them in their historical context. The discussion takes into account each of the two hundred and forty-five illustrations, making the work a good handbook. Or would have made it so. Unfortunately, I think the publisher did the writer a disservice by not reproducing the valuable collection of illustrations better. In some photographs you cannot decipher the details being described or even recognize anything at all. That is a shame because many of the items are held in private collections or are not always on display at the temples and museums. The book was printed from a typescript to which were added the Chinese characters for the proper names, a welcomed feature. Each of the illustrations is also properly identified.

Despite the poor reproduction of the photographs, people interested in the history of art or religion might value the book for its text and documentation. It would have been more interesting for folklorists if the study had been carried on to the present and shown the various appearances of the peacock in the culture today. Just two weeks ago, at a wedding party I received a commemorative menu card which had a pair of Phoenixes embossed on its cover. After all these years of interaction, it seems that the designs of the peacock and Phoenix borrow from each other to enhance the occasion when necessary. May we expect a further study of the nineteenth and twentieth century representations, or at least a more popular edition with better reproductions?

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KOREA

KENDALL, LAUREL. *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman. Of Tales and the Telling of Tales.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988. ix+157 pages. Paperback US$9.95; IBSN 0–8248–1145–3. Library binding US$23.00; ISBN 0–8248–1136–4.

This book discloses the *mudang's*[1] tales of poverty, war, forced marriage, and divine possession. It is also the life history of a woman who spent an unhappy childhood during the politically, economically, and socially chaotic periods of the 1940s and 1950s, and of how she finally became a *mudang*.

Kendall attempts to record and convey both narrative events and narrated events of a woman called " Yongsu's mother " in an ethnographical description. Her field work was conducted over a sufficient period of time.

The *mudangs* usually prefer to keep their private lives intact, and are hesitant to respond to the approach of scholars. Under these circumstances, there are several Korean scholars such as KIM T'aegon (1981), CH'OE Kilsong (1981), and HYUN Yongjoon (1985), who have made a great contribution in this field.

Kim T'aegon was adopted as a *mudang*'s son to conduct his investigation. Ch'oe Kilsong has been greatly influenced by his mother's folk religion and has become very familiar with the world of the *mudang* since his childhood. In an attempt to aid his studies, he became acquainted with a certain *mudang*. He got so close to her that she even started to consider him as her adopted son. This motivated him to develop his knowledge and experience as a discipline.

Hyun Yongjoon was born and grew up in the district of Korea called Cheju Island. With this regional relation, he was able to acquire, through his field work, a complete

picture of the *mudang*s practicing on the island.

Although Kendall had no such background, she made an important contribution to the ethnographical documentation of a life history and of orally performed narratives through her sharp observations and active participation in the *mudang*'s ritual practices, as well as in her private life. More importantly, her strategy was very different from the others in that she had a teacher-student relationship with the *mudang*, " Yongsu's mother," as she is called in the book. Thus, she probably learned in the manner of an apprentice *mudang* by observing *mudang* rituals.

Yongsu's mother, the heroine, selected as an informant for the investigation conducted by Kendall, is now a successful *mudang* somewhere in her fifties.

The most common motifs in Korean *mudang* biographies can be indicated as follows:

First, most of the *mudang*s are from complicated, unhappy family situations or from low income families.

Secondly, one usually experiences a " divine illness " which provides a sign for one to become a *mudang*. This indication usually comes in the form of a mysterious illness or a temporary form of insanity.

Thirdly, one may have a vision of a general riding a white horse, or a white haired old man holding a staff, when one gets ill or even in an ordinary dream.

Finally, one may recover from one's illness by promising a great *mudang* to be her spirit daughter or by honoring the mountain god.

On reviewing the life history of Yongsu's mother, in chronological order, up to becoming a *mudang*, we can easily find all of the above motifs somewhere in her vast life experience.

Approximately 1936: She was born as the third of seven children of a poor peasant family.

Approximately 1941–1942: She and her younger brother caught the measles, and only she survived.

Approximately 1945: She went to primary school but had to drop out because of her father's problems.

Approximately 1950–1957: She worked in a printing company until the age of twenty.

Approximately 1951: She was captured by the North Korean army during the Korean War, but managed to escape. Just before her escape, she dreamt of a white haired old man holding a staff who appeared and prompted her to escape to a nearby mountain.

Approximately 1955: When she was nineteen, she got seriously ill. She recovered by performing a proper *mudang* exorcism. In one of her dreams during this time she saw a white haired grandfather who brought her a bowl of water to drink. A great *mudang* claimed her to be her spirit daughter.

Approximately 1956: She got sick again and dreamt again of a grandfather who appeared and claimed her as an apprentice *mudang* under her sister who was practicing as a *mudang*.

Kendall may have some questions concerning some of the *mudang* rituals. She may have wondered why the rituals for the dead who have died with unfulfilled desires are considered more important than those held for the gods. For instance, why had Yongsu's mother scrupulously honored the death anniversary of her husband's first wife, or why has she honored her disappointing husband, bearing the title of Body-governing Spirit Warrior as the guardian god of her shrine? Kendall may get answers to these questions through studies of the life experience of Yongsu's mother. It is

also noticeable that the deaths of familiar ones who have died with unfulfilled desires are more dangerous to living people.

In any case, I expect that this book can provide its readers a much better understanding of Korean *mudang* and shamanism.

NOTE:

1. I do not agree with Kendall's usage of the appellation "shaman" for the Korean *mudang*. I would rather use the term *mudang* in this review. In a broad sense the *mudang* may be called shamans, but there are some differences in a strict sense between the Korean *mudang* and the Siberian shaman.

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CHINA

MACKINNON, JANICE R. and STEPHEN R. MACKINNON. *Agnes Smedley. The Life and Times of an American Radical.* Berkeley, Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1987. xi+425 pages. Plates, bibliography of Primary Sources, index. Cloth US$25.00; ISBN 0-520-05966-2.

Unlike many progressive socialists who usually come from the middle class, Agnes Smedley (1892–1950) was born in dire poverty on a tenant farm in Missouri, and raised in mining camps in Colorado. She escaped poverty by becoming a country school teacher. Soon she became a political activist. She participated in Margaret Sanger's birth control movement, promoted the Indian national independence movement, and got involved in the Chinese communist Revolution. In the capacity of a political journalist, she wrote from Germany in the 1920's, from China in the 1930's, and in the United States in the 1940's. Her impassioned and lucid eye-witness accounts from China, where she lived from 1928 to 1941, were invaluable sources of information about the rise of Chinese communism as well as the Chinese people's life-and-death struggle against Japan during the Sino-Japanese War. Even after her return to the United States, she devoted most of her energies to continuing raising funds for the Chinese Red Cross (a task which she had started in 1938, though she had been working since 1934 to get medical supplies to the Red Army), and publicizing the misery and heroism of the Chinese people.

"A radical with a great heart," as Captain Frank Dorn, General Stilwell's aide, wrote about her, "she refused to submit to any form of discipline and distrusted all political leaders" (207). Her life was full of paradoxes and ironies. Honest, ideal-