

Neo Shamans, Nurtured by Traditional Shamans in Korea

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July 8th, 2016

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Korean folklore scholarship

- We scholars really hate 째뵙궗(hodgepodge ritual). You have to keep in mind that if you want be a great shaman, you should follow the fixed order of the ritual. You should keep the TRADITION!"
- Seeking 'the original,' 'the true,' and 'the authentic,' not giving any attention to transformation, adaptation, and creative adjustment in Korean shaman's practices

Reality of Korean Shamanism



A bulletin that prohibits shamanic activities is erected at the gate of the Mt. Inwang. Ironically near the bulletin, a newspaper box for mudang hangs on the fence.

Contradictory Images of Korean Shamanism

■ Negative:

- Obstacle to Modernization, Superstition, Magic, Primitive Religion, Religious Practices Based on Horror, Religion of Ignorant Women
- Mad Man, Charlatan, etc.

■ Positive:

- Core of Korean Culture, Traditional Religion, Icon of Resistance, National Heritage
- Transmitter of Traditional Religion, Intangible Cultural Property (Human Culture Treasure)

Korean Shamanism As Indigenous Faith

- Finding "Koreanness" from Korean Shamanism
- **Originality** and **Centrality** of Korean Nation and Culture
- Independent Korea's National Origin
- Enhancing National Pride
- Linking Korean Shamanism to Dangun Myth and Dangun Shingyo (a Religion of God)
- Yi Nung-hwa (1869-1943), Choi Nam-seon (1890 -1957)

Korean Shamanism As Cultural Capital

- Law for Conservation of Cultural Property in 1962
 - “This law is meant to encourage Koreans to improve their cultural life and contribute to developing the global human culture as well, by preserving traditional cultural assets and thereby continuing the national culture (Law No. 961)”
- A large scale of folkloric research project was conducted throughout the entire nation from 1968
- Shaman, a Protector image of Korean "Tradition"
- "Tradition", Criterion for Legitimizing the Authenticity

Model of Tradition: Kim Keum hwa

- Superstar shaman
- Official holder of Intangible Cultural Property No. 82
- Born in Hwanghae Province in North Korea
- Spirit-illness at a young age
- Lost her father at 13, fled North Korea during the Korean War
- Divorced twice
- Brother died of pneumonia, etc.
- Strict apprenticeship under spirit-mother/teachers

Model of Tradition: Kim Keum hwa

“Not all the initiates who have naeringut can be a mudang. The initiate has to train in various procedures while serving his/her spirit-mother for at least 4-5 years. The training is not done like in the classroom, therefore the initiate has to master all the techniques by just watching and hearing...Unless the initiate masters the 12 procedures of a gut, he/she will remain just seonmudang (immature shaman) or jeomjaengi...”

Traditional Way to Learn: Apprenticeship

- Living the life of a shaman serving spirit-mother seems to be the major part of training:
- As kitchen helper preparing food for different deities, the novice learns the cosmology and different functions of the deities
- Watching the master's divination and ritual performance, an apprentice acquires ritual knowledge, performing skill, and social skills
- Training is more important than the trance/ecstatic experience

The Embodiment of Tradition, Kim Keum hwa

- Dramatic change, accepted her shaman-identity as a transmitter of “cultural tradition” while neutralizing the spiritual aspects of shamanism by emphasizing the artistic elements over the supernatural and placing it within a context of preservation rather than development.
- Became an embodiment of tradition
- Initiating more than 200 disciples

Kim Keum hwa, on Media



Jade's Story

- Initiation ritual, 1997
- “For six months since the initiation ritual, my life as a shaman was the same as other shamans do, I performed Kut and made divination for clients...Then one day, I went down to Jeonnam University following a professor Kim. I had spent eight months there studying and meeting many people...Most of them were artists.....Artists, and those who are superior to me in terms of spiritual power...they might be called “**Shaman Syndrome People**” who have innate shamanic energy. They develop the energy into the direction of art, I think...(My interview, 2000)
- Want to be a soul-mate in "Shamanism-Community"

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無堂巫堂

유명옥

존재의 수레바퀴를 찾아 떠나는 영혼 여행



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> 타지마할 님의 블로그

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2008.10.25, 오후 10:15

Features of Neo-shamanism in Jade's

- Decontextualizing and Universalizing
- Psychologizing and Individualizing
- Democratizing

- Cf. "Shaman's role is founded on the idea that he alone is equipped to serve the interests of the society on the ecstatic level (Hultkranz)"

- Not a leader of "Shaman Syndrome People" but a soul mate

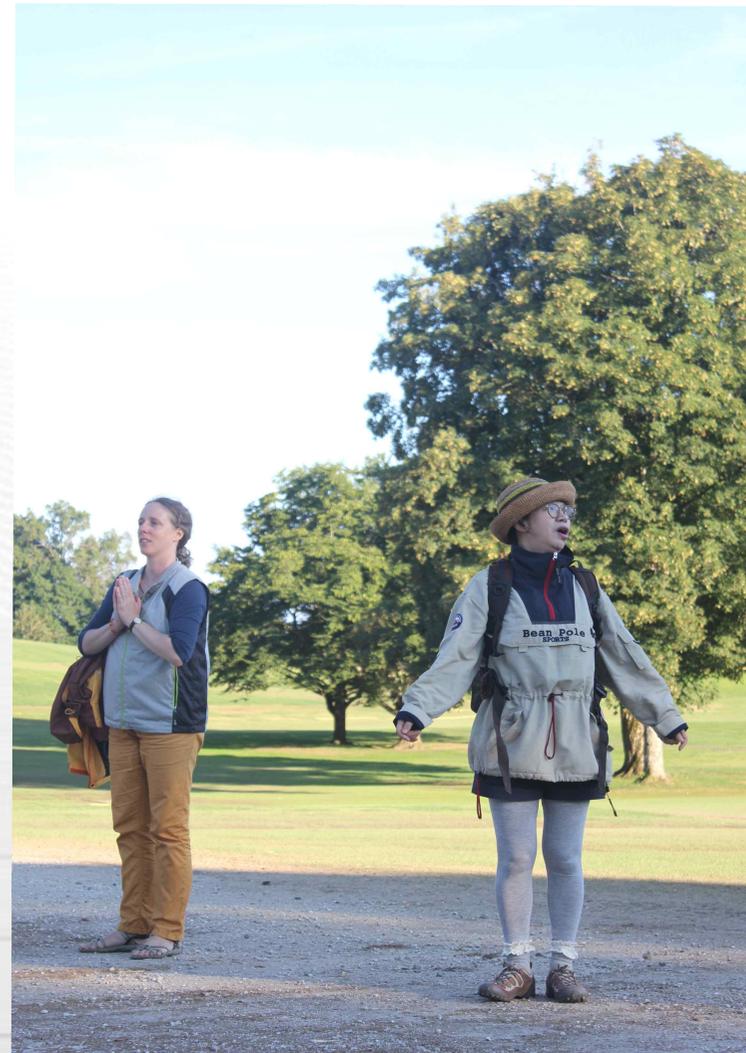
A Swiss woman's initiation story

- Andrea's interpretation, "Many spirits are hovering around you!" without mentioning spirit-illness
- Indications of shaman-destiny: "Why all these difficulties kept befalling me?"
- Initiation ritual in 2010 along with several foreigners, under the supervision of Kim Keum hwa
- Experienced water around her, the wing of a black and white crane touching her cheek, a wild animal dancing with her, bright light moving toward her, and the feeling of something entering her body, with made her shudder and shake.

After Initiation, receiving Swiss mountain gods

- Meeting with Dani, a disciple of Kim Keum hwa
- Visiting Switzerland, 2013 to receiving Swiss Mt. gods
- In Gurten Mt., Dani got visions of people dressed in white, dancing in a circle by a fire under a full moon
- "They must have been priests like us, shamans, before Christianity came into this area"
- Swiss woman, Connecting the dancing people with Celts
- Food offerings for Swiss Mt. Gods, from Swiss!
- Felt a need to find her own Swiss identity within the context of Korean shamanism, turned to her own cultural context of Celts.

Gurten Mt.



Food Offerings



Ritual at Alps



Still struggling to make her shaman-identity

- Cut off all contact with shaman community
- Stopped meeting with Dani who would require of a traditional apprenticeship with the words, "make yourself small!"
- "I'm forty years old....I want to be exactly who I am. I am a Swiss, not a Korean!"

Plural Referential Frameworks

- Reading Autobiographies and Scholarly Works; Browsing a Website – “Individual Oriented” Career Building

“According to the self-portraits described on their internet sites, neo-shamans tend to build their career by learning from all kinds of popular psychology and religious literature by themselves, rather than by following the classical way of long-term discipleship under the guidance of teacher shamans or spiritual parents(Seong-nae Kim)”

Shaman Image, Work of Kim Ju hyeong



Korean Shaman in the Republic of Tuva



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