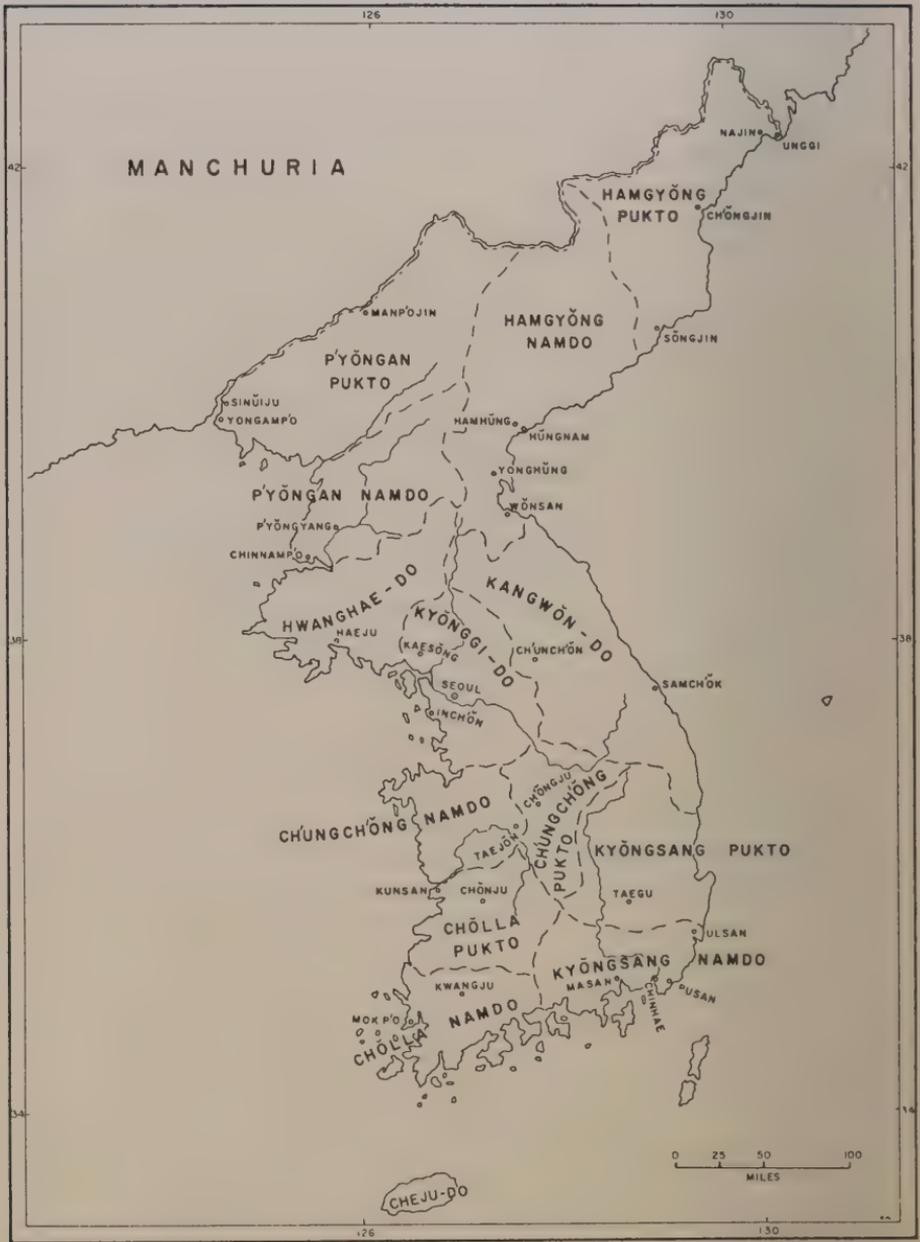


# Korean Shamanistic Rituals

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Map of Korea

## The Origin and Formation of Korean Shamanism

In Mircea Eliade's study of shamanism, he concludes, 'It is difficult to determine the "origin" of Korean shamanism'.<sup>1</sup> This difficulty lies primarily in its complexity. The diversification of shamanistic practices according to different provinces makes it difficult to find a unifying source. A serious attempt was made at the end of the Yi Dynasty to unify the different systems of shamanism, but it did not succeed.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the diversification of this religion is well described by Hulbert as a religion of the mosaic.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, according to Akamatsu, Korean shamanism is the most thoroughgoing synthesis of Taoism and Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> These two higher forms of religion became so intimately united with shamanism that it is almost impossible to separate them. As we will see later, the contemporary form of shamanism has been deeply affected by these religions. Since it is almost impossible to trace the origin of shamanism, it is best to study contemporary shamanism on the basis of myths and legends which have something to do with its origin and formation. We will select a few prominent and reliable myths and legends from among many, and examine them as much as possible in their historical contexts. However, before we analyze these myths and legends, let us first clarify our understanding of shamanism in Korea.

<sup>1</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> The wife of the last king of the Yi Dynasty, Queen Min, a devout believer in shamanism, raised the cult to the highest place in her palace. She attempted to organize the cult of the whole nation under a centralized system by raising Yi Chi Yong to the rank of princess. When the Queen was murdered by the Japanese in 1895, all of this came to an end.

<sup>3</sup> See Humber Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (New York: Doubleday, 1906), Chapter XXX.

<sup>4</sup> See Akamatsu Chijō and Akiba Tokashi, *Chōsen Fuzoku no Kenkyū* (Studies in Korean Shamanism)<sup>a</sup> Vol. II (Seoul, 1938), Chapter 12.

### a. 朝鮮巫俗の研究

Korean shamanism in our times is almost exclusively identified with terms like *Mudang* and *P'ansu*. *P'ansu*,<sup>b</sup> the male shaman, occupies an insignificant place in Korean shamanism, while *Mudang*,<sup>c</sup> the female shaman or shamaness, occupies a central position. Therefore, Korean shamanism in general means the cult of *Mudang*. Before the Korean alphabet was invented, everything was written in Chinese. Therefore, the Chinese words 'Mu'<sup>d</sup> or 'Mudang' have been applied to indicate shamanism. It is commonly believed that the word 'Mu' alone was used to designate shamanism in early writings. *Mu* etymologically means 'the one who performs miracles' or 'the performance of miracles'.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, *Mu* alone is sufficient to indicate the shamaness or the shaman as far as its usage is concerned. However, the word 'Dang'<sup>e</sup> was believed to be added to it later. *Dang* means an altar or a shrine, which should not be confused with the word 'Chyōl' or 'Sa',<sup>f</sup> which means the temple.<sup>6</sup> We do not know exactly when the word 'Dang' was added to the 'Mu' in the development of Korean shamanism. However, from a historical point of view, there is a Chinese document, *San Hai Kyōng* (about the first century A.D.), which had already mentioned the existence of the cult of *Mu* around the area of Mt. Paiktu or Mt. Whitehead, which is located on the northern tip of the Korean peninsula.<sup>7</sup> It appears again in the earliest Korean document, *Samguk Sagi*<sup>g</sup> or the History of the Three Kingdoms, which was written in the twelfth century.<sup>8</sup> From archaeological discoveries in Daejon city, it was evident that shamanistic rituals had been practiced as early as in the

<sup>5</sup> It is not a good translation to say that *Mu* means 'deceiving'. See Allen Clark's translation in his *Religions of Old Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1932), pp. 183-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Dang* does not mean Clark's notion of 'company' (*Ibid.*). It is also different from *Sa* or temple. Even Professor Paul Y. U. Park fails to make this distinction. See his 'A Study on the Relation of Shamanism to Other Religions', in *Korean Religions*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Jan. 1970), p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> It appears in the narrative of King Ruri of Kokuryō: 'When, in the ninth month of his nineteenth year's reign, the King was ill, he called the priest 'Mu' to find out the cause of his illness'. See *Samguk Sagi*, Kokuryō Kingdom.

b. 판수 c. 무당 (巫堂) d. 巫 e. 堂 f. 奇

g. 三國史記

bronze age.<sup>9</sup> During the Yi Dynasty we find that use of *Mudang*, instead of *Mu*, is common practice.<sup>10</sup> As we have already indicated, the Chinese characters for *Mudang* mean the altar or shrine of *Mu* or shaman. It is possible that the location of the shamanistic altar came to be identified with a shamaness herself. However, it is also believed that the term '*Mudang*' may be a Korean word to indicate shaman or shamaness.<sup>11</sup> Since there was no Korean language in use until Sejong King<sup>h</sup> of Yi Dynasty, the Chinese word '*Mu*' was used to signify '*Mudang*' in Korean in early writings. As Akiba points out, *Mudang* of Korean shamanism may not be identified with *Mudang* in Chinese. The word '*Mudang*' of Korean shamanism might be derived from the Ural-Altaiic name for the female shaman '*Utagan*' or '*Utakan*'.<sup>12</sup> However, it is questionable how the latter '*M*' was added to the Ural-Altaiic name for the female shaman. Therefore, this theory that the word '*Mudang*' had its origin in the Ural-Altaiic notion of the female shaman is not conclusive. Whatever the origin of this word, the female shaman came to be known in Korea as a *Mudang*. Even though *Mudang* usually means the female shaman, it is not exclusively limited to her. It often means both the female and the male shaman. Thus in the Seoul area, the male shaman is often called *Sana mudang*,<sup>i</sup> or male *mudang*, instead of *P'ansu*. In the Pyongyang area he is often called *Paksa mudang*,<sup>j</sup> or doctor *mudang*. In the northwestern province it is abbreviated to *Paksa*,<sup>l</sup> dropping the last word '*Mudang*'. However, it is reasonable to believe that the word '*Paksa*' is more authentic than '*Paksa mudang*', which is another name for '*Sana mudang*' or male *mudang*. In other words, *Paksa* or doctor came to be known as *Paksa mudang* because of the prevalence of *Mudang* or the female shaman. However, the word *Paksa* might be the Chinese adaptation of *P'ansu*, which was originally a Korean name for the male shaman. As Hakutori

<sup>9</sup> Kim T'ae Gon, 'Hanguke Mugyo' (Korean Shamanism) in *Han'guk Chongkyo* (Korean Religions), Iri city, Korea, 1973, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Y. U. Park, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Akamatsu Chijō and Akiba Tokashi, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Torii Rygō, *Nihon Chuikyminsoku no Kensishokyo*,<sup>k</sup> pp. 108-9; Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-4.

h. 世宗大王 i. 男巫堂 j. 博士巫堂

k. 烏居龍藏, 日本周圍民族の原台宗教 i. 博士

points out, the Korean word 'P'ansu' might come from the Ural-Altaiic name for the male shaman who was called many different names such as 'Baksi', 'Balsi', or 'Bahsih'.<sup>13</sup> If we believe the word 'P'ansu' had its origin in the Ural-Altaiic people, no doubt the word 'Paksa' came from an imitation of the sound in Chinese. Therefore, we may be able to conclude that there are fundamentally two kinds of shamans: the *Mudang* or the female shaman and *P'ansu* or the male shaman, even though they have been called by many different names. However, they are not identical with Korean shamans as they had been understood in early days. Perhaps the predominance of shamanesses or *Mudang* in Korean shamanism in recent centuries inevitably created an impression that the *Mudang* and Korean shamanism are synonymous. Nowadays the difference between Korean shamans and *Mudang* is hardly questioned.

To summarize, the most probable hypothesis is that the words 'Mudang' and 'P'ansu' are Korean names, rather than Chinese, adopted from the shamanistic tradition of the Ural-Altaiic people. This kind of hypothesis is much more reasonable than to presume that they are purely Chinese, since Chinese civilization affected Korea much later than the first evidence of shamanism in Korea. Korea did not have her own written language for a long time after its foundation. Therefore, Korea had to borrow Chinese characters to express the oral traditions of Korean shamanism. The earliest record we have, as we have already indicated, is the *Samguk Sagi* or the History of Three Kingdoms which was written about the 12th century A.D. It is none other than an interpretation of the existing traditions of Korea in Chinese language. We must go back to the oral traditions to understand native shamanism. That is why it is important to examine the myths and legends which deal with the origin and development of Korean shamanism. However, let us first make a clear distinction between traditional shamanism and the cult of *Mudang*. As we have indicated, they are not identical even though they are often used synonymously in our times. Traditional faith has been known as

<sup>13</sup> Hakutori Kurayoshi, 'Chōsengo to Ural-Altaiigo tonō Hikyokenkyū',<sup>m</sup> in *Dōyogaku Bō*, No. 5.

m. 白鳥庫吉, 朝鮮語とUral Altaiic語との比較研究

*Sinkyō*<sup>n</sup> which literally means the religion of spirits.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the cult of *Mudang* is a form of this religion of spirits. Here, *Mudang* and 'Mu' or 'Wu' in Chinese are almost synonymous.<sup>15</sup> Arthur Waley defines *Mu* as follows: 'In ancient China intermediaries used in the cult of Spirits were called *wu*'.<sup>16</sup> Also *Wu* or *Mu* refers primarily to the female shaman even though it is also applies to all shamans irrespective of their sex.<sup>17</sup> If we define *Mudang* or shamaness as the intermediaries following Waley's definition, traditional faith in Korea is identical with the 'cult of spirits', through which the *Wu* or *Mudang* works. Therefore, *Mudang* is always relative to traditional faith or *Sinkyō*. If we examine myths or legends we will see the evolvement of *Mudang* or shamaness within the national faith of *Sinkyō*. The main characteristic of this traditional faith is the faith in *Hananim*<sup>o</sup> or the Heavenly King as the highest God of all other gods in nature.<sup>18</sup> We will see how closely this faith is related to the foundation of Korea and the national faith which was perpetuated by the people in a deteriorated form of shamanism, the cult of *Mudang*. To understand this, let us turn to myths which deal with the origin of the shamanistic cult of *Mudang*.

Let us first begin with the myths or legends which have something to do with the origin of *Mudang*, the female shamans in Korea. There are many different legends or myths dealing with the origin of *Mudang*, but let us limit ourselves to the few which represent the main tradition of Korean shamanism. One of them deals with a holy mother as the ancestor of *Mudang*. The story of the Holy Mother as the beginning of *Mudang* is connected with a man by the name of Pöbu Hwasang,<sup>p</sup> who appears in a book known as *Muyō Sokgo*<sup>q</sup> by an unknown author.<sup>19</sup> In this book it is said that Pöbu Hwasang, who lived at Hamyang during the middle of Sila

<sup>14</sup> Kim Tuk Hwang, *Han'guk Chongkyosa* (History of Korean Religions), Seoul, 1963, pp. 40ff.

<sup>15</sup> The Korean pronunciation of the Chinese word 'Wu' is 'Mu'.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955), p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Y. U. Park, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Akamatsu and Akiba, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

n. 神教 o. 하늘님 (天神) p. 法祐知尙  
q. 巫女俗若

kingdom, possessed eight girls. All of them departed in different directions and practiced shamanism. Again we see the detailed story of Pöbu Hwasang in connection with the Holy Mother in Lee Nung Hwa's study of Korean shamanism. 'According to tradition, there was a man known as Pöbu Hwasang in Kowunch'un temple' on Mt. Chiri.<sup>20</sup> One day, as he was walking, he suddenly saw a mountain torrent without rain. He looked up the peak of the Heavenly king, thinking that the flood might have originated from there. On the peak he saw a tall, strong woman, who called herself the Holy Mother of the Heavenly king. She became a human being and married him according to the divination performed through water. They bore eight girls who were taught various techniques of shamanism, and taught to praise the Amida Buddha and call upon the name of Pöbu Hwasang. They later spread shamanism all over the country.'<sup>20</sup> Lee further indicates that 'the Holy Mother of Heavenly king is identical with the God of Mt. Chiri'.<sup>21</sup> From this legend we notice that the symbol of the mountain, the mother god or the Holy Mother, became the ancestor of today's *Mudang*. However, the appearance of Amida Buddha in this story indicates that it originated sometime after Buddhism came to Korea. In other words, the origin of *Mudang* in this story is implied as being sometime during the middle of the Sila kingdom, as the *Muyö Sokgo* attempts to describe it.

Let us look at the legend of the princess which deals with the origin of *Mudang*. This story is the most popular and best known to *Mudang* followers. It differs according to regions. Therefore, let us first examine the story as it is known in the central part of Kyonggi province where Seoul is located. The legend is known in this area as the story of Ahwang Kongju<sup>1</sup> or the princess of Yao<sup>u</sup> who is believed to have reigned 2357-2255 B.C. in China. According to this story, peace and prosperity prevailed in China during the Yao reign because of the princess' prayers to Heaven on behalf of the people. Occasionally people avoided the various disasters of fire and flood through her intercessory prayers. Since

<sup>20</sup> Lee Nung Hwa, *Chosön Musokgo*' (Studies in Korean Shamanism), Mung Mungmok (in the chapter of myths dealing with shamanistic affairs), p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

r. 古巖川寺 s. 智果山 t. 娥皇公主 u. 堯  
v. 李能知 朝鮮巫俗考 (51号, 1929)

the king knew the power of her prayers, he sent her among the people to assist them in any way she could. People began to notice her spiritual power and almost worshipped her. Soon altars were dedicated to her by her followers, who later succeeded her and became *Mudang*. Therefore, she became the founder of the cult of *Mudang*. In this story the ancestor of *Mudang* is supposedly the princess of the mystical king of China, Yao. We often see that she is honored at the ritual of seasonal offerings in Ch'ungch'ŏn province. *Mudang* wears yellow and red clothes, which are regarded as Ahwang Kongju's robes, at the ritual. However, in this area she is often regarded as the princess of the Koryŏ King rather than that of Yao in China.<sup>22</sup>

In the Seoul area the princess, who is known as 'Pali Kongju',<sup>w</sup> was thrown out of the palace and became the ancestor of *Mudang*. In the northern province, particularly in the Hamhung area, she is known as Ch'il Kongju<sup>x</sup> (Seventh Princess) or Ilgoptchae Pŏridŏk<sup>y</sup> (also Seventh Princess) who was cast out by the king. The story of the seventh princess seems to meet the ethos of *Mudang*. It is the story of the rejected princess. In early days there was a king who did not have a son, only girls. When the seventh daughter was born, he was greatly angered and put her in a stone box and cast it in a pond. However, Heaven sent a Dragon King to rescue her from the pond and take her to heaven. When she was about fourteen years of age, she came down to earth and learned that her mother was critically ill. She went far away to the Western sky and brought medicine water and saved her mother from death. In this story the medicine water of *Yaksu*<sup>z</sup> becomes the center of shamanistic power. In fact the princess is often identified with the spirit of this medicine water. Thus people often visit the spring of medicine water and listen to the running water as though it were the voice of the princess.<sup>23</sup>

In the Kyŏngsang Namdo area the princess is known as 'Kongsim'.<sup>aa</sup> According to this legend, the princess became insane. Thus she was thrown out of the palace and came to Mt. South, which is in the south of

<sup>22</sup> Akamatsu and Akiba, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Akiba Tokashi, 'Yakusui Singhō no Ichimen' (An aspect of Faith in the Medicine Water) in *Musoku Kenkyū* (The Study of Folklore), Vol. I, No. 5.

w. 鉢里公主 x. 七公主 y. 일곱째 버리덕

z. 藥水 aa. 公心

Seoul. However, because she disturbed many people in Seoul, the king decided to send her off with enough food and a maid to the highest peak of Mt. Diamond which is located in Kangwon province. In a dream at the mountain she had a vision of a crane with blue and white wings coming into her mouth. She closed her mouth tightly so that the crane was kept in her body. Later she conceived a child by the crane and gave birth to twin boys. They grew up and became great ministers under her father's rule. Both of them married and each had four girls. All the eight girls became *Mudang* and were sent in different directions to assist the people through their acts of healing and their professions of faith on the spirits. Since that time the rejected princess, their grandmother, was honored as an ancestor of *Mudang*. The symbolic number 'eight' or 'eight girls' equals the number of provinces in Korea. The eight girls represent the spread of shamanism all over the eight provinces of the country.

According to Murayama's study,<sup>24</sup> two gods became the ancestors of *Mudang* in the southern province of Ch'ölla Namdo. They were the male god, who was the first prince in Korea, and the female god, who was the daughter of this prince. She was later known as Kongsim. One day Kongsim, the princess, was critically ill and almost became insane. Her father, the first prince, called all the well-known doctors but it was no use. As a result he allowed her to perform her strange prayers and meditations in one corner of the palace. She was confined to a room with dark curtains so that no one could notice her other than her maid. The maid was inspired by her unending devotion to prayers and finally learned how to pray herself. Later the maid spread the efficacy of her prayers to the people. The king later realized the power of the princess and released her from confinement and proclaimed the effectiveness of her spiritual power. Through the maid shamanism spread all over the country. From that time on the princess was honored as the ancestor of *Mudang*.

Let us deal with one more story which attributes the origin of shamanistic practice to a king. This story was told in the P'yöngyang area by one of the old *Mudang* known by the name of Hyunsik.<sup>ab</sup> According to her story,<sup>25</sup> King Yü,<sup>ac</sup> the founder of the Hsia Dynasty in 2205 B.C., had

<sup>24</sup> Murayama Chinyashi, *Chösen no Mugeki* (Korean Shamanism), Seoul, 1927, p. 497.

<sup>25</sup> Akamatsu and Akiba, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

already believed in shamanism. Thus the king invited both the male and female shamans to his courthouse and asked them to pray for his health and long life. Thus the shamans began to praise the king by saying 'Long Live King Yü!' However, according to another *Mudang*, Kim Bogu,<sup>ad</sup> the story is a little bit different. It is questionable whether the king was the Chinese legendary figure of Yü. According to Him, the king was more interested in the male shaman or *P'ansu* than the female shaman or *Mudang*. One day the king called a *P'ansu* and a *Mudang* each to the court and asked them to stop the strange noise coming from the empty well behind the courthouse. The king announced that he would reward the one who could stop the noise, and punish the one who failed to stop it. On the first evening the female shaman or *Mudang* was asked to perform magic to stop the noise. She went out to the old well and danced around it while singing. However, the noise did not stop because of the king had thrown people into the well to create the noise. On the next evening again the strange noise was heard. This time the male shaman or *P'ansu* was asked to stop the noise. When the *P'ansu* finished a reading from one of the sacred books, the noise suddenly stopped and never came back again. The king not only rewarded the *P'ansu*, but promoted his work all over the country. At the same time the *Mudang* was not only condemned to death but the king pronounced a decree to capture all the *Mudang* in the country. As soon as the edict went out, the *Mudang* began to flee the country. When they came to a great river which prevented them from crossing, a ruler of that province, whose name was Ahwang,<sup>ae</sup> sympathized with them and provided them with a ship. When the ship was about in the middle of the river, a *Mudang* known by the name of Han Yang Saeng<sup>af</sup> praised Ahwang saying, 'Long Live Ahwang!' She cheered him three times. Later Ahwang became the king and asked all the *Mudang* to return to practice shamanism in the country. That is perhaps why still in P'yongan Namdo province the *Mudang* cheer Ahwang, saying 'Long live Ahwang!' in certain rituals. Even though this story is not directly related to the origin of shamanism, it is important in the development of shamanism. The story attempts to prove that the origin of shamanistic practice is connected to the king. We see the importance of the *Mudang*'s cheer, 'Long live Ahwang!' in the history of shamanism. For

ad. 金寶具 ae. 我主 af. 漢陽生

example, Lee Bin describes it as follows: 'When the ship came to the middle of the deep water, it came to the verge of sinking from the great waves which threatened to overwhelm it. In the ship a Buddhist monk gave a prayer to Buddha. A blind man, or *P'ansu*, and a doctor also offered their prayers. The *Mudang* gave a prayer saying "Long live Ahwang!" When the ship arrived safely at its destination, a Confucian standing on the shore said that the prayers of all saved the ship.'<sup>26</sup> Ryu also indicates the magical charm inherent in the phrase 'Long live Ahwang!' He said that today the *P'ansu* and *Mudang* call 'Long live Ahwang!' because it saved hundreds of people who migrated from China in early days.<sup>27</sup> There the legend came to be associated with king Ahwang who was known as the propagator of *Mudang* in Korea.

Let us now attempt to summarize the myths or legends which we have examined. In all these stories which we have indicated there is an implication that the ancestors of *Mudang* are not self-ordained priests, but mediums or intermediaries of the highest form of spirits. In other words, one of the main characteristics of those who initiated *Mudang* is a heavenly ordination. We see in the story of Ch'il Kongju that she was rescued by the Heavenly king who sent the Dragon King to bring her back to the heavenly place. She later came down to earth as a *Mudang* to restore her mother's health. We also notice the significance of the Heavenly King in the story of the holy woman at Mt. Chiri. She appeared at the peak of the mountain and called herself the Holy Mother of the Heavenly King. She became a human being and married according to the will of heaven and gave birth to eight girls who became *Mudang*. Again the *Mudang* are regarded as direct descendants of the Heavenly King. In the story of Ahwang Kongju we also observe the prayer of the princess to Heaven or the Heavenly Spirit to protect her people from diseases and sufferings. Thus King Yao was able to bring peace and prosperity to his people. Here one of the important characteristics is the direct relation of the heavenly spirit with the function of shamans, who are regarded not only as direct descendants of the Heavenly King but as descendants who were ordained by heaven to carry out the work for the people.

The second characteristic, which is also related to the first, is the kingly

<sup>26</sup> Lee Bin, *Songyungman Rock*, Vol. II, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> Ryu Mong Un, *Uyō Yadam*: Quoted in Lee Nung Hwa, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

origin of *Mudang* and *P'ansu*. In other words, *Mudang* and *P'ansu*, who are now regarded as the lowest class of people in Korea, claimed in these stories that their origin was the kingly family, the highest class of people. In all the stories we have examined there is not the slightest indication that their origin was not from the highest family, the kingly or princely home. In almost all cases the ancestors of *Mudang* were princesses who were either mistreated or unfortunate. The Ahwang Kongju was the princess of Yao, the great and mystical figure who ruled China before civilization. The Pali Kongju is also the seventh princess of a tyrant king who is not known. The Kongsim was a daughter of a prince. Moreover, to the great legendary king Yü, the founder of pre-Chinese civilization, is attributed to the origin of shamanistic development. To summarize, the stories attempt to say that the origin of *Mudang* was with princesses of the highest rulers of the earth, the great kings who founded the famous civilizations of the past.

The third characteristic of the originators of *Mudang* is their close association with mountains. As we have already noticed, the Holy Mother was revealed on Mt. Chiri. The outcast princess went to Mt. South and finally to Mt. Diamond where she conceived her twin sons by the crane in her dream. The close relationship between mountains and *Mudang* is clearly expressed in the existing shamanistic altars on the mountain sides. However, as to the origin of *Mudang*, mountains, particularly Mt. South, became the birthplace of Kongsim. In many provinces the *Mudang* usually begins the ritual of seasonal offerings with a phrase indicating that Kongsim's original place is Mt. South. In the Tongyöng area Mt. South-West becomes the birthplace of Kongsim. In Sunchon of the southern province, the birthplace or *Bon*<sup>28</sup> of Kongsim is regarded as Mt. South. Again, in the Raju, Mokpo and Namwon areas the birthplace of Kongsim is understood as Mt. South.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, certain mountains became not only symbols of sacred presence, but the birthplace of shamanism.

The fourth characteristic of the stories we have examined deals with the tragedy of those who initiated *Mudang*. In almost all cases the originators of *Mudang* go through somewhat unusual experiences which

<sup>28</sup> Akamatsu and Akiba, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

are associated with unfortunate events or tragedies. Look at the daughter of the prince who became almost insane because of illness. Or, we see the princess who was cast out by a tyrant king because she was simply born as his seventh daughter. These stories attempt to depict the painful process of shamanistic initiation which is an experience of ordeals or tragedies. In most cases those who are becoming *Mudang* have to go through a kind of psychic turnover through a serious illness or visions.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, it is possible that the tragic experiences of those who have originated *Mudang* might be reflected in the experiences of those who are later initiated as *Mudang*.

Finally, the fifth characteristic of the myths or legends concerning the origins of *Mudang* is the predominance of women. In almost all cases it is not men but women who became the ancestors of *Mudang*. Except for the Holy Mother of the Heavenly King, we have noticed that the origin of *Mudang* is attributed to princesses. Since there are more female shamans than male shamans in Korea, it is perhaps natural to elevate women as their ancestors. However, in the Cheju Island where there are more male shamans than female shamans, their ancestors are known as men. According to the legend in this island, it was the son of Kim Cha Su, rather than the princess, who later became the ancestor of both *Mudang* and *P'ansu*.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the appearance of princesses and the holy woman as the ancestors of *Mudang* could be attributed to the predominance of female shamans in Korea.

We may now conclude our observations of these myths or legends dealing with the origin of *Mudang*. From our observations we may be able to fix the dates for these stories. It is, of course, difficult to believe that all these stories originated in the same period. However, it is reasonable to fix their dates sometime at the end of the Three Kingdoms when Buddhism and Taoism flourished. The occasional mention of Buddha in these stories indicates that Buddhism was well accepted and became part of Korean life. Buddhism came to Korea about the end of the fourth century. According to the history of the Three Kingdoms, Buddhism was first introduced to Kokuryō by a Chinese monk known by the name of Bu

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; pp. 56ff.

<sup>30</sup> See Akiba Tokashi, 'Saichudō ni Okeru Shaki no Shinkō' (Faith in the Snake-spirit in Cheju Island) in *Ahōoka Gakushū*, No. 7.

Gyun in the second year of So Sulim, who himself accepted the monk with his followers.<sup>31</sup> Since that time Buddhism was widely accepted by the ruling classes. Perhaps some of these stories were told by *Mudang* to supplement their inferior feelings during the Three Kingdoms when Buddhism was at its peak. Moreover, we find that some of the stories mention the founding rulers of China such as Yao and Yü as the ancestors of *Mudang*. This indicates that Korean civilization at that time was deeply influenced by the Chinese people. They attempted to link their heritage to the founding rulers of the Great China. However, behind all these utilitarian motives there was, I think, the fundamental motive of restoring the traditional faith of *Sinkyo* or the religion of spirits to which *Mudang* eventually belong. In this respect, Eliade is perhaps right when he said, 'The present predominance of shamanesses in Korea may be the result either of a deterioration in traditional shamanism or of influences from the south'.<sup>32</sup> It was possible, because of the Buddhist influence to the ruling classes of people, that the traditional shamanism deteriorated as the female shamans took a prominent role in shamanistic practices. Perhaps the stories were told by them to recover the genuine spirit of the traditional faith, which was basically shamanistic in character. In other words, the deterioration of traditional faith through the influence of magic and divination was already evident at the time when these stories were told. We see their conscious attempts to link their heritage to the traditional faith which was initiated by Dan Gun,<sup>aj</sup> the son of the Heavenly Prince and the founder of the Korean nation, who was also regarded as a great shaman.<sup>33</sup> As we have already indicated, these stories attempted to demonstrate that their shamanistic practice was originally ordained by the Heavenly King and had its origin in the family of the founding ruler. Thus these myths already presuppose the existence of the most influential myth of Dan Gun which deals with the foundation of traditional faith. Therefore, let us focus our attention on the myth of Dan Gun in our effort to understand the origin of traditional faith in Korea.

The myth of Dan Gun had been transmitted by word of mouth for many generations before it was finally written down. We find the myth in

<sup>31</sup> *Samguk Sagi*, Vol. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Eliade, *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> Kim Tuk Hwang, *op. cit.*, p. 40; C. A. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

*Samguk Yusa*<sup>ak</sup> or the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms which was written sometime at the end of the thirteenth century. The story of Dan Gun in this book begins with ‘*Wei Ki*<sup>al</sup> (or Wei writings) say’ or ‘*Go Ki*<sup>am</sup> (or the old writings) say’. We know little about the nature of these documents. We can only presume that what was written in these documents was recorded faithfully in the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms. In other words, prior existence of these documents concerning the myth of Dan Gun is clearly evident. Let us then examine what these documents attempt to say in regard to Dan Gun.

The following is the story described in the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms:

There was once a wise and brave prince, Hwan-Ung by name, son of the Heavenly King. The prince asked his father to grant him the beautiful peninsula of Korea to govern. This King granted his wish, and he was dispatched to the Earth, bearing three Heavenly Seals, and accompanied by three thousand followers. The Heavenly Prince arrived under the sacred sandalwood tree on the Tebeg Mountain, and ascended the throne. There he established the Sacred City. There were three ministers to carry out his orders, Pung-Beg (Earth Wind), Wu-Sa (Chancellor Rain), and Un-Sa (Chancellor Cloud), who were charged with the supervision of about three hundred and sixty officials who controlled all things, such as grain, life, sickness, the determination of good and evil. At that time a bear and a tiger were living in a big cave near human beings . . . They prayed earnestly that their wish might be granted. The bear patiently endured weariness and hunger, and after twenty-one days became a beautiful woman, but the tiger ran away for it could not tolerate long days sitting quietly in the cave. The woman was overjoyed, and visiting the sandalwood again she prayed that she might become the mother of a child. Her ardent wish was appreciated, and before long she became Queen and gave birth to a prince who was given the royal name Dan-Gun, or the sandalwood king. The people of the country rejoiced at the birth of the prince, Dan-Gun, who reigned afterwards as the first human king of the peninsula. When he came to the throne he established a new capital at Pyungyang, and gave the kingdom the name of Zoson (Choson — Land of Morning Calm) . . . It

ak. 三國遺事 al. 魏記 am. 古記

is said that when Dan-Gun abdicated and left his throne to the next king he became a San-sin (Mountain God).<sup>34</sup>

Almost an identical description of Dan Gun's myth is found in *Chehwang Umgi*<sup>an</sup> by Lee Sung Hyu<sup>ao</sup> (1224–1300 A.D.?), supposedly written about ten years after the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms. In *Chehwang Umgi* the story of the life of Dan Gun is rather concise. One of the obvious differences in Lee's description from the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms is the birth of Dan Gun by the granddaughter of the Heavenly King rather than by the bear-mother.<sup>35</sup> However, the content as a whole supports the authenticity of the myth of Dan Gun in the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms. In later writings, particularly in the early Yi Dynasty, the myth of Dan Gun is the *Go Ki*, or the Writings of the Old, had reappeared.<sup>36</sup> However, there is no way to verify its authenticity because its very nature is a myth which has to prove itself. There is no doubt that this myth has been deeply imprinted in the minds of the Korean people since the beginning of their history. Thus Koreans are often called the children of Dan Gun or the race of the sandalwood. In this respect King Dan Gun is compared with Jimmu Tenno in Japan. Just as the latter became the first human emperor in Japan, Dan Gun became the first human king of Korea and the archetype of the Korean people. Thus it is not a question of either proving or disproving the reality of this myth. The myth is part of the life of the Korean people. Any attempt to prove its objectivity fails to realize the deeper meaning underlying its living reality. So it is unnecessary to present here countless debates on the verification of this myth.<sup>37</sup> Rather it is more feasible to discuss the significance of this living reality in order to understand the origin of

<sup>34</sup> This is Zong In Sob's translation in his *Folk Tales from Korea* (Seoul: Hollym Co., 1970), pp. 3–4.

<sup>35</sup> Kim Jae Won, *Dan Gun Sinhwae Sinyongku* (Recent Studies in the Myth of Dan Gun), Seoul, 1947, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> The Writings of the Old concerning the myth of Dan Gun again appear in *Saejong Daehwang Silrok* (The Actual Records of Saejong King) and *Chri-Ji Pyungang Cho* (In the section of Pyungyang in the Record of Geography).

<sup>37</sup> See Imase Ryu's *Dangun Kō* (Reflections on Dan Gun) in *Chōsen Kōshi no Kenkyū* (Studies in the Ancient History of Korea); Chae Nom Son, ed., *Sinchung Samguk Yusa* (Recent Critics on the Remnant History of Three Kingdoms), Seoul, 1946, pp. 42ff.; Kim Jae Won, *op. cit.*

traditional shamanism which is known as *Sinkyo* or the religion of spirits.

Before we make any definite conclusions as to the origin of traditional faith in this myth, let us attempt to characterize it as much as possible. First of all, the myth presents Dan Gun as a direct descendant of the Heavenly King. He is the son of Shan Ung,<sup>ap</sup> who is the prince of the Heavenly King, who is also known by the name of Hwan In.<sup>aq</sup> His relation to the Heavenly King is more precisely recorded in Lee Sung Hyu's *Chehwang Umgi* in the thirteenth century. The record of Dan Gun in this book begins with his relation to Korea and his grandfather: 'He who has founded this nation is the grandson of the Heavenly King, who is known by the name of Dan Gun'.<sup>38</sup> This direct linkage of Dan Gun with the Heavenly King establishes the authority of his leadership. As we have already pointed out, he is not really different from Jimmu Tenno who was regarded as the direct descendant of Amaterasu Ōhmikami or Sun Goddess in Japan. Dan Gun is the incarnation of Heavenly Being or Spiritual Being, for his father was the spirit known by the name of Hwang Ung and his mother was formerly a bear who became a woman in order to conceive him. We remember the same imagery in the story of Kongsim, the outcast princess, who conceived her twin boys through a crane coming into her mouth in a dream. Here the crane is symbolized as the Spiritual Being. In this sense Dan Gun is the symbol of Intermediary or Mediator between the spiritual world of Heaven and the material world of earth. If we define the shaman as the intermediary of spiritual being,<sup>39</sup> Dan Gun is the archetype of shamans. In him both the spiritual being and the material being are brought together in his incarnation. In him the direct and immediate expression of the highest spiritual being is manifest. Thus it is the archetype of shamans. We see then quite clearly why the myths or legends dealing with the origin of *Mudang* attempt to connect their heritage to the Heavenly King and the founding ruler of the nation. To be a shaman means to be an intermediary to spiritual beings, and to be the intermediary means to be the archetype of mediation.

<sup>38</sup> The alternative translation can be: 'Who is the one who opened the nation and led the wind and clouds? He is the grandson of the highest king, known by the name of Dan Gun'. See Kim Jae Won, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> See A. Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Mircea Eliade defines shaman's role in light of his techniques of ecstasy. See his *Shamanism*.

Without this archetype, that is, without Dan Gun, there is no way to portray the authenticity of shamanistic expressions. He becomes the archetypal symbol of both *Mudang* and *P'ansu*, as well as traditional faith, which lost its essence through the influence of Buddhism and Taoism in a later period of Korean history.

Secondly, the idea of direct linkage of Dan Gun with the Heavenly King led the people to believe in *Hanunim* or Heavenly King as the highest God of all other gods. This is a characteristic of traditional faith which prevales down to this time. Thus Kyung Cho Chung concludes, 'Shamanism (*Sinkyō*) signifies one god (*Hanunim*), which embraces the idea of one supreme mind'.<sup>40</sup> Certainly, the faith in *Hanunim* or the Heavenly King is the most important characteristic of *Sinkyō*, the traditional faith. Kim Tuk Hwang attempts to summarize the essence of *Sinkyō* as the religion of believing in the Heavenly God as the highest of all gods. However, Mr. Kim calls it 'shamanism' because of its primitive character.<sup>41</sup> He seems to realize that *Sinkyō* is much broader than the so-called shamanism. Thus it is not fair to identify it with *Mudang* or *P'ansu* only, as we have already pointed out. It involves the religious dimension of faith in the highest god. Yet this highest god or *Hanunim* is purely spiritual and the shaman has to be the intermediary in order to communicate with him. In other words, Dan Gun could be considered to be the great shaman through whom an intimate relationship between Heavenly Spirit and earthly life was made possible. Since he was capable of communion with the Heavenly Spirit, he as the one who initiated worship of the Heavenly King. Chae Ham Sun points out that Dan Gun worshipped and prayed to the Heavenly King on behalf of his people, the Koreans, and taught them that service to him alone is the highest duty of all people.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps Dan Gun's worship of his grandfather as the highest god of all gods might have been not only the basis for their faith in the one God of *Hanunim* but also the basic motive for the worship of ancestral spirits in later days. Because the idea of the Heavenly King was given the most important place in the myth of Dan Gun, Kim Jae Won believes that the word 'Dan Gun' might be derived from the Mongolian word

<sup>40</sup> His *Korea Tomorrow: Land of the Morning Calm* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> His *Han'guk Chongkyosa*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>42</sup> His *Asi Choson* (Korea in Early Years), Ch. 6, *Chosŏn gwa Dan Gun ye Chulhyŏn* (Korea and the Coming of Dan Gun).

'*tenger*', which means Heaven as well as the shaman who mediates Heavenly spirits.<sup>43</sup> In some provinces of Korea a shaman is still called '*Tangur Tangur-ari*'.<sup>44</sup> The importance of this faith in *Hanunim* or the Heavenly King is unquestionable to *Mudang*. As we have already pointed out, the stories dealing with the origin of *Mudang* imply that their works are ordained by Him. Thus faith in *Hanunim* is not only held by *Mudang* but is the core of national faith. Akiba believes that this faith in *Hanunim* is the heart of religions in Korea.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, this faith, as Mr. Chung says, 'has been rooted in the Korean mind for so many centuries that its concepts remain a potent force in daily living'.<sup>46</sup>

This lofty faith in *Hanunim* or the Heavenly King, which was introduced by the founder of the nation, Dan Gun himself, gave birth to the Trinitarian idea of Heavenly God. This idea is implicit in the myth of Dan Gun, but developed later when Dan Gun himself became *Sansin* or Mountain God. Thus Zong In Sob adds the following accounts to the myth of Dan Gun: 'He later moved the capital to Mount Asadal (now Mt. Guwol in Hwan He province), where there is now a shrine called Samsong (Three Saints: Hwan In, the Heavenly King; Hwan Ung, the Heavenly Prince; and Dan Gun, the first human King)'.<sup>47</sup> The Trinitarian Deity is well known in Christianity and in Buddhism in a later period. However, the Trinitarian God in traditional faith or *Sinkyō* is different. It represents three generations of the Heavenly King or *Hanunim*. We see the definite hierarchical system within the Trinitarian forms of Heavenly Being. The Heavenly King or Hwan In represents the source of all spiritual beings. 'Hwan' indicates the world of *Hwang* or Heavenly Realm,<sup>48</sup> and 'In' suggests the cause of it. Thus he represents the God of Heaven. His prince, Hwan Ung represents the descendant of Heavenly Realm. Thus He occupies the central realm between Heaven and Earth. Dan Gun or Sandalwood King represents the God of Earth. Thus He became God of Mountain or *Sansin*, which occupies the center

<sup>43</sup> See his *Dan Gun Shinhua ye Shinyōnku* (Recent Studies in the Myth of Dan Gun), p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Akamatsu and Akiba, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>46</sup> Kyung Cho Chung, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>47</sup> His *Folk Tales from Korea*, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Chae Nam Sun, *Choson Sangsik* (A Common Sense of Koreans), *Pungsok Pyōn* (On the Aspect of Customs), Seoul, 1948, p. 44.

of the cosmos reaching up to Heaven. We begin to notice why the stories dealing with the origin of *Mudang* are so closely attached to mountains such as Mt. Chiri, Mt. South and Mt. Diamond. We remember the myth of the Holy Mother who was understood to be the manifestation of Mt. Chiri. The God of the Mountain and the God of Earth became important in a primitive society in which hunting was the most essential aspect of life. However, this Trinitarian idea of God, the God of Heaven, the God of Middle Realm and the God of Earth, has deteriorated in the minds of *Mudang*. The *Samsin* or Three Gods soon became the *Sansin*<sup>49</sup> or the God of Procreation, God of Childbearing, in later shamanism. Chae Nam Sun points it out clearly when he says, 'Even though the idea of Three Gods had occupied an important place in our traditional faith, it later lost its essence and came to be known as a fertility god or the God of Productivity'.<sup>49</sup> We see clearly the deterioration of traditional faith or *Sinkyō* in the later development of shamanism in the cult of *Mudang*.

Just as Mt. Tebek, where the Heavenly Prince descended, became the 'cosmic mountain' to traditional faith, the sandalwood became the 'cosmic tree', which is as Eliade says, 'essential to the shaman'.<sup>50</sup> The very name of Dan Gun bears the name of a tree known as sandalwood, because according to the myth, he was born under the tree. Moreover, the myth indicates that the bear who became a beautiful woman went to the sandalwood and prayed many times to have her wish of childbearing fulfilled. Since then certain trees have been regarded as symbols of spiritual presence. In later shamanism more tree gods appeared than any other gods. The symbol of the cosmic tree found in the myth of Dan Gun seems to confirm its shamanistic origin. Perhaps it is possible to think of the sandalwood tree as the archetype of 'Schamanenbaum'. Moreover, we see the appearance of animals, especially a bear and a tiger, in the myth of Dan Gun. Bears and tigers were the most fearsome animals to be commonly found in Far Eastern Asia. Hulbert is right: The Korean people not only believed in the Heavens, but worshipped the tiger spirit.<sup>51</sup> However, the myth itself does not present the importance of the tiger

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>50</sup> Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>51</sup> H. Hulbert, *The History of Korea* (Seoul: Methodist Publishing House, 1905), Vol. I., pp. 21 and 23.

spirit. Perhaps the reverence of the tiger came in a later stage of shamanistic development. The center of attention is given to a bear who was transformed to a woman and elevated to the Holy Mother. Preverence of the bear spirit is commonly known in shamanistic traditions in Siberia. Nioradze writes in his *Der Schamanismus bei den sibirischen Vockern* that some shamans respect a bear as their ancestor.<sup>52</sup> However, we find a similar account of the myth of Dan Gun in a myth of the Ainu people. The following account is quoted from *The Ainu and Their Folklore*:

In very ancient times there lived two people who were husband and wife. The husband one day fell ill, and soon after died, leaving no children, so that poor wife was left quite alone. Now it happened to have been decreed that the woman was at some future time to bear a son. When the people saw that the time for the child was right at hand, some said, 'surely this woman has married again . . . But the woman herself said that it was all a miracle'. And the following is an account of the matter: 'One evening there was sudden appearance in which I was sitting. He who came to me had the external form of man, and was dressed in black clothing. And turning in my direction he said — "O, woman, I have one word to say to you, so please pay attention. I am the god possessed mountains (i.e., a bear), and not a human being at all, though I have now appeared to you in bodily form of a man. The reason of my coming is this. Your husband is dead, and you are left in a very lonesome condition. I have seen this and come to inform you that you will bear a child. He will be my gift to you. When he is born you will no longer be lonely, and when he is grown up, he will be great, rich and eloquent.'" After saying this he left me.' By and by this woman bore a son, who in time really became a mighty hunter as well as a great, rich and eloquent man. He also became the father of many children. Thus it happens that many of Ainu who dwell among the mountains are to this day said to be descended from a bear. They belong to the bear clan, and are called *Kimun Kimui sanikiri*, i.e., 'descendant of the bear'. Such peoples are very proud and say, 'As for me, I am a child of the god of the mountains. I am descended from the divine one which rules in the mountains.' These peoples are very proud indeed.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See Lee Hong Sik's translation into Korean, p. 52.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted by Kim Jae Won in his *Dan Gun Sinhwa ye Sinyunku*, pp. 53-55.

This myth of Ainu has much in common with the myth of Dan Gun. Thus, it seems that the myth of Dan Gun was influenced by Siberian shamanism, even though we do not know how extensive that influence was. Furthermore, the myth of Dan Gun is believed to be in conformity with the stone inscriptions in the Shrine of King Wu Liang-tzu's Tomb, which is located in the Shantung Province of Manchuria.<sup>54</sup> As a result it seems unreasonable to believe that the myth of Dan Gun is unique. Its basic orientation seems to be shamanistic belief which was widely held in Siberia. Certainly, the shamanistic tendency is the basic orientation of this myth. Thus it has been attributed to the origin of traditional faith or *Sinkyō* as well as the origin of the nation.

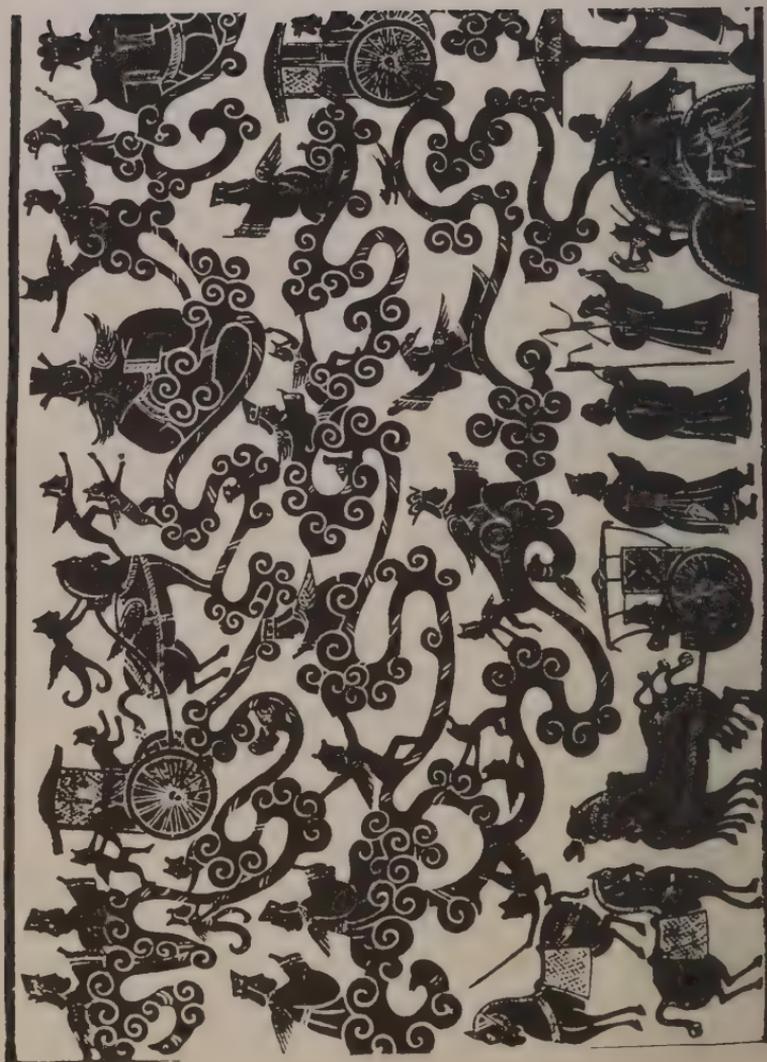
The traditional faith of Korea or *Sinkyō*, which is based on the myth of Dan Gun, is more than just shamanistic. It includes the national faith in the highest form of Heavenly God who became the direct ancestor of Korean people through Dan Gun. Perhaps the *Sinkyō* is quite similar to the so-called 'Chinese Shamanism' or 'Wuism' which is more than mere shamanism and the cult of *Mudang*. DeGroot said that the *Wu* was not exactly the same as a shaman, but he was the real priest of China before the pre-eminence of Confucianism.<sup>55</sup> The *Sinkyō*, like the *Wuism* in China, precedes the influence of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. According to the archeological studies made by Choi Nam Sun, who scientifically explored mountains such as Mt. Paiktu, Mt. Chiri and Mt. Mudeung, vestiges of ancient temples were found that were dedicated to the 'God of Heaven' together with other gods. It is believed that these temples were built before the introduction of new religions such as Confucianism (first century, B.C.) and Buddhism (fourth century, A.D.).<sup>56</sup> The native religion of Korea was certainly the *Sinkyō* or traditional faith which emphasized the worship of the highest god of heaven. This traditional faith seemed to radically deteriorate under the influence of magic and the popular cult of Taoism which came to Korea at the end of the Koguryō Kingdom in the middle of the seventh century,

<sup>54</sup> Observe carefully the stone inscriptions in the Shrine of King Wu. The first inscriptions seem to depict the general appearance of the prince's descent with three thousand spirits and three heavenly seals. The second inscriptions deal with the detailed accounts of his coming, and the third with the association with bears, tigers and other animals. See illustrations in Kim Jae Won, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-55.

<sup>55</sup> J. J. M. DeGroot, *The Religious System of China* (Leiden, 1892), Vol. I, pp. 1205ff.

<sup>56</sup> Kim Tuk Hwang, *op. cit.*, pp. 58ff.

*First Stone Inscriptions in King Wu's Shrine*



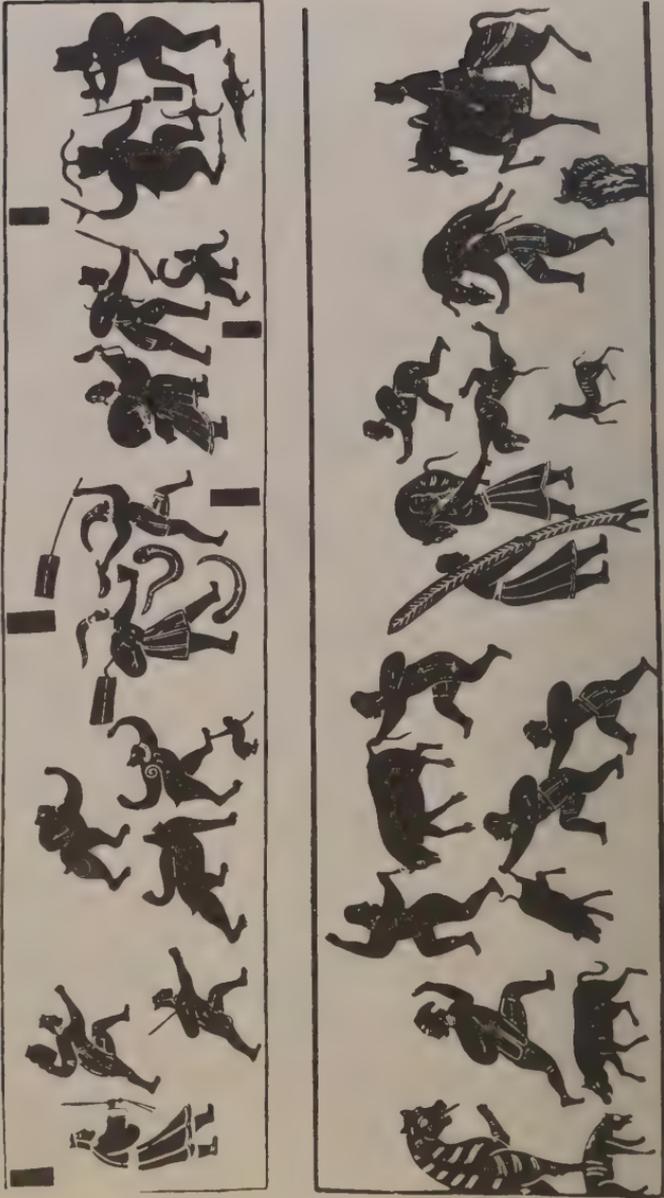
武氏祠堂 後石室 第二層

Second Stone Inscriptions in King Wu's Shrine



武氏祠堂 後石靈 第三層  
(上 第三層·下 第四層)

*Third Stone Inscriptions in King Wu's Shrine*



石室第三號  
武氏祠堂後石室第二號  
(上第一號·下第二號)

A.D.<sup>57</sup> The activity of deteriorated *Sinkyō* is described as follows:

The Han, or genuine Koreans of the third century after Christ, are described (in Chinese Literature) as worshipping the spirits in the fifth and tenth months when the sowing and reaping of the year were concluded. On such occasions, they sang, danced, and drank wine. Several tens of them took part in the dance, and their hands and feet kept time carefully. One particular person was set apart to sacrifice to the Spirit of Heaven, and He was called the 'Heavenly Ruler'.<sup>58</sup>

As described above, the thanksgiving rituals in the fifth and tenth months or in the spring and fall, which are still the core of *Mudang's* ritual in our time, seemed to be primarily directed to the worship of the Heavenly King in traditional faith. This thanksgiving ritual, which is now known as the *Ch'ōnsin gut* (the ritual of seasonal offerings), in contemporary shamanism seems more concerned with the welfare of the home than the Heavenly King. Thus this ritual is also called *Chaesu gut* or the ritual of welfare and blessings in most urban settings. In this respect the genuine Korean religion or *Sinkyō* seemed to deteriorate with the coming of Chinese sorcerers and magicians, particularly with the popular cult of Taoism. Thus Clark continues, 'Magic and divination of the Koreans is said to have followed the teaching of Wun Chang Kang, an ancient Chinese sorcerer'.<sup>59</sup> This deteriorated form of traditional faith or *Sinkyō* is known in our time as the cult of *Mudang*, which has been sustained by the inferior class of people, particularly the women of the lower class. Therefore, this kind of distinction between the traditional and deteriorated forms of national faith is almost essential to understanding the historical phenomena of Korean shamanism.

We may then conclude that the magical cult of *Mudang* which is in practice in our time can be viewed as a deteriorated form of traditional faith. Its deterioration comes from the preoccupation with magic and divination and its neglect of the central importance of traditional faith,

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> C. A. Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-77; quoted from Edkins' article in *Korean Repository*, 1892, p. 200.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77; quoted from *Royal Asiatic Society Records*, 1900, p. 18.

that is worship of the *Hanunim* as the highest God of all others.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the Trinitarian form of Heavenly Gods became the god of procreation or childbearing. *Mudang* has been increasingly more interested in lesser forms of spiritual being than in the higher forms of Heavenly Being, in order to meet the immediate desires of men. Perhaps, as we have pointed out, the creation of myths or legends dealing with the origin of *Mudang* cult might have been related to an attempt to bring its image closer to traditional faith. Whatever the motive behind these stories, the restoration of traditional faith requires not only the radical renovation of existing practices of *Mudang* and *P'ansu* but the genuine rediscovery of national consciousness and the spiritual resources of the Korean people.

<sup>60</sup> Akamatsu believes that this lofty idea of believing in *Hanunim* is neglected in contemporary shamanism. However, Christianity in Korea attempts to make use of this belief to bring people into the Church. Thus the Heavenly Father in Christianity is known as *Hanunim* in Korea. See *op. cit.*, p. 320.