

The Political Message of Folklore

In South Korea's Student Demonstrations

Of the Eighties:

An Approach to the Analysis

Of Political Theater¹

Paper Presented to the Conference
"Fifty Years of Korean Independence"
Sponsored by the Korean Political Science Association
Seoul, Korea
July, 1995

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Folk religious ceremonies have, in recently years, been frequently used in South Korea as an expression of the uniqueness of the national culture. The Office of Cultural Properties Management [*munhwajae kwalliguk*] has recognized several shamans whose ceremonial knowledge is considered especially worthy as "intangible national treasures" [*muhyong munhwajae*] who preserve a unique Korean artistic tradition. And much folklore, including a dancing 'shaman,' was used in this way in the opening ceremony of the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Use of folk religious materials, however, is not confined to government celebrations of Korean national identity. Student political activists have also used folk ceremonies to create new rituals known as street séances [*madang kut*] and street theater [*madang kk*]. This was particularly characteristic of the activism of the eighties.

A typical example of students' political use of folklore took place in 1989 during a large demonstration held in the streets of central Seoul to commemorate the death of two student demonstrators, Yi Han-yul and Pak Chong-chul. A student troop dressed in farmer's costume with slogan-emblazoned sweat bands around their heads and beating traditional drums in rhythms that used to be played by farmer's bands to raise the enthusiasm of villagers transplanting rice led the demonstration. At the climax of the ceremony, the students encircled an open space as if at an old-time marketplace. There a modified séance for the dead [*chinogwi kut*] was performed—but not by a shaman, as even today might be done for families with unquiet dead. Rather, a well-known Professor of dance from Seoul National University, Yi Ae-ju, did the performance.

The venue and performers of this ceremony were unorthodox, but their actions were authentic—at least in the formal sense. Just as the Korean shaman generally performs her ceremonies in traditional dress over which, during the parts of the ceremony in which spirits descend, she usually dons the costume of her spirit familiars, Yi Ae-ju wore a plain white dress such as used to

be worn by poor peasant women. She never overlaid spirit costumes, however. Rather, her 'traditional poor peasant's dress' had been stained with blood to make the performance more dramatic. An expert in Korean dance and renowned for the emotional intensity of her performances, Yi Ae-ju carefully danced a *salp'uri*, a traditional exorcism dance. She danced calling down the soul of the deceased in a way similar to that of shamans, and at the close of her performance mimicked the travel of the souls of the dead along the road to Buddhist paradise [*k ngnak e ch' ndo han n kil*] symbolized by a long strip of white cloth that is rent in the process of transit just the way folklorists have documented is still done by shamans in various parts of Korea.² Everything, in other words, was done 'authentically' and 'traditionally' in ways that have been documented by folklorists, and it was important that this be so. But, of course, this political demonstration was not a 'real tradition' sanctioned by transmission from time immemorial; it was what Hobsbawm has termed an 'invented tradition'—a demonstrably new ritual that relies for its effect on implied continuity with the past.³

Why should we find such 'invented traditions' embedded in anti-government student political demonstrations in the eighties? These rituals, unlike the 'shaman dance' at the Seoul Olympics opening ceremony, are much more than simple celebrations of Korean national culture. Since they take place in the context of intense political confrontation, one may legitimately call them political theater. Pictures of Yi Ae-ju's performance, for example, have been widely circulated accompanied by breathless commentary such as, "Behold! Yi Ae-ju becomes the soul of a person who died under torture, really awakens this rebellious scene, and behold! brightens a new day. This dancer of dance-just-like-life liberates her surroundings, this ball of fire who liberates by dance!"⁴

An Approach to the Analysis of Political Theater

If street séances are political performances what political message do they encode, and why do students express their political message in this indirect way? Student demonstrations have been a regular aspect of Korean political life in Korea at least since 1919, moreover, but only in recent years have these demonstrations come to regularly include such folklore as street séances [*madang kut*] that, as Choi puts it, will "exorcise the evils of society and bring forth an anti-capitalistic folk community and perhaps a new order of socialistic democracy."⁵ What accounts for the timing of this change?

Social structural developments in the eighties do not necessarily point to a resurgence of folk culture. Over the last generation Korea has become a prosperous urban industrial country with a highly educated population. Three quarters of the population are living in urban areas and are occupied in Korea's industrial, export economy. Seoul, the capital, has become a vibrant metropolis of twelve million with skyscrapers, air-conditioned subway lines, and the other accoutrements of modern life. Education standards have risen to high levels by world standards: the wide-spread illiteracy of the immediate post-war period was eradicated through mass literacy programs a generation ago, middle school education has been universal among the school-age population for more than a decade, some seven eights of the school age population attend high school, and more than a quarter go on to college.⁶

Nationalism, of course, has been an important force in twentieth century Korea, but Korean nationalism has heretofore been mostly a secular phenomenon. To the extent that Korean nationalism has been connected with religion, it has been connected with Ch' ndogyo and Protestant Christianity, rather than shamanism. And in any case, the seventies and eighties when shamanism began to be incorporated in student demonstrations are not known as a time of reli-

gious revival among students. On the contrary, the eighties are thought primarily as a time of rediscovery, through world dependency theory, of radical thought that, due to the emphasis on anti-communism in South Korean political culture, had been virtually absent since the Korean War. Cho H i -y n has noted in *Sin Tonga*, for example, that 1985 was a time of a "study boom on the Bolshevik revolution and the writings of Lenin" among student activists.⁷

Political analysis normally begins with a rational consideration of structures of power and social organization, continues with an investigation of policy alternatives, and concludes with a prescription for action. Analysis of political theater, however, must proceed differently. The purpose of theater is not to take power directly, but to affect consciousness. Rather than proceed by reasoned analysis it seeks to penetrate directly to the emotions, to convince the spectator of the correctness of its view, and rouse the spectator to action. It can do this by presenting political issues on a personal level that taps the emotional memory of the spectators and connects this memory with political symbols. Too overt and didactic a political message may be easily be disregarded and lose its emotional impact. Presented indirectly through symbols, however, a political message may be heightened to the level of mythology. Analysis must begin, then, with an understanding of the political message encoded in symbolic actions.

Here the significance of the conjuncture of folk ritual and political opposition in South Korea must be underlined. It is probably universally true that "the decay or demise of an ancient way of life" has been accompanied by "an unprecedented outburst of interest in things . . . [folkloric] . . . and highly self-conscious activity to preserve or develop them,"⁸ in all countries that have undergone a transition from a rural to an urban-industrial economy. The decline of rural Korean folk culture under the onslaught of rapid urbanization and industrialization has, indeed, led to an important movement to preserve and museumify traditional artifacts and practices.⁹ The

active recreation of new, folk-oriented political rituals by Korean student radicals, however, cannot be adequately described or explained solely in terms of a nostalgic reaction to industrialization. Simple nostalgia for a passing way of life cannot in itself explain why selected aspects of *folk* ritual, rather than ritual appropriated from the equally imperiled Korean great tradition (such as, for example, Confucian remonstrance), have been made use of by opposition political demonstrators. To grasp the significance of this folkloric element, then, one must ask what it is about folk religion that in the specific political context of late 20th century Korea has made it useful for purposes of political expression? This is a question about the meaning of ritual activity and the process by which various groups have appropriated folk religious symbols to invest them with new meaning in the context of a variety of social discourses. This process of investing actions with symbolic meaning is historical, so to understand it we have to delve into the Korean past.

Shamanism and Korean National Identity

Although scholars sometimes treat 'shamanism' as a natural religious entity,¹⁰ in the Korean case, at least, the idea that selected elements of Korean folk religion are of importance and add up to a religion, 'shamanism' [*mugyo*], is an intellectual construct that dates from the twenties and thirties of this century. The Korean folk religion one can observe in villages consists of an unorganized mass of often-contradictory folk beliefs and practices of mixed indigenous, Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist and even Christian origin. The core of Korean folk religious practice—at least in a quantitative sense—consists of Confucian-style ancestral sacrifices presided over by the head of household. Such sacrifices may or may not entail a belief in souls and other spiritual essences; that is, people who participate in such rites may justify them as ethical duties that do not require a belief in supernatural forces, they may justify them in terms of belief in souls and spirits, or they may justify them in terms of some combination of the two explanations. Since

folk religion has no ecclesiastical organization to decide upon and enforce orthodoxy, it really does not matter.¹¹ Korean folk also, however, typically believe half- or whole-heartedly in a vast array of spirits and supernatural forces. Giving the dead proper funerals and ancestral sacrifices, and keeping one's household and village gods happy, normally keeps these forces under control, but on occasion when things get out of hand one needs a specialist. A variety of religious specialists exist—from the fortune teller [*ch m jaengi*] who bases his advice on Chinese-derived numerology and astrology founded on the theory of *yin-yang* and the five elements, to the blind *sutra*-reciting exorcist [*p'ansu*]¹²—but the most ubiquitous religious specialist is the shaman, most of whom perform ceremonies known as *kut* in which they invite spirits down so these spirits may communicate with the living. Most shamans apprentice with other shamans, their 'spirit mothers' [*sin mi*], to learn proper ceremonies, narrative songs, and invocations, so it is proper to think of them as operating within the context of a regional tradition, but there is no shamanistic doctrine per se. As Kendall notes, each shaman forges a personal vision synthesizing elements of folk belief and biography into a satisfying whole.¹³ They do the same for their clients.

Objectively speaking, then, shamans [*mudang*] are simply one type of religious specialist in the complex, seamless web of Korean folk religion. That certain persons and groups designate part of this seamless folk religious web as 'shamanism' and see this 'shamanism' as a primordial expression of Korean uniqueness, is a recent phenomenon. It is this notion, however, that makes 'shamanism' available for symbolizing oppositional political messages. As might be expected, the new notion of 'shamanism' as a primordial expression of Korean uniqueness arose with the reevaluation of the sources of Korean national identity necessitated by the opening of Korea to foreign—especially Western—influences in the late 19th century. In fact, the very term 'shamanism' [*mugyo*] dates from this time.

Crumbling Foundations of Traditional National Identity

As is well-known, from the beginning of the Chosŏn Dynasty in 1392 down to 1876 when Korea signed its first modern treaty with a foreign power, Korea was a tributary state [*fánɡuó*, *shuubāng*] of China that endeavored to keep itself strictly isolated from the corrupting influence of the outside world. Tributary status implied kinship and mutual help rather than direct Chinese control, however. During this period Korea was completely self-governing even in foreign policy. Tributary states like Korea recognized, however, that China was the moral anchor of civilization. They accepted the Chinese calendar; they acknowledged that only the Chinese sovereign could be called 'emperor' [*huánɡdì*], while other 'civilized' states could have at most a 'great king' [*táiwánɡ*]; and they accepted that the legitimacy of their ruler depended upon his recognition by the Chinese throne.¹⁴

Unlike the pre-Meiji Japanese who, because of their more decentralized, feudal polity, and their distance from China, participated only marginally in this Sino-centric system of tributary states and maintained their domestic conception of their sovereign as emperor,¹⁵ much of the Korean ruling class eventually bought into the Chinese world view upon which their tributary status was based. The founders of Chosŏn in the fifteenth century, who had seen themselves as creating a new Confucian order to reform the promiscuous, Buddhist, Mongol-influenced society of Koryŏ,¹⁶ had suppressed state Buddhism, made Confucian-style family ceremonies mandatory for the upper class, and based recruitment into the bureaucracy on mastery of the Chinese classics. Education emphasized the authority of Chinese culture so that over the generations a cosmopolitan ruling class, the *yangban*, was created. Though not well-traveled and sophisticated in dealing with foreigners, the *yangban* were cosmopolitan in the sense that, given their education similar to that of the Chinese literati and their use of classical Chinese as a literary language,¹⁷

their models of high culture and civilization were foreign. They accepted that Chinese high culture stood for civilization in general.

For these literati, then, Korea's identity was defined by her relationship to China, which both they and the Chinese modeled on an elder-younger brother relationship.¹⁸ Such a relationship was hierarchical to be sure, but as virtually all relationships in Confucian ethics are considered to properly be hierarchical this was not perceived to be a problem. Close kinship to China—in which Korea was favored over all other countries—was not something that could be attained by mere barbarians.¹⁹ The proper attitude toward China was *sadae*—serving the great²⁰. That Korea was civilized and had a respected place in the world was proved by the fact that Koreans participated in Chinese world civilization, and that they lived by the Confucian ethics that defined civilized behavior in general.

'Shamanism' hardly entered the consciousness of the ruling class as something related to Korean national identity at all. Folk religion was considered at best a harmless diversion of the ignorant masses, but more commonly the refuge of charlatans prying on the superstitious credulity of the hopelessly ignorant. The government maintained a running battle to keep shamans (and Buddhist monks) from residing within the walls of the capital,²¹ but they tolerated shamans among the common folk elsewhere so long as they avoided political activity. Though shamans could not be prevented from making their way among the women of the palace, the Confucian elite portrayed this as leading to disaster of the direst sort.²² In conventional historiography shaman's court activity merely confirmed the self-evident proposition that deviation from Confucian principles leads to disaster.

The foundations upon which were built this comfortable literati conception of Korea's

place in the world, however, collapsed when Korea was forced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to participate in the Western treaty system. China, which had already suffered the indignity of defeat in the Opium Wars, was revealed to be an unreliable elder brother. For Korea's Confucian literati, however, the difficulty was not simply China's inability to defend herself or Korea from the Western powers. After all, China had fallen to barbarians before, but Chinese civilization had always prevailed in the end. The problem was that the *yangban*, who had based their ruling legitimacy on their mastery of Chinese culture, began to realize that Chinese culture was not civilization itself but only one of many civilizations, and far from the most advanced at that. How threatening such a realization was can be sensed in Yi Hang-no's memorial to the throne written in 1866 in which Yi argued that to advocate peaceful relations with the west would amount to abandonment of the values upon which civilization rests, and would be sinking to the level of animals.²³ The comfortable feeling of being near the center, one of the chosen few, was being lost.

This loss of identity was not simply an intellectual problem, but a practical one as well. The new world order in which Korea was being forced willy-nilly to participate did not consist of a center surrounded by self-governing tributaries. Rather each country had to justify its existence vis-à-vis the others or be in danger of becoming dismembered or losing its sovereignty altogether. The predatory intentions of many of the Western powers were transparent and required practical action just at a time when Chinese examples were no longer effective.²⁴ Many prescient Japanese and even Chinese were arguing that only wholesale borrowing of Western culture and institutions, as well as technology, would enable the countries of East Asia to gain the strength they needed to fend off the West.²⁵ In Korea, however, such borrowing would require the complete revamping of the Sinified ruling class. It could not be done overnight, and after a fitful period of reforms beginning with the establishment in 1897 of the Great Han Empire [*Taehan Cheguk*] in a bid for

formal equality with China and Japan, Korea fell prey to Japan's Western-inspired colonialism in 1905.

National Identity in Colonial Korea: Discourse and Counter-discourse

The loss of Korean sovereignty led to an intensification of the identity crisis that had already begun with the breakup of the Sinocentric world order. Justifying oneself as a sovereign nation equal to other nations is obviously more difficult when a nation has already become a colony, but the Japanese take-over also involved a social rupture. Korea's new overlord instituted a thorough, efficiently repressive government run primarily by ethnic Japanese sent from the metropole that not only deprived the Koreans of sovereignty but deprived the entire upper class—the *yangban*—of their role and *raison d'être*: governing the nation. Later Koreans have shed few tears over the demise of the *yangban*. Their inability to devise measures to enable Korea to retain its sovereignty proves *ipso facto* to many of today's Koreans that the traditional political culture had become bankrupt. If the old ruling elite were morally bankrupt and no longer carried a useful Korean culture, however, where could such culture be found?

The Japanese tried to legitimate their rule over Korea by promoting the notion that Korean culture was stagnant, backward, and lacked historicity. This latter notion seems especially absurd when applied to a country that had been united and self-governing for more than 1300 years,²⁶ but Western imperial powers had acquiesced to the Japanese take-over precisely because they agreed that Korean economic backwardness and Koreans' inability to reform quickly along Western lines proved they lacked qualifications for sovereignty while Japanese 'progress' proved the opposite.²⁷ That Japanese would seize upon this notion is only to be expected. Japanese personnel, Japanese-language education, and Japanese language media spread over the entire

Korean peninsula the convenient notion that Korea could only be straightened out by a more dynamic culture. This notion became so pervasive among the colonizers that even a relatively sympathetic observer of Koreans such as Imamura Tomo who came to Korea in 1909 to work as a rural police chief and wrote a compendium of Korean customs appreciated in Korea to this day, felt compelled to justify writing a section on good Korean customs by noting, "Koreans, though they have many deficiencies on top of their lack of nationhood [*kokuminsei*],²⁸ as individuals have a goodly number of strong points."²⁹ Few other Japanese conceded as much. More typical were the attitudes of Aoyagi Tsunetarô who, as Peattie has noted, argued that Koreans were a people without a concept of the state destined to be ruled by others.³⁰ The ultimate goal of the Japanese in Korea was cultural assimilation, and this goal required that the historicity of Korean nationhood be denied.

Though the message was resented, it was hard to dismiss out of hand. If Koreans in the past had disdained the Japanese as being less Sinified, thus less civilized, than they,³¹ it was clear now that Japan was becoming a great power. That this power was being used for purposes immoral in the Confucian scheme of things was widely held in Korea, but it is not easy to dismiss the discourse of the powerful even when you believe it is wrong. Koreans, like the colonized Africans described by Fanon, developed the ambivalent attitudes to their colonial hegemon and their own culture he calls 'cultural estrangement.'³² On the one hand they hated the Japanese for their dismissive attitude and their refusal to accept Koreans as equal even when they learned to speak and act like Japanese,³³ but on the other hand they had to implicitly admit that the very fact of Japanese economic and military power proved Japanese culture had some efficacy. While they hotly disputed Japanese disparagement of Korean culture, many Koreans secretly feared it was true. Furious assertion of Korean historicity accompanied equally furious iconoclasm and rejection of those elements of Korean culture deemed responsible for loss of independence. Pointed

criticism of Japanese mendacity accompanied tacit adaptation of modern elements of Japanese culture.

The writings of Sin Ch'ae-ho illustrate well how the dilemma that the loss of sovereignty created for Korean national identity could lead to a reevaluation of Korean folk religion. Sin is best remembered for writings showing an obsessive concern with Korean national identity. Influenced early on by the organic social evolutionism of Huxley and Spenser,³⁴ with which he became acquainted through the works of the Chinese writer and translator Liang Qichao, Sin endeavored to turn the old Korean historiography on its head. Whereas Confucian historians in the past had narrated Korean history as the story of a cultured (i.e. Sinified) ruling class progressively siding with civilization (i.e. the Chinese) against the barbarians on China's periphery, Sin argued that the proper narrative for Korean history treated it as a struggle for existence between nations conceived as racial *Gemeinschaften* [*minjok kongdongch'e*] formed out of the spirit of the people.³⁵

In Liang's evolutionism some peoples in the course of evolutionary struggle had become 'world historical races' [*you lishi de zhongzu*] that had been able to expand to govern other peoples. The rest were unhistorical races [*fei lishi de zhongzu*] headed for extinction.³⁶ The implications for Korea's fate of this point of view are obvious, especially since Liang's 'yellow race' [*huangzhong*] included only the Han Chinese. To justify Korea's claim for independence, then, Sin would have to emend Korean historical narrative to correctly note a world historical past. Sin's early articles published in newspapers in Korea between 1905 and 1910 interpreted Chinese influence on Korea as a force obscuring and distorting a deeper and older continuity with a pure Korean past rather than a civilizing force. He emphasized the link of Koreans to the early non-Chinese peoples of Manchuria and Mongolia (Xiongnu and Xianbi, for example), and stressed the Korea is properly a descendant of the militarily strong Manchurian/Korean state of

Kogury rather than the more southerly Silla emphasized in more conventional historical narratives. In this context, the myth of Tan'gun—the son of a god who is said to have descended from the heavens to found the ancient state of Chosŏn on the Korean peninsula in 2332 B. C. — near the time of the mythological founding of Chinese civilization by the Yellow Emperor—assumed special importance.

First recorded at the beginning twelfth century historical work, Samguk Yusa, the Tan'gun myth had had a mixed reception in traditional Korean historiography, but by the late 19th century had tended to be de-emphasized so that Korean civilization could be largely traced to China through the figures of Kija and Wiman, leaders who fled from China at various times and came to rule ancient Chosŏn. Porary Japanese historians of Korea completely dismissed the Tan'gun myth in favor of Chinese origins. Hayashi Taisuke, for example, wrote at the beginning of his 1912 General History of Korea, "The ancient state of Chosŏn naturally arose under Chinese influence. It can be said, in fact, that it was pioneered through the power of the Han [Chinese] race. . . Of old it was said that about the time of China's Tang Yao [mythical founder], a demi-god descended at the foot of a sandalwood tree on T'aebaek Mountain (Myohyang Mountain in North P'yŏngan Province) for which reason they called him Tan'gun [Sandalwood Prince]. This is a passage appended by a later Buddhist writer, and is completely unbelievable. However saying Kija fled [the Chinese state of] Yin for Chosŏn could not be groundless talk . . ." ³⁷

Already by 1909, however, Sin had quoted part of the Tan'gun myth as evidence of early Korean self-government. He noted, "The rise and fall, flowering and decline, of a country is connected to the degree of strength of that people's self-government. Thus to touch on world history, replacement of the Latin races by the Teutonic races is due to the amount of this strength

. . . However in reading Korean history a peculiar feeling has struck me. In general Korea since ancient times has been a country rich in self-governing systems. With the remaining sources it is difficult to elucidate these things in detail, but since it is often the case that the scale of the east cloud and the claw of the west cloud sometimes makes the form of a dragon, so in the history of Tan'gun [is the phrase] 'a demi-god descended down to T'aebaek Mountain and the people of the country made him their ruler . . .'"³⁸ In an essay written in the following year he noted the religious imagery of the Tan'gun myth and argued that the terms used did not reflect Buddhist or Daoist influence, but rather were imperfect descriptors of an indigenous religion—*s n'gyo* —the scientific study of which would recover past achievements of Korean civilization. "Things that have been transmitted down to the present of *s n'gyo* history—if they exist—not only would become great materials in careful investigation and proof of the principles of racial evolution . . . but also the history of *s n'gyo* alone is Korea's unique religious history, so [this study] would add great historical luster."³⁹

Railing against Korean dependence on outside powers, Sin treated the policy of serving the great [*sadae*] that had traditionally been seen as a positive marker of Koreans' participation in civilization but had begun to come under fire in the 1890's as a negatively valued pattern of subservience and lack of self assertion (now most frequently translated as 'toadyism' [*sadaeju i*]). Other contemporary intellectuals also accepted much of this new world-view,⁴⁰ and added other criticisms of their own. Yi Kwang-su, for example, blamed the Sinified *yangban* class for systematically suppressing indigenous Korean religion and culture descended from Tan'gun, criticized Koreans for superstition and fatalism. Yet Yi, and he was not the only one, also clearly saw much to admire in Japanese modernity and progress.⁴¹ It was in this atmosphere of Japanese disparagement, iconoclastic rejection of traditional Korean social organization and historical discourse, and renewed interest in ethnic origins that competing discourses of 'shamanism as the

essence of the Korean people' appeared for the first time.

The Appearance of Discourse of 'Shamanism'

The search for a Korean essence separate from Chinese and Japanese influence intensified after the March First Movement demonstrations mobilized a mass constituency for the independence movement and forced the Japanese to relax their military rule for a policy of 'cultural rule' [*bunka seiji*] that allowed space for a vernacular press and modest amount of political activity within what was, in essence, a continued police state. Folk religion did not at first play a central role in that discussion. The traditional dismissal of shamans as practicing 'cunning and treacherous customs' [*yo mang chi sok*]⁴² continued, though in line with the 'modern' modes of thought being introduced into Korea, the term 'superstition' [*misin*] was substituted for the older phrases redolent of Confucian moralism. Disgusted with the infighting among the anti-Japanese nationalists, however, Sin Ch'ae-ho, like many others at this time,⁴³ was turning more and more to 'the people' [*minjung*] as the locus of Korean identity. Others turned to the European disciplines of anthropology and folklore to provide modern intellectual tools to aid in this search. Preeminent among the early scholars in the twenties who used anthropology and folklore to investigate Korean national identity was the scholar and editor, Ch'oe Nam-s n.

Ch'oe was undoubtedly familiar with the work of Sin Ch'ae-ho that had been published in the few newspapers allowed in Korea in the period between 1905 and 1910, and some of his early writing echoes the social evolutionism of Sin and Liang.⁴⁴ Among the first generation of Korean intellectuals to get the rudiments of a modern education in Japan,⁴⁵ he spent the early years of the colonial period working hard for a new Korean literature and a new Korean history that would make a case for the Koreans as a 'world-historical race' worthy to stand among the other great

'races' of the world. As for Sin Ch'ae-ho, the Tan'gun myth played a central role in these endeavors for Ch'oe Nam-s n.

Already in 1918, Ch'oe had published an article in a monthly journal that tried to make sense of the fragmentary texts that here and there mentioned very ancient Korean history, and in this article had traced the Korean people back to Tan'gun. Here Tan'gun was treated as a historical personality who descended to a mountain on the banks of the Sungari River in Manchuria.⁴⁶ By 1925, however, Ch'oe was treating the Tan'gun story as myth⁴⁷ and had begun the folkloric and anthropological comparisons that would form the basis of his elaborate theory of Korean ethnicity.

The anthropology that Ch'oe turned to in twenties was not the new work of Boas, Mead, and Lowie in the United States, or Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown in England that is celebrated in today's anthropology textbooks, but the older anthropology of Spencer, Tylor and Fraser and the now-forgotten diffusionism of Grafton Elliot Smith. Ch'oe had studied in Japan between 1904 and 1908, but it is doubtful he obtained his information about Western folklore and anthropology first hand. There was an inevitable lag in the diffusion of European knowledge to the Far East at this time, yet the older European anthropology and the now-forgotten diffusionism that we see reflected in Ch'oe's work was also attractive for intellectual reasons.

The new Western anthropology of the twenties and thirties, whatever the political views of the anthropologists themselves, was deeply implicated in the Western colonial project.⁴⁸ The chief theoretical focus was on answering instrumental questions about why exotic peoples act the way they do: how personality and culture interact, how social systems function, how social control is maintained, and so forth. These were questions of most interest to social reformers and colonial

hegemons trying to control their diverse populations. It is no accident, of course, that Britain, France, the United States, and the Netherlands—the chief Western societies with overseas empires and/or internal minorities to control—were the main countries in which this new anthropology was developing. The Japanese, good students that they were of Western colonialism,⁴⁹ perceived the usefulness of this kind of anthropology and had already set government anthropologists to work unraveling the mysteries of Korean social psychology. The remarks of Murayama Chijun in the first of a series of research materials on Korean folk religion published by the Government General of Korea between 1929 and 1937 reflect this instrumental approach that treats Koreans almost as if they operated at the pre-logical level Lucien Levy-Bruhl was 'finding' among 'primitives' in Africa.⁵⁰

"To understand Korean culture one must comprehend⁵¹ Korean people's thought. It is right and proper that, in the comprehension of Korean people's thought, we should begin with folk beliefs [*minkan shinkô*]. Forming the foundation of Korean people's thought and thus determining their life course, it is established theory in the psychological world that among the three activities of knowing, feeling, and willing that are the three media of spiritual functioning, emotional activities take first rank, but what best expresses emotional activity is none other than belief phenomena. So if one wants to comprehend a person's life, one can look at what that person's belief phenomena are, and thus, knowing the mainstream of that person's thought, come to know that person's inclinations and social ideals.⁵²

For Korean intellectuals, however, the evolutionism of Spencer and Tylor's comparative method provided methods for asking and answering questions more relevant to Korean national identity than the more up-to-date anthropology. Whatever the excesses of Spencer's organicism,

and whatever the empirical deficiencies of evolutionism, for example, Spencer's viewpoint has the advantage exploited by Sin Ch'ae-ho of explaining historical development in universal terms (such as differentiation of function) that ostensibly do not put any particular civilization (such as China) at the center. If cultural evolution takes place through a struggle between races, turning away from China could be interpreted not as disloyalty to one's teacher and moral exemplar, as Confucian historiography would have it, but a move necessary for the survival. And Tylor's comparative method—in which contemporary customs are treated as survivals of earlier adaptations, and can be used on the model of historical linguistics to reconstruct a proto-culture lost to history—has obvious advantages for a people seeking to extend the temporal reach of their history to find a pure past pre-dating foreign influence that proves the authenticity of their nationhood. And if the idea of people's customs expressing a 'spirit' was widespread among nineteenth century European peoples pursuing intellectual projects similar to those of colonial Koreans,⁵³ the Tylorian approach tended to find that spirit in religion. Primitive Culture, Tylor's early synthesis that went through edition after edition in Europe and America before World War I dealt almost exclusively with that topic.

When Ch'oe turned to anthropology in the mid-twenties to 'solve the riddle of Tan'gun and ancient Korean history'⁵⁴ already raised by Sin Ch'ae-ho and Yi Kwang-su, then, it was to the old-fashioned approach of survivals, diffusion, and cultural origins that he turned. In the process he introduced themes that would make 'shamanism' at the center of Korean ethnic identity. These themes were published in two influential works of 1927, "The Theory of Purham Culture" and "Notes on Shamanism."⁵⁵ In "Purham Culture", by treating Tan'gun as a mythological figure Ch'oe was able to use the comparative method to flesh out the holes in the narrative left in historical works. Using linguistic reconstructions of dubious scientific value, Ch'oe proved to his satisfaction that the Tan'gun myth is a dimly remembered survival of an ancient pan-Asian religion

based on sun worship at mountain altars. Ch'oe shows with more plausibility that a tripartite conception of the world as made up of heaven, earth, and the underworld that is found in Siberian shamanism, Nordic and Greek mythology is also apparent in the Tan'gun myth, and that Tan'gun himself is similar to the Mongolian Tengri—a word meaning both heaven and shaman.⁵⁶ These factors form the essence of an ancient cultural stratum best preserved in Korea that Ch'oe called 'Purham culture:' "When we think that the word Tengri of the Mongolian language that is thought to linguistically belong to the same culture area [as Korea] means both heaven and a type of shaman (a person who prays to heaven), and that anthropologically the ruler and the shaman generally have the same origin and substance, and that prince and shaman are called the same thing in Korea's old legend [of Tan'gun], we come to realize how old is the foundation of what is called Tan'gun, even though it be a legend."⁵⁷

The foundations for this point of view were deepened in Ch'oe's "Notes on Shamanism" published in the monthly magazine Enlightenment [Kyemy ng]. Mostly a distillation of information gleaned from Czaplicka and the Japanese anthropologist Siberian and Mongolian shamanism, "Random Notes on Shamanism" is important for introducing the notion that Korean shamanistic practices, including tranvestitism, that had heretofore been seen as an embarrassment were regular features of shamanism worldwide. More importantly Ch'oe treated shamanism as a distinct religion [*kyo*] rather than a set of miscellaneous practices embedded within a diverse folk religion. He connected this religion with the Ural-altaic language family that stretches from Hungary and Finland in eastern Europe through the Turkic lands and Mongolian to Korea. These ethnographic materials made more plausible Ch'oe's interpretation of Korean shamanism as a survival of an ancient Northeast Asian, Ural-altaic culture as ancient as the cultures of China or Japan. These speculations were given weight, moreover, by a treatise on Korean shamanism published in the same volume of Enlightenment in which an older scholar, Yi

N ng -hwa, compiled excerpts from primary historical sources in Classical Chinese showing shamans to have been important and ubiquitous features in Korea since earliest recorded history.⁵⁸

Ch'oe's specific solution to 'the riddle of Tan'gun,' based as it was on far-fetched linguistic reconstructions, had limited influence even in the twenties and thirties. The notion of Purham Culture never caught on. The general tenor of what Ch'oe had said about shamanism in Korea was plausible, however. There are undeniable linguistic and cultural affinities of Koreans to Mongolians, Manchurians, and other peoples of Siberia, and shamans are important ritual specialists among all these peoples.⁵⁹ Shamans have undoubtedly been an important part of Korean culture since earliest recorded history. Thus even though Ch'oe's specific reconstruction of 'Purham Culture' was ignored, the discourse of shamanism representing the essence of the Korean people become firmly embedded among an important group of Korean nationalist scholars.

The Japanese, too, got caught up in this discourse. While agreeing that shamanism embodied the essence of Korean culture, however, they treated shamanistic practices as 'versunkene Kulturgut'—shamanistic practices [*fuzoku*] rather than shamanistic religion [*satsumankyô*]⁶⁰—and continued to work within dated evolutionary interpretations that emphasized the primitive, atavistic nature of shamanism. Akiba Takashi, another relatively sympathetic Japanese observer of Korean culture, introduced his 1937 magnum opus on Korean shamanism by noting:

Since Korean shamanistic customs were originally a branch of the commonly held shamanism [*satsumankyô*]⁶⁰ of the northern races, in terms of the history of religions they are a type of primitive religion [*genshi shûkyô*]. Social historically they belong to the stage of so-called shamanistic primitive culture. Thus they are

both one of the oldest beliefs and activities in our [sic] Korea, and today furthermore are customs that are widely practiced among the populace [*minshû*], particularly among women. Not only are these practices, therefore, great materials truly indispensable for understanding Korean folk religion [*minkan no shûkyô*] and its social features, but since the original cultural relationship between Korea and China has made Korea undergo obvious Buddhist, Daoist, and other southern cultural influences, Korea has attained quite distinctive developments from the shamanism of other races and exhibits in this characteristics to which deep attention must be paid."⁶¹

Yet amidst this relatively sympathetic view of a shamanism that is seen as central element of Korean ethnicity, the hegemonic Japanese view of a stagnant Korean essence also comes through in Akiba's writings. The conservatism of the Korean peasants that has preserved shamanism in the first place is seen as an expression of the rurality of Korean society, its homogeneity and lack of mobility. This is contrasted with the competition between religions of heterogeneous, mobile, urban societies (read Japan).⁶² The syncretistic incorporation of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian elements (in implicit comparison with Japanese Shintô that had been revived and 'purified' by eighteenth century Japanese nationalist scholars) is said to exhibit a passive attitude that reconciles all and everything. This is contrasted with the supposed 'analytic mind' of urban dwellers. With urbanization and heightened religious competition shamanism was surely a relic destined for extinction.⁶³ Although Akiba makes no mention of it, this was no different than Japanese plans for Korean ethnicity itself, which by colonial policy was slated for extinction.⁶⁴

The Post-war Period

Liberation from Japanese rule in 1945 gave Koreans the chance to reassert their national identity. The occupation of the northern part of the country by the Soviet Union, and the southern part by the United States, however led to an intellectual split. Strongly committed Marxists mostly migrated north either out of a desire to build socialism or in reaction to anti-communist repression in the south. In the south, where the former educated classes were concentrated and where the United States military government made sure an anti-communist administration was set up, the cultural nationalist discourse descended from the speculations of Ch'oe Nam-s ŏn and others who belonged to the colonial and pre-colonial elite became hegemonic. The myth of Tan'gun was taught in the schools as historically accurate, and with the establishment of the Republic of Korea the official calendar was switched to years counted from the beginning of Tan'gun's reign in 2333 B.C.⁶⁵ The notion that the pure Korean national essence is preserved in shamanism became dominant.

The 'cultural estrangement' that had developed in reaction to Japanese control and discourse of Korean cultural stagnation did not disappear, however. Anti-Japanese rhetoric was very popular. Political and cultural legitimacy rested on the degree to which one had promoted Korean independence during the colonial period. Yet most of those who had remained in Korea during the forty years of Japanese control had been forced to compromise with the colonial authorities. In fact, the intellectual and business elite whose cooperation was necessary for the building of the country could not have obtained education and success without maintaining close ties with the Japanese authorities.⁶⁶ Most of them had been educated in Japanese, many read Japanese better than Korean, and many believed Koreans had much to learn from the Japanese. Even several of the prominent pre-war cultural nationalists who had advocated national self-improvement as a road to independence—including Yi Kwang-su and Ch'oe Nam-s ŏn —could be

considered among this group. Thus, though people were happy to promote nationalist projects such as education in Korean, few were nostalgic for pre-colonial Korean social structures. Most, in fact, expected the government to promote reform and modernization.

Syngman Rhee, the first elected president of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) who had spent most of the colonial period in exile in the United States, gained considerable legitimacy from his purity from collaboration. His long exile, however, made him insensitive of the degree to which 1948 Korean society was already fundamentally different from 1910 Korean society. He could remain in power, moreover, only by keeping the national police and state bureaucracy staffed largely by Koreans who had worked for the Japanese administration and whom many considered collaborators—in place. The expectations for reform and development that had greeted liberation were never met by his regime. Symbols, such as dating government documents from the ascension of Tan'gun to the throne, were unable to mask the reality that the new Republic of Korea at that time was neither democratic nor able to promote a vibrant, modern economy.

The so-called 'April 19th Student Revolution' toppled the government, but the new democratic government was overthrown within eight months by military coup. This military regime, led by Park Chung Hee from 1961 until his assassination in 1979, and by military colleagues inspired by him until 1987 set an indelible stamp on the Republic of Korea. Like the previous regime, the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, as the military regime initially called itself, saw the modernization of Korea as their major task, but they emphasized the one goal of economic development as the basis for national strength and socio-economic justice. Democracy, while perhaps suitable for already developed countries, was a luxury Korea could not afford.

Like many who had been upwardly mobile during the colonial period, Park accepted much of the Japanese discourse on the inadequacies of the traditional Korean political and class system. While strongly nationalist, he was among those who had had be strongly influenced by the Japanese during the colonial period. His writings show an almost total rejection of the Korean past:

Our modern history has been a record of failures, national ruination and confusion. Our masses, the creators of history, lacked autonomy and were characterized by flunkeyism [*sadaeju i*] and subjected to the control of foreign powers. A Japanese historian once spoke of the "heteronomy of Korean history," and when we seriously reflect on our national history we cannot deny the aptness of this phrase.⁶⁷

Park and his cohorts thought a strongly committed revolutionary regime could promote national greatness by reconstructing the economy. An admirer of strong modernizers such as Sun Yat-sen, Kemal Atatürk, and Gamal Abdel Nasser, Park saw Germany's post-war *Wirtschaftswunder* as a model to be emulated. Most of all, however, he admired the Meiji oligarchs who between 1868 and 1905 had transformed Japan "from above" into the greatest power in East Asia. Japan's reforms were pre-adapted to East Asian conditions. Many had already been partially introduced to Korea by the Japanese themselves. Educated Koreans in the early sixties were still more familiar with the details of Japanese institutions than those of any other developed country. And the idea that a group of dedicated, knowledgeable official should paternalistically lead the masses into modernization fit well with Confucian notions of government still widely held in Korea. Slogans of the Meiji Reforms, such as "rich country, strong army" were promoted. Park found the Meiji example so potent, in fact, that he even labeled the repressive

constitution he introduced in 1972 the *Yusin* Constitution, using the Korean pronunciation of *ishin*, the Japanese term used to designate the Meiji reforms.⁶⁸

Rapid industrialization, urbanization, and growth in real income for all sectors of society (though, of course, not at the same rate for all sectors) based on practical government planning and promotion of exports and economic investment commenced in the early sixties and has continued ever since. Equally prominent, however, was the government's promotion of a Westernized, secular rational orientation. Promotion of this orientation, it is true, had already begun before the Park regime gained power.⁶⁹ Mun H i -s k, Minister of Education under the democratic regime had emphasized that spiritual aspects of modernization, which is "realizing humanity by making daily life more rational," must precede material modernization. The programs for spiritual change during Park regime were, however, more systematic and, since they lasted much longer, also effective. On the new year after their take-over (January 1, 1962) South Korea switched from the Tan'gi calendar to the Western calendar they use today, but modernization efforts are epitomized, probably, by the highly publicized New Community Movement [*Sae Ma l Undong*] that came out of rural development experiments in the late sixties, but soon was spread to villages, cities, and factories all over the country.

Announced in 1970, the New Community Movement was designed to be an integrated program that combined spiritual development [*ch ngsin kaebal*] and improvement of life attitudes [*saenghwal t'aedo kaes n*] with economic and social development. The government began the program by giving villages materials to implement improvement projects. Analysis of reasons for success and failure in various villages, however, quickly lead the government to focus on qualities of local leadership. A school was set up in Suw n, thus, to train community leaders in the "New Village Spirit" [*sae ma l ch ngsin*]. The spiritual training reflected both critiques of

Korean national character that had been current since Japanese time and the current popularity of Weberian models of development in the West. To remedy the character defects of 'toadyism,' familism, and 'factionalism' the schools emphasized 'independence, self-help, and a cooperative spirit,' and in light of Weberian notions of modernization they also emphasized 'rationalization of lifeways,' 'nurturance of puritan life attitudes,' and 'promotion of life attitudes of respect for what is essential.'⁷⁰ 'Rationalization of lifeways' meant promoting use of scientific implements and standards of clothing, food, and housing not simply for convenience, but as aspects of scientific (read Western) civilization, while 'promotion of life attitudes of respect for what is essential' meant avoiding expenditure on unnecessary ceremonies and ornamentation that could be used for economic investment. The government had already promulgated a set of simplified "Standard Rules for Family Ceremonies" [*kaj ng irye chunch'ik*] in 1969, and these rules were accompanied by periodic sumptuary regulations aimed at reducing extravagant weddings and housing expenditures of affluent government employees.

Park's regime, thus, stamped Korea's modernization with specific characteristics that did not always sit well with the opposition. While few until the late eighties opposed the modernization project itself, many were unhappy with the lack of democracy and repression of labor. Many also felt that an overemphasis on Westernization and rational secularism was leading to a loss of Korean cultural identity. While sumptuary regulation of weddings and housing for the rich was popular, castigating ritual activity as wasteful and extravagant, when combined with the constant migration of young people to the cities, led to the rapid demise of traditional village ceremonies that represented Korean cultural identity and created village solidarity. While 'scientific' sanitation and convenience were appreciated, wholesale replacement of traditional farmer-built houses with 'cultured houses' [*munhwa chut'aek*] designed for the rural masses by architects and built by outside workers, as happened in some model villages in the late seventies,

was resented in many quarters.

The Conjunction of Folk Ritual and Political Opposition

It is in the context of a developmental regime hell-bent on modernization that the conjunction of folk ritual and political opposition makes sense. The military regime's emphasis on creating modern, hierarchical, organizations [*Gesellschaften*], its emphasis on rationality, science and technology introduced from abroad, meant that it was associated specifically with loss of cultural identity, loss of traditional community [*Gemeinschaft*], and assimilation (particularly at the business level) of Japanese and other foreign cultural forms that have been rejected on the political level. While the political objections of the students to the establishment rested on lack of democracy, repression of labor, and concentration of economic power in the hands of a few large capitalists closely associated with the government at the expense of labor and small business, the symbolic expression of this opposition could best be done by emphasizing the importance of cultural features opposite to those of the governing regime.

By reinventing 'traditional' ceremonies, then, the students could shape powerful messages of cultural and social opposition to the government—of solidarity with the common people [*minjung*] rather than the new modern elites, of valuing what is ancient and uniquely Korean rather than what is foreign and borrowed, of promoting the egalitarian solidarity of traditional *Gemeinschaften* [*kongdongch'e*] rather than the competition and upward mobility of the new *Gesellschaftlich* industrial organizations. These new rituals had to be recreated using professional dancers and folklorists because the students, having been born and raised in urban settings, have lost direct contact with traditional village life. Their having broken real social bonds with the village, one suspects, is an essential condition for the revival of the village ceremonies, however.

Were they still villagers, appropriation of folk forms would indelibly mark students with low class status and ignorance—the antithesis of the qualities that make their demonstrations legitimate. It is only when performance of 'traditional' ritual is remote enough to take on the aura of a 'learned art'—something that expresses knowledge rather than the lack thereof—that they become the powerful symbols of opposition and ethnic identity that they became in the Korea of the eighties

Folkloric ritual appeared in student demonstrations of the eighties, then, because it symbolically linked a political agenda with a compelling nationalist discourse. The political agenda involved convincing people that the economically successful military governments should give up their control of society, stop oppressing the common people, and allow the development of democracy and a more just economy. By using shamanistic rituals, the students could link this political agenda with a nationalist discourse about the class source of true Koreanness. This discourse not only allowed students' rituals to tap spectators' emotional memories, but also (unlike similar celebrations of Koreanness in government sponsored rituals) symbolically linked this Koreanness to the common people that had preserved shamanism, rather than elite leaders. By using ritual to imply a parallel between the oppression of the common people by the failed cosmopolitan *yangban*, and the oppression of the common people by a new cosmopolitan elite, the students probably more effectively communicated with their spectators and mobilized them emotionally than rational political discourse ever could have done.

1. The analysis here comes in part from my earlier paper, "Folk Religion and Political Commitment in South Korea in the Eighties," *In Religion and Politics in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Sabrina Ramet and Donal Treadgold.
2. For a discussion of the shaman's *chinogwi kut* see Sorensen, Clark "The Myth of Princess Pari and the Self-image of Korean Women." *Anthropos* Vol. 83, Nos. 4-6, pp 402-19 (1988). Descriptions of ceremonies transporting souls to Paradise can be found in Choi, Chungmoo "The Artistry and Ritual Aesthetics of Urban Korean Shamans." *Journal of Ritual Studies* Vol. 3 No. 2 pp 235-49 (1989) and Beuchelt, Eno "Die Rückrufen der Ahnen auf Cheju do (Süd Korea): Ein Ritual zur psychischen Stabilisierung." *Anthropos* Vol. 70 pp 10-179 (1975). For a general discussion of shamans and their role in Korean folk religion see Kendall, Laurel *Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1985).
3. Hobsbawm, Eric "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." *In The Invention of Tradition*, edited Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1983) p 1.
4. This and other comments about visual aspects of the performance are based on the pictures and comments on this performance published as a calendar by the Center for the Study of Unification Questions [*t'ongil munje y n'guso*] in Seoul.
5. Choi, Chungmoo "Hegemony and Shamanism: the State, the Elite and the Shamans in Contemporary Korea." *In* Lewis Lancaster, ed. *Religion and Contemporary Korea Society*. Center for East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
6. Republic of Korea Economic Planning Board *Statistical Yearbook* 1991.
7. Cho H i -y n (1989) "80 n_ ndae sahoe undong kwa sahoe kus ngch'e nonjaeng." [The Controversy over Social Activism and Social Formation in the Eighties]. *Sin Tonga* 9:435-53.
8. Prys Morgan "From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period." *In Invention of Tradition* pp 43-100.
9. Those who have written about the rise of folklore in Korea and its relationship to modernization include Roger Janelli "The Origins of Korean Folklore Scholarship" *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 99 pp 24-49 (1986); Chungmoo Choi "Hegemony and Shamanism" op cit.; John Howard "*Namdo Tl Norae* : Ritual and the Intangible Cultural Asset System" *Journal of Ritual Studies* Vol. 3 No. 2 pp 203-16.
10. The most prominent, of course, is Mircea Eliade whose *Shamanism: An Archaic Technique of Ecstasy*. Princeton: Bollington has been widely influential.

Janelli, Roger and Dawnhee Janelli *Ancestor Worship and Korean Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

P'ansu have become exceeding rare since the turn of the century.

Kendall, Laurel *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman: Of Tales and the Telling of Tales*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press (1985) p 4.

Nelson, Frederick *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press (1946). pp 86-93 passim.

The Japanese, for example, would refrain from mentioning their emperor in diplomatic correspondence with China, since the Chinese would not understand the messages that were not properly phrased. This issue could be finessed, however, because the Shōgun—the actual ruler who engaged in foreign relations—never claimed to be the emperor even in Japan. A similar mechanism was used with Korea. The Sō family of Tsushima Island operated as intermediaries between Japan and Korea by becoming a vassal of both the Korean king and the Japanese Shōgun.

Chung, Chai-sik "Chung Toj n: 'Architect' of Yi Dynasty Government and Ideology." In Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Haboush, Eds. Confucianism in Korea. New York: Columbia University Press pp 59-88. Kalton, Michael "The Writings of Kw n K n: The Content and Shape of Early Yi Dynasty Neo-Confucianism." In Ibid pp 89-123.

Korean had been written on and off since at least the 6th century using Chinese characters partially for their meaning and partially for their sound, but the presently used Korean alphabet that allows full and convenient writing in the Korean language was promulgated by King Sejong on 1486. Extensive writing and publishing in vernacular Korean began to appear from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but 'serious' work and official documents were not written in Korean until after the Kabo Reforms of 1894-5.

As late as 1977 a Korean peasant who had lived in Manchuria in the forties exclaimed to me about the Chinese, 'well of course they're the house's oldest brother, aren't they?' [*Chungguk n k' n t'aek iji*].

Nelson Ibid p92.

Chung, Chai-sik Ibid. p65.

Yi, N ng -hwa "Chos n musok ko" [Treatise on Korean Shamanistic Customs]. Kyemy ng 19 (May 1927) pp 29-32.

Thus the famous palace incident of Queen Inhy n being sent from the palace by the king in favor of a concubine is always partly attributed to the concubine's employing a shaman to confuse people. The concubine's employment of a shaman in this record proved on the one hand her coarse utter lack of culture and judgement (and thus legitimacy), and on the other explained why she was nevertheless successful for a time.

Carter Eckert, et al. Korea Old and New: A History. Korea Institute, Harvard University 1990, p197.

Huang Zun-xian, a diplomat in the newly created Chinese foreign office in the late nineteenth century, for example, after noting that Korea was a tributary state remarked, "The common case among the Western powers for their possessions is that they must take control of their foreign relations and administer their internal government, and afterwards [these possessions] can be recognized as belonging to the mother country." Wu Tian-ren ng Gōng-d Xiānsheng chuāncao. [The Manuscripts of Huang Zun-xian]. Chinese University of Hong Kong Press. (1972) page 87. This celebrates later Chinese attempts under Yüan Shi-kai to make Korea a possession in the Western sense of the term in contravention to the relationship with Korea before the late 19th century.

This notion reached Korea in 1880 in the two essays "Cháoxiān cèlüè" [Tactics for Korea] by Huang Zun-xian, counselor of the Chinese legation in Tokyo, and "I-yan" [Presumptuous Views] by the Chinese thinker Zheng Guan-ying brought back from Japan by Kim Hong-jip, and early on to Japan. The danger Korea was in can be clearly seen when we realize that Huang, who to the Koreans was stressing the danger of Russian take-over, to the Chinese was advocating a Chinese take-over. (See previous note).

Korea was first united by a single state when Silla with Tang help, after defeating Paekche, also defeated Koguryo in 668 AD.

The British, in order to counter Russia, were allied with the ascendant Japanese at the time of their take-over of Korea, and, being the worst imperialists themselves, hardly objected to the creation of empire on the part of their ally. Theodore Roosevelt, the American president at the time, also thought Japanese control of Korea provided a good buffer against the expansion of Russian power, and refused to intervene on Korea. Secretary of State Taft, in fact, negotiated in 1905 a secret protocol with the Japanese in which the United States agreed to recognize Japanese take-over of Korea so long as the Japanese recognized United States sovereignty in the Philippines. For a sample of the views of Americans bought into the Japanese line on Korea see D. W. Stevens. Stevens, after serving as an advisor to the Japanese foreign ministry accompanied

dent-General Itô Hirobumi to Korea where he was an advisor on foreign affairs between 1904 and 1908. He strongly supported the Japanese t of Korea, which he saw as a degenerate country, but was assassinated by Korean nationalists in Oakland, California in 1908.

The phrase 'lack of *kokuminsei*,' literally lack of 'national-people-ness', implies lack of a common civic culture suitable for the people of a mo n-state. It suggests a culture characterized by self-seeking without regard for the good of the nation, something akin to Banfield's 'an lism,' a charge that can still be heard among Korean critics of their own culture.

mamura, Tomo Chôsen fûzoku shû. [A Compendium of Korean Customs]. Tôkyô: Shitokan (1914).

Mark Peattie "Japanese Attitudes toward Colonialism, 1995-1945." In The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945. edited by Roman Myers k Peattie Princeton University Press p 109.

During the Chos n Peri od dealings with the Japanese were confined to a few people allowed to live in the 'Jap Compound' [*waegwan*] in P re the Korean officials who dealt with Japanese were termed 'teachers' [*hundo*].

anon, Franz The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Grove Press (1968) p210.

See Eckert for examples of this discrimination of assimilated Koreans.

Sin became aware of the writings of Spenser and Huxley through Liang Ch'i-ch'iao's Chinese translations. Robinson, Michael "National Ide the Thought of Sin C-ho: *Sadaeju i* and *Chuch'e* in History and Politics." Journal of Korean Studies Vol 5, p 130.

bid page 132.

Frank Dikötter The Discourse of Race in Modern China. Stanford University Press (1992) page 68.

This passage has grave historical defects (for one thing, Wiman was probably not ethnically Chinese), but the point here is not historical accu rather the implications of various treatments of Korean history for the originality and worth of Korean civilization. This translation is from a l ese translation published in Taibei of the 1912 Japanese original.

Sin C-ho "Han'guk chach'ije -government]. Taehan maeil sinbo July 3, 1909. Reprinted in Tanje e-ho Ch njip. Vol. 3 pp 127-9.

Sin C-ho "Tongguk kodaes n'gyo ko." [An investigation of Korea's ancient s n'gyo]. Taehan maeil sinbo March 11, 1910. Reprinted in I C-ho ch njip. Vol. 4 pp 47-50.

See for example his "Chos n minjok ron" [Theory of the Korean Race], in which he argues that Korea descends from Kogury rather than th of conventional historiography, criticizes the Yi Dynasty worship of Ming that led to the destruction [Sinification] of Korean culture, and ar n ancient Korean religion descended from Tan'gun.

Yi Kwang-su "Chos n minjok ron" Ibid, "P'aljas l l kijorohan Chos n minjok i insaengwan" [Th e life-view of the Korean people base scope theory]. kaeby k Vol 2 No. 8 35-45 (August 1921).

Yi, N ng -hwa, Chos n musok ko. p30.

The interest in shamanism that is the focus of this paper was displayed primarily among a few of what Robinson (Ibid) has called the 'cult ionalists.' For the purposes of this paper I have left aside the self-strengthening movement, the left-wing Marxist intelligentsia, and others onded in different ways to the identity crisis I have outlined here. It should be remembered, however, that the discussions I have focused on v ng place within a much larger and diverse arena of discourse.

Chizuko Allen, "Northeast Asia" p 789.

He went to Japan in 1904 as a Korean government scholar and in 1906 attended Waseda University as a private scholar. He returned to Korea. Allen, Chizuko "Northeast Asia Centered Around Korea: Ch'oe Nam-s n's View of History." Journal of Asian Studies Vol. 49 No. 4 page 7

Ch'oe Nam-s n "Kyego ch'ajon" [Exiting excerpts texts for thinking about ancient times]. Wlgan Ch'ngch'un Vol. 14, June 1918.

Ch'oe Nam-s n "Purham munhwa ron" page 44.

Falal Asad, ed. Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter. London: Ithaca Press. (1973).

The makers of the Japanese empire took a great interest in the British, French and German literature on empire, and brought a system arch-oriented approach to governance. See Peattie, Mark "Japanese Attitudes Toward Colonialism, 1895-1945." In Roman H. Myers and Martie, eds. The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945. Princeton University Press (1984) p85.

Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien (1926) How Natives Think

The Japanese word translated here as 'comprehend' [*ryokai*] is frequently used to denote *Verstehen* in Dilthey's sense of the word.

Murayama, Chijun Chôsen no kishin [Gods and Spirits of Korea]. Keijô: Chôsen Sôtokufu (1929) p1.

Writers who popularized this idea among Europeans, of course, are Montesquieu and Herder.

Ch'oe Nam-s n "Purham munhwa ron" [The theory of Purham culture]. In Yuktang Ch'oe Nam-s n Ch njip Vol 2, page 43. The article originally written in Japanese in 1925 and published as "Fukan bunka ron." In Chôsen oyobi Chôsen minzoku [Korea and Koreans] (1927).

Ch'oe, Nam-s n " *Salman'gyo ch'agi*" [Random Notes on Shamanism]. Kyemyng 19 (1927).

Ch'oe was not the first to propose that Tan'gun was a shaman. Jones had already done so in Royal Asiatic Society Records, 1900 pp 35-41. It is uncertain whether Ch'oe or any other Korean ever read this account.

'Purham munhwa ron" page 60.

Yi, Nng -hwa "Chos n musok ko" [A Treatise on Korean Shamanism]. Kyemyng Vol 19, May 1927.

Korean (and probably Japanese as well) undoubtedly belongs to the Altaic language family that includes Manchurian, Tungus, Mongolian and other languages. As Charles Allen Clark has noted, moreover, the Korean word for female shaman [*mudang*] has cognates in Mongolian, Buryat, Altai, Torgut, Kidan, and Khirgis. Clark, Charles Allen Religions of Old Korea (1932) page 183.

The term used by Akiba here, *satsumankyo* is the Japanese reading of the term *salman'gyo*, a word Ch'oe Nam-s n used on shamanism. Contemporary Japanese writers, including Akiba in a post-war book on Korean shamanism, use the term *shamanism* transliterated from the English.

Akamatsu Chijô and Akiba Takashi Chôsen fuzoku no kenkyû [A Study of Korean Shamanism]. Vol. 1, page 1. Tokyo :Ôsaka yago shoten (1927)

Akiba credits Sorokin and Zimmerman's Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology for this insights.

Akamatsu Chijô and Akiba Takashi Chôsen fuzoku no kenkyû [A Study of Korean Shamanism]. Vol. 2 page 22.

Education was required to be in Japanese and toward the end of the thirties use of Korean was prohibited in schools. All publication in Korean stopped during World War II. Koreans were required to worship at Shinto shrines set up by the colonial authorities. Family law was systematically changed to conform to Japanese norms, and in 1942 Koreans were required to take Japanese names.

Thus the year 1945, which was Shōwa 20 (20th year of the reign of Emperor Hirohito) during the colonial period, became Tan'gi 4278 after the establishment of the Republic of Korea.

See Carter Eckert Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kim's and the Origins of Korean Capitalism. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Chung Hee Park (1970) Our Nation's Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction. Seoul: Hollym pp 118-9.

Although the *Meiji ishin* is usually referred to as the "Meiji Restoration" because direct rule by the Emperor was ostensibly being restored, a translation of *ishin* or *yushin* would be 'renewal' or 'revitalization.'

The same could be said of state economic planning.

All quoted slogans are official aspects of the Spiritual Development and Life Attitude Improvement part of the New Village Movement. (Chung Kap-son 1973) Nongch'on sahoe kaebal non—sae ma l undong l chungsim ro. [Theory of Rural Development—Centering on the New Village Movement]. Seoul: Pagyong Sa pp 270 -7.