

Folk Religion Among the Koreans in Japan  
— The Shamanism of the “Korean Temples” —

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The presence of seven hundred thousand Koreans in Japan has drawn attention to issues such as the abolition of ethnic discrimination and the attainment of human rights in contemporary Japanese society, while the Koreans in Japan, as marginal figures, continue to face the problem of their identity. These issues have been studied from political and historical perspectives, but with an insufficient religious and cultural understanding. The group of “Korean temples” in the suburbs of Osaka, where the largest number of Koreans in Japan reside, is a religious phenomenon consisting of a syncretism of Korean Shamanism, Korean Buddhism, and Japanese mountain religion. In this paper I will outline the present situation of these Korean temples in Japan and reflect on the significance they hold for the Koreans in Japan and Japanese society. The “resentment” (*han* 恨) of the spirits of the dead, which is to be purified through shamanistic rituals, is a religious expression of the collective misfortune of the Koreans in Japan which is continually reproduced by the structural discrimination of Japanese society. Also, this Shamanism has served as a magical way for Korean women in Japan to adjust to their difficult social situation. It also contains, as the basic ethnic culture of Koreans in Japan, the potential to serve as a womb for the formation of their culture and identity.

*The Formation and Present Situation of Korean Society in Japan*

A large number of Korean people were forced to come to Japan and work as cheap labor upon being dispossessed of their land and livelihood when Korea came under Japanese rule after the annexation of Korea by Japan

in 1910. A large influx of Koreans occurred after 1920, and by 1941 there were about 1,469,000 Koreans residing in Japan. From 1942 the coercive drafting of Koreans added to this population shift, with the figure growing to an estimated 2,100,000 people by the time Japan was defeated in 1945 (Pak 1957, p. 69).

A large number of Koreans gathered in Osaka, one of the major industrial cities of pre-war Japan, and a large Korean community took shape in the 1920's in the Ikaino area (part of the present-day Ikuno-ku of Osaka), consisting mostly of immigrants from Cheju Island (see Kim C. 1985, Akiba Y. 1986, Sugihara 1986). The extremely difficult situation in which the people of Cheju Island found themselves forced them to rely on relatives or people from the same village who had immigrated to Japan at an earlier date. People from Cheju Island flocked to Ikaino, until their population in 1934 reached 50,053, one fourth the size of the population of the whole island of Cheju itself (Kim C. 1985, p. 101).

After Japan's defeat in 1945, over 1.5 million people returned to their home country, which had split into North and South Korea. However, five hundred thousand Koreans chose to remain in Japan and continue their struggle to eke out a living in the midst of poverty and discrimination. The Japanese government has retained the social discrimination directed against these people, and continues to follow naturalization policies based on a prerequisite of ethnic assimilation. As of 1982, 115,802 people had acquired Japanese citizenship (Katō 1983, p. 12). However, those who wish to maintain their Korean ethnic identity have refused to be naturalized, and continue to maintain their citizenship with the Republic of Korea (South) or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North). In 1984 there were 687,135 people permanently residing in Japan while maintaining their Korean (South or North) citizenship (*Hōmushō nyūkoku kanrikyoku* 1987, p. 82). This group makes up 82% of the foreign population in Japan. A large percentage of the Korean residents in Japan live in the Kansai area surrounding Osaka, with one hundred ninety thousand Korean residents in Osaka alone. If one adds the Korean residents of Kyōto-fu and Hyōgo prefecture, the total for these three districts alone comes to three hundred ten thousand, about 45% of the total Korean population in Japan.

If we look at the percentages of Koreans according to their place of origin, figures for the entire country of Japan show that 36% are from Kyongsang nam do, 24% from Kyongsang buk do, 15% from Cholla nam do, and 14% from Cheju do (as of 1971, Lee K. 1983, p. 83). Of the Koreans in the Osaka area (totaling some 116,007), however, 46% originally came from Cheju do (p. 87). The percentage increases to 72% (p. 131) out of a

population of 38,713 resident Koreans (as of 1980, p. 125) in Ikuno-ku, which has the highest concentration of Korean residents in Japan. The members of Korean society have experienced local feelings of opposition, and those from Cheju Island in particular suffer from discrimination. Therefore the Korean residents from Cheju Island in Ikaino have established a close-knit society of Cheju people, bound together by connections of family, place of origin, employment, markets, and religion. At the present time, however, more than 80% of the Korean residents consist of those born and raised in Japan, and the first generation Koreans make up less than 20% of the total population. In addition, over half of the marriages are to a Japanese spouse. Issues such as the transmission of Korean culture and the reformation of ethnic identity are being dealt with in an entirely new situation (see Kim C. 1977).

The Korean residents of Japan are “marginal” people caught between the entities of Korea and Japan. These Koreans face a number of problems while forming an extremely small minority within Japanese society (0.7% of 120 million).

#### *Religious Activities Among Korean Residents*

From the earliest days of recorded history to the present time, four major religious traditions have developed on the Korean peninsula, and the current religious structure still includes these four strata (Ryu 1975, p. 9).

In the earliest days Shamanism was dominant among the folk, and also provided the basis for political rule which combined religion and the state. The religious and cultural scope of Shamanism covered a wide area from Siberia and northeastern China to the Korean peninsula, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Some scholars (Chang 1974, p. 16; Ch'oe 1978, p. 148) have raised doubts about using the term “Shamanism” as a catch-all term for the activities of Korean mediums (*musok* 巫俗). Here we will define it as a kind of possession-type Shamanism, following the categories given by Sasaki: all Shamanism has the common characteristic of trance, with the further characteristics of 1) ecstasy-type Shamanism, 2) possession-type Shamanism, and 3) a combination of these types (1984, p. 10). In the Korean language shamans are generally referred to as *mudang*, but among the people from Cheju Island and Osaka they are referred to as *simbang*. Shamanistic ceremonies are called *kut*.

Buddhism, transmitted to Korea in the fourth century A.D., achieved a paramount position during the unified dynasty of Silla (668–935) and Koguryo (936–1392). During this time Shamanism was banished from the

court as superstition.

The Yi dynasty (1392–1910) was the age of Confucianism. It was not only the ideology of the ruling Yangban class, but almost all rites (funerals, weddings, and so forth) and official ceremonies were conducted according to the Confucian form. Buddhist monks and shamans were relegated to the lowest class and all Buddhist temples were destroyed in urban areas. However, the Buddhists possessed a large amount of forests and temples in the mountains, and by upholding austere lives of abstention from alcohol, meat, and conjugal ties, they maintained a major influence among the common people, especially the women, with regard to beliefs in worldly benefits. In other words, the common people believed that the recitation of sutras had a magical efficacy, and halls such as the Seven Star (Big Dipper) Hall 七星閣 and the Three Sages Hall 三聖閣 within the temple precincts became centers for people to pray for good fortune. The main difference between Korean and Japanese Buddhism is that Korean temples do not perform funerals for the ancestors, and are thus not supported by permanent parishioners. Shamanism is also strongly supported by women, who hold a low position vis-à-vis men in Korean society, and the beliefs have been passed down for many generations despite strong suppression. Taoism has permeated Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism in a variety of ways, but does not have its own organized institutions. Shamanism, Confucianism, and Buddhism have all influenced each other, but the distinctions of their social class are clear. This class structure with three religious traditions was formed during the Yi period but continues among Korean society to the present day.

Christianity is another important tradition today. Transmitted in the 18th century, it has shown explosive growth after the end of the Japanese occupation, and currently about 30% of the population professes to be Christian. It has surpassed all of the other religions and has the most influence among the people. There are also many new religious movements, such as the Chondogyo 天道教.

The religious activity of the Korean residents of Japan, on the other hand, combines revival of traditional beliefs (with some unique changes) and an assimilation of Japanese religions.

First, with regard to Christianity, there is no widespread growth like that on the Korean mainland. The main Protestant organization is the Zainichi Daikan Kirisuto Kyōkai Sōkai 在日大韓基督教会総会 (Korean Christian Church in Japan), with fifty-eight churches claiming 4,803 members throughout Japan. Eleven of these churches, with 1,460 members, are located in Osaka (Zainichi Daikan Kirisuto Kyōkai Sōkai 1985, pp. 175–176).

The total number of Christians among Korean residents comes to less than 1%, even when taking into consideration the members of Catholic and other Protestant churches. This percentage is about the same as for Christians in Japan as a whole. On the other hand, the Korean Christian churches are actively involved in solving the topics of discrimination and human rights among Korean residents in Japan, and are having an important impact on Korean residents and Japanese society.

As for Buddhism, there are seven temples in Japan (two in Osaka, four in Tokyo, one in Kyoto) with 7,950 members (4,300 in Osaka, 2,150 in Tokyo, and 1,500 in Kyoto) belonging to the Choge sect, the main Buddhist organization in Korea. The headquarters are located at Fugen-ji 普賢寺 in the Ikuno district of Osaka. This temple was built in 1968. However, it appears that the establishment of orthodox Buddhism lags behind the spontaneous acceptance of shamanistic beliefs or the proclamation of Christianity among resident Koreans. Temples of the Choge sect are in urban areas and rather inconspicuous, with the exception of the one in Kyoto, which is built in Korean style deep in the mountains and has begun to administer a large graveyard. Other Korean sects include the Taego sect, which has a number of temples. Some of the "Korean temples" which will be discussed below claim to belong to the Choge sect, but since the headquarters in Seoul does not recognize them as branch temples, they should rather be considered as particular examples of syncretistic folk religions.<sup>1</sup>

Confucianism still provides the fundamental moral structure for the daily life of resident Koreans, and plays an important role in providing ceremonies for funeral and ancestor rites. Respect for elders, dominance of male over female, ancestor worship, and kinship consciousness are all stronger among Korean residents than among the Japanese. Funeral rites in particular are still maintained in the traditional Confucian way, and serve as a reminder of their ethnic identity to younger Koreans, who are more conscious of being "Japanized" (Kim C. 1977, pp. 120-132). However, Confucianism as a religion has neither an organized institution nor educational system, and it appears that its moral influence is waning among the increasing number of Japan-born Korean residents.

Assimilation into or of various Japanese religious traditions is another phenomenon. It may be that since there are common basic elements between Korean and Japanese religion, such as the merging of animism and

<sup>1</sup> Based on materials gathered in March 1983 at the headquarters of the Choge sect in Seoul, Korea.

Shamanism and a this-worldly orientation, it is easy for this religious assimilation to occur. Some Korean residents go to Japanese Buddhist temples to request funerals or memorial services, and it is not unusual for them to visit famous Japanese temples and shrines to pray for worldly benefits such as prosperity in business or relief from disease. There are also some who are involved in Shugendo 修験道 organizations<sup>2</sup> and actively participate in ascetic practices in the mountains or under waterfalls. People who have become *simbang* through cultivating *shugen* practices have created their own unique folk religion temples. These are the many so-called “Korean temples” found in the mountains near Osaka.

### “Korean Temples”

#### *The Development of Folk/Ethnic Religion among Korean Residents*

Shamanism in Korean society has been strongly supported through the years by women. There has been a revival of Korean Shamanism among residents in Japan, especially in the Osaka area. Here many small temples, called “Korean temples,” have been established, combining the religious traditions of Shamanism, Buddhism, and Japanese Shugendo. General surveys of these “Korean temples” have been made available for the first time recently with the publication of reports by Helen Hardacre (1984) and the Shūkyō Shakaigaku no Kai (1985, pp. 235–296). The present author participated in the joint survey of the Shūkyō Shakaigaku no Kai.<sup>3</sup> In this article I will introduce the “Korean temples” and discuss their significance for contemporary society.

#### The Religious Geography of the “Korean temples.”

The majority of the “Korean temples” are located in or at the entrances of the numerous valleys of the Ikoma mountain range, which serves as the boundary between Osaka and Nara Prefecture. Some are located to the north in Hyōgo Prefecture, in the valleys of the Rokkō mountains. Both of these areas are about thirty to forty minutes by train or car from Osaka. They are built in narrow valleys or at the foot of a mountain, quite distinct from usual residential areas.

The Ikoma mountain range runs about fifteen kilometers from north to south, and is about five kilometers wide from west to east, with the highest

<sup>2</sup> Shugendo is a traditional syncretistic Japanese mountain religion which emphasizes practicing religious austerities in the mountains.

<sup>3</sup> This joint survey was conducted from 1982 to 1984 with Shiobara Tsutomu (Osaka University), Ashida Tetsurō (Kumamoto University), Tani Tomio (Hiroshima Women's College), and Akiba Yutaka (Osaka University).

peak reaching up to 642 meters. Various religious activity has unfolded in this area from ancient times. The myths of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* relate that the Mononobe clan, which assisted in the establishment of the Yamato state, enshrined as their ancestral god one who descended from heaven and landed on Mt. Ikoma. The agricultural society at the foot of these mountains relied for their farming on the mountains as the source of its water supply. The god of the mountain was worshipped sometimes as the god of water, and its image was that of a dragon or snake. The western side of Mt. Ikoma is covered with many steep and narrow gorges, and the resulting waterfalls have served as places of ascetic practice for religious mediums (*reinōsha* 靈能者). It is believed that one can attain magical or shamanistic powers by confining oneself in these mountains and undertaking ascetic practices such as standing under a waterfall and chanting sacred texts. Thus ascetics of the Shugendo tradition, “faith healers” (*kitōshi* 祈禱師), and Buddhist monks have built many hermitages or small temples within the Ikoma mountains.

In the modern period, as Osaka grew into the largest center of business in Japan, the temples of the Ikoma mountains became a popular place for urban dwellers to visit, both as a center for religious beliefs to attain worldly benefits and as a place for relaxation and sight-seeing. Unlike the great temples and shrines of Kyoto and Nara which could boast of prestige and cultural treasures, the Ikoma temples could attract people with religious activities closely tied to the lives of the common people. These temples could not rely on old traditions or authorities, but rather had to compete by adopting with the times and embracing beliefs in worldly benefits. This area has not been controlled by a single religious authority; neither was it an area in which only the customs of a traditional agricultural society were endlessly repeated. As the urban society of Osaka developed, the mundane desires of the common people, seeking magico-religious solutions, led them to incline toward the Ikoma mountains, thus giving birth to various forms of folk religion. In this sense the folk religion of the Ikoma mountains can be said to be an urban and liberating phenomenon. Even today, not counting the shrines and temples which deal only with the local society, there are over one hundred and twenty temples, shrines, and churches, from the large establishments (such as Ishikiri Jinja 石切神社, Hōzan-ji 宝山寺, Chōgo Sonshi-ji 朝護孫子寺) which attract millions of pilgrims, to middle and small sized institutions, all of them repeating cycles of prosperity and decline. It is no wonder that the area is called a “supermarket of the gods” and a “treasure house of folk religions.”

The “Korean temples” have been established in this area by the Korean

residents mostly since after the war (1945), though a few were started before the war, and have added a new dimension to the religious traditions of Ikoma. Our survey discovered a total of about sixty temples in the Ikoma area. There is no other place in Japan where such a dense collection of Korean religious institutions are to be found, and it is rare even in Korea. There are also a number of such temples in the Mt. Rokkō range in Hyōgo Prefecture, and places for rent to perform *kut* along the riversides in Osaka and along the seaside in the southern part of Osaka. Chart I is a list of these “Korean Temples” and *kut* meeting halls.

“Korean temples” are particularly densely concentrated in the Zushi valley (twelve temples, Kamiishikiri-chō), Nukata valley (ten temples, Yamate-chō), and Narukawa valley (six temples, Kamishijō), with a heavy concentration also at the foot of the mountains in Yao City (sixteen temples) and Ikoma City (eight temples). These temples are conveniently located within ten kilometers of areas with large Korean populations. However, the question remains as to why these temples were built in the valleys of the Ikoma mountains rather than in the towns where the people live. The answer is that, first, these are locations where the rituals of Korean Shamanism are performed. These rituals involve long periods of the loud playing of percussion instruments, which would be cause for complaints in urban areas. Small-scale rituals, on the other hand, are usually performed at the client’s home or at a rented hall (or temple) near the riverside. In the case of large-scale rituals which take from three days to a week to perform, there is the need for a location which has overnight facilities and where one can beat drums without restraint. In addition, both the Japanese and Korean people share a common cultural heritage in accepting the religious significance of mountains. The traditional religiosity of the Ikoma mountains was easy for the resident Koreans to accept. As can be seen in the Korean myth of the founding of the nation, mountains are a place where the gods descend on their way to the world of human beings. It was also common for graves to be located in the mountains, thus serving as a realm where the spirits of the dead go. Also, all the large, old temples in Korea are located in the mountains.

Large, high mountains are considered sacred, pure space; smaller mountains located near urban, commercial areas (like those at Ikoma) have ambiguous meaning, as places where the sacred and profane, the pure and impure, are combined. It is a marginal area of both the cities and the mountains, the realm of the living and the dead, Japan and Korea. The Korean mediums cultivate their spiritual powers as *simbang* there and create their own base. In Korea, shamanistic ceremonies [continued on page 166]



## Chart I. List of "Korean temples"

This data is based on the information in Shukyō Shakaigaku no Kai, ed., 1985, pp. 274-296, and updated with current information as of July 1988. I am indebted to Mr. Cho Kyu-don (the Group of Uri Culture) for information concerning the temples of Takarazuka and changes among those of Ikoma.

\* = approximate year.

Shingon-K = Shingon-shū Kōyasan Daishi Kyōkai.

( ) = former name as of 1984

Shingon-D = Shingon-shū Daigo sect

Temple	Foundation	Sect	Location
<b>OSAKA PREFECTURE</b>			
— Katano —			
1 Eitoku-ji (On'u-ji)	1985*		Hoshida
2 Hōtoku-ji	1969*	Shingon-K	Hoshida
— Shijō-nawate —			
3 Hakuryū-in	before 1957		Minamino
— Daitō —			
4 Myōsei-ji			Hojō 7-2304
— Higashi Osaka —			
5 Seikō-ji	1960*		Zenkonji-chō 6-11
6 Ryū'un-ji	1955*		Zenkonji-chō 6-11
7 Reigan-ji	1945*		Kusaka-chō 1-9-13
8 Seikō-ji (Hōtoku-ji)	1986*	Wonhyo	Kamiishikiri 2
9 Haku'un-ji	1935		Kamiishikiri 2-1367
10 Hōzan-ji (Meitoku-ji)	1988		Kamiishikiri 2
11 Tenshu-ji 1			Kamiishikiri 2
12 Hōkō-ji	1955*	Shingon	Kamiishikiri 2-1320
13 Shari-ji			Kamiishikiri 2
14 Seikoku-ji	1952	Shingon	Kamiishikiri 2-8081
15 Myōkaku-ji		Shingon-D	Kamiishikiri 2-811-5
16 Shichimen no taki (waterfall)			Kamiishikiri 2-1515
17 nameless	1980*		Kamiishikiri 2
18 Issei-ji	before 1964		Kamiishikiri 2
19 Jiun-ji		Shingon-K	Kamiishikiri 2-1520
20 Nintoku-ji		Choge	Kamiishikiri 2-1521

Temple	Foundation	Sect	Location
21 Shintei-ji		Shugen Honshū	Yamate-chō 12-5
22 Fudō-ji	1950	Shugen Honshū	Yamate-chō 12-5
23 nameless	before 1957		Yamate-chō 2150
23b nameless			
24 Manpuku-ji	1969*		Yamate-chō 2160
25 Jizō'in			Yamate-chō
26 Kai'un-ji (Ren'en-ji)	1985*		Yamate-chō 2004
27 Gekkyū-ji	1980	Choge	Yamate-chō 2094
28 Shōkaku-ji	1952	Choge	Yamate-chō 2094
29 Manpuku-ji	1963*	Shingon-D	Yamate-chō 2608
29b Shōshin-ji	1955*		Toyoura-chō 16-28
29c Tenryū-ji	1955*		
30 Tokusei-ji	1951		Gōjō-chō 1472
31 Chinkon-taki (waterfall)			Gōjō-chō
32 Gesshōji		Shingon-K	Kamishijō 12-17
33 Hōkōji	1961	Shingon-D	Kamishijō 25-29
34 Gokuraku-ji	1948*	Choge	Kamishijō 25-19
35 Hōkei-ji	1940*	Hossō	Kamishijō 24-25
36 Kannon-ji	1930	Shingon-K	Kamishijō 1743
37 Shūdō'in			Kamishijō 1797-4
38 nameless	1974*	Ōbaku	Rokumanji 1752
39 Yasha-no-taki	1960		Kami Rokumanji 1752
40 Nissei-ji	1955*	Choge	Yamatake-chō 336
41 Daishin-ji	1972	Choge	Ōkubo 88-5
42 Yōmei-ji	1965*		Ōkubo Senzūkayama 69
43 Myōren-ji (Ryūshū-ji)	1984	Choge	Ōkubo 69
44 abolished (Daifuku-ji)	1986*		Ōkubo
45 Fudō'in	1943	Shingon	Takayasu Kokubu
46 Daikō-in (Dairin-ji)		Kōrigawa	
47 Kōfuku-ji	1954	Choge	Hattorigawa
48 Shippō-ji	1976		Hattorigawa 693-10
49 Shin'in-ji	1965*	Shugen Honshū	Hattorigawa 792
50 Shintoku-in	1966	Shingon-D	Hattorigawa
51 Shūhō-ji			Kurodani
52 hermitage in Myōken-ji			Kyōkōji 471-1

Temple	Foundation	Sect	Location
53 Anryū-ji	1981	Nichiren	Kurodani 966-2
54 abolished (Manpuku-ji)			Kurodani
55 Mantoku-ji	1954*	Shingon	Onji Nakamachi 5-9
<b>NARA PREFECTURE</b>			
— Ikoma —			
56 Myōrinji			Nishi matsugaoka 7-60
57 Gyokukō'in Shichiseido		Shingon-D	Kita Shinmachi 22-5
58 Hōtoku-ji	1959	Choge	Ikoma Honmachi 13-62
59 nameless			Monzenmachi 19
60 Dainin-ji	1972*	Shingon-K	Monzenmachi 19-8
61 Kōfuku-ji			Monzen Umeyashiki
62 Myōkō-ji	1979	Shingon	Nabata 2313
63 hermitage in Kyōkō-ji	1982*		Oguraderamachi
<b>OSAKA PREFECTURE</b>			
— Yao —			
64 hermitage in Iwato shrine			Kurodani
— Osaka —			
65 Ryū'ōgū	1974	river side rooms rent for <i>kut</i>	Toshima-ku Nakano 4-1
— Sennan-gun, Hannan-chō —			
66 Kōraku Center	1963	seaside lodge rent for <i>kut</i>	Hakotsukuri 23
67 Tokiwa Center		seaside lodge rent for <i>kut</i>	Hakotsukuri
<b>HYOGO PREFECTURE</b>			
— Kōbe —			
68 Seiryū-ji		Shingon-K	Nada-ku Aotani
— Takarazuka —			
69 Seitoku-ji		Shingon-K	Hirai 1-27
70 Hōjō-ji	1945*	Shingon-K	Hirai 1-27-12
71 Hōtoku-in	1970*		Hirai 1-28-14
72 Kinpō-ji			Hirai 1-29-16
73 Hōkyō-ji	1940*	Shingon-D	Kirihata Nagaoyama 4
74 Ōi-tera		Shingon-K	Kirihata Nagaoyama 4
75 Saimyō-ji taki (waterfall)			Kirihata Nagaoyama

[continued from page 162] are generally performed in the villages and towns rather than in the mountains, and there is no cultivation of ascetic practices under a waterfall as in Japan. The *simbang* of the Korean residents in Japan, however, diligently cultivate ascetic practice under the Ikoma waterfalls, and the Korean people of Osaka positively accept their temples as places for shamanistic ceremonies.

The “Korean temples,” like the other small and medium-sized temples in Ikoma, experience rather short cycles of prosperity and decline. The relationship between the *simbang* and clients is unstable, and as the *simbang*'s physical or spiritual power wanes, the clients also disappear and the temple fades away. It is unusual for a family member or disciple to carry on the work. There have even been several changes which have come to our attention since we finished our survey in 1984 [see Chart I].

#### The Form and Function of the “Korean Temples”

The “Korean temples” range in size from about one hundred to a few hundred *tsubo* (one *tsubo* = 3.3 square meters), all on the small side. The principal facilities are the main hall (*hondō* 本堂), a hall for shamanistic rituals (*fusaijō* 巫祭場), a Seven Star (Big Dipper) Hall, a waterfall for ascetic practice, and dwellings.

The presence of a *hondō* underscores the claim that these are Buddhist temples. Usually a statue of Shaka (Śākyamuni) adorns the central place on the altar, surrounded by statues of Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), Fudō (Acalā), Jizō (Kṣitigarbha), and so forth. Picture scrolls of the deities of the Seven Stars (Big Dipper), the mountains, and the sea are hung on the walls. Often these deities are enshrined in their own detached shrine. The deities of the Seven Stars are from the Taoist tradition, and have been assimilated into Korean folk religion along with the indigenous deities of the mountains and sea. Buddhist temples in Korea often include, besides the main hall, a Seven Star Hall or Three Sages Hall in which are enshrined the deities of the Seven Stars, the mountain deities, and the Dokuson 独尊 or the dragon deities. This is probably due to the influence of the belief in the sea deity and other deities familiar to Cheju Islanders.

The ritual hall often serves also as the residence of the head priest, and usually consists of three or four rooms of a six to eight mat size, with a kitchen and closets. Normally there are no objects of worship or religious symbols contained in this building, and an altar is constructed only when needed for the performance of a shamanistic ritual called *kut*. The *simbang* and the clients stay in this dwelling during the performance of the *kut*. In Korea it is normally unthinkable that a *kut* would be performed in a tradi-

tional Buddhist temple. The social status of a Buddhist priest in Korea is not necessarily high, but that of a shaman is definitely low. It is also true that elements of folk religion such as beliefs in the deities of the Seven Stars and the mountain gods have been assimilated into Buddhism, but the class difference between Buddhist monks and shamans is strictly observed. There is a report that *kut* has been performed at a small number of private temples (Im D. 1981, Kim T. 1981) in Korea, but the details are unknown.

The fact that most of the “Korean temples” include a place for ascetic practice under a waterfall is a unique characteristic which sets them off from religious facilities in Korea. Some of these waterfalls are natural ones, but most have been built artificially by utilizing the sides of a valley to assemble stones and construct a waterfall of a few meters in height. There are many waterfalls in Ikoma, and the Korean mediums and *simbang* have actively sought out the waterfalls to cultivate ascetic practices, founding their own “temples” by rebuilding sites which have fallen into ruin when the former resident had no successor. Although recently the waterfalls of these “Korean temples” are not used very often for religious practice, they are thought to be, along with the *hondō*, one of the necessary components of a “temple.”

There is also a dwelling place for the priest apart from the ritual hall if the temple is big enough. In case the priest is a *simbang*, she usually lives in town and goes to the temple only for the performance of rituals.

The difference in sect does not seem to have much affect on the kind of activity at the “Korean temples.” The Choge sect is, as mentioned above, a Korean sect, and the Ikoma temples (nine) might have had some particular reason to claim alliance with this sect. The Wonhyo sect 元曉宗 (one temple) is also a Korean sect. The Shingon-shū Daigo-ha 真言宗醍醐派 (five temples) and Shugen Honshū 修驗本宗 (three temples) are representative sects of Japanese Shugendo. The Shingon-shū Kōya-san Daishi Kyōkai 高野山大師教会 (four temples) is a movement which attempts to unify *shugen* practitioners and faith healers (*kitōshi*), but the activities of this sect at Ikoma are not significantly different from the other *shugen* related temples. Others include Shingon-shū (five temples, sub-sect unknown), Nichiren-shū 日蓮宗 (one temple), Hossō-shū 法相宗 (one temple), and Ōbaku-shū 黄檗宗 (one temple). Over half of the temples do not claim any sectarian affiliation.

The shamanistic activity of the “Korean temples” will be discussed below. Their activities include daily services based on the chanting of sutras, and annual Buddhist observances, particularly Śākyamuni’s birthday (8 April) and *shichisei-sai* 七星祭 (the “Star Festival,” 7 September).

*Korean Simbang in Japan*

I have already discussed the Korean *simbang* who have founded the "Korean Temples." There are also many *simbang* who do not have their own temples but go to a client's home or rent a temple in Ikoma to perform *kut*. *Akut* is performed by groups of several members, and each group maintains a loose network of contacts. There is fierce competition between *simbang* and their groups, and there is no organization which unites them. It is not clear how many *simbang* there are, but I will discuss the *simbang* which I observed and heard during our survey on the "Korean temples" [See Chart II].

**Chart II. Types of Religionists of "Korean temples"**

Female <i>simbang</i> . . . . .	23
Male <i>simbang</i> . . . . .	1
Female priest . . . . .	3
Male priest . . . . .	19
(recently arrived from Korea . . . . .)	3)
Others . . . . .	5
Religiously inactive . . . . .	5
Unknown . . . . .	7
Total . . . . .	63

Female *simbang* who are in charge of a temple are called *bosaru* 菩薩 (Bodhisattva). This is a title used in Korea generally for Buddhist nuns or devout Buddhist lay women. Performing *kut* is the major occupation of these women, although they are also expected to perform the daily reading of the sutras and some annual Buddhist observances. There are also some women priests ("temple head") in charge of temples who are not *simbang*, who are *bosaru* in the original sense of the term. Former *simbang* who have are no longer able to perform shamanistic activities often manage a temple and rent it as a place for *kut*. Most of the priests have received their qualifications from a Shugendo or Shingon headquarters. This is the reason why many of the "Korean temples" claim to belong to Shugendo or Shingon sects. These sects put more emphasis on the individual activities of the religious practitioner rather than on adherence to certain doctrines or institutions, so a lower level qualification as a priest can be obtained easi-

ly upon completion of certain practices and remunerations. Also, the general public in Japan does not feel contempt toward shamanistic ascetics or faith healers, and so unlike in Korea, their activity to become Buddhists is not restricted. These qualifications are often merely a pretext, but there are a few male priests who can be said to be proper *shugen* priests. Even such temples, however, rent out their facilities for the performance of *kut*, and often the priest participates in the ceremony by reading sutras.

A list of religionists according to place of origin is shown in Chart III.

Cheju do . . . . .	17
Kyongsang nam do . . . . .	10
Kyongsang buk do . . . . .	3
Kyongsang do . . . . .	2
(unknown nam or buk)	
Cholla nam do . . . . .	2
Chungchong buk do . . . . .	1
Kangwon do . . . . .	1
P'yongan do . . . . .	1
Born in Japan . . . . .	2
Japanese . . . . .	2
Unknown . . . . .	22
Total . . . . .	63

The highest number of *simbang* are first generation people from Cheju, followed by those from Kyongsang. This reflects the nature of the Korean population in Osaka. However, at this time less than 20% of the Korean residents were born in Korea, and it is difficult to predict the future of the "Korean temples" as the religionists of Ikoma become older and pass away. Temples usually pass from hand to hand by being bought and sold, and it is a rare case when the temple is succeeded by a disciple or child of the former owner. Even if the successor is an offspring of the former owner, he or she will become merely a manager of the temple for renting it out for the performance of *kut* if, as is true in many cases, he or she does not possess spiritual powers. Recently there are cases where Buddhist monks from Korea were asked to become priests of the temples. These monks had come

to Japan to study or practice for a short time (from a few months to a few years), then settled in the Ikoma temples. At first they are generally against allowing the performance of *kut* in the temples, but recognize that given the circumstances, it cannot be helped. At times they also participate by reading sutras as a part-time job. It is not unusual for a temple to fall into decay if a buyer or successor cannot be found after the death of a *simbang/bosaru*.

Let us examine a few typical cases of Korean *simbang* in Japan:

\* Ōmura Kimiko, female, *simbang/bosaru* of Seikoku-ji (No. 14).

Born in 1921 in Chungchong buk do, and called to Japan by her father in 1925, Ōmura now has Japanese citizenship. She experienced spiritual inspirations from the time she was a child, and from her twenties she cultivated ascetic practices under a waterfall at Fushimi Inari in Kyoto for thirteen years, and learned to distinguish between deities. She had no teacher but practiced by herself. She continued her practice under the waterfall so much that the top of her head became bald. In 1952 she and her husband, who was also a medium, built the present temple at the former site of a water wheel. Her husband died in 1977. In 1983 she rebuilt the main hall. Between five and six hundred candles are donated at the time of the celebration of Śākyamuni's birthday.

Ōmura is still active and performs *kut*. Her followers come from Osaka, Tokyo, Hokkaido, and even Pusan in Korea. Sometimes they visit her, and sometimes she visits them. Occasionally she performs *kut* in Japanese homes. She says, "If I touch your body I can tell your disease immediately. Diseases caused by the curse of a spirit can be healed, except those which have burrowed deep into the bone." She has many disciples. Her daughter recently experienced a possession, and is expected to succeed her mother. Since an organization of believers is too troublesome, so she does not make one.

As an example of a female *simbang* who has her own temple, this case deserves top mention. This temple is now enjoying peak prosperity.

\* Song Kwi-Re, female, *simbang/bosaru* of Tokusei-ji (No. 30).

Born in 1912 in Cholla nam do. Says that "I came to Japan with my husband when I was twenty-three, and suffered much when I was young. When I asked the Japanese gods they said I would die unless I followed this path. I began healing diseases and telling fortunes at the age of thirty-two. I taught myself how to read the sutras and perform



*kut*. (The temple was built in 1951, and she received her qualifications from the Shingon-shū Kokubun-ji sect in 1978.) Now I have no one to rely on and only my disease is left. My followers don't come any more. Everyone is so heartless. . .” This is an example of the decay of a temple along with the decline of its *bosaru*. However, the activity of the temple has not come to a complete halt. A new Mizuko Kuyō-dō 水子地藏堂 (hall for memorializing aborted babies) has been built, and recently a Korean monk has arrived to act temporarily as a priest. The temple is also lent out for the performance of *kut*.

These two examples illustrate the typical career of a female *simbang*. Born in Korea and arriving in Japan before the war, they suffer from various ailments (including spiritual ones), become mediums after practicing under a waterfall at the advice of a Korean or Japanese folk religionist, perform *kut* for healing or other magical favors and gather an increasingly large number of followers, and build a temple at Ikoma. At the present time over half of the *simbang* in their sixties or seventies have retired and are facing the problem of succession for their temples.<sup>4</sup>

The following example is unusual in that it concerns a legitimate male *simbang* who came to Japan after the war. However, it illustrates well the intensity of change facing Ikoma temples, the society of people from Cheju Island in Osaka, and current Japanese–Korean relationships.

\* Kim Man-Bo, male, a *simbang* who faithfully transmits the Shamanism of Cheju Island in the Ikoma–Osaka area.

Born in Cheju Island, Korea, in 1930. His father was also a *simbang*. As a youth he loathed the idea of becoming a *simbang*, and was involved in the movement to abolish superstition. After getting married and serving a stint in the military, he bought fishing boats and began fishing along the coast, but ended in failure. From about this time he began to suffer from diseases of uncertain cause and which would not heal with modern medical treatment. He became a believer of Christianity and then Buddhism but his disease only got worse. Though he resisted it at first, he finally participated in a *kut* performed by *simbang* and his disease was healed. He performed a *simkut* (a ritual of passage to become a *simbang*) and was well received as a legitimate *simbang*. As his children grew older and suffered from discrimination as children

<sup>4</sup> Recently I heard that both of these two *simbang* have passed away, Ōmura in 1987 and Song in 1984.

of *simbang*, he quit his activity as a *simbang* and returned to the fishing industry, but in vain. In 1962 he abandoned everything and smuggled himself into Japan. He had no means to support himself, but was invited to join a group of *simbang*. However, he was secretly reported to the authorities and deported back to Korea. He tried to smuggle himself back into Japan in 1969, but the boat was wrecked and he failed. He then reached the highest level of *simbang* in Cheju Island. He tried to enter Japan secretly for the third time in 1976 and this time succeeded. First he went to Hōtoku-ji (No. 8) in Ikoma, where the priest urged him to become a Buddhist monk. He studied the sutras but couldn't get used to them, and returned to being a *simbang*. He worked under a Mr. Song,<sup>5</sup> a priest of Hōkō-ji (No. 33) in Narukawa-tani. In 1982 he turned himself in to the Bureau of Immigration, and finally received a special resident's permit with the help of a petition signed by his many followers. In 1983 he received a certificate of qualification from the Shingon-shū Daigo sect.

Kim became head priest of Hōkō-ji in 1983. However, the very next year he transferred his affiliation to the next-door Gokuraku-ji (No. 34), and a monk dwelling at Ryūshū-ji (No. 43) who had just arrived in Japan in 1982 became a new priest at Hōkō-ji. Due to complications Kim was late in reporting his "change of work location" to the city office, and had to spend two weeks in a house of detention while the situation was investigated.<sup>6</sup> Although Kim feels a strong sense of pride and responsibility with regard to his performing *kut*, he says that he always wants to quit this work.

There are now two groups in Osaka who faithfully maintain the Cheju Island traditions and can put on a large scale (week-long) *kut*. A three to five-day *kut* is common in Ikoma, with six or seven *simbang* participating. Kim is the leader of one of these groups. His group consists entirely of members born on Cheju Island, ranging in age from their thirties to their seventies. All except one are female. His wife (in her fifties) and another woman (in her thirties) are currently in training.

<sup>5</sup> Song was born on Cheju Island in 1914, and built Hōkō-ji in 1951. He was married to a Ms. Pak, a Cheju Island born *simbang* who was a relative of Mr. Kim. He received a qualifications certificate from the Shugen Honshū, Daikan Bukkyōkai 大韓仏教会 (Headquarters of Korean Buddhists), and the Shingon-shū Daigo sect. He passed away in 1982.

<sup>6</sup> Foreigners in Japan (of which 82% are Korean) are closely regulated by the Immigration Bureau and the police, and any delay in reporting a change in recorded items (within fourteen days) is cause to treat the subject as a defendant in a criminal case. See Kang 1987, p. 110.

The male member (in his seventies) comes from Tokyo to help out. The other two female members (one in her sixties and one in her seventies) are veteran *simbang*. The veteran members each have their own clients and undertake *kut*, and also ask Kim to help when needed. Thus the *simbang* are relatively independent yet involved in an informal network. *Simbang* from Cheju Island who visit Japan temporarily also help out with the *kut*. Kim will go anywhere in response to a request to perform a *kut*, but his main areas of activity are in temples such as Gokuraku-ji and Shintoku-in (No. 50). The later was built in 1966 by Korean monks as a temple of the Shingon-shū Daigo sect. When a new priest took over, the name was changed to Hōten-ji. However, he became ill, so an adopted son (a Mr. Lee of the Wonhyo school) of one of the founders (Mr. Hong) was called from Korea in 1985 to serve as the priest. The name and sectarian affiliation were changed back to their original ones at this time.

We can see that there is a great deal of change and uncertainty even among the temples associated with Kim.<sup>7</sup> There are unordained *simbang* who follow their own program of practice and learning ceremonies and the reading of sutras, and there are also legitimate *simbang* who, like the members of Kim's group, became *simbang* by going through the traditional process. Large-scale *kut* is rarely performed these days on Cheju Island, but they are performed frequently in the Osaka-Ikoma area. Also, on Cheju Island most of the *simbang* are involved in other occupations (such as farming), but in Japan most are full-time *simbang*. The reason for these differences is that in Korea strong political pressures were brought to bear in order to achieve modernization, and Shamanism suffered various attacks as a "superstition," while in Japan this kind of political pressure did not exist. Also, in the midst of the economic prosperity of Japan, though the Koreans have suffered from discrimination, they can afford to support a *kut*, which is very expensive. The lifestyle of those involved in agriculture or fishing on Cheju Island is very different from that of Osaka, but the demand for *kut* has not disappeared. In fact one could even say that it is a better business in Japan. The competition among the *simbang* is very intense, and there is some hostility between the groups. Also, the traditional disdain for *simbang* continues to be felt among Korean residents in Japan. However, as long as there is a religious demand, recruitment of *simbang* will continue among the Korean residents in Japan and from the home country of Korea, and it is likely that Korean Shamanism will continue to sur-

<sup>7</sup> In April 1988 Kim bought a temple, Dairin-ji (No. 46), and re-named it Daikō-in.

vive among the Koreans in Japan.

The “Korean temples” have served to revive Korean Shamanism while combining Korean Buddhism with Japanese *shugen*-type folk religion. What are the religious reasons for this development? Hardacre offers two reasons (1984, p. 64):

1. Since the practice and career of a *simbang* were formed after coming to Japan without any legitimate process, the various religious elements experienced in their lives were assimilated into their activity at the “Korean temples.”
2. For female clients, traditional Shamanism and Buddhism mutually supplement each other, in that both deal with belief in attaining worldly benefits. Thus the combination of both under the rubric of the “Korean temples” was quite welcome.

Four further points could be made.

3. The *simbang* could claim a higher status in religious ranking by emphasizing their identity as Buddhists.
4. Orthodox Buddhist temples were slow to respond to the needs of the resident Korean society in Japan,<sup>8</sup> so there were few social restrictions to maintain the boundary between Buddhism and Shamanism.
5. The Shugendo schools of Japanese Buddhism already included many varieties of mediumistic activity, and were open to accepting the Korean shamans.
6. The Ikoma mountains in the suburbs of Osaka have traditionally been a breeding ground for a variety of folk religions. The existence of waterfalls for ascetic practice assisted in forming this new type of folk religion called “Korean temples.” These waterfalls served an important role in the *simbang*’s practice and became the base on which the temples were built.

*The Concept of Spirits and Ritual Process in Shamanism.*

The world of Korean Shamanism is supported by an animistic and polytheistic belief in spirits. The pantheon includes deities such as the heavenly emperor, the gods of the Seven Stars, the mountain god, the dragon (sea) god, the god of childbirth, and the ancestral deity of shamans; there are also the ten kings of hell and their officers; there are the genii of the village, the spirits of the dead, plants and animals, and all sorts of demonic beings (Hyun 1985, pp. 145–169). Japanese deities such as Shōtoku Taishi, Kōbō

<sup>8</sup> A legitimate temple of the Choge sect, Fugen-ji, for example, was not built until 1968.

Daishi, Hachiman, Inari, and gods of the Ikoma mountains are also enshrined.

Korean Shamanism has many variations according to its locale. The strong trance with possession found in the north becomes weaker towards the south, where the message of the Cheju Island deities is given through divination rather than possession (Hyun 1985, p. 41). However, the proclamation of the *simbang* through possession by a spirit of the dead is an indispensable part of the *kut* of Cheju Island, and thus contains a clear characteristic of Shamanism.

The shamanistic rituals performed at Osaka–Ikoma consist mostly of ceremonies presided over by a housewife who presents petitions for her family. On Cheju Island, village festivals used to be performed, but there is no such occasion among the resident Koreans in Japan which is celebrated for the local area or group as a whole. The purposes of the ceremony include the healing of disease, prayers requesting the birth of a child, family problems, and memorials for the dead or the ancestors. Various misfortunes are attributed to the spirits of the dead who suffer an unhappy death and are insufficiently memorialized, or to local deities who have not been treated properly. Dealing with these spirits is generally the major theme of a *kut*. It is also believed that all deities, spirits, and various demons should be invited to participate, so that they do not become resentful. Funerals are usually conducted in the Confucian style, but after the ceremony it is usual for the women to gather around the *simbang* for a memorial service for the dead.

In the Osaka–Ikoma area the shamanistic rituals are called *ogami* 拝み or *kuyō* 供養 (in Japanese) as well as *kut*. The Cheju Island-style *kut* is performed as follows. First a large ten meter pole is raised in the precincts of the temple, and this is decorated with numerous flags or banners. One side of a long white cloth is tied to the top of the pole, and the other side is affixed in a criss-cross pattern to the ceiling of the room wherein the ritual is held. These symbolize the pillar and bridge by which the deities and spirits follow and descend to the ritual place. An all-out *kut* which lasts for over a week is made up of over twenty rites, each with their own individual theme and form.

The common pattern, however, is that of inviting the deities, offering a banquet, offering of prayers, entertaining the deities, and sending away the deities (Hyun 1985, p. 276). These rites are accompanied by a powerful rhythm from the beating of gongs, chimes, and drums, and presided over in turn by a properly dressed *simbang*. For the “inviting of the deities” the *simbang* goes outside and announces to heaven the main purposes of

the ceremony to be held, dancing strenuously while holding a paper banner. The deity descends to this banner, which is brought into the room and laid on the altar. The "banquet" consists of offering rice, *sake*, rice cakes, fish, fruit, and so forth to the deities, accompanied by the singing of songs. The offerings are changed three times a day during the ceremony at meal-times. The "prayers" consist of requests to the deities and a divination of their answers. The divination is repeated over and over until a good answer is obtained. Often a *simbang* is possessed by a spirit of the dead and tearfully discloses suffering or resentment, and then expresses thanks for the offerings, and the clients respond with tears of their own. Various deities or spirits may possess the *simbang* and express dissatisfaction or sorrow, and offerings must be made for each of these. "Entertaining the deities" consists of the verbal *bonpuri* (recitation of myths) or theatrical presentation of stories concerning the deities. Cheju Island is especially rich in *bonpuri*, and the *simbang* serve as transmitters of these myths. However, self-taught *simbang* are not familiar with the *bonpuri*, and sometimes the recitation of sutras is substituted in the *kut* instead of *bonpuri* (Suzuki 1986, p. 56). The "sending away of the deities" is done after it is determined, through divination, that the deities or spirits of the dead are satisfied with the offerings and will guard and protect the family who sponsored the *kut*. The important point here is that the spirits of the dead who receive these offerings are not limited, as in Confucian rites, to the ancestors of the male line, but include the spirits of the dead from both sides of the family. This is because it is usually the wife who sponsors a *kut*, and the ceremony is more closely related to the actual family life and ancestral spirits than to an abstract lineage.

In each of these rites the leading deities are invited to descend and act out their role one by one. At each rite all of the other deities are also invited to descend. Only the "sending away" of the deities is performed all at once at the end of a large ceremony. Each of the rites maintains its own independent structure and a large *kut* consists of a stringing together of these rites. This structure of a *kut* also contains many undefined or spontaneous elements.<sup>9</sup> In many observed cases the rite is shortened or simplified in response to restrictions of time. However, the important point is the possession. A *simbang* has the ability to control a possession, but it is not always performed completely. A spirit can possess the *simbang* without warning, and thus the order of the rite is changed. At time an immature *simbang*

<sup>9</sup> That the ceremonies observed by Hardacre appeared unstructured, having "no single theme" (1984, p. 53), might have been due to the presence of many of these undefined elements.

will lose control and it becomes necessary to conduct an unanticipated rite for getting rid of a possession.

The Rite of the Ten Kings (*jūōsai* 十王祭) is considered important and is particularly popular among these many rites. It is often performed all by itself. The "ten kings" are the ten deities who rule over the ten realms of hell, as taught in Chinese Buddhism. The spirits of the dead are captured by the servants of these ten kings and brought to the entrance to hell. Here they are judged by the ten kings. The dead, however, are not tortured on the basis of their moral responsibilities, but continue to suffer the misfortunes and resentments from their former lives. A great memorial offering which can be given by the living is to moderate the resentment of the dead and the anger of the ten kings, and thus influence this judicial process. The special feature of this rite is that the spirits of the dead go through a process in which they are transformed into protective deities by passing through the twelve gates of the ten rulers of hell, and this is realized through an impressive mimetic scene (see Iida 1987).

However, a family's happiness and the complete purification of the spirits of the dead cannot be accomplished in one ritual. *Kut* must be performed over and over in order to continue to pacify the spirits.

#### *Social and Cultural Significance of Korean Shamanism in Japan*

Among resident Koreans, Shamanism is supported mainly by wives of first generation Koreans. In male society the beliefs in and rituals of Shamanism are considered superstition, and usually men do not participate in *kut*. The fact that *kut* require a large expense account is another reason for men to oppose the performance of *kut*. Even a short one requires tens of thousands of yen, and a major *kut* can cost from hundreds of thousands to millions of yen. However, if a housewife feels the need, she will raise the necessary funds, even hiding it from her husband or getting into a family fight in order to have a *kut* performed.

The two-layered, mutually supplementary cultural principles of Confucianism = male and Shamanism = female is considered a characteristic of Korean culture (Akiba T. 1980, p. 137). It was the tradition of Shamanism which satisfied the interest in spiritual, religious matters which were denied by Confucian rationalism. This Shamanism was supported through the years by the women, who sought ecstatic religious liberation as a release from the strong sense of repression (*han*, see Lee O. 1982) which they experienced in their male-centered families. Also, the Confucian culture which one-sidedly favored idealistic legitimacy and disdained "pragmatic"

responses, proved powerless in the difficult historical situation which the Koreans experienced under Japanese rule. In this situation it was the women who supported the work in the home, and the women still have the strongest power in the home.

The women among the Korean residents in Japan each know a number of *simbang* and they mutually compare the reputations of the *simbang*. The relations between *simbang* and petitioners are not fixed, though they are bound together in an informal network. If a *simbang* performs effective *kut*, these relations may deepen, or, on the other hand, the clients may no longer need his services. The occasion of a *kut* may bring together daughters and in-laws and other female relatives, thus providing the opportunity for a "transient *communitas*" among those of a common ethnic culture (Hardacre 1984, p. 67). The shamanistic faith is passed on to the generation of Koreans born in Japan through participation in such *kut*. However, often the younger people do not agree to participate, and there are cases when the petitioner is the only participant. A large-scale *kut* can be held as a culmination of the past history of a family (Iida 1987, p. 133). Recently there have been cases of economically successful families sponsoring *kut* as an expression of gratitude to their ancestors, in which even the husband has participated. However, in these cases the husband does not wish that his participation become widely known.

Finally, let us examine the social and cultural significance which Shamanism has in contemporary Korean society in Japan. As mentioned above, the *simbang* still suffer from some discrimination within Korean society in Japan. The fact that the *simbang* have a certain status within the informal daily network of the Korean women does not mean that this discrimination is liquidated. One reason given for this discrimination is that the *simbang*'s work involves coming in contact with "impurity" (*kegare* 穢れ). This "impurity" refers to the attributes of the spirits of the dead and various demons which are resentful and bring about misfortunes. According to Durkheim, the evil nature of the spirits of the dead is none other than an expression of the collective misfortune of a society (1912, p. 590). Ordinarily, the impurity of death is "purified" through the ritual of mourning, and the normality of the community is restored (p. 575). However, the misfortunes which have historically accumulated among the Koreans in Japan is a basis for an immense store of spiritual evil which cannot be easily "purified." The *simbang* are professionally involved in this realm of the spirits of the dead and continue to suffer a caste-like discrimination. This cannot be explained merely as the remains of a traditional concept, but rather has its roots in the collective misfortunes of the Korean people and



the Korean residents in Japan. The discrimination towards the *simbang* among Korean residents in Japan is rooted in the history of the formation of the Korean society in Japan, and in the social structure of Japan which even today continues to reproduce discrimination.

Shamanism, for the Korean women in Japan, is a means to religiously resolve serious problems in their daily life. It also functions, through the performance of the *kut* ritual, as a way to reconfirm their ethnic and cultural identity. Folk religion is not something limited to the world of pre-modern customs in agricultural societies, but is a living tradition which is developing further among modern urban dwellers on the basis of a fundamental ethnic religious consciousness. Folk religion in Japan has served as the womb from which many new religious movements have been born in modern times (Shimazono 1978, p. 38). New religions or mass movements can develop on the basis of the patterns of thinking and religiosity of folk religion. It has been pointed out that the concept of deities found in Shamanism is one factor which supports the extensive progress made by Christianity in Korean society (Ryu T. 1975, p. 34). Also, the development of songs and dance, theater, literature, and so forth in Korean culture is profoundly related to Shamanism. This cultural tradition is now being reevaluated by young people in modern Korea and Korean residents in Japan. In this sense the tradition of Shamanism should not be lightly dismissed as an irrational superstition among first-generation housewives, but can serve the young generation of Korean residents in Japan as a legacy for the formation of a new culture and identity.

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