

## The Comings and Goings of a Korean Grandfather: The *Yongdŭng Kur* Sequence of a Cheju Island Village

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The authors describe the *Yongdŭng kur* held in Sunshine Village, on Cheju Island. The *kur* ceremonies are described in light of the narrative myth of the *Yongdŭng* grandfather legend. Both the welcoming and farewell *kur* are described, together with oral narratives provided by several village informants. The authors conclude that the *Yongdŭng kur* play a central role in the ritual life of the village, and through their annual myth of separation and reintegration, thereby affirm the village's place in the Cheju Island community.

The *Yongdŭng kur* sequence in Sunshine Village, Cheju Island, follows quickly after the lunar New Year's village-wide *kur*, the *cheil kur*.<sup>1</sup> Although many of the central considerations of the *Yongdŭng kur* are the same as those of the *cheil kur*, this series of two *kur* is based on a single mythic narrative which acts as a justification for the ritual's performance. The two *kur*, spaced one month apart, express simultaneously the villagers' fears of and dependence on the ocean. The *kur* also provide a mechanism for reaffirming the village's position in the greater island community of Cheju-do.

The first of the two *kur* is held on lunar 1/15 and celebrates the return of the *Yongdŭng* grandfather from "the land beyond the sea."<sup>2</sup> Among informants this *kur* was alternately referred to as the *Yongdŭng tŭldŏmŭn bonnyang cheil kur* and the *chŏngwŏl borŭm kur*. The main premise of the *kur* is that the *Yongdŭng* spirit returns on this day to the village from another world across the sea and, as a welcoming feast for this helpful spirit, the *kur* is held. During the following month, the spirit travels clockwise around the island, receiving a welcoming *kur* at each of

the villages along the shore. After completing his island circuit, a farewell *kur* is held for the spirit as he returns to sea on lunar 2/15.

Sunshine Village is located on the eastern shore of Cheju Island, in the shadow of Sŏngsan Ilch'ul Bong. Our informants told us that this eastern positioning of the village assured that the *Yongdŭng* grandfather would visit this village among the first on his traveling circuit. Another village, slightly north and east of Sunshine Village, holds a welcoming *kur* on the same day, but celebrates his departure a full two days earlier.<sup>3</sup> The final *kur* is referred to as the *Yondŭng kur*. This final *kur* is much more elaborate than any of the welcoming *kur* held on the island.

Our primary informant mentioned that during the initial period of welcoming *kur*, both shamans and their clients would travel from village to village, taking part in the rituals. Usually people would also attend the *kur* at the neighboring villages. This type of movement serves two purposes. First it acts as an open conduit of transmission for shamanic lore, including, chants, dances, and music.<sup>4</sup> Second it establishes and delineates the Cheju Island community as a single spiritual entity. The primary clients of the shamans on Cheju Island are *chŏmsu* [women divers], and thus the *kur* also provide an opportunity for divers from different villages to interact in a setting other than the economic umbrellas of the divers' cooperative or association.<sup>5</sup>

The *kur* are based on the myth of the *Yongdŭng* grandfather who saves a boatload of fishermen whose boat is lost in a storm at sea. The myth itself is active in the oral narrative tradition, although not as active as the popularity of the *kur* would suggest. In fact while the myth forms the basis for the performance of the *kur*, recitation of the myth is not included in the *kur* of Sunshine Village.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore while some of the clients present at the *kur* could be considered active bearers of the tradition, neither the shaman nor her attendant *sŏmi* are active bearers of the *Yongdŭng* grandfather myth.<sup>6</sup> This is startling because the shaman acts in the community not only as a spiritual leader, but also as an active bearer of the narrative lore associated with Korean shamanism.<sup>7</sup>

The *Yongdŭng kur* sequence of Cheju Island has been discussed only occasionally in the academic sphere. The series *Har'guk ū kur* has devoted an entire volume to the *Yongdŭng kur* of Cheju Island (Chang 1983). However, the volume focuses solely on the departing *kur* and makes only perfunctory references to the myth on which the *kur* are based. Kyŏng Sŏl Sŏng (1973) provides an in-depth discussion of the identity of the *Yongdŭng* spirit and also provides a composite of various myth variations concerning this spirit. He identifies an interesting characteristic of the spirit in his comparative discussion of the myths of Kyŏngsan province and of Cheju Island—namely the ambiguity of the

spirit's sex. In peninsular myths, the spirit appears as an old woman, while in Cheju myths, it appears as an old man. Kyōng also mentions the connection of the spirit to both wind and sea, as well as to weather forecasting. In the Cheju tradition, on the day of the first *kur*, if the weather is rainy, the spirit has been accompanied by his daughter-in-law, and the weather will remain poor for the rest of the month prior to the spirit's departure. If on this day the weather is sunny, the spirit has been accompanied by his daughter, and the weather will remain good for the month.

On a primary level the spirit is closely linked to the wind and, in more general terms, to agriculture. Hwang Ru Shi (1988:125–128) has also studied the *Yōngdŭng kur* of Cheju Island, particularly those at Ch'ilmdŭriang in Cheju City, which have been designated an intangible cultural asset. She notes in particular the role of the *Yōngdŭng* spirit as a communal god celebrated in the village sphere, pointing out that the spirit is related to farming and, in this context, to farming of the sea by *chamsu* (Hwang 1988:127). Kim In Chung (1987:202) and Lee Du Hyōn (1983:245–246) also provide brief discussions of the *Yōngdŭng kur* in their respective treatments of Korean folklore. Cheju tradition, of course, has been studied exhaustively over the years. Volume five of *Han'guk Minsok Chonghap Chosa P'ogoso* provides a detailed outline of shamanic ritual and organization on the island (Lee 1974:87–126).

Fieldwork for this study was carried out from lunar 1/14/88 to 2/16/88 in Sunshine Village on Cheju Island.<sup>8</sup> We approached as many villagers as possible to hear what they knew about the *Yōngdŭng* grandfather. Both clients and nonclients of the village shaman, Sonhi's mother, were interviewed as a means for establishing the level of community knowledge about both the *Yōngdŭng kur* and *Yōngdŭng* grandfather spirit. Also we attended the two *Yōngdŭng kur*. Finally we interviewed Sonhi's mother and her three *somi* with a view towards understanding the structure of the *kur* as well as the position of the *kur* in establishing village-, district-, and island-wide solidarity. The results of this fieldwork and analysis are presented here.

Collecting the narrative variants of the *Yōngdŭng* grandfather myth provided an interesting view into the structure of the active oral tradition among the village members. Although every person questioned was aware of the *Yōngdŭng* grandfather spirit as well as of his connection to the sea, remarkably few were able to provide anything more detailed than affirmation of the spirit's existence and his role as beneficiary of the *Yōngdŭng kur*. Asking informants if they could remember the *Yōngdŭng* grandfather myth prompted responses such as, "I don't really know. . . . *Yōngdŭng* grandfather is a god who helped some fishermen return to Cheju-do a long time ago. . . ." As von Sydow (1948)

has pointed out, this is exactly what one expects to find in an active oral tradition. While a community has a relatively small number of active bearers of tradition who are able and eager to perform a narrative, the number of passive bearers—those who have heard the story in question and can affirm its contents, but are unable or unaccustomed to performing themselves—is relatively large. Collection efforts were concentrated on twenty-three *chamsu*, who were for the most part active clients of Sonhi's mother. Sonhi's mother was also interviewed concerning the *Yōngdŭng* grandfather myth. Of the twenty-four women interviewed in-depth, only five were able to provide any type of coherent narrative.

Three of the five narratives collected were quite short and with only partial overlapping of content. Kok Jun's mother, a fifty-seven year old *chamsu*, widowed with five children, related a short account one day while shelling sea urchins after an afternoon dive. She recounted that *Yōngdŭng* grandfather was a name for the *Yo Wang*, and that the *kur* were held as a tribute to this sea god. She could not remember where she had heard this. The narrative reflects a confusion about the distinction between the well-known sea god *Yo Wang* and the rather ambiguous *Yōngdŭng* grandfather spirit. The other members of her diving group protested her account, an indication that her short narrative was possibly the result of personal speculation and interpretation rather than reception and transmission of earlier narratives. As with many others questioned about the *Yōngdŭng* grandfather spirit, she repeated the belief about weather forecasting, saying that she had heard that as a child.

Chung Mu's mother, a thirty-three year old married diver, related a short narrative on her way out to her diving site. Referring to the spirit as the *Yōngdŭng* grandmother, she recounted that a group of Koreans traveled by boat and landed in the *Oae nom baeki nara* (Japan), where they were helped by the *Yōngdŭng* grandmother spirit. She added that at the time of the *kur* it is best to make rice balls and place them around the house and in the animal stalls, as a defense against childhood diseases. The grandmother spirit is a direct reference to the traditions of southern peninsular Korea (Kyōng 1973:27–28). Chung Mu's mother was also the only informant who suggested that the *Yōngdŭng* spirit could help protect against childhood disease. All other references to the *Yōngdŭng* spirit's protective powers intimated that the spirit protected fishermen and divers while at sea.

The third short narrative was provided by Sonhi's mother, the village shaman. She related her account one evening in her house over cups of coffee. "The *Yōngdŭng* grandfather arrived on Cheju island during the first month a long time ago. He walked around the island, going here and there, picking things up and eating them. After a month, he left the

island in a small reed boat, returning to the land he had come from. Now, when he comes, he brings either his daughter or daughter-in-law." She repeated the explanation of the method of weather forecasting. Although almost all informants were familiar with the means of weather forecasting, some reversed the order of daughter and daughter-in-law.<sup>9</sup> All of these narratives are extremely short and lacking in detail, suggesting that they were performances coerced out of otherwise passive bearers of the narrative tradition. Also their inconsistency with the two longer narratives collected suggest reference to other narrative traditions and, in the case of Chung Mu's mother, reference to a tradition from a completely different province.

The two long narratives collected exhibit a marked similarity in form and content. Both informants were known as storytellers and thus active bearers of oral tradition in the community. One of the two informants, Yong Mi's mother, a fifty-two year old married diver with two children, was Catholic and did not attend any of the *ku* in the village. Nevertheless her narrative was quite elaborate. She had learned the story when she was a young girl, from "old ladies." "It was my grandmother's," she said at one point, suggesting the possibility of narrative ownership (von Sydow 1948). She related this shorter of the two long narratives in her home one afternoon.

One time some Cheju fishermen went out fishing. Their ship was blown to a land of one-eyed people, who wanted to eat the fishermen. Luckily *Yongding* grandfather helped them by hiding them in a basket. Then he sends them home on a boat. But he tells them not to say *Jip e 'i'a wai'a* [We're almost home] before they are on land. They sail and sail. Finally they see land and are very excited, so excited they forget what *Yongding* grandfather said, and they shout out, *Jip e 'i'a wai'a*. Just when they said this, their boat mysteriously returns to the land of one-eyed people. *Yongding* grandfather is upset because they've come back. "This won't do" he says, and "I have to take you home." So he returns with them to Cheju Island and stays a month. When he leaves you send him out with a large cock, rice, water, dried seaweed, fruit, *ungu*, *ch'onggak*, crab, salt, soy sauce, and abalone.

The end of the narrative makes specific reference to the form of the second *ku*, providing a list of foods placed in the small boat set adrift at the end of the ritual.

The longest variant collected was from O In Suk, a fifty-seven year old married diver with three children. She also attributed the narrative to her grandmother, saying she had learned it between the ages of ten and fifteen. The narrative was performed late one evening in the only heated room of her small house, while her children and husband watched television, apparently oblivious to her performance. As she spoke, her eyes

sparkled in her sun-wrinkled face and her shadow danced to the rhythm of her gestures on the wall behind her. Her narrative ran as follows:

Long ago, *Yongding* grandfather was . . . well, I'm not really sure whether it was a story of Cheju or somewhere else since my grandmother told me the story.

One day, some fishermen went out to fish but met up with heavy winds and were marooned, you see. If it were present-day, it would have been a motor boat, but back then it was a reed boat; you know, the type where you have to row the boat with oars. Anyway, they were swept away by heavy winds, and since they couldn't control the boat, they landed in the land of one-eyed monsters, you know, meaning that they only had one eye.

These one-eyed people went to a place where they collected rain water. One of the ladies who came to collect the rain water was this very large woman, you see. She was so large that she was able to gather three people all at once in her skirt; and isn't this evidence that she was a large woman?

She took her water jar, fixed it upon her head, put the end of her skirt up to her mouth and gathered them up one by one. She was without doubt a very large woman. And though those three people were hungry people, she still had to be large to be able to carry all three in her skirt.

And those people were overjoyed at the thought of being rescued since they were well fed and looked after, and were comfortable overall, sitting there. After they were fed, they were taken to a closet; shouldn't they sleep after having eaten well?

While they were sleeping, they overheard these men coming in from the outside, and they could hear dogs barking. She said, "if you are going to come in, well then come in!" As they walked in, she asked them, "How was hunting today?" And they replied that they had had bad hunting that day. When she heard that they had had a bad hunting day, she said "Even I was able to hunt at the rain water reserve, how come you guys had such a bad day?"

In the meantime, these Koreans or Chejuans who were listening were thinking, "This is strange. She didn't go hunting but talked as if she had." But she kept feeding them rice and meat soup, feeding and feeding, and they were enjoying the scrumptious meals. But something was strange. She would feed them only after having come back from outside, and wouldn't it seem strange to you? The way she talked after having been outside, wouldn't it give you a strange hunch?

Since it was so weird, they stirred the soup around like so, and soon discovered that there were fingers and toes in the soup she had been feeding them. And as a result, they realized that they were still skinny, they were being fed soup with parts of fingers and toes and rice to fatten them up to be killed, instead of being fed so that they might live.

You know the old saying about how even a mouse can dig a hole the size of a door? So they began to dig a hole using both their fingers and toes in that one place. When the woman was around, they sat still, and when she was gone, they dug in a frenzy, spending the whole night digging. They kept digging with one idea that if they could dig a hole large enough for a head to fit in the hole, you know like when you come out from your mother's tummy, you are out completely. With this thought in mind, they kept digging at that hard ground with their fingers. While they were digging, they stuck someone's head through the

hole and since he fit, they pushed him from behind and he was able to get through. With one person on the outside pulling, and the one person inside pushing, they got the second one out. The third person was pulled out by the first two who made it out. With all three out, they began to flee and were thinking that they could try to live, even if they had to ride that reed boat out to the ocean again. They fled thinking that somehow or anyway they could find a way to live.

While running away, they came upon this intersection where this old man with this long beard and a stick was sitting like so. When they saw this grandfather, they said, "Help us, please." The grandfather replied, "Oh I knew you would come, and that's why I've been sitting here waiting for you." See, in the old days, there were these spirits called mountain spirits. So he, like us Koreans and Chejudoans, could talk like us, had two eyes, so they knew that their sailor had come. He said, "I've been waiting for you to come," and with this he did something and it turns out he was sitting on a cushion made of gold, beneath which he had dug a hole.

Afterwards, he shut the gold cushion, and resumed his sitting position and, after a little while, those men who were out hunting came and asked if he had seen three people pass by. The grandfather replied that he had not, but the dogs which came along began sniffing around the cushion where the grandfather was sitting and began to dig, but the grandfather beat them all with his gold cane. And when they saw their dogs being beaten in such a manner, they all ran away, wouldn't you? After the men fled, they all got out of the hole, the grandfather made them a boat of wood. You know, he was a spirit and could do things like this. After he finished it he told them that as soon as they landed on the shore of their homeland, they must not forget to say . . . a three syllable phrase which I can't remember, or else they would be blown to the foreign land again. If you compare it to this place, they came to, you know, the cove by the beach, and began to exclaim, "We are finally home, we are finally home!" but forgot to repeat the words that were taught to them.

Since they forgot to repeat the phrase, they were blown back to the foreign shore. Upon arriving on the land, they immediately left for the place where they had last seen the grandfather, sitting on his cushion. When they got there, the grandfather said, "Since I knew you would be back, I have been sitting here waiting for you."

Of course, they weren't caught again, and this time, the grandfather got on the boat, and I guess he came with them to Cheju Island. After having come in, they found that they could repay the large debt owed to the grandfather by holding a feast for one whole month. He comes in on the fifteenth of January, and stays for one month, enjoying the hospitality and being entertained during the feast. After having hosted him for a month, they loaded all the things of Chosŏn—rice, barley, millet, mung beans, beans, soy sauce, and salt onto a boat. They also put in things for him to eat: liquor, *soju*, *makkŏji*, *ch'ŏnggak*, *umi*, kelp, all the things which grow on Cheju were loaded up on the one-person boat. After having loaded the goods, he sailed off. He is dead now since this happened such a long time ago. And therefore we have a *kur* to repay his kindness and to signify his coming. We also do a *kur* bidding him a good journey home on the fifteenth of February by making lots of noise and entertaining him well and then we send him away.

They say that when he comes with his daughter-in-law, it will rain for the duration of his stay; you know, daughters-in-law cause trouble. It means that we

have to buy rain-coats . . . woven out of straw in the old days. When he comes in with his daughter, he wants to entertain her while she is on the island, and so it will be sunny for the month visit.

Although this second narrative is quite a bit longer than the first long narrative, the two variants exhibit a striking structural similarity. In each case there is an opening situation, a separation from the community, an initial crisis, intervention of a magical helper, an interdiction and its subsequent violation, a resultant crisis, a resolution of the crisis, and a final reintegration into the community.<sup>10</sup> This progression reflects the liminality of the New Year season, and the progression of the village through this liminality, emerging at the end of the period as a reintegrated community, through ritual reassertions of individual and communal relationships. The isolation of the sailors in the myth may be interpreted as an expression of the liminality of the village community during the New Year period. The *kur* signaling the return of the *Yŏngdŭng* spirit several weeks after the New Year, and consequently the return of the mythic sailors, marks the beginning of a new period in the life of the village. As with the myth where the sailors are reunited with the community after a long and dangerous absence, the ritual serves a unifying function. With the ultimate departure of the *Yŏngdŭng* spirit, both at the end of the myth and at the end of the ritual, the community has moved beyond the New Year period, and with the help of the spirit, is now able to approach the coming year as an integrated member of the Cheju Island community.

The mythic narrative interacts with the *kur* on two distinct levels. On one level, it acts as a mythic basis justifying the performance of the ritual. The helping spirit must be thanked, and thus the *kur* are held. On another level, the narrative provides form for the *kur* sequence. The narrative refers to the spirit coming and going—thus the need for two *kur*. The spirit journeys by boat in the narrative and accordingly the *kur* provide a boat for him. Finally the narratives reflect the need for food on a long journey, a requirement fulfilled in the *kur*.

The myth places Chejudoans, not from any distinct village, in opposition to foreigners, Japanese, or one-eyed monsters.<sup>11</sup> Thus the Cheju community as a whole is threatened by powerful foreign forces. As a result the community bands together in solidarity to overcome the threat. The god, *Yŏngdŭng*, intercedes on behalf of Cheju, thereby assuming the protector role celebrated in the *kur*. Islandwide village solidarity is expressed in the mythic narrative, while a similar affirmation occurs in the *kur* sequence.

The first *Yŏngdŭng kur* occurs only two weeks after the first village-wide ritual, the *cheil kur*. The morning of lunar 1/15 is cold, and like

all village rituals, the *kur* starts while the sun begins its ascent into the steel-grey winter sky. At the shrine Sonhi's mother, the three *somi*, and several clients lay offerings on the altar. Besides Sonhi's mother and her three assistants, only eight other women have braved the cold. The progression of the *kur* follows the same order as the *cheil kur*. After initial supplications towards the altar, and a short intense section devoted to the elimination of *bu'yŏng* [pollution], Sonhi's mother performs the *Ch'o kam je*, asking for the shrine's primary deity to make an appearance.<sup>12</sup> Once this spirit has arrived, the path is clear for *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather's arrival. Sonhi's mother brings an offering outside, an enticement for the spirit to find his way over the sea. After each short chant beseeching *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather to come, she divines using her "god knives" [*sink'val*] and brass coins [*chŏnmunl*]. The tempo of the music quickens, and Sonhi's mother runs to the shore and throws offering food into the surf. When she returns to the shrine, she is accompanied by the *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather spirit. Soon all are up on their feet, bowing to the newly arrived spirit and welcoming him to the village.

The tempo slows and Sonhi's mother begins a slow chant, welcoming the *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather spirit and cataloging the village. She provides information on both the hamlets of the village—its geographic organization—and the *chamsu*—its economic organization (Tangherlini and Park 1988:25). In the next chant, Sonhi's mother asks *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather for protection for the *chamsu* and fishermen in the coming year. The final chant of the *kur*, during which monetary offerings to the spirit are collected, dwells on the inevitability of death—the last separation of individual from community. After two and a half hours the *kur* draws to a close. However, *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather has arrived in the village, and this year he has brought his daughter, a definite boon for the *chamsu*. Unlike after the *cheil kur*, Sonhi's mother and her clients quickly leave at the end of the *Yŏngdŏng kur*.

One month later *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather is prepared to leave Cheju Island. Unlike the first *kur*, this ritual is on a grandiose scale, with participation of both male and female villagers.<sup>13</sup> In all 131 women attend the *kur*. While most of them are divers, some from nearby villages, other women attend as well. The six men who are present are fishermen, and they remain outside the walls of the village shrine. However, preparation of *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather's boat is left in their care.

With the first rays of dawn Sonhi's mother, her assistants, and clients begin arranging the offerings on the altar. So much food has been brought to bid farewell to *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather that extra tables are brought in for the occasion. The *kur* proceeds like the first up through the *Ch'o kam je*, although Sonhi's mother, playing to a packed house,

stretches out her performance, adding a divination here, and repeating an especially rhythmic verse there. Finally Sonhi's mother bids *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather to come to the shrine, so he can be escorted out to sea. After a month of feasting, the old man seems reluctant to leave Cheju, and Sonhi's mother is forced to make five offerings before he finally arrives at the shrine.

Before escorting *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather out to sea, Sonhi's mother asks him once again to protect the divers and the fishermen. She also asks him to provide abundant catches in the new year. With each new request Sonhi's mother tosses her knives and coins, asking for more offerings whenever she receives a negative reply from the somewhat fickle spirit.

A definite break occurs in the flow of the *kur*, and one of the *somi* begins a slow chant accompanied by a *buk*. In her chant, the *chiyangi aegssi p'uri*, she recounts the marvelous childhood of a mythic figure, and the subsequent misfortunes of his family. Surprisingly very few of the clients pay particular attention to this long, solemn chant. Sonhi's mother admitted during an interview that this chant does not belong to the *Yŏngdŏng kur* as she had learned it. However, an earlier village shaman had included it in her ritual, and now the village clients had come to expect the performance of this chant during the *Yŏngdŏng kur*.

The *p'uri* ends and once again the *kur* resumes its frenetic pace. Leading from the door of the shrine to the gate of the walls, Sonhi's mother and her assistants erect eight bamboo waist-high poles, which serve as gates for the *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather to travel through. Between the gates a long white cloth is lain, one end under the main altar inside and another end at the very edge of the shrine's outer gate. They place a smaller offering table at the end closest to the ocean. The setup is identical to the road prepared for a deceased person during a *Kui yang p'uri*. The *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather will leave Cheju for his land across the sea in the same manner a person's spirit departs the domestic space for the last time. Once the "road" is laid out, Sonhi's mother begins smoothing it out. Dancing and twirling through the gates, she digs, sweeps, and pats the path. She sprinkles it with *soju* to keep the dust down, and rolls rocks along its path to make sure that it is smooth. The path to the other world will be as comfortable as possible. However, unlike the elaborate twenty-one step process required to prepare the road for a newly departing spirit, this road does not require the same amount of preparation—the *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather has made the journey many times before.

After the road is finished, the *Yŏngdŏng* grandfather is able to leave. Although reluctant at first, he is finally sent on his way. The clients stream out of the shrine's gate, picking their way across the rocks to the breakers.

There they throw balls of rice, egg, and apple [*ch'i*] into the surf as offerings to the *Yo Wang* [*yowang ch'i*], the local tutelary spirit, in this case described as a fishing spirit [*sōhang ch'i*], and to the spirits of those who died at sea [*yōnghon ch'i*], as well as an offering for their own protection [*mon ch'i*]. Simultaneously the men release the boat they have prepared, after filling it with the ritual goods described in the myth narratives. While the boat is ideally made of reed, this one was made of closed-cell styrofoam.<sup>14</sup> The men keep watch on the boat until it disappears from sight, assuring that it reaches its destination beyond the horizon.

Back at the shrine, Sonhi's mother busily performs a ritual sowing of seeds. These seeds will guarantee a bountiful harvest from the sea. With a basket of seeds under her arm, she walks to the water's edge and tosses handfuls into the surf. With each handful, she calls out the name of a fish or sea product. Many of the clients pay close attention to her catalog of sea products, making sure that she does not inadvertently forget to mention something. Such an omission could jeopardize that catch in the coming year. Sewing seeds in the water reflects the agricultural nature of the *Yōngdŭng* spirit, and the dependence of the *chamsu* on this spirit for economic success. This section marks the end of the *kut*. However, as with the *cheil kut*, many clients remain to receive personal divinations and present private offerings to specific gods and spirits.

The *Yōngdŭng kut* sequence plays several definite roles in the life of a Cheju village. The first welcoming *kut* provides a chance for the village to reaffirm its position in the greater island community. While the practice of traveling from village to village for the month of *kut* is in decline, the intention of the *kut* is still maintained, both as a welcome for the spirit and as an expression of membership in the larger island community. The farewell *kut* also underscores the position of the village as a member of a larger community. This assertion is supported by both the presence of nonvillagers at the *kut*, unlike at the *cheil kut*, and by the islandwide celebration of the event. The *kut* sequence stresses the economic dependence of the village, and other seaside villages like it, on the weather and the sea. Fair weather and abundant sea life assure a sound economic fortune for the coming year.

When the *Yōngdŭng kut* sequence is considered in view of the New Year's rituals, an interesting pattern emerges. The first rituals of the New Year occur in the domestic space, allowing a family unit to reaffirm its internal relationships (Kendall 1985; Dix 1987; Janelli and Janelli 1982: 26-121). The subsequent village rituals, the *cheil kut* and *p'oje*, provide an opportunity for the village households to reaffirm their relationships with the other households in the village community (Tangherlini and Park 1988:34-35). Finally the *Yōngdŭng kut* provide an opportunity for

the village to express its solidarity with other island villages. The progression of rituals for the New Year move from an assertion of individual relations on the domestic level, to household relationships on the village level, to village relationships on the island level. At that point the Cheju Island community has been fully defined.

The *Yōngdŭng* grandfather narrative on which the *kut* sequence is based displays a distinct Cheju character, when compared to similar narratives from peninsular Korea (Kyōng 1973). While both narrative types make specific reference to accompanying female figures (daughter or daughter-in-law), the main narratives are unrelated. The Cheju variant ascribes a male persona to the spirit. On Cheju Island, the nearby sea is primarily the realm of women, and is harvested by the *chamsu*, as expressed by the final seed-sowing sequence of the farewell *kut*. On the other hand, the sea over the horizon, to which fishermen travel, is the realm of men. On one level the rituals suggest an interesting balance between *ŭm* [yin] and *yang*, in which the *ŭm* segment of the community performs a ritual for a *yang* agricultural/weather spirit, to establish a harmony—a harmony which insures protection and an abundant catch. However, this is only one small aspect of the ritual function. It is significant that the male fishermen release the offering boat, recognized by all as the “climax” of the ritual, while the female *chamsu* throw their offerings into the nearby sea. Although the myth places primary emphasis on the fishermen and their dependence on the *Yōngdŭng* spirit for reintegration into the Cheju community (and thus symbolic success), the ritual places equal emphasis on the dependence of both the fishermen and the *chamsu* on this spirit for economic success in the coming year.<sup>15</sup>

The *Yōngdŭng kut* sequence of Sunshine Village provides interesting insight into both the role of ritual in village life as well as the viability of oral narrative and its relation to ritual structure. Although the narrative is not frequently told in the present tradition and most villagers are only passive bearers of the tradition at best, the presence of two similar, highly developed variants suggests that the narrative tradition is still alive. The attribution of the narrative to grandmothers suggests a developed oral tradition spanning several generations. The performance of the *kut* sequence shows the role of oral narrative in helping provide form to ritual. Earlier studies of the Cheju Island *Yōngdŭng kut* sequence have regrettably dealt only with the second, larger of the two *kut*. In so doing, the role of the *Yōngdŭng kut* as a means for reaffirming the village position in the larger Cheju Island community has been inadvertently overlooked. In our observations it became apparent that both *kut* were interdependent and, from the point of view of the villagers, equally important in the ritual life of the village.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the Center for Korean Studies of the University of California at Berkeley, Sunshine Village, the pseudonym for a village in eastern Cheju-do where the authors conducted their fieldwork (described in Tangherlini and Park 1988).

## NOTES

1. We would like to extend thanks to the people of Sunshine Village for all their help in this fieldwork project. Also we extend our thanks to the Henry Luce Foundation, the Watson Foundation, and the National Museum of Korea for their support; and we would like to thank Dr. Laurel Kendall for her helpful comments.
2. For more information on the ethnography and folk belief of this neighboring village, see Hahn (1987).
3. Dègh and Vázsonyi (1973) propose that a transmission conduit exists for each type of traditional genre. The *kur* provides a mechanism for opening several of these conduits.
4. Yoon (1976) discusses the role of the divers' cooperative movement and association in the organization of Cheju Island women. Cho (1983:82-83) discusses the importance of diving as a social activity on Cheju Island.
5. The question of which came first, the myth or the ritual, is impossible to answer. Rather they function interdependently, relying on each other for both form and function.
6. Von Sydow (1948) makes the distinction between active and passive bearers of a tradition. Active bearers are actively involved in the transmission of a narrative. Passive bearers know the general form and content of a narrative but do not actively transmit it in a tradition.
7. Terminology associated with Korean shamanism is both complex and confusing. Because of convention we refer throughout this paper to shaman, meaning *simbang*, and shamanism, meaning *mingan shang* or *mysok*.
8. For a description of the village, see Tangherlini and Park (1988:22-23).
9. It is more likely that the daughter-in-law would precipitate inclement weather, as in Korean social structure the daughter-in-law is an outsider brought in to the immediate family and is often a source of domestic friction.
10. For a discussion of the morphology of folktales, also in part applicable to myth, see Propp (1979). Also see van Gennep (1960) for an analysis of ritual structure, especially in regards to separation and integration.
11. There was a certain degree of confusion among informants as to the exact appellation of the land where the fishermen landed. Three possibilities were given: *oae nom* (Japanese, *oi nom* [foreigner], and *oi nun* [one-eyed]). Thus the land could either be Japan, a foreign land, or land of the one-eyed people. There is clear motivation for each possibility. Japan has been a traditional antagonist for many years, and therefore a terrible place to be stranded if one is Korean. The myth and the *kur* both emphasize island unity, and therefore any foreign element would form a neat opposition. The one-eyed country immediately calls to mind the wanderings of Odysseus and his stranding in the land of the Cyclops. None of the informants, however, were aware of the Odysseus narrative. However, one-eyed monsters are a common folk motif throughout the world, as evidenced by Thompson (1955). G511.1 (Giant with one eye blind), F512.1.1 (Cyclops), F512.1 (Person with one eye), F512.1.1 (Person with one eye in center of head); and also similar journey motifs: F122 (Journey to land of giants), F129.4 (Journey to otherworld island), and A185.10 (Deity accompanies man on journey). The weather forecasting motif is paralleled by motif A287.01.
12. For a fuller discussion of the form and function of this section of the *kur* in general, see Lee (1974:11-112); and for this particular village and shaman, see Tangherlini and Park (1988:24-25).
13. Also present were six female and five male observers.
14. An example of the use of modern technology in ritual. For another example, see Tangherlini and Park (1988:31).

15. The small number of fishermen in the village (about fifteen) compared to the number of *chamsu* (about one hundred) may be a contributing factor to their relative emphasis in the ritual. Also it is widely recognized that Korean shamanism is predominantly female, accounting for the relative importance of the *chamsu* in the ritual.

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