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Sŏngha Sindang
The Tutelary Shrine of T'aeha Village, Ullŭng Island, Korea

Abstract

The island of Ullŭng-do, located in the East Sea (Sea of Japan), is one of the most remote outposts of the territory of the Republic of Korea. Effectively an unpopulated island from the mid-fifteenth century, it was resettled at the end of the nineteenth century, and possesses perhaps the most unique tutelary cult currently practiced in the villages of Korea. Even though this cult and its shrine are well known, it only twice has been the subject of scholarly study by Korean researchers, and never before by a non-Korean scholar. The shrine cult originated from a legendary story of the death of two youths said to have been sacrificed to appease the wrath of the spirit of the mountain, and was practiced by mainland officials on journeys of surveillance during the period of depopulation. Since the repopulation of the island, the enshrined spirits have been transformed into the guardian spirits of the island.

Key words: tutelary spirit—mountain spirit—regional cult—Korean folk religion—vengeful spirits

THE CULT PRACTICED at the tutelary shrine of T'aeha Village 台霞里, Ullŭng Island (Ullŭng-do 鬱陵島) is one of the most unique village cults in Korea, combining features of a tutelary cult and a cult to propitiate vengeful spirits of the dead. My own interest in the shrine and its cult dates back to 1982, when I was conducting a general survey of the religious situation of Ullŭng-do. At that time, I had been surprised by the fact that the T'aeha Village shrine looked strikingly like a small Shinto shrine, and that the two spirits enshrined inside it, a male and a female youth, seemed to be suspiciously like Izanagi and Izanami, the progenitors of the Japanese archipelago. These two features of the shrine had made me wonder initially if the cult practiced there had been a development from Shinto rituals that had been practiced on the site during the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea between 1910 and 1945. Because of the inclement weather and rough seas, and the fact that until the mid-1980s all transport around the island had to be by boat, I was unable to return to T'aeha Village to reexamine the shrine and its cult in more detail. In 1995, when I was in Korea collecting materials on Korean folktales, I was able to return to Ullŭng-do in November and to carry out research on the religious practices of T'aeha Village. Unless otherwise stated, information in this article is based upon my fieldnotes from 1995.[1]

THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF THE ISLAND

Location of Ullŭng Island and Its Geographical Features

The island of Ullŭng-do is 137 kilometers east of the nearest mainland port, the minor center of Imwŏn 臨院, and 217 kilometers to the east of the major port of P'ohang 浦港. Current travelling time from the four mainland ports that serve the island vary from three hours to six hours or more, depending upon whether the voyager's vessel is one of the high-speed catamaran type of ships or an ordinary diesel-powered vessel.[2] Ullŭng-do is a collapsed volcanic island that rises starkly out of the East Sea (Sea of Japan) to a high point of 984 meters at its principal peak, Sŏngin-bong 聖人峰 (Sage Peak).

The island is located at 130 degrees 52 minutes east longitude and 37 degrees 30 minutes north latitude. Administratively, the island and its outlying islets are classified as a county (郡 *kun*). Including the islets lying immediately off its shoreline, Ullŭng-do comprises a total area of 72.174 square kilometers. The county is divided into one town (邑 *up*) and two townships (面 *myon*), which possess 24 administrative villages (里 *ri*) and 55 settlements (*maul*). The population of Ullŭng-do in 1995 was given as 11,423.[3] Other than the uninhabited rocky islets known as Tok-to 獨島 (竹島Takeshima in Japanese), which are 92 kilometers away, there are no other islands near Ullŭng-do.

History and Early Settlement

The Chinese historical source, the *San guo zhi* (Standard History of the Three [Chinese] Kingdoms) contains a reference to mainland Korean fishermen who in the fourth century had become lost in the East Sea and eventually found themselves washed up on the shores of this lone island. To their surprise, the island was inhabited and formed a small nation called Usan-guk 于山國.[4] According to the twelfth-century Korean historical work, the *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three [Korean] Kingdoms), Usan-guk was conquered by Silla in 512, the thirteenth year of the reign of King Chijung 智證王 (r. 500–513), and has remained an integral part of Korean national territory since that time.[5] By the fifteenth century, the island was known as Murŭng 武陵. Because of the predations of pirates and the possibility that the island could be used as a secret redoubt for offensive activity against the Korean mainland, the island's population was cleared by royal edict in 1416 and again in 1438. From the mid-fifteenth century until the Resettlement Edict of 1884, the island remained ostensibly unpopulated. Regular visits of surveillance were conducted at three-year intervals by an official of the Magistracy of Samch'ŏk 三陟都護府 in Kangwŏn Province 江原道 on the central east coast to ensure that the island was not being used as a military or pirate base (CHANG 1991).

Because of the encroachment on the island by Japanese loggers and fishermen from the 1870s onward, a resettlement policy was instituted by royal edict in 1884 encouraging mainlanders to repopulate the island. Several groups of settlers were sent out in the 1880s to maintain Korean claims to the island. These groups have become known to modern generations as the "pioneers" (開拓者 *kaech'ŏk-cha*) (CHANG 1991, 590). The initial place of settlement was on a small plain around the harbor at the mouth of the T'aeha River 台霞川 in the northwestern corner of the island. This area is the site of the modern village of T'aeha-ri. The area of the village had been chosen as the first location for settlement because of its proximity to the

mainland and because of its associations with the visits of surveillance conducted by the Magistracy of Samch'ŏk. During the period of depopulation, the area of T'aeha Village had been the usual point of disembarkation when representatives of the Magistracy of Samch'ŏk visited the island.

At some point after the inauguration of regular visits of surveillance in the mid-fifteenth century, the Magistracy of Samch'ŏk erected a shrine to the spirits of two youths, one male and one female. The existence of this shrine dedicated to the two youths prior to the arrival of the "pioneers" of the 1880s was confirmed to me in 1995 by elderly residents of the village. They stated that their grandparents, who had been among the first groups of pioneers, had told them that when they arrived on Ullŭng-do there was already a shrine in the area that subsequently became T'aeha Village. The rituals performed in T'aeha Village at the Sŏngha Sindang shrine are today the preeminent cultic activities conducted on Ullŭng Island.

The Tale of the Sŏngha Sindang Shrine

The cult of the Sŏngha Sindang shrine 聖霞神堂 has a story associated with it that forms the raison d'être for the cult which is practiced at the shrine. The "definitive" version of this story was published by Sŏ Wŏnsŏp 徐 元燮 in 1979,[6] and is translated below. Additional phrasing not in the Korean text, which is necessary for a readable English translation, is placed within brackets. I have not attempted to put the tale into good literary form, but have tried to retain as much of the original syntax and vocabulary of the tale in order to preserve its characteristics as a folktale.

The Narrative

> Long ago, an official from the Magistracy of Samch'ŏk came to this island to survey the conditions [on the island]. He set up a base camp and had the island patrolled. When he was about to return, an old man appeared to him in a dream and told him to leave behind a servant. [The official] had this dream for about three days. However, he went about his work and did not say anything to anyone. He boarded the boat and prepared to leave. However, a great wind arose, the sea became very rough, and the boat was about to tip over. The official, now realizing the wrath of the mountain spirit [山神靈, *san sillyŏng*], called a male servant and a *kisaeng* 妓生 [female entertainer] and told them to go to the base camp and to bring back a bamboo tobacco pipe and a tobacco pouch that he had left behind. After sending them off, the official left hastily from the harbor.

At that time, the servant and the *kisaeng,* who did not know that they had been deceived, went to the base camp. However diligently they searched, they could not find [the pipe and the pouch]. Returning to the harbor, they saw that the official's boat was already far out to sea. After wailing loudly, they could do nothing else but return to the base camp. While waiting for the boat to come back, they died.

When the official returned [to Samch'ŏk], he reported to the throne about his patrol [of the island], and that he had left behind a male servant and a *kisaeng.* He was scolded for having left behind innocent people without any of the king's rice [to eat]. The king said, "If they are alive the next time [you go there], bring them home. If they are dead, build a tutelary shrine [to their spirits] and worship them as the guardian spirits of Ullŭng-do." Three years later, coming back to the island [the official] saw the base camp and, in a grove of trees, he saw the youth and the *kisaeng* standing up and looking out to sea. The official was so pleased at seeing this that he cried out. He told a servant to look [at what he had seen], but the servant saw nothing. They disembarked quickly. [The landing party] went over and saw that the two young people were holding each other tightly. The official was happy and called out, "Young people! You are still alive!" Touching their hair, it turned to dust. Only their bones were left. According to the king's orders, [the official] built a shrine there and worshiped the spirits [of the two people].

Commentary to the Narrative

The tale associated with the cult of the Sŏngha Sindang is an etiological tale that explains three things: 1) the origin of the shrine cult itself; 2) the current preeminence of this cult over all other cults on the island; and 3) the reason why the spirits of the two youths became the tutelary spirits for the island. The narrative structure of the myth is composed of four scenes like a drama: 1) the abandonment of the two young people on the island by the official; 2) the confession by the official of his actions; 3) the return of the official to the island and the discovery of the corpses of the two youths; and 4) the institution of the cult. The fourth scene is the principal and culminating scene of the tale, and is prepared for and explained by the preceding narrative scenes.

The final scene makes four important points. First, the cultic activity conducted at the present shrine was initiated at the specific behest of a royal command, which would have lent great prestige to the explanation of its institution. Second, the shrine itself likewise was built to comply with a royal

command. Thus, both cult and shrine could claim equal prestige and antiquity. Third, the cult was instituted in order to avoid the revenge that might be wreaked upon the visits of subsequent officials by the unappeased, vengeful spirits of the two youths. In traditional Korean folk religion, the spirits of young people dying before they are able to "fulfill" themselves (to marry and have children) were seen to be potentially dangerous and malevolent. The Korean hearers of this tale would have understood that the implicit reason for the erection of the shrine and the institution of the cult would have been to appease the potentially malevolent spirits of the two youths.

Fourth, the explicitly stated purpose of the tale is to explain the institution of cultic activity devoted to the spirits of the two youths as the tutelary spirits of the island. This fact is made quite clear by the statement in the narrative that it was the king's command to the magistrate to build a tutelary shrine that would be dedicated to the spirits of the two youths as the guardian spirits of the island. This feature of the tale would have been included within the narrative to explain why the cult, which would normally have been understood to have been instituted in order to propitiate potentially harmful spirits, became transformed into ritual practices that are offered up to beneficent tutelary spirits.

Thus, the Sŏngha Sindang tale about a pair of male and female spirits is not at all comparable to the myth of Izanagi and Izanami, which is a creation myth. The Sŏngha Sindang narrative does not purport to explain the creation of the island, nor to explain how the island came to be populated. The sole purpose of the tale is to describe how these two spirits came to be the focus of a cult, and to explain how this cult focussed on rituals propitiating the tutelary spirits of the island.

The tale of the Sŏngha Sindang shrine is similar to certain other Korean tales that explain the origin of particular cultic activities. The Korean type index of folktales contains a tale type, "An Appeal of a Resentful Spirit" versions 334.1 and 334.2 (CHOI 1979, 135–37), which explains the institution of a local cult as being for the purpose of appeasing the restless spirit of a murder victim. The narrative of the tale describes how the spirit of the murder victim first seeks revenge on humanity, and is appeased in the end by the apprehension of the murderer and the institution of cultic activity in its honor. Although the Sŏngha Sindang narrative parallels Tale 334 by tracing the origin of the cult at T'aeha Village to the unfortunate death of the two youths who are propitiated in the shrine there, it differs from Tale 334 in that the spirit described in that tale type is not a tutelary deity.

Korean folktale type 736, "The Origin of the Protecting Deity of the House and the Earthly Deity," and type 737, "The Origin of the Guardian Deities of Seogwipo," both describe the origin of village tutelary cults that

are dedicated to paired male and female spirits. These tale types likewise differ from the narrative of the Sŏngha Sindang tale. In Tale 736 and Tale 737, the arrival and settlement of the paired deities in their respective villages is said to have been the result of a divine command to go and settle there (CHOI 1979, 321–22).

In the case of the tale told about the Sŏngha Sindang cult, the origin of the cult as a regional tutelary cult is attributed to an attempt to appease the spirits of two young people who had died in unfortunate circumstances. The cults of village tutelary spirits in Korea are usually one of two types: cults of spirits who have been sent specially by a greater spirit to a particular village, or the cults of spirits of the first settlers of a village. The latter case is particularly true of single clan villages where the founding ancestor of the village is honored as the village tutelary spirit. The spirits described by the narrative of the Sŏngha Sindang tale, however, do not fit into the pattern of either of these examples, rather they combine elements of the spirits described in tale type 334, which explains the origin of vengeful spirit appeasement cults, and tale types 736 and 737, which explain the origin of tutelary spirit cults.

Although the narrative of the tale possesses a certain air of historical plausibility, it has been impossible for me to trace any reference to the origins of the cult in relevant historical documents. When I discussed the issue of the historicity of the origin of the tale with Sŏ Wŏnsŏp, the collector of the version of the tale that was translated above, he stated that it was his belief that the legend must have begun with a dream about the mountain spirit that the magistrate had.[7] However, a check of the gazetteer *Sinjung Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* (Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea) of 1531, which often contains legends and folktales about particular localities, failed to reveal any mention of this tale. The "Encyclopedia of the Culture of the Korean People," published by the Academy of Korean Studies, states that the story refers to events that occurred during the reign of King Sŏnjo (宣祖王 r. 1567–1608), but offers no documentary support for this statement (KWŎN 1991, 592). A check of the *Sŏnjo sillok* (Veritable Records of King Sŏnjo), the official annals of the reign of King Sŏnjo, finds no mention of this legend. A further check of the *sillok*, or annals, of subsequent kings of the Chŏson dynasty likewise failed to reveal any reference to the tale. In spite of the lack of documentary evidence for the origin of the cult, it is possible to imagine that two such youths might have been left behind either intentionally or by accident, and that ceremonies had to be instituted to appease their potentially vengeful spirits. As discussed earlier, in Korean folk belief it is feared that the spirits of people dying in unfortunate circumstances, especially unfulfilled youths, will become full of vengeance unless properly propitiated with the appropriate rituals.

A particularly interesting aspect of the narrative of this tale is that the death of the two youths is attributed to the demand made by the mountain spirit to the magistrate.[8] When the magistrate did not comply at first with the demands of the mountain spirit, the latter made his displeasure felt by causing the sea to become too rough for the magistrate's boat to set sail. As control of all aspects of the sea is the role of Yong-wang 龍王 (the Dragon King), the King of the Sea, it is normal in Korean folk religious practice to offer sacrifices to this deity for a safe sea voyage. For a Korean tale describing the sacrifice of a human or humans, the narrative of the Sŏngha Sindang tale is unusual in that it does not tell us why the mountain spirit desired the lives of the two youths. Again, in Korean folktales in which youths are offered as sacrifices to the spirits of the land or water, a reason is given in the narrative explaining why such an offering must be made. In Korean folktale type 117 (Choi 1979, 37–38), "A Fight between a Centipede and a Toad," the annual sacrifice of a maiden to an enormous centipede was described as being necessary to ensure that the centipede would bless the growing of the village's crops. Likewise, the narrative of Korean folktale type 385, "The Story of Simcheong, the Filial Daughter" (Choi 1979, 163–64), states that a filial daughter became a sacrifice to the Dragon King in order that her father might receive enough sacks of rice to pay a Buddhist monk to cure his blindness.

It is unusual for a Korean shrine originally dedicated to the appeasement of a vengeful spirit to become a local tutelary shrine. The "pioneers" who came to Ullŭng-do in the 1880s immediately began to offer up the standard Korean rituals dedicated to the mountain and sea spirits at shrines that had been newly erected in their pioneer villages. Therefore, it would have been possible for them at the Sŏngha Sindang shrine to continue only to offer up rites to propitiate the vengeful spirits of the two youths. The question then is not why they continued to perform rituals at the Sŏngha Sindang, but why the character of the rituals and the spirits enshrined there changed. I believe that the reason for this change in the character of the cult and the enshrined spirits must be due in part to the different psychological states of the people who offered up rituals at the shrine following the repopulation of the island in the late nineteenth century.

The reason why the cult of appeasement changed into a cult dedicated to regional guardian spirits stems, I believe, from the physical remoteness of the island from mainland Korea and its psychological effect on the first inhabitants of the repopulated island. One of the themes of the narrative is the remoteness of the island from the mainland as the main factor leading to the inevitable death of the two youths. During my research on Ullŭng Island, I was always aware of the concern that the islanders had about the condition of the sea. They would frequently ask whether "the sea was up,"

or whether the ships going to the mainland would be able to depart from the harbor at To-dong. The legend of the Sŏngha Sindang, by emphasizing the great distance of Ullŭng Island from the mainland, also speaks to the residents' deepest psychological fears about isolation. Consequently, spirits who had suffered as a result of their own separation from the mainland would understand the islanders' deep-felt fears about the sea and isolation. Whether or not the story of the two youths is based on an actual historical incident, the legend functions to give expression to the deep-seated anxieties that the islanders have about their life conditions. The cult in turn enables them to cope with these fears by appealing for protection and assistance to spirits who have experienced these very fears. Thus, the spirits of the two youths, who would have been seen to be potentially vengeful to the occasional visitors to the island during the period of depopulation, would have been perceived by the first generation of pioneer settlers to the island to be sympathetic to the plight of permanent residents, people who would not or could not leave to return to the mainland.

Description of the Sŏngha Sindang Shrine and Its Rituals

Shrines in T'aeha Village

Including the Sŏngha Sindang, there are five shrines or ritual sites within the boundaries of T'aeha Village. The other four shrines are the Ch'ŏnje-dang 天祭堂, the Sansin-dang 山神堂, the Pŏphwa-dang 法華堂, and the Haesin-dang 海神堂. The Ch'ŏnje-dang (Shrine of the Ruler of Heaven) is peculiar to T'aeha Village because it was the ritual spot where the representatives of the Magistracy of Samch'ŏk offered thanks to the Ruler of Heaven for a successful journey to Ullŭng Island. There is neither a shrine building nor a spirit tablet to mark the spot, but only a designated place within a grove of trees where the ritual was conducted. The Sansin-dang (Mountain God Shrine) is typical of many Korean villages and is located to the rear of the village. There is a modest tile-roofed shrine building containing a spirit tablet dedicated to the Mountain God. As with the Ch'ŏnje-dang, the Pŏphwa-dang (Shrine of the Lotus of the Law) is a unique ritual area. In spite of its current name it is not a Buddhist shrine. Originally called the Ch'ugwŏn-dang 祝願堂 (Shrine of Blessings), it was constructed to offer up prayers for the birth of a royal successor. The site of the shrine is still used to offer up requests for blessings on the village. There is no spirit tablet. The Haesin-dang (Shrine of the Sea God) is located on a rock by the shore at which rituals are offered up to the Dragon King for a successful season of fishing. There is no spirit tablet. Before the end of the Japanese occupation of Korea in 1945, there had also been a Shinto shrine located just west of the present Sŏngha Sindang on the site of the current Old People's Recreation Hall.

The Sŏngha Sindang

Clearly, the largest and most elaborate shrine of the village is the Sŏngha Sindang. The current shrine building (said by villagers to be the third shrine) is located on the north bank of the T'aeha River, but the original shrine was located on what is now a derelict site on the south bank (see figure 1). Informants from the village confirmed that the original shrine had been on that spot when the first pioneers arrived to settle the island in 1884. This shrine is said to have been washed away in the flood of 1925, at which time the second shrine building was erected at a new location, the current site. This second shrine building was constructed in a style reminiscent of a Shinto shrine, which it was not. When I first visited the shrine in the summer of 1982 and saw this second shrine building, doubts about its "Koreanness" were raised in my mind because of its physical similarity to a Shinto shrine building, and because it contained images of a young boy and girl, which suggested to me that the spirits propitiated there might be Izanagi and Izanami, creator and creatrix of the Japanese archipelago. I was told in 1995 that the shrine had never had any Shinto function but had only been the shrine for the local tutelary deities of the island. I was then shown the site of the former Shinto shrine that had been built during the colonial era and torn down shortly after the end of the Second World War in 1945. I was informed by the villagers in 1995 that local Japanese officials during the colonial era had helped in the maintenance of the shrine building.

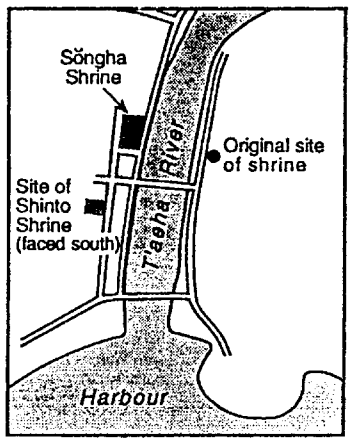

FIGURE 1. Location of shrine in T'aeha Village

Until 1978, the shrine had no specific name but was called simply a *sŏnghwang-dang* 城隍堂, the generic Korean name for a village or regional tutelary shrine. On the twenty-first day of the third lunar month of that year, the shrine was given the name "Sŏngha Sindang" (Spirit Shrine of Sŏngha). The Chinese characters *sŏng* 聖 and *ha* 霞 are taken from two local toponyms, *sŏng* from the great Sŏngin peak and *ha* from the local river, the T'aeha River. The second shrine building was pulled down in 1984, and was replaced on the same site with a much larger and more traditional Korean-style structure. This third shrine building was dedicated on the seventh day of the eighth lunar month of that year and has been in continuous usage since then.

On my first visit in 1982, I had been struck by the presence of the two

statues depicting the enshrined spirits. Although not unique, it is unusual to find statuary in shrines associated with local village cults in Korea. In 1995 I was told that originally only the two tablets dedicated to the spirits of the two youths had been on the altar. The practice of placing a tablet or tablets with the name of enshrined spirits on the altar of local shrines is typical of the vast majority of local shrines in Korea. The tablets in the Sŏngha Sindang shrine are the original tablets and are inscribed "Sŏngha-ji namsin wi" 聖霞之男神位 (Spirit Tablet of the Male Spirit of Sŏngha) and "Sŏngha-ji yosin wi" 聖霞之女神位 (Spirit Tablet of the Female Spirit of Sŏngha).[9] In 1966, two stone statues of a boy and of a girl were ordered from a statuary workshop in the city of Taegu on the mainland and were placed on the altar beside their respective tablets.

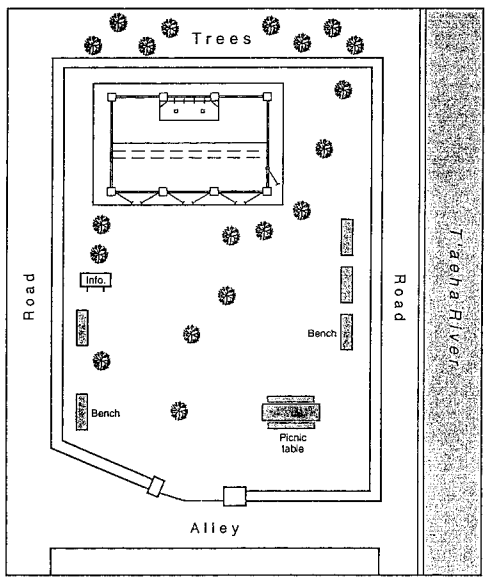

FIGURE 2. Exterior plan of shrine

The Shrine and the Shrine Precinct

The third shrine building (see figure 2) is a three *kan* 間[10] structure that nestles in a grove of trees on the north side of the T'aeha River. The shrine precinct is enclosed on all sides by a wall. Access into the precinct is gained by a gate on the west side from which extends a pavement leading directly to the central door of the three double doors on the front side of the shrine. There is also a small door on the south, or right, side of the building by which access may be obtained when the main doors are shut.

The shrine precinct is deeply wooded and contains five benches and a "picnic table" for recreational purposes. The benches provide space for the elders of the village to meet together to talk and pass the time of day with their friends, while the "picnic table" benches and table provide space for the village elders to play games of *changgi* 將棋 (a Korean version of chess) and *paduk*, known in the West by the Japanese term *go*. Thus the precinct around the shrine serves not only as a ritual space separating the shrine from the secular buildings near it, but it also functions to provide space for the recreational activities of the villagers.

A large counter-like altar (see figure 3) occupies the entire rear portion of the shrine building. In the center of the altar is a small raised dais on which are placed the principal ritual objects, including the spirit tablets and the statues of the enshrined spirits. This area may be described as the inner altar. The inner altar is flanked at the back by a six-paneled embroidered silk screen depicting various birds and flowers. On the left is the statue of the male tutelary spirit and on the right is the statue of the female tutelary spirit. To the left and right of the statues are their respective spirit tablets, and next to each of these is, respectively, a model of a king's crown and a model of a queen's crown. In front of each of the statues is placed a lidded ritual bowl containing clear water which rests on a base. Clear or pure water is a common ritual offering used in the practice of Korean popular religion.

On the counter directly in front of the inner altar are placed associated ritual objects, arranged in an order that is reminiscent of the prescribed ordering of ritual objects during the performance of a Confucian ancestral ritual or shamanistic ceremony. These ritual objects include artificial flowers in vases that flank the edges of the inner altar, boys' and girls' Korean-style rubber shoes, ritual bowls filled with rice, candlesticks, an incense burner, and a lacquered, inlaid mirror case open to display the mirror. This central area is flanked on the left by a pile of men's clothing and shoes, and by a pile of women's clothing and shoes on the right. On the far side of either of these piles are scattered groups of candles and matches.

The central feature of the shrine is the statues of the enshrined spirits. Carved from stone, the statues have been painted to show the spirits in clothing typical of young upper-class men and women. The young man wears a black hat without a brim, a white upper garment, and light blue trousers. As the black hat is the sign of an upper-class scholar, the allegedly historic slave boy who is supposed to be depicted by the statue could not have worn this kind of headgear. The young woman is depicted wearing a bright yellow upper garment, and a bright, rich-green skirt.

The roof of the shrine is supported by a large central beam that on the interior side has the lunar calendar date for the ceremony of the raising of the roof beam, a ritual that is similar to the Western custom of laying a cornerstone.

Ritual Activity at the Shrine

The two principal forms of ritual activity that take place at the Sŏngha Sindang are a village-focus ritual, and personal supplications. The village-focus ceremony takes place only once a year and is held on the midnight of the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, which in Korean is called *tae porŭm* (the great full moon). As is typical of all Korean folk religious activities, the chief village ceremony is set according to the lunar, not the solar, calendar.

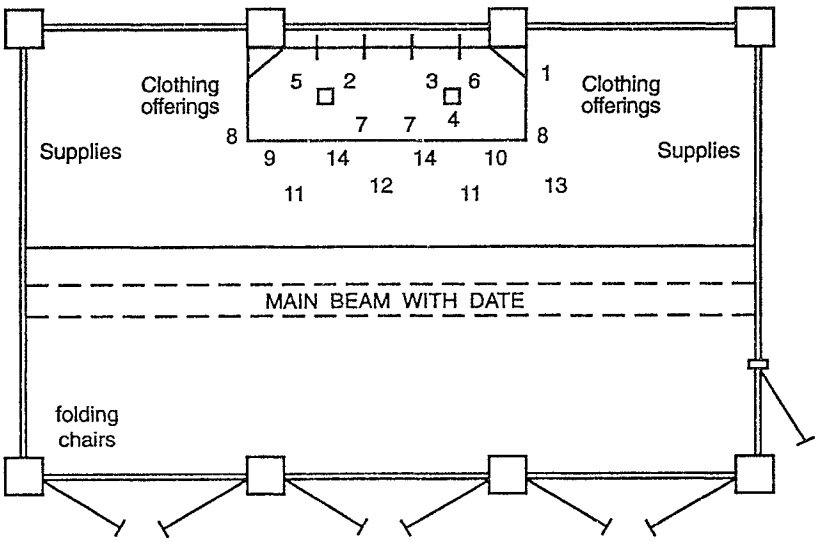

FIGURE 3. Interior plan of shrine

List of ritual objects displayed on the altar of the Sŏngha Sindang

1. Six-paneled embroidered screen
2. Statue of male youth
3. Statue of female youth
4. Spirit tablets
5. King's crown
6. Queen's crown
7. Korean-style metal lidded bowls with bases
8. Artificial flowers in vases
9. Boys' or Men's Korean-style rubber shoes
10. Girls' or Women's Korean-style rubber shoes
11. Candlesticks
12. Incense burner
13. Traditional Korean-style lacquer inlaid case with mirror section raised and open
14. Korean-style metal rice bowls

The night of the full moon of any month is an auspicious time, and none more so than the first full moon of the new year. *Tae porŭm* is the date set for most of the key village rites that focus on the offering of petitions for blessings and prosperity in the new year. As the Sŏngha Sindang is a tutelary shrine for not only the T'aeha Village but also the entire island of Ullŭng-do, the rites offered up here on *tae porŭm* are especially significant in the ritual life of the island. Traditionally, all of the villagers would gather by the shrine, and a previously selected ritual leader or leaders would conduct the service. In 1995 the actual celebrants were all males over the age of 60. I was informed that this was the case because the middle-aged and young males in the village were all Christians and would not take part in what was perceived to be a pagan ritual.[11] My informants told me that the ritual format follows the traditional pattern of Confucian ancestral rites and consists of a series of food and drink offerings presented to the guardian spirits by the officiants. The sacrificial offerings are sea fish and pork in addition to liquid offerings of water or strong Korean liquor.

The most common usage for the shrine, however, is for personal supplications. Unlike Christian churches, regular attendance on fixed dates for ritual activity is not a feature of this or any other Korean local shrine. The shrine is frequented at irregular periods by fishermen or members of a fisherman's family, and by women of childbearing age. The first class of supplicants prays to the tutelary spirits for a successful catch of the local marine product, the cuttlefish (*Sepia esculenta*). As the cuttlefish is a principal Korean delicacy, the source of much of the island's wealth comes from the cuttlefish industry. Because of the rapidly changing conditions of the sea surrounding this lone island, the supplications to the guardian spirits of the island are felt to be essential both for a successful catch and for the security of the fishermen on the sea. It is interesting that these kinds of petitions are offered up to the two tutelary spirits of the island rather than to the Dragon King. In mainland Korean fishing villages these types of petitions are usually addressed to the Dragon King, the ruler of the sea. Indeed, virtually every village on Ullŭng Island, including T'aeha Village, has a shrine called a *haesin-dang* (Sea God Shrine) where these types of petitions are offered up to the Dragon King. Nonetheless, prayers offered to the tutelary spirits of the island are felt to be particularly efficacious.

The second class of personal supplicants is that of women either offering supplications for a son to be born to them, or requesting that their child might enter high school or university. On the mainland, both of these types of petition are usually addressed to the Mountain God or local tutelary spirits. As the spirits enshrined in the Sŏngha Sindang are the tutelary spirits of the island, it is not out of character with the types of petitions offered up to village

tutelary spirits on the mainland, for the same types of petitions to be offered up on Ullŭng Island to the guardian spirits of the island.

When the supplicants come to petition the tutelary spirits enshrined in the Sŏngha Sindang, they bring three kinds of ritual offerings: clothes, food, and money. The offerings of clothing consist of a complete set of traditional boy's and girl's clothes including the appropriate footwear. The piles of clothing on the altar that I saw in 1995 were offerings that had been made to the spirits of the shrine. The offerings of food made to the spirits are not left for a long time on the altar but are distributed shortly afterwards to the people of the village, especially to the older members of local households. The gifts of money which are made to the spirits are put into a local fund that maintains the shrine and other local cultural properties.[12]

Concluding Remarks

The tale of the Sŏngha Sindang shrine is especially interesting because it enables us to understand the process by which a new local cult became established, the reasons for the construction of a local shrine, and why a propitiatory cult to appease the souls of potentially vengeful spirits became transformed into a tutelary cult. With the repopulation of the island at the end of the last century, the function of the shrine changed from being the site for a rite of appeasement into being a local tutelary shrine dedicated to the benevolent guardian spirits of the island. This change in function can be attributed to the difference between the psychological conditions of the pioneer settlers and the magistrates who in the past had come to ensure that the island was not being used as a pirate redoubt. With a change in the nature of the people using the shrine, the shrine then assumed the two principal functions typical of tutelary shrines on the mainland: as the venue for the annual village petitions for blessings in the new year, and as the site for personal petitions addressed to the benevolently inclined guardian spirits of a village or region. This change in the focus of ritual activity at the shrine likewise caused a change in the character of the enshrined spirits from being dangerous, vengeful spirits into being the benevolent guardians of the island.

NOTES

1. I want to indicate here my deep appreciation for the support given to my research project by the Korea Foundation and the Daesan Foundation. I would also like to thank those who assisted me while I was on Ullŭng-do: the Ullŭng County Government (especially the Office of Cultural Properties), the Sŏngha Sindang shrine committee, and the minister and members of the congregation of the To-dong First Presbyterian Church. My own research

formed part of a project that is being undertaken by the Department of Sociology of Kyŏngbuk National University in Taegu, Korea.

2. Early missionary travelogues give some idea of the remoteness of this island. Homer B. HULBERT, writing in 1906, states that Korean sailing boats took two days with a good wind to reach the island (1906, 281). Later in the century, George H. WINN mentioned that his trip to Ullŭng-do in 1923 took just under 24 hours (1923, 193).

3. All statistical information is from the county statistical yearbook *1995 nyŏndo ḳunjŏng hyŏnhwang* (County Administrative Sourcebook for 1995), pages 6 to 8. These records show that since the year 1979 there has been a constant decline in the population from a high point of 29,810. The current population is divided nearly equally between males and females, with a slight predominance of males over females.

4. The narrative of this tale is found in the Dong yi zhuan 東夷傳 section of the *San guo zhi* in the subsection Dong wu ju 東沃沮, which is devoted to the Tong Okchŏ (in Chinese, Dong wu ju) people. This section refers to an event that Pak Kisŏng claims happened during the twentieth year of the reign of King Tongch'ŏn 東川王 (r. 227–247) of Koguryŏ 高句麗. He says that the shipwrecked men were Okchŏ fishermen and that the incident took place around the year 246 (PAK 1995, 74).

5. See *Chijung maripḳan* in *Samguḳ sagi* volume 4 (卷 4), section 22.

6. There are two published Korean versions of this tale, one recorded by CH'OE Kilsong and IM Tonggwon (1971, 39–40), and the other by SŎ Wŏnsŏp (1979, 234–35). Sŏ's version, which was recorded in 1967, is not only earlier but also may be taken to be the definitive version of the tale. On 3 August 1967 he gathered together ten of the male elders of the village —its oldest residents—and had them tell the story. Each element of the story had to be agreed upon by all of the elders present before it was recorded. The tale as recorded in Ch'oe and Im agrees in all essentials with the tale as recorded by Sŏ.

7. From an interview on 27 November 1995, in Taegu, Korea.

8. In Korean folk religion, mountain spirits (*sallyŏng*) and the Mountain God (Sansin) are to be distinguished. Mountain spirits are the local guardian spirits of a particular mountain near a village. The Mountain God is the ruler of all the mountains of Korea. Petitions to either of these spirits may be made at a natural shrine, a large tree near a village, or a small crevice in a rock face in front of which a stone has been placed to serve as a simple altar.

9. SŎ states that when he saw the shrine tablets they were inscribed as "Sŏnghwang-ji namsin wi" 城隍之男神位 (Sacred Tablet of the Male Tutelary Spirit) and "Sŏnghwang-ji yosin wi" 城隍之女神位 (Sacred Tablet of the Female Tutelary Spirit) (1979, 241). Ch'oe and Im do not refer to the inscription on the tablets. My informants in the village of T'aeha-ri said, however, that the tablets were original and not recently made.

10. A *ḳan* is a traditional unit of architectural space, being the space enclosed by a set of four structural pillars.

11. County statistics indicate that more than sixty percent of the population of the island is Christian, divided nearly half and half between the Presbyterian and Baptist denominations. There are small communities of Roman Catholics and smaller numbers of Methodists. These statistics are interesting because the Christian percentage of the population of Ullŭng-do is higher than on the mainland, and because the majority of Protestant Christians on the mainland are either Presbyterians or Methodists, with a much smaller number of Baptists.

12. CH'OE and IM did a thorough analysis of the list of offerings made to the spirits of the shrine during their research in 1971, examining the size of votive gifts and the place of origin of the supplicants (1971, 27–39).

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