

Chapter 3: A Country of Love and Curse

A statue of *A Woman of the Earth* standing at the House of Sharing—a bronze statue of a bizarre-looking old woman. The culture of grudges is suitable for concrete expression.

Wonderland of curse—spiritual culture in Korea

Shamanic culture in modern society

The Korean Peninsula is a treasure-house of shamanism and mysticism. Without recognizing this, it is impossible to understand spiritual culture in Korea.

In the first place, the Chinese character 儒, which is used to indicate Confucianism, is said to mean shaman. Confucius's mother was from the lineage of shamanic family, and their work was essentially the role of virgins in service of a shrine connecting the real world and the dead. They also acted as a kind of funeral parlor in charge of the entire process of funeral ceremony. It was considered their side benefit to dig up the grave and wear the clothes which the dead wore. So, they were regarded as not very respectable in terms of social status. There are various views as to Confucius's father. One point is certain that Confucius was born out of wedlock. As were virgins serving at the Greek Pantheon, shamans may have been engaged in prostitutions at times.

Now, back to the Korean Peninsula. The second king of Silla (57 BC- 935 AD), Namhae's title of honor, Chachaung, is said to refer to the dialect indicating virgin of shrine. During the kingdom of Goryeo (918-1392), it was recorded that the shrine of virgins was built by the state and the king protected the shrine.

In Korea, shaman is generally called Mudang and mostly they are females. There are male shamans (baksu or in some places, farleye), though they are not many in number. In the male-dominating and female-despised Korean society, female shamans uniquely maintain the practice, and shamanism continues to exist to this day, on the basis that the tradition be transmitted from mother to daughter. Presumably for that reason, mudang's husband (mudang's son in law as well) may sound like "a hairdresser's husband"¹ as is banteringly called in Japan. For the honor of mudang's husbands, however, they often acted also as *kwande* and were not totally dependent economically on their wives.

¹ Hairdressing used to be a popular female profession with high income, and therefore, a hairdresser's husband tended to be lazy and dependent on the wife for living.

Kwande is an artist performing masked plays and singing songs, and they, too, are closely related to shamanism. *Mudangs* (wives) are said to have often overdriven their *kwande* husbands in a demanding manner. So, the leading role in the practice is performed by females. Males of *mudang*'s line (*sani*) mostly marry into *mudang*'s family.

Mudang itself is engaged in mean occupation, according to the traditional Korean distinction of jobs. And even today, they are made little of by intellectuals. Still, they have resiliently survived and live an ordinary life among common people in the 21st century. According to Professor Park Jong-hyun of Japan's Hosei University, in Korea, today, roughly a hundred thousand mudangs are registered as a single line of business, and there are two or three times more non-registered ones. By comparison, there are thirty to forty thousand Christian clergymen in Korea.

Mudangs' main clients are middle-aged women and they often visit mudangs with various request such as calling the ancestors' souls, search for the missing, exorcism, healing of a diseases, fortune telling, consultation about worries, and so on. Having the ancestor's soul and various gods called down to the earth, the clients return home with temporary peace of mind. Americans, especially those intellectuals living in big cities like New York, are said to visit their psychiatrist as nonchalantly as on a visit to the dentist. Some say that the psycho-therapist plays a role of the "confession room" in Catholic churches. What a therapist is to Americans is what a shaman is to common Korean people.

In her childhood, Ms. O Sonfa from Cheju Island had spent happy time with a local mudang woman and had the head stroked caressingly when she told the mudang woman a few Japanese words she just picked up. The mudang woman may have been one of the Koreans who had experienced good, old days under the Japanese rule. On Cheju Island, which is surrounded by the seas, the belief in local mudangs has been very popular and it is one of the important roles mudangs play to send those who lost their lives in ship-wrecking incidents to Hades. In Cheju Island, mudangs are called *shinbang* and it is one of the island's cultural characteristics that the ratio of male mudangs is higher than in other parts of the country.

Even in big cities like Seoul, once you step into a back road, you will see a sign of 卍, which symbolizes mudang. In some cases, there is a cheap sweets shop on the first floor, and the owner of the shop performs as mudang on the second floor, moonlighting. This is not a rare case. The sign 卍 can be said to be "the door to everywhere,²" connecting the city life and Hades.

² The door to everywhere is one of Doraemon's (comic character of an almighty robot cat) tools of his powerful magic.

Jin Yon-gun, Queen Min's favorite

Mudangs worship various and diversified gods, ranging from mountain god, dragon-king god and nature gods to Chinese guardian god of Hero Guan Yu in Sanguo-zhi³ or Buddhist gods of Taishaku or Amida. Even during the Joseon Dynasty, which thoroughly oppressed Buddhism, worship of those Buddhist gods was passed on through mudangs among the people.

The tenth king of the Joseon Dynasty, despotic Yeonsan-gun (1476-1506), famous for his penchant for women, was among oppressors of Buddhism, but he protected mudangs and often held grand-scaled shamanic festivals for his deceased concubine. According to existing records, at times, he himself performed the act of divine inspiration and called down from heaven the soul of Queen Jeheon, his real mother, who had been dethroned through slanders, and had her grudges spoken.

It has been known that infamous Queen Min was especially fond of mudangs.

Queen Min spent a huge amount of money to have her son Prince Tag (author's note: later Sunjong) designated as heir to the throne. Moreover, to pray for the heir's good health and peace of the royal family, Queen Min had mudangs perform their occultism in which mudangs dance and pray maddingly every day. In addition, she donated cash of a thousand Ryo, one koku of rice, and one hiki of woven silk to each peak of the twelve thousand peaks of Mt. Kumgang-san. The donation totaled to twelve million ryo of money, twelve thousand koku of white rice, and twelve thousand hiki of woven silk. The financial condition of the state at that time was the reservation of 1.5 million ryo of money, 0.2 million koku of rice and 2 thousand hiki of woven silk. The amount Queen Min contributed to Mt. Kumgang-san was well over six times more of the state treasury. This was hardly sustainable. (*Korea—Two thousand Years' History of Downfall*, written by Choe Ji-ho, published by Shoden-sha.)

According to Kim Wan-sob, known for his book *Explanations for Japanophiles*, Queen Min, during her lifetime, always invited mudangs to her palace, spent not a day without holding shamanic ceremonies, and lavishly gave an excellent fortuneteller 100 hiki of silk and 10,000 ryo of cash, wasting the Treasury in an extravagant manner. (*SAPIO*, February 26, 2003 issue.)

There was a mudang who gained powerful political influence as superstition-spelled Queen Min's

³ Sanguo-zhi is the history of rise and fall during the Chinese Later Han Dynasty and Three States Period when many heroes like Guan Yu (?-220) competed for power in various regions.

favorite. She was given by Queen Min the title of ‘gun’ which is only to be endowed to the members of the royal family and highest officials. It was Jin Yon-gun, a mudang. In 1882, Queen Min lost her power following a coup d’etat plotted by pro-conservative army instigated by her rival, Tae Won-gun. She had several mudangs predict the day when she could return to her royal palace and it was the mudang who perfectly predicted the exact date. Very much moved by the correct prediction, Queen Min built a special shrine (North Shrine) exclusively for the mudang and had her live there and meddle in the government whenever the Queen needed her advice. There was a Dokyo⁴ or a Rusputin⁵ in Korea, as well. For nearly twenty kilometers on the road to North Shrine of Jin Yon-gun, passed a procession after another of carriages loaded with offerings, gold, silver and fortunes, without interruption, from dawn every day. Those were goods for bribery to please Jin Yon-gun into allowing bribers official ranks, if they were lucky enough.

The generation change among mudangs

There are two types of mudangs: regular, hereditary ones and ones of sudden occurrence. In the case of the latter, a person is suddenly stricken by divine inspiration and is carried to a mudang’s place, where she becomes apprentice to the mudang. In this case, the senior mudang adopts the apprentice as her daughter.

In a sense, a mudang of sudden occurrence can be interpreted as being summoned by god above and she is also called summoned mudang. In distinction from the hereditary mudang, the latter is also called son (raw)-mudang.

Speaking of mudangs, I instantly recall a young woman named Im Jong, who became very popular for her striking beauty. She, too, is a mudang of sudden, divine inspiration. Before she became famous, she had been already well-known as an erotic football supporter, appearing in a body-exposed costume at a soccer stadium. She was given a not very welcome nickname of exposure gal. You can watch on YouTube how she has learned to become a mudang—having water poured over her head, calling down the soul of legendary Admiral Yi Sun-sin and wearing the heavy helmet on the head, turning around and around, which looks like quite hard training. Probably, thanks to her efforts, it seems that her change from an exposure maniac to mudang was favorably accepted among Korean young people.

⁴ Dokyo (700-772) was a Japanese monk of the Hosso sect of Buddhism, and he was a political figure in the Nara period, given authority over religious and civil matters by Empress Shotoku (former Empress Koken) after he healed the Empress’s illness.

⁵ Grigori Rasputin (1869-1916) was a Siberian peasant and mystic, who became a healer and adviser for the Romanovs at the end of the Russian Empire.

Korean intellectuals despicably regard mudangs as remains from pre-modern times. However, the change of generations seems to be taking place among mudangs, and Korean TV occasionally features beautiful mudangs and girl mudangs.

In a busy modern society like today, it is not so easy to suddenly become mudang, upon being struck with divine inspiration, abandoning one's studies or housework. In such a case, one can ask a senior mudang to excuse her, telling the god that she is a student (wife) and cannot cope with the god's expectations. Of course, she must pay a certain amount of money to the senior mudang for her exclusion from the obligation.

Korean national constitution of spiritual medium

The phenomenon of divine inspiration is interpreted as a kind of psychopathy (hysteria) according to modern medicine. However, I cannot help but think that the entire Korean population are equipped with divine inspiration or medium as their constitution. In Japan a phrase of "the entire population of a hundred million are so-and-so" is often used. Likewise, supposing the entire Korean population at fifty million, then, "the entire fifty million are shamans."

It often happens that in a demonstration or protest, overly excited Koreans cut their fingers, commit disembowelment, or try to burn themselves pouring gasoline all over their bodies. To commit such self-injuring actions means that the persons are in a certain condition of trance. It seems that Koreans are gifted with innate ability to secrete a lot of brain narcotic and go into ecstasies. Trance and self-injury are closely related, and they are seen among shamans all over the world. As to mudangs in Korea, it is often witnessed that in the process of entering trance, mudangs walk barefoot on blades or swallow a sword, hurting themselves.

During an anti-Japanese demonstration, some Koreans kill a pheasant, which is designated as Japan's national bird, and eat its meat raw, or comparing a live pig to Japan, they tear a pig apart, limb from limb. These acts somewhat resemble those seen in a sacrificial ritual, which is often practiced among primitive religions. There may be many features in common with Haiti's voodoo.

"Koreans may lose their sanity when they get really angry. In that situation, they don't care a bit about their life or death and become tusked beasts. With foams covering around their mouths, they look more and more beastly. To our regret, this bad habit of being overwhelmed by angry impulse is not exclusively male Korean patent. Korean women manifest outrageous cruelties. Women stand up and

rave in an awful, loud voice and soon, no voice comes out of their throat, and then they vomit extravagantly.” (Homer Hubert, *Fall of Chosun*, Taihei Publishing.)

This seems to be illness called “fire disease,” which can probably be understood in terms of a kind of trance or cursing phenomenon. In Japan, until pre-modern times, similar symptom was dealt with as animal curse such as “fox curse” or “dog-god curse.”

Readers may think that the term “fire disease” is a slang expression used in the Internet. In fact, however, it is officially recognized by American Society of Psycho-medicine as anger syndrome, which is a mental disorder peculiar to the Korean people. The term of “fire disease” is popularly used within Korea. However, there are somewhat differences between a narrow and a wider sense of the disease. The fire disease mentioned here is in a wider sense.

In a questionnaire survey conducted by JobKorea, a Korean portal site for searching jobs, 1,923 male and female office workers responded to a question about a syndrome which appears when one sees a disgusting boss or junior. Dominantly, 35.2% of them answered, “fire disease,” followed by “pure anger” (16.5%) and “headache” (14.5%). The rest are “mental collapse” (10.5%), “nausea” (7.3%) and “irregular heartbeat” (6.9%). (*The Joong Ang Ilbo*, dated April 2, 2013) The second and the rest of the answers are related to “fire disease.” To sum up, the Koreans are very much likely to come down with “fire disease” when they feel stressful in dealing with other people in their daily life.

A country dominated by the dead

It is said that Nitobe Inazo⁶ referred to Korea as “a country dominated by the dead.” That means a country where the dead are more important than the living, or more specifically, a country with a culture of funeral ceremonies and rites.

In 2008, when I saw news reporting that at the site of former Namdaemun (South Great Gate), which had been burned down by arson, shamans gathered to perform funeral rites for the ruined gate, I remember these words of Nitobe Inazo. My honest impression is that Korean people are so fond of funerals as to perform funeral rites for non-living building. In Japan there are rites for non-living things such as sewing needles and dolls. But Korean funeral rites for non-creatures are quite different in nature from the Japanese examples. I think that the Koreans are mysteriously attached to funeral

⁶ Nitobe Inazo (1862-1933) was born in Morioka, Mutsu Province (present-day Iwate Prefecture) and a Japanese agricultural economist, author, educator, diplomat, and politician, active both domestically and internationally. He wrote a book *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in English, in 1900.

ceremonies, rather than mental and spiritual dedication.

For that matter, demonstrations using photos of Japan's Prime Minister and statesmen as funeral portraits or cheering for the Korean team at a soccer match, holding black-framed pictures of Japanese players are Korean favorites. In August 2011, three Japanese Diet members including Ms. Inada Tomomi⁷ went to visit Dokdo Museum in Ullung Island and when they arrived at Kimpo Airport, they were welcomed by three coffins prepared by protesters against their visit.

In the Korean Peninsula, "death" is visualized to a grotesque extent. There are still professional "crying women" present who express mournful sorrow at a funeral in lieu of the deceased family. During the Joseon Dynasty, among families belonging to the upper-middle class and up, it was counted the barometer of filial piety how many crying women they could appropriate for their parent's funeral.

Try to picture how the funerals of North Korean Heads of State Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il were carried out. The way the North Koreans wailed and cried exactly demonstrates the tradition of "crying women." It was the visualization of the dictators' deaths and the sacred ceremony of "dramatizing."

Crying women's constant wailing from somewhere, spirit called down by divine inspiration drifting on the wind and an endless line of a demonstrative funeral procession clad in white moving over treeless hills and the barren earth—This was probably Korea that Nitobe Inazo saw.

Rituals are more important than human life

To Koreans who worship Confucianism, the souls of ancestors are the most important. If one is the eldest son of the family, it is his utmost duty to perform a ritual for ancestors going back to the previous four generations.

The ancestral ritual is remotely akin to the Japanese Buddhist ritual, but the scale is no comparison. All the relatives gather at the eldest son's house (the head house) and it takes full three days to prepare meals for the ritual. During the preparation, men do nothing while wives are confined in the kitchen, busily cooking the special meals. On the day of the ritual, men and women do not sit at the same table. This is a completely male-dominated world in which men are looked up to while women are looked down upon. Japanese women who dream of marrying a Korean man had better be prepared now.

⁷ Inada Tomomi was born in Echizen City, Fukui Prefecture, in 1959. She belongs to Liberal Democratic Party of Japan and is now a member of the House of the Representatives.

Dealing with ancestral parents over four generations, there may be five or six occasions in a year to hold the ritual. Naturally, a lot of money is spent. Recently the ritual is getting simpler in urban areas. As in Japan, where people buy cooked *osechi* (special New Year' Days dishes) at supermarkets instead of cooking and preparing at home, it is getting popular in Korea to order a set of dishes for the ancestral ritual in the Internet. Still, older Koreans who make much of the tradition don't like the idea of Internet-ordered dishes.

By the way, in Korea, people pile up flowers and loud-colored offering almost endlessly at the funeral and ancestral ritual. The sight is simply overwhelming. The Koreans have a unique sense of value in terms of quantity and numbers. The basis of their aesthetic sense is abundance in volume.

According to Mr. Kou Bunyu, Chinese character 美 (beauty) is composed of 大 (big) and 羊 (sheep) and to the Chinese, beauty means giganticness. Certainly, they have the Great Wall of China and Xi-taiho (the Empress Dowager)'s detached palace Yihe-yuan Garden, which are grand beyond the Japanese imagination. As beauty is grandness to the Chinese, beauty is quantity to the Koreans. The sense of beauty that appreciates a single flower in a small vase placed on the *tokonoma* (alcove) does not exist in Korea. When Koreans decorate flowers, they fill the entire sight with flowers. That's the Korean style. Offering piled up high like a pyramid can only prove Korean "filial piety." In beauty contests, a phenomenon of plastic-surgery beauties with identical faces lining up in volumes, which looks quite odd to the Japanese eye, has much to do with their unique sense that beauty lies in quantity. Ten beautiful faces are better than one, and a hundred beautiful faces are better than ten, looking more beautiful when it comes to lining up in a beauty contest.

If a girl dies virgin, she will turn into a demon

The souls of ancestors are worshipped in the ancestral ritual, following the family lineage. Of course, there are countless souls that are not at all attended to, and they are regarded as demons. It is one of the important tasks for mudangs to comfort and pacify these demons and sometimes exorcise a demon which haunts humans and does harm to people. This exorcising ritual is called "*ku*."

We Japanese use the word 敬遠 (pronounced *kei en*, *kei* meaning "respect" and *en* meaning "far" and together meaning "to give a wide berth to a person) quite nonchalantly in our daily life. The word comes from a clause "Demons are to be respected, but to be alienated" in *Analects of Confucius*. If demons are not respected, they haunt, and so humans respect them, but don't want to be close.

What kind of souls become demons? The most popular case is a soul of a woman who dies unmarried, a virgin demon. A young woman who dies before knowing a man will hold stronger “*han*” and easily becomes a demon.

In Chosun (former Korea), it was customary to build a grave of a large ball of soil at the foot of a mountain. When a woman died virgin, a soil ball was never to be made. In our sense, this is clearly discrimination against women. People of Chosun may have thought it too pitiable of a deceased maiden. A folktale goes as the following:

One day a drunken traveler pissed over a roadside grave. On that night, a beautiful woman appeared at the pillow of the traveler and said, “I am very grateful that today you let me look at the valuable thing you have. That melt my *han* and now I can leave hither for thither.” Ever after that, the soul of the young maiden frequently saved the traveler. Thanks to her, he was able to pass *kakyo* (the examination to apply for high officials) and wedded a beautiful woman. Whereupon, people did not mound the grave of an unmarried woman—to make the grave unnoticeable so that men can piss there freely. (*Chosen no Minwa [Folktales of Chosun]*, published by Iwasaki Bijyutsu-sha).

It is out of kindness that they don’t mound the grave of a maiden so that her soul may have greater opportunities to leave this world (melting her *han* by seeing the symbol of a man.) A man who pisses over the grave can later establish himself in life. So, that’s win-win on both-sides.

There was another custom of secretly burying a maiden’s body at the roadside on the way to the cemetery at night.

This was meant to avoid the maiden’s soul from becoming *sonkashi*, which is one of the most dreadful demons. It was believed that regretful *han* born out of unfulfilled sexual desire could be soothed by treading of many people’s feet. (*Soul Jouka ni Kanko wa Nagareru [The Han River runs through the castle town of Seoul]* by Im Jong-guk).

Sonkashi is a demon, incarnating a maiden soul. The demon is said to haunt the family of the departed maiden, generation after generation, and do harm mainly to maidens of the house. The act of burying the maiden’s body at the roadside is interpreted as the substitution for sexual intercourse by having many men tread the ground of the burial.

A great work by Murakami Chijun *Women of Chosun* (1929) introduces the custom. Murakami was a non-regular scholar working for the Office of the Korean Governor General and he was a Buddhist

priest as his unique name indicates. He left tremendous volume of records regarding Korean superstitions, habits, mysticism and folk therapy.

“When young girls of flower died without sexual experience, their souls suffered and moaned and finally became demons, haunting their family generation after generation and doing harm to maidens of other households. According to another folktale, a maiden demon with protruding teeth haunts only virgins. Clear explanation is not known. Korean people fear this demon most and mudangs use this as means of earning good money. When a maiden became ill, her family had a mudang ask whether the illness was caused by *Sonkashi*'s curse. And when the answer was yes, they asked the mudang to give prayer and gave various offerings. The mudang rang bells, beat drums and danced. They piled up all the ailing maiden's clothes in an empty room of the house so that *Sonkashi* may move to the clothes and they kept praying. Despite all these efforts, when the maiden died, they dressed her in a man's clothes and buried the body upside down with the head down and legs up, covering the coffin with a lot of thorny twigs. Or, they buried the body at the cross section of a road so that many men would tread over the grave and satisfy the maiden's sexual desire, preventing her from turning into a dreadful demon.” (Compiled by Murakami Chijun, *Chosen no kishin [Korean Demons]*, The Office of the Korean Governor General).

According to Murakami, when a maiden became ill, a mudang demanded an extraordinary fee for praying against the demon, saying the illness was a curse of the fearful demon *Sonkashi*. There are many interesting descriptions of the custom as just mentioned above, but I had better not go into any further now for lack of pages to spare.

A Korean actress's posthumous wedding

One of effective remedies for the maiden soul (unmarried soul) is Hades wedding (posthumous wedding) for the dead. Even today, in Korea, though not so popular any longer, this kind of wedding is still performed to such an extent as it is not at all considered weird.

There are two kinds of posthumous wedding: one is a wedding for a dead person and a living one, and the other is for the dead. A famous example of the former took place in November 1982. A Korean boxer named Kim Deuk-koo died in the hospital after he was knocked out of the time in the 14th round of the WBC Light-heavy World Championship match held in Las Vegas. His fiancée, actress Lee Young-mi, was three months pregnant at the time of their posthumous wedding, over which all the nation wept. Incidentally, Kim's death brought about the change of rules of the World Championship boxing match from the 15-round match to the current 12-round match.

Generally, Hades wedding refers to the latter. People may well remember the case of actress Jung Dabin, who committed suicide at the age of 26 in February 2007. The motive of her suicide is not made clear. She was said to have had hard time dealing with her managing office over transferring to another. There were many rumors about the truth of her death, involving the dark side of the Korean entertaining industry such as the issue of sexual entertaining.

In May 2011, four years after Dabin died, following an urgent request of her mother, a posthumous wedding (according to the media report, “soul wedding”) was held between the late Dabin and a five years older man who died of illness in 2002 (at the age of 26, the same age as Dabin did). Dabin’s parents and the young man’s parents were friends and the plan of the posthumous wedding of their late daughter and son went smoothly. (It was not reported whether Dabin and the young man knew each other while they were alive.)

Of course, it is a mudang’s job to organize a posthumous wedding. It is perfectly O.K. if the husband (wife) to be is already decided as in Dabin’s case. When the partner is not yet decided, a mudang selects a suitable soul of a matching age and makes up a couple. In that case, extra service charge is due.

At the “wedding ceremony,” dolls dressed like yangban (officials) are used in lieu of the dead and a bedding ceremony is also performed. A portrait of the bride and bridegroom is prepared. In Dabin’s case, the composite faces looked too big to match the size of the bodies and looked a kind of funny. Personally, I felt the portrait leaves much to be desired. Never mind my impression. Dabin’s mother looked so happy with the wedding. I suppose that this is exactly the Korean spirit of “*ken cha nayo*” (“No problem!”) The couple’s bones were buried in the same grave to rest in peace.

Dabin’s mother seems to be very enthusiastic about folk religious matters. In 2009, she had a mudang call down her daughter’s soul and the entire scene broadcast live on cable TV. Through the mudang’s voice, Dabin’s soul said something insinuating that she was killed by someone. Hearing this, calls of protest saying, “That’s too much” bombarded the station. Dabin hung herself to death in the room of an actor named Lee Kang-hee with whom Dabin lived temporarily. He was the first person to find her dead and he met with groundless suspicion for some time after the incident. Lee must have had mixed feelings about his former lover’s posthumous wedding. I cannot help but sympathize with him as the same sex. Lee meant nothing to Dabin’s mother, who is truly Korean to an admirable extent.

On Dabin’s part, I wonder if she is grateful to her mother for holding the posthumous wedding,

thinking that Dabin must be alone and lonely after death, or if she is not happy to marry a man whom she was not particularly fond of.

The true nature of Korean Christianity

It is said that one fourth of the entire Korean population are Christians. Next to the Philippines, which was under the Caucasian control for long, Korea is the major Christian country in Asia. Incidentally, one fourth of the Korean population is equivalent to the ratio of servants (the lowest class of Korean social hierarchy) during the Joseon Dynasty. Of all the Korean Christians, the ratio of the Catholics versus Protestants and others is one to two. The latter is dominantly in the majority.

Japanese people may think that as the head of church of the Catholics is the Vatican, there must be the head church of the Protestants somewhere in the world. The fact is that among Protestants, there are roughly divided sects of Presbyterians and Lutherans. In particular, the Korean Protestant churches are completely independent organizations, something like a self-owned enterprise.

The reason why I suddenly take up Christian churches is that I want readers to know that Korean Christian churches are not Christian, but nearly all of them are newly established religious sects combining local shamanism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, waves of modernism came along with Japan's Annexation of Korea and drove away folk religion led by mudangs. Simultaneously, Christianity entered Korean society and in the process of establishing itself among the Korean people, it absorbed traditional local religions. The intellectual class who despise mudangs appeared lenient to Christianity and may have helped Christianity become popular in Korea. At the same time, it means that even Christianity could not have survived without incorporating the local faith. By the way, voodoo mentioned earlier in this chapter is also a folk religion, combining African folk religion of animism with Christianity brought by French missionaries.

After World War II, the culture of mudangs was hit hard for the second time by the policy of abolishing superstitions under the military regime of President Pak. This, again, rendered a good opportunity for new Christian cults to gain momentum. Typical examples of this trend are Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (the Unification Church) and Christian Gospel Missionary (Providence), Yoido Full Gospel Church founded by the late Rev. Yonggi Cho in 1958 and Onnuri Community Church founded in 1986 by Ha Yong-jo. All of these were born concurrently at that time and they are of dubious reputation.

To mention characteristics of Korean Christianity, first comes total pursuit of secular profits. Searching

jobs, marriage proposal, desires to become company president or become beautiful and various other secular desires are dealt with by Korean Christian churches. Birds of a feather flock together. It is quite natural for Korean Christian followers to frequently change their churches of faith if their requests are not favorably realized. They often talk about which church can bring most profit as a topic in a daily conversation. Therefore, Korean churches are very busy with their business of “collecting followers,” using every possible means, ranging from Onnuri Community Church with their own satellite broadcasting station to a small family-run church with only three members giving out brochures at a subway station. They go as far as to say, “If you become our follower now, you will get five percent more profit.” Starting with five followers, Yoido Full Gospel Church has now become a mammoth cult in mere 23 years, boasting several hundred thousand followers worldwide (the biggest independent church in the world).

The second characteristic is, most typically Korean Christian practice of the ceremony of spiritual calling down of souls like “exorcism” and “spiritual therapy,” inherited from shamanism. The Korean Christianity teaches that unhappy happenings such as poverty, sickness and familial discord are all attributed to demons. By exorcising demons by the power of the church founder, people can become happy. Essentially, Protestant has a sect that performs a kind of spiritual calling down of a god (holy spirit) called Pentecost (advent of holy spirit), and in this sense, Protestant and Korean folk religion have something in common.

The prayer for holy advent performed at Korean Christian churches greatly varies from man-to-man performance to a mass trance of several hundred to a thousand people performed at a large, rented hall. In mudang’s *ku* (exorcising ritual) drums called *change* and other musical instruments are used to induce trance. At Korean Christian churches, organs and drums are used instead. Try searching “crazy Korean church” or “crazy Korean Christians” in YouTube. You will find a lot of movies uploaded showing extraordinary conducts of Korean Christians, rolling down in a mass, crying, hitting each other in the face and so on. Then you will know what the Korean national constitution of spiritual medium is like.

Articles often appear in Korean newspapers reporting lawsuits against indecent, sexual conducts of clergymen belonging to Korean churches filed by their female followers. Indecent conducts usually take place during face-to-face exorcising on the pretext of healing illness. In most cases of indecent sexual conducts in Korea, the pattern is such as a clergyman against a follower, a teacher against a student, a boss against a follower or (though quite unbelievable) a father against his real daughter. They are “power harassments”, using advantageous position over the victim. The characteristic of Korean society that makes much of social order and status is well reflected in its sex-related crimes.

How, then, is it possible for such indecent, evil clergymen to exist? That is because in Korea people think that money can buy priesthood. According to *Korean MBC News*, there are about four hundred unauthorized theological schools in Korea and the regular rate to buy priesthood is five million won (nearly four hundred fifty thousand yen) on the average. So far, ten thousand such random priests have been produced. If one becomes a priest and collects fifty followers, one can easily recover one's initial investment. Rent a room in an apartment house or more inexpensively, a corner of a coffee shop and you can immediately open a "church."

Korean priests claim that the disastrous earthquake was God's punishment

The third characteristic of Korean Christianity is "anti-Japanese" belief, as one may easily guess.

Previously mentioned Rev. Yonggi Cho said, immediately after the Great East Japan Earthquake, "The earthquake that happened this time is Heaven's punishment against the Japanese people who alienated God and kept worshipping idols." His remark met with much criticism, even from Japanese Christian circles.

Rev. Cho, though the Japanese media rarely report about him, is a man of dubious deeds. His name is constantly associated with scandals regarding such matters as land ownership and women.

It is not Rev. Cho alone that attributes the disastrous earthquake to Heaven's punishment. Rev. Kim Song-an of Konan Church said, "The disastrous earthquake occurred because Japanese people worship eight million idols (Japanese expression of *yaoyorozu* meaning 'many' is literally interpreted as meaning 'eight million' here) and the Emperor." Rev. Sa Jonjin living in the United States made a similar assertion and dared to say, "To save the Japanese people's soul, we must spread our religion."

Most fearfully, missionaries who are sent from Korean churches with such narrow-minded and biased thinking come pouring into Japan and they actively engage in spreading their wicked faith. Especially, in the area hit hard by the disaster, they teach their faith to the victims of the disaster, pretending to be volunteer workers to help the poor people, or at a university campus, they work on freshmen disguised as various student circles (Gospel, Korean conversation, Taekwon-Do and so on) or using Korean talents as attractive guests, they invite Japanese people to an event. These attempts have already begun.

In Korea eight million cult churches jostle for more followers. To newly collect followers, they have no alternative but to move out of Korea to other countries and their best target is Japan, barren land

when it comes to Christianity, where Christians are only one percent of the entire population.

Korean priests explain that the reason why Christianity failed to take root in Japan is because “Japan is a country of an idolatrous cult beyond the reach of God’s voice.” They assert that mass revival of Japanese people is necessary to save Japan.” In their mission, they appeal to the sense of atonement on the part of Japanese people, emphasizing that “since Japan once committed a sinful deed against Korea, it is time to follow God and ask for pardon.” Following their line of logic, Korea is a country that forgives while Japan is one that asks for forgiveness, which perfectly constitutes the relationship between the one above and the one below. This is completely different from the Christian faith of love. On the contrary, it is an act of blackmail and coercion.

During the Meiji Period and thereafter, why did Christianity fail to spread in the highly Westernized Japan in the way of living and in other aspects? The answer is quite simple. The Japanese people did not need a religion like monotheism that teaches from the top downward. That’s the biggest difference from Korea. And yet, the Japanese people in general do not dislike “things belonging to Christianity” in the least. Non-Christian Japanese merrily celebrate Christmas and hold a wedding ceremony at church, which is the best proof of Japanese thinking toward Christianity. In recent years, even Halloween seems to have taken root in Japan, very much affected by commercialism. I would say that Japanese take Christianity too romantically. The truth is that originally it was a religion of invasion. The European colonialism and the spread of Christianity had always been twosome. It was European missionaries that killed in genocide native Indio in South America, wasn’t it? And, I like to repeat this point over and over: The Korean Christianity is one-hundred percent cult.

Feng shui (wind and water)⁸ and struggles over graves

In Korea, Feng shui worship is also very popular. According Ms. O Sonfa, “In Korea mudang is not discussed seriously by gentlemen, but Feng shui is highly regarded as study.” In gist, mudang is vulgar, while those who engage in Feng shui are high-class.

At the Korean Presidential Palace (a.k.a. the Blue House), there are Feng shui tellers belonging to the Presidential staff and their views exert certain political influences. Since Korean Presidents worship Feng shui, it cannot be vulgar. In fact, Feng shui tellers have become vulgar and deep in secular filth.

⁸ Feng shui was originally established in China nearly four thousand years ago. It is a kind of environmental study, using 氣(ki) referring to air, spirit, feeling, and other elements and deals with every aspect of human life.

Some buy promising land cheap and register the land in another person's name. Others conspire with land owners and sell worthless, remote mountain land dear to rich people who are absorbed in Feng shui telling, saying the land is good in terms of Feng shui at the rate equivalent to that of the first-class land in the urban area. Many of them are said to be very busy with real estate business.

The most frequent troubles involved in Feng shui worship are over graves. Here is a simple example. B family built a new grave right next to A family's grave. When it is judged that the new grave unfavorably affects the Feng shui environment of the A's grave, A destroys B's grave without consent or A buries the bodies in B's grave without permission. To intentionally disrupt another household's grave in terms of Feng shui, one builds a new grave after selecting a good Feng shui point. For example, one builds a new grave at a higher location than another grave standing at a good Feng shui location, thus shutting down wind stream downward. This is called disruption of air stream. During the Joseon Dynasty, it often happened that two families ended up in a bloody fight over the disruption of the air stream of their graves. Also, "dark burial" frequently took place, burying a body at a prohibited site or in another person's land without permission. After dark burial, to avoid trouble with another household, the ground was left non-mounded (flat burial), or an empty coffin was buried at a common cemetery (empty burial or pseudo burial). People resorted to various complicated means of camouflage.

These "criminal burials" were to be very severely punished, but one person after another committed the crime. Criminal burials never ceased because based on their "Feng shui" faith, people firmly believed that burying their ancestors in the best grave in the Feng shui way is directly associated with "filial piety" and the air stream coming from the burial affects the prosperity of their offspring. So long as they fulfill "filial piety" to their ancestral soul, they don't care a bit for others' ancestral souls, which perfectly reflects the Korean sense of *uri* and *nam*.

McCarthyism⁹ in Feng shui

Among consecutive Korean Presidents, it was President Kim Young-sam who was particularly interested in Feng shui.

Immediately after he took office, President Kim announced the policy of abolishing the former building of Korean Governor-General's Office. However, against his decision, many protested in favor

⁹ McCarthyism is the practice in the United States of making accusations of subversion or treason without proper regard for evidence. The term refers to U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy (Republican-Wisconsin) and has its origins in the period in the United States known as the Second Red Scare, lasting from the late 1940s through the 1950s.

of the preservation of the building from the aesthetic point of view. To cope with this situation, President Kim came up with a bizarre theory that the office building had been built by the Imperial Japan to prevent the air stream in Feng shui of the Jing-fu Palace (Royal Palace). It was called “the Imperial Japan’s Feng shui conspiracy.” Against this plot, President Kim promoted to remove iron piles which had been driven by the Governor-General’s Office for survey across the country, saying that “piles were driven by the Imperial Japan to interrupt the air stream of the Korean people.” Following the President’s order, people engaged in digging out iron piles all over the country in earnest and a huge amount of tax money was spent on this project.

Naturally, there must have been much criticism against this superstitious policy. In 2005, ten years after the commencement of the project of abolishing iron piles, *People’s News*-affiliated online *Kuki News* (dated October 4) reported as the following.

When the Independence Memorial Hall publicly displayed metal piles, each 1.5 meters long, which were reportedly driven by the Imperial Japan, some counterargued that they were nothing but an instrument for survey. It has been dominantly explained that metal piles were used to discourage Korean people’s fighting spirit by the Imperial Japan, feeling their military control over the Korean people came to dead end (the theory of Imperial Japan’s interrupting Feng shui plot). Against this, some argued that it was “a groundless McCarthyism in Feng shui,” which is quite convincing in a sense.

“McCarthyism in Feng shui” sounds on the mark. The expression was termed by professor on history, Dr. Lee Ifa. Dr. Lee laughs off the theory of the iron piles interrupting the air stream, saying “In the process of making a map, the iron piles were driven in the mountain peaks simply for the purpose of indication.”

Aside from the arguments, the interpretation that iron piles are instruments used by the Imperial Japan to make Koreans lose their fighting spirit is interesting. Teachers of Japan Teachers’ Union who always teach students that war is evil and that military forces are impermissible should admire this peaceful strategy allegedly employed by the Imperial Japan that can make the enemy lose their fighting spirit without using military forces. Besides vindicating the Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution¹⁰, you

¹⁰ Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

should mass-produce iron piles and drive them in conflict-troubled areas in the world. Let me remind readers. When it comes to “the interruption of air stream,” Korea is the original place.

“At the foot of Mt. Chiri, there is a temple called Jisso-ji. Regarding this temple, words have been passed on for generations that ‘when Japan prospers, the temple declines and vice versa.’ According to another anecdote, a temple was built at this place to interrupt air of land that streams to Japan. It is said that every time a person hits the pattern associated with a Japanese map engraved on the temple bell, Mt. Fuji in Japan receives one blow.” (*The Chosun Ilbo*, dated September 21, 2013.)

Going as far as this, the faith is more like mysticism rather than Feng shui. As soon as Christianity and Buddhism took root in Korea, they were destined to bear mystical nature.

By the way, Mt. Chiri is the highest sacred mountain in the south of Korea. According to one theory, the mountain is where mudangs were originally born. Eight daughters born between Buddhist priest named Hoyu and Seibo (Holy Mother) Tenno.¹¹ Both of them lived in Mt. Chiri and were the first mudangs.

The mysticism of comfort-woman statues

Speaking of the statue of comfort woman installed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul and many others the Korean Government is planning to install in the city of Glendale, California and across the United States, it is my opinion that they are wrongly translated into English as “statues,” but essentially they should be recognized as objects of worship in local religious customs, something like totems (tribal soul).

Korea and its working organizations have installed many anti-Japanese monuments in the name of mourning or prayer in Japan. By my rough estimate, there are one comfort-woman related monument, nine mourning monuments for mobilized Koreans and coal mine workers, and two monuments respectively for terrorists An Jung-geun¹² and Yoon Bong-gil¹³. Besides, in the village of Sarufutsu in

¹¹ Tenno is the lowest ranking secular deity in Buddhism.

¹² An Jung-geun assassinated Ito Hirobumi, the first Japanese Prime Minister and former Korean Governor-General, at Halbin station on October 26, 1909. An was executed on March 26, 1910 in Port Arthur, then under Japanese control.

¹³ Yoon Bong-gil threw a hand grenade at the seats of key figures during a congratulatory ceremony held at a park in the Japanese town in Shanghai, killing and injuring many people on April 29, 1932. Yoon was executed on December 19, 1932 and buried in Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan.

northernmost part of Hokkaido, a conflict is now going on over the installation of a mourning monument for forcibly mobilized Korean workers between Korean and Japanese supporters and those against the installation. (As of December 2014).

Of course, I have nothing to raise against mourning for the deceased whether they are Japanese or Koreans. To be honest, I feel nothing but a sense of abhorrence, not just a sense of difference toward these monuments. Speaking of monuments, they are places for the Japanese people to solemnly pray, "Please rest in peace." However, Koreans are totally different. They build monuments, firmly determined to swear, "We shall never forget your han." It is a target of mysticism. It is nothing different from the straw effigy of "ushi no koku (at dead of night) mairi (shrine visit)"¹⁴ of old Japanese religious customs. Moreover, completely different from the instantaneous straw effigy, their monuments of grudge are meant to stay at the place for one or two thousand years to come.

For that matter, a monument of Korean military employees installed at Yomitan village in Okinawa is straightly named "Monument of Han." The scene engraved in relief on the monument is horrible beyond words: A blindfold Korean young man with his hands tied in the back, his aged mother clinging at his feet and a Japanese soldier standing. Of course, the Japanese Army never collected military employees in such a way. The scene is a total fantasy.

Far from iron piles to interrupt air stream, the Korean people built these monuments of grudges all over Japan and try to build many more in America and the rest of the world. We must not allow these unsound and ominous things to spread on earth any longer.

Kingdom of the concrete

Thought over the statue of *A Woman of the Earth* at the House of Sharing

There is a bronze statue of *A Woman of the Earth* in the precinct of the House of Sharing, where former comfort women are accommodated.

As the name indicates, it is a statue of a naked woman who seems to have sprung up out of the earth. (Refer to the picture on the front page of this chapter.) Detailed explanation reads: The woman's shrunken breasts indicate motherhood who gave birth to many babies and bred them. Her disfigured

¹⁴ Ushino koku mairi was a mysterious practice once popularly exercised to lay a curse upon a target by hammering nails through a straw effigy of the victim into a sacred tree of the Shinto shrine, out of grudge, anger, revenge, etc.

fingers indicate hard household labor. Her bulging belly indicates The statue looks awfully grotesque from every angle. I can hardly understand how this statue came to be built at the facilities to accommodate former comfort women. Is it possible that this statue embodies “an ideal old woman” in Korea and that “han against Imperial Japan” is ensconced in the woman of this statue whose life once promised well but was suddenly changed to a miserable one by the Imperial Japan. In any case, it is a sense totally incomprehensible to the Japanese. The relief at the entrance of the Historical Museum of Comfort Women located in the same place is equally bizarre—five bayonets sticking out of chrysanthemum (the symbol of the Japanese Emperor, needless to say.), piercing through a woman's body.

I have no intention here to discuss whether the statue and the relief are good or not. All I want to say is that these displays gave me an important hint in understanding the Korean sense of beauty and sensitiveness. The Koreans prefer concrete to abstract and they are a people of concrete, so to speak. That's what I thought, looking at the *Woman of the Earth*.

In fact, I cannot think of the Koreans in connection with abstract art. As is often pointed out, the most important element that constitutes Korean spiritual culture is the thought of “han.” It is Korean artistic expression to visualize such emotions as grudge, anger, sorrow and agony, and it cannot be helped that natural consequence of the expression tends to be personal and concrete. The comfort-woman statue standing in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul and many more which the Korean Government plans to build across the United States in collaboration with Korean residents in America are typical examples. Even Koreans may well know that the *Woman of the Earth* can hardly attract American sympathizers.

Yangbans who spent their whole life on empty discussion

Yangbans (officials), the ruling class during the Joseon Dynasty, despised labor, and whenever two of them got together, they were allegedly absorbed in discussing empty theory and logic. Empty discussion may give an impression that yangbans were like quasi-philosopher hermits, meddling with metaphysical discussions. However, the Koreans were least good at abstract and conceptual thinking, and what they discussed was whether the period of mourning for a royal widow was three years or five years or the like, which was totally formalistic and unproductive. Official A called up fifty crying women for his father's funeral, while official B called up a hundred of them. Which is more filial? This is utterly fruitless discussion. However, this extremely empty controversy required winner and loser. Sometimes the loser was executed to death or exiled from Korea if he was lucky to be alive. Yangbans had to risk their lives on empty discussion. Cheju Island, the roots of the present-time

Korean residents in Japan, was a place of exile where yangbans who had lost in such a fruitless dispute and had been deprived of their social status were mercilessly sent.

Tragic abolition of Chinese characters

Ms. O Sonfa, a critic from Korea, maintains that the policy of abolition of Chinese characters which launched in 1970 and progressed over years further robbed the Korean people of their ability of abstract thinking.

To begin with, many of Korean idioms consist of Chinese words coming from China and Japanese-version new Chinese characters introduced from Japan during Japan's Annexation of Korea, which were read in a Korean manner. And particularly, most of academic terminology and abstract words were borrowed from the latter. There are countless examples of words equivalent to English words such as philosophy, physics, science, thought, economy, harmony and so on. North Korea's official national appellation is Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Words equivalent to democracy, people and republic are all Japanese. These words were created based on Chinese characters.

In the first place, it is easily imagined how inconvenient to indicate ideogramic Chinese characters using Hangul, which are phonograms. Since there are many homonyms in Japanese Chinese characters, it is practically impossible to deal with homonyms in phonograms. You can only guess in the context. In conversation, it may not present much difficulty, but when it comes to writing, the conversion sometimes incurs serious confusion. In 2009, a critical incident occurred. In the process of starting construction of railroad for KTX (Korea Train eXpress, Korean-version bullet trains), Korean pride, a serious mistake happened, which tremendously delayed the construction work. This was caused because there is no distinction in Hangul between two Japanese words of 防水 (meaning preventing water) and 放水(releasing water), and highly water-absorbent material was used, instead of water-resistant one indicated in the construction chart. This incident was a sheer luck in otherwise what might have been a very critical accident.

In the Korean language "hydrogen" is Hangul "susoo." Ms. O Sonfa knew 水素 (Japanese word for hydrogen), literally meaning "water origin," for the first time and instantly she understood the meaning of the word. 蓋然性 (probability), 歸納法 (induction), 既視感 (deja vu) ---when a person meets these difficult Japanese words for the first time, he/she can roughly grasp the meaning from the ideogramic Chinese characters forming the words. This is one of the great advantages we can find in the culture of Chinese characters. One Chinese character alone can contain definite information. When French thinker Roland Barthes once said that the Japanese culture is culture of "écriture"

(writing), he may have meant that Japan is a country of culture of Chinese characters. Japanese culture is, indeed, culture of reading words written in Chinese characters and understanding the meaning.

“Art of thief” created by a Korean artist living in the U.S.

Though it was a bit old, I found an interesting article.

“While studying abroad in New York, a Korean man named Lee Je-sok won prize after prize in open international competitions for advertising art. Now, he attracts New Yorkers’ attention by staging a guerrilla-like campaign to protect Dokdo (Takeshima Island), installing PR goods made of eye-catching stationery at various parts of Manhattan, the heart of New York. Mr. Lee’s campaign project started last week around the Times Square and the Empire State Building in Manhattan. Mr. Lee made up a life-size figure whose face was covered with the Japanese national flag, climbing over a hedge after sneaking in a stranger's house and committing theft. Then he made a life-size figure whose face was covered with the Japanese national flag and had it climbing over a hedge. Mr. Lee placed the figure at random, regardless of day or night, in a guerrilla-like manner. At the base of the installation, a sign says, “STOP ISLAND THEFT,” and beside it, an explanation reads, “Japan is trying to steal islands in Asia through distortion of history.” (*YONHAP NEWS*, dated July 25, 2008)

The picture of Mr. Lee’s “work” is a life-size, old-fashioned thief, clad all in black, the face covered with the flag of the rising sun and carrying a big bag on the back, totally out of nowhere, crawling over an advertising tower like the Spider-Man. Since it was an illegal installation, his “work” was removed the minute he completed installation by environmental care staff and guards. According to the article, Mr. Lee declares that he would continue his campaign, no matter what.

Mr. Lee seems to find significance in placing his work, a kind of street art, before arguing whether the work has any artistic value. I cannot help but feel totally discouraged at his sense, rather than amazed at its uniqueness. I acutely think that the Koreans are totally untalented when it comes to avant-garde art.

I think that the essence of avant-garde art lies in surrealism and nonsense. There is no boundary between the subject and the object. Of course, avant-garde works carry critical mind. However, it is not permissible to simply condemn others in the name of criticism without reflecting on oneself. For instance, when a person creates a piece of work against environmental destruction, unless he or she (creator) realizes that he or she is a part of the environmental destruction, his/her appeal ends up in hypocrisy or a mere preaching at best. Moreover, it is necessary to have a macroscopic viewpoint that

those who destroy environment are also part of the environment.

Mr. Lee's work unilaterally and self-righteously criticizes Japan in connection with the territorial issue of Takeshima Island, placing himself in a position of a protector of justice and goodness. Regarding the issue of Takeshima, Japan has been calling for the settlement at the International Court of Justice in the Hague. Mr. Lee's campaign over Takeshima is nothing short of improper harassment, which is worse than hypocrisy. General Americans would say that this issue is "not my business." Mr. Lee's work is unworthy to be called a piece of art. This is more like a crazy person in the neighborhood is throwing about handouts filled with claims called "delusion of persecution."

Beside the performance, Mr. Lee entered a piece of work made of a Japanese history textbook cut in the shape of a gun at e-bay, the world leading Internet auction site. Recently he made a collage poster of Prime Minister Abe biting off a rising-sun flag and he is willing to throw copies of the collage in Japan. I should say that his artistic sense and taste remain the same as ever.

Caricatures of the random shooting incident boomerang

In April 2007, at Virginia Institute of Technology in the United States, a student shot guns at random and thirty-two people were killed and the suspect himself committed suicide after the shooting. In terms of death toll, this was the worst campus shooting in history, surpassing the tragic shooting incident at Columbine High School in 1999, which claimed fifteen lives, including teachers and students.

Right after the Virginia incident, it was reported only that the suspect might be an Asian student and nothing more was not yet known. On the next day, newspaper caricatures in Korea held up "a sword of justice" in unison against American gun society. For example, a caricature depicts President Bush briefing, "One shot killed 33 persons—this shows once again how superb our country's firearms technology..." and another scene of a suspect-like silhouette shooting at random. Other caricatures followed the same pattern—The Statue of Liberty shedding tears, bullet holes all over the statue, or a map of America bloody with bullets. All the Korean newspaper caricatures were cynical about the ailing American gun society. Apparently, the Koreans condemned America from a higher platform of conscience.

I think that it is an unwritten law, not exclusively among the Japanese media, that when a disastrous incident or accident occurs, claiming many lives, the media usually refrains from using the tragedy as subject of caricature for at least several days afterward. And right after the incident (accident), out of

consideration for the victims and their families, they do not report it until the detailed fact is known. This is the manner the Japanese media keeps at least.

When the next news revealed that the perpetrator of the random shooting at VIT was a Korean resident in the U.S. named Cho Sun-hi, the confusion among the Korean newspapers was chaotic beyond words. Caricatures in the Website were readily deleted, and the caricaturists were blamed and deprived of their job. The Korean newspapers put all the responsibility on the cartoonists and pretended to have nothing to do with the criticism. Then, all they reported was, “Are Korean residents in America guilty-conscientious?” “Is Korea’s international credibility damaged by the incident? And no thought was extended toward the victims and their families. Some newspaper even advised Korean residents in America that they pretend to be Japanese until people stop talking about the incident.

All of this was a comedy brought about by the Korean national habit: regardless of themselves, they try to be morally dominant over others by condemning others.

Mr. Kim Chi-Ha’s long poem titled *The Tale of Feces Clan* is worthy of literary work in that he is mindful of himself and that he is ready to receive counterattack when he criticizes another party. I will go into details about his poem in Chapter four. In the poem, he symbolically depicts Japanese men on *Kiesen* (performer prostitutes) sightseeing tour who release feces on the top of the statue of Admiral Yi Sun-sin, a Korean historical hero, and at the same time banteringly refers to Korean people’s sorrow of having their fellow women sexually serve Japanese men for the sake of earning foreign currency. Of course, Mr. Kim never forgets to give a stinging ache to the Japanese people.

It is truly unfortunate for Korea not to have successors to Mr. Kim Chi-Ha. If the lack of successors is due to Korean cultural environment, it is very unfortunate, I should say.

The Japanese have an affinity with avant-garde

The so-called avant-garde art movement came from Dadaism that rose in Europe during the chaotic period just before and after World War I. In Japan it was at the end of the Meiji period into the first year of the Taisho.

The term “dada” is an infantile French word, meaning a horse, coming from the sound of “da, da, da...” of horseshoes hitting the ground, an onomatopoeia. French poet Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) happened to find the word in a dictionary while searching for a word with as little meaning as possible, and the word “dada” was used as the appellation of their art movement. Surrealism, various pop arts,

underground art movement in the 60s all date back to dada.

When a completely new, and utterly strange art movement came from overseas, Japan accepted it in a cool manner and instantly absorbed it. The background of the trend of “ero(erotic)-gro(grotesque) nonsense” during the Taisho period and at the beginning of the Showa period was thus formed.

On the other hand, Hitler of Germany, Japan’s ally during World War II, oppressed and expelled avant-garde works and writers for being decadent. Hitler used to be a classical art student and perhaps, he could not or, more likely, would not understand avant-garde art. Concurrently in Japan, a comic strip titled *Nora Kuro* appeared monthly in a magazine for boys *Shonen Kurabu [Boys Club]* and became an idol among little Japanese citizens. It is a well-known fact that the author of the comic strip, Tagawa Suiho (1899-1989), once belonged to MAVO, avant-garde art group in Japan.

In retrospect, to the Japanese, avant-garde art was like a good companion. For example, the traditional Japanese talking art of RAKUGO has many repertoires with surrealistic and nonsense elements such as *JUGEMU*¹⁵ and *ATAMA YAMA*¹⁶. Some overseas intellectuals find common characteristic between some works of Ukiyo-e pictures and those by Rene Magritte (1898-1967), Belgian surrealist, and Marc Chagall (1887-1985), Russian artist. During the Edo period, common people’s culture was in full bloom and the Japanese people already experienced surrealism, nonsense, and parodies.

It can date back further. We can say that Chanoyu (tea ceremony) established by Sen no Rikyu is the world’s oldest conceptual art or happening art. Chanoyu was closely related to Zen concept of Buddhist Rinzai Sect. Zen questions posed to those who take part in Zen practice can be said to be the supreme surrealism.

Avant-garde art cannot rise from dynasties. The difference between whether the country has a period of the common people for over two hundred years or not is extremely important when comparing Japanese culture and Korean culture.

Nevertheless, it is a cultural problem and never a national problem that there are and will be few Korean avant-garde artists. In fact, Nam June Paik (1932-2006), a famed talent in modern art, is a Korean (with the American nationality). Though he is introduced as a Korean resident in Japan,

¹⁵ JUGEMU is a funny and sad story of a boy with an endlessly long name starting with “Jugemu.”

¹⁶ ATAMA YAMA (head mountain) is a story of a short-tempered and stingy man who swallows a cherry whole with the seed, which sprouts out of the man’s head and becomes a big cherry tree. From then on, an event after an event takes place on the man’s head.

according to his profile, he entered Japan with his parents, fleeing from the Korean War (June 1950 - July 1953) after World War II. At present, many of those who are called Korean residents in Japan illegally came to live in Japan in the post-war years and they have nothing to do with the alleged forced abduction.

Mr. Paik was born in 1932. He was nine years senior to Mr. Kim Chi-Ha and would be over eighty years old if he were alive today. After graduating from the University of Tokyo, he went to Germany and studied music there. He lived in New York in the 1960s and his talent fully blossomed. He was a member of the famous avant-garde art group, Fluxus¹⁷, and closely associated with Joseph Boise and Ono Yoko. I visited several of his exhibitions. There were a series of works lining and piling up television Braun tubes retrieved from large-size garbage lots. They looked like criticism against civilization or indication of inconstancy of time telling that future will soon become past. (For that matter, Braun tubes, once latest invention, have now become things of the past.) Or they looked like mere display. What counts is that there is no self-consciousness of the artist evident in the works.

The statue of a comfort woman and performers

Ever since a statue of a comfort woman was established in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, the precinct of the statue became a stage for a variety of performers. For a recent example, a middle-aged female dancer demonstrated agony, clad in jeogori (Korean traditional wear) and with a toy handcuff, at the foot of the statue. What I found most interesting was the following.

“White rice fell on the head of a woman dressed in white Korean clothes. Rice for a mouth to eat fell on the head and on the ground, piling up. Instead of avoiding falling rice, she stared at the rising-sun flag streaming in front of the Japanese Embassy, with empty eyes at one time and angry eyes at another. This performance was staged at twelve noon on August 23 in front of the Japanese Embassy, written by writer Lee Ha-yun (aged 51), titled *Crying without Appearances and Voice*. The white Korean clothes refer to a comfort woman, a victim of forced labor by Imperial Japan. Falling rice symbolizes the exploitation of Korean girls’ labor. (omitted) Writer Lee explained: during the forced occupation period under Imperial Japan, Japan confiscated rice, which is our staple food, and exploited many female Korean workers who suffered bitterly from hunger. Each grain of rice is blood, sweat and tears

¹⁷ Fluxus was an international, interdisciplinary community of artists, composers, designers and poets during the 1960s and 1970s who engaged in experimental art performances which emphasized the artistic process over the finished product. Fluxus is a Latin word meaning to “flow, change, or apply purgative.” A designer from Lithuania named George Maciunas proposed this avant-garde art movement.

shed by our old women of Volunteer Workers Corps and the soul of many old women of VWC who died amid indifference and silence.” (*The Voice of People*, dated August 23, 2013)

The photo accompanying the article shows an old woman in white sitting in a red circle indicating the Japanese flag over whose head her company (also old women) carry a bag of rice and pour rice. Under a torrential flow of rice, the old woman cries out something at the Japanese Embassy. In the Japanese sense, we want to warn them not to waste rice. However, when they say this performance is “a piece of art,” we cannot help but remain silent. I just heartily laughed at it. This female writer, Ms. Lee is an artist who lives in New York and using rice as object engaged in writing to express the life of the Korean people in performance and other verbal installations.

This tells all—the limitation of how far the Korean modern art can go.

A personal work was eliminated because of the appellation of the Sea of Japan

I met Mr. Nam June Paik once at his exhibition and had a chat with him over random topics. His name, Paik, is usually pronounced [pe-ku], but in Japan it is popularly pronounced [pai ku], which he said he likes because it sounds like a non-nationality word.

I deeply appreciate that it was very fortunate of him and for his works that he was free from the spell of dwarfish nationalism peculiar to the Koreans.

Mr. Paik died in 2006. Quite naturally, posthumous events were held on several occasions in memory of him, who disseminated excellence of the Korean people to the entire world. In 2008, Nam June Paik Museum was opened in Seoul. I found a very worrisome article regarding how Mr. Paik’s works are treated in his home country, Korea.

“Among works by the late Nam June Paik, our modern artist, exhibited in Korean National Modern Art Museum, a work including the description of “The Sea of Japan” was found and it was pointed out that the appellation is inappropriate because it is different from the ‘The East Sea’, which Korea officially maintains. Following the claim, the museum removed the work on April 25. According to the museum, it was a piece entitled *The Old Map II* exhibited at the special exhibit. Mr. Paik added some touch to an old map of Asia in which it was originally written in French, *La Mer du Japon*. The museum replaced the work, following viewers’ allegation that a work by the prominent Korean artist carrying the appellation of The Sea of Japan is inappropriate.” (*The Asahi Newspaper*, dated April 27, 2006.)

They try to conceal a piece created by an individual artist just because the piece of art is inconvenient to their assertions. Is it only my view that such Korean mental constitution distances itself from art?

Religious trial of grudge

Crime and sin

There are two English words “crime” and “sin” to indicate wrongdoing. The former refers to action committed in violation of law. The latter refers to action against religious justice (mainly in the view of Christianity) or morality (ethics). Infidelity, immorality, breaking of the Buddhist law, and blasphemy belong to the latter.

Crimes against law are limited. In most cases, those who commit crimes are subject to punitive imprisonment, and even in the case of death penalty, once the criminal is executed to death, his crime is liquidated as far as law is concerned. In this sense, unlimited punitive sentence is also limited punishment. However, sin is an eternal wrongdoing, and there is no end to punitive term. Sin disappears only when God forgives the sinner. Let me concede as far as I can. Suppose Japan’s Annexation of Korea was “wrongdoing,” Japanese intellectuals, regardless of rightist or leftist thinker, would naturally regard it as crime, not sin. They think that apology and due compensation can peacefully resolve it. It is earthly logic. On the contrary, to Koreans, Japan’s wrongdoing is nothing but sin. Therefore, however sincerely and earnestly Japanese Prime Ministers and the Emperor in their official capacity announce “regret,” Koreans would not accept it, firmly thinking that Japan’s expression of regret is like an infidel pretending to confess, “God, please forgive me,” and once out of the confession room, the infidel proposes unthinkable proposal, “Let us now build futuristic relationship between Japan and Korea,” sticking out its red tongue.

What is “God” to Koreans then that can judge Japan? It is difficult to immediately answer this question. It will be probably their ancestors’ soul. Korea is a society of mysticism, centering their ancestral soul. To judge Japan’s sin is to resolve “*han*” of their ancestors’ soul. In all probability, such a day will never come. The liabilities called “*han*” will keep bothering Japan for eternity.

Why is it that Hitler is regarded as the vilest evil?

Recently, Korea has been ardent about assimilating images of prewar Japan and Nazi Germany. Koreans sometimes discuss the comfort-women issue in the same context with Nazi Holocaust.

Koreans dare dub the rising-sun flag, the symbol of Japan Self-Defense Forces, “Hakenkreuz of the East.” They worked hard on American Jewish organization to have them criticize Japan. They repeat their favorite accusation that “While Germany sincerely deals with the past, reflecting on their past deeds, Japan, also being a war criminal state. . .” These are nothing but Korean intelligence strategy to establish an image of Nazism in the West and the Imperial Japan in the East” among the international community.

The assimilation of Japan and Nazi means to turn the International Military Tribunal for Far East (Tokyo Trials) into a religious trial.

This needs some explanation. In modern and contemporary times, Adolf Hitler was not the only dictator in the world. There were Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sung, Chiang Kai-shek, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Ferdinand Marcos, Nicolae Ceausescu.... There are so many of them. The twentieth century was a century of wars and at the same time it was a century of dictators. Stalin and Mao Zedong committed far more cruel genocide in terms of the number of victims. Besides Germany, there were some countries that also staged war of invasion against other countries. There were many governments and political parties on earth that oppressed their own people at gun nozzles. (Korea is one of them.) However, they have never been spoken ill of as bitterly as Hitler.

People criticize the Abe Administration, saying “Prime Minister Abe is fascist. He is like Hitler.” But they never compare him to Stalin nor Mao Zedong. Hitler and Nazis always carry a tell-tale image of evil beyond politics or ideologies. Therefore, caricatures of Hitler and Nazis abundantly appear everywhere from villain professional wrestlers to cartoons and animation. For examples, there are evil organization Shocker in *Kamen (Masked) Riders*, and General Desler in *Uchu Senkan Yamato [Space Warship Yamato]* .

Referring to the amendment of the Constitution, Vice Prime Minister Aso said, “Learn from Nazi maneuvers,” as a counter-example, meaning not to hurry in achieving a goal. His remark brought a chaotic response from the Japanese media. Consequently, Mr. Aso was obliged to rescind his words and apologized. If he had said, “Learn from Mao Zedong’s teaching,” would there have been such a fuss? There is an infrastructure of Japan Teachers’ Union called Research Society for Juche idea¹⁸. Teachers belonging to this society still praise Kim Il-sung, former North Korean Head of State, even after the issue of the abduction of Japanese citizens was brought into broad daylight.

¹⁸ Juche (self-reliance or subjectiveness) idea is the official state ideology of North Korea, described by the Government as Kim Il-sung’s original, brilliant and revolutionary contribution to national and international thought.

In the same sense as they praise the killer dictator's idea, I would like to know what difference there is between these teachers and neo-Nazis.

Why is it that Hitler (or Nazis) is discussed separately from Stalin and Mao Zedong in terms of image? That is because what other dictators and despots committed was regarded as crimes, while wrongdoing committed by Hitler and Nazis was regarded as sin for the first and only time in modern and contemporary history.

In other words, it is deification of sin. If other dictators are "villains," Hitler has become a "devil." Devils are adversaries against Gods. However, at the same time, they fascinate a certain part of human psychology. For instance, various designs and uniforms created and used by Nazis have maniac admirers even today. Being aesthetically refined is one of charms that attract people and make a devil what it is.

Parental crime is to be inherited by children

I think that the International Military Tribunal for Far East itself was a farce unworthy of the name of trial in that the winners judged the losers. Even in this farce trial, seven category-A war criminals including Tojo Hideki were judged against crimes they committed. A bad law is still a law. So long as it was a modern-time trial, a crime cannot be judged as sin. Following San Francisco Peace Treaty concluded in September 1951, the Japanese Government accepted the judgement and regained independence. Additionally speaking, as few Japanese know, following the protocol of international law, when peace treaty comes into effect, and "warring situation" among states ends, judgement rendered in military trials by the adversary states becomes invalid (Amnesty Article). Consequently, there is no war criminal any longer internationally.

To Korea, the biggest regret after World War II is that Korea failed to judge Japan as a member of the Allied Forces in Tokyo trials. (In the first place, Korea was not qualified to do so.) However, Korea thinks that what Japan committed was not crime but sin, and that therefore they can interpret the sin in limitless terms. And their ultimate end is to regard Japan's Annexation of Korea as the biggest sin in human history and thus to judge Japan eternally. This is what I mean when I mentioned that Tokyo trials are turned into a religious trial.

Of course, if such a thing is possible, the European Powers and the United States that possessed colonies all over the world are held responsible for their crimes, which the international community

will never admit. That is why Korea needed to assimilate Japan with Hitler (and Nazi Germany), the latter being exceptionally held responsible for the sin, ever once in history.

The Germans of Christian Germany fully understand the concept of sin and its grave consequence and quickly detached Nazis from the German people and by pushing the entire sin (including crimes) onto Nazis, they successfully accomplished the comeback to the international community. According to their reasoning, it was Hitler that was in the wrong and many good Germans were deceived by him. However, Korea makes no distinction between the Imperial Japan and postwar Japan. They think sin committed by the Imperial Japan is sin of the State of Japan. Their logic may be based on Korean Confucian thinking that parental sin is to be succeeded by children and grandchildren. Moreover, when it comes to Japan, there is no distinction between the state's sin and the people's sin.

Is Korea Judea?

Suppose Japan is Nazis, Korea is in the position of the Jewish people. This seems to be what Korea has in mind. In fact, they are busy trying to approach the American Jewish society through Korean residents in the U.S. By teaming up with the Jewish people, Korea aims to establish an alliance of victims against Japan and Germany.

In August 2013, at the "Museum of Jewish Traditional Culture" in New York, a friendship event called KCSI (Korean Christians for Shalom Israel) was held, organized by a body called "Korean-Israeli Society for Bible Study." This body is infrastructure of "Onnuri Community Church" of Korean Christianity. Mr. Ha Yong-jo (deceased), founder of the church, was anti-Japanese thinker, who defiantly contributed an essay to the church's booklet, saying "Japan was hit by the big earthquake because Japan is a country of Satan, ignorant of God." Actress Choi Ji Woo, who is popular in Japan, acts as advertising tower for this church and she played an active role when the church launched into Japan.

In February 2014, an announcement was made that the Queens Community College Holocaust Museum will regularly exhibit materials related to comfort women. Out of eighty thousand dollars of the construction cost, sixty thousand dollars will be covered by the museum and the rest (twenty thousand dollars) will be provided by the Society of Korean Residents in the U.S. Here, too, we must realize the fact that Korean maneuvering is progressing far and wide.

By assimilating itself with the Jewish community in America, Korea intends to make their position as victims absolute and sacred. They want to say that they are sacred victims.

However, in my opinion, what Korea is doing will end up in making the Japanese people look like the Jewish people.

Allow me to repeat my point here. After World War II, Germany achieved its comeback to international community by separating the German people from Nazis. However, on the part of Korea, since the Japanese people itself is evil and the target of Korean “han,” the distinction will not do. They think that the Japanese should be eternally repulsed as “the people of evil” from the entire world.

Are there any peoples on earth who are deemed to be absolute evil and despised as much as the Japanese in history? I can think of only one. Yes, the Jewish people.

At the base of Nazi Holocaust, there was anti-Semitic thinking on the part of Christian society. I cannot help but wonder how Japanese liberal intellectuals pretend not to know this fact who otherwise criticize Japanese Shinto in connection with militarism. It is Christianity that killed a countless number of people. Japanese national Shinto is no comparison at all.

The word “Holocaust” (it is an originally Greek word meaning “burn up”.) came to be popularly known in Japan after a drama titled Holocaust (1978), starring Meryl Streep. In the first sequence of the drama, I remember the following conversation between a small boy and his little sister:

Sister: How come I must hate Jews.

Brother: Because Jews killed Christ.

Aside from a natural question of “Was Christ a Jew?” this is the simplest and accountable explanation to children of the reason why Christians oppressed Jews. To kill the Savior, there is no graver sin than this. And for this sin, the Jews have been oppressed over two thousand years and destined to roam about across the world. Today, in the twenty-first century, part of American Fundamentalists still maintains this theory.

I feel very ominous at the words of President Park Geun-hye: “The respective standpoints of the perpetrators and victims will never change for a thousand years.” I think that is partly because her words have something common with the anti-Semitic thinking on the part of Christians.

The Koreans and monotheism

In Asia, Korea is the major quasi-Christian country, where one third of the population are Christians.

We can think of several reasons why Christianity has so popularly rooted in Korean society. One of the reasons is that monotheistic teaching of Christianity is fit to appeal to the Korean national trait. As is well known, monotheism is a religion which goes downward from the top. Monotheism teaches that God creates everything including humans. Man enters into contract with God and man follows God's Providences. This teaching perfectly fitted the Korean way of thinking, which is characterized by strong self-awareness, but lacks independence, and tends to control and punish others. As monotheism has been totally intolerant to heathens, in Korean consciousness, there is always intolerant and discriminatory psychology toward "heathens" named the Japanese, together with refracted superiority. Moreover, the concept of punishment, peculiar to monotheism, comfortably absorbs Korean "han."

I have already mentioned that there are several priests in Korea who do not hesitate to assert that "the Great East Japan Earthquake is God's punishment upon Japan." That's not all. Not a few Korean churches teach that the dropping of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki is God's fury at the sin in the name of Japan's Annexation of Korea. According to Korean priests, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are no different from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that were burned under fire of sulfur by God in a fury.

The Korean people prefer to decide black or white in every matter. They are dualists—good or evil, right or wrong, superior or inferior and so on. In that sense, they don't tolerate ambiguity. Adding monotheistic idea of punishment to this dualism, the thinking of contemporary Korean intellectuals become more and more hardened. Thus, most intolerant and punishment-mongering views have been formed in dealing with Japan.

President Park's theory on the relationship between "perpetrators and victims" is just a comprehensible sample of this thinking.

On the other hand, from the Korean viewpoint, the Japanese prefer ambiguity in everything and look unchaste, having no principle. In principle, indeed, Japanese thinking does not seek absoluteness. It may seem to be unexpected, but this unexpected trait is formed through influence of Buddhism.

A phrase from the famous Hannya Shingyo Sutra "Shiki Soku Ze Kuu, Kuu Soku Ze Shiki," literally translated as "A thing that has form does not have substance, and a thing that does not have substance has form." And the sutra teaches that all that has form is only recognition and recognition does not exist as substance." This may sound totally Greek. But we can conceive as much as that this kind of thinking does not lead to absolute view of value. None has substance –this all too brief teaching has

something in common with the Japanese people's view of resignation. It is a view of resignation that nothing happens when one attaches oneself to something that has not substance.

Also, in the Zen world of Buddhist Rinzai Sect, to reach the mental state of being enlightened, one must deny all that is seemingly absolute existence, one after another, to the end. "When one meets Buddha, kill Buddha, when one meets one's ancestor, kill the ancestor, when one meets Buddha's disciple, kill the disciple, when one meets one's parents, kill them, when one meets one's relatives, kill them...."

This kind of thinking never derives from other religions, especially from monotheistic religions. For example, if there were a Christian who says, "Meeting God, kill God, meeting Jesus, kill Jesus, meeting soul, kill the soul..." he would be unfailingly deemed to be mad. In the Middle Ages, he would have been surely brought to a heathen trial and burnt at the stake. The thinking would have been sin.

To kill one's ancestors, to kill one's parents—if a stubborn Confucian scholar during the Joseon Dynasty had heard this, he would have instantly swooned. A Korean would say, "Barbarous Japanese appreciating the teaching like this are surely inferior to animals". Sorry, but Rinzai Gigen, founder of this sect, was a Chinese priest during the Tang Dynasty.

The Buddhist way of thinking, the Christian teaching, the Confucian view of value—each has its own truth and I would not be foolish to try to tell which is superior to which. However, in discussing the difference in thinking between Japan and Korea, it would make much sense to see the difference of respective religious views.