A 11

The tape then introduces a film taken by Father Weber in the early 1920s on a search for ephemeral Catholic communities. This older film leads into the videotape's core, a detailed recounting of the making of onggi jars. The video producers note that onggi production is divided between two individuals: potter and assistant. The latter prepares the clay, which includes an exhausting and intricate series of tasks. Beginning with clay delivery, the videotape continues through mixing, and preparation of bases coils and, in the case of a variation from Cholla Province, slabs.

The potter works alone at his wheel, centering and scoring the base, building the jar, beating it with anvil and paddle, forming the lip, and finally providing it with rudimentary decoration. A fine example of the care taken by the videotape's producers occurs as they focus on the sequence of the potter first hitting the inside of the jar with the anvil and then responding a microsecond later with the paddle on the outside. This pushes the clay out and upward, compacting it to hold its shape. The narrator states that an accomplished potter can make a medium-sized jar in ten minutes and works from first light until dusk. This reviewer wishes that other recordings of similar processes paid equally close attention to such delicate nuances of production.

The jars are then left to dry and, finally, are glazed, with intimate attention paid to preparation of the glaze material and the glazing itself. When sufficient numbers of pots are produced, the great climbing kiln is prepared, the wood cut, and the clay brought in to be used as sealant. Kiln stacking of more than 1000 jars, small inside the large, is treated in exceptional and sensitive detail, as well as the processes of preliminary heating and then firing. The filmmakers intercut contemporary shots of stacking and firing from Weber's 1920s film, providing a sense of continuity rarely achieved in films concerning seemingly ephemeral folk production.

This reviewer notes only one problem with this videotape, a lack of discussion of ownership of the means of production and modes of labor. Thus, while the tape opens the issue of the ephemeral nature of onggi production and states that potters are itinerant producers working on a seasonal schedule, it does not discuss workshop or kiln ownership. Even though potters and apprentices are paid following the unstacking of a kiln and the selling of the jars to wholesalers, the videotape does not discuss the division of this money or whether the skilled craftsmen are generally well-off or poor. For this, one looks into the background of the long shots to see the potter's communities or reads portions of the monograph, which cover such details.

This videotape is, however, a minor classic. It brings to consciousness, for folklorists, craftspeople, other investigators of cultural traditions, as well as Koreans, a complete sense of the importance of this neglected art. The videotape is not a simplistic, humdrum recitation of a rote process, but rather a multivocalic investigation of an important East Asian culture. I recommend that it be used by cultural anthropologists and archaeologists, folklorists, art historians, and teachers of ceramics, not only for its overt content, but also for providing questions for discussion and useful for further research. I also recommend that Koreans see it in order to note, as have some of my Korean American students, that Korean objects and traditions are worthy of treasure.

An Initiation *Kut* for a Korean Shaman. By Diana Lee and Laurel Kendall. 37 min., 1/2" video format, color. (University of Hawaii Press, 2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, HI 96822)

TIMOTHY TANGHERLINI
University of California, Los Angeles

As the camera pans slowly across a cramped room, a view of a shaman playing an hourglass drum is slowly replaced by that of several women sitting on a couch. One of the women looks distractedly over her shoulder out a window of the small apartment, seemingly uninterested in the performance going on before her. This opening scene from Diana Lee and Laurel Kendall's film *An Initiation* Kut *for a Korean*

Shaman signals from the beginning that this film is no ordinary ethnographic document. Kendall's narration of the following sequences—sequences intended to provide a brief introduction to the phenomena of *manshin* (shaman) and *kut* (shamanic ritual)—include the observation that in Korea "shamans are sometimes reviled as charlatans, lewd women, . . . and sometimes romanticized as the authors of a distinctive Korean commentary on suffering, life, and death." Lee and Kendall's film neither reviles nor romanticizes the shamans.

Most available films of Korean shaman rituals focus on the romantic view of the manshin and kut. Often these productions show the ritual performance of a government-designated "national living treasure." These "superstar kut" productions generally reflect the rigid structures hypothesized by some Korean folklorists and frequently feature play-by-play narration by a well-known scholar of Korean shamanism. Regretfully, it is these performances that have been accessible to those interested in learning about shamanism in Korea. Now there is a film that presents another view of Korean shamanism.

Lee and Kendall follow the initiation kut of Chini, a young Korean woman who, after a year of preparation, has decided to accept the spirits. A strong voice in the remainder of the film is that of Kim Pong Sun, Chini's *shinomoni* (spirit mother) and teacher. Kendall poses the question, "What sort of person becomes a shaman?", and the answer first comes from Kim. The film moves back and forth between Kim and Chini telling Chini's life story, each one building and changing the narrative according to her own perspective. The film presents Chini's story twice told—once by Chini, focusing on her slow realization that she had to become a shaman, and once by Kim, focusing on Chini's suffering. This interesting sequence accentuates the role of personal narrative in Korean shamanism.

After approximately ten minutes, the film moves from the intensely personal narratives of Chini and Kim to the public space of the kut. As the shaman, her assistants, Chini, and her relatives move indoors, one woman turns to the camera and tells Kendall, Lee, Asch, and by extension, us, to come into the cramped space of Chini's tiny apartment to watch her initiation. Here is where Lee's considerable skill as a filmmaker becomes evident. Operating a heavy video camera in a tiny apartment with uneven lighting is at the very least challenging. Nevertheless, Lee manages to capture both the expressions of the individual ritual participants and their interactions. Coupled with Kim Asch's excellent sound recording, Lee's photography evokes the excitement and the intensity of the performances. When Chini at one point lowers her fan in exasperation, we feel the closeness and heat of the room and her obvious frustration with her inability to successfully call the spirits.

From Chini's opening dance, it quickly becomes apparent that something is troubling her. This is not the smiling Chini of the day before who sat cutting pictures for her altar. Instead, she is nervous and uptight. Kim counsels her again and again, but when Chini finally climbs atop the water jar, the gods say that she must wait another year—Chini's dead sister is blocking the path for the spirits. Kim manages to speak to the dead sister, and she agrees to speak through Chini as the Princess Hogu. Since Chini does not own this costume, a call has to be made to the shaman supply store. An amusing yet important scene follows, in which one of the shaman's assistants is seen speaking on the phone, ordering the costume. The scene underscores the progression of the kut, not as a fluid performance, but one marked by fits and starts, with indeterminate moves between ritual performance and daily conversation. The most emotional scene follows the arrival of the new costume, and Lee has been able to capture all of the *han* (sorrow and longing) of Chini's sister's laments.

Throughout the kut, Kim verbally attacks the gods and derides Chini, at one point sneering, "You shameless bitch." The relationship between Chini and Kim reveals an interesting aspect of kut—insult and rough treatment are part and parcel of the performance. Often shamans have a quick tongue and an acerbic wit—Kim is no exception. All is not harmonious during the

ritual, despite what romantic representations would lead one to believe. Instead, conflict and insult play an important role in the kut.

Although the film starts out setting up expectations of a straightforward documentary with Kendall's slightly monotonous narration, the discourse of ethnographic description is quickly subverted. The distinctions between performer and audience blur as the theoretically neat notions of kut perpetrated by romantic representations come tumbling down. At the same time, the Confician-informed dominant culture's view of Korean shamans as "lewd women" is rejected through the sympathetic portrayal of these women's lives. Chini's inability to perform up to the critical standards of Kim further personalizes the concept of shamanism in Korea. Even though one feels sorry for Chini, one realizes that she is the hapless victim of fickle spirits and not the victim of an abusive shaman or the objectifying, colonial gaze of a video camera.

When the film was screened at the 1993 Vitas Film Festival at UCLA, it evoked strong reactions—both positive and negative. A handful of graduate students felt that the film was exploitative. Some felt that, if the video camera had not been present, Chini would have been successful. Others felt that it was unfair to record her failure. The latter of these concerns is without merit, since it suggests that folklorists should ignore performances that present an unflattering view of the performers. The former concern reflects expectations of what an ethnographic film should be—it is jolting to have the romantic rug pulled out from under one's feet.

Although the film suffers from a few minor technical problems that are symptomatic of the low budgets of most ethnographic productions, the biggest problem with Lee and Kendall's film is the lack of a study guide. However, Kendall's two books on Korean shamanism—*Shamans, Housewives and Other Restless Spirits: Women in Korean Ritual Life* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985) and *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman: Of Tales and the Telling of Tales* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988)—more than compensate for this lack. Along with either of these two books, the film is remarkably well-suited for use in the classroom and will be of particular interest to students of folklore, religion, anthropology, dance, ethnomusicology, film, and notably, women's studies. Lee and Kendall, in a short 37 minutes, have succeeded in capturing all of the emotion, humor, frustration, and excitement of a kut in this excellent film.

Moving Mountains—The Story of the Yiu Mien. By Elaine Valaquez. 58 min., 16mm film and 1/2" video formats, color. (Filmmakers Library, 124 East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016)

Cecily Cook
The New England Foundation for the Arts

One concern of Southeast Asian refugee groups resettled in the United States is that most "Americans" see them all as Vietnamese or Chinese and resent them for being here. Consequently, it becomes important, especially for some of the smaller ethnic groups from highland areas, to try to explain themselves, their culture, and how they got to this country to their new neighbors. *Moving Mountains* is a beautifully executed example of this kind of explanatory document. It is also an excellent introduction to the lives and changing culture of Mien refugees living in the United States. Using historical footage of the Mien in Laos, recollections, interviews, and scenes of traditional activities taking place in Oregon and California, Elaine Valaquez gives us a detailed, visually rich portrait of the Mien people in the United States.

The beginning of the film seeks to establish that Mien refugees have every right to live in the United States. Within the first minute we see footage of Mien people in traditional dress walking in what is presumably the forest in Laos, a U.S. Army helicopter strafing the ground with machine-gun fire, and Mien people in a refugee camp. Ay Choy Saelee, one of the film's central narrators, says that many Americans feel that refugees are not "necessary" and proceeds to explain the differ-