

Worshiping the Goddesses of P'albong Mountain: Regional Variation, Authenticity, and Tradition

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The mountain gods of P'albong Mountain in western Kangwŏn Province are celebrated in a spring shaman ceremony presided over by a master shaman attached to the village shrine. Several studies of the shrine ceremony made between 1976 and 1990 complement each other at the observational level, but differ as to whether the present ceremony is an imperfectly preserved example of an ideal-typical dualistic *purakche* made up of a male Confucian ritual complemented by female shamanistic ritual, or a living example of a distinct regional tradition that acquires its authenticity from believers' inner experience and perception. Mountain worship at P'albong Mountain is documented to be old, yet the current shamans' ritual is "inspired by the gods" rather than handed down from the past. The article argues for the view of tradition as an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity, rather than of tradition as replication of the past.

Keywords: tradition, authenticity, female mountain gods, village *kut*, *tangjigi* shaman

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The village of P'albong-ni No. 1 in Western Kangwŏn-do has become known for its maintenance of a shamanic shrine celebration (*tanggut*) for five female tutelary deities worshipped at two shrines built on P'albong Mountain. This shrine celebration was first described in 1976 based on oral testimony collected by a team of Korean anthropologists.¹ I lived in the village for eleven months in 1977 and two months in 1983, was the first ethnographer to directly witness the shrine ceremonies presided over by the shaman Cho Chŏngsun, and in 1983 conducted a village-wide survey of local vernacular religion. A description of Cho Chŏngsun's 1983 performance of the shrine celebration at Kangwŏn Folk Festival in 1983 has been published.² Then in 1990, a team of government researchers led by Kim Myŏngja recorded in situ Cho's performances of the P'albong Mountain *tanggut*.³ Thus, multiple reports by a variety of ethnographers have been made of the P'albong Mountain shrine celebration.⁴ By combining the published accounts of Korean fieldworkers with my field notes, one can construct a more complete account of village tutelary deity worship than from any one single source. This also allows one to document the changes in the ceremony over a fourteen-year period.

When I compared my 1977 field notes with the published ethnographic reports on P'albongsan *tanggut*, I found that my notes and the reports largely corroborate and complement each other on the observational level. In spite of this observational agreement, however, Kim Myŏngja's published report evaluates the authenticity of Cho Chŏngsun's performance, the nature and significance of the gendered religious division of labor in local vernacular religion, and the significance of functional differentiation between house and mountain gods in ways quite different from what I propose in this essay. These differences stem, in part, from the different purposes of Kim Myŏngja and myself. While I was investigating lived vernacular religion as part of a village study, Kim Myŏngja and her collaborators, as employees of the Yenŭng Minsok Yŏn'gusil, a division of the South Korean Government Office of Cultural Properties, were investigating the P'albong Mountain *tanggut* as a possible candidate for government support and preservation as an "intangible national treasure," and were thus looking for the specific criteria that would justify such a designation.

The differences between Kim Myŏngja's and my evaluations of P'albong Village tutelary deity worship stem also, however, from differing theoretical assumptions and analytic methods that yield differing evaluations of the same ethnographic material. The central question here is whether the authenticity of P'albong Village tutelary deity worship derives from its being a faithful exemplar of an ancient Korean ideal-type with fixed characteristics handed down from the past, or whether authenticity emerges from improvisatory activity of the shaman, bricolage that "take[s] to pieces and reconstruct[s] sets of events" that are then

¹ *Han'guk minsok chonghap chosa pogosŏ* (HMCCP), Vol. 8 (Kangwŏn-do p'yŏn) [Consolidated Korean folk custom field report] (Seoul: Munhwajae Kwalliguk, 1977), 50–61.

² Kangwŏn-do Munhwa Kongbo Tamdang Kwansil, *Minsokchi* [Kangwŏn gazetteer] (Ch'unch'ŏn: Kangwŏn Ilbosa 1989), 325.

³ Kim Myŏngja, "P'albong-san *tanggut* chosa pogo" [Research report on the P'albong mountain shrine ceremony], *Munhwajae yŏn'guso Haksul yŏn'gu pal'yo nonjip*, no. 4 (1990): 19–49.

⁴ Several reports have also been since published of later performances that are beyond the scope of this article.

accepted within the local community as serving their religious needs.⁵ In the former case, the shaman Cho Chöngsun's ritual performances might well be simply a fragmentary survival of a traditional ideal-typical Korean *purakche*, or village celebration. Such an ideal type has been proposed by Akiba Takashi and Kim T'aekkyu and modeled on the elaborate *pyölsin keut* of the east and southeast coasts of Korea.⁶ As will be documented below, however, there are good reasons to think P'albong Village tutelary deity worship has always differed from the ideal-type posited by Akiba, Kim, and others, and that Korean vernacular religion in the past did not have the regional uniformity necessary for reconstructing a national ideal type from current survivals in the manner of Tylor's comparative method.⁷ My preferred alternative interpretation finds authenticity in religious believers' inner experience and perception while emphasizing the locally instituted and emergent nature of P'albong Village tutelary deity worship.⁸

The Tutelary Deities and Their Worship

Five gods are worshiped on P'albong Mountain. This mountain, while not particularly tall, stands out with its craggy cliffs beneath which flows the Hongch'ön River. On the second of the eight peaks of the mountain stands a small shrine that contains spirit tablets for the "Eight Peaks Mountain Earth Spirit" (P'albongsan hut'osillyöng) and for the "Seven Stars Seven Lords" (Ch'ölsöng ch'ilgun).⁹ A larger shrine nearby holds the tablets of Lady Yi, Lady Kim, and Lady Hong.¹⁰ The term for the Earth God, literally "Empress Earth God" (*hut'osin*), is generic, but these gods, who take care of and administer the soil, are generally female. In fact, the villagers told me that all five of the mountain gods are female and habitually referred to all of them as mountain gods (*sansillyöng*). To distinguish them here I will continue to call the generic mountain god the Earth God, with the other mountain gods being the Three Ladies. Lord Seven Stars, of course, is a sky god. The village *tanggut* is celebrated on the full moon (fifteenth day) of the third lunar month.

The village shrine (*tangjip*) had burnt to the ground in 1970 or 1971 and had only just been rebuilt in April 1976 when a South Korean research team first came to survey the village.

⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 33.

⁶ Akiba Takashi, "Chösen no mura matsuri," [The Korean village festival], *Chösen no toshokan* 3, no. 3 (December 1933), 3–9; Kim T'aekkyu, "Tongje wa Tongsin" [Village ceremonies and village gods], In *Han'guk nonggyöng sesi üi yön'gu—Nonggyöng ürye üi munbwa illyujhakchök koch'al* [A study of Korean rural seasonality—a cultural anthropological investigation of rural ritual] (Taegu: Yöngnam Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1985), 364–71.

⁷ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958 [original 1871]), 16.

⁸ Leonard Primiano, "Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folklife," *Western Folklore* 54, no. 1 (January 1995): 37–56.

⁹ The smaller shrine had two compartments with tablets labeled 七星七君 神位 (Tablet of the Honorable Seven Stars, i.e. Big Dipper), and 八峯山后土神靈 神位 (P'albong Mountain Earth Spirit Tablet). The larger shrine had altars with tablets to 李氏夫人, 金氏夫人, and 洪氏夫人 (Lady Lee, Lady Kim, and Lady Hong), gods' costumes, and other paraphernalia.

¹⁰ HMCCP, vol. 8, 148.

This was in August 1976 well after the May 5th date of the first *tanggut* in the new shrine. The account of the P'albongsan *tanggut* in the 1977 *Han'guk minsok chonghap chosa pogosŏ*, Vol. 8 (HMCCP; Consolidated Korean folk custom field report), then, is based on oral reports rather than direct observation. Yi Sunjae, whom I got to know in 1977 and met again in 1983, presided over the ceremony at the newly rebuilt *tangjip*. Yi Sunjae was not a shaman or other religious specialist but rather a dignified house head and large-scale landowner who dressed habitually in *hanbok*. I found him, as did the HMCCP, to be a "sincere believer in the Three Ladies of Eight Peaks Mountain." The HMCCP's description of the ceremony is as follows:

The time of the ceremony is about 10:00 AM, The master of ceremonies (*chegwan*) lit the incense to bring the gods down (*punbyang kangsin*), and following the master of ceremony's offering of a libation of liquor, the shrine shaman (*tangjigi*) made a supplication (*ch'ugwŏn*). The precinct captains (*panjang*) called out the names of the house heads of his precinct, and the shaman (*mudang*) floated burnt paper offerings (*soji*) for each and every house.¹¹

Lighting of incense and offerings of liquor by a master of ceremonies are the normal sequence of Confucian-style ancestor worship ceremonies (*chesa*) in which village men make offerings to ancestral spirits, but they also use this style of worship to honor local earth gods in funerals and tomb side ancestor worship, so it would have been natural to extend it to the tutelary mountain gods. In this instance the shaman chanted simple prayers and floated up burnt paper offerings as the names of the house heads of each precinct were called out, but no singing, dancing, chanting, or channeling of the god's voice (*kongsu*) is mentioned so the "shamanistic" elements of this ceremony seem to have been minimal. It was followed by a banquet, as would be the case for either ancestor worship or a shaman ceremony.

The 1977 *tanggut* that I witnessed the following year was a more elaborate affair with a cooked pig's head and costumed singing and dancing introduced by the new resident shaman Cho Chŏngsun, and celebrated primarily by a male shaman (*paksu*) from Seoul and his retinue. The *paksu*, dressed in skirt and vest upon which he overlaid his spirit costumes, presented what I judge to be the *sansang kŏri* (mountaintop act) section of the *todang kut*, the Seoul area ceremony for tutelary deities. He called down the Spirit General (Sinjangnim) and after dancing vigorously in front of the alter, balanced the pig's head on a trident to prove the god's approval of the offering. More vigorous dancing led to the descent of the mountain god and a *kongsu* section in which the shaman voiced the god foretelling the fate of the village, followed by playful *mugam* in which his assistants danced with the gods' costumes.

The third and final section of this *kut* was undertaken by one of the *paksu*'s assistants who donned her own costume of a pink skirt, a Buddhist cowl (*kokkal*), a white monk's robe (*changsam*), and two long sashes crisscrossed over her shoulders, one red (*hong kasa*) and one a riot of striped color. She had little bags hanging from her belt containing jujubes and chestnuts. I quote from my 1977 fieldnotes:

¹¹ Ibid.

She begins dancing and after a minute bows three times toward the altar. Soon she is dancing and singing with a fan in her right hand. She becomes very assertive strutting back and forth. The women are more attentive now than they were for the paksu. Suddenly the shaman throws down her fan and starts jumping up and down. She grabs four of the female spectators wrestling with them one by one and forcing them to bow. These [obviously terrified] women now bow to the altar again and again. (May 2, 1977)

This female shaman's section performed in Buddhist attire resembled the Buddhist Affairs Section (Pulsa kōri) of the *todang kut*, a section of the ceremony in which the shaman addresses high gods (like Buddha) to usher in good fortune. In this case, however, the shaman slipped up with the Three Ladies calling down Lady Yi, Lady Kim, and Lady Pak (instead of Lady Hong). She channeled the gods in *kongsu* and was probably singing the Cymbal Song (Para T'aryōng) as she went around offering divination by arranging jujubes and chestnuts in women's skirts (*san ūl chunda*).¹²

The year 1977 was the shaman Cho Chōngsun's first year as *tangjigi* shaman, and as we shall see, she could not yet manage a complicated shrine ceremony by herself. Later that year on May 24, however, I witnessed her expanding her repertory as she presided with the help of an assistant at a shrine ceremony for Buddha's Birthday (lunar 4.8). After chanting prayers for individuals at the Earth God Shrine, Cho moved to the Three Ladies Shrine to don a magnificent new white monk's robe (*changsam*) similar to the one worn by the visiting shaman who had performed the Pulsa Kōri on May 2. Later she changed again into a new Spirit General cloak complete with dangling metal ornaments and a winged hat (that I called a Brunhilde hat in my fieldnotes). Replacing this with a red headband and a blue surplice, she danced vigorously in preparation for the descent of the gods. She changed into a magnificent red changsam with white sleeves, and, twirling, grabbed the name hangings (*myōngdar*) that women had brought to dedicate family members to the care of the gods, placed them on her back and staggered as if with great weight. She tried, but failed, to take an aluminum basin in her teeth with which to dance. After dancing and holding the basin in her arms for a while Cho removed most of the god clothing and handed the gong to her client. The kut was running out of steam. Cho's assistant who was drumming declined to dance in the god's costumes, so Cho turned to her client from Seoul saying, "You've come to this famous mountain. You can't just quit and leave." In my May 24 field notes I wrote, "So the woman bows to the altar, puts on the blue cloak with red sleeves and does a demure dip, kick, dip, kick, hop-hop, hop-hop waving her arms gracefully."

This kut had the tripartite structure later reported in *Kangwŏn Minsokchi* for the village tanggut: the first ceremony at the small shrine for Lord Seven Stars and the Earth God, the second ceremony at the big shrine for the Three Ladies, and the third shaman's ceremony in the same location for the shaman's own Taegam (Your Lordship) spirit.¹³ The ceremony,

¹² Maria Seo, *Hanyang Kut: Korean Shaman Ritual Music from Seoul* (New York: Routledge, 2002). 192–3, 199–204.

¹³ The word "*taegam*" during the Chosŏn Dynasty was an honorific term of address for high officials. Today shamans use it as an honorific for their own gods.

however, was not smoothly executed. Cho failed to hold the aluminum basin in her teeth (success would have been a sign of godly approval), and perhaps because a successful performance needs to be paced by an experienced drummer who must sense the change of mood and change the rhythm to induce the descent of the gods, the performance was not as compelling as that of the *paksu* and his assistant at the earlier *tanggut*. The *mugam* section toward the end in which Cho's assistant was to dance in the clothes of the gods, fell flat when the assistant lost interest, and Cho's client from Seoul only managed a desultory dance during a section in which clients in a successful *kut* sometimes even become possessed themselves.

These observed ceremonies can be compared with what a team of folklorists from the Yenŭng Minsok Yŏn'gusil (Folk Performing Arts Study Center), a division of the Office of Cultural Properties that investigates performing arts for possible preservation and support, found when they made a high-quality field investigation of the P'albong *tanggut* which was later written up by Kim Myŏngja. A three-person team visited P'albong Village twice in May 1990 to observe the 3.15 *tanggut* and 4.8 Buddha's Birthday celebrations thirteen years after the ceremonies described above.¹⁴ The resulting report is careful and thorough folklore research. Kim's team interviewed Cho Chŏngsun, the same shaman I had met in 1977, and her report reveals institutional and folkloristic aspects of the village *tanggut* that I had not yet fully understood. The report is also reassuring in the sense that the transcriptions of Cho Chŏngsun's singing and chanting that the ethnographers had recorded and transcribed confirmed what I had heard and fragmentarily written down in 1977: they were prayers and invocations to local gods on behalf of villagers, but they did not include elaborate songs and myths such as those collected by famous Japanese and Korean folklorists like Akamatsu and Akiba, Kim T'aegon, or Ch'oe and Sŏ.¹⁵

Kim's report describes the 1990 ceremony that she called a *saengsin kut* (birthday celebration) at some length. Cho by then was calling the ceremony *kkot maji kut* (flower greeting ceremony), a term that has also been used for Kyŏnggi-do spring *tanggut*. Broadly it most resembles the *kut* I observed on Buddha's birthday (as well as the 1st Kangwŏn-do Folk Art Festival Performance of 1983) rather than the 1977 *tanggut* I witnessed that was mostly performed by visiting shamans. According to Kim's report the sequence was a *ch'ŏngbae* (calling down the gods) with the Lord Seven Stars section danced by Cho with name hangings on her shoulders and then the Mountain Spirit and Spirit General sections danced by a male disciple from Seoul, Sŏ Insik.¹⁶ Cho Chŏngsun took a more prominent role by performing the beginning of the Lord Seven Stars section (as danced on Buddha's Birthday), while the Buddha worship I had observed in 1977 had been omitted, and the Mountain Spirit and Spirit General sections danced by a visiting *paksu* had been abbreviated and did not include a pig's head offering.

¹⁴ Kim Myŏngja, "P'albong-san *tanggut*," 22.

¹⁵ Akamatsu Chijō and Akiba Takashi, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū* [A study of Korean shamanism] Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ōsakayagō Shoten, 1938); Kim T'aegon, *Hwangch'ŏn muga yŏn'gu* (A study of yellow spring shaman songs) (Seoul: Ch'angudang, 1966); *Han'guk mugajip* [Collection of Korean shaman songs] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1971–80, 4 vols); and Ch'oe Chŏngnyo and Sŏ Taesŏk, *Tonghaean muga* (East coast shaman songs) (Seoul: Yŏngsŏl Ch'ulp'ansa, 1974).

¹⁶ This may have been the same *paksu* I had seen in 1977, but since he left before I could get his name I cannot be sure.

A Tangjigi Mudang

The HMCCP report of 1976 had called the village shaman a *tangjigi*, but in 1977 I had not fully understood the implications of that term. I had known that Cho Chöngsun, who lived on donated land on the mountainside below the village shrine, had been entrusted with the shrine key, and that villagers who wanted to use the shrine were accustomed to fetching the key from her when they wanted to use the temples. Whenever there had been a major celebration at the village shrine—the *tanggut*, Buddha's birthday, *Ch'ilsök*, and so forth, she had, in addition to performing a *kut*, offered prayers for individual villagers as part of her duties. I had also observed her making rounds collecting rice from various houses in the village before the village shrine celebration, and I had been under the impression that these were tax-like payments for her services to the village similar to the way the village paid the ferryman (*narujigi*) so that individual villagers did not have to pay a fare each time they took the ferry across the river. Kim's description of the village office of shrine master (*tangju*), however, showed it to be more institutionalized than I had realized.

As the shrine (*chedang* 祭堂) is managed by the *tangjigi* shaman, this *tangjigi* is decided upon by the village head and *yuji* (politically influential men) when the villagers are gathered at the village meeting. In the past they furnished a house, half a hectare of rice land and on the order of a day's plow of rainfall field, but now it has come to be recognized that the village turns over the shrine key, the *tang soettae*. During the village meeting the *tangjigi* shaman is decided, and thereafter she becomes *tangju*. Not only does she manage the shrine she also supervises the village tutelary deity celebration.¹⁷

In 1977, I had been excluded from the village annual meeting where these issues were discussed because villagers were expecting disharmony, something that they would rather the foreign anthropologist not witness, so I had missed this nuance. I have no recollection of hearing the term “*tangjigi*” when I was in the village, but Dr. Myöngnye Kim of Kangwön University's Yöngsö Chiyök Yön'guso told me on May 6, 2015 that *tangjigi* is used in the high mountains of the eastern part of Hongch'ön County, whereas in P'albong Village they prefer the term “*tangju*” or shrine master. The Yenüng Minsok Yön'gu (YMY) team also elicited a more complete life history of Cho Chöngsun than I had, describing her suffering from god sickness (*sinbyöng*) from the age of nineteen and how, after studying with a couple for a fortnight at nearby Dragon Gate Mountain in Kyönggi Province, her “gates of speech opened” (*malmun ül yörötta*). She subsequently wandered about until she came to P'albong Mountain. I had known about Cho's wandering since she had told me the gods had led her to P'albong Mountain where she found “medicine water rock” (*yaksuam*) spring near where she had built her house, but she had not told me about the god sickness. I did know in addition to what Kim Myöngja published, however, that Cho was born in 1931 and in a July 15, 1977 interview with her son, I was informed that Cho's first husband had been taken

¹⁷ Kim Myöngja, “P'albong-san tanggut,” 26.

into the North Korean volunteer army (*ũiyonggun*) in the summer of 1950.¹⁸ Cho Chõngsun would have been nineteen at that time, meaning her shaman sickness dates to the time of the Korean War, when her first husband disappeared. Cho must have arrived at P'albong Mountain in late 1976 or early 1977, because the 1976 HMCCP report mentions a different shaman, Pak Pongnyõ, as *tangjigi* for the 1976 shrine ceremony.

This account of a god-descended shrine master shaman, however, makes Cho Chõngsun a somewhat unusual figure in the literature on Korean vernacular religion. From the beginning I had understood her as a god-descended shaman (*kangsinmu*) because she voiced the gods (*kongsu*) during her ceremonies. This view is strengthened by Kim Myõngja's account of Cho's god sickness, something that is culturally understood to be evidence of a god's calling someone to be its mouthpiece and a regular aspect of god-descended shamans' life histories. Literature on Korean shamanism generally locates the tradition of god-descended shamans primarily north of the Han River, corresponding to P'albong Village's location, but this literature also characterizes shamans attached to shrines as hereditary *tan'gol mudang* (*sesũmmu*) who do not voice the gods directly but communicate with spirits through mediums (often a spirit pole grasped by a susceptible villager). *Tan'gol mudang* who learn their craft from their mothers-in-law used to be found primarily in the Honam area of southwest Korea. Some god-descended shamans apprentice to spirit mothers (*sin õmi*) who teach them chants and ceremonies and supervise their initiation, but Cho related to Kim Myõngja, "I didn't formally learn all my shamanistic activities in a different place, but devotedly did what the gods told me to do at P'albong Mountain."¹⁹ She is, in other words, not a hereditary *tan'gol* shaman nor trained by a spirit mother, yet she is a divinely inspired *tangjigi* shaman attached to a shrine.

State Views of Authenticity in Shamanic Performance

Choi Chungmoo has noted that since the 1960s, shamanism in the Republic of Korea has emerged to become a carrier of cultural identity. It is seen as a repository of a national spirit (*minjok ũi õl*) never overcome by centuries of Chinese, Japanese, or Western influence that can therefore be recuperated to re-inscribe the independence of Korean culture.²⁰ The Law for Preservation of Cultural Properties (Munhwajae poho põp), first passed in 1962, provided for a Cultural Properties Committee made up of folklorists to designate, after careful investigation, persons or ceremonies as Important Intangible Cultural Properties or Human Cultural Treasures.

¹⁸ During the North Korean occupation of most of rural South Korea in the summer of 1950, young men who had not fled in front of the advancing North Korean forces were recruited for the Volunteer Army. In many cases this recruitment was by force, and recruits often were killed or had to retreat with North Korea troops into North Korea, and so disappeared.

¹⁹ Kim Myõngja, "P'albong-san tanggut," 8.

²⁰ Chungmoo Choi, "The Competence of Korean Shamans as Performers of Folklore" (PhD. Diss., Indiana University, 1987), 59.

The basis of the designation of an item as an intangible property is its long history, authenticity, rarity, and perfection in the state of preservation at the time of its discovery. The item should also possess artistic value and be shared largely by the populace, preferably by the peasants. In order to protect the designated item, any further alternation(s) in text and form from “the original” is prohibited by regulation.²¹

People or ceremonies officially designated cultural treasures may then receive financial support from the state. By 1966, eight regional versions of shamanic rituals had been so designated.

Working within this framework, Kim Myōngja thought aspects of the P'albong Mountain *tanggut* did not meet proper standards for preservation. She based this assessment by comparing P'albong Village rites with classic accounts of Korean village ceremonies going back to the Colonial Period (1910–45), during which such rituals were said to properly be rites of village solidarity having a fundamentally dual structure (*ijung kujō*) combining male-centered Confucian rites with female-centered shamanistic activities. This tradition of viewing shrine worship as functionally distinct from house god worship and deeming well-preserved shrine ceremonies to be fundamentally dualistic can be traced back to an influential 1933 article on Korean village festivals by Akiba Takashi.²² In this article Akiba emphasized gender duality expressed through a seasonal rite celebrated by unpolluted males in Confucian style, and an occasional rite, centered more on women, that involves shamans. Although Akiba does not give an historical explanation for the duality that he observed, he does seem to assume that shamanistic rites are older (*genshūteki*) and more central than Confucian rites.²³

Akiba's model was later appropriated by some of the post-liberation Korean folklorists who also tended to emphasize the folkloric importance of the *pyōlsin kut* of southeastern Korea. Many villages of in southeast Korea celebrate an annual Confucian-style ceremony at their village shrine combined with a shaman-centered *pyōlsin kut* celebrated at intervals of three to ten years that can involve masked dance drama (as in the famous village of Hahoe) or itinerant troops of highly trained hereditary shamans who perform a series of artistic *kut* over several days. Some of these *kut* involve narration of long and elaborate myths. Post Liberation Korean scholars such as the late Yi Tuhyōn consider these *kut* the roots of indigenous Korean drama.²⁴

In her report, Kim approvingly mentions Kim T'aekkyu, quoted below, whose view of village ritual follows in this tradition.

In village practices that are stable and correspondingly slow to react, these factors [of acceptance and rejection of foreign religions] are even more harmonized based on the depth of time. It seems to me that village festivals are practices of ours that best exhibit

²¹ Chungmoo Choi, “The Competence of Korean Shamans,” 66.

²² Akiba Takashi, “Chōsen no mura matsuri,” 8.

²³ Akiba Takashi, “Chōsen no mura matsuri,” 9.

²⁴ Yi Tuhyōn, *Han'guk kam'yōn'gūk* [Korean masked drama (Seoul: Munhwajae Kwalliguk, 1969)].

this characteristic of village culture. It can be said that a conspicuous aspect of village festivals is the combination of Confucian ritual sequence with shamanistic ritual, that is “kut.”²⁵

Kim Myōngja concedes that anthropologists such as Ch’oe Kilsōng reject interpreting village rites on the basis of an idealized historical typical analysis of village ritual and see village ritual as a reflection of living social structures rather than a transmission from the past of an ideal type.²⁶ In her article on the P’albong *tanggut*, however, Kim Myōngja was clearly looking for the stable, long-standing, fully harmonized ritual hypothesized by Kim T’aekkyu that can justify government support, because it preserves authentic ancient Korean culture elaborated to a high artistic level. By these standards the P’albong Mountain shrine ceremony does, indeed, lack ordered sequence, form, and artistry.

For Kim Myōngja the fact that no Confucian-style ritual is recorded or remembered for P’albong Village means that an essential part of the authentic dual structure of a proper village festival is missing. Her description below corresponds with what I also observed, but her interpretation differs from mine.

Those participating in the ritual are almost all just women. If because of pollution or other circumstances they cannot go up the mountain they prepare their offerings at home and offer their worship facing the mountain, and also when they worship house gods they always set aside a portion for the shrine god, so one can see that there is no belief in dual differentiation between village gods and house gods.

After the disappearance of the Confucian ceremony male participation is naturally deficient, and since it is done as a shamanistic ceremony centering on women the shrine god that is the village god naturally becomes linked to the house god belief that is a part of female ritual. Thus while the ritual was changed from a dual structure attached to a Confucian ritual to a one-dimensional ritual centered on kut, the ritual’s participants became limited to be female-centered excluding males, and thus has the appearance of amalgamating even more closely the village god with the house gods whose ritual is women’s responsibility.²⁷

Kim avers that the P’albong Village gods should be a village founding god (*balbae, balmae*), an ancestral god (*chosang*), or a village protector god (*kolmaegi*) as is typically found in villages with dual Confucian/shamanistic village rituals. As she noted (and I also found), the five female deities on P’albong Mountain are not strongly functionally differentiated. Women go to the Three Ladies Shrine to bless babies, to the Seven Stars Shrine to pray for happiness and long

²⁵ Kim T’aekkyu, “Tongje wa tongsin” [Village ceremonies and village gods], in *Han’guk nonggyōng sesi ūi yōn’gu: Nonggyōng ūiryē ūi munhwa illyuhakchōk koch’al* [A study of Korean rural seasonality: A cultural anthropological investigation of rural ritual]. (Taegu: Yōngnam Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, 1985), 364–71.

²⁶ Ch’oe Kilsōng, *Han’guk min’gan sinang ūi yōn’gu* [A study of Korean popular belief] (Taegu: Kyemyōng Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’ansa, 1989), 200.

²⁷ Kim Myōngja, “P’albong-san tanggut,” 41–42.

life for their descendants, and to the Earth God to protect the village and also to cure their diseases. If the *tanggut* should properly be a ritual of village solidarity, then the admixture of private family concerns into the village ceremony shows degeneration of rites that would have been distinct in the past. For Kim Myōngja the multiple religious functions that are combined in the *tanggut* as practiced in P'albongni show improper confusion between the functions of village gods responsible for village solidarity and protection and the house gods responsible for individual family welfare.²⁸

Not only is the lack of male-female dualism and the lack of functional differentiation of household and village gods a problem for Kim Myōngja, but so was the sequence of the *tanggut*. There was no clear distinction between the various *keōri* (acts) of the kut. The shaman songs were mostly prayers for villagers' well-being and were the same for each section, rather than the elaborately distinct chants folklorists have collected for Seoul *todang kut*, and apart from the question of which of the Ladies has come down for the ceremony—a prognostication for the harvest—the women, according to Kim, were not much interested in village-wide issues, and rather tended to focus on receiving divinations for their family, good luck, and the blessing of name hangings (*myōngdari*) to protect family members. "Thus, for the *tanggut* more than ritual sequence and artistic form the priority is on aspects of content that are expression of belief, and what is more it is these dominant factors [rather than artistry and folklore] that seem to be those that have the strongest transmissibility."²⁹

Finally, Kim Myōngja finds the functionality (*chingnūng*) asked of the P'albong Mountain shaman problematic.

In the traditional village it is ideal that each village have a hereditary shaman (*tan'gol*, *tan'gol mudang*). That *mudang* was called the shrine master. The village shrine master naturally had taken charge of the village festival (*purakche*) put on by the village. This conception is still transmitted in the present. However, these days it seems to be a phenomenon that is rarely maintained.³⁰

Here she notes that Cho Chōngsun has been given the shrine key, but she no longer gets a house and other support despite the fact that she still has responsibility for the village festival.

... when in 1981 village people died because of a boat accident they told Cho Chōngsun it's because she didn't worship the village gods well, told her to hand over the shrine key, and called another shaman to get the kut, have thieves caught, and make right the

²⁸ The earliest expression of this view that village ceremonies properly must express village communal consciousness can also be found in Akiba, "Chōsen no mura matsuri," where Akiba writes, "as for villagers' communal consciousness, what is expressed religiously is the concept of village gods". Later Akamatsu Chijō and Akiba Takashi wrote in *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū* "the village made up of a collection of families also manages activity as a super familial religious institution (*chō-kazokuteki shūgyo kikan*), so both a village rite that the villagers do themselves and a village rite in which outside shamans participate still survive" (195).

²⁹ Kim Myōngja, "P'albong-san tanggut," 43.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

order in the village.³¹

The shaman thus combines the role of a priest in managing shrine ritual, divination in calling down the gods and getting predictions, curing of sickness, entertaining the gods in shaman ritual, and still has the political role of maintaining order. To Kim this shows that the formal aspects of the transmitted village ritual have been truncated and changed in the process of transmission.

The result is the observation that the *tanggut* that must have once been done as a dual structure of Confucian and shamanistic ritual, has changed into a *tanggut* centering on shamanistic ritual, and while this was happening the village god belief had been closely amalgamated with the house ritual of the house gods of individual devotion and female responsibility.

In this regard we can see that the content of belief got emphasized rather than the ritual's formal artistry, [that content's] transmissibility has been preserved, and so for the *tanggut* shaman not just the functions of priest, curer, diviner, and entertainer but also the political function of controlling the social order has been preserved.³²

Believers' Inner Experience and Perception

Kim Myōngja's ethnography was thorough and careful, and it filled important gaps in my knowledge of folk religion in P'albong Village. From the point of view of the national intangible cultural treasure system, a system looking for elaborate artistic traditions handed down in fixed form from the past, her conclusions are justified. Cho Chōngsun and the P'albong *tanggut* are based on spiritual inspiration rather than teacher-student transmission, and the ceremony does not demonstrate the fixed structure and artistic elaboration that Kim was looking for. However, because Kim Myōngja builds into her analysis a number of historical and theoretical assumptions that can be questioned, her conclusions are not necessarily the last word on the P'albong *tanggut* and the shaman Cho Chōngsun.

I have quoted Choi Chungmoo about the importance of artistry and intact transmission for Intangible National Treasures, including shaman ceremonies. When discussing how shamans' *clients* evaluate shamanic competence, on the other hand, Choi comes up with a different set of criteria. While artistry is appreciated, "[o]verdone artistic performance in which aesthetic considerations outweigh the religious efficacy of the kut is often suspected of quackery," she notes.³³ Successful shamans, she argues, must combine spiritual power (*yōnghōm*) with social

³¹ Kim Myōngja, "P'albong-san tanggut," 44.

³² Kim Myōngja, "P'albong-san tanggut," 45.

³³ Choi Chungmoo, "The Artistry and Ritual Aesthetics of Urban Korean Shamans," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 3, no. 2 (Summer, 1989): 239.

(Tree God), *T'ojisin* (Earth God), and so forth.⁴¹ That is, village ceremonies generally focus on local nature deities that express natural power. Very few are expressly regional, historical, or clan figures—the ancestors or *kolmaegi* that Kim Myōngja cites as proper village deities.⁴² Murayama, in fact, thought that with the great variety of village ceremonies “it is impossible to make a definitive description of village rites,” and he notes that it is common for villages to make a male villager a master of ceremonies, yet “they rely entirely on the specialized actions of a professional shaman,” as is also the case in P'albong Village.⁴³ Murayama's work reveals, in fact, that the ideal type upon which Kim Myōngja based her assessment is the regional tradition of the Yōngnam region and eastern Kangwōn Province rather than a uniform, nationwide traditional practice.

More recently, Korean anthropologist Ch'oe Kilsōng has criticized single origin theories of Korean village festivals for interpreting ceremonies outside the context of society itself and for seeing the village festival as actually creating village social structure rather than reflecting it.

Purakche (village ceremonies) do not form the village but transform with changes in the village. Socialization does not exist based on the functions of the *purakche* just because there is a *purakche*. On the contrary, if the social basis (of the village) changes then the *purakche* generally also changes. The fact that the *purakche* is implemented means that social functions exist. One cannot merge social functions and the *purakche*. Society exists even if there is not a *purakche*. The *purakche* functions according to its own principle and, based on these principles, it reflects the society that exists.⁴⁴

This points to a weakness in Kim Myōngja's analysis. If ceremonies interact with and reflect each village's social structure, then the assumption that there is a proper ideal typical *purakche* is misplaced. There is no question that dual festival structures are common in South Korea, but the assumption that all village festivals have, or used to have, a dual structure is not based on historical research. Rather, it involves thinking through an ideal-type, historical-evolutionary sequencing based on the comparative method.

In the comparative method, present tradition is seen to preserve remnants of past culture that can then be reconstructed by comparing the distribution of these remnants and imagining a historical process by which what was once uniform has decayed. It is a kind of speculative history that incorporates numerous dubious assumptions. One of these is the idea that a uniform historical development trajectory can be assumed for all villages in a single culture area. Because dual structures are common for village ceremonies in Korea, it is

⁴¹ Of these only Sōnangsin requires explanation. This is a kind of deity often worshiped by travelers or villagers at an ancient tree or a numinous pile of rocks located sometimes in the center of a village, but at other times at the boundary between villages.

⁴² Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no kyōdo shinsbi Dai 1 bu, Burakusai* [Korean provincial rites, part 1: Village Festivals] (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1937), 123–25.

⁴³ Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no kyōdo shinsbi Dai 1 bu, Burakusai*, 203.

⁴⁴ Ch'oe Kilsōng, “Characteristics of Village Belief,” in *Folk Belief*, 190.

then further assumed that villages that lack this characteristic have lost something that must have existed in the past. This procedure ignores two other possibilities: (1) that variation in village ceremonies may reflect longstanding sociopolitical variation between individual villages rather than the degree of preservation of tradition, and (2) that there are distinct regional traditions in Korean vernacular religion that cannot be unified into a single historical developmental trajectory. There is reason in the case of P'albong Village, I believe, to suppose both of these possibilities are true.

Because I was aware of Korean folklorists' dualistic analysis of Korean village festivals when I did my original fieldwork in 1977, I went to a great deal of trouble to make sure that I did not miss a Confucian ceremony. On May 2, 1977, when I observed my first village *tanggut*, I feared that I had missed a secret early morning ceremony done by the men of the village before the *tanggut* had begun. My male informants always answered my persistent questioning by saying that there was no such ritual. I asked the question numerous times to a variety of people over a number of months and never got a different answer. Kim Myōngja interprets the ceremony described for 1976 in the *HMCCP* as a remnant of a Confucian ceremony that must have been more intact in the past. Because village informants insisted that there was no male ceremony, and did not talk about one in the past, however, I see the hybrid ceremony hosted by males in the newly rebuilt *tangjip* in 1976 as a temporary expedient because of the absence of a *tangjigi* shaman. Moreover, the Confucian nature of that ceremony can be questioned since when I questioned the village head, Hong Sōnggyu, about the 1976 ceremony during a preliminary field survey he told me the following:

In 1976, we invited 2–3 shamans (*mansin*) on the full moon of the third lunar month, and guests and relatives came to watch. We had a 3–4 day festival, a shaman's (*mudang*) kut (40–50 people). It was set up by the shaman (*mansin*), and they came crossing the river. My parents and cousins came. We are going to do it again this year. After we built the *tangjip* we called for a shaman (*mansin*), and the shaman said that for her part she would come (northern type god-descended shaman [field assistant's comment]). They want to make the mountain into a tourist destination. Even from Seoul they come every weekend. (December 11, 1976)

On this visit, I was being helped by Kim Hongjun, an MA student from the Seoul National University Anthropology Department, so I am certain in this case that language difficulties did not distort my information, since anything I did not understand Mr. Kim explained to me in English. Hong's use of the Seoul terms "mansin" and "mudang" for shaman does not correspond to the local linguistic usage I discovered during my 1983 village religious survey (see above), but on this occasion I attribute it to the village head's self-conscious use of Standard Korean language (*p'yojunŏ*) for the benefit of his foreign visitor.

Whether the 1976 ceremony was Confucian or not, however, one can argue that the village male ritual repertory consisted of ceremonialism based on Confucian ancestor worship, so it would be natural for males to conduct worship in this manner if for some reason (lack of a

shaman for example) they had to worship tutelary deities themselves, regardless of whether this was a “tradition” in the village, or not. The HMCCP reports, moreover, that the shrine had a shaman *tangjigi* before it burnt in 1970, and “public opinion tended in the direction that there would have to be a *mudang* again, and that they probably should have a *mudang* do the 3.15 ceremony.”⁴⁵ I would argue, therefore, that it is most likely that worship of the P’albong Mountain gods has always been primarily through a *tangjigi* shaman.

Historical evidence for the antiquity of the mountain cult on P’albong-san, while limited, seems quite firm. *Tongguk yöji süngnam* [Augmented survey of the geography of Korea], a gazetteer from the sixteenth century mentions P’albong-san in *Hongch’ön Hyön*, noting it is also called Kammurak. Two Buddhist temples were said to be located there: Changnak-sa (Long Bliss Temple), and Söngbang-sa (Fortress District Temple), and a shrine in which the country government sponsored a sacrifice spring and fall.⁴⁵ The gazetteer was first compiled in 1481, but is known today only from its 1530 revision, and of that revision the only extant copies date from 1611. The current information plaque on the shrine dates the ceremony to the reign of King Sönjo (1567–1608), and commentators seem to assume the cult developed during the Japanese invasions of the 1590s. Moreover, the shrine on P’albong Mountain is the only shrine outside the immediate vicinity of the Hongch’ön Prefecture seat that is recorded in the *Tongguk yöji süngnam* to have received official rites, giving it extraordinary status within the county.

Just because the country was sponsoring sacrifices called “che,” we cannot necessarily assume that these were Confucian in style for the period in question.⁴⁶ While a consistent Confucianization process during the Chosön Dynasty led the rites in state-sponsored shrines to gradually be taken over from shamans by magistrates and then converted from shamanistic to Confucian style, this process was well short of complete in the sixteenth century.⁴⁷ During this period, the term “sa” 祀 (worship, normally referred to as ancestor worship) was also used to describe the worship of Söngang sin (a type of tutelary deity worshiped at special trees or piles of rocks). While the names of gods worshipped are not given in this source, we can assume that mountain gods of some sort were involved since it would be hard to explain the location of three temples on a remote mountain peak, otherwise.

Is it conceivable, then, that five female deities had been worshipped on P’albong-san from hundreds of years ago? Today folk religious images of mountain gods invariably show a male deity, often seated on a tiger with a magpie messenger in the trees, and (sometimes) a small wife (*manura*) on the side. Son Chint’ae, Korea’s first field-based folklorist, however, documented back in 1934 that there are also very old female mountain gods. Son, in fact,

⁴⁵ *Sinjüng Tongguk Yöji Süngnam* [Revised and augmented survey of the geography of Korea] (Seoul: Tongguk Munhwasa, 1958), Vol. 46, 835. Both Buddhist temples and ancestral shrines are pronounced *sa* in Korean, but written with different Chinese characters. A Buddhist temple is written 寺 while an ancestral shrine is written 祠.

⁴⁶ The term “che” normally, but not invariably, implies a Confucian rite since the same Chinese character is sometimes used as a transcription for *cut*.

⁴⁷ Boudewijn Walraven, “Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society,” in *Culture and the State in Late Chosön Korea*, eds. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 160–98.

considered the female mountain gods to be historically older than the male ones.⁴⁸ This makes it seem quite possible that the cult of the female mountain gods on P'albong Mountain is old, original, and has always been managed by a *tangjigi mudang*.

Kim Myōngja's contention that the mountain gods of San'gongni are inappropriate for village worship, thus, seems overly narrow. Her examples of appropriate gods—*halmae*, *halbae*, *kolmaegi*, ancestors—come exclusively from the ethnography of southeastern Korea where today the complex of annual male-centered Confucian ceremonies combined with occasional elaborate shamanistic ceremonies (*pyölsin kut*) led by troops of itinerant hereditary shamans still survives. While this kind of shamanism exhibits the high levels of elaboration and artistry that attracts the attention of folklorists and government culture-preservation bureaucrats, this is a different regional tradition from that of western Kangwŏn Province where P'albong Mountain is located. The Taegwallyŏng Tano Ceremony, by far the most famous folk religious rite in Kangwŏn-do and a UNESCO heritage ceremony involves none of the above deities Kim Myōngja considers appropriate, but rather a Mountain God and a *Sŏnghwang sin*, deities similar to what are found in P'albong-san. A female deity is also involved.

I would go farther and claim that it makes perfect sense for female mountain gods to be responsible for the welfare and tranquility of the area around the mountain. Since the women of the family—under the direction of the house mother-in-law—ensure domestic welfare and tranquility, it makes sense that female gods would ensure wider welfare, tranquility, and fertility. And when things go wrong—disaster strikes, fertility is inadequate—it also makes sense that villagers would turn to a cooperating group of female gods to set things right. Groups of women cooperate to prepare meals, care for children, and manage the household in much the same manner. Their personality conflicts (like those of the Three Ladies) can also cause trouble. Male ancestor worship and worship at Confucian academies is about social status, power, and wider connections in Korean society. Even so, burials and tomb side ancestor worship presided over by men also include offerings to local earth gods (*to'ji chi sin*) colloquially referred to as mountain gods (*sansin*). The more powerful tutelary mountain gods of P'albong Mountain do govern social order, but otherwise are not about male concerns of status and power. They are about peace, fertility, longevity, and health, and they use their power accordingly.

Finally, Kim Myōngja judges the local god-descended shaman Cho Chŏngsun by the standards of the hereditary *tan'gol mudang* model that has been documented only in the southwest. This procedure of working within a unilineal evolutionary framework by which the most elaborated examples of folk religion are taken as the nationwide norm, and less elaborated or unique examples are understood in terms of either imperfect preservation of Korean tradition or deviance from Korean cultural norms, defines western Kangwŏn Province's regional distinctiveness out of existence. Other villages in western Kangwŏn-do also have god-descended *tangjigi* shamans. P'albong Villagers, when volunteering the names of religious specialists, usually cite *chŏmjaengi* or *poksul* who are understood locally to

⁴⁸ Son Chint'ae, "Chosŏn kodae sansin ūi sŏng e ch'wihayŏ" [On the sex of ancient Korean mountain gods], *Chindan hakpo* 1, no. 12 (1934): 145–55.

perform “seated kut” (*anjŏn kut*) consisting of chanting without dancing, though some used the mountain shaman who prefers the term “Posanim” (literally “honored bodhisattva,” but understood here to mean a Buddhist oriented shaman who sings, dances, and channels the gods). Chang Sugŏn noted that this is a distinct regional tradition writing, “[t]he mainstream in Kangwŏn Province and also in interior parts of Kyŏngsang Province is ‘*chŏmjaengŏ*’ who are god-descended shamans who emphasize divination (*chŏmbok*), are often self-styled “*posal*” [Posanim is the honorific form of *posal*], and it is difficult to find shaman priests who sing and dance.”⁴⁹ It may well be that P’albong Village’s distinctive cult of five female mountain deities worshiped by a shaman who uses less elaborate singing and dancing than what is found in the Seoul region is a venerable and authentic example of Korean regional vernacular culture, rather than an imperfect realization of a uniform national folk tradition. Since vernacular religion by definition lacks centralization and uniformity, one would expect such regional variation.

Authentic, but Is It “Traditional”?

Worship of the P’albong Mountain gods is documented to be old. The institutionalization of the P’albong Mountain shrine master goes back several generations in village memory, too. These memories cannot be documented as reliably as the cult of P’albong Mountain itself, but the institution of *tangju* clearly and substantially predates the arrival of the present shaman, Cho Chŏngsun. Yet the concrete ceremonial sequence of the illiterate shaman, Cho Chŏngsun, cannot be reliably traced to a line of transmission from the past. However, over the fourteen-year period between 1977 when I first observed her performances and 1990 when Kim Myŏngja observed them, I can discern the process of a novice shaman elaborating her shamanic repertoire, gradually adding costumes and ritual sequences.⁵⁰ The villagers never voiced concern about the improvisatory nature of Cho’s performances, whether in the village or at the *tangjip*. Efficacy came from Cho’s perceived ability to harness the spiritual power (*yŏnggŏm*) of the mountain gods: the fact that she could successfully voice the gods in village and private ceremonies was proof that the gods had opened her “gates of speech,” and that she communicated with the gods of P’albong Mountain. In this sense the authenticity of her activities came from village believers’ subjective experience of her spiritual power.

Even if Cho’s performance cannot reliably replicate past ceremonies, can vernacular religion, like that of P’albong Mountain, still ratify Korean cultural distinctiveness as outlined by Choi Chungmoo above? Is there a way that Cho Chŏngsun’s performances can be seen as “traditional” even if they do not replicate fixed ritual sequences transmitted from the past?

⁴⁹ Chang Sugŏn, “Min’gan sinang” [Folk belief], in *Han’guk minsokhak kaesŏl* [An introduction to Korean folklore], eds. Yi Tuhyŏn, Chang Sugŏn and Yi Kwanggyu (Seoul: Minjung Sŏgwan, 1974), 128–97.

⁵⁰ This point is even more obvious if one takes into consideration the even later observations of Kim Ŭisuk on the 1993–9 performances. See “Hongch’ŏn P’albong-san tangsanje,” in *Kangwŏn-do minsok munhwaron* [On Kangwŏn Province folk culture] (Seoul: Chimmundang), 297–324.

Edward Shils would answer in the negative, saying a line of transmission must “last over at least three generations . . . to be a tradition.”⁵¹ Even Eric Hobsbawm distinguishes “invented tradition” from “custom” by averring that tradition “imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices, such as repetition.”⁵² Handler and Linnerkin, however, have argued that calling something “traditional” is an interpretation rather than a statement of fact, and “tradition cannot be defined in terms of boundedness, givenness, or essence. Rather, tradition refers to an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity.”⁵³ Society itself, they argue, is a meaningful process rather than a bounded object, and what becomes traditional are those activities that are interpreted to provide identity because of purported links to the past.

To villagers surrounding P'albong Mountain in the late twentieth century, the mountain's link with the past was important. In 1976, villagers thought worship of the mountain gods of P'albong Mountain important enough that they gathered 120,000 *wŏn* (the equivalent of 240 US dollars in 1977) to have the shrine rebuilt after it burnt down.⁵⁴ Once the shrine was rebuilt, they thought it important that the shrine celebration continue on the traditional date of the full moon of the third lunar month. To do so they thought they needed, as in the past, a shrine master—a shaman attached to the shrine to carry out the ceremony. They chose Cho Chŏngsun as shrine master because she appeared at the mountain and claimed to be in communications with the traditional mountain gods. She proved that her “gates of speech” were open by voicing the gods. These were customary criteria for choosing a shaman. Cho did not transmit an intact or a fixed ritual sequence, but used recognizable customary bits of Korean shamanic costumes, prayers, and story motives to weave together her performances, performances that I have been able to show have become more elaborated over time. This bricolage takes apart bits of vernacular myth and ritual and reconstructs them into new, meaningful sets of events. While Cho's creations are rightly not deemed “national treasures,” this does not make them inauthentic. They are more than “custom” because P'albong Village is now part of the global world that includes Christians who reject local vernacular religion in the name of modernity. P'albong Village vernacular religion is no longer innocent worship of local gods. Now it is “tradition” because worship of village tutelary deities has, by default, become a statement of local identity in the face of universalizing religion.

⁵¹ Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 15.

⁵² Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

⁵³ Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, “Tradition, Genuine or Spurious,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 385 (1984): 273.

⁵⁴ *HMCCP*, 148.

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