

Healing Rite of Cheju Simbang in Korea : A Preliminary Analysis

(제주도 심방의 치병의례에 대한 연구 시론)

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Introduction

This paper is part of an analytic research report written for the Social Science Research Council, U.S.A., which provided funding for the dissertation research on this topic. The title of the research is *Continuity and Transformation of Cheju Shamanic Healing in Urban Korea*. Through this research, I propose to examine the effects of social and cultural change on the concept of person, as expressed in the traditional healing practices of *simbangs* 심방, shamanic healers in Cheju Island. By healing practices, I mean human intervention, in a broad sense, in physical, conceptual, and social disorders. Given this definition, I hypothesize that, while the underlying principles of the traditional healing practices remain the same, the modifications brought about by medical pluralism and urbanization may effect the relocation of person and personal identity in the modern context of social relations. This research intends to illuminate not

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only what modifications occur in the beliefs and practices of simbangs' healing rites, but also how personal experience is socialized in the context where the critical event of illness and healing rite brings social change into the realm of the constitution of personhood.

From preliminary research in Cheju (February to May, 1984), I tentatively conclude as follows: 1. The force of the village shrine (*tangse* 당세) is waning in the process of modernization throughout the whole Cheju society. 2. In accordance with this overall trend of social change, Cheju simbangs are undergoing professionalization and political factionalization. 3. With regard to the performance itself, the shamanic art of storytelling still constitutes the efficacy of the healing rites. These conclusions are, however, tentative and somewhat premature; serve only to guide subsequent research. They are based on a short period of fieldwork and more or less superficial observation: therefore, they must be retested in the ensuing period of research, and, in the worst case, some of them will be corrected entirely. Again I would like to stress that this paper is a fieldwork report and not a theoretical analysis.

1. The Force of the Village Shrine (*Tangse* 당세) Waning in the Process of Modernization

The importance of the village shrine lies in the fact that it symbolizes the spirit of community as a natural and independent social entity, and authenticates the position of shrine priest, the original role of simbangs. The village shrine

is called *ponhyang-tang* 본향당, which means the shrine of the primal ancestor. And there is a distinctive myth attached to each village shrine regarding the tutelary deity of the village, *ponhyang* 본향, which is respectfully called as *chosang* 조상 among the villagers themselves. This myth is *tangbonpuri* 당본풀이, recounting the origin of *ponhyang* and also the initial relationship between the village and *ponhyang*. Often in the myths, the tutelary deity gives sanction to the formation of village and commands the villagers to worship it regularly throughout the year. The whole village itself constitutes a worshipping group of this deity. And the high class of worshippers, *sang-tangol* 상단골, represents the villagers. *Tangol* 단골 here means literally the client of the village shrine, and this client group is stratified into three classes depending on the term of relationship with the tutelary deity; they are *sang-tangol* 상단골 the high class of client, *chung-tangol* 중단골 the middle class, and *ha-tangol* 하단골 the low class.

This worshipping group of the tutelary deity appoints a *simbang* as the shrine priest. He is in charge of conducting *tangches* 당제, the collective ceremony at the shrine, and delivering the oracle of the deity to the village, which is called *tosan* 도산, meaning the great divination. Usually the priest lives in the village which appoints him/her. In some cases, the *simbang*'s divine service is consecrated directly by the tutelary deity according to *tangbonpuri* so that he/she should not be ill treated by the villagers (Donbguk village). In short, the force of the village shrine consists

of three elements, that is, the sanctuary itself, the *tangol* groups, and the priest. As long as these three elements continue to function, the force of the village shrine does justice to the social and religious unity of a village community.

Once the shrine itself is destroyed by external forces, however, the force of the shrine is destined to crumble. In Cheju history, three major external forces are construed as follows: Japanese colonial policy for smashing Korean tradition, popular radicalism in tune with the national modernization movement in the 1970s, and the government's cultural policy to expel superstitious practices which symbolize the backwardness of peasantry. Interestingly, the shrine itself has been always the target of these external forces. The critical examples are the shrines within the cities which have completely disappeared with one exception, *Chilmori-tang* of which *tangche* was designated as a national cultural property.

Moreover, once the village shrine was destroyed and its worshipping ceremony was banned, the clients' groups went underground and hardly observed ceremonies collectively. It is quite a recent phenomenon for the villagers to rebuild the shrine and observe ceremonies respectively in each village. In early 1980, the new regime relaxed its coercive cultural policy of destroying superstitions especially in countrysides; furthermore, it promoted revitalization of traditional village festivals and collective rituals. In Cheju Island, the village rituals at the *ponhyang-tang* in several

villages were revived by the group of officially granted simbangs which is called by themselves as *munwha-saeng*, 문화생, a culture group. The ritual activities of this group were supported by the government. Granted as such, these simbangs could conduct the village ceremonies despite that they were not the priests appointed by the villagers.

This current change of the government's cultural policy reflects its ambivalent endorsement of "shamanist tradition" as an official art to instill the spirit of a new nationalism proclaimed by Chun regime. The political ideology of nationalism to establish the legitimacy of the new regime was ironically discovered on the frontier of contemporary Korean society, that is, the tradition of the peasantry, which was gradually disappearing. In other words, the collective ceremony of village community has emerged as a symbol of this new nationalism.

However, this restoration of the traditions of the peasantry maintains its coercive and purely ideological character. Only a few village ceremonies keep their original forms. And the scale of ceremony itself becomes less spectacular in respect to the priestly simbang's performance. From these facts, I suppose that the village shrine indeed begins to lose its genuine meaning for the unity of the village community. In practice, the social conditions which necessitate the collective ceremony do not exist in the contemporary village society. The village everywhere in the island is absorbed into the one-day-living network due to easy transportation. And it is now easily affected by the intervention of the

nation-state and the prevailing materialism. The village community no longer constitutes a natural and independent entity culturally as well as socially. Instead individual well-being and material success have become the prime movers of the villagers' lives. Actually there was a change in intention of the participants in the new year ceremony. They seemed to be more interested in the divination of individual families than in the oracle of the tutelary deity given to the whole village. Furthermore, the number of people who are knowledgeable of *tang-bonpuri* 당본풀이 recited during the ceremony becomes decreased with the exception of the old. It is thus doubtful how far the government-oriented restoration of collective ceremony can help reinstillation of a spirit of communal and national unity as far as this policy serves only an ideological purpose.

However, the more important issue to be examined further is the unchangeable meaning of the village shrine as the symbol of personal identity, for instance, as a Songdang-born or a Kimnyŏng-born person. Regardless of the diminished scale of the ceremonies and individualized intention of the participants, the *ponhyang-tang* remains the tangible symbol of the villagers' personal identity.

Going back to the issue of changing aspect of the force of village shrine, I assume that the clients' group of the shrine has gradually disintegrated. In the past, each client class, that is, *sang-tangol*, *chung-tangol*, or *ha-tangol*, consisted of a kinship group, for instance, the Kim family or the Koh family. *Sang-tangol*, often the largest and oldest kinship

group in a village, was powerful socially as well as religiously. Because of the high rate migration of the native in the villagers, however, this hierarchical system of the clients' group indeed lost its imperative significance. In Cheju history, The April Third, 1948 Communist Rebellion had exerted a great impact on this trend. During the Rebellion, most of the villages on the middle slope of Mt. Halla were burned, and villagers were forced to empty their own villages and move to the coastal villages. Ever since then they have been scattered all over the island. Even after their villages were restored later, few natives came back. In Songdang, the Kim family, which was once *sang-tangol* and the majority of the village, is now one of the minority groups. Although the Kim family still keeps the status as *sang-tangol*, only its nominal status outlives. In the new year ceremony in February, 1984 the clients had a hard time to collect voluntary donations from the villagers which would be used to rebuild the shrine house. Hwabuk village in Cheju City is a typical case of this disintegrated clients' groups. Its shrine was destroyed fifteen years ago in the name of break-down of superstition and has never been rebuilt; at present, the villagers do not have a collective ceremony. I did not meet any villager who was interested in the issue of *tangche* or the clients' groups.

Along with the dissolution of the clients' groups, the priestly simbang lost his/her sponsorship and thus once sanctified authority. The relationship between the village clients and the priest is no longer socially constrained; it has been

superseded by an individual contact for the purpose of resolution of private problems. To some extent, the simbang themselves tend to prefer this phenomenon of individualized practice. They seemed to feel burdened by formal adjunct to a specific shrine because this implies the villagers' continuous patronage over them. Accordingly, a new phenomenon appears; a simbang moves to the city and makes multiple contracts of priestship with several villages. In this way he can work as a freelance practitioner of shamanic rites without unilateral patronage. And because he lives away from those villages, his burden could be reduced. Once the simbang leaves the village and comes back to engage in only a few formal ceremonies, the villagers' access to their priests must be reduced. In the worst case, this type of simbang is threatened to break the contract by the villagers for the reason that he/she lives outside the village (Kimnyǒng case).

In short, the process of secularization of the simbang's craft must be discussed along with the ongoing trend of disintegration of the village community and the clients' group, which attest to the individualistic orientation and primacy of materialistic values in ordinary life.

2. The Professionalization and Political Factionalism of Cheju Simbangs

The Process of professionalization and factionalism in simbangs' practices is effected by three concurrent phenomena as follows: secularization of simbang's status, ideo-

logical intervention of the government and official folklore scholarship, and diversification of shamanic practices. On the basis of actual occurrences, I am going to describe the way in which each trend advances this process.

As described in the preceding section, the status of simbangs has been transformed from that of shrine priest to private practitioner of shamanic rituals. The pervading individualism in contemporary Cheju society accelerates this transformation. A new type of client relationship also has become widespread. It is no longer based on a long-standing social bond for this is replaced by a short-term encounter initiated by specific demand of the client. The simbang's livelihood and practices depend on a more expansive but shallower network of clients outside the village in which the simbang lives. Accordingly, the range of choices on the side of the client becomes wider and more random.

In this context, three factors are involved in the process of secularization: clients' choices, simbangs' response to their choices, and external forces. The clients tend to select one simbang from the pool of available practitioners including simbangs. The major criteria of their choices are the public reputation of the simbang as a ritual performer and his personality. Indeed the simbang's reputation relies on the payment they receive from the clients and their performing technique. A specially demonstrative aspect of performance (*kut*), for example, dancing and dramatic exorcism, gains high credence. The degree of simbang's exposure to mass media also appears to be another criterion of the

client's choice, for the mass media are well-developed in the island. For example, Ahn Sain simbang and his assistant simbangs who appear frequently on television are well received by clients who have not known them previously. Even more, they seem to be self-conscious of their performance as public entertainment although this tendency is yet limited to a few simbangs, mainly young apprentices of Ahn Sain simbang.

A typical simbang who benefited from this trend is Ahn Sain simbang. He is designated as a Human Cultural Treasure (*ingan-munhwache* 인간문화재), who is in charge of performing in public "*Chilmori Tang-kut*," which was also designated as the 71th Intangible Cultural Treasure in 1980. His widespread reputation and current honor, however, owe much to the government's cultural policy and official folklore scholarship. It took him fifteen years to achieve his present honor. In 1962, he started with the public performance in the national contest of folk plays. At that time his participation in the contest was encouraged by Prof. Hyun Yong-jun in Cheju National University, who was then a young scholar. Ever since then he has participated in that contest almost every year and won the distinguished prize twice. Moreover, his "art of shamanic performance" was tested five times by official folklore scholars who were in charge of "excavation" (발굴) and conservation of hidden cultural properties. It was in the year of 1965 that he was first tested. In 1980, he finally succeeded in obtaining the official designation of Human Cultural Treasure. Now he

receives a regular salary from the government and has a couple of "inheritors" (*chunsucha* 전수자) of his performing arts. He himself is proud of his success as an official artist who is subsidized like an official. His drive to become a famous artist did not stop there. He seemed to feel the island too narrow to satisfy his goal. When a professional company dealing with overseas sales of Korean folk art suggested to him the idea of making a contract to perform on stage in foreign countries, Ahn Sain simbang accepted without hesitation. He said to me, "Well, why not going abroad?"

It is here interesting to know that the criteria of selection as a Human Cultural Treasure by folklore scholars and the show business company lies in the simbang's "artistic performance" of the kind that easily appeals to the standard of appraisal that banks on the purism of the scholars and commercial culture. To conform to this standard, I observed, Ahn simbang had shortened the chanting of the *tang-ponpuri*, added new elements for dramatic display, and inserted some borrowed parts from well-known shamanic arts from mainland. Ironically his efforts were rewarded with public recognition. Professor Hyun, who claims himself to be a recorder of Ahn's art and practices, published in 1980 a text of 900 pages which contained myths chanted by Ahn simbang. This text became a representative text of Cheju shamanism for scholars who are unfamiliar with Cheju culture. Moreover, Ahn simbang himself was proud of "making Prof. Hyun a Doctor of Philosophy" as if he taught Prof. Hyun as a apprentice of

his art.

As such, the ideological alliance of the government with folklore scholarship has promoted the professionalization of the simbangs' practices as art forms alienated from their socio-cultural context as well as politicization of the simbang society.

Ahn simbang and his followers organized their own association entitled the Preservation Association of the *Chilmori Tang-kut*. The activities of this Preservation Association are financially supported by the government and morally encouraged by folklore scholarship. This group took advantage of requests for public performances of Cheju *kuts* on stage at private theatre in Seoul or in national contests of folk plays. And *Chilmori Tang-kut* was performed on stage regardless of specific day of the ceremony which was originally February 14 by lunar calendar. Even performers themselves except Ahn simbang looked less serious and stressed public entertainment. As a result, this *tang-kut* lost its religious meaning as a collective ceremony for the villagers which was often called as *tangehe* 당제 . (The word, *kut* 굿 implies performance itself rather than religious ritual, *che* 제 in terms of character of each word.)

Through the Preservation Association and its supporting authority like folklore scholarship and government, Ahn simbang tried to establish his own orthodoxy in Cheju shamanism. However, his claim for orthodoxy created great reactionary controversy among Cheju simbangs in the island. Simbangs who did not agree with his claim to legitimacy modestly

refused to recognize him. They refused to help Ahn simbang's public performance of *tang-kut* and to join the Preservation Association. Instead, they organized a new group among the disclaimers and joined a national union of shamanic practitioners which licenced their work.

There was one reason for them to join that union. Ahn simbang's Preservation Association declared their legitimacy for performing *kuts* by spreading a rumor of which they were the only group "permitted" by the law. And they threatened the other simbangs to join and help their association: otherwise, the others' performance would not be sanctioned legally. As a reaction to Ahn simbang group's threat, a new faction of simbangs was organized. In addition, this faction tried to isolate Ahn simbang and his group from the society of Cheju simbangs and to degrade Ahn simbang's legitimacy by pleading with other media sources and an emerging young folklore scholars. But their efforts turned out to be virtually in vain. It is assumed that, although they could succeed in isolating the Preservation Association from their groups, they failed to appeal to the authority for their alternative orthodoxy. It is also because the government's ideological task to "revitalize tradition" was already fulfilled through official designation of Ahn Sain simbang as a Human Cultural Treasure. Once the government officially sanctioned Ahn Sain simbang, Ahn's orthodoxy had to be maintained regardless of its questionableness. The official designation of Ahn simbang as a legitimate performer of *Chilmori Tang-kut*, in practice, contributed to loosen

prohibition of "superstitious practices" including the *tangche* in each village and *kut* performances in private houses. Ahn simbang and his followers were proud of their contribution and, in fact, used this for persuading other simbangs to join their association.

Ironically, this internal disjunction within the society of simbangs entailed an unexpected coalition between the simbangs, who are traditional Cheju shamans, and the newly emerging shamanic practitioners such as fortune-tellers, Buddhist spiritual healers, possession mediums, and so on, who are considered fakes by the simbangs themselves. Ahn simbang and his Association and the reactionary union of Cheju simbangs competed in appealing to these non-traditional shamans in order to increase their own memberships. In Cheju, there are about 600 shamanic practitioners but only one hundred and fifty simbangs, according to rough statistics reckoned by a simbang. For political reasons, simbangs tend to adjust to this trend of diversification of their profession although they lament the decline of their prestige and expertise on the other hand. They often go to and work together with those non-traditional shamans if they fail to get a sufficient number for *kut* performance.

In short, shamanic practices are undergoing a growing politicization. And it is supposed that the persistent force of this trend results in the curious perversion of Cheju folk culture in general. In other words, this trend envisions a new image of the traditional shaman, that is, an "artist" who produces a "shamanic art", which is defined as such

by the government and official folklore scholarship. As a result, the simbang's performing activities will become conducive to political action.

3. The Art of Storytelling and the Efficacy of Healing Rites

In this section, I focus on the healing rites themselves and the role of the simbang on behalf of the cure for the sick person. The patient comes to the simbang and asks for "giving life" to him/her in the crisis of death. The simbang as a healer is endowed with the genius of the "giving life" while sustaining himself/herself in the interface of life and death. Therefore, the simbangs in Cheju often refer to their work similar to that of the advocates at law. They plead the patients or clients in front of deities who are supposed to take possession of their lives. Looking the nature of simbang's cure in a broad sense, the cure locates itself in the contradictions inherent in human life, for example, of life and death, fortune and misfortune, health and illness, character and fate, and so forth. Put it differently, the cure constitutes the space of transition where these contradictions are mediated. The magical art of cure acts on this space.

With respect to the effect of the cure on the sick person, this magic of cure serves the transformative passage between two states of personhood, in which ill state of being is changed into healthy being, and deadly despair into confidence in life. This transformative capacity inherent in the magic of cure bears witness to the efficacy of the healing

ritual. As the means of transformation, specific aesthetic forms are employed in the ritual. In the case of simbang's healing rites, these forms consist of storytelling, trance dancing, orchestral music, and comic drama. Varied respectively in terms of the function and effect within the structure of ritual, they contribute to reordering the experience of illness and misfortune and engendering clear senses of the experience.

Among others, I focus on an aesthetic form of story in the simbang's performance. It is because this aesthetic form plays a crucial role in the cure. The art of storytelling here refers specifically to recitation of the patient's personal myth concerning the problematic affliction as well as the patient's life experiences related to illness. In general, the myth chanted in the ritual is called *ponpuri* 본풀이, literally meaning the origin story of a deity. In every rite conducted for various purposes, a *ponpuri* of a specific deity or spirit is chanted like a formula. Contrary to *ponpuri*, the personal myths recited in healing rites are less formula-rized and more improvised on the basis of particular life experiences of the patient. If we define *ponpuri* in a broad sense as a origin story, however, a personal myth here can be also categorized as a *ponpuri* of the sick person.

Here, I will at first examine the structure of healing rite that indicates the phases of transformation of personal identity. Next I will illuminate the art of storytelling that constitutes the ambience of the magic of cure. An aesthetic effect of storytelling will be dealt with in terms of its func-

tion in reconstructing the experience of a person's life and redefining personal identity. The role of the simbang in healing rites will also be dealt with in terms of his/her capacity as a storyteller. Being of help for the reader's understanding, an exemplary text of storytelling will be presented in appendix.

(1) The Structure of a Healing Rite (*Chunūn-gut*)

The Cheju healing rite is structured by three procedures: diagnostic divination, myth chanting, and the drama of exorcism. Unlike shamanic rites in the mainland, the diagnostic divination takes a very minor part in the process of Cheju simbang's healing rite. The clients come to consult with the simbangs only on the matter of ritual performance (*kut*) after they have already secured the diagnosis of the patient's illness from the spirit medium or the fortune-teller. From the description of the cause and progress of the illness given by the clients, the simbangs finally decide whether to conduct a rite of soul-return (*nŏkdurim* 낚들임) and exorcism (*pūdasī* 푸다시) in a small scale or to perform a large scale rite such as *chunūn-gut* 추는 굿, meaning a dancing rite.

The simbangs are clearly distinguished from those practitioners who are divinely inspired. They are considered mainly as ritual performers who are well acquainted with chanting of *ponpuris* of deities, dancing, and music as well as divination. Along with these, a trance dancing of the

patient in tune with orchestra music takes an important part of the rite. For this reason, the healing rite of the *simbang* is often called the rite of dancing, *chunūn-gut*. The drama of exorcism is played at the climax of the rite in order to expel the evil spirits from the body of the patient.

In respect to the ritual process, the *kut* begins with an evocation of high deities at the altar. This phase of the ritual is *chogamche* 초감제, meaning the rite of invitation of deities. The attending *simbang* informs of a certain time and place of the ritual (*nal-kuk-sōmkim* 날국섬김) and rehearses the genesis of the illness and the reason why this rite is performed (*yōnyu-dakkūm* 연유 닦음). When the *simbang* "clears the causes" (literal meaning of *yōnyu-dakkūm*), he/she narrates various events in which the patient lost his/her soul (*nōk-nagam* 냐나감) and explains how far the affliction has developed due to the patient's negligence of these events. In the narration, the *simbang* also chronicles the family's misfortunes, specifically disgrace or unfortunate death. If the *simbang's* narration is incorrect, the family members of the patient corrects it so that the "clearing the causes" could be precisely shaped and delivered to deities who are supposed to listen to it. In the meantime, the patient is seated or laid down in a corner of the inside room, listening to the *simbang's* narration of his/her own life story. At the end of *chogamche*, the *simbang* earnestly begs those invited deities to forgive the patient for his/her sin of negligence of their presence and to appease their anger amid orchestral music and dancing of the patient. *Chunūn-gut*

is therefore referred to *pŏl-puri-binyŏm* 벌풀이 비념 in the simbang's narration, which means a plea for the release of the patient from the punishment. In the ritual context, an illness or affliction is explained as the god's punishment (*pŏl* 벌) on the person who committed a sin (*choe-check* 죄책) of neglecting the presence of the afflicting deity.

If thus-far the storytelling takes the form of documenting actual events and facts, the following phase (*sŏ'uje-sori* 서우제소리) proceeds to the improvisatory chating of a personal myth. Here, imaginary events about the patient's encounter with the afflicting spirit (which is not identified yet but generally categorized as *yŏnggam* 영감 or *tochaebi* 도채비) are illustrated along with the factual events drawn from the patient's life experiences. In this phase, the patient appears on the altar and dances to the orchestral music played by three or four assistant simbangs (*somu* 소무) and to chanting by a chief simbang (*su-simbang* 수심방). This ensemble of chanting (*sŏ'uje-sori* 서우제소리), dancing (*non-yŏm* 노념), and orchestral music (*yŏnmul-sori* 연물소리) inspires an awesomely reflective (rather than entertaining) mood into the participants. The patient's family shed tears occasionally as the simbang recites a whole life story about how the patient and his/her family have lived up to now against harsh environment and all kinds of misfortune. The patient also dances in silence, shedding tears in response to the chanting. The atmosphere in general turns to be more or less ironical as such.

The patient dances, in practice, as the possessing spirit

whereas the subject of the story is he/she. In other words, the patient manifests in himself/herself the double subjectivities of both the possessed and the possessing spirit. The patient forces himself/herself to dance and play as much as he/she can manage. The *simbang* encourages the patient to dance by chanting and playing music amusingly. As the music tempo goes fast at climax, the dancing also turns to a fanatically fast tempo until the patient is exhausted and falls down on the floor. On the average, the trance dancing lasts thirty minutes in the beginning and gradually extends to one hour depending on the judgement of the *su-simbang* who watches carefully the progress of dancing. Once the patient falls down, he/she is moved to the inside room and rests there for about thirty minutes. This cycle of dancing and rest, which is called *kut-hansŏk* 굿한석, repeats for several days until the patient confesses the identity of the dancing subject, which is the possessing spirit. The patient is allowed to have meals like other participants in order to invigorate the strength of the dancer.

At the climax of trance dancing (*nonyŏm* 노념), the *simbang* suddenly stops the dancing and inquires of the patient (*taegim-batŭm* 대김받음) the reason why the patient is dancing and who he/she is. The patient not only identifies himself/herself with the name of the afflicting spirit but also confesses when and how the spirit encountered the patient. And the patient speaks to the *simbang*, who acts the part of the inquisitor, about the exact date and time of leave. Thereafter, the content of confession is inserted in the

simbang's chanting. This simbang's inquisitive dialogue with the patient is repeated three times in principle. In fact, this inquisition serves two contrary purposes simultaneously: renunciation of the patient's double subjectivities inside one personality and inculcation of the patient's will to be relieved from the affliction.

Right after the last inquisition, small rites of soul-return (*nŏkdurim* 넋돌임) and exorcism (*p'udasi* 푸다시) are performed. When the simbang blows a breath on the top of the patient's head while chanting to call the lost soul back, the patient's once lost soul returns through a piece of patient's old clothes which is put on the head. After *nŏkdurim*, the patient takes a bath, has his/her fingernails and toenails cut, and puts on the new set of clothes and shoes. During exorcism, the simbang covers the head of the patient with a long piece of white cloth (*pŏlsuk-jachi* 벌써 자치), which symbolizes the patient's sins.

The healing seance culminates with a theatrical representation of the possessing spirit, who appears at the altar with a paper mask on his face. This part of rite is called *yŏngam nori* 영감놀이, the play of a dilapidated gentry class. For the first time, the agent of misfortune and illness is concretely impersonated by an assistant simbang. He is invited to the sacrificial feast of roast pig and the last dancing party with the patient. He comes to reconcile with the patient under the supervision of the *su-simbang* and publicly pledges to leave the patient forever. Virtually, the simbang pleads with him to take away the illness from the

body of the patient. This drama proceeds with a typical dialogical mode whereby two *simbangs* engage in a comic verbal discourse and associated gestural action. The currents of laughter and jokes amid the participants flow brightly for a while and then runs to the ending point of the rite in its entirety.

The series of final exorcisms (*mak-pudasi* 막푸다시) follow the comic drama. In order to expel avenging hungry ghosts (*chapgū* 잡구) who are identified as low-ranked officers of *yōnggam*, the *simbang* simulates stabbing the patient with knives, tearing harshly the outer garments, killing a rooster, and cracking a piece of old jar. This phase of rite is also called *ogsal-chiūm* 옥살지움, in which the *simbang* threatens these ghosts to leave the patient and gives away things favored by them, for example, rooster (a symbol of the patient's body and life) and old clothes (into which their close love relationship with the patient was permeated). Finally the *simbang* burns old clothes of the patient and the long piece of white cloth.

In the meanwhile, a miniature boat made of weeds and loaded with a handful of the patient's hairs and nails departs offshore (*paebangsong* 배방송). All of these rites of exorcism and the sailing of a boat have to be done promptly at the same time. The *simbang* and the patient suspect that the afflicting spirit hesitates to leave if it takes time. Thus they load small bags of food and money which are supposed to be used for the spirit's sailing far away from the shore. The patient now wears a net of leftward woven

thatch over the face to hide and protect himself/herself from the leaving spirit who is supposed to have still lingering affection toward the old person (*hŏn-sarŭm* 현사름), and runs away to the place where the spirit cannot come back to find the patient later on. At the end the simbang asks the deities to be seated or return back to their original places (*tochin* 도진) and hurries to leave the altar, which is immediately undone, without saying farewell to the patient or the participants.

The patient returns to his/her authentic personhood after all, wearing a "new person" (*sae-sarŭm* 새사름). This indicates the resolution of the contradictions which once bubbled up on the surface of self-consciousness of the person and muddled up the personal identity. This phase of return to the alternative possibility of life, however, has to be kept secret for a while since the danger of reaffliction still remains. For a week, the strangers' visits to the patient's hiding place are prohibited, and the pork meat which is once sacrificed to the *yŏnggam* is tabooed to the patient and other family members. Thereafter, the simbang goes back to the patient's house and treats the ghosts who could not come to the altar for different reasons and thus now wait for offerings from the patient. This rite is *tuimaji* 뒤통이, meaning a belated greeting. It is very important for the simbang to protect the patient from unexpected reaffliction. With *tuimaji*, the healing rite is completely finished (see Figure 1).

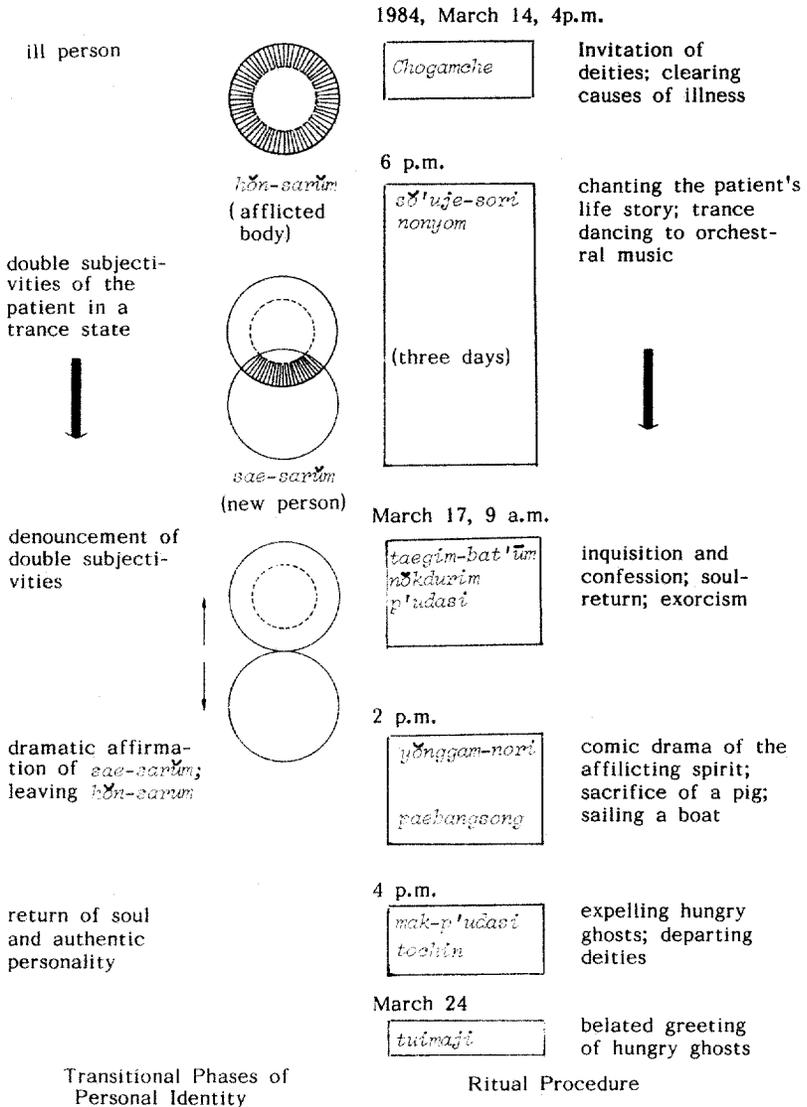


Figure 1. The Structure of Cheju Simbang's Healing Rite (Chunün-gut)

(2) The Art of Storytelling and the Simbang Storyteller

The story of misfortune and illness chanted by the simbang is more or less improvised for the purpose of healing. In the light of ritual process, however, the story, an autobiographical narration of a person's life, is endowed with the mythic quality because it transports *something more* than the narration of actual events and facts. As Levi-Strauss depicts in his structural study of myth (1967: 206), "myth is felt" on a high level "where meaning succeeds practically at 'taking off' from" the ordinary context of experiences. I suppose that this "something more" has to do with the re-constitution of authentic personhood. Through careful reading of a case story attached to the appendix, I will discuss the mythic quality of the story and the aesthetic effect of storytelling generated from this quality.

The story is about a twenty-one year old woman. It is selected from thirty *sŏ'uje-sori* because this part compresses the autobiographical narratives of the patient. The background of the patient's illness follows below. She is a factory worker in a small manufacturing company in Seoul. She has worked there for a couple of years since she had graduated from middle school. She lived in the dormitory and earned only about \$120 a month. After her father died years ago, she became virtually the head of the family of her mother, two sisters, and two younger brothers. Although her income was so low, she had to send more than two thirds of her monthly earnings to her family living in Cheju Island.

She was responsible for her brothers' and sisters' schooling too. But her responsibility for her family seemed too heavy to manage alone. She began losing words suddenly after an accident in the bathroom of the factory.

Her symptom was diagnosed by her mother and relatives as soul-loss (*nŏk-nagam* *넋나감*). She lost her soul when she saw by chance a dead fellow worker in the bathroom. Even worse, she had to face the accidental death of her close friend from Cheju later on. Because these two events were too shocking, perhaps she could not recuperate from them and began falling into the state of incapacity, unable to continue working in the factory. For three years, however, she endured this trauma. Finally being unable to cope with this, she came back home for the cure. Medicines were taken in vain. An acquaintance of her mother, Park simbang was called in to conduct a healing seance on March 14, 1984. Although her mother requested only an exorcism, Park simbang persuaded her to have the patient dance in a larger scale of *kut* with orchestral music. Despite that she could not afford the expense, she and her close relatives decided to follow Park simbang's suggestion out of sheer desire to have her daughter cured and relived. The seance lasted for four days and nights until March 17. In the beginning, the patient seemed to feel ashamed and reluctant to dance in front of her relatives. But later she was convinced that only dancing could cure her.

The imports of autobiographical narratives and trance dancing

During the chanting of *sŏ'uje-sori*, the simbang recited her life story in the factory and at her poor home. But it must be noticed that the subject of the narration is the patient herself. Because the patient is unable to tell her story with her own words, the simbang as a substitute tells a story with her voice. While dancing in trance, the patient listens to her own story as if it is someone else's story. Mutely dancing in a trance and in tune with the chanting and music, she is earnestly wrestling with the illness, which is concretely identified with the spirit of a dead fellow worker. In the story, she resents her sacrificial life of hard work for her family's sake. About this sort of resentment, she dares not speak up in front of her family and relatives if it is an ordinary situation. On the other hand, below this sharp reproach toward others and her fate, lies her apologetic statement about the fact that she could not fulfill her responsibility to them because of her illness. As a third person in the story, the simbang encourages her to release the speech that has been smothered socially. The simbang says, "Whatever you want to tell, pitiful maiden, please tell it all. Let father and uncle hear it all." (see the appendix) Her body, through its rhythmical movement and gestural flow, speaks her words and statements. We can read a verse indicating this reciprocation of the body and the word: "Grievous words, sorrowful words, The twenty-one year old tells all of them. Sorrowful maiden, grief-stricken maiden of twenty-one years. Let us play together to the end."

The mythical quality of a story and its reflective effect

Interestingly, the simbang's recitation creates a reflective mood for all participants including the patient's family and relatives who are indirectly responsible for her illness. It is possible because a story of twenty-one year old factory worker conveys a universal myth of contradictions which are recognizable anywhere, for example, her resentment versus apology, affectionate bonds at home versus terrifying loneliness in the urban environment, her responsibility for her family versus her resistance to it, and so on. They are themselves generic portions of our life experiences. Put it differently, although the patient herself is non-narrative, the mythic qualities of the story do justice to the suspended silence that anchors itself on the self-effaced subjectivity of the patient. The distance, ritually built between the storyteller and the listening patient, sustains this silence, in the space of which people reflect upon the meaning of life and death at the same time. Standing on a forked road, the simbang here holds contradictions together in balance. The magic of simbang's cure reveals here powerfully.

The simbang's craft of communication and technique of the cure

A good simbang, *cherahan simbang* 제라한 심방, is defined by the clients in terms of the merits of ritual expertise (*sudŭk* 수덕) and spiritual power (*yŏnggŭp* 영급). These qualities are not considered an individual genius as often presumed by scholarship of shamanism; instead, they are rather constitutive in actual performances. The simbang

takes up his personality and life experiences as the medium of his work and makes choices between limited possibilities.

Park simbang incorporates a sense of his own life in the art of storytelling. For example, he occasionally sheds tears when the story of the patient came to the loss of her father and her fate of having been left alone in the world. In fact, he himself lost his parents when he was eight year old, and thereafter carried on a miserable life. His shedding tears at the proper moment in accordance with his recitation is the technique of communicating the import of specific experiences of the patient to all participants. His audience has known him since his childhood and therefore easily reciprocate by shedding tears together. Strategically, Park simbang also performs the same gesture at the same moment of recitation even in the case of different patients. Not only his own life experience but also his knowledge of other persons' lives is well blended with the patient's story. For example, Cheju diving women's folk song about their illfated birth and hardship (Kim 1983: 93) is inserted in the recitation in order to portray the hard-pressed life of a twenty-one year old factory worker. The merit of Park simbang's performance depends on his choices of mediums, which are communicable to the audience.

The simbang's authority and the otherness of his consciousness

Not only does he make the audience shed tears together with him but he also can break the prevailing sad mood and bring about sudden laughter by quickly changing the rhy-

thm of his drumming or by gesturing comically in the middle of chanting. At this moment, the truth of negative statements about the human condition --death, departure, loneliness, hard work, terror of loss, misfortune, illness, and so on-- is questioned. His laughter and comic gesture reversely transport his conviction to negate them after all. This conviction does not only justice to his authority as a healer but constitutes the otherness of his consciousness. In so far as the simbang sustains this otherness of his consciousness, he can shake unreflective perceptions of sadness, fear, regret, and happiness kaleidoscopically, and reorient them into a new order of meaning.

The empowering consciousness of the simbang and its ethical force

The otherness of simbang's consciousness about human condition not only mediates incompatible elements of human life but inculcates the sense of life and justice. For example, in the recitation of Park simbang, the running river is contrasted with the running tears; on the other hand, the rotten water of a tree trunk is identified with the decomposed water of the five internal organs and six chambers of the body. Here, the image of running water of both river and eyes, which means the continuity of life, is represented antithetically to that of the stagnant water of tree trunk and a sick human body, which stands for the discontinuity of life. There is another example. The burning and smoking coals are also figured antithetically to the burning but not-

smoking heart of the patient. In other words, the productivity of coals is contrasted to impasse of the patient's will to relive. By contrasting the opposite images of things, the simbang denounces the stagnant and unproductive state of the person and instead affirms the necessary restitution and continuity of life. Success or failure of the cure is actually not the issue in the rites. The simbang's storytelling itself is the cure. By announcing the necessary element of life to the public, the simbang disseminates his ethical knowledge about what a human life should be and what a person can become. This ethical force intrinsic in the consciousness of the simbang is so empowering that even the deep shock of every individual experience like death and illness renders no impediment or a barrier.

The Remainder: the Individualized Self and the Perversion of Magic

In Cheju simbang's healing rites, we could see that the simbang, the patient, and the audience come together and weave the mysterious elements in one's individual experience into the transparent fabric of life. The image of self is here constantly engaged in the otherness that constitutes the background possibilities for the transformation of personal identity. In this socio-mythic ensemble of personhood, there is no essential ego or cogito that was often taken for granted as generalized individual or individual self in the literature of psychology. All personality in the healing rites is relational; therefore, a person is not treated as

an individual quantity abstractly but as a quality inherent in a specific group such as a family or kin group. This is the reason why the tragic story of a woman can move the storyteller and audience all together to laugh and at the same time cry against her fate as exemplified in the story. Moreover, repetitive recitation of the same story about one person for several days (through *sŏ'uje-sori* sung thirty times in the exemplar story) helps to mature the social sentiment that brings about the reciprocation of the self and the other.

However, this qualitative constitution of personal identity is undergoing adaptation to the contemporary social atmosphere. I assume that once the *simbang's* art of storytelling begins to lose its significance within the structure of healing rites, the person with a problematic illness also dismisses the opportunity to attain counsel from the others, and the reciprocation of the self and the other becomes unimportant in the rite. I observe that the clients, specifically from the young generation, tend to be impatient for the *simbang's* storytelling which is stretched out over several days simply because they expect a fast remedy for the symptom and also worry about the expense.

In a word, the clients tend to avoid the risk of money and time. They prefer short-time rites (one day or two days) because it costs less than longer ones. In order to avoid unnecessary friction with the clients, the *simbangs* also sometimes strategically omit parts of the performance which they think do not draw attention from the audience if the clients look worried about the cost. When the client begged

Park simbang to finish the rite soon with a simple exorcism for the patient who looked exhausted from dancing, Park simbang had a hard time to convincing the client that he could not enter directly into the exorcism without sufficient time to conduct *sŏ'uje-sori* and trance dancing session. He had to wrestle with the client at each intermission, arguing about when the rite would come into the phase of exorcism.

Sometimes shamanic practitioners shrewdly take advantage of the clients' worries and lack of acquaintance with the traditional ritual procedure. They are mainly spirit mediums, fortune-tellers, and Buddhistic healers who are not acquainted with the art of storytelling and chanting of *pon-puri*. Their practices are clearly distinguished from traditional practices of simbangs. They tend to comply with the demand of the clients for a fast and immediate remedy and dramatic demonstration of exorcism which is considered a minor part in the simbang's healing rites. As a result, their charge for service is in general less expensive than that of the simbangs.

The nature of payment for shamanic practices also has changed. In the past, the client paid at their option with gains or small money. And the simbangs did not ask directly for the payment. They were supposed to pay more attention to the "work" (*il al*), which was concerned with "passing the crisis" (*il-naenggim 일뉘김*) of their neighbors and patrons. But these days cash payment appears the chief source of the simbang's earning. Payment is decided in advance

by the simbangs themselves. In short, the simbangs' practices are registered as a commodity, which is exchangeable in the market of plural medical resources.

Although Cheju society is not necessarily destined to develop towards market economy and individualization, obvious trends in that direction attest to the ideological construct of a separate individual alienated from its nurturing nexus, the domain in which the magical art of simbang's cure finds itself at home. The magic of cure gradually degenerates into the method of treatment which is readily commoditized. If a client and a patient comes to the shamanic healers as a stranger and clings to the immediately tangible effect of the treatment, the ritual performances lose their enchanting and edifying effects that were once considered the major functions of healing rites. The plenitude of mythic ambience as idealized in my description of a traditional mode of the simbang's healing undergoes the gradual vanishing process. The magical quality in the art of storytelling yields to the same fate too.

In this context, however, it must be noticed that the politicized and commoditized form of simbang's practice coexists with its unchangeable tradition. Put it more precisely, there is a certain realm where the unchangeability of the simbang's tradition is stressed and held obstinately. For instance, when the government loosens its ban on the superstitious practices (*misin-tapa* 미신타파) and praises shamans as "traditional Korean artists" by designating some of them Human Cultural Treasures, it presumes the ever-present

nature of shamanic practices. The deeper the modernizing effort of the whole nation goes, the more highly shamanism stands for the "pure and unchangeable" tradition. Perhaps this is the reason why folklore scholarship these days concentrates on the study of shamanism. This somehow perverse use of "tradition", however, interestingly helps to revive shamanic practices on the level of ordinary lives. Flourishing shamanic practitioners in urban settings as well as in the countryside demonstrate this phenomenon. A close examination of this phenomenon must be the subject for the ensuing period of research.

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Appendix

A Story* of a Twenty-One Year Old Woman
Chanted at a *Chunŭn-gut*

Time: March 16, 1984. Evening.

Place: Hamdŏk, Cheju Island

Attending Simbang: Park

Assistant Simbangs: Three women and Mun simbang

Situation: This story is excerpted from three *sŏ'uje-sori* which were sung by Park simbang in the last night of this healing rite. Park simbang stressed the 26th *sŏ'uje-sori* to move both the living and the dead spirits (*kusin* 구신).

The 26th Sŏ'uje-sori, 7:22 p.m.

어기 여차 살강기로, 일천간장을 다 풀려 놀자

Ugi yocha, let us play together and melt our hearts to the sound of rowing

어 야 어 영 어 야₁

Uh ya uh yeong uh ya

놀다나 가자, 놀다나 가자 월출 동경 달 떠오도록 놀자
Let us play, let us play/Let us play until moon rises in the east

일락서산에 해 떨어지난
Sun sets in the west /.....

설운 나 아기가, 멧 삼년 멧 해
You are my pitiful maiden/ For three years

병도 갈라 가고 님도 갈라 가고, 이별 이별 영이별하자.
Farewell to illness, my lover too/ Let's separate forever

울어 울어 잘 울었구나, 설운 정네 멧 해 멧 해
Cried, Cried, Cried a lot/ A pitiful maiden for so many years!

그만하난 이별되고, 그만하난 꿈 갈라 가네
It is enough, go away now/Let's keep apart from each other

날 울렸구나 날 울렸구나, 스물 한 살 잘도 울려
Made me cry, made me cry/ Made me, a twenty-one year
old, cry a lot

잘 울렷시난 배 놀일나고, 밥 먹엿시난 실바름 닛네
After crying, it is the time for sailing the boat/ After
supper, it is breezing

영자야 화장야./ 배 단속하라, 명지와당 실바름 닛네
Youngja! Whajangah!/ Prepare a boat, offshore the breeze
is blowing

잘도 울렸네 잘도 울렸네, 멧해 멧년 날 울렸구나
Made me cry, made me cry a lot/ For so many years, made
me cry

요놈의 뺨은 들어랜 하난, 의사 약방 약 허사로다.
Once this illness caught me/ All medicines and doctors were
in vain (*the simbang is tearful while chanting*)

어멍아 어멍아 나 나춘 어멍아, 그때 그때 낯날 뻘에
Mother, Mother, My mother!/ Then, then, when I lost my
soul (*the patient begins to cry while dancing*)

저승군법이나 삼시군법 그때 그때 눌렷대민, 뼈속에 살속에 아니나 들 걸
If the simbang pressed me with his law then³/ The illness
could not penetrate into the bones and body

나일 나일 망쳤구나
Oh, it ruined my life!

설운 어멍도 잘 들읍서, 한 텃줄에 난 나 동싱덜야
Listen carefully! My sorrowful mother/ And siblings born
through the same umbilical cord

어떻 살리꼭 나 동생 살리젠, 이일 이일 하단보난
 To support my mother and siblings' living/ I worked hard
 this, this job

부모 동생덜 탕 멕이젠 나일 망치
 To support my mother and siblings' living/ I ruined my life!

서처 고단한 내로구나, 일점설육 엇는 내로구나
 I am totally alone!/ I don't have any relatives!

(the simbang weeps loud)

일가친척 엇는 불쌍한 애기, 총각머리 등에 지영
 A pitiful maiden, without relatives/ A maiden still wearing
 maiden's braids *(the audience begins to weep one by one)*

나일 망치라 나일 망치라, 스물 한 설 나일 망치
 I labored in vain, in vain/ The twenty-one year old one's
 life went amiss *(Park exclaims Jo-ta! while crying)*

돈 어시난 큰 공부 못하난, 나 동생덜 공부 가리치젠
 Without money I couldn't go to school/ Instead, I tried to
 support my sibling's schooling *(the patient's siblings cry)*

밤인 들면 낮거치 살고, 낮인 들면 밤가찌 살았구나
 I've survived nights as if days/ Days as if nights

나일이여 나일이여! 나일이여 어느 아버지
 My fate! My fate!/ My fate, whose father ...

(Park exclaims Joo-ta! Loud)

뽕 찢르던 나 아바님, 독약 먹은 나 죽은 아방
 My father, short-lived/ My uncle, died of poison

혼신 싯건 영신 싯건, 스물 한살 나 살려줍서
 If you spirits exist/ Please help this twenty-one year old!

펜지 오라가민, 나 성제간 펜지 오랍신가, 돈 오랍신가
 If a letter arrived/ My siblings wondered if it was a letter

4
or money(*Joo-ta!*)

기달리던 나 어머니, 기달리던 나 성제간
My mother waiting for me/ My siblings waiting for me

이거 이거, 멧 십년 멧해 총각머리 등에 지고
This, this/ For so many years, wearing maiden's braids

돈아 돈아 말모른 돈아, 우리 아버지 무사 돈 아니 벌어 뇌똥
Money, money, money without words/ Why didn't my father
save money for us?

나 아버지 대신 돈 벌베 가근, 나 동싱덜 상급학교 시키젠
Instead of father, I left home to earn money/ To support
my siblings' high schooling (*the patient cries loud*)

어멍아 나 동싱아 나 살려도라! 돈 벌어근 나 동싱덜
Mother, my siblings, help me!/ With money saved, my sib-
lings!

상급학교나 내어 놓앙, 나 동싱덜 사회전출 시경
I supported your advance to high school/ And your successful
entry to society(*Joo-taaaaaa!*)

우리 일가 방답 어른덜, 이렇게도 적막하나?
Visiting relatives!/ Why do you keep silence?

나난 아바님아 나난 아바님아, 무사 이리 무정허파?
Father, father!/ Why are you so heartless?
(*the patient cries again loud*)

고단하고 우리 다섯 오누이, 칭원한 우리 다섯 오누이
We five distressed siblings/ We five grief-stricken siblings

불쌍한 정네야 놀당 가게, 칭원한 정네야 놀당가게
A pitiful maiden, please play here now/ Grief-stricken maid-
den, please play here

이날 밤이 다 새도록, 널 아침이 개추명 되도록
All night, until tomorrow sun / Breaks through the morning

air (the patient cries loud, yearning to the dead father,
"Father, help me live again!)

이 신병 나난, 금전 못벌엉

Since I have had this illness/ I stopped earning money

우리 동생덜 신디 못 보내주언

I could not send money to my younger siblings

나만 나만 눈물로 세수해영

I only, only washed my face with tears

아버지 죽영 업토감장해핑, 나 동생덜 공부시키젠

After burying the dead body of my father/ I tried to support
my siblings' schooling

이날 저녁 곱고픈 말, 설운 얘기야 다 일러뵝

Tonight, whatever you want to tell/ A piteous maiden, please
tell it all

아버지나 들엉가꼭, 죽은 아버지네 다 들엉가게!

Let father and uncle hear all!

칭원한 말 원통한 말, 스물 한살 다 일러달라

Grievous words, sorrowful words/ A twenty-one year old
one, tell all of it

원통한 얘기 칭원한 얘기, 스물 한 살 다 놀고 가자!

Sorrowful maiden, grief-stricken maiden/ A twenty-one year
old one, let us play now to the end!

(the patient begs her father's help again)

..... ending soon

(at the end of dancing, Park praises the patient, "Eh! you
are playing well!")

The 27th Sŏ'uje-sori, 9:22 p.m.

석탄 백탄 타는 디는, 영기도 김도 나건마는

Where the coals burn/ The smoke comes out

이내 간장 오장 탄 디는, 영기도 김도 아니나네

But where my five organs and six chambers burn/ Neither
smoke nor steam comes out (*Joo-ta!*)

저 산천으로 내리는 물은, 나무등결 다 썩은 물

The water running in the river/ The water from the rotten
tree trunk

이내 눈으로 내리는 물은, 오장 간장 다 썩은 물

The water running in my eyes/ The water putrefied in the
five internal organs and six chambers of the body (*Joo-ta!*)

The 28th Sŏ'uje-sori, 10:08 p.m.

나 낳던 날은 어떤 날 냥, 해도 달도 엇는 날 냥가
What day was the day I was born/ Was it the day without
sun and moon?

스물 한살, 총각 머리 등에 지고
A twenty-one year old/ wearing maiden's braids

이제 이제 무슨 일이던고, 하나님이나 알았던가
What, what is happening to me/ Did God know it?

나난 어명도 몰랐구나, 한 댕줄에 난 나 형제간도 몰라
Even my mother didn't know/ Even my siblings born by the
same mother did not know it

이리 저리나 할 줄 알았다면, 예수 믿어나 천당갈걸
If I knew things would turn out like this/ I should've believed
in Jesus and gone to heaven

초전심을 울릴 줄 알았다면, 머리 깎아 상서절 갈걸
If I knew my sad fate now/ I should've had my hair cut
and gone to the Buddhist temple

요즘으 금전 팔랑 잉기단, 나일 망천 나일 망천
 While wandering about to earn this damning money/ I ruined
 my life, ruined my life

* The text of this story is originally transcribed by Koh Kwang-min at Cheju National University, with whom I attended at this healing rite. I am grateful for his kindness to give me the text.

1. Refrain repeated after each verse, indicating a line in the text.
2. / indicating a short stop between two verses within a line.
3. "Law" means here exorcism rite (*pudasi*) in which the simbang expels the evil spirits three times.
4. I.e., "It is good!"