

From Alexandre Guillemoz, *Les Algues, Les Anciens, Le Dieux* (The Seaweed, the Elders, the Gods) (Paris, Léopard d'Or, 1983) pp 149-70

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2. The Ancestors (page 149)

Funerals and rites following a death for three, twelve or twenty-seven months will not be addressed in this study. The ancestors we are talking about here have all been dead for more than two years. The rites for them took place following other domestic deities. The descendants are no longer required to mourn their parents and are no longer considered polluted by the death.

The most important rite of the cult of the ancestors has been imitated from China and is called *chesa*. Leon Wieger (1932:168) gives the character *che* 祭 the meaning of “Oblation, sacrifice . . . Offering x to the moon, which descends to influence the “si” 示 from the top.

F. S. Couvreur (1966: 645) indicates that the character *sa* 祀 says, “Sacrifice, offering of food and grain . . to a spirit or the dead.”

The villagers of Mipo think that the ancestors absorb during the *chesa* the fumigation, the colors and a part of the meal that is prepared. In a sense, *chesa* comes close to the Greek verb *thuo* “to sacrifice”. Emile Beveniste (1969, t.II:229) indicates, “The ‘sacrifice’ in Greek is . . . stemming from the notion of “fumigation”, grains that are made to burn, exhalations of meat that roasts, smoke that is . . burned, exhalations from roasting meats, smoke rising and rising as an offering to the gods. We could be prompted to translate *chesa* as sacrifice.

However, H. Hubert and M. Mauss (1970:204) write “. . .we must call sacrifice any oblation, even vegetable, whenever the offering is destroyed . . .” During the course of some *chesa* presented in these pages, a part of the offerings is abandoned outside the house, but they are not destroyed. The same authors state further (p 205) a second definition: “Sacrifice is a religious act that, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the state of the moral person who performs it or of certain objects in which it is interested.” The hen or cow that is sometimes killed before the *chesa* does not have the character of “victim.” Their meat is offered like other dishes, rice, soup, fish, fruit . . . So *chesa* do not correspond to either the first or second definition of H. Hubert and M. Mauss. That term will not thus be translated as sacrifice, but as “ritual offering” more briefly as “offering”, a term that must be distinguished from the “simple offering” of something to a deity. To designate the latter, the villagers employ the expression “offer a bowl of rice” (*pap ollida*); whereas for the former they use the following terms: “do a ritual offering” (*chesa rül hada*), celebrate a ritual offerings (*chesa rül chinaeda*), or offer up a ritual offering (*chesa rül ollida*).

a. The Soul Boxes (Les boîtes à âmes)

p150 In the inner room on a shelf next to Samsin's jar could be observed the presence of one or more wicker boxes called *kusin tobangkkuri* (photo 9). These boxes are round or rectangular. For example, at h.1 the one that adjoins the Samsin jar is 20 cm in diameter and 12 cm total. That found to the right of the preceding has a rectangular form: 25 cm long, 20 cm wide and 20 cm high. In the village *tobangkkuri* designates the sewing box in which the women store the needles, scissors, thread, and pieces of cloth they need. Chŏng T'aejin and Kim Pyŏngje (1948:126) confirm the meaning of this term that they say belongs to Kangwŏn Provincial dialect. The meaning of the word *tobang* is unknown. On the other hand, *kkuri* can designate the spool of thread of a sewing box. That box contains the *kusin* (dialectical pronunciation of Standard Korean *kwisin*) of the father and/or the mother of the house head. In that case, *kusin* could be translated as "soul" and *kusin tobangkkuri* as "soul box".

When there are several boxes, each of them contains the souls of one generation of the family. Ten families of the sample have one or two "soul boxes." One of the two owned by family number 1 contain nothing. According to the 88-year old grandmother, it was put there to teach her children. In family 4, one of the two boxes does not contain the soul of an ancestor, but that of her eldest son who died a bachelor at the age of twenty-five of a belly disease. In all the other cases, the willow boxes contain the souls of pairs of ancestors of the family: the first box the soul of the father, or the soul of his wife, or the souls of the father and mother of the house head; the second the souls of paternal ancestors of the house head; the third the souls of paternal great grandfathers of the house head; the fourth, the souls of the great, great grandparents of the house head. So, according to Kim Hong-su (59 years old) one may see lined up next to the Samsin jar four wicker boxes containing the souls of the pairs of ancestors of the paternal line of the house head.¹ Beyond the fourth generation of ancestors the soul box is destroyed.

151 These soul boxes sometimes contain the collar that was sewn on the edge of the jacket of the ancestor's vest (h. 1), a piece of fabric, or a piece of folded white paper with money (10,000 wŏn), according to h. 10. It is forbidden to touch these wicker boxes and I could not see what was inside. However, in another village of fishermen situated in the same province a box was opened for me that contained (photo 10): a 500 wŏn bill and three or four 10 wŏn coins, the seal of an ancestor, the deed of ownership of a piece of land, and some pieces of clothing of the ancestor. (House of Kim Tong-su, village of Sŏkpyŏng, Kuryongp'o Üp, December 1973). In Mipo, in three houses of the sample, a piece of which cotton covered with dust was place over the jar of Samsin and the soul boxes (houses 1, 4, 18). That fabric is called "fabric for Samsin's clothes and fabric for the ancestors' clothes".

None of the six family heads who are younger sons of their family of origin have a "soul box" because the cult of the ancestors takes place at the elder brother's place. Among the fourteen

¹ Kim Yong-su is not one of the family heads of the sample. His family has been living in the village for four generations. On the first day of the lunar new year, he puts out nine pairs of chopsticks and nine spoons for Grandma Samsin and for each of the members of the four couples. He pours liquor into eight cups for the ancestors. Grandma Samsin does not take liquor.

family heads who are the eldest of their family of origin five have one “soul box” (3,8,16,18,20) and five have two (1,4,10,14, 19).

At the four house heads that remain, one (h14) destroyed the box at the same time as the Samsin jar in 1965 because he said it was a superstition (he was a police officer at the time). The second (h 6) abandoned his mother and broke all links with his family of origin. The third (h 13) never had a “soul box.” His family originated in a farming village in the same county in a neighboring township, but they have been in Mipo for three generations. However, they have a Samsin jar. The fourth (h 5) does not have one, although it does have a Samsin jar; he is a fisherman, and according to the elders his family is one of the oldest of the village, but this family has never had a “soul box.” The absence of a box does not prevent these four family heads from worshiping their ancestors.

None of the families that I interviewed possess ancestral tablets. The villagers say that the only tablets they have today in the village are those of the village gods of the sea that were made at the end of the last century. Worship of the ancestors is offered beneath the “soul box” or in front of a piece of paper that is pasted on the wall, and on which is inscribed the name of the ancestor.

The “ritual offerings” are done in the house for the ancestors of the family head up to his paternal great grandparents. These constitute the offerings for four generations of ancestors *sadae pongsa* that take place on fixed dates: the morning of the first day of the lunar new year, the morning of the 15th day of the 8th month, and on variable dates: the anniversary of the death of each of the ancestors, at night, at midnight.

Page 152 b. The ritual offering on the 1st day of the lunar new year

The worship on the first day of the lunar new year took place at Mr. Kwŏn Ŏn-ch’ul’s on the 11th of February 1975 in the following manner. At nine in the morning, the table for worship is set up. The last dishes arrive from the kitchen. They are put on the table by the family head. The table is below the wicker box that contains the soul of Mr. Kwŏn’s father. Wooden pedestals that are used only for worship are placed on the large table of worship with the following dishes:

1. Flame broiled fish (whiting, sole, amberjack, salmon trout, and pieces of shark) and pieces of octopus.
2. Bowl of soup.
3. Bowl of cooked rice.
4. Rice cakes *sŏngbin* = *sŏngp’yŏn*
5. Three hard-boiled eggs,
6. Bowl containing pieces of tofu in water
7. Rice cake *ttŏk*
8. Cooked beef.

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9. Whiting pancake

10. Sweet potato pancake
11. Pancake of legumes and sautéed meat
12. Jujubes
13. Persimmons
14. Chestnuts
15. Two pears
16. Four apples
17. Tofu
18. A kettle containing rice liquor prepared at home called “clear liquor” *ch’ōngju*
19. Empty container concealed partly under the table

On the little table placed in front of the main table we have:

20. A copper cup filled with sand in the center of which is planted tufts of pine needles
mosa
21. A small container with charcoal [n.b. “incense burner”]
22. Two copper cups on their copper stands
23. Two metal chopsticks
24. One spoon
25. A small copper box containing pieces of juniper *hyangnamu* (*Juniperus chinensis*)
26. Place where the offered cup of liquor is deposited

In the room is found Mr. Kwŏn, his eldest son, one of his married younger sons, his nephew (eldest of a younger collateral branch, in place of his deceased father, younger brother of Mr. Kwŏn), and his three or four-year-old grandson. They are the only men in the room. The door to the room is closed. The family head wears traditional clothes of white cotton. He puts on his dark blue traditional coat. All of the rest wear occidental type clothing (pants, shirt, sweater, vest). Everything is ready for the offering.

One: Prostrations

Mr. Kwŏn throws a few twigs of juniper into the small container. The aroma is released. All prostrate themselves in front of the worship table. The prostration *k’ŭn chŏl* of Mr. Kwŏn can be described in the following manner.

The man is standing. His hands meet at the level of his lower abdomen; the fingers of his right hand are held between the thumb and fingers of his left hand. He raises his forearms until his hands, whose index fingers touch each other, reach the level of his shoulders. He lowers his hands on his thighs squatting on his heels. He puts his left knee to the ground, and then his right. He keeps his hands on his thighs and presses the top of his feet against the floor. He straightens his head. He raises his hands at the shoulders, leans forward lying flat on the floor, with his index fingers touching at their tips. The forearms follow the movement and come flat on the ground. The back follows and the face comes to a halt a few centimeters above the hands. He stops

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for a few seconds, the time to take a deep breath. He raises his head, the bust, is resting on his right leg and stands up while keeping his hands against each other. He starts again the same prostration with all the other participants. These two prostrations are called *chaebae*, a double prostration. After getting up, the officiant along with all the others assume *panjöl* slant. He bends his head and body forward with his feet together. The palms, turned against the legs, descend to a level below the knees.

He stands up and says, "Grandfather, you are going to Japan (one of the younger brothers of the family head lives in Japan). You are going to America." (I'm filming the worship, and when a stranger takes a picture its always for taking it to bring it to America.)

Two. Purification of the Cup

Mr. Kwön sits on his heels in front of the tables. He takes a cup holding in his hands for support. His nephew pours some liquor in the cup. Mr. Kwön makes the cup pass three circles over the incense burner. He pours the contents of the cup on the sand with *mosa* in three different points, so that the cup describes a path that would represent an equilateral triangle inscribed within the circle formed by the needles of *mosa*, the vertices of the triangle representing the point where he pours a part of the contents of the cup. This is to purify the cup by rinsing it and removing bad orders thanks to the fragrance that rises from the incense burner. The family head puts the cup and its support on the small table. He puts a couple of bits of juniper in the incense burner.

Three: Offering of Liquor

He makes a double prostration. He sits on his heels. He takes a cup and its support, hands it to his nephew who pours liquor into it, places it on the stand, and holds out his hands in the direction of the large table. The nephew who stands at his side takes the cup by its support and puts the whole on the big table at 0 0, next to the bowl of rice, while his uncle makes with his two hands a gesture of accompaniment meaning that he offers the cup of liquor. The nephew removes the lid from the bowl of cooked rice, embeds the spoon vertically into the rice, and places the chopsticks on the beef (at 8). He waits a few seconds until he removes the cup of liquor and pours the contents into a receptacle half hidden under the big table (at 19). He rests the empty cup on its support and the whole on the little table (at 22),

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in front of the incense burner. Mr. Kwön prostrates himself twice, bows and leaves his place to the oldest of his sons. The eldest son places himself in front of the tables and does a double prostration and bow. Sitting on his heels he takes the pieces of juniper and puts them into the incense burner. He takes a cup with its support, hands it to the nephew that pours the liquor. The eldest offers the cup in the same manner as his father. Then, he prostrates himself two times and bows.

The younger son replaces the nephew in the role of assistant. The nephew will take the place that the elder just left at the tables. The nephew does a double prostration plus bow. He offers

a cup of liquor in the same manner as the father and eldest son. Then, he prostrates himself two times, and bows. The young son prostrates himself, bows, and offers a cup of liquor to his ancestor in the same manner as his predecessors. The offering cup rests on the big table.

Four: Inviting to eat *yusik*

The family head resumes his place in front of the table. Everyone, including the grandson, prostrate themselves to the ground, the forehead above the hands, the forearms placed on the floor. They stay like that for about a minute. During this time the ancestor is supposed to be eating the proffered food. Mr. Kwŏn clears his throat (signal), he stands up, followed by all the others who are also clearing their throats.

Five: Mountain Water

The family head is sitting on his heels in front of the tables that are taken away by his younger son, the bowl of soup will be poured into the tureen in the kitchen. He asks for the water from the mountain *sanmul*. The younger son comes back from the kitchen with a bowl that contains a bit of cold water. The family head puts it next to the bowl of rice.

Six: Prayer

Mr. Kwŏn says while rubbing his hands together (gesture of prayer):

Father, eat well. Yon mother who is eighty years old this year I pray to you she lives to one hundred. (inaudible). I pray to you that this year, these twelve months, these three hundred and sixty days pass well like a beautiful day. I pray to you that all the children we raised who went to other places, that all (inaudible), give much fortune and realize many wishes.

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Seven: Complementary Offering of Liquor *ch'ŏmjak*

Mr. Kwŏn takes the lid of the bowl of rice (turning the concave face up), hands it to his nephew who pours a bit of liquor. The family head offers this liquor in the direction of the big table. The nephew takes the lid and pours the contents into the cup that is resting on the table.

Eight: Collection of a portion of cooked rice *cheban*

The nephew takes the spoon that has been planted in the bowl of rice. He sinks it delicately and vertically into the bowl of rice, and then removes it. Again, he sinks it a third time so that it detaches a portion of rice having the form of a truncated cone. He deposits that portion into the bowl that contains the mountain water. He does this two times. When he has deposited three additional spoonsful he places the spoon on the edge of the table. He covers the three-

quarter bowl of rice with the lid. Mr. Kwŏn explains after the offering, "Like the living, the ancestors eat the rice by dipping it in the water."

Nine: Respectful Greeting *kukkung*

The family head gets up and all, including the grandson, do a bow. They stay upright for about about three seconds, body forward, head down, the fingers of the right hand held between the thumb and the fingers of the left hand. Then they all prostrate themselves two times. The worship, properly speaking, is over. I lasted about then minutes.

Ten: Consumption of Fortune *ŭmbok*

The door of the room is opened. The mother of Mr. Kwŏn is brought in. The nephew hands him the cup that is on the big table and that contains the liquor offered to the ancestor. The nephew also invites him to take some soup. The nephew then offers a cup of liquor to the family head, to the ancestor, to the younger one . . . All married men offer are offered one after another according to their age a cup of liquor and are invited to take some soup. When we all had drunk Mr. Kwŏn went out of the room and directed the preparation for worship of Sŏngju that he will offer alone. To do this he uses a part of the meal and liquor prepared for the ancestor. A few minutes later he returns to the room after having offered the worship to Sŏngju. He then takes his meal on the same table as his mother. The other adult men eat at another table. The women, including the wife of the family head, take the rice directly from a rice box that is place on the floor.

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The meal ends, the women cut the dishes offered to the ancestors into small portions and display them on a wooden pedestal. The dishes (rice cakes, fish, meat, . .) and a glass of liquor will be offered all day to visitors who will greet the head of the family and his mother for the new year. The typical visitor is a younger man than those he comes to greet. When he enters the room, he kneels down and asked the great grandmother to kindly receive his prostration. Then, he puts himself into a squatting posture. He sometimes touches his back with the backs of his hands saying, "Live a long, long time." The mother of the family head then leans her bust forward (bows) and tells him some words of thanks. Then he prostrates himself in front of the family head who invites him to drink a glass of burning liquor or rice beer and to consume a portion of the dishes offered that morning to the ancestors. Mr. Kwŏn and his mother then ask the news of the parents of the visitor who goes away as soon as a new visitor arrives. These visitors who follow one another all day are not only relatives of the family of the house head, but also some relatives of the latter's mother's family, though they come from a village twelve kilometers distant. In addition, Mr. Kwŏn receives visits from sons of friends who are the same age as him. Fathers consider themselves as brothers and send their son to present the wishes for the new year. Unlike what happens in Seoul I did not see any elders give money, if only 10

won (0.1 F), to children in return for their good wishes. However, the visitor is always offered a drink and some food.²

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On the 15th of the first lunar month they eat as a family glutinous rice *ch'albap* mixed with red beans. "The family head first offers a bowl to his ancestors and he asks them that everything goes well. Like that, bowing down without offering incense." There is no ritual offering, one simply offers a bowl to the ancestors. According to some informants, this "simple offering" can take place on the 16th of the first moon, in the morning after the worship offered to the god of North Village and the god of South Village.

d. Cold Food

The 105th day after the winter solstice (the 4th or 5th of April) the villagers eat cold food *hansik*. This festival originated in China where the fires were extinguished that day and then reignited the next day to celebrate the triumph of the spring sun. That day the inhabitants of Mipo say they go to visit the tombs to maintain them. They do not worship at home but only make a few offerings of cold food (cups of liquor, rice cakes) on the graves after doing the maintenance work.

"On other days there are *kusin* (souls, wandering spirits?). *Hansik* is a day when there are no *kusin*. Also on that day we can go to the tombs, repair them and arrange them at our ease." (Pak Pyöng-ch'un, 44 years old, May 17, 1975). "On that day, whatever you do at the grave, it is a day without *t'al* (misfortune, disastrous event), and also one can repair the damage caused by a cow or the water. One can cut the vegetation." (h 10)

² Here is the translation of the most significant passages of the conversation of four family heads of Mipo on the first day of the lunar new year. The recording was made at 2:30 in the morning, the first day of the first month 1975 in the village hall of the south.

"The first day of the year is a very important festival. We only go to family's homes (by blood, marriage, or friendship). We do not go to families that we only know a little."

"Women do not go to their families at this time, but only after the 15th day of the first month."

"We will first greet the paternal grandparents, father and mother. Then, we offer worship to the ancestors. Afterward we go greet the relatives (grand uncles) in the area that offer use food and drink."

"If the father of a close friend dies a few days before the new year, we don't visit them the two or three first days of the year, but only a couple of days afterwards. So if we knew the deceased well we offer him a cup of liquor and we will prostrate two times in front of their soul."

"The first day of the year we are very happy. We put on new clothes, and we dance and sing at night in the houses until we shake the pillars. Men have fun together and women on their side are also dancing and singing in the new year."

e. The Ancestors and Planting

In the spring during the 4th lunar month, some family heads offer a bowl of cooked rice to the ancestors before leaving to plant their rice fields. That offering is destined uniquely for the ancestors. “We pray to the ancestors for agriculture to go well.” (f2). This is not a “ritual offering”, but a “simple offering.” According to the sample, six families make offerings of rice to the ancestors before planting (2, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19). Three families don’t sow rice because they are fishing families (5, 9) or because they do not possess rice fields (6). Eleven families make no offering, which does not mean that they consider that the ancestors have no influence on the harvests.

f. The Ritual Offerings on the 15th of the 8th Month

The worship on the 15th of the 8th moon, the festival called “Autumn Eve” *ch’usök*, took place at Mr. Kwön Ŏn-chul, the 30th of September 1974, in the following manner. At eight fifteen in the morning the large and small tables use for the worship were made up in the corner of the inner room under the shelf that supports the Samsin jar and the “soul boxes.”

Figure 8: Tables for 8.15 Worship

1. Sea products: octopus, dried fish . . . everything is surrounded by a straw tie.
2. Soybean sprout soup
3. Bowl of cooked rice
4. Fifteen rice cakes of oblong *ttök*, fastened by a straw tie
5. Dried squid
6. Legumes (soybean sprouts)
7. Pieces of tofu floating in a bowl of water *tang*
8. Candle inserted in a brass candlestick
9. Dried abalone
10. Four hard-boiled eggs
11. Ten slices of fried tofu
12. Thirty jujubes

13. Ten unpeeled chestnuts
14. Four persimmons
15. A Korean pear the top part of which is peeled
16. Four apples the top part of which is peeled
17. Copper cup filled with sand at the center of which is planted red pine needles

18. Copper vessel containing wood charcoal
19. Small brass box containing the shavings of juniper
20. A brass cup and its support
21. A kettle containing rice beer
22. A receptacle half hidden under the table
23. Two metal chopsticks
24. A spoon
25. Place where the cup of beer will be deposited

The offerings are contained in the brass bowls that are deposited on the wooden stands, with the exception of the apples that are on an earthenware platter.

We are expecting the eldest son who went out to sea this morning. He enters the room at 8:35. Mr. Kwön now unties the straw ties that fastened the fish and the rice cakes. He lights the candle. He expels two girls who are in the room, but says nothing to the two boys who participate in the ritual offering with the family head, his eldest son and his nephew. Mr. Kwön, like all the grandfathers of the village on that day, is wearing traditional clothes and a white, cotton coat.

The ritual offering takes place in the same manner as that of the first day of the lunar new year: prostrations (photo. 11), purifies the cup, offers a libation of liquor, invites to eat. As soon as the mountain water is brought in, Mr. Kwön removes a portion of cooked rice in the same manner as his nephew at the first of the year, and he says to his father, "Eat well," without praying for his mother. Then the rite ends with the complementary offering of liquor and the respectful greeting. It is 8:50 (duration of the rite: 15 minutes), after which the grandmother re-enters to consume the fortune.

The family head specifies that this worship was given to his father, and that those given to his grandfather and his two paternal grandmothers were offered at Hanggol, the small neighboring village where his father had originated. The nephew left the house a few minutes later to make offerings at his house to worship his father, the deceased younger brother of Mr. Kwön. When we had all drunk, the family head exited the room to prepare the worship of Söngju, for whom he made an offering at 8:57 using the dishes offered to his father. Then, he goes back to the inner room. The women clear the tables and begin to cut up the food offered to the ancestors. The latter were partly consumed after the morning repast.

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After the meal I leave with the eldest son to the village of Hanggol that is situated along the seacoast on the other side of the mountains to the south of Mipo. The majority of the family of Hanggol belong to the Andong Kwön lineage. When we arrive in the valley that is situated north of Hanggol we come across a group of villagers followed by a teenage girl who carries on her head a basin that contains the offerings and the drink. They are the members of the lineage

that lives in Hanggol and who will make offerings at the tombs of their ancestors. The eldest son joins them.

The worship takes place in the following manner: the man who best knew the ancestor in the tomb presents to the others (surname, given name, line of kinship . . .) while we unpack the dishes that are placed at the foot of the tumulus beneath which the ancestor rests. Then the men get in line and do a big prostration. The man in the middle of the line is in front of the tumulus and the offerings. He pours the rice beer into the cup placed at the foot of the tumulus. All, with the exception of the teenage girl who stands aside, prostrate themselves. Afterwards, the one who poured the rice beer into the cup pours the contents of the cup onto the ground at the foot of the tomb. The teenager approaches, puts the offerings and the dishes in the basin, places them on her head and follows the line of men who go to another grave. As worship must be offered according to the order of the generations and according to place in the generation, the group travels the valley in all directions, returns by the same route, and sneaks between rice fields that are ready for harvest. According to the eldest son, if the group did all the lineage tombs of the Hanggol Kwön, the whole day would not be sufficient.

Mr. Kwön arrives in the valley. He is the only man of more than sixty years and the only one dressed in traditional white clothes. He comes to offer worship at the tomb of his father. The group joins him. He puts the offerings: rice cakes, fish, fruit, at the foot of the tumulus. All of the men get in line. The grandfather is in the middle of the line in front of the tumulus. All do a double prostration. Mr. Kwön offers a cup of rice beer. He prostrates himself two times. Then the others do a double prostration following him. He empties the contents of the cup onto the ground in front of the tomb. The group reforms and leaves in the direction of another tomb in the valley. Mr. Kwön stays near his father's grave, lies down and falls asleep. It is noon.

After the rituals, it appears that the ancestor resides at least in two places: one part in the "soul box" that he eventually shares with his wife, and the other part in the tumulus that he occupies by himself and where his body rests.

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g. The Commemoration of the Dead

On February 11, 1975 Mr. Pak To-sök made a ritual offering for the anniversary of the death of his grandfather Pak In-ch'öl. The latter is mentioned in the register of the Miryang Pak lineage in the following manner:

Born on the 3rd day of the second moon of the year *kyemyo* (1943 [sic])

Died on the 2nd day of the 1st moon of the year *imo* (1882)

Buried in Kisöng-myön, village of Hochön, valley of Haengdam, in the direction of the west.

The worship is therefore offered on the night of the 1st to 2nd of the 1st month of the lunar year shortly after midnight with the participation that night of: Pak To-sök, born in 1920, his grandson; Pak Pyöng-man, born in 1915, his great nephew; Pak Pyöng-söng, born in 1927, his great nephew; Pak Pyöng-ch'un, born in 1957, his great grandson, younger son of Pak Ro-sök (the eldest son is absent due to his doing his military service). The given name of the latter three officiants begins with the same character, *pyöng* (bright, distinguished) because they belong to the same generation, despite their differences in age. This common character for an entire generation is called *hangnyöl* and it is given to all the members of the branch called *Kyujönggong*, one of the three hundred and sixty branches of the Miryang Park.

At 11:00pm the table of worship is prepared in the inner room of the house of Pak To-sök in front of the wall in one of the farthest corners of the hypocaust opposite the entry door. There is no “soul box” in this house. The family head has stuck on the wall behind the table a piece of Korean paper on which is inscribed: “Ancestor tablet of my illustrious deceased grandfather who remained a scholar in private life, deceased eldest.”³ On the table are found the following dishes:

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Figure 9: Table of worship for the commemorated of the dead

1. Fish on which is placed a pair of chopsticks
2. Bowl of soup
3. Bowl of cooked rice
4. Candle
5. Pieces of tofu floating in water *tang*
6. Nine rice cakes
7. An omelet
8. A pear
9. An apple
10. Some dried persimmons
11. Some dried jujubes
12. Some peeled chestnuts
13. Three hard-cooked eggs
14. Two spoons and a pair of chopsticks
15. A kettle containing rice beer
16. A bottle of burning liquor
17. A receptacle half hidden under the table
18. A bowl that contains some cold water (mountain water)

³ 顯祖考處土府君神位 This inscription on a piece of paper takes the place of the “soul box” in houses that don’t have them. I did not ask the head of the family if there was once a “soul box” in his family. This is very likely since this is one at his relatives of the 7th degree, Pak Pyöng-man. A more precise search would make it possible to say if the “soul box” is anterior to the use of this piece of paper called an ancestral tablet. That is in imitation of ancestral chestnut wood tablets found in aristocratic houses.

19. Place where the offered cup of liquor is placed

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There is no incense burner or juniper, but the worship is done otherwise in the same manner as at Mr. Kwŏn's. The ritual offering begins at 12:10am on the 2nd of the first moon with a double prostration, followed by the offering of liquor (rice beer) by each of the men without the purification of the cup taking place. At the invitation to eat, they implanted two spoons in the bowl of rice. After the complementary offering of liquor, Pak Pyŏng-man removed a portion of cooked rice and placed three spoons in the bowl of mountain water, not without having dipped them in the bowl of soup. (He used one spoon once, and the others two times). The then honorable salutation takes place. So, Mr. Pak Pyŏng-man leaves the room with the bowl of rice and the mountain water and deposits the contents in the courtyard of the house in an easterly direction, "In a pure place, he says, so that the soul, *hon*, of the ancestor eats these dishes outdoors." Then he comes back to the room and everybody prostrates two times.

Pak To-sŏk removes the paper from the wall. He lights it in the flame of the candle and deposits the ashes carefully in an ashtray. He places the bowl of rice, the bowl of soup, and the bowl of *tang* on the shelf in the most elongated corner of the home, right where we find the Samsin jar and the "soul boxes" in other houses. It is 12:20. The ritual offering took ten minutes. Pak To-sŏk begins to consume fortune by drinking the cup of rice beer offered to his grandfather. The door communicating with the kitchen opens. The wife of Pak To-sŏk is passing the *kimchi* (that is never offered to the ancestors) as well as a salad of cod and pepper to accompany the drink. The wife of Pak Pyŏng-sŏng who was resting sitting in the corner of the room during the worship, cuts up the dishes offered to the ancestors (fish, eggs, fruit . . .) that are immediately consumed. The snack ends at 12:45.

During the rite two spoons and two sets of chopsticks are used. Pak To-sŏk explains that although he is offering worship to his grandfather he always invites his grandmother. Inversely, when the worship comes to the anniversary day of the death of his grandmother, he always invites his grandfather. Pak Pyŏng-man adds that to remove a portion of the cooked rice, it is necessary to put out three spoons, but that since there are two spoons it would be necessary to put out six spoons, which is not suitable because it is an even number. That is why you have to put two spoons with one of the spoons and one spoon with the other.

The day before the morning of the 1st of the lunar new year a ritual offering is done to all of the paternal ancestors of Pak To-sŏk: grandfather, grandmother, father and mother. There are not many descendants of the ancestor that night, because a number of them were functionaries and were retained all night at the *myŏn* for preparation of the election will take place the same day, the second day of the lunar new year (February 12, 1975). The commemorative rites for the death of an ancestor are done for four generations of ancestor preceding the family head. According to Pak Pyŏng-man, one makes a complete ritual offering to parents and grandparents, and a reduced ritual offering (without fruit) to great grandparents, and great great grandparents.

Mr. Ch'oe Chin-su, 66 years old in 1974, manifests this belief in the presence of the ancestor during the rite in the following tale that dates from the end of the last century.

Near P'yŏnghae in the village of Onjŏng there is a family whose ancestors are buried very far away in Samch'ŏk (110 km). A traveler came to spend the night near one of those tombs. Since he was tired and there were no human beings around, he lay down and fell asleep against the embankment into which the tomb was leaning. He had a dream. The soul of a dead person *hon* said to him, "I must go to the house of my son to receive the ritual offering. Since you are my guest, I ask that you to watch over my home," and he left for the village of Onjŏng. Right after midnight the son offered worship and when his father arrived in Samch'ŏk, the rite had just finished. The father, who had come to eat the offerings, returned to Samch'ŏk without having eaten enough. The rite ended, the Onjŏng family threw the offerings into a fire of straw. A child playing near the fire was inadvertently pushed and was burned. When the ancestor arrived at Samch'ŏn at sunrise, he told the sleeper that every year he went to the rite offered for the commemoration of his death, but that he had never managed anything to eat because the route is too long so that he always arrives late. He charged the traveler to go find his son to say, "We offer the worship before the cock crows, but offer mine after the cock crows. The grandson who was burned in the fire will heal when one applies mosses that grow in the water. The traveler, not knowing what to believe, arrived at Onjŏng near P'yŏnghae. He found the house and found out that they have really offered a rite in that manner. The son asked him where the traveler found the tomb of his father. The traveler responded that it is found in Samch'ŏk. He passed on the words of the ancestor. The burns of the child healed. Since that time, the Yi's of Onjŏng make the commemorative offering for the death of that ancestor after the cock crows. That village is found eight kilometers from Mipo.

The regular worship is offered for four generations of ancestor of the family head, on the 1st of the 1st lunar month and the 15th of the 8th lunar month in the house of the family head. For ancestors situated five or more than five generations, the descendants offer each year on one day of the 10th lunar month, worshiped called *sisa* in front of the tomb. Chŏng Pyŏng-in will offer it on the first day of the 10th lunar month that is designated with the character *chŏng*. In 1974 that day was the 9th day of the 10th month, the day *chongmyo*,⁴ November 22, 1974.

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⁴ Each day of the calendar is designated with two characters of the sexagenary cycle (*yukkap*) that originated in China. The system—again traditionally utilized in the lunar calendar—permits the counting of years, months, days, and hours in sixties. According to this system, each date is designated within a given cycle using a combination of two characters from one of a series, that of the ten stems and the other a series of twelves, that of the dozen branches. [lists the 10 stems and 12 branches] The first one is *kapcha*, the second *ŭlch'uk*, the eventh *kapsul*, the twelfth *ŭrhae*.

One makes a ritual offering as if the ancestor was present sitting at the table. If the ancestor was left-handed one must place the bowls of soup and the rice, the chopsticks and the spoons as if for a left-hander. However, the principle of offering a meal to the ancestor as if he were alive has an exception: one never offers *kimch'i* (pickled cabbage with pepper) to the ancestors, even though it is the favorite dish of Koreans. Because pepper is proscribed one may, according to Pak Pyŏngman, give *mul kimch'i* composed of pieces of daikon radish in lightly salted water. In the category of forbidden foods are also included the brines: shrimp brine *saeu chŏt*, oyster brine *kul chŏt*, anchovie brine *myŏlch'i chŏt*. . . Similarly, one may not offer to the ancestors fish with a name ending with "ch'i": *myŏlch'i* anchovy, *kkongch'i* herring, *kalch'i* hairtail fish. Some informants say it is because they smell bad. But nobody says that other fish smell good! Other informants say they do not offer fish whose names end in "ch'i" but those fish whose names end in "ŏ". Now, all the fish whose names end with "ŏ" are written with the Chinese character 魚, while those that terminate with "ch'i" can only be written in the Korean alphabet. For those cults that take place according to the Chinese model imported into the peninsula it may be necessary to see there the prohibition of products that could not be written in Chinese.

In certain families like Mr. Kwŏn's women are absent and girls are driven out of the room where worship is offered. In other families like Mr. Pak To-sŏk a woman can stay, but in all cases, they do not participate in the ritual offering. After the ancestor has finished eating they consume the fortune with all the members of the family. However, it is the women who are in charge of all the preparation due, which is particularly long for the rice cakes. That preparation lasts an entire day for the regular ritual offerings. Compared to the duration of the worship proper (a dozen minutes) the role of the house mistress appears in all its importance. A daughter-in-law learns from her mother-in-law the manner of preparation of the offerings, because she did not participate, or only a little, in the preparation of the rites in her family of origin. On the other hand, the details can vary from one family to another.

The purpose of the rite is to propitiate the ancestors for them to bring fortune to all of the family. "He who honors his ancestors well, lives well," said the f. 19. Mr. Kwŏn prayed to his ancestors for the children to live a long time without misfortune, and that his mother "lives to be eighty-eight, lives to be one hundred."

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The rites of the first day of the lunar year and on the 15th of the 8th month are followed by a national celebration. Those days are celebrated in South Korea. The children, as well as those who are far away, come back to their paternal home to participate in worship and to greet their parents.

The "soul box" is an interesting feature that seems to have attracted little attention from specialists. We might think that it is the equivalent of the ancestral tablet, even a substitute. However, its role is much larger, since it can be used to hold one of the souls of a celibate son (family 4), while the ancestral tablet can only be used for ascendants, never for descendants. Would this phenomenon be limited to the Mipo region? No research has been conducted on

this subject. However, in the course of enquiries along the southeast coast, I discovered a “soul box” in a village of fishermen in Aninjin near Kangnŭng 125 kilometers north of Mipo, and at Sŏkpyŏng near Kugryongp’o 90 kilometers south of Mipo.

The villagers think that one of the deceased’s souls come to live in the “soul box”, that the other is in the grave with the body, and that the third goes into the “world over there” *chŏsŭng*. This conception is closer to that of the Chinese. H. Doré (1970:74-5) wrote, “In practice the majority of Chinese believed, or at least acted as if, there were three souls: the first in the tablet; the second in the casket with the rest of the dead; the third who suffers punishment in the other life . . .”

The worship offered to the ancestors is essentially constituted by “the ritual offering”, but the collected materials suggest a differentiation of three types of offerings: “the complete ritual offering”, “the scaled down ritual offering”, and “the simple offering” of a bowl of rice.

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Table 15: Ancestor Worship: Types of Offerings

	In houses without A “soul box”	At the tomb
Lunar 1.1	ritual offering, Incense	nothing
Lunar 1.15	Simple offering of a Bowl of rice without Prostration and without Incense	nothing
Cold Food	nothing	Offering of rice cake, liquor, Prostrations, tomb maintenance
Planting lunar 4 th mo	Simple offering of a Bowl of rice	nothing
Lunar 8.15	ritual offering, incense	reduced ritual offering, Prostrations without incense
Commemoration Of the dead	ritual offering -complete for parents and Grandparents -reduced (without fruit) for Great and great, great	

Grandparents

One asks of the ancestors, as with Grandmother Samsin, for well-being, long life. Ancestors are considered like divinities (comme des divinités) which leads Ch'oe Chae-sök to say (1975:657):

The ancestors are the divinities *sin* who bring prosperity to the family and to their descendants only. They are exclusive gods who only want offerings from their descendants. The "ancestor-gods", thanks to the worship of their descendants, bring perpetual prosperity to the latter. Neglecting to worship the "ancestor-gods" is the worst impiety and the origin of catastrophes that will reach their posterity.

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The ritual of ancestor worship is cumbersome and complicated. It is throughout their life that older sons learn to offer ancestor worship. Younger sons have only a secondary place in the ritual that leaves no room for imagination or personal initiative. It is about copying the ancients. The prayers that are said have a general value and they do not express a bit of affectivity. One can only make an offering in the worship of the eldest on such dates (1st day of the 1st moon, 15th of the 8th moon, the anniversary day of the death of the ancestor) and in such places (house of the eldest son, tomb) that are defined. Only the eldest son in the family has the right to make offerings to his ancestors. This mode of relations with the ancestors, codified, socialized, and complex contrasts with the mode of relations more dramatic, more spontaneous, and simpler with Grandmother Samsin who can be called anywhere, anytime, with a simple bowl of water.