Japanese occupation and the division of the Korean peninsula into North and South. This liberation and division occurred almost simultaneously. The state of division, a symbol of modern human tragedy, has continued for 65 years since the Korean War in 1950. During this time, Korean literature has acted as a window into Korea's turbulent and chaotic modern history. Through different perspectives and narrative techniques, Korean literature has sincerely represented the lives and concerns of Korean people. For this reason, it would not be wrong to define Korean literature as 'a literature of division'. Notwithstanding this fact, time is required to overcome the scars and pain of the fratricidal war caused by such division.

Since national division in the post-war years of the 1950s, South Korea has been continuously linked by the following events: the military dictatorship, 'Student Revolution' of April 19, and rapid industrialization in the 1960s–1970s; the dawn of depoliticization and new generation writers in the 1990s; and the postmodern and digital age, or even 'Korean Wave', of the early 2000s. Through these eras, Korean literature can be characterized and even evaluated from very different perspectives. Meanwhile, modern Korean literature has developed under conditions of unprecedented social and political turmoil.

In other words, Korean modern history can be interpreted through the lenses of imperial interventions, colonization and de-colonization, national division and the Korean War, dictatorship and democratization, and economic development and globalization. Its geopolitical conditions have demanded that Koreans maintain their own historical, linguistic, and cultural identity in very difficult circumstances. Thus, during these times, the cultural role of literature was particularly important.

Therefore, this paper will hereafter verify the following five categories: liberation from Japan and division literature after the Korean War, the

literature of the post-war era and democracy in the 1960s, industrialization and democratization in the 1970s–1980s, Korean modern society in the 1990s, and the new generation literature from the late 1990s. Thus, the method of study used in this paper is focused on socio-political phenomena, and according to the need, the related individual writers and works are here cited.

1. Liberation, division, and the Korean War

Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation in August 1945, but due to the intervention of the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, and China, Korea was subsequently divided into two countries: South Korea and North Korea. Therefore, all Korean literature from 1945 onwards can be called 'division era literature', and most Korean literature remains heavily influenced by this division. However, the tragedy of division provided a great deal of inspiration and material that allowed Korean literature to develop.

The Korean War in 1950 is certainly one of the most important events in Korean literature, and, accordingly, Korean literature can be divided into three categories based on the following chronological order: 'space of liberation literature' (1945–1950), 'wartime literature' (1950–1953), and 'post-war literature' (1953–1959). During these periods, writers tended to focus on the social reality of confusion and devastation, and tried to depict the image of people wandering for survival. The turbulent times of the division era, i.e. the severance of North and South meant that at that time people could no longer go back and forth across the border. As an inevitable consequence, a new era of literature was created by many writers, who fled from the North and settled in the South. As notable writers of this division literature, Hwang Sunwon (황순원), Son Changseop (손창섭), Jang Yonghak (장용학), Choe Inhun (최인훈), Lee Hocheol (이호철), Choe Jeonghui (최정희), Park Gyeongli (박경리) and others are here mentioned.

Among these writers, S. Hwang depicted his personal experiences in North Korean society before the Korean War and in South Korean society after the Korean War in his novel "The Descendants of Cain". In addition, his "Trees on a Slope" presents the lives of young people trying to deal with the war and cope in the destruction of its aftermath (Jonghoi Kim 2015: 31). Meanwhile, Son Changseop and Jang Yonghak described the immense suffering of the late 1950s in particularly sharp detail, while writers such as Choi Inhun and Lee Hocheol narrated faithfully and anew the same subject matter in the context of the relationship between North and South. Surprisingly, these circumstances were also described by Choe Jeonghui and

Park Gyeongli with the heightened sensitivity of female writers at a time when they had come to be viewed as the leading lights of their era.

However, beginning in the 1960s, the stream of literature became increasingly complex as the conditions in South Korean society gradually began to recover some social stability. From that time to today, methods of referring to literature continue to emerge, such as 'divided literature', 'literature of separation', 'literature of the industrialization era', and 'new generation literature', etc. So to speak, the creative and thematic perspectives adopted in Korean literary works from the 1960s onwards have as their core issues division, industrialization, and democratization.

Since most writers experienced war, famine, and devastation during their childhoods, themes based on these experiences are still considered to be the mainstream of Korean literature. The literary works of Kim Wonil (김원일), Jeon Sangguk (전상국), Han Seungwon (한승원), and Yi Munyeol (이문열) are typical examples. They lived through the war as children and grew up to revive memories of their desolate childhoods in their works.[11]

2. Literature of the post-war era and for the democracy in the 1960s

'Post-war literature' is both a concept and category used in modern Korean literature. It remains an ongoing issue since the only armistice agreement was signed in 1953, and the influence of the wartime experience continues to exist today. Therefore, it is better to describe mid-1960s Korean literature as 'first-phase post-war literature'. The concept of 'post-war' has an overlapping nature to Korean people, since it refers to both the end of World War II, which led to the independence of Korea, and also to the end of the Korean War, which divided the Korean peninsula into two different countries.

While the young writers who grew up in South Korea secured hegemony in Korean literature, there was also a group of writers, poets, and critics, who had come from the North in order to survive during the war. Strangers to the new environment and engulfed by the reality of deep disharmony in the South owing to economic lack, cultural upheaval, and political corruption. Naturally this group expressed this sense in the discourses of their work, which could be sorted into three basic forms of discourse: return to one's

[1] The representative works for these themes were published by Wonil Kim's "The Spirit of Darkness" (1973), Sangguk Jeon's "The Restless Villages" (1977), Sungwon Han's "La mer de brouillard" (1979), Munyol Yi's "The Son of Man" (1979) and so on.

hometown, acclimatization to new surroundings, and the search for another idealized homeland (Minho Bang 2015: 34–35). On the other hand, South Korean writers tried to emphasize the inherent value of literature.

The catastrophic damage inflicted by the Korean War shifted Korea into a completely different society than before, and Korean literature transformed into the 'first-phase of post-war literature'. The abovementioned Sunwon Hwang is a typical example of a writer from this era, demonstrating the destructive influence of ideological conflict and war on young people in such novels as "The Descendants of Cain". Choi Inhun expressed the unique awareness of a writer who had fled his hometown in his work "The Square", while Lee Hocheol's "Petit Bourgeoisies" sought the establishment of a new Korean society after the war. Many of the prominent post-war literary works were written by female authors, such as Park Gyeongli and Choe Jeonghui who, in their works, depicted the violence inflicted on women during the wartime. In addition, short stories by Gang Shinjae (강신재), Han Malsuk (한말숙), and Son Jangsun (손장순) convey a subtlety of moral awareness.

Korean literature in the 1960s can be summarized into the themes of 'aftermath of the 4.19 (April 19) Revolution' and 'introspective fighting back'. The 4.19 Revolution gave Korean people the hope of freedom and democracy, but this dream was shattered in the very next year by the 5.16 (May 16) military coup. In this era, Korean literature strove to combat the cruel reality. Kim Seungok (김승옥)'s "Journey to Mujin" and Yi Cheongjun's (이청준) "The Wounded" expressed the despair and hopelessness of Korean society after the coup. In Yi Cheongjun's "The Wounded", anti-communist ideology is described in detail as an effective means to unite the nation to accomplish the goal of 'modernization of the fatherland', which was the most urgent call of the Park regime in the 1960s. That issue was directly associated with the matter of how to describe the Korean War in cultural productions of that era (Jimi Kim 2013: 73–75).

Some writers went beyond the trend of anti-communist or anti-war polemics and tried to provide a more balanced perspective on the subject. In poetry, Kim Suyeoung (김수영) and Shin Dongyeop (신동엽) depicted the spirit of the 1960s, but while Kim Suyeong focused on the negative aspect and atmosphere of society, Shin Dongyeop approached social issues with traditional values and teachings (Yonghee Hong 2015: 36–37). It can be defined here that Korean literature from the maelstrom of the Korean War to the period of the 1960s took up the causes of stability and the fight for freedom and democracy in people's lives.

However, at the same time, Korean society changed rapidly after the 4.19 Revolution in 1960 when students became the driving force in the fight

against Rhee's dictatorship and the 5.16 military coup. Of course, the desolate literature of the early 1960s opened a new literary world, followed the social trends, and displayed a diverse social consciousness, from political democracy to workers' rights. More specifically, two writers are representative of this era: Kim Seungok tried to rediscover a lyrical sensibility in his short story, while Yi Cheongjun expressed the interrelation between self and reality by a single pathological phenomenon. In addition, a number of works such as Hwang Seogyeong's (황석영) "Strange Land", Yun Heunggil's (윤흥길) "The Man Who Was Left as Nine Pairs of Shoes", and Cho Sehee's (조세희) "A Dwarf Launches a Small Ball" addressed the social issues of the time, including the side effects of rapid industrialization, by comparing rural and urban areas in a more direct way.

Thus far, most of the explanation has dealt with novels, as stories provide a more concrete and realistic description when it comes to identifying the interrelation between social and literary fiction through narrative. However, to discuss literature solely from the perspective of novels is not a reasonable standpoint. In those days, there were also a great deal of notable poets; however, poetry is more difficult to discuss in terms of social interaction than novels, even if there do exist some poets who represent this era.

Kim Sunyeong, for example, expressed the zeitgeist in his poem "Blue Sky", while Shin Dongyeop did so in his collection "Asanyeo". Above all, from 1970 onwards, poet Kim Jiha (김지하) wrote a poem that represented the voice of popular resistance. With his "Five Thieves", he forged a new horizon in the history of poetry. Owing to his serial poetry, he became a legendary figure among both, the many poets at that time as well as for a later generation. However, he was eventually imprisoned by the Korean government for a long time, sparking the so-called 'engagement' in Korean literature, which then became widespread.

It is also interesting to note a poet who diligently transformed everyday language into poetry. As a member of the 4.19 Generation, Kim Gwanggyu (김광규)[2] has broadened the horizons of Korean poetry by presenting us with the new genre of so-called everyday poetry. Let us observe his poetics through an interview he conducted with a journalist.

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[2] Poet Kwangkyu Kim, born in 1941 in Seoul, debuted at a rather late age of 34 in the journal "Literature and Intelligence". He proved everyone's fears groundless through his prodigious poetic output. With his first collection, "The Last Dream to Drench Us" (1979), he expressed just how faithfully he had been carrying out his duties as a poet.

(Journalist) Ahn: *On reading your poems, readers get clues about certain thoughts and realizations drawn from everyday life since it is central to your poetry. You mentioned the 4.19 Generation. Are we to understand that this pursuit of everydayness is connected to you being part of that generation?*

(Poet) Kim: *That's right. The rise of everydayness is an important clue, whether in poetry or prose. Take novels for example. The petit bourgeois started appearing in the novels of the post-4.19 Generation instead of the heroic protagonists that appeared in earlier generations. A similar transformation of the poetic ego can be seen in my fourth poetry collection, Like Someone Fussing and Fretting (1988) and my fifth collection, Aniries (1990).*[3]

Through his poetic experimentation, which began in 1979 with his first collection of poems, "The Last Dream to Drench Us", Kim Gwanggyu has given meaning and value to the domain of the petit bourgeoisie who had not previously received attention.

3. Industrialization and democratization in the 1970s–1980s

Korean literature in the 1960s can be summarized into the themes of 'influence of the 4.19 Revolution', 'aftermath of the 5.16 military coup', and 'introspective fighting back'. In other words, the aspirations of the 4.19 revolution in 1960 had been trashed within a year by the military coup of 1960. Accordingly, the failed revolution was internalized in the literary world and began to play out as a literary 'fight back' (Yonghee Hong 2015:36).

Despite such circumstances, in the early 1960s, Korean society began to change dramatically with its rapid industrialization. Despite the outstanding economic growth, before long it had created many side effects, such as the unequal distribution of wealth, urban-rural conflicts, and dehumanization of the labour force. Therefore, Korean literature in the 1970s tried to focus on these social issues. The new tendency of note in literature from the beginning of the 1970s was the social emergence of conflict between the proletariat class and the bourgeoisie, and workers' issues became the main subjects of Korean literature. For example, in Hwang Seogyeong's "Strange Land", we can find

[3] An interview between journalist Seohyun Ahn and poet Kangkyu Kim, "Cherishing the Language of Everyday Lives", in List Books from Korea, Vol. 28, Korea, 2015, p. 11.

a detailed account of wage exploitation and the poor conditions in the daily lives of workers. He also examined the lives of wandering labourers and their loss of emotions caused by the dismantling of fishing and farming villages in "The Road to Sampo" (Chanje Wu 2005).[4]

> *The man in the dog-fur hat paused a moment and turned around, but then kept on walking. Yŏng-dal ran after him. When he caught up with him, he said, gasping for breath, 'Let's go together. I'm going in the same direction as you are, at least up to Wŏlchul'. [···] 'Well, one gets used to that sort of thing', said the other man. 'Do you have any idea how far Sampo is?' 'At least several hundred li, that is, to the sea coast, and then we have to take a boat'. 'How long has it been since you left Sampo?' asked Yŏng-dal. 'Over ten years', answered the other man, and he continued, 'There won't be anybody who will recognize me there'. 'Why do you want to go back then?' asked Yŏng-dal. 'For no particular reason', said the other man. 'As I'm getting old, I just feel like visiting it'.*[5]

To be more concrete, the modern industrialization of Korea in the 1970s was dependent on rock-bottom wages, export-driven production, and concentration on heavy industries. As a result, the economic growth brought to the fore the backwardness of rural villages, the great gap between urban and rural lives, etc. These facts are connotatively dealt with in his novel.

At that time, the anxiety incurred under the economic oppression and inequality sought its best expression in S. Hwang's "Strange Land" and Cho Sehee's "A Dwarf Launches a Small Ball". These novels depict wandering labourers who suffer under the deepening economic inequality and factory workers who are killed while fighting against it. Here, the imagining of the anxiety shows itself as a political unconsciousness that longs for economic equality.

In other words, the collective unconsciousness of deep anxiety can be easily found in the novels of the 1970s. However, according to the writer's attitude of confronting the given situation, the imagining of anxiety shows itself differently as political unconsciousness yearning for freedom, equality, unification, or true self-identity.

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[4] Chanje Wu, *The political unconsciousness in the imagination of anxiety*, Korean Literature Theory and Criticism, Vol. 9, Korea, 2005, pp. 119–146.

[5] Sokyong Hwang, *The Road to Sampo*, translated by U-Chang Kim, Asia Publishers, 2012, pp. 19–20.

With regard to rural devastation, Han Seungwon demonstrated the rapid disappearance of rural villages in his work, "In the Heart of the Mountains". He also dealt mainly with the folk character and vitality of the fast disappearing farming villages by using rustic language and rural sentiment. Meanwhile, other novels, such as "Elegy for Jaragol" by Song Gisook (송기숙), "Dream of Lingering Sorrow", "The Ballad of Kalmori", and "Our Neighborhood" by Lee Mungu (이문구), described the awakening and adaption of rural villagers to the structural inconsistency and pressure of society. In such stories, for example, Choi Ilnam's (최일남) "Seoulites", the main plot focuses on the negative aspects of industrialization, human alienation, boundless materialism, and moral hazards at work. In summary, the social conditions of class alienation and the loss of basic humanity are described in detail with deepest sympathy.

On the other hand, the poetry of the 1970s pursued an aesthetic approach through the form of Korean lyrical forms and styles, which were adopted from the traditional narrative of *pansori*, such as Kim Jiha's "Five Thieves" (Youngsoon Song 2007).[6] Kim Jiha created a cutting satire of the structure of oppression instituted by the dictatorship and decadent corruption of the age. This marked a particularly important transformation in the field of Korean literature and arts. It may be said that this new exchange signified both autonomy and identity in the field of literature.

However, in the 1980s, Korea tragically experienced the Gwangju Democratization Movement in order to stand against the military regime. For the time being, therefore, literature could not help but be coloured by the concept of 'literature as a social movement', and gradually had to fight against the military regime in power. The military government was finally deposed in 1987 and the political maelstrom settled into peace. After that, Korean literature was able to enjoy freedom of speech. Furthermore, the collapse of the Eastern bloc in Europe and the end of the Cold War era relieved the social atmosphere, so that writers could elevate their own diversity and pluralism without restriction.

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[6] Youngsoon Song, *Observation on parody of pansori in Kim Jiha's ojeok* (in English "Five Thieves"), Korean Modern Literary Criticism, Vol. 23, Korea, 2007, pp. 5–25.

4. Korean modern society in the 1990s

Through these tumultuous stages, Korean literature in the 1990s began to develop very different sensibilities and techniques than those of the 1980s. Poets and novelists were able to elevate their own diversity and plurality without government restrictions, and many changes occurred in social conditions, above all in the transition from print and analogue media to digital and image culture media. Thus, the literary and arts environment incurred a change and was concurrently confronted with differences from the past.

One of the writers who marked this change in Korean literature was Kim Yeongha (김영하) He took a deep interest in describing various aspects of social change in Korea, in a novel that was distanced from so-called storytelling and represented a transformation in Korean literature towards an expanded awareness of other countries beyond the Korean peninsula. Other writers, such as Park Mingyu (박민규) and Lee Giho (이기호), who had manifested the shift from traditional methods of life to the digital era, gave readers descriptions of daily life in the so-called post-modern society in their novels. Of course, these writers could not be said to represent Korean literature in itself; however, in the transformation of the history of Korean literature, they wrote meaningful works that reflected the changing times (Jonghoi Kim 2015: 33).

This change in Korean literature was derived from both inside and outside, with the change in society and the South-North Korean relationship. Furthermore, 'the era of women's literature' started after the 1990s with the rise of the women's rights movement, and some notable writers such as Shin Gyeongsuk (신경숙), Kim Insuk (김인숙), Seo Hajin (서하진), Jeon Gyeonglin (전경린), Cho Gyeonglan (조경란), and Han Gang (한강) represent a more meticulous approach to literary creativity. They pioneered this era and many readers eagerly embraced their works.

With the end of the Cold War, South Korea was successfully transformed into a developed country. Korean literature also rapidly changed shape and was liberated from its predetermined concepts. Instead of national division and political conflicts, writers tried to emphasize the problems of a post-industrial society. Kim Yeongha ignited the change in Korean literature in the 1990s with his debut novel "I Have the Right to Destroy Myself".

> *They never ask questions like, 'Have you ever felt the urge to kill someone?' And obviously they never wonder, 'How do you feel when you see blood?' They don't show the interviewees David's or Delacroix's paintings and ask them their thoughts. Instead, the interviews are filled*

with meaningless chatter. But they can't fool me; I catch the glimmer of possibility in their empty words. I unearth clues from the types of music they prefer, the family histories they sometimes reveal, the books that hit a nerve, the artists they love. People unconsciously want to reveal their inner urges. They are waiting for someone like me.[7]

Kim Yeongha presents a so-called 'suicide advisor' as his narrator. The narrator argues that a life controlled by the big Other is possible; accordingly, the only autonomous action is voluntary death. In a strange post-modern age, his paradoxical protagonist signals the passing of Korean society over a new horizon. Furthermore, in his novel, the writer tries to demonstrate the peculiarity of Korean modernization and modern society through the perspectives of Korean people from various backgrounds: an immigrant worker, a North Korean spy, a serial killer, etc. (Bosun Ryoo 2015: 40–41).

Park Mingyu is another notable writer of the 1990s whose work was inspired by foreign pop culture. With the mixture of the Korean traditional ego, he illustrated the foreign pop culture with his own unique taste. Even today, he brings many ideas and concepts from the latest movies, such as "The Avengers" and "Mad Max", to his work. Lee Giho also demonstrates a unique perspective on post-modern society, and his latest work "The World History of Second Sons" is regarded as one of the greatest Korean novels of the 21st century. On the other hand, Jeon Myeonggwan (전명관) criticized the modern political structure through his unusual yarns in his breakthrough work, "Whale". Lastly, Korean literature encountered a wave of neo-liberalism, and this wave heavily influenced Korean literature's reflection of modernity.

In the 1990s, Korean female authors started to participate actively in Korean literature, as the focal point of literature moved from political aspects to scenes of more personal and daily life. Some female writers, such as Eun Huigyeong (은희경) and Ha Seongnan (하성난), attempted to examine existence in the context of a rapidly changing society, while Jeon Gyeonglin and Han Gang attempted to investigate sexuality as a method to break from rationalism.

In Eun Huigyeong's novel "A Gift from a Bird", the protagonist is divided into two characters in order to provide an exhaustive and objective observation in the story. Similarly, Ha Seongnan utilizes the perspective of a

[7] Youngha Kim, I Have the Right to Destroy Myself, translated by Chiyoung Kim, Harcourt Books, 2007, p. 20.

cold observer to amplify the dark side of modern life where all communication has been severed. On the other hand, Pyeon Hyeyeong (편혜영) focused on our diminishing existence in her early works, but has recently emphasized that the idea of our utter vulnerability due to the possibility of unexpected disasters gives meaning to our existence. Lastly, Yun Seonghui (윤성희) has tried to seek a new meaning for existence by breaking away from the common attitude towards life (Soojeong Shin 2015: 44–45).

In terms of sexuality and female instinct, Jeon Gyeonglin is the most notable female writer to utilize these concepts in literature. She has embodied women's desire and sexual sense for deviation and escape in her works, such as "The Goat Herding Woman" and "Nighttime Spiral Staircase". Han Gang's "The Fruit of My Woman" shows the fundamental desire that lies in the woman's instinct, and Cheon Unyeong's (천운영) "Needle" emphasizes the veritable feast of this female desire using the symbol of a needle tattoo as an object for masculine voyeurism. The female writers of the 1990s have opened up a new realm in Korean literature in a distinctive style and fashion, and are still creating a new chapter in Korean literature.

5. New generation literature from the late 1990s

Here a different perspective related to Korean culture is necessary. Since the appearance of the 'Korean Wave' in the late 1990s, Korean popular culture has become one of the most beloved popular cultures both within and outside of Asia. In comparison with Korean literature, many have recently come to prefer Korean pop-culture, which they perceive as something new and trendy, as well as something that contains Asian values and emotions (Sangyeon Sung 2008, p. 11). However, the influence and relationship between Korean literature and culture could be studied together with other fields. Thus far, it is very important for the understanding of literary contents that are closely linked to the so-called K-Pop culture. In summary, Korean literature has, to date, supplied cultural nourishment, e.g. even in the Korean Wave of today.

The introduction of a new generation to literature means the appearance of a new culture and a new way of thinking. This generation passed their childhood in the 1970s with no such great difficulties as their parents combating poverty, and then grew up indirectly influenced by the new political outlook and suppression. Generally, they have a great affection for the culture produced by mass-media. If we compared their development process with the literary stream in Korea, the 1960s could be defined as the era of literature for independence and strong self-awareness, the 1970s as the era for people,

the 1980s as the era for the rights or emancipation of labour, and the 1990s could be called the new generation literature.

Yu Ha (유하), Kim Seungok (김승옥), Jang Jeongil (장정일), Park Ilmun (박일문), and Lee Inhwa (이인화) are classified as post-modernists, and the narrative technique used in their works is characterized as pastiche, literary piracy, parody, and kitsch. Using a sneering and nimble technique, they describe the urban civilization as a kaleidoscope. Moreover, the themes of new-generation literature include self-denial, nihilism, and resignation.

Conclusion

In the age of the new generation, the nihilism and lamentation of young urbanites, and their powerlessness in the face of a mammoth urban civilization are represented in several areas of daily life. In general, there are two ways to depict the mass cultural element in literature, which are not only borrowed in their works but also used for the purpose of criticizing mass culture. One is deeply rooted in the mass culture that attracted their sensitivity at the time when screen-media was widespread, and the other is concerned with the mass culture willing to dissolve the old-fashioned view of literature by reflecting the decadence of a post-industrial society. There is no denying that the new generation literature reflects mass culture in the above-mentioned two ways.

In conclusion, the literary significance of new-generation literature, which has already opened up a new sensibility in literature, must be discussed more seriously. At the same time, the new generation, known as the ‘kitsch generation’, must transcend the dogma or self-complacency caused by the theoretical superficiality of mass culture, as well as taking a realistic view in harmony with today’s condition. I believe the function of literature can be best understood through the process of compromise and research based on the history of Korean literature.

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