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Belief in Malevolent Spirits

Meyer Fortes distinguished ancestor worship from cults of the dead in general by stating that "the attainment of ancestorhood and the ritual services of ancestor worship necessitates legitimate descendants" [1976:5]. If we are to adhere to his distinction, research on Korean ancestor worship would be limited to the study of Confucian ancestor worship. This would make the research of Korean religious faiths inadequate with respect to the deaths of family members, however, because some family members are not commemorated in Confucian ancestral rituals. Indeed, Fortes himself suggests that "an overall study of ancestor worship should include an examination of notions concerning what life is and what death means, as well as beliefs concerning afterlife....the dead are not necessarily promoted to the status of ancestors to be worshipped. The dead may be conceptualized as dangerous spirits who must be propitiated with sacrifices and gifts to keep to secure their good will towards the living" [1980:8].

In Korea, dangerous spirits appear in shamanistic rituals honoring the dead.1) Accordingly, research on Korean religious beliefs and customs must also include shamanistic forms of ancestor worship that predate the introduction of Confucianism in Korea.2) This paper will analyze Korean ancestor worship in this broader sense, focusing on the relationship between the broader category of the dead and their living relatives.

Confucian ancestor worship ritualizes lineal kin relations and is based on filial piety, while shamanistic rituals for the dead are based on beliefs that the deceased may afflict their living family members if these spirits hold grudges against them. With respect to Confucian ancestral rituals, the issues of why the ancestors are worshipped and the perception of ancestors as guardian deities have already been examined elsewhere [Ch’oe Kil-sŏng 1986] and will not be detailed here. The present paper approaches the problem by focusing on the bitter grudge that some of the dead are said to hold against the living and on the relationship between the dead and the living that they afflict.

This paper directly addresses why ancestors bring misfortune upon the living, a topic that has attracted little research thus far. The extant ethnographic literature on Korea has treated the topic only peripherally, stating that those who fail to become ancestors (in the Confucian sense) afflict the living. Yet, the phenomenon of spirits that cause misfortune is quite widespread and demands study.3)
Afflictions from the Dead

The dead may be classified into three categories: kwisin, chosang, and mangyöng or mangja. Kwisin may be used to mean spiritual beings of any kind, but when used with regard to dead family members, the term refers to either dead children or those who died before marriage, clearly distinguishing these deceased persons from ancestors (chosang). A mangyöng or mangja, on the other hand, is not absolutely separate from chosang or kwisin: a mangyöng or mangja may later become either a chosang or a kwisin.

Confucian rituals are offered by patrilineal descendants, the eldest son of the deceased taking primary responsibility for these rites. In the context of Confucian rituals, a mangyöng or mangja is the spirit of a person just after death, when the family is still in mourning, before it becomes a full-fledged ancestor. Compared to a true ancestor, the pre-ancestral mangyöng has a strong tendency to torment people. In shamanism, rituals are offered to kwisin and mangyöng, both of which have the power to afflict, but it is not clearly established who should offer such rituals.

Spirits capable of afflicting living family members (kwisin and mangyöng) come in several forms. There are spirits of babies and children, spirits of young people who died before marriage (mongdal kwisin), and spirits of people who had been married but died without leaving any children. None of these three classes of spirits are included in the Confucian category of ancestors, and so Confucian rituals are not offered to them. Yet these spirits, however anomalous from the Confucian point of view, may become recipients of shamanistic rituals. A fourth category of spirits capable of afflicting the living is comprised of all the dead during the mourning period prescribed for them by Confucianism. Both Confucianism and shamanism treat the spirits at this stage with care.

With respect to how kwisin and mangyöng torment the living, let us next consider exactly who afflicts whom.

Infant Spirits

When children die, their parents ritually weep in the same way as when an adult dies, but no funeral is held and no formal burial mound is built. If the corpse is buried, the place of internment is marked with a simple stone only. The corpse of a child may also be either thrown away or hung on a tree [Aono and Kim 1924:74]. Moreover, dead children are not commemorated in Confucian rituals thereafter [Murayama 1931]. All these actions carry the meaning that children who have died are not considered full-fledged persons.

Dead young children are thought to have mystic powers, and the spirits of these children often afflict the living by possessing them. Some of the possessed persons become shamans, called t’aeju mudang. The source of religious power for this type of shaman is the possessing spirit of the child (t’aeju). Son Chin-t’ae records two cases of t’aeju mudang who killed children in order to gain supernatural power:
one starved a child to death, and the other killed a child by cutting off its tongue. Through the spirits of these children they hoped to gain greater religious power [Son 1948:337–338]. The spirits of children often express their grievances through the speech of shamans they possess, with statements like "Mom, I couldn't have enough of your milk [Ch'oe Ch'ong-yö and Sö Tae-sök 1974:369]." I observed several *t'aeju mudang* in the city of Taegu and in Kangwön and Kyönggi Provinces [Ch'oe Kil-söng 1969:60]. One of the male shamans I observed was possessed by the spirit of a child whom the shaman had formerly honored as his *t'aeju* but later abandoned. The spirit expressed ill-will toward the shaman for his betrayal.

Occasionally, the spirits of deceased children even afflict their own mothers. Given the close bond that ideally exists between mother and child, these cases pose an interpretive problem. While the notion that dead persons afflict the living is also found in other East Asian societies, most often the dead are thought to afflict the living because of a grievance that must be remedied [Ahern 1973:185; Yamaori 1979:106]. This interpretation seems to be inadequate for explaining the Korean case of a dead child tormenting its own mother.

One explanation lies in whether the deceased child's attentions are interpreted as a punishment or as a message. Affliction can mean either of these things. In the Korean language, afflictions are called "*t'al*". The word derives from "*t'at*" which originally meant "cause," but since the Chosôn Dynasty (1392–1910), it has come to mean "sickness" or "accident" [Yi Nam-dök 1985:353]. Today, *t'at* has the negative meaning of "disease," but it probably first had the meaning of "a message from a god." It is often said that a disease can be cured if one simply recognizes that the disease is a sign from a god. If a person does not recognize the *t'at*, the illness can become very serious and the person may even die. We may distinguish between *t'at* as a message from a god and *t'al* as a penalty from a god. Thus, the affliction caused by a child can be interpreted as simply a message, a call for attention. A dead child afflicts its mother because of love and because it wants to be embraced, rather than because it holds a grudge against her.

The belief that children may afflict their mothers relates to the common Korean notion that ideal happiness involves a long life, the opposite of which is an early death or a short life. Any death is unhappy because it terminates life that could have been longer, but the death of a child stands in sharpest contrast to a long life. Thus it is considered the unhappiest of all events. A dead child and a living mother pose a basic contradiction, so the child is thought to hold a grudge against her.

The anguish felt by the mother herself also plays a key role. A Korean proverb says: "A parent is buried within a mountain, but when a child dies, it is buried in the parent's heart." This saying indeed expresses the deep sadness of bereaved parents. It is the duty of the parents to raise children; when a mother is possessed by her child, she is expressing her own pain for not being able to fulfill that duty. We see very ambivalent emotions—a mixture of mutual love and hatred, affection and guilt—projected onto the spirit of the child.

Finally, the afflictions of infant spirits are related to the manner in which
Confucianism treats dead children. The death of children is called sang in Confucian terms, and no Confucian rituals are offered for those who die as children. These dead are truly unfortunate because they do not receive ancestral rituals from anyone, and they barely receive any attention in the realm of Confucian ancestor worship. The belief that dead children afflict their mothers expresses the responsibility the living feel towards the dead: these dead should also be honored somehow.

**Mongdal Kwisin, or Spirits of the Unmarried Dead**

*Mongdal kwisin* are spirits of adults who died before marrying. The spirits of unmarried young women, in particular, are thought to be the most dangerous and are greatly feared. Thus, the term *mongdal kwisin* usually signifies the spirits of dead, unmarried, young women. Female shamans perform posthumous marriage ceremonies for *mongdal kwisin* [Ch’oe Kil-sŏng 1984:125–127]. However, these posthumously wed spirits still do not receive any Confucian ancestral rituals, although many *mongdal kwisin* are deified as guardian goddesses of boats (*paesŏnang*) and of wider regional societies and communities (expressed by various terms, such as “haerang”).

Posthumous marriages occur in many societies throughout the world. They are especially widespread in China, Korea, and Japan [Takeda 1990:199], where they always involve shamans. In Korea, it is thought that the dead afflict the living because they are unhappy at never being able to marry. So, shamans hold marriage ceremonies in an attempt to soothe these spirits. I personally observed instances of such ceremonies, mainly in the Kyŏngsang and Chŏlla provinces, and also conducted interviews about these marriages on Cheju Island. The data collected through these field surveys support the view that *mongdal kwisin* afflict the living because they want to be married. However, almost no research has been conducted on when, in what way, and whom they torment. Consequently, systematic comparisons with similar customs in Japan and China have yet to be made.

As already noted, Confucian rituals are reserved for the dead who had been married during their lifetimes. Arrangements are occasionally made to offer Confucian rituals to males who died prior to marriage (see next section), but in no circumstances are they offered to deceased single women. Indeed, it may be due to this dearth of rituals for deceased unmarried women that their spirits are most strongly feared and therefore ministered to by shamans.

In various areas, the spirits of unmarried dead women have afflicted local magistrates who consequently died under unusual circumstances. Attempting to ward off their affliction, magistrates have erected monuments honoring these spirits as chaste women. Murayama explained that the “grudge-holding dead and monuments for chaste women are closely related to each other.”

Koreans consider that a girl’s virginity and widow’s chastity must be scrupulously guarded. When a suggestive rumor spreads, the accused girl or
Belief in Malevolent Spirits

widow, out of vexation, may take recourse to suicide by hanging herself or taking poison. She does this to prove her innocence, though sometimes the rumor turns out to be true. The spirits of the dead, holding such grudges, tend to afflict county magistrates or provincial governors more than anyone else. This superstitious fear is extremely strong. If three magistrates of the same county die in succession, their deaths are attributed to some grudge-holding spirit of a dead woman, even though their consecutive deaths may have been purely chance occurrences. In such cases, it is customary that a higher yamen, or administrative office, reports the case to the central government, and the county is abolished and annexed to another county, or else the county yamen is moved to a different town [1929:185–186].

This quotation conveys the fear that Koreans had toward the spirits of unmarried females. I have heard such stories since I was a child. But even if the spirits of the unmarried dead are thought to bring about misfortune because they are envious of the weddings of living people [Ha 1982:435], we still need to explain why they afflicted county magistrates, why county administrative districts were abolished, and why the seats of counties were moved. Two explanations seem possible.

One explanation is that the spirits torment those who are in the same geographic area. Geographic factors play a strong role in affliction by spirits. For example, it is often said that drownings and traffic accidents occur repeatedly in particular places. It is thought that when individuals die unusual deaths, the objects of their scorn are not only family members but may also include people who happen to live in the same village or region. If geographical propinquity is responsible for the spirit of the dead afflicting the living in the same locality, this is in sharp contrast to the logic of Confucian ancestor worship, according to which the dead (ancestors) and the living (descendants) are linked through patrilineal ties of kinship.

Thus, mongdal kwisin afflicted magistrates during the Choson Dynasty because the latter were symbols of their respective counties. County offices were moved to other towns for the same reason. As stated before, we still find today that female mongdal kwisin are deified as guardian goddesses of communities and wider regional societies. This practice may reflect the belief that affliction by spirits who have experienced unusual deaths is not restricted by blood ties and spreads throughout a region as a whole.

Another explanation for why magistrates are afflicted is related to their status. There are many folktales in which girls of humble origin are married to men of high status. A case in point is a tale concerning the Tano Festival held every year on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month in Kangnung, a city in Kangwŏn Province. This story tells of a beautiful girl from a Ch’oe family who was carried away by a tiger and was married to a distinguished Buddhist monk with the title of kuksa, a term designating the highest-ranking monk. Another instance is the story of Ch’unhyang, a famous legend transmitted in Namwon of South Cholla Province. In this tale, a promising boy and a girl fall in love with each other, but when the boy
leaves for the capital, another man tries to force the girl to become his concubine. At a critical moment, the boy, who has attained a high rank, returns to rescue the girl and marries her.

These folktales probably reflect beliefs about ideal marriage partners. The ideas that traditional Korean women possess with respect to marriage reflect a strong consciousness of the social status of potential marriage partners. When *mongdal kwisin* afflict people such as magistrates, it symbolically expresses not only the spirits’ strong desire to get married, but also their desire to marry people of high social status.

What is most central to the issue of the spirits of unmarried women, however, is the importance of marriage. Especially in times when all women were expected to get married, not being able to marry was truly unenviable. Marriage introduced a woman into her husband’s patrilineal group, and after death she was qualified to be honored as an ancestor. If a woman reached a marriageable age but died before getting married, she would not qualify as an ancestor.

In contrast to today, in a traditional society marriage was not the result of an individual’s will. Instead, it was seen as an uncontrollable event, decided by others and to be accepted almost as one’s predetermined destiny. Koreans quote a proverb which says, “A priest cannot shave his own head.” This expresses the idea that marriage is something our parents manage for us. Moreover, it was the duty of parents to marry off their children. Accordingly, when offsprings die before getting married, they bear hatred toward their parents for failing to carry out this duty. Since the unmarried dead have lost the possibility of becoming ancestors, they were thought to bear extra resentment for not being allowed to marry [Wolf 1974].

In addition to a long life, another ideal of happiness in the minds of Koreans has been to produce legitimate offspring and thereby become ancestors. If unmarried people die after cohabiting together for a lifetime, leaving behind children, they may become ancestors if they receive a posthumous wedding. However, a wedding is a necessary but not sufficient condition for attaining the status of ancestor. In addition to a wedding ceremony, one must live with a spouse, and leave behind at least one son in order to become an ancestor. All these requirements carry important meanings even in the world after death.

A couple usually begins living together after their wedding ceremony, but when a wedding is not possible at the initial stage of their union, it may be held later. The following case, which was told to the author by a certain Mrs. K, illustrates that wedding ceremonies are not always intended as initiation rites or to announce the commencement of living together. For many years, Ms. Y, who ran a restaurant, had been romantically involved with Mr. K. All the while, Mrs. K had been aware of her husband’s relationship with Ms. Y; indeed, the two women had even met each other. When Ms. Y reached her sixtieth birthday, she and Mr. K decided to go through a wedding ceremony. They had discussed the idea together with Mrs. K. The wedding was prompted by other people advising them that Ms. Y’s spirit
would possess and afflict someone if she died unmarried. In other words, a marriage ceremony is even more vital for the dead than for the living. Hence, if marriage cannot be done during one's lifetime, it is good to do after death.

The Dead Who Have No One to Offer Them Rituals

In studies of ancestor worship in different societies, it is generally understood that ancestors may be either benevolent or malevolent. Fortes explained that among the Tallensi of West Africa, the image of ancestors who afflict their descendants grows out of relationships between despotic and controlling fathers and their sons [1961]. Similarly, Jack Goody postulated that the conflict which arises in the parent-child relationship concerning inheritance is the structural basis for seeing ancestors as malevolent [1962:410]. In contrast, Maurice Freedman stressed that Chinese ancestors are benevolent [as quoted in Ahern 1973:191–193]. In some excellent research carried out in Taiwan, however, Emily Ahern found that Chinese ancestors also possess some strongly malevolent characteristics. Based on the reasoning of Fortes, she argued that the image that a young child forms of his or her father is closely related to that person's views of his or her ancestors [1973:216].

While Ahern's discussion is relevant for analyzing Koreans' images of ancestors, both she and Fortes concentrate too much on parent-child relations. In my own view, the relation between grandparents and grandchildren is of utmost importance. In Korean society, where the stem family prevails, children live with and are raised by both parents and grandparents. They are disciplined by parents but receive much loving care from grandparents. The contrast between these relationships is sharp.

Children receive a lot of love from the grandparent's generation or any older generation. They think of their ancestors as being not so much their parents, but rather from higher-up generations, and they are conscious of extremely deep affection from these ancestors. In other words, attitudes toward ancestors in Korea are not based on the image of parents, in contrast to the situation that Fortes inferred from the study of ancestor worship among the Tallensi.

Yet, the image of affectionate ancestors in Korea holds only in the context of Confucian ancestral rituals. In belief systems other than Confucianism, we see very different images of ancestors. These other images become more salient at rituals for the dead who did not leave any offspring.

In Confucianism, it is the duty of descendants to offer rituals to their lineal ancestors. Conversely, dead children and the unmarried dead are not commemorated because they did not leave any children. Moreover, people do not offer rituals to the dead of junior generations, so parents do not commemorate their dead children in Confucian rituals.

On Changgwans Island in Changhing County, South Cholla Province, the dead without children (both married and unmarried) are called "ancestors without owners" (imja ōmnun chosang). These spirits are said to cause misfortune if they are not cared for with Confucian rituals, but to bring fortune to those who look
after their rituals. On the advice of a shaman, such spirits are usually cared for by parents, brothers, and other close relatives. In other words, in this situation, older generations make an exception and offer rituals to younger generations. This is especially true when the dead person was the eldest son of the primogeniture descendant (chongson) of a lineage.

The islanders say that rights to offer rituals for these “ancestors without owners” should be given to those who need the spirits’ blessings. Rights to honor these spirits change hands at the advice of a shaman. For instance, a villager who had been suffering from a series of misfortunes visited a shaman. Upon the shaman’s divination, he received an “ancestor without owners” from one of his relatives. If misfortune continues to fall on the new caretaker, the “ancestor without owners” may be returned to its original caretaker.

The rituals for ancestors without owners are Confucian in style. But, as the shamans’ intervention in assigning ritual responsibilities indicates, these ceremonies for the dead are not based on Confucian filial piety. They are shamanistic, magico-religious rituals based on the belief in spirit affliction. We may also view them as combinations of shamanistic death rituals and Confucian ancestral rituals.

**Ghosts: Mangyông and Mangja**

There are other beliefs and ritual practices where Confucianism and shamanism intersect. During the two-year mourning period, the deceased, referred to as “ghost” (mangyông or mangja), is polluted by death, and both Confucian and shamanistic rituals are offered. These rituals include funeral rituals as well as various shamanistic rituals of purification.

In the Confucian ritual sequence, the completion of the mourning period and return to a normal state are called t’alsang, or “to get out of mourning.” This point is marked by a ceremony, called tamje, during which both the body and the emotions of the deceased are properly laid to rest.

At about the same time as the Confucian tamje is held, a shamanistic ritual called t’alsang kut is also held. However, the consequences of these rituals are different. In the Confucian ceremony, the dead person turns into an ancestor who is considered to have basically the same existence as a living person, the only difference being that the ancestor is invisible. That deceased person is honored in ancestor worship from then on. In the shamanistic ritual, by contrast, the deceased becomes a god to whom no ancestral rituals are offered thereafter. This reflects the difference between Confucian and shamanistic ideas of afterlife.

Confucianism and shamanism have been reconciled and together form the religious beliefs and practices concerning the dead in Korea. This synthesis is symbolically evident in the shamanistic ritual for terminating mourning (t’alsang kut). The very name of the rite combines the Confucian word “t’alsang” and the shamanistic word kut (shaman’s ritual), thereby indicating a merging of the substance of Confucianism with the rituals of shamanism. In my own observations of these rites, Confucian rituals and kut have sometimes been held together. For
spirits of people who never married or had unlucky deaths, however, only shamanistic rituals were held in the t'alsang kut.

During the mourning period, Confucian and shamanistic death rituals are invariably held side by side. When the deceased has suffered an unlucky death, however, the Confucian part of the rituals is either simplified or abbreviated. Although the dead are referred to as ghosts (mangyông) during mourning in both Confucian and shamanistic contexts, they are viewed differently. In shamanism, they are at the first stage of becoming gods, while from the viewpoint of Confucian rituals, they are on the point of becoming ancestors. Despite this difference, however, Confucianism and shamanism are at their most coalescent during the mourning period. Those dead who will later become ancestors share the trait of the unfortunate dead—both groups are equally under the pollution of death. Accordingly, both groups of the dead are embraced in shamanistic beliefs.

Dualism or Complement?

Confucianism and shamanism represent fundamentally different and contrasting attitudes towards ancestors in Korea.

1) In shamanism, ancestors are not restricted to patrilineal forebears; maternal ancestors, wife’s ancestors, and women who die unmarried are also among the ancestors whom shamans appease. In this sense, we may regard shamanism as a women’s religion. The implication is not that Confucianism and shamanism are mutually exclusive, or that shamanism is based on uterine principles alone, but only that shamanistic rituals include those whom Confucian rituals ignore. Instead of the agnatic principle that is central to Confucianism, fear of the dead and the notion of affliction by the dead are the important considerations in shamanism.

2) Confucian rituals worship as ancestors those who completed a normal course of life and went through a series of rites of passage, including marriage ceremonies. Those who attained prestigious social positions are worshipped particularly carefully as focal ancestors of lineages and lineage branches. In other words, Confucianism places special emphasis on agnation, social prestige, and rites of passage. Conversely, it is at best indifferent to, and often tends to look down upon, non-agnates, the socially weak, and those who died prematurely.

Those dead who did not complete a full set of rites of passage are pitiful. Confucianism ignores them, but shamanism looks after these dead and propitiates them because of belief in affliction they would otherwise cause. Thus, Confucianism and shamanism can be regarded as complementary to each other.

3) Confucian ancestral rituals are confined to family members and relatives. The normal practice is to offer memorial services on the anniversary of death for four generations. During the Chosôn Dynasty, the court would issue special permission so that men of outstanding achievements could be commemorated forever (pulch'onwi). In practice, however, even men of such fame are worshipped primarily by their descendants. In other words, while Confucian ancestor worship acknowledges the societal factor insofar as special importance is attached to
distinguished ancestors, it still places most emphasis on the prestige such ancestors bestow on their descendants. Kinship ties remain crucial.

We can say that kinship is also central in shamanistic beliefs concerning the dead, in that the dead propitiated in shamanistic rituals cling to their family members and relatives. However, the influence of these dead extends to nonrelatives in the local society as well. This may be due to the dead person's desire to attract the community's attention to the cause of his or her misery.

In sum, we discern two types of ancestor worship in Korea, representing two contrary and contrasting attitudes towards the dead. In the conceptual framework of Melford Spiro, ancestors are not only revered through the extension of filial piety but also feared by their descendants, and this difference reflects contrasting mental representations of forebears [Spiro 1981:45]. On the one hand, there is ancestor worship in a narrower sense, conducted in Confucian style which is in accordance with Fortes' definition. On the other hand, there is ancestor worship in a wider sense which includes shamanistic rituals for the dead. The former is offered to patrilineal ancestors who died normal deaths, while the latter is based on the belief in spirit affliction and propitiates those who died unfortunate deaths.

Ever since Akiba's *Dual Organization of Home Cults in Korea* [1935], Korean ancestor worship has been analyzed in terms of a dualistic model. Supported by many subsequent researchers, Akiba's thesis seems to enjoy the status of the established theory. We may summarize his model in three main points. First, Confucian rituals commemorate patrilineal ancestors, while shamanism propitiates maternal ancestors as well. Second, the eldest son takes chief responsibility in offering Confucian rituals, while the second or third son looks after the heirless dead according to the shaman's advice. Third, while Confucianism does not honor the youthful dead, shamanistic rituals do include deceased children or the unmarried dead. This summary points us toward the significantly contrasting attributes of the two kinds of ancestors.

Later researchers have followed Akiba's dualistic line of reasoning. Laurel Kendall [1981] distinguishes between ancestors, who are worshipped by men with Confucian rituals, and ghosts, who are propitiated by women in shamanistic rituals. Like Kendall, the Janellis present an ideal model of Korean ancestor worship that emphasizes the contrast between the two types of beliefs and practices. However, they also report ethnographic cases that suggest that even patrilineal ancestors sometimes afflict their descendants [1982:162]. Thus, they acknowledge that the contrast between ghosts and ancestors may be attenuated in practice, depending on particular circumstances. However, the Janellis do not seem to deny the basic duality.

It has been suggested that Chinese ancestors may also be conceptualized in dualistic terms. Jack Potter, for instance, contrasts benevolent guardian ancestors against malevolent ones [1974:228–231]. Wang [1976] refers to ancestors proper and ancestors peripheral. The Janellis observe that such dualistic notions of ancestors are common in East Asian societies, adding that it is in Korea that men's
and women's conceptions of ancestors stand in sharpest contrast [1982:194].

This essay departs from this earlier research by trying to show that Confucian and shamanistic rituals not only contrast but also stand in a close mutual relationship with each other. As noted above, both Confucian and shamanistic rituals are offered for the sake of the dead during the mourning period. The t'alsang kut, a widespread practice in the Cholla provinces, is a shamanistic ritual that terminates the mourning period designated by Confucian norms.

In Korea both men's and women's beliefs exhibit dualistic features, but these beliefs are put into practice complementarily in each household. While they reflect a family structure that stresses sexual division, households function through a division of labor between the sexes that is complementary. The Confucian notion of ancestors symbolizes grandchildren's affectionate filial piety towards grandparents; shamanism poses a belief in afflicting ancestors. Some Confucian rituals may be based on shamanistic notions, while other shamanistic rituals may take on Confucian trappings. In Korea, Confucian ancestor worship and shamanistic rituals for the dead together constitute a single complex of beliefs concerning dead members of the family.

Notes

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1) See Akiba [1940]. Chang [1983] points out that my analytical concepts, which apply the definitions of Fortes directly, are too narrow for analyzing ancestor worship in Korea. See also Ito [1983] and Takeda [1984].

2) Previous researchers have approached the phenomenon of ancestral rituals from two sides: belief and social structure. Since the early stages of the development of anthropology, significant results have been achieved in the area of belief. Tylor [1871] even sought the origin of religion in ancestral rituals. His research, while receiving some criticism, influenced later work on spirit beliefs by Evans-Pritchard [1956] and others. Recently, outstanding research has been done by Fortes [1961], Goody [1962], William Newell, and others. Ancestors [1976], a volume edited by Newell, contains research on African and Asian ancestral rituals, but lacks any studies of Korean ancestral rituals. Subsequently, however, the Janellis' Ancestor Worship and Korean Society [1982] has made up for this deficiency.

In contrast to the belief-oriented research completed during the early period of modern anthropology, most of the books noted above emphasize social aspects, attaching importance to phenomena such as ritual inheritance and family structure. On the other hand, Freedman [1966], Wolf [1974], Ahern [1973], and others put some emphasis on religious issues along with issues of family and kinship. Their work integrates both the social-structural and the belief aspects of ancestor worship.

3) The notion that the spirits of the dead may possess the living appears to be fairly widespread. Evans-Pritchard [1956] writes that among the Nuer of Africa the dead are thought to have the same feelings as when they were alive. Just as the living are thought
to afflict others, so do the dead. In Japan, too, the subject of ancestral affliction contains deep social and cultural meanings [Yamaori 1979:98].

Research on affliction by the souls of the dead does more than deepen our understanding of ancestor worship. It also sheds light on more general phenomena, such as affliction caused by transgressing, and thereby polluting, sacred places.

4) Even in societies that use Chinese characters, the symbols that express the notion of spirits are varied and complex. Jordan [1972] and Wolf [1974] classify Chinese spiritual beings as gods (sin), ghosts (kuei) and ancestors (tsu).

5) A t’aeju mudang tells fortunes by means of ventriloquism. This type of shaman has been referred to as a kongch’angmu in historical documents since ancient times. Kongch’ang (“voices in the air”) is exactly like the “separate voices” of eastern Siberia’s Chukchee tribe, and similar spiritual ventriloquism can be found among the Cree and Cheyenne of North America [Eliade 1964:225].

6) Yamaori stresses that in Japan affliction (tatari) has socially and culturally deep meanings. He refers to the work of Origuchi, who argued that tatari originally signified the manifestation of gods and spirits, but in later historical periods came to mean affliction [Yamaori 1979:97–98].

7) It is not easy to draw a sharp line between a child and an adult in terms of age. According to the Li-chi (Treatises on Ceremonial Usages), sang applies to death under the age of nineteen. Death under the age of seven is especially designated as sang without mourning dress. In Korea, a person under the age of seven is definitely considered a child. In the past, a man was considered an adult after he had held an initiation ceremony, usually during the teens. Since such initiation ceremonies are no longer held, further investigation is needed regarding the age at which a person is no longer considered a child in relation to death rituals.

8) In some regions, unmarried dead persons are terminologically distinguished according to their sex.

9) On Cheju Island, arrangements are made to assign adopted sons to posthumously married couples so that the latter may qualify as ancestors. These sons offer Confucian ancestral rituals to their adoptive parents, and the latter do not afflict the living. Here, shamans do not intervene in the posthumous marriages.

10) The principle of three obediences (sam-jong-ji-do) dictates that a woman should obey her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and her sons after her husband’s death. Marriage determines the destiny of a woman in the latter two stages of her life.

11) Akiba Takashi’s 1940 paper appears to be the first to discuss ancestor rituals that predate Confucianism. Recently, Chang Chu-gún [1983] and Ch’oe Kil-sŏng (1986) have also authored papers on this topic.

12) Akiba’s first treatment of Confucian and shamanistic rituals in terms of a dualistic model can be found in his “Village Ceremony at Tŏkmulsan” [1931].

Romanizations

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