Journal of the Korean Geographical Society, Vol. 40, No. 5, 2005(553~570)

Kyeryong Mountain as a Contested Place*

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경합(競合) 장소(場所)로서의 계룡산(鷄龍山)*

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Abstract : On Kyeryong Mountain, different religious(or ideological) groups have endowed space and place with amalgams of different meanings, uses and values. In addition to Buddhism and Confucianism, Shamanism and other popular beliefs have practiced their own ideologies(or powers) to create and maintain their own territories and identities. The geographies of resistance, involving Shamanism, have been scattered all over the mountain, discontinuous in the territorialization. These geographies of resistance could be identified the best around the most sacred sites, such as Sambulbong, Amyongch'u and Sutyongch'u. The entanglement of Shamanism with Buddhism, in various patterns through space and time, has indeed contributed to the survival of Shamanism as a subordinate power.
Key Words : Kyeryong Mountain, religious(or ideological) groups, the geographies of resistance, the entanglement of Shamanism with Buddhism

요약 : 계룡산에는 상이한 종교(또는 이념) 집단들이 다양한 의미와 가치를 부여하며 이용해 온 공간과 장소들이 있다. 불교와 유교 그리고 무속을 포함하는 민간 신앙들은 자기 고유의 영역과 정체성을 생산하고 관리하기 위하여 제각기 다른 이념(또는 세력)을 구현하여 왔다. 무속을 중심으로 하는 저항의 지리는 계룡산 전역에 걸쳐 불연속적인 영역을 기반으로 진행되어 왔다. 이러한 저항의 지리가 가장 뚜렷하게 확인되는 지점은 삼불봉, 암용추, 숫용추 등이다. 지금까지 무속과 불교의 공간적이고 시간적인 뒤엉킴을 통하여 피지배 세력인 무속이 생존하여 왔던 것이다.
주요어 : 계룡산, 종교(또는 이념) 집단, 저항의 지리, 무속과 불교의 뒤엉킴

* This article has been completed with the financial aid from the Korea National University of Education.
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1. Introduction

Although Kyeryong Mountain (Kyeryongsan) rises as an isolated mountain, it is easily conceivable from a distance because of its mystic shape. Since a series of peaks form an elongated ridge resembling a dragon with a cock's comb head, the mountain is called Kyeryong Mountain meaning Cock Dragon Mountain. Such a mystic panorama has caught the eyes of common individuals and groups throughout time. Today, it is known as the most important mountain that shamans visit for their prayers or for their services. There are many places that lure both shamans and Shamanists on the mountain. The best sites where shamans like to communicate with spirits are high peaks and deep valleys. In these sites they usually stay for a long time to strengthen their supernatural abilities, and sometimes establish their own halls to provide services to their clients.

On Kyeryong Mountain, different religious (or ideological) groups have endowed space, and of course place, with amalgams of different meanings, uses and values. In addition to Buddhism and Confucianism, Shamanism and other popular beliefs have practiced their own ideologies (or powers) to create and maintain their own territories and identities. It seems that Shamanism has managed to resist the domination from the state (first, the national park, and then, the military headquarters), and maintain its power through the practice of spatial tactics.

The control from the state has also intervened in the territorialization of these different groups on Kyeryong Mountain throughout time. Religious (or ideological) groups have taken various forms of resistance to the domination of space by the state and other forms of dominating power. The differences in the power relationship with the state among these groups have given rise to the various tensions and conflicts over the uses of space. Within such contradictions of space, particular locations on Kyeryong Mountain become sites of contestation where relations of power are interwoven. These sites have also involved alternative construction of place or 'counter spaces', as Lefebvre had once described (Lefebvre, 1991, 382).

Kyeryong Mountain, therefore, provides a case study that would be ideal for thinking through critical geographies of power: resistance or entanglement. Resistance, indeed, seeks to occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities from those defined through oppression. It would be interesting to study how marginal or dissident groups on Kyeryong Mountain have transgressed the imposition of boundaries and scales to resist or survive oppression or surveillance, first, from Neo-Confucian rule and then, the military government. Under these circumstances, in this study, the aim is to examine how resistance from Shamanists, Buddhists and other religious groups have sought to occupy new spaces, to create new geographies, and to make their own places. The important questions are about the ways in which geography makes possible or impossible certain forms of resistance and about the ways in which resistance makes other spaces.

While the central strategy of authority is to force people to play its game, they continually seek to find their own places. In geographies of resistance, people are understood to have capacities to change things through finding their own tactics for avoiding, taunting, attacking, undermining, ending, hindering, or mocking the everyday exercise of power (Pile, 1997, 14). From this perspective, resistance is about the

desire to find a place in a power-geography where space is denied, circumscribed and/or administered. The believers in Chŏnggamnok and their variations can be seen to be marginal or dissident groups who were anxious to find a place in the time of political turmoil through the Japanese occupation (1910-1945). In this study, therefore, an attempt is made to unveil how they occupied a location called Sindoan Valley from the early 1900s, and reacted to the construction of military headquarters from the 1980s.

The powerful controlling space and tactics of resistance have at least two 'surfaces': one facing toward the mapping power, the other facing in another direction towards intangible, invisible, unconscious desires, pleasures, enjoyment, fears, angers and hopes. On Kyeryong Mountain, the powerful have been the state (national park and military headquarters), and the weak have been the Shamanists. In the geographies of resistance, other places are always involved: spaces that are dimly lit, opaque, deliberately hidden, or saturated with memories (Pile, 1997, 16). The spaces of resistance from Shamanists have been multiple, dynamic and weak, and only ever in part controlled by the practices of domination. Finally, an attempt is made to study how tactics of resistance have dislocated interaction between the two, or three or more, spaces of Shamanism, national park, Buddhism, or the military.

2. The Local History of Confucianism and Buddhism

The highest summit on Kyeryong Mountain is called Ch'ŏnhwang Peak (Ch'ŏnhwangbong: 845M) from which ridges run in five directions: Ssalgye Peak (Ssalgye bong: 828M), Kwanŭm Peak (Kwanŭmbong: 816M), Sambul Peak (Sambulbong: 775M) and Sujŏng Peak (Sujŏngbong: 662M) in the north; Sinsŏn Peak (Sinsŏnbong: 642M) and Sinsŏnbong Peak (Sinsŏnbongbong: 500M) in the northeast; Ch'ŏnhwang Peak (Ch'ŏnhwangbong: 605M) and Hwangjŏk Peak (Hwangjŏkpong: 664M) in the east; Hyangjŏk Peak (Hyangjŏkpong: 574M) and Kuksa Peak (Kuksabong: 431M) in the south; Munp'il Peak (Munp'ilbong: 816M) and Yŏnch'ŏn Peak (Yŏnch'ŏnbong: 739M) in the west. Waters flow from the summit to form three large streams (Yongsuch'ŏn, Tugyech'ŏn, Nosŏngch'ŏn) onto the plain area, but the mountain itself can be divided into five valleys. In this study, these five valleys are named tentatively after the representative cultural landscapes: Tonghaksa, Sangsilli, Sindoan, Kapsa and Sinwŏnsa.

Kyeryong Mountain seems to have been viewed as sacred by the state from the early period in Korean history. It was in 420 that the Paekche Kingdom (48 BC-660 AD) built the first Buddhist temple named Kapsa on the sacred Kyeryong Mountain. It is said in the Samguksagi, or Historical Records on the Three Kingdoms, that the Silla Kingdom (57 BC-935 AD) located five sacred peaks to protect the nation. Kyeryong Mountain was called Sŏak (Western Peak), meaning "the sacred mountain in the west." In 1394, the royal court established an altar in the temple of Sinwŏnsa to pay homage to the deity of Kyeryong Mountain. From then on, Kyeryong Mountain remained one of the three sacred mountains where the royal court dedicated rituals to the mountain deities.

In 1393, the founder of the Chosŏn Dynasty, King T'aejo (r. 1392-1398), visited Kyeryong Mountain with the idea that he would relocate the royal capital from Kyegyŏng (currently called

Kyesŏng) into the Sindoan Valley. Although he changed his mind to locate the royal capital in Hanyang (Seoul) instead, Kyeryong Mountain came to be known to the public as the most sacred mountain in Korea. In the middle of the Chosŏn Dynasty, a book of geomantic prophecy, called Chŏnggamnok, became popular among those who were dissatisfied with the social-political conditions. The book said that the Chosŏn Dynasty was coming close to its end and a new dynasty would succeed it with the capital at Sindoan Valley on Kyeryong Mountain (Yi, 1993, 13).

Since the Japanese annexation (1910), believers in popular religion moved into the Sindoan Valley in groups with the dream that it would become the center of the nation or the world in the future. After the Korean War (1950-53), shamans and their clients came to Kyeryong Mountain in large numbers to pray for themselves or practice their services. In 1975, the Korean government delineated a perimeter of the national park onto Kyeryong Mountain, and since that time popular religion, including Shamanism, has been prohibited from the occupation of any sites on the mountain.

Today, there are three large temples thriving on Kyeryong Mountain: Kapsa, Sinwŏnsa and Tonghaksa. Each of these large temples has also its own monasteries in the valley that they occupied: four in the Kapsa Valley; six in the Tonghaksa Valley; six in the Sinwŏnsa Valley. In terms of physical size, Kapsa is the largest, and Tonghaksa is the second largest; Sinwŏnsa is the smallest. Eighteen more temples, independent from the large temples, are also scattered all over Kyeryong Mountain. All of them have been built since the 1940s, and half of them are situated in Tonghaksa Valley. Since the foundation, however, these temples have not grown all along with their monasteries throughout time. The contemporary temples of Tonghaksa and Sinwŏnsa, in particular, are largely the outcomes of reconstruction from the 19th Century up to the present.

According to a series of traveler's documents, Kapsa has always been the largest temple as it managed to gain the royal support in the Chosŏn Period (1392-1910). In the late Chosŏn Period, by contrast, Sinwŏnsa and Tonghaksa gradually declined to reduce their sizes. In a traveler's document (Yi, 1712), it was said that the number of monks residing in Kapsa amounted to several hundred, several times larger than those in the temple of Sinwŏnsa. Another document mentioned that no more than six to seven monks remained in the temple of Tonghaksa that had been nearly half-destroyed (Nam, 1731). As the earliest document (Song, 1700) described the temple of Tonghaksa as a famous temple, it seems that Tonghaksa declined rapidly within a short period of time from 1700 to 1731. The latest traveler's document (Kwŏn, 1790) confirmed that the temple of Sinwŏnsa was completely destroyed into ruins. Based on to the earlier document (Nam, 1731), it can be speculated that Sinwŏnsa might have declined only within less than sixty years between 1731 and 1790.

After the Silla Kingdom (57 BC-935 AD) conquered the Paekche Kingdom, the monk named Ŭisang appointed Kapsa as one of the ten temples that represented the Hwawŏm(Flower Garland) Sect. The temple is situated in the valley from which one can look up to the peak named Ssalgyebong. All the buildings were completely burned down in 1597 during the Imjin War (1592-1598), but rebuilt from 1604 to 1654 (Chŏng, 1996, 77). The buildings were also newly

constructed from the late 18th to the late 19th Centuries: P'yoch'ungwŏn (1783), Chŏkmuktang (1797), and Sungmuktdang (1899).

The temple of Tonghaksa was originally established in 724 under the Silla Kingdom with the name "Ch'ŏngnyangsa." The founder of the Koryŏ Dynasty, King T'aejo (r. 918-943), ordered in 920 that it should be the temple to pray for national prosperity. In 936, a Confucian shrine named Tonghaksa was built in the temple in order to perform rituals for Pakhyŏkkŏse, the founder of the Silla Kingdom, and for Pak Chesang, the loyal subject of the Silla Kingdom who died in Japan after rescuing the 19th king's younger brother from Japan (Sungmohoe, 2004).

In 1394, during the rein of King T'aejo of the Chosŏn Dynasty, a Confucian altar was established to commemorate Chŏng Mong-ju (1337-1392), the loyal subject, from the Koryŏ Dynasty. In 1400, this altar was developed into a Confucian shrine named Samŏn'gak that enshrined two more loyal subjects: Yi Saek (1328-1396) and Kil Che (1353-1419). In 1924, the mortuary tablets of two more loyal subjects were also added to the altar to encourage national ethos under the Japanese occupation (1910-1945). During the rein of King Sejo (r. 1456-1458), a Confucian shrine named Ch'ohon'gak was built to comfort the spirits of those who were killed in the political struggle against King Sejo. The shrine was completely destroyed with fire in 1728, and not reconstructed until 1869-1883. Then, in 1903, twenty years after the reconstruction, the royal court bestowed on the shrine the name plaque called Sungmojŏn. The association called Sungmohoe was organized in 1963 to perform the Confucian rituals twice a year: in spring and autumn. In 1992, a hall called Sungmoje was constructed to host the meeting in the commemoration of loyalty in the past.

It was argued that the temple of Tonghaksa was transformed into the Confucian academy named Tonghak Sŏwŏn sometime before the rein of King Chŏngjo (r. 1777-1800) (Han, 1994, 21). The academy had continued to function as an institution until it recovered its former status of temple in 1836. Even today, the Confucian gate called hongsalmun, instead of the Buddhist gate called ilchumun, still stands at the entrance to the temple. On its left-hand side, a pavilion named Serokchŏng also stands beside the stream. This implies that by this time the social status of Neo-Confucianism was deemed superior to those of Buddhism and Shamanism on Kyeryong Mountain.

3. The Sacred Sites in Shamanism

Shaman called mansin and their clients also undertake pilgrimages deep into the mountains to supplicate or worship the mountain deities and other deities. Shamans by themselves sometimes camp out near peaks or in remote ravines at mountains, famous for their Shamanistic and geomantic powers. Here, they bow and pray continuously in front of shrines, in order to enhance their own supernatural ability. In general, the shaman ritual, called kut, has been performed on hilltops or high peaks, in deep mountain ravines near waterfalls or against cliffs on dramatic slopes (Mason, 1999, 143).

In Korea, Kyeryong Mountain is known as the most important mountain that shamans either visit for their prayers or for their services. There are many sites that entice both shamans and Shamanists because of the mystic shape or

secluded location. Of these sites, the most popular among Shamanists are two peaks and two waterfalls: Sambul Peak (Three Buddha Peak), Yŏnch'ŏn Peak (Connecting Sky Peak), Sutyong Pond (Sutyongch'u: Male Dragon Pond), and Amyong Pond (Amyongch'u: Female Dragon Pond). In these sites, they usually stay for a long time to strengthen their supernatural ability, and sometimes establish their own altars or shrines to provide services to their clients.

The mountain peak, named Sambulbong, is one of the most sacred sites in Kyeryong Mountain, because it literally symbolizes the important deities in Shamanism. It is said that below this mountain peak many women used to come with shamans or by themselves and pray for the birth of a son. Neo-Confucian principles in the Chosŏn Period demanded that women give birth to sons in order to carry on the family line, and women in desperate need of a son relied on Shamanism.

The extreme importance of male descendants made the shaman's performance undeniable as a sort of last resort. In this way, Shamanism could exist as an assistant to Confucianism that emphasized ancestor worship. The deities called samsin (three spirits) or sambul (three Buddhas) were those that shamans used to resort to in the ritual called kut for the birth of sons (Covell, 1986, 86-88). These deities together represent procreation or pregnancy, and thus, have been a principal symbol of fertility in Korean Shamanism. Even during the Chosŏn Period (1392-1910), Confucianism had no remedies for the anxieties caused by childlessness, children's illness, and child rearing. Even though the proper performance of ancestor worship was thought to ensure the prosperity of descendants, it could not satisfy the emotional needs of women (Boudewijin, 1999, 185).

Since both Taoism and Buddhism influenced Shamanism, it is not surprising that Taoist-type and Buddhist-type icons exist. At present, there seems to be no purely unadulterated Shamanistic representation of a deity. The deities called sambul are a meld of Buddhist appearance with a Shamanistic concept as directly involved in the birth process (Covell, 1986, 86). The Shamanistic concept of samsin went through a long history, and acquired both Shamanist and Buddhist elements. Because the deities of samsin are depicted as three monks in religious robes, they are often called samsin, or the "three Buddha."

In the time of Buddhism and Confucianism with hegemony in power, Shamanism, disguised in Buddhist clothes, appealed to women's desperate need for male descendants. Shamanism was only able to survive the suppression from Buddhism in the Koryŏ Period (918-1392) and Neo-Confucianism in the Chosŏn Period (1392-1910), by catering to Buddhism and Confucianism. A Buddhist monastery, named Kyemyŏng Chŏngsa, under the peak of Sambulbong, belonging to the temple of Tonghaksa, is now prohibited from Shamanistic activities. However, it had once served as a shaman shrine before Tonghaksa claimed to build a temple beside the archaeological site of a temple named Ch'ŏngnyangsa in 1997 (Yi, 1999, 211-213). Before then, the temple of Tonghaksa allowed the monastery to be used as a space where Shamanism could survive in Buddhist clothes.

The peak called Yŏnch'ŏnbong is another sacred site under which many Shamanists come in search of spirits. This peak is regarded as an excellent site for Shamanists, from which one can look closely up to the peak called Ch'ŏhwangbong

(The Heavenly Emperor Peak), the highest peak, where the heavenly spirit comes down. Under this mountain peak, a Buddhist monastery named Dŭngwunam had been established as a part of the temple, Sinwŏnsa, and now, not only Buddhists but also Shamanists visit it (Yi, 1999, 261). Shaman altars or shrines can be seen more frequently along the route from this monastery to the peak of Yŏnch'ŏnbong. Kŏmnyongam is another Buddhist monastery, owned by the temple of Sinwŏnsa, which allows Shamanists to stay there for their prayers and rituals. These two monasteries are also the same as Kyemyŏng Chŏngsa in the way that they provide a space for Shamanism as well as Buddhism.

A sexual pair of ponds, named Sutyongch'u (Sutyong Pond: Male-Dragon Pond) and Amyongch'u (Amyong Pond: Female-Dragon Pond), are also the sacred sites for Shamanists. It is said that these names were made from the myth that a male dragon and a female dragon resided separately in these ponds and swam underground to meet with each other. The myth also tells that these dragons ascended to the sky where they were originally from. These ponds are believed to be the best site where shamans can meet the three spirits at the same time: heaven, land, and water. At night, in fact, the sounds of waterfalls breaking on the rocks, and the dark shade of woods and rocks are qualified enough to orchestrate a mystic atmosphere.

Physically speaking, however, these ponds are potholes with depths of 4-5m, which were formed in the rocky valleys from the erosion by waterfalls. However, the division of sex in their names may have been from the overall shape of the ponds. From the air, Sutyong Pond looks like a penis, while Amyong Pond resembles a vagina. For this reason, women desperate for the birth of a son used to come to Sutyong Pond, while men in need of a daughter went to Amyong Pond. During the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), moreover, twelve Confucian literati, who were opposed to the colonial rule, regularly held a meeting in front of Amyong Pond (Yi, 1996, 225). They inscribed their names on the rock behind the sacred pond to swear not to become a Japanese subject. It is obvious that the inscription itself was meant to demonstrate their determination to resist the Japanese colonial rule.

4. The Sacred Place in the Popular Religion

It is said that in the late Chosŏn Period (1392-1910) there were only a few houses in the Sindoan Valley with very little cultivatable land with irrigation water (Han'guk Ilbo, 1965). In 1918, about one hundred households believing in the prophecy book, Chŏnggamnok, moved into the valley. It was in 1924 that about a thousand believers in a popular religion, called Sichŏn'gyo, a sect of Donghak, settled down in the valley. Most of them were from the provinces of Hwanghae and P'yŏngan, because they believed in the prophecy from Chŏnggamnok that human traces would not be seen in these provinces for three years (Yi, 1993, 17). The name of Sichŏn'gyo was changed into Sangjegyo right after their movement into the valley, and then into Ch'ŏnjin'gyo in the 1950s.

A geomantic prophecy luring them to the Sindoan Valley said that it would become the center of the world in the millennium. The second head of Donghak interpreted the book of Chŏnggamnok in his own way, and predicted that this world would come to an end and enter

into a new world in 1924 (Han'guk Ilbo, 1965). The result was that a large village occupied the whole valley with nearly 5,000 households (7,000 persons) in 1924. After the year 1924 passed without any outcome, it was again predicted that this world would come to an end in 1954. Those who believed in this prophecy continued to join with those who had already settled down in the valley. Most of them were from the groups of popular religion other than Sichŏn'gyo, and their number rose up to more than 200 groups in the early 1950s.

These religious groups were basically similar to one another because they all believed in Chŏnggamnok stating that the Sindoan Valley would become the center of the world in the millennium (Tonga Ilbo, 1923). Chŏnggamnok predicted that the Chosŏn Dynasty would come to an end and the Chŏng Dynasty would replace it with its capital in the Sindoan Valley. They dreamed that the valley would be the place from which a messiah and a bachelor, called Chŏng Toryŏng, would govern the world in the millennium. They also dreamed that 66 countries in the world would come to the Sindoan Valley and pay tribute to the Chŏng Dynasty. The historical fact, that King T'aejo (r. 1392-1398) in the Chosŏn Dynasty was planning to construct the royal capital in the valley, also strongly supported the dream. The Chŏnggamnok became very popular in the late Chosŏn Dynasty and even more popular throughout the Japanese occupation and the Korean War.

They also shared the geomantic (feng-shui) idea that the valley was situated in the source of power: yin and yang or water and mountain. The geomancers interpreted that the power of the mountain, originating in Mt. Paekdu, would flow in a circle through Mt. T'aebaek, Mt. Sobaek, Mt.

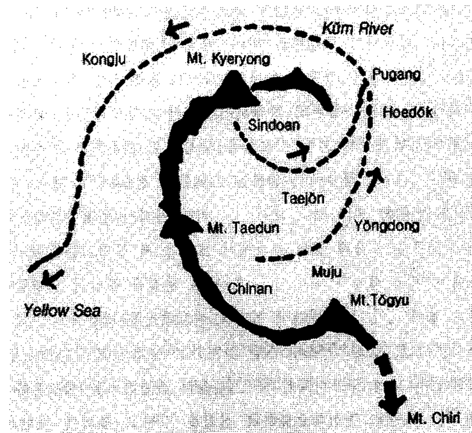

Figure 1. The overall pattern of flow in the mountain and water around Sindoan

Chiri, Mt. Tŏgyu, and Mt. Taedun to arrive at Mt. Kyeryong (Figure 1). On the other hand, it was said that the flow in the water would form two patterns: small and large. In the small pattern, it would flow in a circle from Mt. Kyeryong through the Sindoan Valley into the Kŏm River, which in turn would make a circle into the Yellow Sea. In the large pattern, it would flow from the origin through the Kŏm River to form a circle around Mt. Kyeryong into the Yellow Sea. The geomancers imagined that the overall patterns of flow in the mountain and water would compose the visual image of taiji in Chinese (literally meaning two gigantic opposite powers), and the Sindoan Valley was located in the center of the flow pattern, the source of the opposite powers: yin and yang (Figure 1). It was believed that it would become the political center of the world in the millennium, because the valley was the source of the power in the universe.

In addition, the geomancers interpreted that the Sindoan Valley was the most auspicious place, surrounded by mountains in four directions, which were symbolized by the

imaginary animals: blue dragon, white tiger, black turtle and red peacock. The mountains and hills surrounding the valley in a circle would also look like a golden hen holding the eggs, either in the breast or under the wings (Yun, 1994, 590-592). Another view from feng-shui said that the arrangement of mountains and hills around the valley would look like a dragon playing with a pearl. The residents in the valley dreamed that such a feng-shui topography would be the cause to bring fortune to them in the future.

Chŏnggamnok, first, and then, Donghak, offered the myths and beliefs to individuals in the face of dissolving boundaries and frontiers in a time of heightened uncertainty under the Japanese occupation (1910-1945). The social preservation of religion as a major institution within secular societies has been, in part, won through the successful creation, protection and nurturing of symbolic places (Harvey, 1993, 23). Places are thereby constructed and experienced as the focus of the image of beliefs, desires and discursive activity, filled with symbolic and representational meanings.

One more commonality among them was the syncretic tendency in their doctrines, pursuing the integration of all the religious elements. The Chinese and Korean preference for blurring, not sharpening, religious identity was expressed in the ideal of "the three religious being one." It is Chinese and Korean tradition that religious difference is, at times, allowed to be expressed as though it were religious similarity, and vice versa. In Korea, moreover, given Confucianism's ascendancy to state orthodoxy, Buddhists could not but seek to demonstrate the fundamental unity of Buddhism and Confucianism as two complementary approaches to self-cultivation (Buswell, 1999, 141-148).

Three teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism or Shamanism) use different paths, but they all come down to the same meaning. This was a culture that allowed for, even insisted upon, multiple understandings. Herein, the concepts of entanglement can be used to explain the syncretic tendency in Korean religion or ideology. It can be understood that the familiar Taoist image of the yin and yang symbol helps us to visualize the claims about the entanglements of domination and resistance (Sharpe *et al.*, 2000, 20). Although the symbol implies a dynamic balance of opposed forces, it implies that there is to be no complete separation between two seemingly opposed practices, in that one will always contain at least the seed of the other.

However, depending on the main line of doctrine, the religious groups in the Sindoan Valley could be divided into five categories: Donghak, Buddhism, Tan'gun, Christianity, and Shamanism. The sect, called Sichŏn'gyo, from Donghak, was the majority in terms of resident number, while Buddhism was the largest in terms of sectarian number (Han'guk Ilbo, 1965). Each congregation from Buddhism is, in reality, an independent sect in separation from Buddhism, even if it took its architecture style and name after the Buddhist temple.

5. The Control of Kyeryong Mountain from the State

In 1975, the Korean government proclaimed that Kyeryong Mountain be preserved as a national park, and that all the believers in the popular religion including Shamanism should leave the mountain. Some of those who had

resisted the state order were arrested and thrown into prison. However, many who had followed the government policy reluctantly came back to the mountain within two years. In 1979, the state launched the second program to evacuate them from the mountain while negotiating with the believers in the popular religion. The state provided financial subsidy or land to those who would voluntarily leave the mountain.

In 1983, the state decided to establish the headquarters commanding land, sea and air forces in the Sindoan Valley. Since then, in order to protect the military base, the state has forced all the believers in the popular religion to leave the valley. It is said that the buildings of headquarters were intentionally located in the most auspicious spot in the Sindoan Valley. The main building, in particular, was shaped into an octagon to symbolize the 'the Eight Trigrams' in the Book of Changes, or a Chinese classic on divination (Yi, 1999, 167). The overall location is believed to be surrounded by the imaginary animals: a dragon ascending the sky, a hen holding its eggs, a tiger lying flat on the ground, and a serpent coiled on the ground. These imaginary animals are, in fact, swift and strong enough to protect the headquarters from any outside attack.

While the construction of military headquarters was completed in 1989, a planned city called Kyeryong City was under construction to accommodate the military and their family members. The original plan was to build a "bed-town city" that could host a population of 150,000 by the year 2011 (Kyeryongsi, 2004). The current population is now slightly over 30,000, out of which military family members occupy about 60 percent. The city hall also planned to develop urban form that would conform to the geomantic interpretation of the site. It insisted that the layout of the city, when completed, would look like "a golden hen" flying up to the highest peak, Ch'ŏnhwangbong, on Kyeryong Mountain.

In such a visual image, urban planners went on to imagine the physical parts of the hen: comb, eye, neck, breast, heart, body and tail. Then, they matched each district of land use with each of these physical parts: administrative district with comb; commercial district with neck and breast; cultural district with eye; old city, highway and freeway with body and tail. The heart, a hill called Hyojisan, was to remain as a public park with trees because it was not to be harmed. The result was that the administrative, commercial and business districts would be located in the spot that had been believed in fengŏshui to be the most auspicious.

The fierce contest over images and counter-images of places is an arena in which cultural politics of places, the political economy of development, and the accumulation of a sense of social power exist (Harvey, 1993, 23). In the planning of Kyeryong City, the political-economic possibilities of place (re)construction were colored by the evaluative manner of place reconstruction. By the same token, the creation of symbolic places is not given naturally, but painstakingly nurtured and fought over, precisely because of the hold that place can have over the imagination.

6. The Geography of Resistance or Entanglement

In general, Shamanists like to pray for spirits, especially at night, because of the mystic atmosphere. Even before 1975, Buddhist halls or

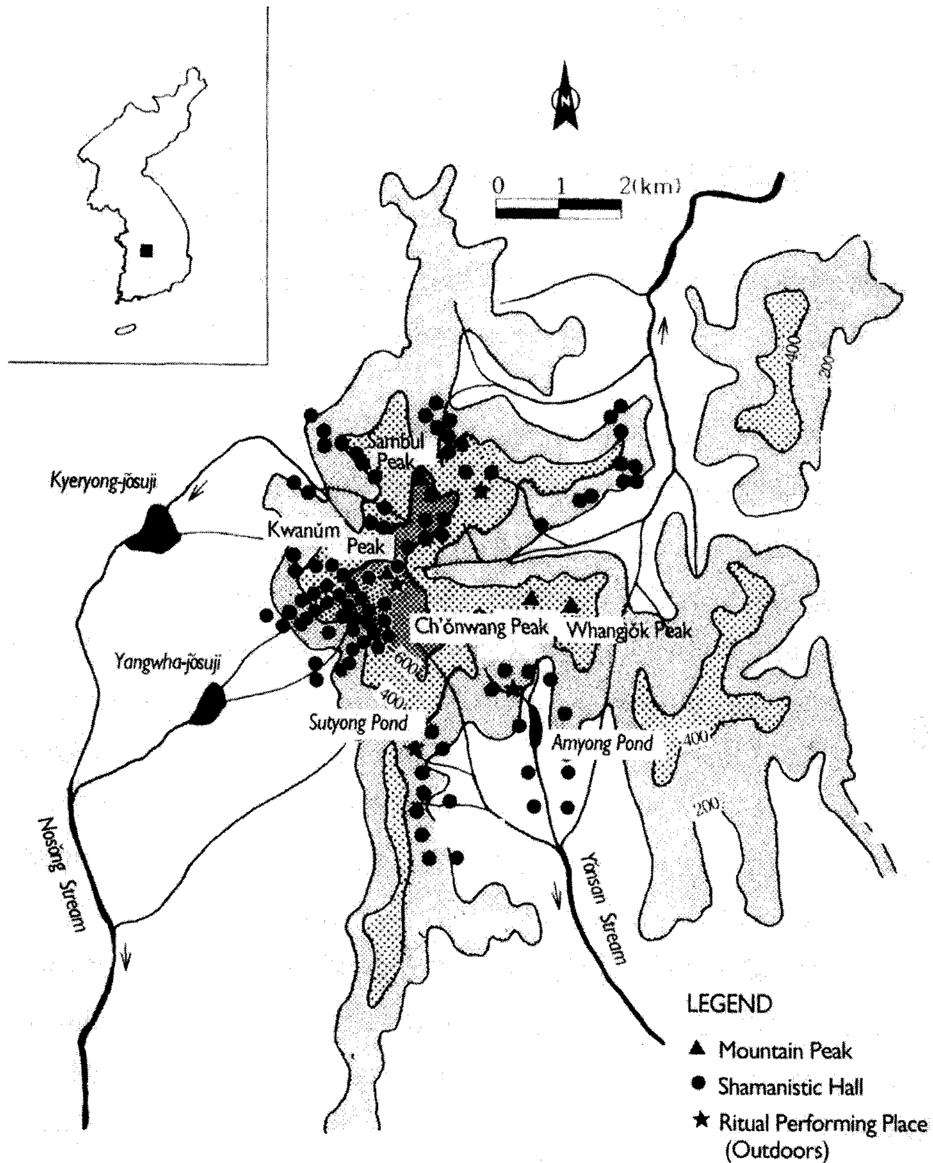

Figure 2. The distribution of Shamanistic halls on Kyeryong Mountain before 1975

monasteries were scattered over the mountain, while housing Shamanists who would like to spend nights. These Buddhist halls or monasteries, despite their Buddhistic appearance and names, in fact, were shaman shrines called kuttang where only the shamans performed rituals called kut. This means that Shamanists had to pretend to be Buddhists in order to ward off the suspicious eyes of the government.

Before the official ban on Shamanism in 1975, more than one hundred shaman shrines occupied the entire mountain in the form of housing, earth caves, stone caves and tents (Figure 2). In general, they were very small in

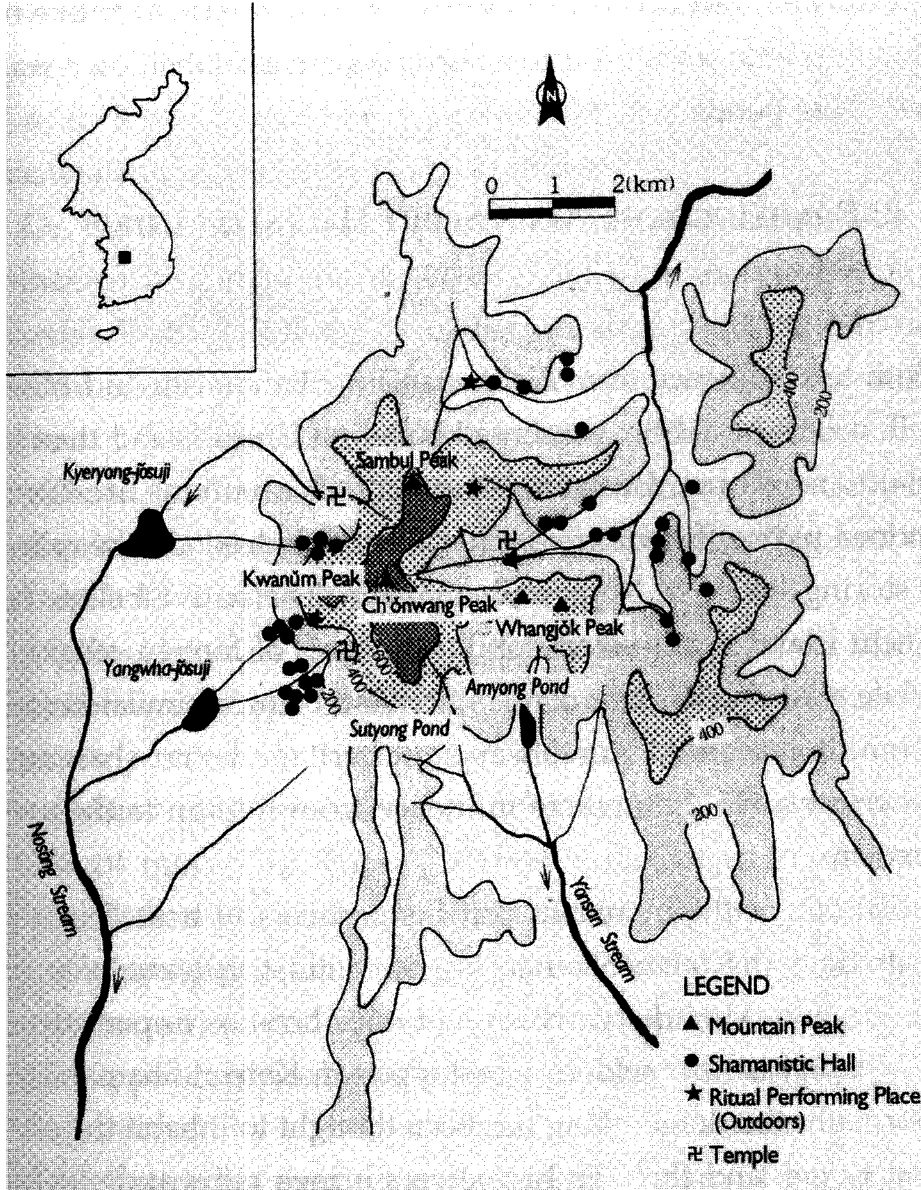

Figure 3. The distribution of Shamanistic halls on Kyeryong Mountain after 1975

size and individual in ownership. The owners were predominantly women who wanted to pray for their own spiritual power or health. The mountain peaks and ponds were very crucial to the locations of shaman shrines before 1975. After 1975, by contrast, shaman shrines near mountain peaks and ponds almost disappeared, but those near Buddhist temples managed to survive in limited locations (Figure 3). This suggests that power relations might produce discontinuous spaces, which resistance might transgress or move between (Pile, 1996, 14).

However, since the 1990s, when control from the state was weakened, shaman shrines without

pretending to be Buddhist halls or monasteries have increased in number. They usually hang white and red banners high in the sky and name boards in front of the house. When a shrine is large in size, it consists of several halls and open spaces where shaman rituals can be performed. Such a large shaman shrine began to develop from the late 1970s when Saemaul Wundong, or New Village Movement was launched (Gu, 2001, 37). As shaman rituals were officially prohibited in the citizen's houses, shamans came to consider the open spaces near Kyeryong Mountain to be suitable for their performance of rituals. Many of these shaman shrines are now located on the foothills of Kyeryong Mountain out of the perimeter of national park.

After 1975, the Shamanists who could not survive the state control relocated their shrines on the sites from which they could see the sacred peaks on Kyeryong Mountain. The Sangsilli Valley and the entrance of Tonghaksa appealed to them as favorable to their relocation of shaman shrines. The shrines at the entrance of Tonghaksa have thrived, partly owing to the easy access from Taejŏn City. The shrines in the Sangsilli Valley are located on the sites from which Sambulbong can be clearly seen. In this valley, there are also two small Buddhist temples with shaman shrines: Chŏngnyongsa and Chabisa. The former changed its location under Sambulbong into this valley, and the latter took over a shaman shrine named Yŏmburam. This implies that many Shamanists who had to leave the sites near Sambulbong within the boundary of the national park relocated their shrines in the Sangsilli Valley outside of the national park. Likewise, authority produced space through cutting up boundaries and the control of movement within and across the boundaries. Resistance, however, was not confined to the authorized spaces of domination (Pile, 1997, 3).

Kŭmnyongam, or Golden Dragon Monastery, is located in the middle of the route, climbing from Sinwŏnsa to Yŏnch'ŏnbong. This is, in fact, a small temple consisting of Buddhist and Shamanistic buildings: Taewungjŏn (Main Hall), Sansin'gak (Mountain Deity Hall), and Kŏmnyong Tongch'ŏn (Golden Dragon Cavern). Taewungjŏn is the Buddhist building that was for the statues of Buddha, while Sansin'gak is the Shamanist building for the mountain deities (grandfather and grandmother). Kŏmnyong Tongch'ŏn is the shrine where the deity of the dragonŏking is worshipped. A valley called Yonggung (Dragon's Palace), with about 17 sites where Shamanists pray for their own wishes, stretches out behind this shrine.

Even if the monastery belongs to the temple of Sinwŏnsa, it is a privately owned temple that was built on the former site of a shaman shrine called Kŏmnyongam. The owner of the monastery maintained the shaman shrine's name, "Kŏmnyongam," while erecting the contemporary buildings on the land rented from Sinwŏsa (Gu, 200, 226). Therefore, it is only at this temple that shaman can pray in the perimeter of Sinwŏnsa. The monastery has been a contradictory space where Buddhism allows Shamanism in privately while driving it out publicly. Herein, the opposite powers of Buddhism and Shamanism have not been necessarily conflicting to each other. Resistance in one place may therefore be complicit with domination in another, which begins to introduce the entangled geographies (Sharpe *et al.*, 2000, 24).

The .ponds of Sutyongch'u and Amyongch'u are today completely closed to human entry for military reasons. In the valley of containing these

waterfalls and ponds, since 1983, a headquarters commanding land, sea and air forces was established. Since then, in order to protect this military base, any human entry has been barred from the valley. Under these circumstances, Shamanists did not give up their minds, but stole their way into these sacred sites at night in search of spiritual communications. Such sacred sites as these two ponds are too important for Shamanists to stop coming and praying.

Before 1983, many women would come to Sutyuong Pond (Sutyuongch'u) and pray for the birth of sons. On the rocks around this pond, many names of those who prayed wholeheartedly for their wish were inscribed. At night, in particular, these ponds were busy with women or shamans who dedicated foods to spirits and lighted candles. However, under the public ban on human entry, only a small number of shamans with strong spiritual needs dare to steal their own way into these ponds. Likewise, acts of resistance might take place in the spaces under the noses of the oppressor, with its own distinct spatialities (Pile, 1997, 2). They have a logic of nomadism; it follows its own hidden tracks in a field that is not within its jurisdiction. Actually, it does not have any jurisdiction over anything and is most of the time silenced.

There have always been the heaviest concentrations of shaman shrines in the sites from which Yŏnch'ŏn Peak can be seen as the highest peak. Many of the shaman altars or shrines near the monastery of Dŏngwunam have been established after the official ban on Shamanism (1975), and the construction of military headquarters (1983). It is said that many of the shaman shrines around Sutyong Pond and Amyong Pond ultimately ended up with settling there. Here, simple altars are built at the base of a rock sticking up while forming a high ridge or cliff (boulders) on a slope, usually with an overhang forming a hollow too shallow to be a cave. They are often found with two or three white candles burning and perhaps a bowl of fresh water; chanted prayers are offered there. These altars, often just a flat natural or hewn stone, are called Sansindan, or the altar for the mountain deity (Mason, 1999, 40).

Moreover, Chinese letters on a cliff have made Yŏnch'ŏn Peak more sacred. It is said that the believers in Chŏnggamnok inscribed on the cliff eight Chinese letters as deciphers that the Chosŏn Dynasty would come to an end in 1910. This inscription has represented the popular dream that this troubled world would be over before long. The name of Yŏnch'ŏn Peak also literally means "a peak to be connected to the heaven" whose spirit would come down to the highest summit, Ch'ŏnhwang Peak. On this summit two altars still remain: Chŏndan (Altar for the Heavenly Spirit) and Sanjedan (Altar for the Mountain Spirit). The presence of these altars on Ch'ŏhwang Peak has certainly made Yŏnch'ŏn Peak a sacred site from which one can have access to the heavenly and mountain spirits.

The time when Chŏndan was first built by the followers of a sect from Donghak, called Sichŏn'gyo, is not known. Sanjedan, on the contrary, is known to have been erected in 1944, by the fourth head of Donghak. On these altars, Donghak followers, after moving into the Sindoan Valley, began to dedicate annual rituals, on April 1st (lunar calendar), to the heavenly spirit called Sangje, the mountain spirit called Kyeryong Sansin, and Ch'oe Cheŏwu, the founder of Donghak (Yi, 1996, 289).

Sometime after 1945, the American military, in cooperation with the Korean military, established

a base to relay communication on the summit of Ch'ŏnhwang Peak. In 1981, a civil telecommunications company named Han'guk T'ongsin took over the base and erected two large towers on and below the summit. Citizens from Taejŏn protested that the iron tower on the summit be removed because it weakened the telluric energy (chigi) on the mountain. The company eventually agreed to relocate the tower below the summit, which would be open to the public from 1998. Donghak believers, then, have tried to appropriate the altars again on the summit from which they can perform their annual rituals and strengthen their identity. Engagements in the politics of location involve the definition of boundaries that are not to seen as fixed, impermeable or permanent (Pile, 1997, 26). In the struggle to define an alternative way of living, Donhak followers would try to occupy the summit, Ch'ŏnhwang Peak, as a strategic location.

In the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910), Neo-Confucianists were the radical idealists whose goal was to replace popular customs with Neo-Confucian culture. Inevitably, the attempt to change long-standing practices and ancient beliefs met with resistance. Faced with resistance from the popular level, they had to compromise with the popular beliefs to impose the Neo-Confucian style onto the popular rituals (Boudewijin, 1999, 172-173). When irregular cults were too glaring, government officials often preferred to accommodate them in some way. Neo-Confucianists could not ignore the old tradition of royal support for the worship of mountain deities once they gained national power (Mason, 1999, 157). Out of the shrines dedicated to the mountain deity, however, only one remains today in its old form within the perimeter of Sinwŏnsa on Kyeryong Mountain.

It was called Kyeryongdan until the reign of King Kojong (r. 1863-1907) when its name was changed to Chungaktan (Central Peak Altar). The Japanese colonial government stopped performing the ritual at this altar, but in 1998 local cultural leaders revived the tradition of grand ceremonies that combined the three elements: Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism. With tolerance to the indigenous cultures, Buddhism has played as an intermediary between the two opposing powers: Neo-Confucianism and Shamanism. Today, the local government of Kongju City officially supports the ritual to the deity of Kyeryong Mountain at the altar of Chungaktan. Likewise, the socioŏpolitical process of the state is one of perpetual movement, negotiation, changing alliances and affinities, coŏoptions and infiltrations, contingent upon the particularity of spatio-temporal conditions (Sharpe *et al.*, 2000, 11).

7. Conclusion

The geographies of resistance, involving Shamanism, have been scattered all over the mountain, discontinuous in the territorialization. These geographies of resistance, in particular, could be identified the best around the most sacred sites, such as Sambul Peak (Sambulbong), Amyong Pond (Amyongch'u) and Sutyong Pond (Sutyongch'u). The name of the peak, "Sambulbong," was originally from the Shamanistic concept of samsin, the deity of procreation or pregnancy. Many women used to come here with shamans or by themselves and

pray for the birth of a son. The solution to resist the official suppression on Shamanism, however, was a meld of Buddhist appearance (sambul) with a Shamanistic concept (samsin). The sexual pair of ponds, Amyongch'u and Sutyongch'u, are the sacred sites that shamans have never given up under the public surveillance. After the construction of military headquarters (1983-1989), under the public ban on human entry, shamans stole their way into these sacred sites at night in search of spiritual communications.

The entanglement of Shamanism with Buddhism, in various patterns through space and time, has indeed contributed to the survival of Shamanism as a subordinate power. Without understanding Buddhism as an intermediary in the relation between the state and Shamanism, it would be difficult to explain the dynamism in the survival and revival of Shamanism in the past and the present on Kyeryong Mountain. Such entanglement of powers could be easily found in the Sinwŏnsa Valley where Buddhist halls were the most tolerable to the practice of Shamanism. The geographies of entanglement, in various spatial formations, could be seen in the perimeter of the monastery named Kŭmnyongam. Here, a variety of religious practices involving Shamanism in the open spaces are always permitted, even during the daytime.

Sindoan Valley is the place where tensions and conflicts over space have been the most severely felt. In this valley, the geographies of entangled power relations have been interactive with the messy and inherently spatialized entanglements of domination and resistance. Prior to the state intervention in 1975, there had been a severe competition over the spaces in the valley among various groups from popular beliefs. They shared the beliefs in the geomantic prophesies from Chŏnggamnok that the valley would become the center of the world in the millennium. In order to dominate competition over sites and spaces, each of them created its own visions of paradise while sharing the geomantic prophesies. The result was the geography of domination and resistance as a contingent and continuous bundle of relations, which enacts a contested encounter within and between dominant and resistant practices that are hybrid, rather than binary.

After the construction of the military headquarters (1983-1989), the state has actively appropriated the spaces from the believers in popular religion in the valley. In the planning of Kyeryong City, the state reinterpreted the traditional geomantic idea of the valley to create its own place myth. This shows that geography of domination often comprises a web of tension across space, hybrid assemblages of knowledges, vocabularies, and judgements. In other words, there has been a fierce contest over images and counterŏimages of sites and spaces in the Sindoan Valley. In this case, the political economy of development has involved cultural politics of places and the accumulation of a sense of social power. The state has tried to dominate the valley as a power, by not only the appropriating the material spaces, but also creating symbolic places.

As seen from this study on Kyeryong Mountain, the mountain in Korea could be a text to be deciphered; a succession of spaces that encapsulated time. Geographies of dominance and resistance or entanglement have really complicated meanings of sites and spaces throughout time. In this study, the perspective from the critical geography, with a focus on the power relations, has proven very useful in the examination of the seemingly messy and

inherently spatiailized phenonmenon on Kyeryong Mountain.

The idea and practice of "mountain" as a sacred place has been a common cultural and religious tradition throughout East Asia. The mountain has been used as the place for the competition among the three main religions or ideologies in East Asia: Buddhism, Confucianism, and native beliefs. Along with more studies on the other mountains in Korea, it is suggested that, a comparative study of mountains in East Asia-China, Japan, and Korea-should be undertaken in the future to read them as texts effectively.

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Received November 16, 2005
Accepted December 16, 2005