

JINSEOK SEO

The role of shamanism in Korean society
in its inter- and intra-cultural contacts



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Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, Faculty of Philosophy

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INSTEAD OF FOREWORD

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I. INTRODUCTION¹

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

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

“You have to go to church. Otherwise your whole family will perish.”

My mother, who hadn’t had any contact with Western culture, much less Christianity until then, was really reluctant to listen to the shaman’s advice. However, my mother finally found a friendly Methodist Church nearby where a warm-hearted deaconess instructed her in a new way of life worshiping the Christian God and took care of my family, who trod the first step towards the church after quitting “the old habit of paganism”. Since it was really hard for mother to quit immediately the old habit of paying regular visits to Buddhist temples and shamanic shrines at the same time, she still stubbornly went to these places after converting to Christianity, but the deaconess – I am not sure whether she is still alive or not – never prohibited her from going to temple, and even volunteered to take care of 2-year-old me while mother was in the temple praying to the ‘pagan’ god.

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

Probably the advice of the shaman was right. As soon as my family members converted to Christianity, the economic situation of the family rapidly improved: my brother was born and I thrived, even to twice the lifespan predicted by the doctor. Finally my mother was convinced of the virtue of the Christian Church, quit her old habits and is now a deaconess devoted to the Pentecostal church. My brother is preparing to become a protestant minister.

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

As I grew up, I became interested in shamanism and the general processes by which an ethnic religion builds up a national culture in other countries. I realised that my mother's Christian conviction is very similar to the traditional viewpoint of Korean shamanism – a person who is destined to be a shaman has to go through a serious disease or a series of misfortunes in exactly the way my family had, and he or she has to address themselves to a master to be healed from disease or relieved from misfortune through an initiation ritual, then start a new life as a prophet or shaman in order to pass on the words of the spirits or gods. Even after initiation, the shaman should maintain a good rapport with the gods because laziness can cause a repetition of the bad luck. My mother had a firm belief that I had to find a way to live as a 'servant of the Lord' as I was given a calling from God like other would-be shamans who were destined to work for a god, a vocation decided in advance even before birth. Specifically the misfortune and disease my family suffered were spiritual diseases that shamans should go through before initiation, and our conversion to Christianity, the initiation.

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore Korean shamanism is always an essential tool for understanding Korean culture. After the introduction of Buddhism in 4th century and rise of Confucianism since the establishment of Joseon dynasty in 14th century, the dilemma caused by the confrontation of shamanism with other religions has been

at the centre of scholarly discussion. While until the 19th century the object of comparison was Buddhism and Confucianism, which affected crucial influences in North East Asia, Christianity has also entered the orbit in the same way as previous religions, and the direct influence of shamanism on Christianity is attracting scholarship today as well. Christianity will probably not be able to remain untouched by Korean shamanism.

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

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

Here are the most important topics that will be dealt with in the articles presented in this dissertation.

- 1) The characteristics of heroism and the prominent role of the female gender in Korean mythology – the reflection of traditional features of shamanism in Korea.
- 2) The process of the secularisation of sacred attributes, such as the Korean totem pole, *jangseung*, a carrier of ethno-symbolism that constitutes an ethnic peculiarity in a critical national situation. The transition of original attributes as guardians of ‘Koreanness’ – the characters and attributes eligible to be part of an authentic Korean tradition and society, and comparison with a similar component in Europe.
- 3) The traditional role of shamanism as a catalyser for the blending of other cultures with different Korean cultural strata exemplified by the on-going impact on Christianity.
- 4) The new potential of shamanism in the culture industry of the new era, acting as a bridge to connect Korean traditions with other cultures.

2. OUTLINES OF KOREAN SHAMANISM

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

2.1. The shaman and shamanism according to Eliade and others

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

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

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

Shamanism is usually perceived to be a form of belief, a mixture of animism and totemism, thus given a variety of appellations such as paganism, a national religion. It is very problematic to identify the nature of shamanism and shamans with a few words only, because the phenomena or behaviour given the name 'shamanism' by local people and scholars in one country can display more different features and peculiarities than other regions. As asserted by Thomas A. DuBois, "a single tradition may possess distinct professionals sharing portions of this supposedly singular shaman role" (DuBois 2009: 41). Eliade's *Shamanism* was the great prototype and scholarly authority for neo-shamanism to follow; however, as Daniel Noel has claimed, it was in actuality "an authoritative *imagining* more than a factual account of what traditional indigenous shamanisms had been or might still be outside of Western culture" (Noel 1997: 42). Åke Hultkrantz has pointed out too, that "there are places where other phenomena appear which, through their peculiar association with the shaman, may nevertheless be called shamanic. This means that we must depend less upon etymological explanations than upon phenomenological consideration" (Hultkrantz 1973: 27). This factor created many scholarly disputes about the credibility of

Eliade's definition, including in Korea, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

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

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

The assertion of Anna-Leena Siikala, who has conducted research on shamanism of Finno-Ugric peoples, can be applied to the general definition of shamanism, including Korea.

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the difference between the sorcerer or magician and the shaman, Eliade asserts that magic and magicians are to be found more or less all over the world, whereas shamanism exhibits a particular magical specialty, on which we shall later dwell at length: “mastery over fire”, “magical flight” and so on. He emphasized that the shaman is a magician in terms of this fact, however not every magician can properly be termed as shaman (Eliade 1974: 5).

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

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

over religious ceremonies and fulfil the functions of priests in a society where an official religion is not established.

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

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

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

2.2. Conceptualisations of shamanism in Korea

2.2.1. Korean shamanism and Eliade

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

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

As mentioned by Valk, the function of shamans conducting communication between the earthly and heavenly worlds is found in the shamanisms of other countries. Due to this universal similarity and geographic relationship, the research on Korean shamanism was predominantly influenced by the conceptualisation of Western scholars, represented by Eliade who underlined the possibility of formation of Korean shamanism under the influence of other regions such as, China, South or North Asia. Eliade has actually mentioned the cha-

racter of Korean shamanism, though briefly, in his book *Shamanism* and claimed that the phenomenon of shamanism in North East Asia including Korea displays elements of southern origin, specifically Buddhist (Lamaist) elements (Eliade 1974: 496).

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

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

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

2.2.2. Korean shamanism and the technique of ecstasy

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

Jo Heungyun (조흥윤) confirms that "Korean shamans are not always possessed by a spirit even when delivering *gongsu*, words from the gods. This shows that the presence of gods and the experience of trance do not always

accompany shamanic rituals. Shamans merely recite standard texts according to which they create words of blessing and reflect the guidance of spirits” (Jo H. 1994: 33).

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



Fig. 1. At Jinoguigut presided by shaman Yi Yongbun, in Bucheon. 15.10.2011

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

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

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

In my fieldwork, I have observed that a client was invited by the shaman to hold a branch picked up from the wood to experience possession by the spirit of the client’s late mother. The son didn’t succeed in experiencing possession

during the trance as expected, however encounters between clients and souls in the state of trance are organised repeatedly in the process.

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

2.2.3. Korean and Siberian shamanism

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

Lee Jeongjae (이정재) argues that the worldview and cosmology of the Siberian peoples and other associated elements – such as the relationship with god(s) of nature, animal gods, spiritualism, the afterlife, symbolism – are religious phenomena compatible with the economy of a society maintained by hunting. In contrast to this, Korean shamanism is totally different from the Siberian worldviews and cosmologies because this society was formed within an advanced agricultural economy and a well-developed monarchy. A similar belief system is commonly shared by many religious phenomena within Siberian shamanism, Korean shamanism, totemism, animism, manitoism and even advanced religions. Thus it is somewhat unreasonable to claim a Siberian origin for Korean shamanism based only on universal similarity (Lee J. 1997: 465–470).

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

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

The definition becomes clearer with the illustration of the Chinese character 巫 showing the general function of shamans: the pictogram shows a person dancing between heaven and earth around the world tree or world pillar which connect the two worlds². The conception of mediator comes clear with this assertion by Merete Jakobsen that “although the concept (of shamanism) derives from the Tungus of Siberia, the role of the shaman as a mediator between the human world and the world of the spirits is known worldwide and therefore justifies the use of shamanism as a more general term” (Jakobsen 1999: 1).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As mentioned in part 2-2-3, Korean shamanism both functions as a folklore and religion. First of all, *musok* is the conceptualization of Korean shamanism that shows it has significance as a set of customs and/or culture. *Musok* shows that Korean shamanism functions as part of the folklore or folk customs which established the foundation of Korean culture.

The significance of Korean shamanism lies in the fact that it is an important constituent of the cultural grammar of the Korean people, alongside Confucianism. Nevertheless, Korean shamanism didn’t educate people systemically with a script, as did Confucianism and Buddhism, it was fused into the Korean mentality by imperceptible degrees and finally operated as a normative stratum. Thus, actually, at the beginning of Korean folklore study, initiated by foreign scholars, Korean shamanism was predominantly comprehended as an obvious part of tradition or folklore, which were formulated under natural circumstances and the native philosophy of the Korean people – a viewpoint that prevails to this day.

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

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

Korean shamanism displays the characteristic of folklore defined by Edwin Hartland in many perspectives, which deals with the mental and spiritual side of humanity. People collected and stored a considerable amount of knowledge of a certain kind in order to pass on from one generation to another a definite social organization and certain invariable rules of procedure in all areas of life. “The

knowledge, organization, and rules thus gathered and formulated are preserved in the memory, and communicated by word of mouth and by actions of various kinds. To this mode of preservation and communication, as well as to the things thus preserved and communicated, the name of tradition is given” (Hartland 1904: 2-3).

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

The rituals and ceremonies of Korean shamanism have the canons and regulations formulated simultaneously without an excessive intervention of control or command from official authority. Existence gains a significance and reality only by means of physical occurrence during the performance of these rituals and ceremonies in the presence of an audience. Its association with divine realms and prophecy loses meaning as soon as the performance is over, at least, before the techniques of recording and documentation were invented. Prophecy has no script or text about the doctrine or canon accessible to believers while the performance is not held. Therefore the performance of Korean shamanism is a tradition, defined by Francisco Vaz Da Silva as an “open-ended process shaped by the interplay between individually-generated variations, on the one hand, and selection criteria upheld by historically changing communities, on the other” (Vaz Da Silva 2012: 51), which comprises an important factor to qualify Korean shamanism as a folklore.

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

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

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

John C. Messenger points out that “religious belief, to be so defined, must involve supernatural entities toward which sacred attitudes are directed by groups of people” (Messenger 1972: 218). Keel Heesung (길희성) asserts that anything which a significant collectivity of the Korean people, has regarded, is valued, pursued, or to which people devote themselves or worship as sacred

should be included in the study of Korean religion (Keel H. 2010: 13). According to Kim Chongsuh (김종서), the concept of 'Korean religion' should emerge from the religious experiences of the Korean people. If 'religion' in Korean literally means 'the fundamental teachings of human life', 'Korean religion' can be understood as 'the symbolic system of the fundamental teachings that Koreans believe and according to which they act and lead their lives' (Kim C. 2010: 24).

In fact there is literary evidence that Korea was once governed by shamanistic rulers. During the Silla kingdom (BC 57 – AD 935) sacerdotal functions were particularly integral to kingship – the second king of Silla, Namhae Geoseogan, was also called Chachaung or High shaman (Chang 1988: 31). The Silla kingdom, one of three kingdoms that ruled over the Korean peninsula, was the last kingdom to accept Buddhism as the national religion. The Silla acknowledged Buddhism only in 527, whereas other kingdoms accepted it at the end of the 4th century. Thus the religious life of the people in this kingdom would probably have been maintained on the basis of shamanism or local belief for quite a while, even after Buddhism was adopted and developed in other kingdoms.

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

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

This excerpt was taken from *Donggukisanggukjip* (동국이상국집, 1241) by Yi Gyubo (이규보), a Goryeo dynasty (918–1392) scholar. In respect of this record, shamanism was the object of criticism and persecution before the acceptance of Confucianism as the national religion in the 14th century. However, the reason for this persecution was not a problem of belief or doctrine itself, but the lewd, deceitful and dissipative life of the shamans. After this excerpt Yi Gyubo clearly noted that even a subject or government administrator would be ruined if they tried to lure people with capricious and wicked things, therefore shamanism itself was not the object of hatred or persecution.

Moreover it was problematic to root out shamanism because it was a basic substratum of Korean culture. Despite the official ban and the negative image of shamanism in society, the royal court used to appoint a national shaman and

³ Yi Gyubo (translated by Jin Seonggyu 진성규), *Donggukisanggukjip*, KRPIA.CO.KR, © 2012, Nurimedia. All Rights Reserved.
<http://www.krpia.co.kr/pcontent/?svcid=KR&proid=5>.

summon other shamans to organise ceremonies with shamanic attributes as rites in order to pray for rain, festivals for local gods, etc.

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

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

The position of Korean shamanism is still very ambiguous. Although there are plenty of shamanic shrines in every city, visited by people for religious purposes, shamanism is not officially acknowledged as a religion. Shamans are not registered as representatives of a religious institution, for example, as Buddhist monks, priests or pastors (ministers) are, because there is no lawful category in which to include them. All major religions are maintained by the Department of Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, which is divided into 2 subdivisions according to the character of the religion⁴. However, Korean shamanism is not recognised as an official religion registered at the Ministry, and therefore as of 2012 there is no subdivision allocated to oversee the affairs of shamanism.

Shamans cannot register their profession as religious either; therefore they open shrines or conduct ceremonies as members of a union of shamans. There are a few congregations of shamans, such as *Gyeongsinyeonhaphoe* (경신연합회, the Association of People Admiring God.), or *Musoginyeonhap* (무속인연합, the Association of Korean Shamans), under which shamans can register themselves as a member of a congregation in a city or town. Congregations of sha-

⁴ The first religious affairs officer – Buddhism.

<http://www.mcst.go.kr/web/introCourt/introStaff/popStaff.jsp?dept=1371333>

The second religious affairs officer – Foreign religions (Protestantism & Catholic), Confucianism and other national religions (excluding shamanism)

<http://www.mcst.go.kr/web/introCourt/introStaff/popStaff.jsp?dept=1371334>

mans are different from Orders in Buddhism and denominations in Christianity, because the division is based on private interests and personal relationships.

2.4.1. Shamanism as a folk religion

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

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

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

The understanding of folk religion in Korea can be observed through the joint study of Kim Myeongja (김명자) and Jang Jangsik (장장식), who identified distinctive peculiarities in Korean folk religion: 1) religious rituals are transmitted orally, 2) the object of worship is polytheistic, 3) physical good fortune in this world is the most important goal, 4) sorcery techniques are employed to pursue goals, 5) religious rituals are mixed, so establishing a multi-layered doctrinal structure, 6) personal efforts are emphasised because participation in sessions is very significant in the canon (See Kim M. & Jang J. 2004).

The manifestation of folk religion is not restricted only to shamanism. The elements pointed out by Kim and Jang, or Yoder can appear in the system of official or institutionalized religions such as Buddhism and Christianity. Jang Namhyeok (장남혁) identified a division in Christianity in order to differentiate folklorized, from official, Christianity. Jang Namhyeok classified the Protes-

tantism of Korea as official Christianity operating on the basis of faith and disciplines decreed by an institute or a system initiated and directed by a group of religious specialists; while he defined folk Christianity as Christianity based on activities or religious behaviour maintained regardless of the direction of specialists, including behaviour that is somewhat emancipated from the intermediation of an institutional authority. Korean folk Christianity involves belief or activity managed by lay people without special status verified by a denomination or seminary. Followers of folk Christianity are more interested in obtaining spiritual power and assistance from religion than contemplating and obeying legitimate disciplines (Jang N. 2002: 58). The attributes of folk religion are apparently found in folk Christianity. The influence of Korean traditional shamanism on the growth of Christianity and behaviour of Korean Christians is already studied academically in Korea and abroad (see Kim E. 2000; Jang N. 2002; Lee Y. 2009: 7-14; Kim Y. 1987) and will be discussed further in later separate articles.

2.4.2. Shamanism as a primitive religion

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

The travel accounts of Isabella Bird Bishop (1831-1904), a British female traveller who made four trips to Korea from 1894 onwards, are significant in this regard. She disparaged Korean shamanism with the affirmation that Chinese mythology had been transformed into a vulgar superstition in Korea. Bishop attempted to give general information about Korean shamanism and general folk belief with illustrations of organisation, classification of shamans and gods by function and rank, historical background and the process of initiation into shamanhood. Bishop says, about the spirits of Korea's national religion, that there is an obscure but arranged structure among the spirits although demons are impossible to categorise by sex, and that as characters they were like a bunch of ghosts. Due to her Christian worldview, she connected shamanism with sorcery and demonism. She wrote that "the term shaman may be applied to all persons, male or female, whose profession it is to have direct dealings with demons, and to possess the power of securing their good-will and averting their malignant influences by various magical rites, charms, and incantations, to cure diseases by exorcisms, to predict future events, and to interpret dreams" (Bishop 1898: 225).

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to Tylor, the general doctrine of disease- and oracle-spirits, which is one of the most apparent features of Korean shamanism, appears to have its earliest, broadest, and most consistent position within the limit of savagery (ibid.: 210–211). The theology of Korean shamanism observed by a number of foreign traveller and missionaries to Korea also tallies with Tylor's premise of primitive

religion that “the details of demoniacal possession among barbaric and civilized nations need no elaborate description, so simply do they continue the savage cases. ... The possession-theory belongs originally to the lower culture, and is gradually superseded by higher medical knowledge” (ibid.: 221).

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

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

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

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

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

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

altered by the efforts of family members and offspring if they perform many rites and ceremonies.

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

How the introduction of the moral element separates the religions of the world, united as they are throughout by one animistic principle, into two great classes, those lower systems whose best result is to supply a crude childlike natural philosophy, and those higher faiths which implant on this “the law of righteousness and of holiness, the inspiration of duty and of love” (Tylor 1871: 447). The grounds for criticism against shamanism was reasoned in a stereotype that it was a religion (or religious practice) meant to be employed only for individual purpose to realize one’s wish or plan, or sometimes that it is related with a wicked sorcery, as observed by Bishop and Clark, devoid of general moral principles.

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

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

The eternal maintenance of existence is not confined only to the personal. Traditional Korean shamanic rites predominantly stress reconciliation with the community of ancestors. Jakobsen also stressed that in Korean shamanism “the relationship to the dead family members and their influence on the well-being of the living is the central point. The family is the centre of concern” (Jakobsen 1999: 210). The welfare of descendants and family is secured by wishing for an auspicious abode for the ancestors, while evil spirits are cast out from the town during communal ceremonies or festivals that secure the welfare of the entire community. Therefore, in Korean shamanism the function of maintaining the community is more prominent than the function of mediating between the divine and human realms. DuBois attested this premise about the situation in

Korea with a statement regarding a generic shamanic function; “Spirits – animate and conscious entities associated with physical beings – exist as invisible components of the visible world and offer the shaman interlocutors with whom to negotiate the issues that face the human community: the onset of disease or ill luck, the need for hunting success, the desire to know with clarity the realities of the present or the future” (DuBois 2009: 55).

The rites for casting out evil spirits that cause diseases and misfortune, or for healing people, are not illustrated only by the process of exorcism through personal interaction with spirits. More important is the process of seeking the reason for the damaged relationship in order to solve the problems and send the mortifying spirits back. The notion of communal spirits can also be found at the heart of Korean shamanism, since the relationship with a person’s surroundings, such as family members, community and ancestors, is always emphasised; attempts to comprehend the hidden history of a spirit are made in this context. Don Baker highlights that Koreans have the tendency to seek solutions to ubiquitous human problems by transcending individuality through identification with a larger community (Baker 2008: 8). The tendency of shamanism to stress the maintenance of the community’s welfare generated common denominators with Confucianism, which ruled during the Joseon dynasty and finally paved the way for shamanism to take its position as a cultural substratum.

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

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

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

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

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

However the obvious entity of the communal spirits is not a quality solemnly valid in Korean shamanism. The general association of shamanism with the function to maintain the community was discussed by other scholars, too.

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

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

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

On the other hand there are also cases of shamanistic tradition and behaviour being adapted into the Buddhist canon. The adaptation of local belief in Buddhism is not a speciality found solely in Korea, considering the syncretism with Taoism in China and Shinto in Japan. The most apparent example of Korean syncretism is the Buddhist festival Palgwanhoe, held during the Goryeo dynasty. It was outwardly a Buddhist festival held in Buddhist temples under the conduct of royal families, however it was a festival with shamanistic characters imparted from the tradition of ancient dynasties before the introduction of Buddhism. Actually the Palgwanhoe signified more as a feast that official shamans participated in to wish for worldly good luck rather than as a Buddhist tradition (ibid.: 78). Today the diversity of shamanic deities, such as Sansin (mountain god), Yongwangsin (sea god), Mungansin (the guardian of gates), Umulsin (the guardian of wells), that have been transformed into Buddhist deities are frequently observed and we still find special pavilions designed for Korean local gods prepared in the grounds of temples. Additionally, worship ceremonies the individual purposes of which object is not Buddha, are orga-

nized frequently, for instance the performance of worship for Sansin to prevent natural disasters, for Chilseong (The gods of Big Dippers) to conceive a child and for Yongwang to make provision against accidents at sea and to wish for a good haul of fish (Kim T. 1983: 341). Especially *jangseungje*, a ritual ceremony held before erecting a *jangseung*, a Korean shamanic totem, is organized in some Buddhist temples. The *jangseungje* in Daeheungsa temple in Namhae is considered as one of the most representative examples of localization of Buddhism in the sphere of folk belief (ibid.: 342).

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

2.4.3. Shamanism as vernacular religion

Hereby a light will be shed on the possibility of regarding Korean shamanism as a vernacular religion. As defined by Leonard N. Primiano, “the vernacular religion is religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret and practice it. Vernacular religious theory involves an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the religious lives of individuals with special attention to the process of religious belief, the verbal, behavioural, and material expressions of religious belief, and the ultimate object of religious belief” (Primiano 1995: 44). The study of vernacular religion appreciates religion as “an historic, as well as contemporary, process and marks religion in everyday life as a construction of mental, verbal, and material expressions. Vernacular religious theory understands religion as the continuous art of individual interpretation and negotiation of any number of influential sources” (Primiano 2012: 384).

Since Korean shamanism affected a significant role continuously in the individualization and interpretation of understanding ‘official or institutional religion’ according to local necessities in Korea, as proven by the cases of syncretism with Buddhism and Christianity, Korean shamanism has many features of vernacular religion; however an approach from this view point has not yet been conducted in Korea.

Mentioning Kim Chongho’s statement again, ‘shamanism’ is largely a ‘residual’ category in the writings on Korean religion. In other words, the practises that are labelled ‘shamanistic’ are chiefly characterized by not being clearly included within the Korean definitions of ‘Buddhism’, ‘Confucianism’ or ‘Christianity’. In this residual category, ‘shamanism’ is often referred to as ‘folk religion’ or ‘popular religion’ (Kim C. 2003: 27). The residual element of shamanism also intervened with other major religions and finally coerced the Korean people to interpret and individualize the doctrine and canon in the vernacular way of Korea.

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

creed of the established religion. However, there is currently no research on Korean shamanism as a vernacular religion. This research could bring a new knowledge and prospect to conceive from a new perspective the role and function of Korean shamanism in localizing and individualizing foreign religion on Korean soil.

2.5. Gods in Korean shamanism

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

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

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

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

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

Yi Yongbeom sorted Korean deities into three categories in his research: 1) territorial gods (characters affiliated with a special locality, such as the cosmos, localities and houses); 2) human gods (humans deified after death, such as apotheosized historical persona, heroes, shamans and the spirits of ancestors); and 3) spirits without personalities (such as evil energies, baleful influences). Yi

says the hierarchy of gods is centred on the territorial gods and the human gods endowed with special personalities, and also on spirits without personalities located at the margin. Those spirits are ominous energies or forces which can cause harm to people. They are objects to avoid because they cannot build a direct relationship with people but only bring hazard (ibid.: 252).

Yang Jongseung, who pioneered the research on Korean traditional deities, identified 190 main characters and 292 sub-characters (variations of the main deities) from among the shamanistic deities whose imageries are illustrated in folk paintings (See Yang J. 1996) and classified Korean shamanistic deities into the following types according to their main functions; 1) gods related to shamans (who aid shamans with miraculous efficacy); 2) gods related to people (who are engaged in matters of basic human welfare such as life and death, work, daily life, fortune or fate); 3) gods related to nature (who are associated with natural environments and directions); and 4) gods related to the afterlife (who oversee the spirits and reincarnation and control the afterlife) (See Yang J. 1996). The classification by Yang also resembles the categorization by Kim Taegon, a leading scholar in the study of Korean shamanism, who sorted out 273 characters from many sources like deities appearing in *gut* rituals, shamanic portraits, deities worshipped during village festivals and house guardians (Kim T. 1981: 280).

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

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

1316 – 1388), a general and politician during the late Goryeo dynasty, all of whom are believed to protect people from evil spirits.

- 6) Evil spirits wandering in this world. Demons (Japgwi) or goblins (Dokkaebi) living in villages and natural habitat, as do helpers for the gods, such as tigers serving Sansin and Seonnyeo (선녀), and the servants of the gods in heaven.

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

Deities in Korean shamanism are not omniscient. Their spiritual power can be manifested in a range of special vocations rendered to a god. There is no intervention, interference or intercourse among gods. A god never gives a command or instruction to other gods and is not obliged to obey what others say. They don't ask for co-operation or collaboration (Im S. 1991: 30). This attribute may look to possess only an aspect of the undeveloped and primitive, but according to the assertion of Im Seokje, gods within Korean shamanism display ambivalence, with the same god having a good and bad character, according to the situation that is found only in Korea (ibid.: 42).

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

The standard to distinguish good and evil gods is very vague, therefore it is very problematic to evaluate Korean shamanism according to the principles of other religions. It is noteworthy to mention Yi Yongbeom, who claimed that "one should avoid categorizing Korean deities according to names or functions because such a method disturbs comprehension of the generic world of Korean deities" (Yi Y. 2002: 233). Jo Heungyun identified the peculiarity of Korean theology as the multifariousness of characters, exemplified by the entangled

involvement of gods and their functions. Even a single god can appear with a variety of characters and functions. Jo Heungyun compares this aspect with the World of the Flower Garland (Huayan) described in Buddhism. There are an abundant number of smaller towers attached to an immense main tower, and every small tower is elaborated as profoundly as the main tower, which is as large as the sky. Uncountable numerous towers exist in harmony and concord with each of the originalities preserved intact (Jo H. 1994: 26).

Furthermore the personae and protagonists in Korean shamanism frequently seem to be a mixture of Buddhism and Chinese mythology. Sakyamuni or Maytreya, characters reflecting Gautama Buddha but personified according to the Korean situation, make appearances in many myths, such as the myth of creation and the myth of Jeseok Buddha; while the highest hierarchy of gods is occupied by characteristics allegedly borrowed from Chinese mythology, such as Okhwangsangje (the highest Emperor of Jade), Chilseong (the god of the Seven Stars). Shamans also worship many historical Chinese personae as gods. Korean shamanism as a mixture of numerous beliefs of foreign origins was also observed by Bishop who wrote in the travel account that “it may be assumed, taking tradition for a guide, as certain of the litanies used in exorcism and invocation were introduced along with Buddhism from China, that Korean imagination has grafted its own fancies on those which are of foreign origin, and which are of by no means distant kinship to those of the shamanism of northern Asia” (Bishop 1898: 222).

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

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

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

2.6. Connections between shamanism and Korean nationalism

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

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

This tendency to reform and resignify what was traditional and what was folk culture to enhance the national identity was also observed in Korea, although rather differently from Finland or Estonia, i.e. with a political purpose. The most representative example of intentionally systematized enlightenment through folk culture was Gukpung 81, the Grand Festival of Traditional Culture, organized in 1981 under the military dictatorship led by president Chun Doo-hwan (1980–1988), who attempted to rationalize his regime, obtained through a military coup and massacre, by way of inspiration to national identity through folk performances.

The festival was held in the centre of Seoul for 5 days from 28 May to 1 June with the slogan ‘the power and passion of youth creates a new history’. Around 6,000 students from 198 universities and 7,000 citizens from all South Korea participated (or rather were mobilized, according to later testimony by participants) in the festival, a variety of events, contests, traditional markets were displayed with folklore as the central theme (Gang D. 2006: 52). After the closing of the festival, the allowing of mass gatherings, which had previously been strictly forbidden (the public curfew was lifted during the festival) and the new consciousness of folklore and national culture, were positively evaluated by the mass media. However, this folk consciousness was later criticised as “a fabricated or manipulated folklore” at a symposium of Korean folklorists held the following year⁵, because of the mobilization of university students by force and the manipulation of folk culture to rationalize the unjust regime. Since that first festival no others have been held.

⁵ The article “The fabricated folklore overwhelming in Korea (판치는 模造民俗)”, Donggailbo 《동아일보》, 1982.9.9.

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

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

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

The esoteric image of a nation is strongly connected with the sense of belonging to a group and provides a standard by which to decide whether to disapprove or accept an alien factor. A sense of belonging is the basic requirement for community spirit, which expands into manifestation of nationalism. The role of folklore in forming a community or strengthening the sense of belonging was also discussed by William Bascom. In addition to the obvious function of entertainment or amusement, he asserts that a function of folklore is “that which it plays in validating culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them” (Bascom 1965: 292) and “that which it plays in education, particularly, but not exclusively, in non-literate societies” (ibid.: 293). Finally “folklore fulfils the important but often overlooked function of maintaining conformity to accepted patterns of behaviour” (ibid.: 294). Shamanism, apparently a part of folklore in Korea, has affected such a function in crucial situations.

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

Hereby another conception of the application of folklore is introduced, that of ethno-symbolism. Ethno-symbolism is a concept created by Anthony Smith which says that a national symbol originating from folklore, for example myth

or common memory, constitutes a standard by which to differentiate a nation (See Smith 1999 & Seo J. 2012).

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

As asserted by Siikala and Ulyashev, the revival of tradition is a mark of the battle of survival of small minorities. This aspect authenticates the assertion of Siikala and Ulyashev that “because of the suppression of the Stalinist regime and the ensuing absence of the written culture of many Finno-Ugric groups, orally preserved traditions and ethnic religions seemed to provide the foundation for a national culture. ... These tendencies are typical not only of Siberian minorities or Finno-Ugric peoples; they are a global sign of the times” (ibid.: 29). The role of *jangseung* in ethno-symbolism will be discussed in a separate article.

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

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

In addition to this external and active participation in the Resistance, there has been an invisible influence on nationalism through symbolism and emotional sanction of external cultural stimuli. Shamanism was always connected with the identification of the alienated classes in Korean society and is a religion

which pursues reconciliation and harmony among sky, earth and people to gain heavenly blessing and to find equality with others. Thus, as seen here, Korean shamanism, highlighting equality and philanthropy, always stood on the side of the suppressed and subdued classes like paupers, women, serfs and farmers, and encouraged the Korean people to endure anger and to share social benefit with neighbours at critical moments, such as the occupation by Japan or governance by an authoritative Administration. Shamans were located between the human and spirit realms. As asserted by DuBois, they were “set apart from other people by these mediating activities performed at the edge of the human community and the threshold of the spirit world. The shaman can easily experience a sense of alienation from both human and spirit realms” (DuBois 2009: 82). Especially in Korea the shaman functioned among marginal people as the stimulus to build an identity, which finally led to the establishment of an overall Korean nationality.

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

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

Composing the most suitable representative character for a nation relies heavily on the esoteric and exoteric images together. A mixture of these two images performs a crucial role in forming the overall image of a nation. Such images are often formed spontaneously without the intentional interference of

an authority. The image loses validity as soon as a government or other national authority attempts to create an image by way of compelling force or fabrication, as witnessed in regimes of tyranny and dictatorship such as the case of Gukpung in Korea.

3. THE NARRATIVE GENRES OF KOREAN SHAMANISM

Resources regarding Korean shamanism began to be collected and documented at the beginning of the 20th century, initially predominantly by Japanese colonial scholars, although more synthetic and intensive research was conducted from the 1960s. The lyrics of shamanic narratives have already been published, and rituals and ceremonies have been archived by a number of cultural institutions. Nevertheless while the number of manuscripts preserved in the archives grows continuously, the activities of shamans still depend on oral narratives handed down from former generations. The first collection of texts on the shamanic myths was published in the 1930s (Im S. 1991 : 68), documenting around 1000 years later the myths of the establishment of kingdoms that had already been documented in chronicles such as *Samguksagi* (1145) and *Samgukyusa* (1281).

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

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

The value of *muga* was studied by many foreign scholars. Thomas DuBois has evaluated that in Korean *muga*'s "symbolic directions and stock phrases and epithets help render the oration both recognizable and efficacious to human and supernatural audience alike. Delivered in the proper manner, such orations helped the ritual progress from one stage to the next, demonstrating at the same time both the authority and the verbal dexterity of the shaman" (DuBois 2009: 207). *Muga* is the myth, which is recited to music, is the history of a personified god and is a component of the ritual and constitute a vital constituent required

to enhance the efficiency of ceremonies. Singing *muga* is one of the most important tasks for Korean shamans who accomplish a function as “a poet, singer of songs and a narrator of shamanic legends and myths” (Hoppál 2007: 133).

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

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

3.1. Muga as a resource of mythology

Undoubtedly every nation has its repertoire of myths and legends, with sacred attributes, to describe the beginning of an ethnic group or society and its sacredness. Korea also has an abundant collection of mythology explaining the very beginning of the Korean nation, represented by Dangun, the geographical configuration, divine beings or the lives of deified historical persona. The myth of Dangun, explaining the initiation of Korean nation and the foundation of national philosophy and civilization, has been valuable heritage for the Korean people regardless of transition of dynasties, classes, ideologies or changing political power throughout their 5000-year history. Other sacred stories about the activities and roles of divine being of the transcendental world have been transmitted to the present through oral or written expression. Unquestionably *muga* is a valuable reservoir for Korean mythology.

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

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

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

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

The conceptualization of Jan Harold Brunvand might be regarded as a conventional conceptualization of myth: “myths are regarded as sacred and legends as either sacred or secular; myths are set in the remote past, in the otherworld, or an earlier world, and legends in the historical past. Myths have as their principal characters gods or animals, while legends generally have humans in the major roles” (Brunvand 1986: 136).

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

As stated by Brunvand, it is not possible to categorise genres using a method that reflects only the content and peripheral structure. As Linda Dégh has pointed out, “the form, contents, and function of the stories belonging to different genres are always variable. Identical stories can be found within different genres. They may be shaped into fictitious, credible, revered, or ridiculed

treatments. What is a tale for one culture may be an origin legend for another; a twist in a tragic story for one can render it extremely funny for another” (Dégh 1972: 59).

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

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

The most significant myths in Korea about the founders of the three kingdoms, such as Jumong, Kim Suro, Bak Hyeokgeose and Dangun, may look akin to the legends or fairy tales about the heroic establishment of historical personae because the plot is set in a real historical past and the major roles are played by humans. There is evidence about the place and periods of episodes which, in fact, may seem unparalleled to other myths describing the mysterious world inaccessible and inexplicable for normal people. However, each myth explains the origin of the main civilizations that flourished on the Korean peninsula. Myths transmit central cultural messages. Through repetition, key categories of the cosmos and society are identified and established, and the relations among them are internalized.

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

Myth is not merely a story about gods. It supplies an explanation about the genesis of life and the meaning of existence for human beings, provided in oral format for the Korean people. Therefore the text of *muga* – in which a variety of stories including the creation of human being, the origin of nature and life, etc., is conceived – can be categorised as a branch of myth. One of the main roles of

oral-traditional poetry in culture is to build a bond between past and present, as well as to maintain a group identity (Hoppál 2007: 134). Thus we might conclude that *muga* is a precious reservoir of myths which explain the beginnings of the Korean nation, civilization and community.

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

- 1) Myth (*sinhwa*) – a sanctified story (about the establishment of dynasties and shamanic gods). The outcome of primeval society as transferred to the unit of the nation, country. Myth is divided into two sub-categories: myth about the establishment of dynasties that were written down as a part of history in chronicles using Chinese characters; and shamanic myths transmitted in oral form among shamans. In the Korean vernacular, the term *sinhwa*, which literally means ‘the story of the gods’ mainly refers to myths about the establishment of dynasties, while on the other hand shamanic myths are called ‘*bonpuri*’ or ‘*bonhae*’ – origin myths.
- 2) Legend (*jeonseol*) – a story with concrete evidence of time and place that is believed to be sacred and true. Because of this evidence, these stories are transferred within a particular area and function as good mediators, building kinship between residents.
- 3) Tale (*mindam*) – a story handed down orally among ordinary people, a fiction told to pass the time that has no place, epoch or characters designated.

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

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

related to dishonour or degradation, but rather related to form and conceptualization.

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

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

3.2.1. Lyrical folk songs in Korean tradition

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

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

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

Among the *seosaminyo* narrative songs is *minyo*, a song type with a story-telling structure. Jo Dongil explains that *minyo* have stories about real people and occurrences (Jo D. 1970: 16). He added that “the research on *seosaminyo* has been very scanty. The relevant materials are being collected, however the basic difference from *seojeongminyo* is not comprehended and the object of study is aimed in the wrong direction” (ibid.: 18). Although there are repertoires of *seosaminyo* with plots similar to the life-stories of gods or heroes, with a scale and structures comparable to *Kalevala*, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the majority of *seosaminyo* are, according to Jo Dongil, closer to ballads than

heroic epics in European conceptualization. Folksongs registered under the category of *seosaminyo* mainly deal with labour songs which don't have any attributes of the heroic epic. Jo Dongil attests that *seosaminyo* is closer to ballad than to heroic epic because it depicts only a singular occurrence or describes one subject, although it is a story told in the form of song. It conveys the contents related to one theme without the plot or outline. Every object around people, such as an animal, plant, or chores, are used for the theme, but according to the periods and regions, a lot of different repertoires can be created, such as depicting erotic activities or describing the sorrowful condition of women. Jo Dongil says that "*seosaminyo* is the song reflecting the lifestyle and philosophy of normal women which differentiate them from European ballad" (ibid.: 156).

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

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

Therefore, in Korean vernacular, there are some sub-genres parallel to the lyrical epic to be found in *seosaminyo*, such as *janggun seolhwa*, *pansori* (See 3-3), *bonpuri* and *boncho*; an explanation of their beginnings is discussed in the previous chapter. Here, the term *janggun seolhwa* means legends narrated orally about Korean generals who actually existed and played an active part in Korean history, represented for example by the stories about Kim Yusin (김유신, 595-673), the general who unified the Korean peninsula in the 7th century for the first time in Korean history; about Nam Yi (남이, 1441-1468), a military officer who ended his life in tragedy; and about Gwak Jae-u (곽재우, 1552-1617), the leader of a militia. Characters from those stories have been born again as protagonists in novels created by more recent writers, while some generals whose lives generally finished in a tragic way are occasionally deified by shamans. The story is transmitted in oral form with the original formulaic and ornamental

style displaying the specific metrical form, thus at first glance the *janggun seolhwa* shares the most similar form with conventional oral epics at the first glance.

3.2.2. Heroism in *muga*

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

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

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

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

The heroes described in narratives are distinguished by certain characteristics that many scholars, such as Vladimir Propp (see Ulicka 2000) and Lord Raglan, attempted to systemize. Lord Raglan tried to make a list of the hero's characteristics, as found in traditional narrative stories:

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

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

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

However, the arrangement by Raglan is not valid for all cases. In the Korean epic, such incidents are experienced not by the hero him or herself, but by women who are destined to bear an future hero, thus in this sense the Princess Bari story is exceptional in that the whole plot is experienced and undertaken by one protagonist. The predominant role played by women in *muga* may be

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to Kim Yeongil, "Korean shamanic heroes are different from the protagonists of fairy tales. What protagonists in fairy tales seek is an individual value, however, Korean shamanic heroes seek something that is of value to the community. Those heroes have to confront gods for the community's sake and afterwards become deified by people for their deeds" (Kim Y. 2005: 72–73). Kim Yeolgyu says "Korean shamans have the religious function of telling fortunes and presiding over religious ceremonies and also possess the attributes of

warriors” (Kim Y. 1977: 250). The warrior-like attribute of challenging evil spirits, the ability to communicate with the divine realm and the duty to maintain the welfare of the community – Korean shamans with these characteristics are close to the imagery of heroes who establish and defend a nation in an epic tales.

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

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

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

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

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

The analogous variants within the popular *pansori* (see 3-3) and *mindam* narratives are also found in *muga*; for instance, the story of Sim Cheong is found in *pansori* repertoires as well as those of *muga* performed on the eastern coast of Korea. In addition there is a *muga* with a similar plot reminiscent of the story of the sisters Kongjwi and Patjwi, one of the most renowned fairy tales in Korea.

...One day he went to the pond and suddenly saw three beautiful blossoms blooming there. The covetous Kwangyangsang plucked three flowers and hung

them over his gate, but every time he entered or left through the gate, the flowers hit his head. “Crazy flowers,” he said and threw the flowers into the fire. The next morning a grandmother from Green Moss Mountain came to get some embers from Kwangyangsang’s house. When she looked in the firebox, there was no fire but there were three gems. [Excerpt from the *muga*, *Origin Myth of the Messenger*] (Seo D. 2000: 208).

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

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

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

3.3. The formulaic structure of *muga*

3.3.1. *Pansori* and *muga*

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

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

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

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

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

The system of versification for *muga* is not different from the normal versification of other *minyo*. According to the arrangement of Park Migyeong (박미경), the majority of lines are divided into two parts; and each part can be divided into 6 syllables (Park M. 1996: 88). The drumming technique employed

during the ritual corresponds to the general method observed by Siikala, which is to say that it is “by and large uniform throughout; a slow, soft initial phase is followed by an increase in tempo and volume” (Siikala 1992: 34).

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

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

One of the characteristics commonly found in *muga* is the repetition of identical occurrences and a lack of omission (Park M. 1996: 125). When telling the story of Princess Bari, the stories of how her 6 sisters were delivered are repeated at length. In the origin myth of Jeseok (제석) Buddha, the hardships and trials that his mother has to go through before the birth of the main protagonists are described in detail. For this reason the contents of *muga* are mainly comprised of the same story repeated regularly, which is not customary in *pansori* performances.

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

3.3.2. *Muga* and performance

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

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

The introductory part

- 1) Announcement about the shaman – the leader of the ceremony.
- 2) Narration of how the leader performs the devotions for the ceremony.

- 3) Narration of how the food was prepared and prayer for its acceptance.
- 4) Prayer for fortune in this world and prevention of calamity for the following year.

The main part

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

The concluding part

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

For this reason, the text of a *muga* is quite long and it takes lot of time to perform a *muga* in the ceremony. Kim Joonki (김준기) has said that “the division of *muga* into three parts of introduction, narration and prayer coincides with the three-stage structure, as well as the principles and contents, of the *gut* ceremony” (Kim J. 1994: 136). Specifically, a *muga* shows a compressed form of the *gut* ceremony itself. The performance of Korean shamanism is exemplified in the *gut* ceremony. It has multi-faceted features as a profane performance for an audience and a sacred ceremony for the gods, and *muga* comprises an essential part of the performance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH INTO KOREAN SHAMANISM: SYNOPSIS

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

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

- 1) A tendency of nationalism resulting from defiance of the predomination of Western culture over Korea and cultural colonization. This is associated with the attempt to rediscover the value and merit of national cultural identity stemming from the Korean traditional belief.
- 2) Materialistic culturology focused on comparative research on shamanism in North East Asia.
- 3) Speculative study on the archetype of shamanism as it relates to the nationalism and religiosity of the Korean people.
- 4) The approach to shamanism as a prototype of the Korean psyche to detect the core of Korean culture and to uncover the collective subconscious of the Korean people in order to develop Korean culture and to relocate Korean shamanism as a sanctuary which set up the worldview and ethical code of the Korean people.

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

- 1) Western orientalism and cultural colonisation

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

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

Shamanism was approached as a prototype of the Korean psyche as a way of detecting the core of Korean culture uncovering the collective subconscious of the Korean people in order to develop Koreanness and to relocate Korean

shamanism as a form of sanctuary with which to set up a worldview and ethical code for the Korean people.

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

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

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

Korea lay in the arena of rivalry between the surrounding great imperial powers, such as Russia, China, Japan and the USA, which restlessly buffeted the vulnerable nation and forced Korean scholars to concern themselves with the future of the nation. The colonisation by Japan *de jure* was finally completed in 1910, although cultural and administrative colonisation had already begun prior to this.

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

Unlike the narrowly focused studies of Western missionaries and travellers toward the end of the 19th century, the Russian materials on religion are more varied and set within a wider study of Korean society and culture. However, the Russian studies reflect the concerns of an aggressive, expansionist policy, and are presented in the form of objective reports. The representative work of this group is a massive 1,256-page book in three parts called *Opisanie Korei* (Description of Korea), published in 1900 by the Russian Ministry of Finance. This book contains a separate chapter titled 'Korean Religions' in which there is a subdivision for shamanism, this section including all popular religions with stress on shamanism's pantheistic characteristics (Kim C. 1944: 145 – 146).

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

and Choi Namseon (최남선), the pioneers of Korean studies, gained a reputation with their study conducted on the basis of bibliographic research.

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

Before the end of World War II, the Japanese policy of colonisation of Korea saw many changes. After the movement of March 1, 1919, in which the Korean people declared the independence of Korea from Japan, although it was not completely successful, Japanese colonists began to manoeuvre to find a way to alter the method of control to become culturally oriented. However, within a couple of decades of World War II this accelerated and it was necessary to find an academic background to strengthen control and further exploit the Korean people, therefore Korean shamanism was approached from a different angle.

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

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

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

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

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

social code of behaviour because it was believed to be an archetypal structure for Korean culture.

The intensive collection of *muga* commenced, which eventually increased the number of articles and dissertations on shamanism. This period is represented by the most brilliant folklorists and researchers into shamanism, such as Kim Taegon, Jo Heungyun, Yu Dongsik and Im Seokje, the works of whom are quoted in this dissertation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The aesthetics of shamanic rituals and festivals were put into a symbolic model to establish an ideal community with democracy and equality. The national authenticity of shamanism was reconsidered to cope with the possible

impending extinction of true ‘Koreanness’ in the turmoil of the constrictive economic growth and military dictatorship which were believed to be negative consequences of Western-based industrialisation.

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

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

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

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

The Korean people realised the advantage of folklore and shamanic myth, undervalued until then, as a valuable common national property or heritage. Here cultural property, as defined by Bendix and Hafstein in their study, is “a national concept at its inception, used in the context of claims for the restitution of historical artefacts from one state to another. Cultural heritage, on the other hand, is the preferred term in contexts that stress the general safeguarding of artefacts, buildings, sites, and, most recently, cultural practises” (Bendix & Hafstein 2009: 6).

Martin Skrydstrup says that “‘cultural property’ is both a *discursive register* involving codified rights, enabling and hindering communities and nations to

make claims in the name of culture, and an *institution* dedicated to the rights of distribution and allocation of tangibles and intangibles” (Skrydstrup 2012: 522).

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

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

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

With the growth of interest in cultural content, folklore also began to be seen as a branch of industry. Many countries are making inroads into the world market with cultural content that contains the mentality and emotion of the nation.

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

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

⁶ Tunis Model Law on copyright for developing countries
http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/31318/11866635053tunis_model_law_en-web.pdf/tunis_model_law_en-web.pdf (Accessed December 07, 2012).

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

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

5. THE METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH AND SOURCES OF THIS DISSERTATION

In the same way as the conceptualization of Korean shamanism, the discussion on how to designate the appropriate methodology for research is also continuous. As described in the previous part, at the beginning of the study of shamanism, the methods employed by earlier scholars from the West to conduct overall research on shamanism was also implemented for Korea, followed by harsh criticism that this research was nothing but fitting content into an exterior frame by force with no thought for the principal property of Korean shamanism. Kim Taegon said that “regardless of the universality of generic human culture, it is impossible to eliminate the special local conditions of Korea, therefore the automatic employment of a special theory which ignores the reality in Korea is like ‘fitting your feet into the shoes’” (Kim T. 1983: 14).

For my research I generally employed the qualitative and biographical studies methods. Jo Jeongho, who conducted a meaningful study on research methods for Korean shamanism, stated that the qualitative method is the most relevant method for Korean shamanism (Jo J. 2002: 20). Jo Jeongho indicated three stages of qualitative method for Korean shamanism: 1) archival research, 2) participant observation, and 3) ethnographic interview. Archival research is the preliminary stage before starting a synthetic study to comprehend the main conceptions and terminology of shamanism and collecting biographical materials for investigation (*ibid.*: 43). Participant observation includes analysis, documentation and interpretation of the life and culture of shamans after long participatory investigation of the daily life and working environment of the community of interest (*ibid.*: 44). Ethnographic interview involves unstructured interviews. The contents and methods of the questions are not planned and the interview can proceed with fluidity in accordance with the interviewer-interviewee relationship and atmosphere moment by moment (*ibid.*: 45).

As mentioned in the foreword, this study was conceived from my long contemplation on the possibility of binding Korean shamanism and Western culture, and also from my wish to propose an academic suggestion for harmonious co-existence. I might assert that both stages of archival research and participant observation occurred simultaneously because of the Protestant atmosphere at home, the long friendship with shamans befriended while doing my work of promoting Korean culture in Europe and independent study for my own interest. The fieldwork was designed to acquire evidence to verify my presumption, pre-formulated with archival material, and my theoretical approach. However, according to the conviction of Schmidt-Lauber who deprecated the pre-formulated conclusion, underlining that “concepts, theories, and solutions are developed based on the material itself and less in answer to pre-formulated hypotheses that are to be verified or refuted” (Schmidt-Lauber 2012: 570), there may be grounds for criticising my method. From childhood I had a good rapport with Christians as well as shamans and by imperceptible degrees this constructed the presumption in my mind that lead to my dream of true harmony between

Korean shamanism and the European culture introduced to Korea. To expand upon this, the presumption was rather constructed by way of “anthropology at home” as invoked by Schmidt-Lauber herself (ibid.: 564) and I conducted the procedures of inspecting it in a more professional way through encounters with experts occupied with shamanism and folklore as required for my study.

The qualitative study is apt to be criticized for the subjective position of scholars whose subjective opinion can interfere, but I think this view originates from misunderstanding the matter of objectivity and the essence of qualitative study. In contrast to natural science, subjectivity is inevitable for the social and humane sciences (Jo J. 2002: 20).

Jo Jeongho’s conviction supports the adequateness of my approach based on pre-formulated presumption. It doesn’t mean that subjectivity is tolerated in all circumstances. Jo Jeongho added that “in the qualitative study the subjectivity of both researchers and informants is highlighted, however it should be guaranteed that the subjectivity is not an intemperate self-assertion” (ibid.: 20-21).

Schmidt-Lauber also warned that “‘excessive’ empathy and too great an identification with the field can result in ‘going native’, that fabled loss of cultural identity on the part of the researcher, while maintaining too great a distance runs the risk of exoticism or even xenophobia and racism” (Schmidt-Lauber 2012: 563). To avoid these problems I strived to maintain the rule of absorbed participation and objective distance at the same time when doing my fieldwork.

Kim Taegon, a leading character in the study of Korean shamanism, accented the need not to neglect religiosity when studying shamanism. He claimed that “above all one should pay attention to the fact that the overall objects of shamanism study such as the history, customs, literature, music, theatre, psychology, and society, are phenomena occurring in the boundary of the religiosity of shamanism” (Kim T. 1981: 36). However, I did not pay special attention to the existence of religious aspects of shamanism represented by ecstasy and exorcism, rather the focus of my research was on the character as a Korean cultural stratum. The most important point for selecting the interviewees was to what degree he or she strives to follow the original formalities of ceremonies and the traditional canon and code transmitted from generation to generation. I tried to meet with as many shamans as possible, although I did not take into account the testimony and information of informants who had a very strong tendency to exhibit personal ability and talent; for example, I met shamans who attempted to persuade me to organize a *gut* to become a shaman for the success of my thesis, or asked me to promote her special ability to see the souls of animals. When conducting fieldwork in Lithuania for the comparative research between *jangseung* and traditional Lithuanian wooden crosses, I chose as a priority woodcrafters who practiced the traditional way of carving without fusing their own aesthetic view.

I also had to consider how the interviewee comprehended the original conceptions and theoretical background and how they actually employ for their work, because I approached shamanism with the conviction that it is a valuable frame constituting part of a culture, rather than a religion. Therefore whether shamans experienced encounters with gods, specifically experiencing ecstasy or possession, or not, was not essential for me; however, as Kim Taegon advised, I tried to keep in mind that their statements and behaviour have a religious value and this avoided both enquiry on the basis of belief, and refutation of their views. Against this background my interviews were initiated from questions about very basic circumstances and surroundings, such as family, the opportunity of work, and the situation in which he or she was possessed by god, and then tried to limit the field of the questionnaires.

When meeting with Protestants, I continued the dialogue in pleasant and favourable conditions without emphasizing the purpose of my comparative research because of their intolerant mental attitude towards any association with shamanism. The interview itself was not essential for research related to Christianity because much material is already available through various channels; for example, the collection of testimonies, the teaching of church ministers provided in Internet homepages of churches and prayer houses, and so on.

The in-depth interviews with Lithuanian woodcrafters took place in the autumn of 2006, and those with Korean shamans in the autumn of 2010. Additional materials were collected from diverse channels, such as books, academic articles, dissertations, the Internet, and fieldwork for more empirical materials.

The interviewees for Lithuanian folk crafts were selected on the basis of the recommendation of the Centre of Folk Culture of Lithuania:

Adolfas Teresius, Kaunas
Algimantas Sakalauskas, Prenai
Saulius Lampickas, Alytus
Jonas Tvardauskas, Anysciai
Ginutis Dudaitis, Kaunas
Antanas Česnulis, Druskininkai
Kazimieras Martinaitis, Marijampole
Vitalis Valiukevičius, Vilnius

The masters of *Jangseung* were selected on the basis of information and estimation obtained from the mass media and academic articles:

Kim Suho 김수호, Yecheon
Gang Seongcheol 강성철, Gwangju (Gyeonggi province)
Kim Yunsuk 김운숙, Ilseong
Kim Jongheung 김종홍, Andong

Since much research has already been made on Korean shamanism, much information was accessible through various channels, however, some personal inter-

views were made when necessary. Due to the lack of a centralised institution controlling the activities of shamans, it was not simple to find interviewees. Since many shamans were reluctant to reveal their occupation publicly, I conducted the interview with shamans introduced by acquaintances engaged in peripheral shamanic activity, for example singing coaches for shamanic songs and traditional singers working as shamans in public:

Lee Yongbun 이용분, Bucheon

Yu Sangho 유상호, Bucheon

Choi Yemyeog 최예명, Gyeongju

Gang Yeongim 강영임, Seoul

The investigation into the relationship between shamanism and Christianity particularly relied on publicly available data published in the Internet or through the press, because the religious leaders of Protestant churches didn't want to give an interview on the subject. For that reason the majority of testimonies and information was collected from the homepages of churches and prayer houses and the sources are noted as footnotes.

I was able to hear the testimonies of lay people from the Eungwang Full Gospel Church and Pyeongtaek Full Gospel Church in Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi province. The interviews took place several times in the autumn of 2011 in a friendly atmosphere.

6. SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

This dissertation is composed of 4 separate articles written for academic journals in Estonia, South Korea, Lithuania and Hungary since 2007. As discussed before, the research on Korean shamanism was mainly conducted in order to deliberate on its origin from the perspective of Eliade's study, to uncover the original facets of Korean shamanism in relationship with other cultural spheres and to pave the way for the preservation of Koreanness in the face of extinction by external influence.

My research relies on those existing theories and opinions to a fairly large degree, however I intended to seek out the futuristic virtue of Korean shamanism and propose a scheme to refine the possibility of a comparative perspective with those part of Western folkloristics and religious studies that relate to shamanism and folk belief.

A series of studies on heroism and the shamanic heroes in Korean shamanism has already been conducted, although the majority of the studies were focused on an assortment of elements and the comparative research on the functions and roles of the protagonists. For example, parallel academic research has been published on the employment of mythology and traditional narrative. An article with a very similar subject to my dissertation is "Putting Korean Shamanistic Myths into Culture Content", which focused on the mytheme arrangement, classification and utilisation method for storytelling, by Choe Wono (최원오). However the author of the article did not clarify the differences between shamanic myths, ordinary myths and legends, and ended up abstracting some elements (mytheme according to the author) from renowned myths and legends to utilise as content and arranging these into categories (See Choe W. 2007). Despite the fact that he did not investigate the special value and significance of shamanic myth, the study is a good example with which to demonstrate the arrival of a new paradigm for research on shamanic myths.

The research into the relationship between Korean Protestantism and shamanism was carried out in various fields before my paper. Firstly it was done by Christian scholars from seminaries or universities of theology mainly with the purpose of preserving the purity of Christianity by way of eliminating elements of shamanism from the system, and in addition performed by ethnologists to assert the existence of shamanic elements in the system of Christianity and to reveal the character of shamanism as a Korean social substratum. They simply attempted to prove the superiority of one religion in order to justify the necessity to eliminate the other; however they scarcely tried to find a way to make a compromise, or find an idealistic way to develop both religions in harmony in order to mirror Korean religious history, which was inevitably influenced by shamanism in the end.

The comparative study between *jangseung* and the Lithuanian crosses has already been made by Martynas Šiaučiūnas-Kačinskas, a scholar of Korean Study from Lithuania. This analysis mainly focused on a description of function and historical transition. The aim of my paper was also to compare the symbo-

lised traditional elements of Lithuania and Korea on the basis of Lithuanian crosses and Korean *jangseungs*, which manifest functional and morphological similarities, but finally to analyse how they were revealed in ethno-symbolism providing a cultural resource with which to maintain the national character (See Šiaučiūnas-Kačinskas 2008).

6.1. Heroines in Korean myths (*Mäetagused*)

This article discusses the structure of Korean myths as representative of female heroism, the purpose of which was to instil courage and hope in women. This thereby shows that Korean myths are not merely a passive reflection of the social situation but serve the active function of influencing society in a particular way and contributing to social organisation. In addition, the article studies the heroism of Korean women in myths glorifying their beauty and dignity. The objects of this study are mainly protagonists who appear in *muga*.

In Korean myths, women are mainly perceived as passive mediators whose function is to give birth to heroes. However, there are other myths that have been passed on through history, the nature and structure of which are analogous to their European counterparts. Perhaps there have been other such myths, but they have not been preserved owing to the fact that Korean society has long been dominated by men or the nobility.

These myths are not merely simple representations of Korean society at the time, but serve as antisocial messages by shamans of the lowest social stratum, who lived under a double pressure. Their message was that all people are born equal and share equal human rights, and they ridiculed the hypocrisy of the nobility, who harshly criticised shamans but eventually followed their advice

6.2. The transition of sanctity into secularity: the comparative analysis of function as the carrier of ethno-symbolism: Korean *Jangseung* and the Lithuanian traditional wooden cross (*East European Studies*)

Lithuanian crosses, enrolled into the list of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, function as a representative craft art endowed with secularity and sanctity, at the same time as being a significant means of ethno-symbolism that helped people preserve and maintain cultural identity and national peculiarity when in danger of extinction. The ethno-symbolism evoked by A. Smith claims that most nations were based on ethnic ties and sentiments and on popular ethnic traditions, which provided the cultural resources for later nation formation. To turn ex-colonies into territorial nations first they must forge a cultural unity and identity of myth, symbol, value, and memory that can match that of nations built of pre-existing ties.

Hagar Salamon and Harvey E. Goldberg stated in joint research that symbols are “woven through both myths and rituals and contribute to their close association. They effectuate the storing of cultural information and enable its transmission in concentrated messages carrying practical implications along with emotional and spiritual denotations. Through them, interrelated cultural themes are articulated at the levels of both cosmology and its specifications in a range of realms: nature and the supernatural, political orientations, aesthetic taste, law and justice, and other matters of the mundane world” (Salamon & Goldberg 2012: 129).

The attributes of Lithuanian crosses and *Jangseung*, which were initially established to express the religiosity of both nations, were gradually converted to have secular characters in order to maintain national identity during rapid political and social transition: they are both, specifically, ethno-symbolistic. Some famous sites for groups of crosses, for example the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai and Unity Square in Kaunas, are associated with the Lithuanian people’s struggle against Soviet occupation. The cross, the cultural value of which was once totally neglected, has developed to become a representative of Lithuanian tradition, established on the basis of Christianity and aiding Lithuanians in recovering their nationalism.

Some sculptors took part in the restoration of crosses on the Hill of Crosses. During an interview, one confessed that he strongly believed the restoration of crosses was a fundamental way to preserve Lithuanian identity. Today he still carves the authentic crosses devoid of political aspiration that decorate every corner of the Hill of Crosses.

Jangseung once functioned in the same way as crosses in Lithuania. For decades following the Korean War, South Korea was ruled by an authoritarian government that denied basic human rights for the sake of cultivating Western rationalism and the abolition of old-fashioned practices.

Jangseung was degraded to a symbol of old-fashioned practice and superstition and became an object of persecution that aligned people with anti-government and anti-USA rhetoric. *Jangseung* were very often erected in universities and labour movement sites, which led to the social reform movement; the *Jangseungje* was held as a symbolic ritual to pray for the advent of a new era in which liberty would be secured. The Lithuanian cross has almost lost any practical association with ancient religion and has developed into a monument representing Christian culture. The traditional symbol of deities, the World Tree, is still revered and displayed in other artistic forms, persisting as a representative of Lithuanian ethno-symbolism, as observed during the Soviet period.

6.3. The haunted culture – Shamanic heroes in the cultural content industry of South Korea (*Acta Orientalia Vilnensis*)

Korea, with insufficient natural resources and a limited consumer market, began to look at the cultural content industry in the 21st century. Therefore, the cultivation of this industry hasn't taken a long time compared to neighbours such as Japan, the USA or Hong Kong. Yet Korea has obtained an astonishing outcome in the short term. The popular culture of South Korea, with the appellation *hallyu*, boasted an enormous strength initially in the Asian market, which subsequently widened to markets in other countries. Seeing that Korean cultural archetypes don't play a successful role in the cultural content business of Korea in general, the position of shamanism is truly trivial. The article analyses and discusses the meaning, function and potential of Korean shamanism in the field of the Korean cultural content industry.

Shamanic content that lies directly within the development policy for traditional Korean archetypes is not free of criticism. Korea, believed to have the biggest number of shamans in the world in proportion to population, is endowed with abundant mythological resources. In addition, written narratives about the foundation of dynasties and legends documented in chronicles are still transferred to the present. So the number of mythological resources available for commercialisation is really enormous. Yet the amount of modern cultural content about shamanic heroes is scant.

Many causes can be found for this. First of all, the stereotypes related to shamanism had a negative impact on the cognition of the Korean people. Shamanism was regarded as a superstition that deluded the public and deceived people. It became the object of persecution during the Joseon dynasty, the period of colonisation by Japan, and the industrialisation period after the Korean War. Moreover, under the influence of Christianity, mainly Protestantism, shamanism was downgraded to satanic witchcraft or sorcery. Objective criteria by which to identify and separate genuine Korean shamanic elements from foreign religion are missing.

Korean shamanism is eligible to be regarded as a national religion. However, there have been no attempts to visualise or systemise shamanic characters according to peculiarity, behaviour and exterior features. The application of the images of shamanic heroes to the creation of modern content was not always successful. As mentioned, it was influenced by intolerance towards shamanism in society and the scarcity of experts trained in the visualisation and creation of storylines. Notwithstanding all the failures, seeing Hollywood films successfully based on mythology and legends motivated Korean artists to search for new characters. Therefore, attempts to employ shamanic heroes as characters in new productions are growing.

6.4. Shamanic influences on Korean Protestant practices as modulated by Confucianism (*Shaman*)

The fusion of institutionalised religion with shamanism occurred constantly throughout Korean history. Christianity, despite a short period of dissemination not exceeding 200 years, has also developed much faster in Korea than other Christian countries in the West, although surprisingly shamanic influences are also noticed in the relationship with Christianity. Such tendencies are mainly noticed in Pentecostal churches, which emphasise the work of the Holy Spirit and direct experience of the presence of God by the believer. The experience of the Holy Spirit, similar in fashion to possession by a spirit in shamanism, as well as other mystical elements, such as craving fortune and blessing in this world, are more important than salvation and eternal life.

Korean folk Christianity has a diversified understanding of the devil or Satan, normally classifying evil into groups such as devils of illness, of misfortune, of arrogance, etc., and ascribing all suffering as the consequences of satanic deeds.

Behaviour similar to that of Korean shamanism is often observed during services in Protestant churches, especially during special services like overnight prayer meetings and the revival assembly. Some reputed ministers lay emphasis on full possession by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating a number of mystic actions similar to shamanic activities, for example exorcism, expelling evil spirits, miraculous healing, etc., which are sometimes considered a standard by which to measure a minister's spiritual efficacy.

The aforementioned customs of folk Christianity exist on the boundary of Christianity and participation is encouraged by official Christianity, which admits them as 'meaningful' and 'legitimate' practises. In this paper I analyse the relationship between Christianity and shamanism, a Korean cultural substratum, by illuminating the role of Confucianism – specifically the derived or secondary Confucianism that percolated through shamanism – in order to understand the influx of shamanic behavioural elements into Christianity.

The contribution of Confucianism should not be overlooked in an account of the development of Protestantism in Korea. An understanding of Confucian discipline is crucial for understanding contemporary Korean society, and all former dynasties established on the Korean peninsula since the very beginning of Korean history, and actually many common factors are found between Korean Christian culture and Confucian tradition.

Despite the fact that, seen from this perspective Protestantism probably looks remote from shamanistic tradition and closer to Confucian tradition, the influence of shamanism as a substratum of Korean culture is very evident. Truly the traits of Confucianism and shamanism are found almost equally in Korean Protestant culture, although many scholars lay more stress on the impact of shamanism than Confucianism on the reality of Protestant practise.

The current situation within the Korean Church is very similar to the transition process that occurred within the shamanic system – transformation from the domination of spiritual to hereditary shamans, as asserted by Kim Taegon.

One can doubt this assertion because, in fact, the number of hereditary shamans has abruptly decreased, whereas the spiritual shaman is increasing due to social transition; and furthermore, the Korean Church didn't develop depending solely on districts in the *dangol* system by which a district is looked after by a shaman like a priest or clergyman in a narrow sense. Today hereditary shamans are rarely found, and shamans say that even hereditary shamans cannot work without spiritual possession. Put simply, the inclination to the techniques of sorcery and miraculous power is still strong. It is possible to say that the temporary period of transition from sorcery to a systemised shamanic authority based on region had already finished when intensive industrialisation and westernisation commenced in Korean society. However, the inclination of the people was to return to the period of sorcery, although the shamans, who were automatically given shamanic authority formed during the preceding period of transition, only supposed that miraculous power was guaranteed. Likewise the Protestant Church, even though it did not undergo the process of *dangol*, was granted spiritual authority similar to shamanic authority because of this background. Ministers whose miraculous ability is acknowledged by lay people were automatically granted systemised authority, as happened with Korean shamans.

7. CONCLUSION: THE TRADITION DYNAMICS OF KOREAN SHAMANISM

Hagar Salamon & Harvey E. Goldberg pointed out in their joint research that “the three vehicles of expression – symbol, myth and rituals – are linked to one another, at the level of aesthetics as well as being regulatory and communicative elements in what may be grasped as an expanded ‘language of culture’” (Salamon & Goldberg 2012: 121). Korean shamanism possesses all these basic elements constituting the language of culture.

Yoon Yeeheum (윤이흠) asserts that “Korean cultural history clearly indicates that shamanism has been the means by which traditional culture has been transmitted to new generations since the earliest times” (Yoon Y. 1999: 98). Shamanism was a matrix of the Korean people’s needs.

In the same way that my family went through a serious dilemma about whether to adhere to the older traditional belief that relied heavily on Korean shamanism, or to follow a new religion from the West, Korean society is still faced with similar agonies. Many people worry that Korean society is heading in a bizarre direction – in North Korea the dictatorship attempts to prolong their regime through the method of Confucianised socialism, while in South Korea, after successful and rapid industrialisation and Westernisation, culture was cultivated in an unsightly way, like a gentleman wearing a Western suit with an old-style Korean hat on his head. After the drastic social movement to improve a lifestyle impoverished by the war and Japanese occupation, Western culture was designated as the national standard to follow in South Korea.

The wide-ranging cultural content exported to the foreign mass media highlights the modern and stylish side of contemporary culture, which developed alongside the rapid growth of Korean IT technology and finally improved the popularity of Koreanness abroad. However, it is extremely difficult to find anything reminiscent of authentic Korean culture, although the circumstance is encouraging Koreans of the new generation to deliberate on the application of tradition, including shamanism, in new ways.

The footprint of shamanism is distinct not only in the cultural or religious fields. The collective support of Red Devil, the official supporting group for the Korea Republic national football team, by millions of people who gathered in the centre of Seoul during World Cup 2002, and which astonished the World with the power of unity, is usually interpreted as a consequence of the influence of Korean shamanism for which the Korean people enjoyed ecstasy in a community. Rapid industrialisation was also possible, supposedly, because of the charisma of authoritative political leaders who cunningly manipulated the merits of Confucianism and shamanism.

The disposition of the Korean people is frequently described with the cliché ‘cooking pot nature’ displaying the inconsistent and expeditiously changing temper of the nation, a nature that goes wild with enthusiasm over a new tendency or philosophy, with that enthusiasm vanishing in an instant. Such a situation can be explained by the historical habits of the Korean people, who always

coveted wealth and welfare in the worldly life and believed that a contribution to society was directly connected with individual success. This disposition might have been enhanced under the traditional philosophy of shamanism, or the philosophy of shamanism might have originated from the inveterate character of the Koreans. It is very problematic to portray concretely the nature of that temperament and to ascribe the origin of the temperament to the influence of shamanism.

To quote Kim Chongho again, the practices which are labelled 'shamanistic' are chiefly characterised by not being clearly included within the Korean definitions of 'Buddhism', 'Confucianism' or 'Christianity' (Kim C. 2003: 27). If his conviction is right, it would be more proper to prescribe all temperaments of the Korean people as inexplicable by philosophies and religions other than Korean shamanism.

The combination of these inexplicable factors generated spontaneously was at last given the appellation of tradition, which constantly affects the ways of thought, life and entertainment of the Korean people.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of defining and profiling, it is possible to identify a number of factors comprising the core of Korean shamanism in function and significance.

- 1) The shaman can be interpreted in Korean tradition as an individual with religious charisma authorised by the technique of ecstasy who conducts rituals and ceremonies in the traditionally acknowledged way.
- 2) Korean shamanism has dual natures as a code of behaviour, canons, practice, etc. that constitutes the cultural dimension of Korean culture (*musok*), and as a doctrine, principle and creed comprising religiosity (*mugyo*).
- 3) Korean shamanism never systemised its doctrines or theology in the way of Japanese Shinto or Chinese Taoism, but developed in its own way as a folkloric tradition of multiple expressions and variety of beliefs.
- 4) Korean shamanism has become an essential part in the social construction of the Korean nation. The interaction of esoteric and exoteric images created by Korean shamanism generated a sense of belonging, which developed into nationalism and ultimately serves as a means to safeguard the national culture.
- 5) Korean shamanism crystallised the codes and behaviour of the Korean people and transmitted basic norms and a basic mentality in symbolic form, for example filial piety, ritual property and the fulfilment of obligations in the community. All of which were said to be the most valuable human attributes in Korean traditional society.

Therefore, ultimately the research into impalpable Korean shamanism might be an eternal task for the Korean people to accomplish as it gives a crucial key for them to understand who they really are.

KOKKUVÕTE

Šamanismi roll Korea ühiskonnas, selle kultuurisisesed kontaktid ja suhted teiste kultuuridega

Käesolev dissertatsioon koosneb neljast eraldiseisvast artiklist, mis on ilmunud akadeemilistes ajakirjades Eestis, Lõuna-Koreas, Leedus ja Ungaris alates 2007. aastast. Varasemad Korea šamanismi käsitlevad uurimused tegelevad valdavalt selle päritolu küsimusega M. Eliade teooriate valguses, üritavad defineerida Korea šamanismi eriomaseid jooni võrreldes ülejäänud kultuuriruumiga või seavad eesmärgiks takistada šamanismi kui Korea kultuuripärandit kandva traditsiooni hääbumist.

Käesolev uurimus toetub paljuski neile varasematele teooriatele ja arvamustele, aga selle eesmärkideks on leida veel seda, millist potentsiaalset väärtust võiks šamanism nähtusena kujutada endast ühiskonna jaoks tulevikus ning välja pakkuda meetodikat Korea šamanismi uurimiseks võrdluses folkloristika ja religiooniuuringute uurimisobjektidega lääne kultuuriruumis.

Šamanism aitab kõige paremini mõista Korea kultuuri. Pärast budismi jõudmist Koreasse IV sajandil ja konfutsianismi esiletõusu *Joseon*’i (*Dzosen*) dünastia ajal XIV sajandil tekkis dilemma, mille põhjuseks oli šamanismi vastandumine teiste usunditega. Kuni 19. sajandini kõrvutasid uurijad šamanismi budismi ja konfutsianismiga, millel oli traditsiooniliselt suurem mõjuvõim Kirdes-Aasias, siis aga tõusis esile ristiusk ning šamanismi mõju kristlusele püsib siiani akadeemiliste ringkondade huviorbiidis. Võime olla üsna kindlad, et ristiusk ei ole jäänud šamanistlikest mõjutustest puutumata.

Šamanismi ja teiste traditsiooniliste usundite vahelised tugevad sidemed on Koreast loonud ainulaadse kuvandi, aga pole selge, milliseks kujuneb šamanismi ja pealetungiva lääne kultuuri suhe. Kas šamanism leiab viisi, kuidas kesta ja edasi areneda ajastul, mil väljastpoolt tulevad peale järjest mitmekesised tehnoloogiad ja filosoofiad?

Kui varasemad uurimused on oma olemuselt olnud eelkõige diakroonilised, tegeledes kontseptualiseerimise ja kirjeldamise küsimuste ning ajalooliste transformatsioonidega, keskendub käesolev väitekiri šamanismi rollile Korea kultuuri kujundajana kultuuride kokkupuutel. Šamanismi ei peeta pelgalt reliktsiks kultuuripärandiks, vaid selles nähakse ka kaasaegset majanduslikku ressursi.

Käesolevas väitekirjas sisalduvates artiklites käsitletud peamised teemad on järgmised:

- 1) Kangelaslikkuse tunnusjooned ja naiskangelastest peategelased Korea mütooloogias – Korea šamanistliku pärandi kajastumine mütooloogias.
- 2) Religioossete atribuutide sekulariseerumise protsess ja etnosümbolism. Näiteks Korea tootemisammas *jangseung* sümboliseeris rahvuslikku eripära ajal, mil rahvuslus oli kriisis. Algsete atribuutide muutumine „korealikkuse“ (omadused ja atribuudid, mida loetakse Korea algupärase ühiskondliku ja kultuurilise traditsiooni osaks) ülahoidja rolliks ning *jangseung*’i kõrvutamise sarnase nähtusega Euroopas.

- 3) Korea šamanismi pärimuslik roll katalüsaatorina Korea kultuuri erinevate osade segunemisel väljaspoolt tulevate kultuurimõjudega, kristluse näitel tänapäeva Lõuna-Koreas.
- 4) Korea šamanismi uus potentsiaal nüüdisaegses kultuuritööstuses, mis ühendab Korea pärimust teiste kultuuridega.
- 5) Korea šamanismi iseloomustab terve rida isetekkelisi ja süstematiseerimata elemente, mida on lõpuks ka rahvuspärandina tunnustatud ning mis pidevalt on kujundanud Korea rahva mõttemaailma, igapäevaelu ja meelelahutusvaldkonda. Hoolimata raskustest selle nähtuse ammendaval defineerimisel ja kirjeldamisel, on siiski võimalik välja tuua mitmeid elemente, mis moodustavad Korea šamanismi põhimõttelise tuuma.

Väitekirja põhiseisukohad on järgmised:

- 1) Korea traditsiooni järgi saab šamaani võtta kui inimest, kellele on teatud eks-
taasitehnika vahendusel antud religioosne vägi või autoriteet ning kes viib läbi rituaale ja kombetalitusi traditsiooniliselt tunnustatud viisil.
- 2) Korea šamanism on oma olemuselt kahetine. Ühelt poolt käitumiskooideks ja kombestik, mis on seotud Korea kultuuriruumiga üldiselt (*musok*) ja teiselt poolt religioosse iseloomuga õpetused, põhimõtted ja usutunnistus (*mugyo*).
- 3) Korea šamanismis ei toimunud õpetuste ja põhimõtete süstematiseerimist ühtse religioonina nagu see oli Jaapanis (*shinto*) ja Hiinas (*taoism*), vaid see arenes omasoodu rahvatraditsiooni ja erinevate uskumuste näol.
- 4) Korea šamanismist sai üks põhilistest alustaladest Korea rahvusühiskonna loomisel. Šamanismi loodud esoteerilised ja eksoteerilised kuvandid löid omamoodi ühtekuuluvustunde, mis hiljem kasvas rahvuseluseks ja mis aitab nüüd kaitsta rahvuskultuuri.
- 5) Korea šamanism on endas talletanud rahva hulgas kehtinud norme ja käitumisviise ning andnud sümbolse kuju põhilistele normidele ja vaimulaadidele. Nendeks on näiteks pojaliku vagaduse idee, erinevate rituaalide ja kommete järgimine ning erinevate ühiskondlike kohustuste täitmine, mida on peetud Korea vanas ühiskonnas inimese väärtuslikemateks omadusteks.

Artiklite kokkuvõtted

Naiskangelased Korea müütides (Mäetagused)

Selles artiklis vaadeldakse Korea müütide struktuuri naissoost peakangelastega näidete puhul, kus üheks eesmärgiks oli vanas ühiskonnakorralduses kõige madalamal positsioonil olnud naistele julguse ja lootuse sisendamine. Sellest näeme, et Korea müüdid ei olnud mitte lihtsalt ühiskondliku olukorra kajastajad, vaid neil oli ka kindel aktiivne roll ühiskonna mõjutajatena ja sotsiaalsesse korraldusse panustajatena. Lisaks käsitleb artikkel naiste kangelaslikkust müütides, mis ülistavad nende ilu ja auväarsust. Vaadeldud on peamiselt *muga*'des (šamaanilauludes) kujutatud peategelasi.

Korea müütides kujutatakse naisi peamiselt passiivsete vahendajatena, kelle ainsaks funktsiooniks on sünnitada kangelas. Siiski esineb ka müüte, mis on oma struktuurilt ja olemuselt väga sarnased Euroopa kangelasmüütidega. Tõenäoliselt on selliseid müüte olnud rohkem, aga meeste ja ülikute domineeritud ühiskonnas pole need säilinud.

Sellised šamaanilauludes esinevad müüdid mitte ainult ei kirjeldanud omaaegset Korea ühiskonda, vaid täitsid ka ühiskonnakriitilist rolli, andes edasi ühiskonna madalamaisse kihti kuuluvate šamaanide, kes olid topeltsurve all nii oma soo kui ka elukutse tõttu, ühiskonnastaseid sõnumeid. Laulud kuulutasid, et kõik inimesed on sündinud võrdsetena ja neil on võrdsed inimõigused. Naeruvääristati ülemklassi inimeste silmakirjalikkust – nad mõistsid küll šamaanid karmilt hukka, aga lõpuks ikkagi järgisid nende nõuandeid. Artikkel käsitleb ka naiste rolle teistes Korea müütides ning kõrvutab neid Euroopa kangelaseepostega.

Etnosümbolismi kandjate funktsiooni võrdlev analüüs: Korea *jangseung* ja Leedu puuristid (*East European Studies*).

Leedu ristid, mis on lisatud ka UNESCO inimkonna suulise ja vaimse pärandi meistriteoste nimistusse, on ühtaegu osa Leedu rahvuslikust käsitöökunstist, milles põimuvad ilmalikkus ja sakraalsus, teisalt on nad ka etnosümbolismi kandjad, mis aitasid säilitada väljasuremisohus kultuurilist identiteeti ja rahvuslikku eripära. A. Smithi on võtnud kasutusele etnosümbolismi kontseptsiooni, mille järgi on enamike rahvuste tekke aluseks olnud etnilised sidemed ja meelsused ning levinud rahvatraditsioonid, mis andsid hilisemaks rahvusluse tekkeks vajaliku kultuurilise ressursi. Et taastada okupeeritud aladel omariiklust, on neil rahvastel vaja esmalt üles ehitada kultuuriline ühtsus ja identiteet läbi jagatud müütide, sümbolite, väärtuste ja mineviku, mis oleksid võrreldavad varasemate sidemete baasile rajatud riikide omadega.

Sümbolid, nii ikoonilised märgid kui ka indeksid, on tihedalt põimitud müütidesse ja kombetalitustesse ning hoiavad neid kahte omakorda tihedas seoses. Nende abil talletub kultuuriline info ja saab edasi kanduda kontsentreeritud sõnumitena, mis sisaldavad nii praktilise iseloomuga viiteid kui ka tundelist ja vaimset tähendust.

Leedu risti ja Korea *jangseung*'i algselt religioossele tähendusele on aastamolt lisandunud ilmaliku ja rahvusliku identiteedihoidja tähendus poliitiliste ja sotsiaalsete üleminekute perioodil. Mitmed kohad, nagu näiteks Ristimägi või Kaunase Ühingu Väljak (Vienybės Aikštė), on tihedalt seotud Leedu rahva võitlusega Nõukogude okupatsiooni vastu. Riste, mille kultuuriline väärtus ja algne religioosne tähendus kunagi jõuliselt hüljati, hakati okupatsiooniperioodil seostama samuti alla surutud ristiusuga, üheskoos omandasid nad sümboolse tähenduse Leedu rahvuspärandi ja rahvusluse kandjatena.

Ristimäe riste, mida Nõukogude võim päevasel ajal hävitas, käidi öösiti taastamas. Välitööde jooksul kohtasin mõnda neist inimestest, kes tunnistasid, et nägid tollal ristide taastamises peamist viisi, kuidas säilitada Leedu rahvuslikku

identiteeti. Nüüd aga nikerdavad nad praeguseks tervet Ristimäge kaunistavaid autentseid riste ilma igasuguste poliitiliste püüdlusteta.

Jangseung täitis omal ajal Leedu ristidega sarnast funktsiooni. Mitme aastakümne vältel pärast Korea sõda kehtis Lõuna-Koreas autoritaarne riigikord, mis seadis eesmärgiks propageerida läänemaist ratsionalismi ja välja juurida vanamoodsaid kombeid ning eiras peamisi inimõigusi.

Jangseung oli taandatud vanamoodsaks kombeks, ebausümboliks, ning see muutus tagakiusamise objektiks, kuna koondas enda ümber valitsuse- ja ameerikavastase meelsusega inimesi. *Jangseung*'e püstitati ülikoolide juurde ja töolisliikumise seotud paikadesse, kust kasvas välja ühiskondlik uuendusliikumine. *Jangseung*'i püstitamisest sai justkui uue aja, vabaduse saabumise eest sümbolne kombetalitus-palve.

Praeguseks on Leedu ristid kaotanud peaaegu igasugused sidemed muistse religiooniga ning neist on saanud omamoodi kristliku kultuuri monumendid. Muistsete jumalate sümbol – ilmapuu – on siiski endiselt au sees ning seda kujutatakse jätkuvalt teistes kunstivormides kui Leedu etnosümbolismi kandjat, mida ta oli ka nõukogude perioodil paralleelselt puuristiga.

Šamanistlikud kangelased kui ressurss (*cultural content*) Lõuna-Korea kultuuritööstuses (*Acta Orientalia Vilnensis*)

Väheste loodusvarade ja piiratud tarbijaskonnaga Korea hakkas kultuuri kui tööstusliku ressursi vastu huvi tundma alles 21. sajandil. Nii on selle tööstusharu arendamine võrreldes naabermaadega, nagu Jaapan, Ameerika Ühendriigid ja Hongkong, toimunud üsna lühikest aega. Sellest hoolimata saavutati kiire edu. Lõuna-Korea pop-kultuur *hallyu* tungis jõuliselt Aasia turule, levides sealt omakorda edasi teistele turgudele. Korea kultuurilised arhetüübid ei mõjuta ometigi oluliselt Korea kultuuritööstust ning šamanismi roll on sealjuures marginaalne. Selles artiklis käsitletaksegi Korea šamanismi tähendust, rolli ja potentsiaalset väärtust ressurssina Korea kultuuritööstuses.

Korea, kus tegutseb rahvaarvu arvestades kõige enam šamaane, leidub külluslikult mütoloogilist ressursi. Lisaks kroonikates kirja pandud narratiividele ja legendidele dünastiate rajamisest on meieni jõudnud ka šamaanide lauldavad suulised müüdid. Nii on kommertshuvides rakendatavat mütoloogilist ressursi tohutult palju, kuid šamanistlike kangelaste motiive kasutatakse sellest hoolimata üsna vähe.

Sellele olukorrale võib leida mitmeid põhjuseid. Esiteks on šamanismiga seotud negatiivsed stereotüübid. Šamanismi peeti pikka aega ebausuks, mis petab ja viib inimesi eksiteele. Šamaane on läbi ajaloo taga kiusatud – nii *Joseon*'i dünastia, Jaapani kolonisatsiooni kui ka sõjajärgsel industrialiseerimise perioodil. Lisaks taandas kristlik, eriti aga protestantlik mõju šamanismi kuratlikuks nõiduseks või võlukunstiks. Ühtlasi puuduvad objektiivsed kriteeriumid, mis aitaksid tuvastada ja eristada Korea šamanismi algupäraseid elemente hilisema levikuga religioonidest.

Teiseks põhjuseks on see, et šamanistlikke tegelasi ei ole kunagi üritatud visualiseerida või katalogiseerida vastavalt nende iseloomule, käitumisele ning välistele tunnustele. Šamanistlike kangelaste kasutamine kaasaegse kultuuri ressursina on senini olnud võrdlemisi väheedukas. Siiski on müütidel ja legendidel põhinev Hollywoodi toodang motiveerinud Korea kunstnikke uute võimaluste otsingule. Nii üritatakse šamanistlikke kangelasi kasutada järjest enam kui kultuurist ressursi.

Šamanismi ja konfutsianismi mõju Korea protestantlikele praktikatele (*Shaman*)

Ametlike religioonide ja šamanismi sulandumine on toimunud läbi Korea ajaloo. Kristlus on küll tulnud Koreasse hiljem, ent sellest hoolimata levinud palju kiiremini kui läänemaailmas ja selles on šamanismi mõjutused üllatavalt silmapaistvad. Šamanistlikke mõjutusi võime märgata eelkõige nelipühaliste juures, kes rõhutavad Püha Vaimu tähtsust ja Jumala vahetut kogemist. Korea rahvapärases ristiusus peetakse kannatusi, õnnetusi ja haigusi saatana tegevuse tulemuseks.

Korea protestantlikes kogudustes pööratakse suurt tähelepanu praktikatele, mis meenutavad šamanismi. Näiteks Püha Vaimu kogemine, mis on sarnane šamanistliku seestumisega, ja palvetamine, et saavutada edu ja õnnestumist selles maailmas, mida peetakse tähtsamaks kui lunastust või igavest elu.

Need šamanismile sarnanevad kombed on eriti hästi näha kindlatel jumalateenistustel nagu öised palvused või Püha Vaimu kogemiseks peetavatel kogunemistel. Mõned lugupeetud pastori rõhutavad Püha Vaimu kogemist, demonstreerides jumalateenistuse ajal šamanismile omaseid müstilisi elemente nagu kurjade vaimude väljaajamine, imepärane ravimine jne, mida mõnikord loetakse ka pastori vaimuliku taseme näitajateks.

Eespool mainitud rahvapärase ristiusu kombed eksisteerivad ametliku ristiusu piierialal, aga neis osalemist julgustatakse ning neid tunnistatakse formaalselt kui tähenduslikke ja legitiimseid praktikaid. Käesolev artikkel analüüsib ristiusu ja šamanismi omavahelist suhet, teisese ehk juba šamanistlikest mõjutustest läbi imbumud konfutsianismi näite valguses. Nii on šamanistlike elementide imbumist kristlusse parem mõista.

Konfutsianismi rolli kristluse levikul Koreas ei tohi alahinnata. Konfutsianistliku distsipliini mõistmine on hädavajalik tänapäeva Korea ühiskonna ja kõigi kunagiste Korea poolsaarel valitsenud dünastiate lahtimõtestamiseks. Ühtlasi on leitud palju ühiseid elemente Korea kristliku kultuuri ning konfutsianistliku traditsiooni vahel.

Korea protestantism näib olevat küll lähemal konfutsianistlikule traditsioonile kui šamanistlikule pärimusele, aga sellegipoolest on olnud šamanismi mõju protestantismile üsna märkimisväärtne ja sellele on suuremat tähelepanu pöördunud ka akadeemilistes ringkondades. Tegelikult võib šamanistlikke ja konfutsianistlikke mõjusid protestantismile hinnata umbes võrdväärsseteks.

Korea kristliku kogukonna praegust olukorda võib võrrelda šamanistlikus traditsioonis aset leidnud üleminekuprotsessiga, kus Kim Taegoni järgi saavutasid pärilikud šamaanid vaimsetest šamaanidest suurema osakaalu. Korea šamaane saab jagada kaheks: ameti pärinud šamaanid, kes saavad oma kutsumuse vanematelt päranduseks (sagedamini ema poolt) ja šamaanid, kes töötavad vaimude kontrolli all. Tema väites võib muidugi kahelda, sest tegelikkuses on pärilike šamaanide arv järsult kahanenud, samas kui vaimsete šamaanide arv on kasvanud tänu ühiskondlikele muutustele. Samuti ei ole Korea kirik alati tegutsenud vastavalt *dangol*'i süsteemile, mille järgi tegutseb üks šamaan ainult ühes kindlas piirkonnas nii nagu praegu teevad seda pastorid ja vaimulikud.

Käesoleval ajal on pärilikke šamaane väga vähe ja praegused šamaanid on veendunud, et pärilikud šamaanid ei saa töötada ikkagi ilma vaimse kogemuseta. See tähendab, et spirituaalseid võtteid ja imepäraseid jõude peetakse ikka veel väga olulisteks. Võib öelda, et üleminek spirituaalselt autoriteedilt piirkonnapõhisele süsteemsele šamanistlikule autoriteedile oli juba lõppenud, kui Korea ühiskonda tabas intensiivne industrialiseerimine ja läänestumine. Sellegipoolest on taas pöördutud tagasi spirituaalse autoriteedi poole. Šamaanid, kes demonstreerivad võimsat spirituaalset väge, pälvivad kohe ka tugeva autoriteedi. Sarnaselt tunnustatakse autoriteeti ka protestantlikus koguduses, milles ei ole kunagi olnud *dangol*'i süsteemi.

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