

THE  
MAGO  
WAY

Re-discovering Mago,  
the Great Goddess from East Asia  
(Volume 1)

*Foreword by  
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MAGO BOOKS

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Photo provided by Mago Stronghold,

“View from the prayer chamber.” Jiri Mountains, S. Korea

## **DEDICATION**

To Matthew Kim Hagen and My Parents

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## FOREWORD

With her dissertation and her on-going work Helen Hye-Sook Hwang has opened up a new way of thinking about East Asian Goddesses that decenters the Goddesses of particular national or religious traditions—such as Chinese Goddesses or Buddhist Goddesses. Her ground-breaking work suggests that seemingly independent Goddess traditions are rooted in a common East Asian prehistoric tradition which she names Magoism. Hwang shows that prehistoric Goddess traditions predate Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, and other Eastern traditions, including Korean shamanism. Her work also reveals commonalities between prehistoric Goddess traditions in East and West, making it clear the “rebirth of the Goddess” is not an exclusively Western phenomenon.

I first met Helen Hye-Sook Hwang when I was asked to become a late addition to her dissertation committee at Claremont Graduate University. Because of their lack of familiarity with her subject matter and radical approach to it, Hwang’s committee was mystified by her topic, “Seeking Mago, the Great Goddess.” I was asked to step in due to my knowledge of the work of Marija Gimbutas on the prehistoric Goddess of Neolithic Old Europe. Though I had not studied East Asian Goddesses in depth, my intuition, based on the history of European Goddesses, was that East Asian Goddesses had their roots in prehistory.

Traditional scholarship, whether focused on Eastern or Western traditions, assumes that “history” begins with written

records dated around 3000 BCE or later. Almost all written records, East and West, stem from patriarchal societies ruled by warrior kings. Written law codes reflect the subordination of women in patriarchal societies. However, comparison of early and later law codes indicates that in many cases women had legal and economic powers that were gradually eroded. Mythological texts also imply that women and Goddesses once held power that was later taken from them. The notion that history is defined by written records limits history to that last 5000 years, leaving the first 100,000 years of human history out of the picture. So-called “prehistory” includes the many long years when human beings survived by gathering and hunting in the Paleolithic era (Old Stone Age), as well as the early years of agriculture in the Neolithic era (New Stone Age), which began about 10,000 years ago in different areas of the world. Some would argue that the first 100,000 years of human history were pre-patriarchal and that patriarchy became normative at different times in different places, especially if patriarchy is defined by the control of female sexuality, private property, and war.<sup>1</sup>

According to Marija Gimbutas, Neolithic Old Europe (c. 6500-3500 BCE) was peaceful, sedentary, highly artistic, egalitarian, matrilineal and probably matrilocal, and revered the Goddess as the power of birth, death, and regeneration in all of life. The peaceful cultures of Old Europe were overthrown by nomadic warriors who entered Europe from the Russian steppes north and east of the Black Sea. Their culture was horse-riding, patriarchal, patrilineal, warlike, not highly artistic, and they worshipped male Gods identified with the shining powers of the sun and the shining bronze of their weapons. As

the power of the patriarchal warriors grew, the Goddesses of Old Europe were subordinated to male Gods. Thus were developed the familiar Goddesses of Greek mythology: Athena who sprung fully armed from the head of Zeus, Hera, the betrayed wife, and Aphrodite the Goddess of sexual pleasure. Gimbutas taught us that these all-too-human Goddesses were cut off from their primordial roots in the powers of birth, death, and regeneration.<sup>ii</sup>

Hwang's work promises a similar revolutionary rewriting of cultural and religious history in "Old East Asia." In addition to revealing a Goddess tradition at the root of later patriarchal traditions in East Asia, Hwang's work raises the question of how and when East Asian traditions became patriarchal. It answers the question of where the later Goddesses came from, and why they were added to or became prominent in largely patriarchal traditions. As Hwang shows, the Goddess was already there and could not be fully suppressed or completely ignored. The origin of the Daoist Goddess (or Immortal) Magu is no longer shrouded in mystery. It can also be more fully understood why a male Bodhisattva became the much-loved Buddhist Goddess of compassion, Guan Yin.

The Neolithic revolution, described as one of the "great advances" in human life, is defined by three inventions or discoveries: agriculture, weaving, and pottery.<sup>iii</sup> Anthropologists and pre-historians will concede that agriculture was probably invented by "woman the gatherer," who picked fruits and vegetables, collected nuts and seeds, and prepared them for eating. It would have been women who noticed that seeds dropped at a cooking site in one year might

sprout up into plants by the time the group returned to it the next year. The theory that women invented agriculture is supported by folkloric and other evidence suggesting that women worldwide have been in charge of horticulture (agriculture without an animal-drawn plow). Women passed the secrets of how to preserve seeds in a cold dark place and when and how to plant them from mother to daughter. These secrets, which were in fact scientific knowledge discovered by “woman the scientist,” were passed on as mysteries that connected the power of women to give birth and nurture life with the symbol of Mother Earth as a Great and Giving Mother.

Anthropologists and pre-historians will also agree that women were the likely inventors of weaving because weaving is women’s work in almost all traditional cultures.<sup>iv</sup> The secrets of weaving too were passed down from mother to daughter over the millennia. The processes of spinning flax or wool into thread and weaving it on a loom into cloth were technological innovations, discovered by “woman the inventor.” They too were understood to be mysteries of transformation analogized to the power of the female body to create life. Woman the inventor also discovered how to make pottery. As the preparers of food, women would have been the ones to notice that a fragile clay bowl or pot that fell into a fire could become strong enough to hold liquid and to be used repeatedly. The secrets of where to find clay, how to mold it using snake coils, how to fire it, and how to decorate it, would also have been passed from mother to daughter. These processes were understood to be mysteries of transformation connected to the powers of women to create and nurture life.

It is likely that discovery and control of the three mysteries that defined the Neolithic revolution gave women considerable power in Neolithic societies in every area of the world. However, as Peggy Reeves Sanday's cross-cultural studies reveal, "female power" is not "female dominance." In societies organized around female power, mothers are honored, but women do not dominate, because they care about the welfare of all of their children, both female and male.<sup>v</sup> Despite popular misconceptions, matriarchy is not the mirror image of patriarchy. In matriarchal societies women do not rape men, beat men into submission, or hold men as slaves. Rather, matriarchal societies are egalitarian. Grandmothers and great-uncles share power with checks and balances that assure that everyone's needs are taken into account.

Heide Goettner-Abendroth originated modern matriarchal studies, which has moved beyond the Western focus of early discussions of matriarchy to include and make central indigenous cultures in Asia, Africa, and South America. Goettner-Abendroth has isolated four characteristics of matriarchal societies: 1) they are generally horticultural and distribute wealth through gift-giving; 2) they honor motherhood and are usually matrilineal (family line traced through the mother) and matrilineal (women and sometimes men remain in their birth clans); 3) their social structures are egalitarian with no great disparities of power or wealth; 4) they tend to view Earth as a Great and Giving Mother and to understand all of life to be sacred. While earlier theorists of matriarchy subscribed to an evolutionary model of culture in which matriarchy had to be superseded by patriarchy in order

for culture to evolve, modern matriarchal studies does not consider patriarchy to be an advance in culture; rather it looks to matriarchal societies for clues for human survival.<sup>vi</sup> Following Mary Daly, Hwang prefers to name these societies “gynocracy.” “Matriarchy” foregrounds motherhood which also functions as a symbol for women’s cultural contributions in female power societies. “Gynocracy,” on the other hand, calls attention to the fact that female power societies honor women for their cultural contributions and not only for the power to give birth to and nurture human beings. Whichever term is preferred, both matriarchy and gynocracy refer to egalitarian female-centered societies in which all people and the web of life are valued, and in which the Earth and its sacred places are symbolized as female and as Mother.

The Mosuo who live on Lake Lugu in the Himalayas are a living matriarchal society of peace. In their system children do not have to “leave home” and “learn to make it on their own.” Both males and females continue to live in the matriarchal clan. Women invite their lovers to share their beds at night, but men return to their maternal clans at the break of day. Love and sex are free because they are not tied to the care of children. All children are welcomed in the maternal clan. Mothers are not isolated. Women of one generation along with their mothers care together for the children of the next. Brothers and uncles are the male role models for boy children. Male and female nature and character are not sharply differentiated: both females and males are understood to be active and productive, and all children are taught to become as loving and giving as the mothers who raised them. One of the main indigenous festivals of the Mosuo is the Mountain-Circling Festival held

in honor of Mountain Goddess Gemu whose tears rained down to create Lake Lugu.<sup>vii</sup>

The theories about human history I have discussed here are the context in which I welcome Helen Hye-Sook Hwang's revolutionary theories and research about Mago as a prehistoric Goddess and Magoism as the prehistoric religion of East Asia. I suspect that Mago and Magoism flourished in and were handed down from egalitarian, matrilineal, matrilocal, and gynocratic or matriarchal clan-based horticultural societies in East Asia like that of the Mosuo. At the heart of Hwang's research is her cross-cultural compilation of Mago-related place names and folklore. This information will be interpreted from a new perspective in a forthcoming book by Hwang,<sup>viii</sup> which will document the association of Mago with sacred places, including mountains, caves, and water sources, across East Asia. This data and more that will surely be discovered by those who read Hwang's book, opens up new ground that could become a focus for further investigation by generations of scholars.

In order to unlock the "language of the Goddess" of Old Europe, Marija Gimbutas developed a method that she called "archaeomythology" in which she used folklore and selective readings of patriarchal mythology to interpret the symbols encoded in Neolithic artifacts. If used to study artifacts from prehistoric cultures of East Asia, this method could add new details to the history of Mago and Magoism. Hwang proposes a method she calls "mytho-historic-theology." This method uses folklore and selective readings of historical texts to re-create the early history of Mago and Magoism in East Asia; the

addition of the term “thealogy” makes it clear that Hwang’s study of “myth and “history” is also concerned with contemporary meaning.

Gimbutas situated her work within a tradition of “objective” scholarship, and expected that it would be evaluated scientifically. She never offered an explicitly feminist critique of patriarchal scholarship. Nor did she do more than suggest that the worldview of Old Europe was superior to that of patriarchal European cultures and religions. Nonetheless, the feminist and spiritual implications of her work were immediately recognized. I have argued that Gimbutas’s failure to name her perspective as feminist and critical of patriarchy opened the door for critics to dismiss her work in the name of scholarly objectivity, without examining their own patriarchal interests and biases.<sup>ix</sup>

In contrast, Hwang clearly names her standpoint as feminist and her interests as thea-logical. She is openly critical of traditions of scholarship that have been shaped by patriarchal interests that are both religious and nationalist. She does not hide the fact that her research is fueled by a personal, spiritual, and political quest. She is not only seeking to uncover a history that has been ignored and distorted. She is also seeking a history and a mythology in which to ground a feminist spirituality concerned with the well-being of all human beings and all beings in the web of life. It is Helen Hye-Sook Hwang’s fervent hope, and one that I share, that her work will spark a widespread rebirth of the Great Goddess not only in her native Korea, but in all of East Asia. Hwang shows us that the Great Goddess is not limited by ethnicity or nationality.



She crosses the boundaries between East and West. If we are willing to listen, She can inspire us once again to live in societies of peace.

Carol P. Christ

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## Foreword

<sup>i</sup> I have discussed these issues in *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1997 [New York: Routledge, 1998]), chapter 4. Also see Carol P. Christ, “A New Definition of Patriarchy: Control of Female Sexuality, Private Property, and War,” *Feminist Theology* 23/3 (2016), forthcoming.

<sup>ii</sup> See *The Language of the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991). Although traditional patriarchal scholars in Classics and Archaeology have dismissed Gimbutas's theories as nothing more than romantic fantasy, most Indo-Europeanists (scholars of Indo-European languages) agree with her that Indo-European languages were introduced into Europe through a series of invasions by Indo-European speaking warriors whose homeland was north and east of the Black Sea. See Edgar C. Polome, "The Impact of Marija Gimbutas on Indo-European Studies," *From the Realm of the Ancestors: An Anthology in Honor of Marija Gimbutas*, Joan Marler, ed. (Manchester, CT: Knowledge, Ideas, and Trends, 1997), 102-107.

<sup>iii</sup> See *Rebirth of the Goddess*, 53-54.

<sup>iv</sup> See Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994).

<sup>v</sup> Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981); also see her *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

<sup>vi</sup> See Heide Goettner-Abendroth, *Societies of Peace: Matriarchies Past, Present, and Future* (Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2009), 19-24.

<sup>vii</sup> *Societies of Peace*, 23-255; and <http://traditions.cultural-china.com/en/115Traditions275.html>.

<sup>viii</sup> Helen Hwang, *The Mago Hypothesis: Reinstating Mago, the Great Goddess, and Magoism, a Trans-patriarchal Gynocentric Tradition of East Asia (Korea, China, and Japan)*, tentative title.

<sup>ix</sup> Carol P. Christ, "A Different World?: The Challenge of the Work of Marija Gimbutas to the Dominant Worldview of Western Culture," *From the Realm of the Ancestors*, 406-415.





## INTRODUCTION

Salvation for the terrestrial community depends on our ability to keep patriarchy in check. We CAN keep patriarchy in check by telling the gynocentric truth. The gynocentric truth mirrors what patriarchy is; it is none other than a dangerously deranged force of destruction. Because it is deceitful and threatening, we tend to see it bigger than it actually is. It has no power of giving or nurturing Life. Patriarchy is NOT winning but ever-dwindling and ever-dying. This book, *The Mago Way*, represents the ancient way of telling the gynocentric truth: to Remember collectively the ORIGIN STORY of the CREATRIX. *The Mago Way* unleashes the power of the almost forgotten story of HER Beginning from Old Korea. It is the one and only story of WE that takes place Everywhere and All the time. It is cosmic, galactic, solar, terrestrial, individual, personal, and atomic in scope. The *Mago Way* summons the gynocentric reality of WE/HERE/NOW to raise our minds/hearts.

A feminist self-searching journey is the doorway to an encounter with the Female Divine, the divine S/HE. In my case, the divine S/HE is Mago, the Great Goddess [read “Ma” as in “mama” and “Go” as in “to go”]. It has been more than fifteen years since I first learned the word “Mago” in the book entitled the Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City), the Gynocentric Book of the Mago Clan. It was given to me by an acquaintance unexpectedly, but it was timely. I was able to write my doctoral dissertation about Mago. Since then, Mago has become the

focus of my life's endeavor. The Mago Way is an answer to my life's quest and task. I have researched, presented, written, lectured, and toured about Mago. Far from being exhausted, Mago data continue to grow monthly and yearly. So does my understanding of Magoism.

The Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City), the principal text of Magoism, provides the backbone structure of my work on Mago--the mytho-historical-theology of Magoism. It may be called an apocryphal text in the sense that the title is not verified elsewhere. That has caused skepticism among "mainstream academic" Koreanists. However, I treat the Budoji as the central text in my work. I hold that the Budoji presents an original narrative of the beginning of the Great Goddess and gives an overall picture of the ancient world's cosmogonic stories. As I have shown in this book, it is a self-testifying text, primarily proven by its cosmogonic etiological account. It explains the very foundation of East Asian cultures and histories and worldwide ancient religious/spiritual traditions. Astonishingly, terms and notions employed in the Magoist Cosmogony stand as the archetypes of East Asian cultures and other counterparts elsewhere. Moreover, upon assessing pre- and proto-patriarchal histories in East Asia, which are truncated if not erased in Sinocentric texts—supposedly the oldest and proven texts of East Asia, I have used folklore, place-names, literature, archaeology, and art as well as apocryphal texts in assessing the mytho-history of Magoism.<sup>1</sup>

Previously, I attempted to publish my research on Mago under the tentative title of "*The Mago Hypothesis: Reinstating*

*Mago, the Great Goddess, and Magoism, a Trans-patriarchal Gynocentric Tradition of East Asia (Korea, China, and Japan)*” with a standard publishing house. However, the idea did not materialize. I can see now why it was not meant to happen. For one thing, my research kept on developing and deepening. Speaking metaphorically, I was in the middle of the cave and did not know when and where I was going to come out of the cave to talk about what I saw inside and what that journey meant. As indicated in the above title, I could only call it a hypothesis at that time. Also I can see now that trying to put my research into one book would not have done justice in that it is too complex in content and immense in volume. It is indeed timely now that I call it *The Mago Way* and publish it as Volume 1 by Mago Books that I have recently founded. This teaches me to trust the unfolding of my Mago journey in its own timing.

This book reflects the flow and evolution of my intellectual/spiritual/physical journey toward the Great Goddess. Although Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this book have been previously published in anthologies and journals, they are not exactly the same as the original essays. I have rewritten Chapters Four and Six to a significant extent to align with up-to-date insights that I have newly included in Chapters One and Eight. For the other chapters, I have made necessary changes in the body and endnotes so that they, while upgraded to the newest insight, remain as milestones to their original versions. Figures (24 in all) are included to aid visual orientations. I have created the Glossary for key concepts, after standardizing the romanizations and translations of East Asian words.<sup>2</sup> It is my hope that this book comes to you as a

revelation, as it does to me.

In *The Mago Way: Re-discovering Mago, the Great Goddess from East Asia*, I have shared my personal, scholarly, and spiritual discoveries concerning the Great Goddess known as Mago in East Asia. Comprising eight essays researched, some published, between 2000 and 2015,<sup>3</sup> this book is a crystallization of my feminist intellectual/spiritual/activist endeavor (1) to search for my own East Asian/Korean gynocentric cultural and historical background; (2) to discover the overall features of Magoism, the mytho-historical-theological matrix that venerates Mago as the supreme divine; (3) to reinstate the pre- and proto-patriarchal mytho-history of Magoism from the perspective of Old Korea; (4) to assess cross-cultural parallels with worldwide Goddess traditions; and (5) to delineate the metamorphic nature of the Magoist Cosmogony. Due to the complexity of the Magoist Cosmogony, however, Volume 1 can only treat the first part, which is prior to the self-evolution of Mago Stronghold (Earth).<sup>4</sup>

Eliciting the Reality of the whole, the Magoist Cosmogony tells us that HER Beginning is not a thing of the bygone past but the Work of WE/HERE/NOW. The ultimate agent, time, and space are the unified One. It informs us that the natural process of autogenesis takes place as the universe reaches HER sonic equilibrium. All things are self-born through the sonic movement of the universe. Mago too has come into being through the very music of Eight Tones, also known as “the music of the spheres” in the West.



Surviving unbridled by patriarchal censorship over the course of time, the Mago Cosmogony redefines the Holy Text as necessarily gynocentric. It awakens a deep knowing in us. It may be called a vision in that it is about dis-covering truth, to be precise, the gynocentric nature of Reality. The symbol of the Female (S/HE) is not a sex indicator. Encompassing the All, the Female is the Way of the Universe. I intend to use “sex” in place of “gender” in this book. First of all, the context (the Divine Realm of the Great Goddess) is prior to the bifurcation of the sexes. Thus, the notion of gender for “the Female” is irrelevant. Secondly, it is to restore the discussion of “sex” in place of “gender” for feminist discourse. “Sex” is the original factor that precedes and gives rise to the notion of “gender.” It is the biological nature of women and men that Magoist Feminism concerns, as it seeks the empowerment of “the female” rather than “the feminine” and the balance between “sexes” rather than “genders” across time and space.

The Gynocentric Truth speaks for itself. It is beautiful and metamorphic. The Magoist Cosmogony reveals itself through the language of etiology. It explains how human civilizations as a whole and specifically are derived from the Creatrix. Terms and notions that it employs are profusely embedded in the cultures and histories of East Asia and beyond. Such gynocentric mythemes as cosmic music, the primordial paradise, the Triad, parthenogenesis, and the Nine-Goddess recur in ancient world cultures beyond East Asia. In the beginning story of the Great Goddess, we are invited to remember where all things come from, how they are maintained, and where they re-turn. HER STORY leverages us to the ultimate reality of WE/HERE/NOW!

**Introduction**

<sup>1</sup> For more on this topic, see Chapter 4 and Chapter 8 in this book.

<sup>2</sup> For Romanization of Korean words, I have followed the system of Revised Romanization of Korean (RR) with the exception of some customary usages of proper nouns, e.g., the Korean family name 김 is romanized as Kim not as Gim. Sometimes each syllable of a Korean word is hyphenated, e.g. Mago-seong (Mago Stronghold), in order to make the meaning more explicit. When East Asian words are romanized, translations are always given in parentheses.

<sup>3</sup> Some essays have a tendency to repeat the background information because they were written and published individually. In that case, I have adjusted the emphases differently so that they open up new insights and conversations.

<sup>4</sup> Volume 2 will discuss the stabilization and self-evolution of the Earth, the paradisiacal living of the Early Mago Clan in Mago Stronghold, the first disaster/digression of the Mago Clan, the departure and migration of the four primordial racial clan communities, and the mytho-history of Old Magoism.

**FIRST PASSAGE:  
THE PERSONAL IS  
POLITICAL AND COSMIC**



## CHAPTER ONE

# What Is Mago and Magoism and How Did I Study HER?

This chapter,<sup>1</sup> interweaving the personal (how I came to study Mago) and the political (why I advocate Magoism), informs the general and particular tenets of Magoism. My study of Mago was, although it took the form of a doctoral dissertation, ultimately motivated by my self-searching quest as a Korean-born radical feminist. I came to encounter the Great Goddess known as Mago in East Asia by way of several detours on my life's journey. Like my non-Western and formerly colonized modern-Korean female identity, Mago was made to lurk beneath the thick layers of patriarchal puppetries throughout the course of fairly recent times—for patriarchy is really brief in the history of the Mago Clan. Ironically, however, my East Asian cultural legacy of seeking the Way made me stay on the course. I learned that the Way which my ancestors sought has deep roots in Magoism. The Way is a short form of the Way of the Great Goddess that East Asian patriarchal masters don't want to know or don't teach. Moreover, there is something very special about being an ancient Korean spirit. Old Korea was the eldest daughter of royal Magoism which knew nothing of difference between you and me or between one nation and another. It was the Big WE that Magoist Mudangs protected and transmitted in the ever present reality of HERE and NOW, lighted by the Female Beginning. The story of Mago's

beginning is salvific. The beginning of the Great Goddess is still taking place and all are invited to join the ecstatic celebration of life on the earth, HER garden.

### **What Is Mago and Magoism? How Old Is Magoism?**

The Great Goddess is known to all peoples throughout history. Under patriarchy, S/HE is either temporarily forgotten or disguised as another name or form. The knowing of the Great Goddess goes beyond any human language, more precisely, patriarchal languages. S/HE is rooted in the unconsciousness or the collective consciousness. For our discussion, I call HER S/HE, the Female. East Asians have called HER Mago. Mago signifies the Female, another name for the Creatrix of the universe. Throughout East Asian history, Mago has manifested as S/HE (One) AND HER representatives (many). S/HE is the All, WE, the entirety of the earthly eco-system. Magoism refers to the Way of the Great Goddess, the gynocentric reality of all beings on the Earth. The word “Mago” is salvific, codifying the ultimate reality.

The Great Goddess, Mago, symbolizes the power of genesis on macro- and micro-cosmic levels. Here is the gynocentric narrative: Mago is supreme as the progenitor, cosmogonist, and ultimate sovereign of the Earth. S/HE is not only the First Mother of humans but also the Originator of all species on Earth. As the Goddess of the Earth, Mago mediates the earthly community to the universe. Thus, S/HE is called the Heavenly Goddess. Note that Heaven and Earth are not

deemed dualistic. Mago is addressed by many names. Among them are the Triad Deity (三神, Samsin), Grandmother or Crone (Halmi), Auspicious Goddess (瑞姑, Seogo), Evil (Magui), Immortal Goddess (仙姑, Seongo) and Old Goddess (老姑, Nogo), all of which have roots in Korean/East Asian traditional culture.

In lore, S/HE is thought to have come from the Seven Stars (the Big Dipper). The serpent that symbolizes the Seven Stars was deemed sacred, a reminder of Mago's Abode. As Samsin Halmi (Triad Grandmother/Goddess), Mago oversees the birth, death, and illness (especially chickenpox) of a child. She is also depicted as the Giant Crone who shapes natural and cultural topography such as mountains, rivers, villages, stone walls, and megalithic structures. Although having been favored, revered, and celebrated by East Asians in the course of history, Mago was largely forgotten in the public domain up to the 1980s in Korea. She re-emerged to the public, as the principal text of Magoism, the Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City), was made available in the Korean language in the mid-1980s.

The term "Mago" itself manifests universally as the notion of the Great Goddess. The root "Ma," which means both the Mother and the Goddess, is found in many names of the Goddess for the world. "Go" in "Mago" is used as a modifier indicating Mago, as in "Seon-go (Transcendent/Immortal Goddess)," "No-go (Ancient Goddess)," and "Seo-go (Auspicious Goddess)," to name a few. "Go" is also related with if not derived from Goddess "Gom" or "Goma," the She-Bear Sovereign of Danguk, the nine-state confederacy of the

remote past. The Japanese term “Kami (Deity)” is derived from “Goma.” “Go” appears linguistically and mythologically related with “Gaia” and “Guanyin.” As such, “Ma-ga (Ma Gaia)” in Mycenaean Greek and “Ma Guanyin,” the Magoist Goddess commonly known through Buddhism, all can be seen as the derivatives of “Mago.”

The Magoist Cosmogony highlights the sonic movement of cosmic elements as the Creatrix. In the beginning, there was light. The movement/vibration of light (cosmic music) in the universe caused creation to take place over eons. Stars were born in the previous cosmic era. In due time, Mago was born together with the Earth (the Stronghold of Mago) with her moons. Her (self-)emergence marks the beginning of earthly history. Mago listened to and acted in tune with the cyclic movement of the cosmic music. In further due time, S/HE bore two daughters, Gunghui (Goddess Gung) and Sohui (Goddess So) parthenogenetically. This Primordial Triad laid the foundation for the earthly environment for all species. Mago, assisted by HER two daughters, orchestrated the terrestrial plan to bring acoustic balance in harmony with the cosmic music/sound/vibration. S/HE delegated HER descendants to cultivate and manage the sonic equilibrium of the Earth.

Like the word “Mago,” “Magoism” manifests as One Culture AND many cultures of the world that venerate the Great Goddess. In a broad sense, “Magoism” refers to the entirety of gynocentric civilization. It is pre- and meta-patriarchal. It is the Source of patriarchal cultures. In a narrow sense, it indicates the one that has shaped East Asian histories

and cultures. The very naming of “Magoism” restores the nature of East Asian civilization as gynocentric, contrary to the standard Sinocentric [read ethnocentrically patriarchal] view that ancient China is the origin of East Asian civilizations. Magoism is the golden measurement.

Mago’s manifestations, varying from nature-shaper to Daoist Goddess, are so multivalent that they appear to be unrelated to one another. As such, it is not surprising to note that scholars including Daoist scholars and Korean folklorists have respectively focused on some particular manifestations in China and Korea. They either treat Mago as a Daoist Goddess of unknown origin or conclude that the Mago known in Korea is not the same Goddess known in China.

The transnational occurrence of the term “Mago (麻姑)” should not be dismissed or treated as anomalous. Likewise, HER seemingly heterogeneous manifestations should not be taken selectively for scholarly investigation. In understanding the multivalent and transnational manifestations of the Great Goddess, we need a new theological lens of the Great Goddess, which I would call Magoist theism. Water is a good metaphor for the Great Goddess. Rivers and lakes cannot be said to be the nature of water by taking into consideration only bodies of water. Magoist theism is NOT compatible with the binary scheme of monotheism or polytheism. The Great Goddess is not measured by the number of Goddessheads. S/HE is NOT either One or many but One AND many. S/HE is like water in bodies of water. Magoist theism is even different from henotheism, which refers to the worship of a particular deity



among multiple deities. The Great Goddess (Mago) is inseparable from HER other multiple manifestations (Magos). She is the All. She is the whole AND the particular at once. By extension, the term “Mago” is sometimes used to mean Magoism, the matrix of the Great Goddess. When “Mago” is invoked by poets or devotees with a nostalgic emotion, it means the gynocentric bygone antiquity or Old Magoism, which is equated with the paradisiacal home/womb/tomb of All. The term “Mago” also means “the Reign of Mago,” the gynocentric mytho-history of grand peace.

The provenance of Mago is as old as the concept of mother. “Ma” in “Mago” refers to both “mother” and “the Goddess.” It is difficult to date the earliest evidence of Magoism simply because we do not have written records of pre-patriarchal times. HER supreme nature is written out of history.

### **How My Education and Experience Helped Me Study Mago**

The topic of Mago came to me in time for writing my doctoral dissertation for the Women’s Studies in Religion program that I was enrolled in at Claremont Graduate University. My graduate education, which I crafted to be a feminist cross-cultural alchemical process of de-educating myself from the patriarchal mode of knowledge-making, led me to encounter the hitherto unheard-of Goddess of East Asia, Mago. I came to read the *Budoji*, the principal text of Magoism, in 2000 and did some basic research to find out that Mago was known

among people in Korea and that S/HE was also found in Chinese and Japanese sources.

Among the primary sources that I gathered, the Budoji stood out because: (1) it adopts a bird's eye view of the Great Goddess from the cosmic beginning, and (2) it counter-testifies to the pre-Chinese mytho-history of Magoism succeeded by ancient Koreans, which is written out of ancient Chinese history.

That was the beginning of my Mago study. Since then, the topic of Mago has shaped not only my Goddess scholarship but the course of my life. I have made myself a scholar advocate of the Great Goddess. The knowing of Mago is still unfolding, which makes the task of writing about Magoism ever daunting and challenging.

My major task for the first two years was to search for and collect as much diverse data as possible from Korea, China, and Japan. As a result, I was able to document a wealth of transnational primary sources including folklore, art, literature, toponyms, and the debris of religious and historical texts as well as so-called apocryphal texts including the Budoji. Processing these various and sundry data required a new methodology, which I named the mytho-historical-theology of Magoism. Multi-disciplinary and comparative by nature, my dissertation started the journey of an unending adventure for the forthcoming years.

My graduate studies provided an opportunity to go deeper in my self-searching quest. I quenched my long-repressed thirst of pursuing academic goals without feeling selfish or antithetical to the love of God. How sweet that was! Ten years did not seem long! For the earlier years during which I was a Christian, I, taking my religion too seriously, firmly believed in the Christian teaching of “denying oneself to follow Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> To pursue an academic career was my dream in my early 20s. But I gave it up for the love of God. And I joined Maryknoll Sisters, the U.S.-based Catholic overseas missionary organization. I felt strongly drawn to embark on my life to the unknown, which I thought of as God calling. Only when I began to study Mago, I learned that the strong pull into the unknown was the Way, a living legacy rooted in East Asian culture and history. Throughout my Christian years, my Self was the battle field: It was “I” that was under fire. I self-policed to ensure that I was chained to self-tormenting. That was an everyday spiritual practice of crushing my heart’s craving for intellectual activities. The pain culminated in the mission field of the Philippines wherein I exposed to myself the reality of extreme poverty and violence. I had hit rock bottom.

The belief system of Christianity began to crumble and lose its grip over my Self in proportion to my capacity to focus on the question, “Who am I?” The time came when the “I” was no longer able to bear the agony caused by self-alienation. I simply quit Christianity and declared myself free from it. The God that I held onto so tightly turned out to be a non-being. I said good-bye once and for all and walked away. Then, I found within myself that what I had sought even throughout my

Christian involvement was the Way (道, Dao, Do). I was coming home/becoming myself with the realization that the Way was nothing other than the Way of the Great Goddess, Mago. Now as a post-Christian, it did not take long to set myself on a plan of enrolling in a feminist studies graduate program. However, I was no longer the uninformed youth that I was in my early twenties. In the end, all I wanted was knowing and becoming myself as a woman of Korea and East Asia. Knowing was a very personal and political matter to me.

I was finally at peace with my Self. An insatiable craving for intellectual development in me was attended to for the first time. As a matter of fact, I had been a reader and a writer by nature from youth. The first few years of my graduate education were nothing other than a practice of self-acceptance as a self-born woman. I voraciously and systematically read up on writing term papers for the classes I took on various subjects related to feminism, theology, and religions. Nonetheless, the School of Religion at Claremont Graduate University did not, in those days, offer classes on East Asian topics that I wanted to take. Claremont education allowed me to train myself as a feminist scholar of my own kind. Or at least it did not stop me from what I meant to do; I secured tools and materials to build my own scholarship on Magoism. With a Ph.D. degree in Religion and Women's Studies, I left the school with the realization that I still needed to be grounded in East Asian Studies.

I would say that my graduate education worked for me in a non-conventional way. In the first place, I was the first and

only non-white foreign non-traditional student at age 35 in the graduate program. That was not something new or bad *per se*. I had been a cross-cultural Catholic missionary for the previous eight years and lived in the U.S. and the Philippines as well as Korea. Compared to being a cross-cultural missionary, being a graduate student was far less risk-free, I would say. At any rate, I was not alone. I was with myself. Furthermore, I was a post-Christian feminist who was deeply influenced by Mary Daly and maintained a close personal relationship with her throughout my graduate school years. In fact, it was Mary Daly who wrote a recommendation letter for my application to the program. My difficulty was in another area. Being in graduate school, especially for the first year, was one of the most difficult challenges that I had to overcome in my life. As a Chemistry major in undergraduate education, I had never seriously learned how to write a humanities or social studies paper, let alone write papers in a non-native language. Despite all, I managed all pretty well throughout the years of my graduate studies. Being a student was relatively easy work for me.

I paid the price for shaping my own scholarship. I held part-time teaching positions trying to gain a tenure track position for a few years. I wanted to hold a full-time teaching position but not badly enough to negotiate my own way of doing gynocentric scholarship or the topic itself. In retrospect, I unconsciously defied being molded to an institutional position. More to the point, I could not allow myself to be exposed without any support to combat the unnamed harassment of institutional racism, sexism, and xenophobia in U.S. universities. After landing an online teaching position for

Women's Studies and Religious Studies at a university, I steered my ship to revert to student status. I enrolled in another M.A. program in East Asian Studies at UCLA. It was my attempt to enter an academic position through a different door. However, after one year, it proved that I was unfit for Korean Studies. I was yet to evolve to something unknown.

In retrospect, I would say that my encounter with Mago as a doctoral dissertation topic was ultimately prompted by my intellectual/spiritual quest as a feminist who came from Korea. Ardently following the Radical Feminist thought of Mary Daly in the 1990s, I wanted to seek my own cultural identity that was not only non-patriarchal but also East Asian and Korean. This threw me to an untrodden path in academia. Mago being an unintroduced topic, my study was destined to blaze an entirely new trail.

I used to think to myself, if I had remained a Christian feminist, I would not have encountered Mago. Likewise if I had resorted to Buddhism or any other East Asian religion, I would not have dared to delve into the study of Mago. It was only because I was becoming myself that I was able to meet Mago.

### **Magoism in Korea, China, and Japan: How It Is Similar and Different**

When it comes to the origin of ancient ideas/things in East Asia, there is a tendency to assume that that origin is of ancient

China. However, it is a mistake if one thinks ancient Chinese texts can explain the origin of gynocentric cultures. In assessing the origin of Magoism, we need to take into consideration that ancient China dominated written history and rewrote history from its ethnocentric and patriarchal perspective. In that process, pre-Chinese Magoist mytho-history of East Asia was written out of ancient Chinese history. However, Magoism, inscribed in such oral texts as folklore, place-names, literature, and art survived. There is more. Korean apocryphal texts counter-testify that Sinocentric [read patriarchal and ethnocentric] historiography is but a history of the dominator/colonialist/nationalist. The modern endorsement of Sinocentrism espoused by nationalism further displaces the premise that China is an offshoot of the Old Magoist State, Hanguk (State of Unity), pre-Chinese Korea. Favored and loved by the populace throughout history, Mago remains obscured, not clarified in ancient Chinese texts. The earliest written account, “The Biography of Magu” by Ge Hong (283—343 CE), set a path for the forthcoming depiction of Mago as a Goddess of immortality whose origin is unknown.

It is precarious to date the earliest written record of Magoism in Korea. It is mainly because ancient [read pre- and proto-Chinese] Korean written records did not survive. However, true history does not die. The mytho-history of Magoist Korea has returned as apocryphal and oral texts in modern times. To be noted is that, unlike the Chinese counterpart, Korean Magoist data explicitly attribute Mago to supremacy. Mago is depicted as the nature-shaper, progenitor, and ultimate sovereign in the Budoji. Her supremacy is written in folklore, place names, literature, art, and the debris of

historical and religious records. Korea stands as the repository of Magoist oral texts.

As such, reconstructing the mytho-history of Magoism inevitably involves the restoration of the pre- and proto-Chinese history of Korea. Furthermore, Korean linguistics and mythologies are ripe with clues to the etiology of Magoism. For example, the term “Mago” is closely linked with the Korean word “Gom” or “Goma,” the She-Bear Sovereign, founder of the nine-state confederacy in pre-patriarchal times. Also known as Ungnyeo (Bear/Sovereign Woman), She is better known as the mother of Dangun, the founder of the Joseon dynasty (ca. 2333-ca. 232 BCE). It remains debatable if “Gom” or “Goma” is derived from “Mago,” or vice versa. What is evident is that both Goma and Mago are related to the Ursa Major (Big Bear) constellation, although Mago is also associated with the Big Dipper (Seven Stars), part of the Big Bear constellation. The root “Gom” is deeply embedded in East Asian culture and mythology, a topic to be discussed elsewhere.

There are commonalities and differences in history and culture among Korea, China, and Japan. Not only the word “Mago 麻姑” but also such toponyms as Mt. Mago, Mt. Goya, Mago Stronghold, and Mago Rock are commonly found across national boundaries in these countries. Furthermore, a sentiment of nostalgia longing for Mago or rather the bygone times of Old Magoism permeates East Asian literature and art transnationally. In this light, numerous artistic expressions of Mago can be seen as a collective yearning for Magoism. Such



commonalities warrant that Magoism was once an overarching cultural and historical heritage for Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese.

Nonetheless, there is a substantive difference between the accounts from Korea and China.<sup>3</sup> The Korean account explicitly depicts Mago as the first mother, cosmogonist, and ultimate sovereign, whereas the Chinese sources do not articulate HER supreme identity. In the latter, S/HE is often a Daoist Goddess of immortality. However, that is but a modern misunderstanding. The Daoist portrayal obscures further rather than clarifies Mago's supremacy. Pre-Daoist in origin, Mago escapes the Daoist encapsulation. To be precise, the unrecognized popularity of Mago in Daoism evinces the insurmountable nature of Magoism on the one hand. On the other hand, it debunks the idea that Daoism is incapable of Mago's identity, as the Great Goddess is indeed antithetical of the very nature of Sinocentric historiography, which is patriarchal and ethnocentric. The mytho-history of pre-Chinese Magoism, obliterated in ancient Chinese written history, has survived as Korean apocryphal texts. I have discussed elsewhere that reconstructing the mytho-history of Magoism requires a rewriting of pre- and proto-Chinese Korean history.

Mago has taken up seemingly different identities as Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West) in Daoism and Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess of Japan's Imperial Family) in Shinto. Also the cult of Matsu in Taiwan, Macau, and the southeastern region of mainland China appears to be a relatively new manifestation or revival of Magoism, evolved

from a historical woman named Matsu. Other Siberian-Mongolian Goddesses parallel Mago in differing ways.

Given that the term “Mago” is etymologically affine to “Maga” or “Ma Gaia,” it is not surprising to note that Mago folk stories concerning megaliths told in Korea run a close parallel to those of European Goddesses including the Gaelic Goddess Cailleach. Lore about Mago and Cailleach appear almost identical. Referred to as Halmi (Grandmother or Crone) and often described as a giant nature-shaper, Mago is linguistically related to Cailleach, which means “an old woman” or “hag.”<sup>4</sup> I have recently assessed that the theme of Nine Magos (九娘, Gurang) recurs across cultures in the Greek Muses, the Hindu Matrikas, and beyond. Mago’s affinity to other Goddesses becomes ever evident when we examine how the triad and parthenogenesis, the two paramount themes of the Magoist Myth, are in ancient gynocentric cultures and religions around over the world.

### **Magoism, East Asian Religions, and Magoist Mudangs**

As mentioned above, Magoism refers to the totality of human civilization that is ultimately gynocentric. Speaking from a narrow perspective, Magoism is the primordial matrix from which such East Asian religions as Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism were derived. In the light of Magoism, a patriarchal religion is redefined as a pseudo-Magoism that which has co-opted the Way of the Great Goddess (Magoism) with the androcentric reversal of the female principle.

Consequently, the legacy of Magoism has survived as the seemingly neutral, if not obscure, notion of “the Way (道, Dao, Do)” and overarching cosmologies and philosophies in these East Asian religions and their cultures. To characterize cursorily, I would say that Confucianism focuses on the political and rational aspect of Magoism, whereas Buddhism incorporates the practical and cultural implication of Magoism. By extension, as the word Daoism (道教, Teaching of the Way) indicates, Daoism has extensively co-opted Magoist concepts, myths, and histories without acknowledging its derivative status from Magoism.

Korean Shamanism or the Mudang tradition (Muisim) refers to the religious aspect of Magoism. As such, it is a female-centered religion. Traditionally known as Muin (巫人, Shaman Person) or Mudang (巫堂, Shaman Abode),<sup>5</sup> female Shamans are predominant in number and function. Unlike East Asian patriarchal religions, however, Korean shamanism has perforce walked the path of degeneration over the course of patriarchal history. Korean shamans, deprived of socio-political authority traditionally endowed to them, have managed to survive but not without cost. Deprecated as women’s culture and religion for the last several centuries, Korean Shamanism has acquired a layer of patriarchal outlook. Thus, while retaining the Magoist legacy in rituals and customs, it is tongue-tied, unable to speak of its Magoist origin. It now speaks of the Great Goddess no more than the Mago lore. For example, Shaman lyrics depict Mago in a very subdued manner, while folktales describe HER as a nature-shaper.

I hold that it is only within the premise of Magoism that Korean Shamanism can be fully explained and instated to the status of its original power. Its origin, being the oldest religion in the mytho-history of Magoism, is simultaneous with Magoism, if not earlier than the latter. It is possible that ancient Mudangs were those who made Magoism known to people. For our understanding, however, I posit a technical difference between Magoism and Muism. If Magoism is about the Great Goddess/Mago, Muism is about Magoist royal descendants. Readers need to be reminded that, according to the Mago Myth, all peoples are the descendants of the Great Goddess. Mudangs are those who self-undertake the role of teaching, healing, and leading the human members of the terrestrial community to the knowing of the Great Goddess, the Source of the All on Earth. The ritual they perform is called Gut (굿), which is a spiritual act that brings the human community to the reality of the Great Goddess. Gut is a cosmic ceremony by definition wherein Mudangs summon all beings to their primordial status given by the Great Goddess in the time of the terrestrial beginning.

Mytho-historically, Magoist Shaman rulers were chosen among the princesses of the Magoist royal clan to succeed and fulfill the mandate of Mago Bokbon (麻姑複本, Return to Mago's Origin) to the world. Lore tells that Mago had eight daughters and dispatched them to the neighboring islands. They became the Shaman progenitors in those places. Thus, they, together with Mago, are called the Nine Goddesses (Gurang). The folk story is, however, only an abridged version

of the Budoji account about the prototypal Diaspora from the paradisiacal home of Mago, Mago Stronghold (麻姑城, Mago-seong). Mago's eight (grand)daughters agreed upon leaving Mago Stronghold to prevent its complete destruction and to remind all peoples of their common origin from the Great Goddess. They, representing the four primordial racial clans, took separate paths to the four corners of the world and continued their journey to new settlements. In other words, the first Mudangs were the daughters of the Great Goddess who participated in the cosmogonic drama of the Mago Paradise and witnessed the archetypal event of the first disaster, taking living things for food, which set the path for the degenerative human evolution. The incident shifted the balance of the ecosystem, while dividing people, and threatened the primordial community of the Mago Clan with complete destruction. Thus, Mago's eight (grand)daughters had perforce to leave the Primordial Community of Mago Stronghold. Upon departing, the eldest daughter of Mago, representing Mago's descendants, made an oath to Mago that She would bring back all people to the knowing of the common human beginning in Mago Stronghold. It was of utmost importance that forthcoming Mudangs understood the oracle of the first Mudangs. The transmission Gut was performed with the passing down of the three regalia from the predecessor Mudang to her successor, a custom later known as the coronation. As such, the vision of Mudangs was cosmic and gynocentric, as it was to have an inner eye to see the cosmogonic event of the Great Goddess in which all, not only females and males but all species on Earth once lived in equilibrium with the cosmic power of creativity.

Pre- and proto-Chinese Korean sovereigns were Magoist Mudangs whose lineage goes back to Mago's daughters and ultimately Mago. The best known are the three sage rulers: Hanin, Hangung, also known as Goddess Goma, and Dangun. As history ran its course, the royal lineage of Magoist Mudangs was interrupted by the establishment of Chinese patriarchal rule. Nonetheless, the ancient Chinese regime was in no way in the position of creating something new or better than Magoist gynocracy. Emperor Yao, the Chinese dynastic founder, was a rebel force under the traditional rule of Old Magoist Korea. Hijacking the royal lineage of Magoist Mudangs through military advancements, he self-proclaimed Chinese rule to be the State of "the Son of Heaven," a patriarchal variation of "the Daughter of Mago." The Japanese imperial family still claims that they are the direct descendants of Amaterasu.

Recent years have witnessed the increasing number of Mudangs who claim their main deity as Mago. To know how the Great Goddess was worshipped in the past is helpful for modern Magoist Mudangs. S/HE has been favored, loved, and worshipped under many names by East Asians as well as Koreans. HER many names indicate various forms of faith practices, a topic that requires another space. Among them the most pervasively venerated is Samsin Halmi (Triad Grandmother/Goddess), also known as the Birth Grandmother, for overseeing "childbirth, the lifespan of a child and also the health of the entire family, taking on varying roles in the home."<sup>6</sup> Samsin is also worshipped as the progenitor in households and celebrated in major seasonal and cultural holidays of Korea.

Indeed, the future is the time for Magoist Mudangs to rise again to take back the gynocentric language that can speak of the common beginning of all beings from the Great Goddess. Today, anyone who understands the cosmogonic beginning of the Great Goddess (the Mago Myth) and chooses the life of bringing the terrestrial community together in harmony of the cosmic music is a Mago Mudang. In short, know the Magoist cosmogonic story and let that story lead you to do something. By definition, everyone belongs to the Mago Clan, the totality of the divine and humans. That is what Magoism is all about and anyone is called to join the most ancient tradition of the Great Goddess, which will bring us back to the beginning, the center of our time and space, HERE and NOW.

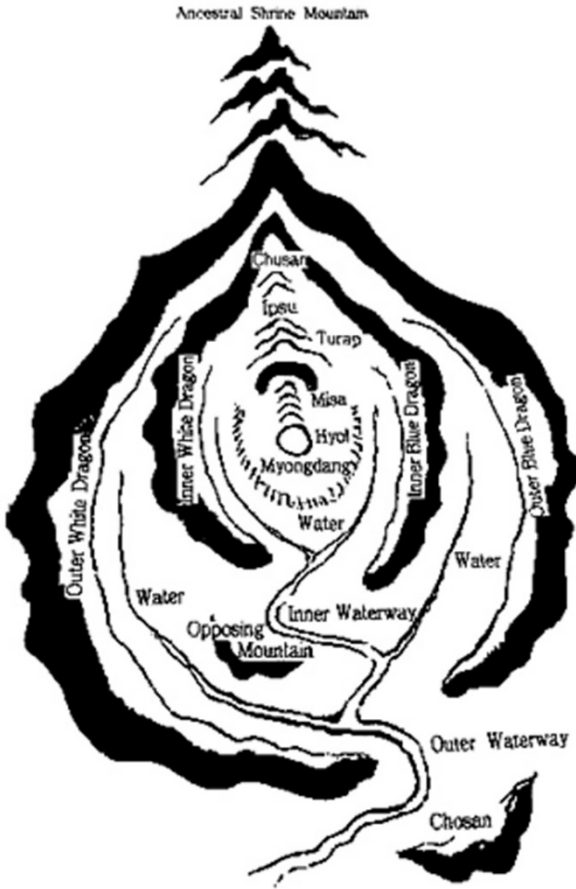


Figure 1: Myeongdang (Ideal Topography) as vulva in Pungsu (Wind and Water) thought. After Gyeongju Namsan Research Institute.





Figure 2: Mago by Seokgyeong. Joseon Dynasty (14th C).  
Gansong Art Museum.

## Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of the original conversation with Jayne DeMente and Anniitra Raven Moon, which took place during their radio show, the Creatrix Media Live. It was aired on May 22, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> This was the passage that froze me to self-loathing: “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” Matthew 16:24.

<sup>3</sup> Japanese sources, much fewer in number, come in between them in characteristics.

<sup>4</sup> From ongoing conversation with Mary Condren. Dr. Condren first informed me of the folkloric similarity between Mago and Cailleach in 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Male Shamans are called Baksu or Gyeok.

<sup>6</sup> Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Beliefs: Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore and Traditional Culture Vol. II. The National Folk Museum of Korea (2014), 178.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Returning Home with Mago, the Great Goddess from East Asia<sup>1</sup>

I come from Korea. When I say I come from Korea, I do not mean “Korea” in a nationalist sense. Our national/ethnic identity should not divide us. Nationalism, reinforced by international politics as a cardinal rule of the global community, precludes the agency of women; it is a game of the patriarchal controllers. As nation states mutually conflict in their interest, it is also divisive. When I say I am Korean, I mean I am a Magoist Korean, a gynocentric Korean. My Korean identity refers to my cultural and historical root. Fortunately, I have found my Korean gynocentric root in the tradition of Mago, the Great Goddess, from East Asia.<sup>2</sup>

Virginia Woolf, Mary Daly, and Gloria Anzaldúa reiterated that they have no country, but the whole world is their country. I now join them in saying that I have no country because the whole world is my country. This is supra-nationalism. It is also the gynocentric principle of symbiosis, which is shared by my foremothers from East Asia who passed down the mythos of Magoism throughout generations. I am a Magoist, and Magoists are supra-nationalists and symbiosists.

### Beginning Steps of My Home-coming Journey

I had a rough start in my first year of university. Like other university students in Korea in the early 1980s, I projected my sense of misery onto a political situation. I participated in student demonstrations and social study groups. My sense of crisis only increased, however, as time went by. I was like a universe that was out of balance. Life looked too big to handle. To live felt like walking in a burning hell. One day the thought that my life was not worth living consumed me. Then I said to myself, "OK, I am dead. However, life continues. Now can I live as another person in the ebb and flow of people?" This spared me from killing myself. On a winter day, a friend took me to a bible study group. There, I plunged myself into the Catholic charismatic movement. Out of an excruciating mental pain, I picked my life's last card and gave it to the belief of Jesus Christ. All my heart's desires were disbanded for God. Loving God saved me from my existential pain. I thought all my life problems were solved once and for all in Christianity. I was nineteen years old.

I had two dreams in my early twenties. The first was to become a cross-cultural missionary and the other to study subjects in the humanities - not that I did not like my Chemistry major but I loved humanities subjects more. I immersed myself in reading and thinking about literature, philosophy, sociology, and art history. It was clear to me that I would have thrived if I had changed my major, but the rigid school policy required me to take the entrance exam once again. I was already a committed Christian, and pursuing an academic career did not seem important. So I abandoned my

desire to become an academic, though my love for learning never died. Now I clung to the idea of becoming a cross-cultural missionary. The biblical story of Abraham, who was told by God to leave his familiar world and live in the new land that God commended, felt like no strange story to me. Upon reading or hearing it, my heart beat loudly. I was scared, but knew that I had to follow my heart's inclination to try the call of Abraham.

For a long time, I thought my call to become an overseas missionary originated in my Christian belief. Only after learning that Magoist missionaries were dispatched to the peoples of the world to remind them of the Origin of the Great Goddess/Mago in pre-patriarchal times, did I realize that it came from my Magoist Korean heritage.

Upon learning about Maryknoll Sisters, a U.S.-based catholic women's overseas missionary congregation, I was fascinated by their missionary spirit. It did not take long to know my heart's desire to become one of them. Many of them I knew were great missionaries who went to unknown lands and befriended the poor. They adopted the language and culture of the people with whom they lived. I relished phrases like "Stay when you are needed; leave when you are wanted." I allowed myself to love, but not to be attached to what I loved. I excelled in my self-training in contemplation and meditation. Soon I ardently aspired to become an advanced mystic. I spent hours upon hours praying, reading, and reflecting. Then, soon I practiced just to be without doing anything. The Catholic tradition of spirituality welcomed me. The pleasure I took in reading and practicing a multitude of meditation methods was

everything that I owned. Mystics and hermits lured me into wilderness. I was almost ready to try out the life of a cloistered nun. For those four years of waiting for my membership approval from the headquarters of Maryknoll Sisters, I rehearsed my missionary journey into an unknown land over and over again in my mind.

My years spent with Maryknoll Sisters in New York granted me the possibility of seeing what a women's community could be in its idealism. The first year was so difficult that I thought I was not cut out to be a Maryknoll missionary. But from the second year on, I began to befriend colleagues who supported me. Meanwhile, my Korean perspective was gradually transformed into a cosmopolitan one. In fact, Maryknoll Sisters still occupy a special place in my heart. I have not yet found another organization or place where women's cross-cultural experiences can be shared that spontaneously and intimately. My peers, especially, who came from literally everywhere — Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America — opened my eyes to different ways of thinking, doing, and being. Just living in community with them gave me a great deal of hands-on knowledge about other peoples and their cultures.

Maryknollers were like wanderers. I was constantly on the road for nearly eight years, living, working, and learning in Korea, the U.S., and the Philippines. As an aspirant, I had my first exposure to Maryknoll life on a remote southern island in Korea for six months. This was a sort of ideal missionary life with fishing and farming villagers, mostly women. Then I was exposed to an urban missionary community, in Seongnam City,

Korea, for two years or so on and off. I lived my first two years as a member of Maryknoll Sisters in an inner-city neighborhood of Newburgh, New York, and another year in Maryknoll, New York. Afterward, while based in Manila, I had short-term experiences in several places from the far north down to the far south of the Philippines. Although my stay in the Philippines lasted only about a year and three months, I traveled frequently during this time. Toward the end of my stay in the Philippines, I took a three-month program led by Sr. Mary John Mananzan, where women from different parts of the world came to learn about women and society. This gave me a sort of introduction to Asian women's issues. In retrospect, my life with Maryknoll Sisters was a special time of blessing. My Maryknoll experience of being constantly on the road has allowed me to visit life's hidden valleys where otherworldly treasures are buried. I am deeply thankful for those who shared their friendship with me along the way, especially people in the Philippines. I know that I left my heart there with the people to whom I was sent.

During my formation period, I attended seminary courses and volunteered part-time in inner-city centers. Female friendships nourished me in Maryknoll. Good women friends radiated like jewels. All sorts of interest groups and workshops were open for members. Life looked colorful, offering me many options for the first time. I began to paint watercolors and continued to write poetry. I was happy and thrived among like-minded women. I was exploring many possibilities of what life could be. So it was very difficult when I had to move on to my mission phase. Maryknoll Sisters celebrated a mission-sending in a great fashion with rituals and ceremonies. As I said

good-bye at the airport to the group of friends who were seeing me off to the Philippines, I shed uncontrollable tears. I did not know then that my tears were for my final good-bye to my Christian idealism.

I had made my vows after two years of training. However, looking back on it, this was not a joyous event; on the contrary, I was falling apart inside due to unknown causes. Dreadful night dreams were repeated. So I sought out ways to work with my dreams. I learned that dreams are the surest guide if we know how to listen to them. A cloister Sister met me for counseling on a weekly basis for a year or so. I scrutinized myself inside out and upside down to find something that I needed to fix. I was determined to put an end to the feeling of restlessness that had followed me along the way. I searched all possibilities that might have affected me, including my family relationships, childhood, or anything that might surface in my consciousness. My soul was dug up and I found no shocking surprise. The feeling of restlessness was still there with me. Pains were still raw.

En route to the Philippines, I stopped by in Korea to stay with my family for about three months. My family, as well as several Maryknoll Sisters, met me at the airport. As I approached my mother, she said no word but touched my face and my arms, and hugged me with tears. Everyone welcomed me warmly. I was home again but did not, in my heart, feel at home. I was deeply disturbed by something that I could not name. Feeling angry amidst my family reunion troubled me more. I felt guilty, knowing how my parents had sacrificed themselves in order to raise and educate me.



In the Philippines, where I lived as a Maryknoll Sister, I was disillusioned about christianity. For the two months of the orientation period, I visited rigorous ministries in remote places. I soon became exhausted, not only physically but psychologically. The “Third World” became real to me. When I saw the indigent of the Philippines, then I knew my own experience of poverty was not really of poverty, just a little inconvenience. I got sick from food and water that I drank in the houses of people whom I visited. A strong rotten smell nauseated me, whenever I passed by the alley where people sold their meat, fish, and fruit. The unbridgeable gap that I found between the people and myself broke my heart. My feelings of guilt, frustration, and anger could find no ventilation. I was saddened when a burglar broke into the house overnight and took small house items. I was speechless when I visited people in a garbage incineration site who lived on trash. My heart ached when I saw an entire family living out of a small cart on a street. Begging children followed me when I got off a bus in new places. Hundreds of girls from the rural area went to the city and became prostitutes. I saw how people were caught in tribal wars and government raids against communists. I saw women used as pawns in the rivalry between the church and the government on the issue of abortion. I saw the wealth of catholic organizations and the affluent people. What I saw is beyond description. I could not even cry. I was in shock, torn by the two worlds - the rich, the west, and the religious on the one side; and the poor, the indigenous, and the lay people on the other side. Shattered pieces of a jar spoke of my heart, as I found them under my feet on my desperate prayer-walk to a grove.

When I had entered Maryknoll three years before, I'd been enchanted by the idea of going to a Latin American country for mission, and studied Latin America for nearly two years. During that time, however, I'd also become aware of my identity as an Asian. So I'd turned my eyes to an Asian country, and there was the Philippines. The Philippines was similar to many countries in Latin America, sharing a history of colonization by Spain and recent U.S. influence to say the least.

I thought I had seen poverty where I volunteered to help out the urban poor in New York. I thought I had seen poverty in the remote island of Hwai-do, Korea, where I had been first exposed to the life of Maryknoll Sisters. I could not compare any of this to what I saw in the slums of the Philippines. I knew that poverty was not confined to the poor of the Philippines - spending three years in Maryknoll, preparing for mission work, had made it clear that the rest of the so-called Third World was not very different from what I saw. I may not be wrong to say that two-thirds of the global population live in poverty. Poverty is not just the problem of poverty alone. Violence goes with it, and evil thrives in the climate of violence.

I heard the cry of the people and the cry of the environment. I also saw how western colonial power damaged the people of the Philippines. Foremost, I saw how christianity ruled over people. I could no longer reconcile my experience with my christian beliefs and my membership in Maryknoll Sisters, the Sisters of the almighty U.S. It became clear to me that the god to whom I had been praying was nothing more than a patriarchal projection that served western colonialist hegemony. I also found no hope in the leadership of western

powers. I came to realize that christian and western thought leads nowhere but to division and confusion. I saw the bottom of the hierarchical dualism. I could not imagine happiness and joy at the end of this track of life, not for myself nor for humanity as a whole. In short, I saw the ugly face of patriarchy and had to disassociate myself from it for my survival.

I came back to Korea and soon withdrew from Maryknoll Sisters. I said good-bye to the Christian beliefs that I once held closely. However, my missionary dream died hard. The idealist vision was almost everything to me. Ceaseless tears welled up from the depth of my being for many months. These tears were not those of sorrow but of cleansing and healing. I stayed firm and began to claim my own power. I was all alone but was not afraid. At this time, I finally felt at peace with myself. I was soaring from within, and the whole world was there for me.

Deep down inside, I knew I had to come back to Korea to establish my relationship with my mother. My mother was feeling deprived of her maternal right to me by her mother-in-law. I had loved my grandmother in the place of my mother all my life until then. I did not know that the more I expressed my affection for my grandmother, the more my mother was hurt. My grandmother had been widowed at a young age. And I do not know how old I was when she took me from my mother's bosom and raised me as if I were her own child - maybe when my mother was pregnant with my brother, even before I reached my first birthday. Whatever the specific circumstances, however, it became clear to me, as my feminist consciousness grew, that Confucian culture set up women against each other. In my case, I did not have a chance to love my own mother,

and that severed relation caused problems in my psychology. It was like a thorn inside my soul that pained me whatever I did. So when I returned home, I made efforts to connect with my mother for the first time in my life. And it was a time of healing for both of us.

Mary Daly's books came to me providentially. *Beyond God the Father* literally fell into my hands, as I was browsing books at the small library of the women's center in the Philippines. I do not know which page it was that I started reading. But once my eyes were set on a page, they were glued to the next. After returning to Korea, I continued on reading *Gyn-Ecology* and *Outercourse*. For about three years, I was intensely engaged in Daly's books. I translated *Beyond God the Father* and *The Church and the Second Sex* and published them in Korean. I survived by teaching English and thrived by seeking what I had longed to seek. I nurtured myself by taking up various art and exercise classes. I continued to write poetry for those years.

Mary Daly's thought opened a new reality for me. With her books, I came alive. I knew what she meant by ontological hope. Her books showed me a way to a trans-patriarchal voyage. I saw the root of the problem, patriarchy, and de-educated myself away from it. After I severed my involvement from Christianity, I was cautious not to invest myself in patriarchal institutions or relationships as a whole. I was not afraid of loneliness. On the contrary, I jolted into the joy of being alive. This was another level of happiness. I was becoming a self-defined womyn.

I first sent Mary a letter saying that I wanted to translate

her books into Korean. Luckily, I received a reply from her soon after. Then one day I felt a strong urge to speak with her. So I called her. I do not remember the details of our conversation. It must have been night in her time. I think that we spoke for quite a long time. What I remember vividly is that I had a visual image of a large star dashing toward a small star at tremendous speed. Both were fire balls. I stayed awake all night, as if struck by a ray of sunlight. The light/power sustained me for many hours that I did not know. I was lying in my bed, doing nothing and thinking nothing until I regained my ordinary consciousness.

I came back to the U.S. and began graduate studies in Women's Studies in Religion in 1997. I returned to my love of study, nothing could interrupt it this time. Nothing was easy on many levels but I weathered the storm. And I graduated with a Ph.D. degree in 2005.

My story of completing my doctoral degree is in no way monotonous. In the summer of 2000, I was given a book called the Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City) by a Korean scholar. However casual this event may have been, it flung open the door to my encounter with Mago, my ancestors' Goddess. Only later did I come to fully understand that "Mago" means the Great Goddess. Since then, the steps of my home-coming journey have become faster and more focused. I see everything - myself, feminism, history, and human destiny - differently in Magoism. And it feels right to me.

## **An Introduction to Magoism**

Mago is the Great Goddess of East Asia. Nonetheless, She remains barely known to the world. Her counterparts, Xiwangmu (the Supreme Goddess of Daoism) and Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess of the Japanese imperial family), are said to comprise the pantheon of East Asian cosmic Goddesses. Considering that these Goddesses are often aligned with the ancient culture of China and Japan, the pantheon of East Asian Great Goddesses omits both Mago and “Korean culture.” That is, both Mago and ancient Korea are made invisible in the modern scholarship of East Asian Studies.

Prompted by the sporadic reemergence of the “forgotten” corpus of Mago, which abounds in pan-East Asian sources from Korea, China, and Japan, I have sought, in a spirit marked by continuous surprise and exhilaration, the one unbroken rubric of the gynocentric cultural matrix and named it Magoism. Magoism refers to the anciently originated gynocentric tradition of East Asia, which venerates Mago as originator, progenitor, and ultimate sovereign.<sup>3</sup> The book I am now writing, by examining a large corpus of Magoism, delineates how the mythos of Magoism has played out in specific contexts in the course of history.<sup>4</sup> It epitomizes an effort to translate, as ancient Koreans did, the universal language of Magoism into the specific Magoist mythological motifs - paradisiacal community, trinity, parthenogenesis (“virgin-birth”), immortality, veneration of mountains and rocks, missionary/emissary institution, realizing the reign of Mago on earth, multi-cultural/multi-racial celebrations, the second coming of Mago, and returning to Mago - that recur in the ancient world across cultures and also linger in patriarchal

religions.

To reinstate the anciently originated cultural matrix of Magoism is a complex and daunting task. Methodologically, I have employed a trans-disciplinary approach that I call a mytho-historic-thealogy of Magoism - a *thealogy* (study of the female divine) that is primarily illumined by the specific feature of Magoist *mythology*, which necessarily exposes the *pre- and trans-patriarchal history* of East Asian peoples. This trans-disciplinary method of studying Magoism not only uncovers the usurpation of Magoism by patriarchal polities and religions in East Asia, but also suggests a new paradigm in studying primal Goddess traditions.

This book takes a first step and offers an overall picture of primary sources and the mytho-history Magoism, leading to uncharted territories. Historiographies lead us nowhere for the pre-patriarchal [read pre-Chinese and ancient Korean] past. Mythographies make the idea of female supremacy unimaginable. Nationalist and ethnocentric perspectives hinder us from seeing a trans-national gynocentric tradition. There is a new trail to be blazed in every direction that Magoism turns. I have arranged this book, however, so that primary sources speak for themselves about the vicissitudes of Magoism. Primary sources, rich and complex in trans-disciplinary implications, are our guides to this yet-to-be-rediscovered reality. This book ultimately exposes a nexus of nationalist, patriarchal, and colonialist attempts that have dethroned the female power embodied in the mythos of Magoism.

## Overall Implications of Magoism

The occultation of Mago along with ancient Koreans has, most immediately, made the patriarchal histories and cultures of East Asia tongue-tied about their origins. Such East Asian Goddesses as Xiwangmu and Amaterasu, seen as seemingly unrelated deities demarcated by nationalist ideologies, betray the fragments of the anciently originated East Asian gynocentric tradition that I call Magoism. I do not mean to say that the invisibility of Magoism has paralyzed one's view of East Asia only. It debilitates a historical view of the pre- and proto-patriarchal ancient peoples of the world. The Magoist mythos not only retrieves the evidence of pre- and proto-patriarchal gynocentric civilizations unfolded through the three magocratic confederated polities, Hanguk, Danguk, and First Joseon, but also restores archaic knowledge that peoples of the world maintained cultural and political unities in lieu of female principle/power.<sup>5</sup>

Magoism offers a consistent view that defines human history as gynocentric. It is one way, perhaps one of the oldest ways, of looking at the present in light of its gynocentric origin and the cross-cultural unities of pre- and proto-patriarchal times. I propose Magoism as a hidden piece that has been "unconsciously" pursued by those studying ancient worldwide mythologies, legends, and archaeologies. In Magoism, we, together with ancient trans-national East Asians, see the second coming of the Female Origin, the First Cause. I suggest Magoism as an alternative consciousness to modern, Eurocentric, nationalist, and colonialist worldviews. This book



ultimately aims at unleashing a new grammar that explains how cross-cultural symbolism is organically interrelated.

To speak macrocosmically, Magoism refers to the gynocentric matrix from which humanity evolved. It is immortal insofar as humanity continues to exist. That is, Magoism is an ever-living tradition. It has never completely disappeared from the course of history but has been truncated, distorted, and appropriated by patriarchal cultures and institutions. Traces of Magoism abound in East Asia, not only in written and oral texts, but in religious and cultural practices that have survived to this day. Magoism re-awakens us, as it did ancient Magoists, to the knowledge of the Creatrix. Ancient Magoists understood the mythos of Magoism as an ultimate counter-testament to the usurpation of patriarchal powers.

Naming and reconstructing Magoism would not have been possible without the *Budoji* (Epic of the Emblem City), allegedly written by a Silla Korean in the late 4th or early 5th century CE. The *Budoji*'s panoramic narrative is a complex and systematic one, telling of the cosmogonic origin of the Great Goddess, the Paradise of Mago Stronghold, the four primordial racial clan communities, the early developments of magocratic polities, and the decline of ancient magocratic polities due to the rise of patriarchal regimes. The ancient civilization of Magoism culminated in the establishment of three archaic magocratic polities – Hanguk as the oldest confederacy of twelve states (?– ca. 3898 BCE), Danguk as the second confederacy of nine states (ca. 3898 BCE–ca. 2333 BCE), and First Joseon as the third confederacy of three states (ca. 2333 BCE–ca. 232 BCE). These periods are characterized

by gynocentric cultural unities and political alliances. Magocracy gradually dwindled under the assault of patriarchal powers.

### **Suggested Ideas for Contemporary Feminists**

Based on what I have learned so far about the ancient reality of Magoism, I would like to suggest the following ideas for us:

1. We must have a clear understanding that contemporary international politics, characterized by ethnocentrism, nationalism, and colonialism, harnesses women without acknowledging us - it excludes the agency of women. Patriarchal rule is wrongful in its very foundation because it is, by definition, a rule of men predicated on the subjugation of women: it is a violation/betrayal of the whole by a part and, as such, necessarily involves violence. Having assaulted the principle of symbiosis that was traditionally cultivated and sustained by gynocentric political powers, a patriarchal political power, at once, seeks to defend itself from the assault of the other - other groups, races, and nation-states. That is, it is destined to guard against the other doing what it does. This is a self-undermining mechanism that constitutes its very existence, and modern patriarchal nation-states have inherited this self-corruptive biology from their predecessors. Our conscious or subconscious identification with the ethnocentric, nationalist, and colonialist ideologies underlying international politics is ultimately detrimental.

We need to seek ways in which our ethnic, racial, and cultural identities are not only acknowledged but celebrated.

2. We need to re-establish an understanding of gynocentric principles with which everyone can agree. We can test whether a principle is gynocentric by asking ourselves if it fosters the spirit of inclusion and collaboration. By a gynocentric principle, I mean chiefly the principle of symbiosis. I am not saying that only women can enter into this reality. Nor do I say that all men were the messengers of patriarchy. As this gynocentric principle embraces women of all races and states, it does not exclude men. This principle embraces everyone and everything by its very nature. I distinguish gynocentrism from feminism in this sense. Gynocentrism does not contradict but completes feminism. Feminism is an indispensable politic of gynocentrism that copes with patriarchalism but is not the ultimate goal. This is not merely wishful theory-making. It is the principle on which ancient Magoism is solidly grounded. The cosmogony of Magoism shows an East Asian way of expressing the work of this gynocentric principle of symbiosis. We need to pay attention to gynocentric traditions from around the world that have survived to this day. I suggest that we draw gynocentric principles from matriarchal (matrilineal, matrilocal, and matrifocal) societies of the world. There are abundant sources that reflect the gynocentric principle, including myths of goddesses, archaeological findings of female figures, megalithic cultures, and goddesses/shamans/women traditions. Even the world's

so-called great religions like christianity, judaism, buddhism, daoism, and confucianism could not completely remove gynocentric heritages.

3. We must name patriarchal civilizations in gynocentric terms. We will tell where patriarchal civilizations came from, what happened in the process of making patriarchal regimes, and how patriarchal fathers maintained their worlds. We will tell who men were and what they should be like. Ancient Magoists began this work and showed us its plausibility. At last, we will speak of the world, humanity, the universe, history, technology, art, economy, and nature in gynocentric languages.
4. We need a new world order that is *not* based on domination of the other (a universal grammar of patriarchal regimes), and for this, we should look to non-colonialist/indigenous female-centered traditions as well as pre- and proto-patriarchal histories and cultures. Magoism offers the history of gynocentric confederated polities in which peoples of the world were united rather than competing against one another. Ancient Magoist states were organized as self-governing communities: for example, the third Magoist state comprised three autonomously governing sub-states, each of which comprised numerous self-governing tribal communities, each of which in turn comprised clan communities, and so on. The gynocentric polities were like the Russian doll that has layers of dolls inside of her - the image of the Russian doll, in fact, epitomizes the gynocentric principle of the natural world.

In order to maintain peace and unity among peoples, ancient Magoists also invented the institution of missionaries, who were dispatched to the peoples of the world. They held intercultural conventions on a regular basis for several millennia.

5. Last but not least, we must recognize our alliances among and beyond the circles of self-identified modern feminisms. Gynocentrism is one way to see all sorts of racial, cultural, and historical feminisms as an allied force. However, the gynocentric matrix is of a nature that is much bigger than women-only worlds. It is Home for everyone and everything to find our common origin in the Female. Any individuals or groups that act according to the principle of symbiosis are our allies: environmentalists, freedom fighters, non-governmental organization activists, farmers, mothers, grandmothers, artists, spiritualists, scientists, the unemployed and employed, or public and private intellectuals from all parts of the world. The allied force is a surge and resurgence of people who have been called to live a life of Symbiosis across time and space. They may be “foreigners” who speak another tongue. We certainly cannot know them all. Our ultimate alliance is with the Great Goddess - Mago, Gaia, Tiamat, Muse, and many more as we name Her - who was there in the beginning to cultivate the principle of symbiosis for humanity once and for all. S/HE is with us through her light that shimmers through anything and everything. Recognizing our alliances is ultimately a matter of opening a spiritual eye.

I can tell you that ancient Magoists have anticipated this work. They teach us that Mago/Female is the original divine that needs to be revered for the sake of human survival and prosperity. They teach us that humans are responsible for maintaining society in resonance with cosmic music, the ultimate creative power from which everything was born in the beginning. They show us that it is possible to build human communities that resemble the paradisiacal community of Mago.

As for myself, I will continue to follow my dream to bring my ancient tradition alive and to carry on the Magoist mission my foremothers passed on to me.

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## Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup> Previously published in *Trivia: Voices of Feminism* Issue 6, September 2007. Trivia Editors Lise Weil and Harriet Ann Ellenberger note, “Prompted by a suggestion from Mary Daly, we searched the web for articles on Mago by Hye Sook Hwang, were excited by what we found, and asked Hye Sook to write an introduction to Magoism for *Trivia* readers. The above is a development of part of the speech she gave at the Feminist Hullabaloo, June 22-24, 2007, Santa Fe, New Mexico.”

<sup>2</sup> “Mago” is a generic term for the Great Goddess, and at the same time a proper noun indicating an East Asian manifestation of the Great Goddess, including women of the Great Goddess. By “the Great Goddess,” I mean the Goddess who is deemed supreme. She may also be called the Cosmic Mother, the Great Mother, or the Supreme Goddess.

<sup>3</sup> I avoid the term “creator” and instead employ “originator,” for the former is conventionally understood as the divine who creates from nothing or from something like mud or soil. Mago provides an initial momentum and maintains cosmic balance for the natural world to self-create and self-evolve.

<sup>4</sup> This book did not get materialized. It was tentatively entitled, *The Mago Hypothesis: Reinstating Mago, the Great Goddess, and Magoism, a Trans-patriarchal Gynocentric Tradition of East Asia (Korea, China, and Japan)*.

<sup>5</sup> By “magocratic,” I mean of a system of government ruled by Magoist shaman leaders. For more, see Chapter 4 in this book.

## CHAPTER THREE

# **A Cross-cultural Feminist Alchemy: Studying Mago, Pan-East Asian Great Goddess, Using Mary Daly's Radical Feminism as Springboard<sup>1</sup>**

*We will succeed in our Quest for Quintessence.*

Mary Daly

Mago is the Great Goddess of East Asia and in particular Korea. Reconstructing Magoism, the cultural and historical context of East Asia that venerated Mago as the supreme divine, is both the means and the end. Magoism demonstrates the derivative nature of East Asian religions such as Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism while redefining East Asian Shamanism to be the religious expression of Magoism.

I encountered the topic of Mago during my doctoral studies. The topic of Mago fell out of nowhere at the time I was preparing for qualifying examinations. I had never heard the name, "Mago." Only when I was able to collect a large amount of primary sources from Korea, China, and Japan, was I awakened to the cultural memory of Mago. I grew up craving the stories of Halmi (Grandmother/Great Mother), a common reference to Mago among Koreans. I had a childhood experience of being in the fairy land unfolded by my



grandmother's old stories. While "Mago" was unfamiliar to most Koreans, S/HE was taken for granted in her many other names such as Samsin (the Triad Deity) and Nogo (Old Goddess) and place-names such as Nogo-san (Old Goddess Mountain) and Nogo-dang (Old Goddess Shrine).

A Korean scholar, on a casual occasion, gave me a book entitled the Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City). He may have intuitively foreseen that I would make use of it sooner or later. The Budoji is an apocryphal text that describes the genesis event of Mago and her paradise called Mago-seong (Mago Stronghold) and an ensuing deployment of pre-patriarchal Korean history, thitherto unheard of. Upon my first reading of the Budoji, I was more confused than enlightened, but I felt drawn into and embraced by its mythic, historical and poetic language. I was already far along the path before I realized I was truly immersed within it! An ark of treasure emitting a pristine aura was laid before me, though I was too bedazzled to see within. Mago was there, shrouded in her old garments, seemingly obsolete, but a full and complete presence.

I was tongue-tied for a while. But I did inquire about Mago among Koreans. I learned that Mago was recognized by contemporary Koreans, marking the modern revival of Magoism. A movie entitled "Mago" was being made. A newly formed feminist musical band named itself "Mago." A tea house named the "Mago Cafe" further enforced the reality that there was a pride and understanding of her existence. Foremost, I was surprised by the fact that a large number of Mago stories were available both online and as written documents. Many stories that depict Mago as the nature-

shaper of local landscapes such as mountains, rocks (including dolmens and megaliths), seas, villages, streams, stone-walls, and caves, were still told by the elders in small villages of Korea. I also found historical materials that mention Mago not only from Korea but also China and Japan.

I brought up the subject of Mago to my advisors in time to propose a topic for my dissertation. This topic was barely known to anyone in academia. I was able to put together a bibliography with a considerable amount of source materials for my dissertation proposal. Secondary sources were, albeit small in number, also gathered. That marked the beginning of my study of Mago.

I had another dissertation topic at that time. In fact, my thitherto prospective topic was Mary Daly's feminist religious thought. Daly's feminist thought had been my guiding light ever since I first read the *Beyond God the Father* in the early 1990s. I encountered Mary Daly's post-Christian thought when I was on the brink of Christianity. I had been a member of Maryknoll Sisters, an organization that opened up to me the possibility of cross-cultural living. Though I dedicated myself to implementing Christian ideals, all I could see was the necrophilic "foreground," a world dictated by patriarchal institutions and ideologies.

Feminist theology was self-transcending to me. I was unafraid of going beyond the boundary of Christianity and its God. Female subjectivity of which I was now conscious no longer held male subjectivity "neutral" or "objective." My take of female subjectivity, however, needed to peel off another

layer of ethnocentrism, Sinocentrism in East Asian Studies and Eurocentrism in feminist studies. I began to re-orient myself to the new reality, “the Biophilic Background,” to borrow Daly’s term, by affirming myself, a Korean feminist, and all Others rendered as “inferior” by the patriarchal and/or Eurocentric self.

I was a self-motivated feminist learner. I had spent four years alone in reading or rather soaking in Daly’s books after withdrawing from Christianity. I translated Daly’s first two books as well as one Eco-feminist book edited by Diamond and Orenstein into Korean during that time. It was a time of self-birth as a woman-identified woman. I de-educated myself from patriarchal knowledge and ethics and spent time to re-establish my relationship with my mother.

The process of de-education took place inwardly while I was reading feminist books, keeping my daily journals, and practicing meditations including physical activities such as walking and stretching. These were the things that I had already been doing. What was new to this period was that I chose things that I wanted to do especially with my body and senses. I practiced *gukseon-do* (a Korean traditional mind and body exercise, equivalent to yoga) on a regular basis and took art lessons including fine art and calligraphic painting. I took time in nature visiting mountains, parks, and Buddhist temples.

I reflected upon my mindset to see if I was still feeding the conceptual habit of self-defeat imposed upon women by patriarchal religions and cultures. For example, I probed to see if I was still under the influence of the so-called “feminine virtues” of dependency, obeisance, and silence. For quite some

years, I was caught in raw emotions of anger and grief. Nonetheless, I knew, even then, that those emotions were there to help me build myself as a life-affirming existence. Any practice that was necrophilic was something that I disassociated myself from and avoided.

Mary Daly was an essential figure in shaping my feminist consciousness, which eventually evolved to my reconstruction of Magoism. More than that, she helped me find women's studies graduate programs in the United States. That is how I was able to begin the graduate program of Women's Studies in Religion at the Claremont Graduate University (CGU), California.

The years of my graduate studies allowed me to quench my thirst for knowing feminist scholarship of the old and new. I was less interested in feminist studies as a matter of career development than as a commitment to myself. I was a misfit for the traditional job market, though I did not know this at the time. My cross-cultural experience of living as a member of Maryknoll Sisters had shaped my aptitude to self-guided learning. I saw life and work as a unified reality. Intellectuality without spirituality found no purpose for me. I was exploring the meaning of knowing and learning for a Korean feminist, to showcase an alternative feminist mode of subjectivity to the Eurocentric counterpart. The scholarship that I sought had everything to do with my own cultural and historical identity. I naturally moved to the area of East Asian studies. At last, I enrolled myself in another M.A. program in East Asian Studies at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) some years after earning my Ph.D. degree from CGU.

Only then did I learn that what I sought was nothing other than the Way, a religious ideal for traditional East Asians. A focus on East Asian studies enabled me to recognize the significance of the Way, upheld by East Asians regardless of one's religious affiliations (Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism) or social status. In studying Mago, I was able to find evidence that the Way originated from Mago. Furthermore, I learned that the veneration of Mago, often referred to as different names such as the Heavenly Deity or the Triad Deity, shaped the landscape of East Asian religions and cultures. In short, I had sought the Way and found it in Magoism.

In Magoism I came to understand my own journey in a new light. Beneath my Christian identity, I was an East Asian set out on a historical and cultural journey to seek the Way. Put differently, beneath my Christian identity, there was my East Asian cultural and historical heritage that led me to choose the life of a cross-cultural Christian missionary.

As a Christian, I had relished a wide range of meditation methods of the West and the East by practicing them one by one. My love of Zen Buddhism and Daoist thought such as the *Zhuangzi* and Laozi's teachings continued to extend to the spiritual teachings of Catholic saints both male and female. They were the stepping stones that helped me cross over to Magoism.

It became evident that I was to write about Mago for my doctoral dissertation. The time was ripe. My advisors approved my proposal with the request that I needed to have five members instead of three in my dissertation committee

because no one could oversee the project that I was undertaking. I duly embarked on my research on Mago. It was a long and winding journey to arrive in the place where I was supposed to be in the first place. I was returning home with Mago.

What motivates one's scholarship determines its method and end. Any compromise would be detrimental to goddess studies. The conventional method forged to explain a dynamic of the so-called world's great religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam forecloses a study of goddess in her own context because they are inherently patriarchal devoid of the great goddess by definition while hijacking the female principle. In the case of Mago studies, a Daoist approach to Mago, as She is known as a Daoist goddess of immortality, fails to articulate her pre-Daoist origin and her pre-patriarchal manifestations.

Furthermore, the female principle of Magoism undercuts the androcentric underpinning of major East Asian religions such as Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, subscribed by the Sinocentric premises. Bringing light to the submerged history of pre- and proto-Chinese Korea, Magoism redefines the Korean identity as gynocentric. By extension, the conceptual grid of modern nationalism proves to be inadequate in assessing the transnational manifestation of Mago's supreme divinity. Magoism is pre-nationalist in origin and demonstrates the historical evidence of gynocentric supra-nationalism (note to supra-nationalism: a conceptual device to undo nationalism).

When all is said and done, my reconstruction of Magoism is owed to Mary Daly's radical feminism, which elicits the Background Reality, reversing the reversed, the patriarchal foreground. Without Daly's radical feminism, the mytho-historical-theological layout of Magoism would not have been possible. Originating in pre-patriarchal, that is pre-Chinese, times, Magoism rewrites the gender-principle of Korean and East Asian civilizations and renames East Asian patriarchal civilizations pseudo-Magoist. Daly's radical feminist methodology constitutes the backbone of the Magoist methodology of East Asian feminism.

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### Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup> This essay was first published in *Feminism & Religion* (June 26, 2012) [<http://feminismandreligion.com/2012/06/26/a-cross-cultural-feminist-alchemy-studying-mago-pan-east-asian-great-goddess-using-mary-dalys-radical-feminism-as-springboard-by-hye-sook-hwang/>].

# SECOND PASSAGE: MAGOISM AND OLD KOREA





## CHAPTER FOUR

# Issues in Studying Mago, the Great Goddess of East Asia: Primary Sources, Gynocentric History, and Old Korea<sup>1</sup>

Mago refers to the Great Goddess from East Asia whose tradition has been largely forgotten or unrecognized in the course of patriarchal history. The topic of Mago has never been treated in its own right in mainstream academia of the West and the East. It has been rendered as “non-data.” Nonetheless, I have documented a wealth of primary sources from Korea, China, and Japan. In analyzing and theorizing what is implied in these sources, I have unveiled an organically supported cultural matrix that venerates the Great Goddess who is addressed as Mago and named it Magoism. While the term “Magoism” is my coinage, its concept proves to be ancient in origin. Magoism is explicitly and implicitly referred to as “the Origin of Mago,” “the Principle of Mago,” “the Affair of Mago,” or simply “Mago” in various texts. At one level, Magoism connotes the trans-patriarchal cultural matrix of East Asia in which East Asian women have held religious and political authority. In that sense, revivifying Magoism restores East Asian female agency, which has been underrepresented and misrepresented within East Asian, patriarchal, and/or Euro-American ethnocentric discourses. However, that would

be only a myopic perspective in the light of what Magoism connotes as a whole. Magoism stands for the whole view wherein parts are all symbiotically interconnected. It enables the pre-divided unified consciousness that originates from the Creatrix. Put differently, Magoism refers to the world-wide manifestation of the gynocentric cultural matrix that is derived from the knowing of the Great Goddess.

This chapter introduces a gamut of Magoist primary sources collected from Korea, China, and Japan, and reconstructs the mytho-history of Magoism from the perspective of Old Korea. The pan-East Asian existence of the Magoist literature comes across as surprising if not anomalous, because official historiography of East Asia does not even hint at a transnational gynocentric unity in ancient times.<sup>2</sup> Despite that, evidence of transnational Magoism substantiates that East Asian peoples were under the same culture for a significant period of time. Transnational Mago folklore suggests that the East Asian peoples of Korea, China, and Japan thrived under the political and cultural banner of Magoism for a long time in pre- and proto-patriarchal times.<sup>3</sup>

Characteristically, primary sources suggest the primacy of Korean Magoism. Magoist sources from Korea outnumber her counterparts. Also, Korean sources are concerned with Mago as the Great Goddess and the coherent mytho-history of Magoism. The *Budoji* (Epic of the Emblem City), an ancient Sillan testimony to Old Magoism,<sup>4</sup> places ancient Silla (57 BCE-953 CE) of Korea as a champion of Old Korea. By “Old Korea,” I mean Magoist peoples and the confederacies of East Asia who are pre- and supra-nationalist and multi-ethnic. The

root “han” in Hanguk (State of Han, Korea) connotes the Magoist origin of Korea. Linguistically, it is a polysemic term whose meanings include “one,” “big,” “great,” “same,” “full,” “middle,” “good,” or “outward.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Korean corpus systematically portrays the Great Goddess/Mago as progenitor, cosmogonist, and ultimate sovereign, while its Chinese and Japanese counterparts obscure the feature of the Great Goddess. Neither Mago’s provenance nor the mytho-history of Magoism is explicitly addressed in the latter two sources. It is implausible to trace the coherent nature of Magoism with the latter two sources alone.<sup>6</sup>

Why do Korean sources attest to Magoism, whereas Chinese and Japanese counterparts obscure it? This question is crucial, leading to nothing less than a rewriting of pre- and proto-Chinese Magoist mytho-history from the perspective of Old Korea. This study maintains that Old Magoists, later known as ancient Koreans were not only the creators of pre- and proto-Chinese [read patriarchal] magocratic [read Magoist theocratic] civilizations but also the bearers of Magoist sovereignty to the ancient gynocentric world. Old Magoism and the mytho-history of Old Korea are inextricably intertwined. It is not surprising to note that BOTH have been subjected to erasure and erosion by East Asian patriarchal ideologues. Such assessment may be unthinkable within the scholarly circles of Sinocentric [read patriarchal/ethnocentric/nationalist] mythography and historiography. The mytho-history of Magoism offers an alternative paradigm by way of mapping out a gynocentric consciousness with which Old Magoist Koreans kept at bay patriarchal advancements. In sum, the mytho-history of

Magoism shows these two points: What the Origin of the Great Goddess is and how the mandate of Mago Bokbon (Return to Mago's Origin) is carried out over the course of time.

### **Primary Sources of Magoism**

The Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City) and the Handan Gogi (Old Records of Han and Dan), which I deem the two major texts of Magoism, reemerged in the twentieth century. My first acquaintance with the Budoji, an extraordinary text allegedly written in the late fourth or fifth century CE, opened my eyes to the unusually cogent and systemic narrative of Magoism.<sup>7</sup> In its complex and sophisticated language, the overt gynocentric principle that runs through this epic text immediately caught my attention. My fascination with the Budoji increased as I learned that the Budoji was the first and only “extant” book of fifteen books entitled the *Jingsimmok* (*Encyclopedia of Illuminating Mind/Heart*), all possibly written/compiled by the same author(s).<sup>8</sup> The titles of the *Jingsimmok*'s individual books indicate a broad range of such topics as musicology, astronomy, mathematics, calendar, history, geography, rituals, healing and medicine, agriculture and silk production, pottery making, and others. The Budoji takes paramount place in the collection of fifteen books for its intelligible story of the cosmic and terrestrial beginning of the Creatrix, followed by the mytho-history of the oldest magocratic confederacies.

Intrigued by the Budoji, I began to seek out a larger corpus of Mago texts around 2002. The results were beyond

expectation.<sup>9</sup> I soon learned that Mago literature exists not only in Korea but also in China and Japan. An abundance of primary sources was discovered in various genres such as myths, toponyms, folktales, sagas, poetry, and art. Revealing was the evidence of Magoism within the historical and religious texts from these countries. With that, it was not difficult to find a link to another unusual text, the Handan Gogi, a collection of five texts that provides the chronology of the pre- and proto-Chinese mytho-history of Korea.<sup>10</sup> The Handan Gogi, although different in nature, accords with the Budoji's mytho-history of Magoism.

I have classified the primary sources that I collected into the following five categories:

- (1) The Budoji and the Handan Gogi, both of which were translated and published in modern Korean in the 1980s;<sup>11</sup>
- (2) Folktales and toponyms from Korea, China, and Japan;
- (3) Mythic accounts from the *Samguk Sagi* (*History of Three Three Kingdoms*) and the *Samguk Yusa* (*Memorabilia of Three Kingdoms*), the alleged oldest books of Korea by mainstream Korean Studies;
- (4) Folklore including sagas, literature, art, and miscellanies from Korea; and
- (5) Daoist texts, toponyms, and folklore including legends, art, and miscellanies from China.

There is no subtleness that the Budoji and the Handan Gogi attest to the lost mythology and history of Magoist Korea. The Budoji, a yet-to-be known wondrous epic, depicts the cosmic beginning of the Great Goddess, followed by the ethno-genesis of the Mago Clan and the mytho-history of East Asians. Its thirty-three chapters envisage a panoramic mytho-history of Old Magoist Korea from its beginning to its flowering and decline. In contrast to mainstream academics, independent scholars and amateur historians have taken these books seriously.<sup>12</sup> A commentary of the Budoji has been recently published by Thomas Yoon in English as well as Korean.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, commentaries on the Handan Gogi have mushroomed since its first appearance in Korean. Among them is Ilbong Yi's work, which I find a good resource for my study of Mago. His work has merit in providing ancient Chinese historical and mythological texts to support the mytho-history of Old Korea.<sup>14</sup>

Over three hundred folktales and toponyms were collected from Korea by 2007.<sup>15</sup> Orally transmitted stories, with the exception of a small number documented in the *Hanguk Gubi Munhak Daegyae* (*A Survey of Korean Oral Literature*), have not been systematically compiled by scholars.<sup>16</sup> Magoist toponyms include Mago-san (Mago Mountain), Mago-am (Mago Rock), Mago-seong (Mago Stronghold), Mago-dong (Mago Village or Cave), and others.<sup>17</sup> Sources from Japan mark only four entries at first.<sup>18</sup> Later I added a number of art pieces, place-names, and indirect materials from Japan. While more is expected from Japan, Japanese sources are no less pivotal in piecing together seemingly isolated Magoist data across time and

geography. The Chinese corpus is, despite its fragmentary and derivative nature, by no means small or unimpressive. Alongside Japanese sources, Chinese materials provide integral information for the overall features of transnational Magoism in East Asia. My collection from China includes substantive Daoist texts as well as hitherto unknown folklore, toponyms, art and literature. Magu (as it is pronounced in Chinese), commonly addressed as “the Goddess of Longevity,” appears as a minor deity in the Daoist pantheon. Magu is sometimes depicted as a maid of Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West), known as the cosmic mother in Daoism. However, Chinese portrayals of Magu in general are not consistent. They adumbrate the pre-Daoist origin of Magoism. In short, Magu remains more obscured than revealed in Chinese Magoism.

The fact that Mago is mentioned in the *Samguk Sagi* and the *Samguk Yusa*, two major historical texts of Korea by the standard of mainstream Koreanists, is indicative of the very old nature of Magoism. Referred to as Nogo (老姑, Ancient Goddess) or Nogu (Crone or Ancient Goddess), Mago is no longer invisible in these texts. By pointing out the extensive records of Nogu in these texts in association with the imperial or heroic myths of Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo, ancient States of Korea, Gwangsik Choe, Korean historian, attributes Nogu to Samsin (Triad Deity). Choe reports that the records of Nogu disappear from these texts around the fourth and fifth century CE. In the case of Goguryeo, it is after the reign of Sovereign Micheon (r. 300-331), in the case of Silla the reign of King Soji (r. 479-500), and in the case of Baekje the reign of King Dongseong (r. 479-501).<sup>19</sup> Based on Choe’s research, it is

inferred that that a direct association of Magoism with royalty was purged from the official historiography from the early fourth century (Goguryeo) through the end of the fifth century (Silla and Baekje).

Interestingly, Mago is mentioned in renowned Korean literature and art of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century of the Second Joseon dynasty, which includes the *Suk-hyang Jeon (Tale of Suk-hyang)* and the *Sim-cheong Jeon (Tale of Sim-cheong)*; poetry of Kim Sagot; an anonymous poem engraved on the rock of Nakhwa (Fallen Flowers); a poem by Hong Daeyong; a painting by Kim Hongdo; and miscellanies.<sup>20</sup> However, HER identity is much eroded if not distorted in these sources, resembling the Chinese portrayal of Magu. Given that the mytho-history of Magoism undergoes the Dark Period during the Second Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), these data, on the one hand, demonstrate the survival of Magoism throughout the time of patriarchalization of Korea. They show the transitory process in which Magoism becomes demythologized and trivialized in Korea. On the other hand, they suggest a reverse import/influence of Chinese Mago manifestations. As Second Joseon took pro-Chinese policy, its cultural norm incorporated the Chinese standard. That makes Korean Magoist materials a mixture of diverse Mago manifestations.

### **The Mytho-History of Magoism**

Some archaeologists have advocated an urgent need of using myths and folktales in interpreting “prehistoric” archaeological discoveries where written records are simply absent. According



to Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, archaeologist from Japan, the study of folklore began to be developed as a new method in an effort to pursue “scholarly inquiry” about women in Japanese ancient history in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> This, alongside the method of archaeo-mythology, which Marija Gimbutas advocates in her pioneering work, *The Language of the Goddess*, lends credence to my task of assessing Mago folklore for the reconstruction of mytho-history of Magoism.<sup>22</sup> However, what puts my study in a more difficult position, compared with those of Ikawa-Smith and Gimbutas, is that the pre- and proto-Chinese history of Old Magoist Korea has been systematically obliterated by Sinocentric historiography from ancient times. Insofar as ancient Korean history is subjected to the Sinocentric framework of East Asian history, primary sources concerning Magoism remain as “non-data.” Archaeologies of Old Magoist Korea are semantically precluded.

Assessing Magoist data necessarily entails a reconstruction of the mytho-history of Old Korea from the perspective of Magoism. The backbone of mytho-history of Magoism, that is, from the cosmic beginning of the Creatrix until the sixteenth century of the Second Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) is based on two books, the *Budoji* and the *Handan Gogi*. A more recent history of Magoism, that is, from the seventeenth century to this day is based on folklore, literature, and other texts.

The mytho-historical framework of Magoism that this study reconstructs is meritorious on several levels. First of all, it provides an unbroken outlook of the gynocentric mytho-history of the Mago Clan, that is, the community of earthly

beings, from the cosmic beginning to this day, which explains the derivative nature of patriarchal history. Secondly, it brings limelight on women and female agency within the context of gynocentrism. Put differently, ethnic, racial, or national differences do not become the cause of division or confrontation. This extends to the issue of sex/gender. The Magoist Cosmogony gives an alternative [read non-patriarchal] view of sexual bifurcation of the Mago Clan, which I have discussed in later chapters of this book. Men are seamlessly included in the vision of the Primordial Home of the Mago Clan. Ultimately, the mytho-history of Magoism avails the consciousness of the whole, WE/HERE/NOW, originating from the beginning story of the Creatrix.<sup>23</sup>

More immediately, it pieces together particular manifestations of women and Goddesses from East Asia under the rubric of Magoism. Magoism being the pre-divided cultural matrix of the Great Goddess, it certainly provides a linkage to female-centered traditions in one way or another. From the perspective of a feminist hermeneutic of the Budoji and the Handan Gogi, I posit that women were the primary agents of Magoism. Accordingly, the political/religious leaders of early Magoist polities—from Hwang-gung to Yuin, Hanin, Hanung, and Dangun—are predominantly female shamans. Magoist shaman leaders invented and operated gynocentric socio-political systems in honor of the Creatrix. As champions of magocracy, they reigned for several millennia, if not tens of millennia, prior to the establishment of patriarchal rule in East Asia. That said, I define “magocracy” as a system of government administered by Magoist shaman leaders/rulers in the name of the Great Goddess/Mago. It is the hallmark of

the three confederacies of Old Magoist Korea, Hanguk (ca. 7199 BCE?-ca. 3898 BCE), Danguk (ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE), and Budo Joseon (ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE), also known as First Joseon or Old Joseon.<sup>24</sup>

As is shown in the table below, the mytho-history of Old Magoism and the mytho-history of Old Korea are inseparable. The fact that Magoism and Korea are inextricably tied in archaic times is hidden from modern Koreans themselves. By “Old Magoist Korea,” I mean the religious and political conglomeration of Magoist East Asian peoples in pre- and proto-Chinese times. Magoism gave rise to Old Koreans, while the latter embodied the former. Thus, a mytho-historical development of Magoism necessarily entails a reconstruction of the mytho-history of Old Korea. Magoism stands for the female agency of Old Koreans. Old Magoist Korea embodies the gynocentric agency that is derived from the Great Goddess. The history of Magoism parallels the history of Korean female agency. As women were subjected to rampant sexism under the rule of the Second Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), Magoism underwent the Dark Period.

Most modern Koreans do not have a conscious recognition of Magoism, as Korean society in the twenty-first century is still grappling with the legacy of sexism and colonialism inherited from the previous centuries. Not many are aware that Korean traditional culture, art, custom, language, religions, and archaeology are the extant reservoir of Old Magoism. Korean Magoist sources prove vital to ascertain that Magoism was the overarching socio-cultural system for Koreans until the end of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). The seventeenth century CE

marks a watershed in Magoism, the onset of the darkest time, when the process of patriarchalization of the Second Joseon dynasty took root on the level of culture and society.<sup>25</sup> Magoism thrived until the end of the sixteenth century on a socio-cultural level in Korea. This is something that distinguishes Korea from China, which explains the primacy of Korean Magoist data.

| Periods           | Heroines and/or states   | Major Events  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Mythic            | -Mago Samsin (Triad Deity)<br>-Hwang-gung<br>-Yuin   | -The Paradise of Mago Stronghold<br><br>-The First Diaspora northward and farther migration   |
| Golden or Archaic | -Hanguk (Hanin) ca. 7199 BCE?-ca. 3898 BCE<br>-Danguk (Hanung) ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE                       | -First Magocratic Confederacy<br>-Second Magocratic Confederacy   |
| Budo              | -First Joseon (Dangun) ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE  | -Third Magocratic Confederacy<br>-The Second Diaspora   |
| Post-Budo         | - Silla (57 BCE-935), Goguryeo (37 BCE-668), Baekje (18 BCE-660), Gaya, and other states<br>-Goryeo (918-1392) | -The Third Diaspora<br>-Old Korean States gradually lost the confederate system; Magocracy no longer in power   |
| Dark              | -Second Joseon (1392-1910)<br>-Korea<br>-South Korea and North Korea   | -The Fourth Diaspora<br>-Magoism underwent political and cultural suppression in Korea; Second Joseon lost the major territory of East Asian subcontinent |
| Revival           | -After 1986  | -Magoism partially revives in Korea   |

Figure 3: Six Periods of Mytho-History of Magoism.

Reconstructing the mytho-history of Magoism necessarily reveals the gynocentric history of Old Magoist Korea. Accordingly, the mytho-history of Magoism sketches the territorial landscape of ancient East Asian Magoists from Central Asia to North and East Asia. “Old Magoist Korea” indicates the pre- and proto-Chinese Korean confederacies, which embody Magoism as a religious and political ethos. It is characterized by magocracy in which women represented religious and political authority of Mago, the Great Goddess. The defeat of the confederate political system of magocratic city-states by patriarchal forces historically known as the Chinese presages the erasure and fabrication of the mytho-history of Magoist Korea in Sinocentric historiography. Even after the disintegration of magocracy, Magoism as a cultural and national ethos continued to flourish among Koreans up until the end of the sixteenth century. Koreans underwent the dark period of Magoism when the Second Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) transformed itself into a full-fledged patriarchal nationalist state until the re-emergence of old texts, the Budoji and the Handan Gogi, in the mid 1980s.

I have categorized the mytho-history of Magoism into six periods: Mythic, Archaic, Budo, Post-Budo, Dark, and Revival Periods. Due to the primary Korean data that I have collected, it follows the line of Korean States from the Post-Budo Period on. China is formed in the Budo Period, whereas Japan is formed in the Post-Budo Period. Magoist Korea is transformed into a nationalist state only in the Dark Period.

1. Mythic Period: Refers to the time/space from the cosmogonic beginning until prior to the foundation of

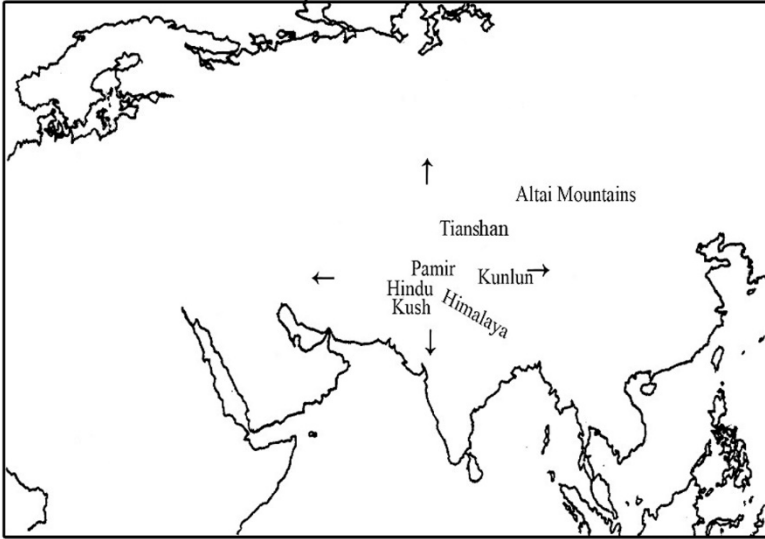
Hanguk, the first confederacy of Old Korea. It concerns the mythic realm in which all is found kindred, originating from the Creatrix represented by the Great Goddess/Mago. It introduces the Whole Story, the One Story of WE/HERE/NOW, enabled by the Great Goddess. According to the Magoist cosmology, the universe is embedded with the power of autogenesis. All owes to the sonic movement of the universe for self-birthing and self-evolving. Self-emerged through the cosmic music, Mago presides over the cyclic movement of cosmic music. The cosmic, galactic, solar, and terrestrial beginning takes place, as the sonic movement of the universe unfolds in harmony. The Mago Descent, the community of the divine, human ancestors, and humans, is responsible for the acoustic balance of the terrestrial community in tune with the cosmic music. Finally, the Primordial Paradise is formed, as Mago Stronghold (Earth) reaches the state of sonic equilibrium. All is kindred and interconnected. Life is everlasting, uninterrupted by physical death.

In due time, however, the Early Mago Clan faces an irreversible disaster. Due to the increase of population, some residents take living beings for food. To save the endangered Mago Stronghold, the elders of the four primordial racial clans have agreed upon living in Diaspora.<sup>26</sup> The mandate of Mago Bokbon is professed by Hwang-gung, the eldest shaman leader of the Early Mago Clan, to Mago that she will remind all peoples of the world of the common origin from the Great Goddess. The Hwang-gung Clan, ancestors of East Asians, migrate northward and subsequently northeastward from the Paradise of Mago Stronghold.

The physical location of Mago Stronghold, the epicenter of the world, remains unknown. Even ancients tend to disagree, e.g., Daoists associate it with the Kunlun Mountains and Buddhists with Mt. Meru. Nonetheless, all possibilities point to the location of high mountains in Central Asia. Budoji scholars, based on the description that “Mago Stronghold was located on the highest place on the Earth,” speculate that the Paradise of Mago, the epicenter of the world, was located in the Pamirs, present Tajikistan (see [Figure 4]), Central Asia, bordered with the western tip of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China.<sup>27</sup> The four primal races of the Mago Clan depart from Mago Stronghold in four directions.<sup>28</sup> Early East Asians led by Hwang-gung (Yellow Vault) settle in the Heavenly Mountains (天山, Cheonsan or Tianshan), north of the Pamirs. Sources suggest that they migrated further north to Siberia and the vast territory of East Asia, and spread out farther.

The Paleolithic Culture of Lake Baikal, eastern Siberia, sheds light on one of the early settlements of the Hwang-gung Clan.<sup>29</sup> Various mythological and archaeological studies agree on the significance of the Paleolithic Culture in Mal'ta adjacent to Lake Baikal as one of the most pivotal Paleolithic sites of the world. Indeed, the migration of early peoples from Mal'ta culture into the Americas and elsewhere corroborates the Magoist mytho-history of early East Asians. Based on the archaeological data, it is inferred that Mal'ta culture, Siberia, is one of the early communities of Magoist East Asians. In that case, a section of the Mythic Period of Magoism can be charted in chronology through the culture of Mal'ta, dated to 18,000-

13,000 BCE.<sup>30</sup>



*Figure 4: Migration of the Four Primordial Racial Clans*

2. Golden or Archaic Period: This period is represented by the two archaic magocratic confederacies, Hanguk (ca. 7199 BCE?-ca. 3898 BCE) and Danguk (ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE).<sup>31</sup> If we can project a later section of the Mythic Period as the Paleolithic within the periodic scheme, this period may correspond to the Neolithic and the early Bronze Age. However, that is not without difficulty in that the onset of Hanguk remains unknown.<sup>32</sup> According to the Handan Gogi, the confederacy of Hanguk comprises twelve states.<sup>33</sup> The Danguk confederacy is composed of nine states. Hanin and Hanung (also Dangun in the next period for First Joseon) indicate both the founder and the title of leader for Hanguk



and Danguk. The Handan Gogi provides chronologies and names of seven Hanins for Hanguk and eighteen Hanungs for Danguk.<sup>34</sup>

The mandate of Mago Bokbon (Return to Mago's Origin) underpins Magoist political and religious systems of the Golden Period. In fact, the notion of Mago Bokbon, the prototypical oath professed to Mago by Hwang-gung, the eldest of the Early Mago Clan, is the paramount teaching of Magoism. Successive Magoist leaders inherited and conducted Hwang-gung's oath, an act which was taken as a sign of the legitimate heir for the throne by the ancient populace. Magoist sovereigns dispatched their princesses and princes as envoys to worldwide peoples. In that light, Danguk is distinguished from Hanguk in that its founder Goma, instead of dispatching envoys, herself traveled worldwide. She was no local hera. Her religion, which I call the Goma religion, was transmitted alongside. She was remembered as the Goddess of the nine symbolism.<sup>35</sup>

Pre-patriarchal Magoism reached its pinnacle during the period of Danguk.<sup>36</sup> Danguk (ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE) is characterized by the civilization of Sinsi (神市, Divine Expo), a pre-Chinese gynocentric civilization enabled by the leadership of the founder Hanung, also known as Goma or Ungnyeo. Given the cross-cultural manifestation of the Goma religion, it is inferred that the civilization of Sinsi was systemic, global, and sophisticated. It is known not only for the invention of such technologies as constructing palaces/temples, ships, and vehicles that displayed unprecedented nautical prowess with which Hanung herself

made itinerant travels to daughter-states. In addition, the foundation of East Asian civilizations including calendarics, linguistics, intellectual discourse, celebrations, social institutions, rituals, domestic and inter-political administrations were developed in this period. The female principle on which it is based lends credence to posit that the Sinsi civilization was one of the most peaceful and dynamic developments in history.

3. Budo Period: Budo (the Emblem City) refers to the religious and political center of Magoism, a replica of Mago Stronghold, the Paradise of the Early Mago Clan. It is another name for First Joseon, also known as Dangun Joseon (ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE). The civilization of Budo is a revival of the previous civilization of Sinsi in nature. However, it is distinguished from its predecessor in some substantive ways. Dangun, the founding sovereign of First Joseon, envisioned a Mecca of Magoism in East Asia. As history ran its course, the gynocentric world was severely interrupted by the newly risen patriarchal regime. From its inception, the magocratic leadership of Budo Joseon faced invasions by the early Chinese polities led by Yao, Shun, and Yu, the allegedly ancient Chinese kings whose lineage was connected to Shennong and Huangdi from an earlier time.<sup>37</sup> People lost the aptitude for understanding the common origin from the Creatrix, which made it dangerous for Magoist envoys to travel across cultures and lands.

The way that Dangun implemented the mandate of Mago Bokbon was to reenact the Paradise of Mago Stronghold within her own territory and invite peoples of the world to

Budo. Structured after Mago Stronghold, Budo provided a virtual paradise for intercultural exchanges and multi-racial co-habitations. The city-centers of Budo were known as the three mountain-isles, also known as three Joseons or three Hans, by later generations. Nonetheless, as First Joseon eventually declined due to the ongoing invasion of the newly risen patriarchal rule led by Yao, Old Magoism disappeared from history. The loss of Budo was long remembered by East Asians. The nostalgic sentiment longing for “Mago” appeared as a salient theme in East Asian religions, art, literature, and cultures. A good number of Magoist primary sources that I collected embody a tantalizing emotion of sadness and love for the bygone history of Old Magoism.

During this period, China was born as a patriarchal regime that threatened the confederate system of Budo Joseon. Nonetheless, it harbingered an irreversible digression in the history of the Mago Clan, which brought the demise of magocracy for good. East Asian peoples went into the period of “warring states” (475 BCE-221 BCE), as the traditional confederate system of Budo Joseon weakened. The Budoji attributes the rise of Yao’s [read Chinese patriarchal] regime to the second “catastrophe of mistaken/patriarchal thinking” in the history of the Mago Clan after the first “catastrophe of five tastes,” which refers to the incident of taking living beings for food that took place in Mago Stronghold. If the first catastrophe brought the consequence of leaving the paradise of Mago Stronghold on the part of the Early Mago Clan, the second catastrophe brought the end of gynocentric confederacy, which exposed people to war and violence without protection. If the first catastrophe was caused by the

increase of population in Mago Stronghold, which was inevitable, the second catastrophe was caused by one man's private desire for the throne out of his misunderstanding of the way of the universe.

The federal system of Budo finally collapsed ca. 232 BCE. The demise of Budo Joseon meant the defeat of Magoist political power. Contrarily, ancient China witnessed the establishment of the Qin dynasty (221 BCE-207 BCE), a full-fledged patriarchal state of China, which was short-lived, only fourteen years. Post-Budo Korean states arose in an attempt to regain the glorious history of their predecessors during the forthcoming millennia. Meanwhile, the Chinese regime grew too formidable for ancient Korean states to overcome and restore the confederacy of Old Korea. Magocracy, gone to the background of pre-Chinese history, faced obliteration by Chinese historiographers.

4. Post-Budo Period: This period corresponds to the time of more than one and a half millennia from the decline of Budo Joseon till the end 14<sup>th</sup> century CE. Post-Budo Korean states mushroomed in an effort to regain the old system of magocracy. From the time of early centuries CE on, as history proves, the expansion of Chinese monarchical regimes successfully impaired the reuniting effort of the post-magocratic Korean States represented by Silla (57 BCE-935 CE), Goguryeo (37 BCE-668 CE), Baekje (18 BCE-660 CE), and Gaya (42-532). Post-Budo Korean States helped Japan to be born. The fact that the Budoji is an epic narrative of early Sillans who called their state So Budo (Little Budo) proves vital to ascertain the magocratic political orientation of early Silla.

Early Sillans, perhaps together with other Post-Budo Korean states, faced a challenge: Outwardly they strove to establish political alliances from the Post-Budo states and at the same time domestically they appropriated the system of monarchy. Post-Budo Koreans struggled between the traditional and the new.<sup>38</sup> While partially importing Chinese institutions, they retained magocratic legacies. Despite the Chinese [read patriarchal state] influence, Koreans held gender-balanced socio-cultural systems until the end of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392).

Magocracy did not leave the heart of people, however. The ethos of nostalgia for the bygone rule of magocracy prevailed throughout East Asia. The *Budoji* (Epic of the Emblem City) recounts that most people forgot “the Affair of Mago” and that “the Principle of Mago” became vain, when the reign of Dangun, also known as Old Joseon (ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE), underwent the process of disintegration caused by the invasion of Chinese rule led by Yao. People’s longing for the return of the Reign of Mago appears in lore as well as written records of Korea, China, and Japan.<sup>39</sup>

The following two accounts, one from a ninth century Tang Chinese poet and the other from thirteenth century Korean folklore, are particularly telling:

Once Miss Hemp [Magu] has gone away, none knows  
when she will come again.<sup>40</sup>

[I]f the Reign of Mago leaves us now, when will it return?<sup>41</sup>

In expressing nostalgia, the above two accounts betray a

substantive difference. The first addresses the disappearance of Mago, as she is perceived as a Goddess of the mysterious origin. The second articulates what has been lost, “the Reign of Mago.” Among pre-modern Chinese intellectuals, as the first account indicates, Magu remains more obscured than clarified for her origin or identity. For example, HER supreme divinity is eroded or replaced by other deities such as Nuwa and Xiwangmu in Daoism and Chinese folk religions. As China gains hegemony in the course of Post-Budo history, Chinese and Daoist perceptions were imported in reverse to Korean intellectuals especially in the Dark Period of Magoism.

5. Dark Period: This period marks from the onset of the Second Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) until the mid 1980s when the Budoji emerged in Korea. Anti-traditional and anti-women policies were taken by pro-Chinese administrators of Second Joseon who espoused Neo-Confucianism as state ideology. The legacy of Magoism was purged from the public domain. The mythic literature of Mago was secularized if not demonized. Mago folktales were despised as meaningless or ridiculous stories of the unsophisticated. The remnants of ancient historical records were further obliterated. Korea was transformed into a full-fledged patriarchal nation-state, subservient to China.<sup>42</sup> Until today Korean culture staggers from the stranglehold of rampantly sexist Neo-Confucianism.

6. Revival Period (from 1986): The publication of the Budoji in modern Korea marks the watershed for a new era in which Magoism begins to resurface in Korea. Some Korean folklorists took Mago folktales seriously. Cultural events, literary writings, as well as village rituals were revived and

reinvented for the last three decades. The year 2002 saw the production of the film *Mago*, which nonetheless did not appeal to the public, to say the least.<sup>43</sup> Independent scholars began to publish their exegeses of the Budoji and the Handan Gogi in various ways including websites and public lectures.<sup>44</sup>

### **Beyond Nationalism/Ethnocentrism/Colonialism**

The mytho-history of Magoism illumines not only the common ancestry of all peoples to the Great Goddess but also the formation of East Asian nation states. My reconstruction of the Magoist historical scheme combines two working chronologies: One is the mythic pedigree of Mago recounted in the Budoji and the other the chronology of Old Korea as well as China and Japan based on the Handan Gogi. I have conjoined them in a coherent chronology (see [Figure 5]). This is only a working model, which is subject to modification upon further study.

According to my interpretation of the Handan Gogi, Old Koreans refer to the people of “Han” and “Dan,” which also indicate the two oldest confederacies of Magoist States, Hanguk (State of Han) and Danguk (State of Dan). They are sometimes referred to as “the people of the Giant State” in Chinese records. However, they are more often obliterated than remembered in Sinocentric East Asian history. Neither the history of Han and Dan nor the cosmogony of Mago has survived in Sinocentric history of East Asia. Nonetheless, Chinese records could not completely remove the trace of Old Koreans. From the perspective of Magoism, I posit that Dong-

i (東夷, Eastern Peoples of Archery) and Gu-i (九夷, Nine Peoples of Archery), whose meanings later changed to the “non-Han-Chinese barbarians,”<sup>45</sup> are colloquial references to Old Koreans by the Chinese. These terms, Dong-i and Gu-i, suggest an ancient enforcement of Chinese nationalist/ethnocentric [read patriarchal] ideologies.<sup>46</sup>

The Magoist chronology of East Asian politics exposes the derivative nature of East Asian nation-states from Old Korean Magoism. Labeling this study as a nationalist endeavor is inadequate for two related reasons. First of all, nationalist perspectives are inherently flawed in accessing Magoism. This study shows that not only national identities but also national geographic territories were differently configured in archaic times of East Asia. Viewed from nationalist and androcentric perspectives, the pan-East Asian corpus of Magoism appears as non-data. In short, a patriarchal/nationalist view is misleading in investigating the pre-patriarchally originated tradition of Magoism.<sup>47</sup>

Secondly and more importantly, Old Magoism, as testified by ancient Korean Magoists, contests an establishment of nationalist/ethnocentric regimes. The Budoji is poignant in denouncing the establishment of Yao’s rule [read Chinese rule], a precursor of the nationalist/ethnocentric state, calling it the second greatest disaster in history. The formation of Yao’s regime is nailed as private and arbitrary [read nationalist or ethnocentric] and therefore it is morally and politically wrong. In this sense, I regard Old Magoism as fundamentally feminist as well as gynocentric.<sup>48</sup> Ancient Magoism advocates a radical



| Mytho-history of Magoist East Asia |   |  |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
|                                    | Korea/East Asia   |  | China   | Japan  |
|                                    | Periods   | Founders/Sovereigns  |   |  |
| Divine Mother Ancestors            | Mythic period, Mago Stronghold  | The Mago Triad<br>Eight Goddesses<br>(Three Deities and Five Sovereigns)<br>Nine Mago Creatrix                     | Mythic period   | Mythic period  |
| Yellow Gung                        | Post-Mago Stronghold period   | Hwanggung<br>Yuin  | Paleolithic period  | Paleolithic period   |
| Nine Hans (Korea/East Asia)        | Hanguk, 12 state confederacy (7199?-3898 BCE)   | Hanin  | Neolithic period (c. 8500-2070 BCE)   | Jomon period (10,000-300 BCE)  |
|                                    | Danguk or Sinsi, 9 state confederacy (3898-2333 BCE)  | Hanung or Goma   | Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors  |  |
| Formation of China                 | Joseon or Budo, 3 state confederacy (2333-232 BCE)  | Dangun or Imgeom   | Xia (c. 2070-1600 BCE)<br>Shang, (c. 1600-1046 BCE)<br>Zhou (1046-256 BCE)<br>Spring and Autumn period (722-476 BCE)<br>Warring States period (476-221 BCE) | Yayoi (900 BCE-250)  |
|                                    | Buyeo (239 BCE-494)   | Haemosu (Yuhwa)  | Qin (221-206 BCE)<br>Han (206 BCE-220 CE)   |  |
| Formation of Japan                 | Silla (57 BCE-935)<br>Goguryeo (37 BCE-668)<br>Baekje (18 BCE-660)<br>Gaya Confederacy (43-562) | Bak Heokgeose (Holy Mother Seondo)<br>Jumong (Soseono)<br>Onjo (Soseono)<br>Gim Suro (Jeonggyeon Mother Sovereign) | Three Kingdoms (220-280)<br>Jin dynasty (266-420)<br>Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589)<br>Sui dynasty (581-618)                                     | Yamato period (c. 250-710)<br>-Kofun period (c. 250-538)<br>-Asuka period (538-710)                                      |
|                                    | Balhae (Daejŕnguk) (698-926)  | Daejungsang  | Tang dynasty (618-907)<br>Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960)   | Nara period (710-794)<br>Heian period (794-1185)   |
|                                    | Goryeo (930-1392)   | Wang Geon  | Song, Liao, Jin, and eastern Xia dynasties (960-1234)<br>Yuan dynasty (1271-1368)   | Kamakura period (1185-1333)  |
|                                    | Joseon (1392-1910)  | Yi Seonggye  | Ming dynasty (1368-1644)<br>Qing dynasty (1644-1911)  | Muromachi period (1333-1568)<br>Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600)<br>Edo period (1600-1868)<br>Meiji period (1868-1912) |

Figure 5: Mytho-History of Magoism and East Asian States.

form of feminism that opposes the aggression of patriarchal/nationalist regimes. The Budoji does not describe early Sillan Magoists as hopeless idealists who insisted on the return of the lost magocracy. On the contrary, they accepted *national* identities in coping with nationalist ideologies.<sup>49</sup> In the case of early Sillans, supra-nationalism is not a mere rejection of nationalism but a nation-based mechanism that impairs nationalism. By “ancient Magoist Koreans,” I mean a religious and political community of East Asian peoples, that is, pre-and proto-Chinese East Asian peoples who maintained supra-nationalist principles derived from the ancient knowledge of Magoism. Likewise, ancient Koreans were anti-ethnocentric, a Magoist legacy often misunderstood by modern Koreans. Ultimately, a feminist Magoist perspective exposes the origin of nationalism as a by-product, an instrument of patriarchal powers, which rose to disrupt magocratic social order.

This study of Magoism necessarily exposes nationalism that is operating in East Asian Studies. With a few exceptions, many scholars are uncritical of the work of Sinocentrism. Among others, its impact on Korean Studies is huge and detrimental. I find international scholarly discussions on Korean nationalism misleading and doubly oppressive. Koreanists, let alone Sinologists and Japanologists, lacking in an effort to view Korean materials in their own right, often begin their analyses with the presupposition that the history of Korea began under the colonial influence of China and Japan from ancient times. While blindly endorsing Chinese and Japanese nationalism backed by Euro-American cultural imperialist assumptions, they toss out new studies on ancient Korean history and culture, labeling them as “nationalist” and

therefore unreliable and unauthentic.

## Conclusion

How can we define and affirm national and ethnic diversities of peoples in non-hierarchical and non-colonialist ways? This is a crucial question for contemporary feminists to answer. Precisely, Magoism proffers an answer to this question. In fact, the answer has been given to all throughout history. Magoism preserves cross-cultural gynocentric unity by telling the Magoist Cosmogony, the Beginning Story of the Creatrix. It awakens in people the deep memory of the Primordial Home of the Great Goddess, once shared by our ancestors regardless of racial and ethnic differences. The mandate of Mago Bokbon aims at bringing post-paradise clan communities under the original rubric of Magoism. It is pre- and supra-nationalist in dynamic.

According to the Magoist Cosmogony, the evolutionary stage of racial diversification precedes sexual bifurcation. Mago's eight (grand)daughters comprise four primordial races and form the Primordial Mago Clan, the Nine Magos. That is, racial diversification enters in the third generation (Mago's eight granddaughters), whereas sexual bifurcation marks the fourth generation of the Mago Lineage.<sup>50</sup>

Magoism defines patriarchy as not only a derivative of Magoism but also an anti-thesis of Magoism. It is not the original vision of society but a mistaken view of Magoism. As the mytho-history of Mago proves, the establishment of

patriarchal forces is secured by disrupting the gynocentric alliance administered by the confederate government. The rise of patriarchy is incompatible with the mandate of Mago Bokbon. The Magoist Cosmogony has to be forgotten or banned under patriarchy.

The pre- and supra-nationalist underpinning runs through the mytho-history of Magoism. It is predicated on the mandate of Mago Bokbon. Archaic Magoist confederacies of Hanguk, Danguk, and Budo Joseon freshly offer a new consciousness for us to overcome a nationalist/ethnocentric/colonialist ethos. Nationalism/ethnocentrism/colonialism is nothing other than a historical by-product, introduced by patriarchal rulers. The mytho-history of Magoism shows that feminist endeavor to resist nationalism/ethnocentrism/colonialism is old in origin.

Modern feminists can benefit from the mytho-history of Old Magoism. I view the politics of Budo and Post-Budo Koreans as of the feminist prototype. The situation that Old Magoist Koreans faced was not substantively different from what modern feminists face. Old Magoists, especially in the Budo Period, designed and invented their political and religious customs to resolve the problems caused by the rise of male dissidents, which grew into patriarchal regimes in due time. The Magoist task of the Budolese was to flower Magoism while defending it against the expansion of patriarchal political powers. The mytho-history of Magoism tells us that Old Magoist Koreans were successful in keeping at bay nationalist and ethnocentric political forces for a long time.



Figure 6: Magu in Mt. Magu, Jiangxi Sheng, China.  
From The Gazetteer of Mt. Magu, Book 12, Volumes 1-6 (1866).

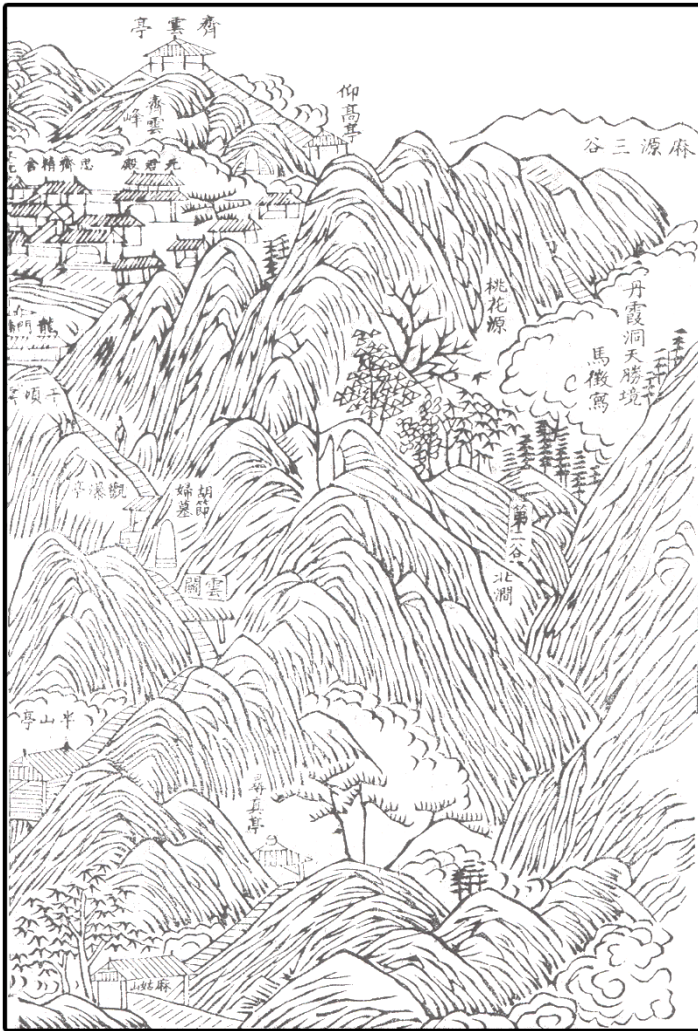


Figure 7: Mt. Magu, China. From The Gazetteer of Mt. Magu. Entrance to Mt. Magu is located in the left bottom corner.

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## Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup> I have revised the original essay entitled, “Issues in Studying Mago, the Great Goddess of East Asia: Primary Sources, Gynocentric History, and Nationalism” to a significant degree. Its original version was first published in *The Constant and Changing Faces of the Goddess: Goddess Traditions of Asia*, eds. Deepak Shimkhada and Phyllis Herman (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2008), 10-33.

<sup>2</sup> I limit my reference of East Asia to Korea, China, and Japan, from which the corpus of Magoism has been collected.

<sup>3</sup> C. W. Sydow’s theory of oicotypification (the same folktale type that is found in different regions), which explains the mechanism of folktale transference from one region to another, corroborates the mytho-history of Magoism that I have constructed. I explicated in detail C. W. Sydow’s theory of oicotypification in my dissertation. To summarize, the pan-East Asian existence of Mago folktales supports two speculations: First, the active story-tellers of Magoism migrated across the subcontinent of East Asia. Second, East Asian peoples were once under the cultural influence of Magoism and then were later subdivided into different nation states. In the case of the Mago oicotype, both scenarios are relevant. See C. W. Sydow. *Selected Papers on Folklore* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 11-59 cited in Helen Hye-Sook Hwang, *Seeking Mago, the Great Goddess: A Mytho-Historic-Theological Reconstruction of Magoism, an Archaically Originated Gynocentric Tradition of East Asia* (Claremont Graduate University, Claremont: CA, 2005), 6-9.

<sup>4</sup> Old Magoism is distinguished from New or Later Magoism in the sense that it is Magoism in pre- and proto-patriarchal times when Magoist shaman leaders/sovereigns held political and religious authority.

<sup>5</sup> See Yongsu Bak, *Gyeoryemal Yongrye Sajeon (the Dictionary of Korean Spoken Language)*, 2166-2167. Also “Hanguk” refers to the first confederacy of Magoism.

<sup>6</sup> I do not suggest that Chinese and Japanese sources are similar in any way. From the limited amount of data from Japan, I infer that Japanese Magoism is more closely tied to Korean Magoism than is Chinese Magoism.

<sup>7</sup> The motivation of my study of Magoism comes from within myself. I embarked on my study on Magoism as I sought my own cultural roots as a self-motivated Korean feminist. See Chapter Five as well as chapters in Part I of this volume.

<sup>8</sup> I suggest that Bak Jesang, the alleged author, and his wife Kim, possibly with their familial members who may have completed it later, are the co-authors of the *Budoji*. See Hwang (2005), 109-114.

<sup>9</sup> Mago was already, albeit limitedly, familiar to the Korean populace in the late 1990s. Various cultural and literary events associated with Mago included a storybook, film, festival, and village ritual by 2002. Numerous folktales of Mago were, besides academic sources, readily available on websites run by such diverse and numerous organizations as province and city information sites, tourist sites, and general interest sites.

<sup>10</sup> The authorship of the five texts compiled in the *Handan Gogi* broadly ranges in time from the mid seventh century CE through the sixteenth century. See Hwang (2005), 118-119.

<sup>11</sup> Bak, Geum. *Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City)*, Eunsu Kim tr. (Seoul: Hanmuhwa [Hanmunhwa?] Press, 2002, c1986). There are three translations of the *Handan Gogi* (桓檀古記, Old Records of Han and Dan). The *Handan Gogi* was first translated into Japanese and published in Japan in 1982. See the *Kandan Koki* (Old Records of Han and Dan), Kashima Noboru, tr. (Pusan: Minjok Munhwasa, 1986; Tokyo: Rekishi to Gendaisha, c1982). My work uses Seungguk Im’s translation of the *Handan Gogi*.



<sup>12</sup> Both the Budoji and the Handan Gogi are largely dismissed by mainstream Koreanists. I have discussed the authenticity issues of these books in my dissertation. See Hwang (2005), 98-101.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Yoon, *The Budozhi: The Genesis of MaGo (Mother Earth) and the History of the City of Heaven's Ordinance* (Notre Dame, IN: Cross Cultural Publications, Inc., 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Ilbong Yi, *Siljeung Handan Gogi (Verified Handan Gogi)* (Seoul: Jeongsin Segyesa, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> When I completed my dissertation in 2004, I had collected over two hundred folktales and toponyms. The number has grown to several hundred as of 2015.

<sup>16</sup> See Hwang (2005), 250-253.

<sup>17</sup> Place-names take up about thirty percent of folktales.

<sup>18</sup> Japanese sources of Mako (as it is pronounced in Japanese) are: Mt. Mako in Miyako, Okinawa; Mako-iwa (Mago Rock) in Yamanashi (山梨縣); and Mt. Mako (麻姑射, Hakoya no Yama) is mentioned in *The Tale of the Heike*, tr. by Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce T. Tsuchida, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), 226. Two entries are stated to connote Mako in the *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (日本國語大辭典, *Japanese Language Dictionary*) (Tokyo: Japan, 1976). First, it refers to the passage from the *Chuang Tzu*. Second, it indicates the Palace of a former emperor.

<sup>19</sup> *Samguk Sagi* and *Samguk Yusa* cited in Gwangsik Choe, *Uri Godaesa-ni Seongmuneul Yeolda (Opening of Our Ancient History)* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 2004), 141-8.

<sup>20</sup> Among these, the *Suk-hyang Jeon (Tale of Sukhyang)* thematically centralizes the providence of Mago who is portrayed as “crone,” grandmother, and the divine for Sukhyang, the main female character. Among miscellanies, included are the *Baridegi*, a Shamanic lyric, and the *Pyo-hae-rok (Logbook of Shipwreck)* by Hancheol Jang in the 1770s.

<sup>21</sup> Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, “Gender in Japanese Prehistory” in *In Pursuit of Gender: Worldwide Archaeological Approaches*, Sarah M. Nelson and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, eds. (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2002), 324-5.

<sup>22</sup> Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess: Unearthing the Hidden Symbols of Western Civilization* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), xviii.

<sup>23</sup> For the consciousness of WE/HERE/NOW, see Chapter Eight in this book.

<sup>24</sup> My dating of the archaic states of Hanguk, Danguk, and First Joseon follows the Handan Gogi. These dates are subject to modification, based upon further study.

<sup>25</sup> Patriarchalization of Korea during the Second Joseon dynasty did not take place immediately after its foundation. The Japanese invasion (Imjin War) in 1592, which caused another war with the Ming dynasty China (Jeongyu War) in 1597 in the Korean Peninsula, escalated the process of Joseon’s sexist Neo-Confucian policy.

<sup>26</sup> According to the Budoji, the four primal human races left for four directions of the world. See Hwang (2005), 164-169.

<sup>27</sup> Budoji, Chapter 1. These scholars include Eunsu Kim, translator of the Budoji, and Thomas Yoon, commentator of the Budoji, among others.

<sup>28</sup> Stories of departure from Mago Stronghold will be detailed in Volume 2 of *The Mago Way*.

<sup>29</sup> The Handan Gogi attributes the geographical locus of the first magocratic confederacy, Hanguk, to the region of Lake Baikal, eastern Siberia.

<sup>30</sup> For more, see Hwang (2005), Chapter 6.

<sup>31</sup> I disagree with the exponents of the Handan Gogi on the naming of the second archaic polity of Korea. While the majority of (male) interpreters congruently name it Baedaljuk or Cheongguguk, I call it Danguk. See Hwang (2005), 197-202.

<sup>32</sup> The suggested date of 7199 BCE is only one of the two postulations (3,301 years) based on the two dates given in the Handan Gogi. It states: Hanguk lasted 3,301 years or 63,182 years. See the Samseong-gi II, Handan Gogi, 27.

<sup>33</sup> In general, discussion of Hanguk is hampered by the paucity of data. The territories of these twelve states appear to cover large areas of North and East Asia and part of Central Asia. Some names of these twelve states are phonetically akin to Sumer and Ur. See Hwang (2005), 194.

<sup>34</sup> Handan Gogi, 27; 44.

<sup>35</sup> For the cross-cultural manifestation of the Nona-Mago symbolism, see Chapter 7 in this book.

<sup>36</sup> These envoys (Magoist priestesses/shamans, predominantly female) may be known as “Goddesses” in other cultures. For the discussion of Tiamat in the Sumerian myth, see Hwang (2005), 214-218.

<sup>37</sup> The Handan Gogi mentions the early heroes of China such as Fuxi, Shennong, and Huangdi as descendants of the royal lineage of Old Magoist Korea in the fourth millennium BCE. See Hwang (2005), 237-239.

<sup>38</sup> Political leadership of early Silla faced two opposite positions, the adherents to Magoist tradition (traditional pro-Magoists) and the followers of Chinese political models (reformed pro-Chinese Magoists). Nonetheless, the traditionalist pro-Magoists appear to have held strong influence until the end of seventh-century Silla, when two female sovereigns were consecutively enthroned. See Hwang (2005), Chapter 7, for more discussions.

<sup>39</sup> For further discussion, see Helen Hye-Sook Hwang, “The Female Principle in the Magoist Cosmogony” in *Ochre Journal of Women’s Spirituality* (Fall 2007), 5-6.

<sup>40</sup> Ts’ao T’ang (Tang poet) cited in Edward. H. Schafer, *Mirages on the Sea of Time: The Taoist Poetry of Ts’ao T’ang* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 98.

<sup>41</sup> It is reported that this folk lyric (阿也麻古之那) was widely sung during the late period of Goryeo. As the character “go” in Mago is written as 古 instead of 姑, it may be subjected to a different interpretation. However, it is not rare that the character “go” is replaced by other characters such as 高, 故, 固 indicating Magoist place-names including Go-seong (Mago Stronghold). See the *Goryeosa (Chronicle of the Goryeo Dynasty)*, vol. 36, Sega, King Chunghye, cited in *Go Joseon-ui Jonggyo Hyeok-myeong (The Religious Revolution of Old Joseon)*, Jungpyeong Noh. (Seoul: Daehan, 2003), 130.

<sup>42</sup> The anti-traditional Neo-Confucian transformation of the Second Joseon dynasty at the end of the fourteenth century is explicated in Martina Deuchler’s work, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1992). See also Hye Sook Hwang, “Seong-ui Gwanjeom-eseo Bon Hanguk Yeoksa-wa Jonggyo (1): Goryeo-wa Joseon Chogi-ui Hanguk Yeoseongdeul (Korean History and Religion Viewed from a Gender Perspective (Part I): Korean Women during the Goryeo and early Joseon periods),” in *Segye-ui Sinhak (Theology of the World)* Vol. 52 (Fall 2001), 175-208.

<sup>43</sup> See the film *Mago* directed by Hyeon-il Kang and written by Kyung-ki Jang. Contrary to its advertisement, this film has proven to be a huge failure on several levels. Its patriarchal perspective takes pride in making pornographic cinematography for male voyeuristic consumers. My critique of Mr. Jang’s portrayal of Mago was publicized in Korea through two major women’s newspapers, *Women’s Newspaper* and *Woman Times* as well as *Dong-A Weekly* in May 2002.

<sup>44</sup> For further information, see Hye Sook Hwang, “Hanguk-jeok Yeoseongjuui Sasang-eul Yeongseong-euro Kkotpiugi: Mago Yeosinhak: (Flowering a Korean Feminist Thought: The Study of Mago, the Great Goddess,” in *Yeo/Seong Iron/ (Theory of Women and Gender)* Vol. 7 (2003), 7-22.

<sup>45</sup> Dong-i (Eastern Peoples of Archery) is generally recognized as proto-Chinese East Asian peoples that include ancient Koreans. See Sarah M. Nelson, *The Archaeology of Korea* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 151. The Magoist mytho-history of early East Asia reinstates Dong-i and Gu-i (Nine Peoples of Archery) as proto-Chinese Magoist Koreans. Unlike the Chinese translation of “barbarians,” the character i (夷) in Dong-i and Gu-i is, as some Korean scholars have noted, composed of great (大) and archery (弓). Dong-i is a term of honor rather than denigration in origin, meaning Eastern Peoples of Archery. Ilbong Yi states that Gu-i (Nine States of Archers) also refers to Baedalguk, which I name Danguk, the second oldest magocratic confederacy of nine states. It is also known that Confucius himself addresses Dong-i and Gu-i as the Land of the “Noble Person” (君子) to which he himself wished to return. See Ilbong Yi, *Siljeung Handan Gogi (Verified Handan Gogi)*, 45-7.

<sup>46</sup> Early China is known as patriarchal and patrilineal. K. C. Chang mentions that if China had a matrilineal and matriarchal historical stage, “it must have occurred long before the Three Dynasties [Xia, Shang, and Zhou].” K. C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Harvard University Press, 1983), footnote 1, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Sarah M. Nelson has pointed out the irrelevance of national boundaries in approaching Korean prehistory and writes, “At this stage [the Neolithic] the present national boundaries were wholly irrelevant, and networks of trade and other interaction probably characterized the entire region [of East Asia]” See Sarah M. Nelson, *The Archaeology of Korea*, 109.

<sup>48</sup> Scholars have used such words as “gynocentric” (Adrienne Rich and others), “matristic” (Marija Gimbutas), and matriarchal (Heide Goettner-Abendroth) to provide clear conceptions in their studies of prehistoric

female-centered societies. In my explication of Magoism, I distinguish gynocentrism from feminism. While gynocentrism implies pre-patriarchally originated culture/consciousness characterized by female agency, feminism indicates a derivative nature of its epistemic ontology. As an anti-patriarchal culture/consciousness, it counters the malfunction of patriarchalism. Feminism by definition presupposes a patriarchal disposition. It is not sufficient to employ feminism alone to reconstruct Magoism. Magoism provides an epistemic ontology of gynocentrism, which in turn explains the pre-patriarchal origin of female culture/consciousness. Magoism is based on both gynocentrism (for pre-patriarchal reconstruction) and feminism (patriarchal deconstruction).

<sup>49</sup> I agree with Matilda Joslyn Gage on the formation of nationality in pre-historic gynocentric societies. In other words, national identities are pre-patriarchal in origin. See Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church and the State: A Historical Account of the Status of Woman through the Christian Ages with Reminiscences of Matriarchate* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1893), 32. In Magoism, it is of importance to distinguish national/ethnic identities from nationalist/ethnocentric identities. In pre-patriarchal societies, people are grouped according to national or ethnic identities, all of whom come under the one big group of the Mago Clan, as is indicated in the etymology of Hanguk (State of the One Big Mago Clan). In the mytho-history of Magoism, peoples begin as gynocentric or matriarchal clan communities, which eventually grow to form themselves as a sub-state of the Magoist confederacy. Meanwhile, in the category of nationalist/ethnocentric identities within political communities within the principle of unity, the latter proves to be a patriarchal ethos coupled with ethnocentrism and colonialism.

<sup>50</sup> For the discussion of the four primordial racial clans, see Chapter 7 in this book.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# **Making the Gynocentric Case: Mago, the Great Goddess from East Asia, and HER Tradition Magoism<sup>1</sup>**

The paramount significance of Magoism lies in the fact that it redefines the female principle and proffers a gynocentric utopian vision to the modern audience. Its utopian cosmology is no free-floating abstract idea but imbedded in the mytho-historical-cultural reality of East Asia. I suggest Magoism as the original vision of East Asian thought. Put differently, Magoism is an East Asian gynocentric testimony to the forgotten utopian reality. In the sense that Magoism presents an East Asian gynocentric symbolic system, this study is distinguished from Western and androcentric discourse. Its gynocentric universalism should not be subsumed under the discourse of Western or patriarchal universalism. Magoism prompts an alternative paradigm of ancient gynocentrism that redefines major notions of the divine, human, and nature in continuum. The Great Goddess/Mago is the unifying and at the same time individualizing force in this system. Magoism enables a macrocosmic view in which all individualized parts are organically co-related and co-operating. Underlying the patriarchal edifices, the Magoist principle is the Source from which the latter is derived.

My task is to explicate the Magoist utopian vision within

its East Asian context. Difficulty is manifold. Complexity and immensity warrant an open-ended ongoing assessment. To say the least, this project explores uncharted territory. I draw upon feminist studies, religious studies, and goddess studies and link them with the area studies of Korea and East Asia. Thus, this study is necessarily interdisciplinary and cross-cultural. I have named this study the mytho-historical-theological study of Magoism.<sup>2</sup> One may call this an experimental study that tests out new possibilities seen from an East Asian feminist perspective. This chapter discusses the following three issues: Unveiling Magoism as a trans-patriarchal and transnational reality, reconstructing Korean Magoist identity, and claiming the Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City) as a principal text of Magoism.

### **Unveiling Magoism as a Trans-patriarchal and Transnational Reality**

I begin with defending the legitimacy of naming Magoism as a transnational mytho-historical-cultural system. I argue that at the core of the issue is the gynocentric symbolic system that Magoism embodies. In other words, Magoism is a system that attributes the gynocentric principle represented by the Great Goddess to the (pro-)creative force from which human civilizations are derived. S/HE is both the progenitor and cosmogonist. Magoism encodes the Origin Myth in which Mago is portrayed as the progenitor and the cosmogonist at once. The story of Mago's beginning is the archetypal memory that humans need to re-member for their survival and prosperity on Earth.



The hard fact is that the Magoist female principle is made invisible in modern scholarship. However, the dynamic is reciprocal: The Magoist principle knows of neither the patriarchal ideology of female subordination nor modern Western hegemony. More to the point, Magoism ascribes the female principle to power, intelligence, and equilibrium in ultimatum. Mago is the Way, Heaven, and Source. As such, the Magoist gynocentric principle is antithetical to the patriarchal mind where the female is defined as dependent and derivative. In this regard, it is not surprising that the large corpus of primary data concerning Mago has been left in the dark.

The word “Mago” is the primary defining factor to identify her transnational manifestations in Korea, China, and Japan. This name crisscrosses otherwise seemingly unrelated data including folklore, arts, literature, poetry, and religious and historical records. Such toponyms as Mt. Mago, Mago Rock, and Mago Cave presently extant in Korea, China, and/or Japan further substantiate the transnational context of Magoism. However, like her multiple manifestations, “Mago” has many derivative names. While “Mago” is the most frequently used, she is also referred to as “grandmother” (*balmi*) or “female immortal/transcendent” (*seonnyeo*). “Mago” is also called “Hwago” (Huagu, flower goddess), “Maego” (Meigu, plum goddess), and “Seongo” (Xiangu, transcendent goddess), all of whom are better known as Daoist goddesses.<sup>3</sup> Korean folkloric sources avail us of other derivative names such as Magu, Magui (demon), Nogo (ancient woman/goddess), Nogu, Gomo (goddess mother), Seolmundae, and Samsin (Triad Deity). These names are distinguished from others in that Mago is

depicted in them as the nature-shaper or progenitor. Like her name, her toponyms have multiple derivatives such as Mt. Nogo and Mt. Goya. Some other names reflect her negotiated and mutated identities. Dense and yet fluid, her many names suggest the enduring and adoptive qualify of Magoism.

In modern times, S/HE is reduced to a cultural fetish associated with immortality in China. This perception proves to be problematic, however, given a close investigation. Mago's origin or identity remains unknowable among the Chinese throughout history. In fact, partial aspects of Magoism are fairly well documented by a group of Daoist scholars in the West. It appears that these scholars whose assessments I will discuss below have paid close attention to the topic of Mago within the context of Chinese Daoism. However, they all arrive at the conclusion that Mago's origin or identity is unknown. Wolfram Eberhard details the list of topological centers such as Mt. Magu or caves of Magu across China as well as fragmented folkloric data to say that even her legends "do not help much in identifying her."<sup>4</sup>

Edward H. Schafer goes further to describe "the cult of Miss Hemp" in his book dedicated to Ts'ao T'ang, poet of the Tang dynasty. Nonetheless, his assessment does not elucidate its pre-Tang history, as it states:

Indeed, a personal cult of Miss Hemp [Mago] flourished in T'ang times, associating her with rocks, mountains, mysterious grottoes. On the level of popular religion her name was given to a cliff at Mount T'ien T'ai, the holy

mountain of Chekiang: The Precipice of Miss Hemp (Ma Ku Yen) was believed to be the very place where she condescended to visit the home of Ts'ai Ching, and in Sung times there was still an old statue of her standing in a grotto there. But in the arcana of Highest Clarity her petrological associations were even more refined: The twenty-eighth of the thirty-six "lesser" grotto-heavens, called "Heaven of the Cinnabar Aurora" (*Tan hsia t'ien*), was believed to lie beneath the mountain in Kiangsi that bears her name, on which the commemorative stele with an inscription composed by Yen Chen-ch'ing was placed.<sup>5</sup>

Schafer's brief sketch helps us recognize a host of Mago data from China within the context of Daoism. What Schafer spells out above is indeed a useful to assess the coherency of Magoist transnational data, a discussion to be made in a separate space.

Robert Ford Company also provides, among other data, some legends from which he observes that her cult is attributed to its existence in Qin times (221 BCE-206 BCE) and even older times. Company estimates that Magu was possibly "a theriomorphic deity (snake-headed) who gradually metamorphosed into a human being."<sup>6</sup> This suggests Magu's origin in the Stone Ages as animal-headed deities are thought to originate in those times. It should be noted that contemporary scholars' assessments of Mago's origin and identity only echo what the ancient Chinese text of Magu represented by Ge Hong (284-364) and Yan Zhenqing (709-785) conveys.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the Chinese have adumbrated but not articulated her non-measurable origin and identity. Furthermore, it is fair to say that the Chinese have anguished

to know about her mysterious origin and identity throughout history.

The Daoist approach to Magoism is ultimately limiting in that “the cult of Magu” antecedes the foundation of Daoism. It may as well be said that Mago has never been fully entrenched in Daoism. Daoism could neither embrace nor eliminate the supreme divinity of Mago. Her situation parallels the Christian conundrum of the supreme divinity of Mary, which could neither be embraced nor eliminated by the church. Unlike Christianity, however, Daoism coped with this dilemma by forging a different name for the great goddess, Xiwangmu, whose origin is also unknown.<sup>8</sup> Thus, that early Daoist schools extensively borrow the central premises of Magoism goes undetected.

Translated as the “Miss Hemp” or “Hemp Maid” in English, “Mago” is further diluted in the West. The logographic meaning of “Hemp Maid” misdirects one’s perception to some sort of a parochial deity from China. Linking hemp with Mago leads the researcher to a meandering dead end. Wolfram Eberhard rightly concludes that hemp is not directly associated with Mago.<sup>9</sup> Logographic meanings of a word are often irrelevant to the meaning of the word itself. It is common that specific Chinese characters are taken to express the sound of the word not its meaning.<sup>10</sup>

An etymological discussion of “Mago” is rather prolix.<sup>11</sup> In sum, I posit that “Mago” is an old word referring to the great goddess: “Ma” in “Mago” refers to “mother” or

“goddess” and “go” to “goddess” or “woman.” Reinstating “Mago” as the great goddess sheds light on the hidden or forgotten meaning of a series of female-identified words. When the old meaning of a female-connoted word is discovered, it in turn brings back the once highly deemed status of women. For example, “go” is known as a female sibling of father or “mother-in-law” for modern East Asians, and is elevated to a goddess-reference within the context of Magoism. This suggests the idea that women in the family were once deemed divine-like beings.<sup>12</sup> Magoism also re-potheosizes the Korean word “halmi,” a favored epithet of Mago. Known as “grandmother” or “crone” for modern Koreans, “halmi” is the old reference to the great mother (*hal* means great and *mi* means mother). This suggests the idea that “grandmother,” “crone,” and “goddess” were closely co-affiliated terms in ancient times.

### **Reconstructing Gynocentric Korean Identity**

Scholars in the West, upon assessing a religion or deity of the non-Western world, tend to pair the topic with a modern nation. Thus, they often project their modern knowledge of the nation or culture onto the indigenous religion or deity they study. Such a methodology betrays the assumption that the modern notion of national identities is time-proven and bias-free. In this process, one’s perception of other people’s cultural expression is molded by Western-made modern knowledge of that people. This kind of knowledge often ceases to exist outside the Western mind. Some especially in Korean Studies go further to say that the religious expression of a non-Western

country in point is colored by the rise of cultural nationalism. Thus, it suggests that a religious expression fostered by nationalist zeal is inauthentic or impure. While such a conclusion is not necessarily wrong, I find it misguided. Done so, it prepares the ground for Western scholars to wield the authority of Western hegemony over the non-Western world. Precisely, it is blind to the fact that no cultural expression in modern times is free from nationalist ethos. Modern life is inherently shaped by the shade of nationalism whether it is in a non-Western world or a Western world. In my view, the question to be asked is: How can we assess a religious expression of a people beyond the modern notion of national identities? Or how can we go beneath the modern notion of national identities in order to assess the religious expression of a people?

I hold that the modern category of national identities in particular causes harm to the study of the goddess. Modern nationalities go hand in hand with the impetus of patriarchal religions that do away with the female principle. There is an unmistakable difference between the male divine and the female divine when their manifestations are found cross-nationally. It is generally assumed that exchange of cultures between nations allows the male divine to be disseminated from one people to another. It is true that patriarchal religions have traveled around the globe and disseminated their gods into other nations. When it comes to the goddess whose worship is widespread across nations, such as the case of Mary in the West, however, this kind of reasoning proves to be inadequate. Antithetical is the idea that patriarchal religions

actively promote the transmission of the great goddess from one nation to the other. Thus, the very perception of the transnational goddess is systematically thwarted in the realm of patriarchal religions. Androcentric researchers may choose to either dismiss as anomalous the topic of the goddess whose manifestation is found cross-nationally or treat her as a local deity severing her from her transnational context. This has been done to the topic of Mago.

While Mago's manifestation exists across the national boundaries of Korea, China, and Japan, it differs in nature, density, and complexity in these countries. Likewise, primary sources also show different traits according to the country. Korean sources surpass her Chinese counterparts not only in number but also in density and complexity. Mago's supreme divinity is essentially affirmed in Korean sources, whereas it is treated as unknown in Chinese and Japanese counterparts. More to the point, the *Budoji*, the principal text that re-emerged in Korea in 1986, asserts that Koreans were the defenders of Old Magoism (Magoism in pre-patriarchal times) against the pseudo-Magoist Chinese regime. How can we understand the primacy of Korean Magoism without resorting to the modern notion of nationalist identities?

To this question, the *Budoji* offers a compelling reading: Korean Magoist identity precedes the formation of nationalist identities. Its mytho-historical account forges Korean identity within the context of Old Magoism. The Magoist universalist principle is predicated on the idea that individualized group identities (polities) co-exist as a unified force on account of Mago being the origin of everyone and human civilizations.

Consanguinity of all peoples is at the root of Magoist universalism. According to the Budoji, tracing Mago's genealogy was a means to uphold Magoist universalism. Mago's genealogy was constructed to affirm the consanguinity of all peoples and their languages in pre-patriarchal times. Being the primal genealogy of the human kind, it reifies the Magoist universalist principle proclaiming the Origin of Mago. The Budoji continues to warrant that ancient Koreans were the orthodox compilers of Magoist chronology.

In the Magoist mythological schema, responsibility and leadership are given to the eldest of the community. The eldest devotes her life to the cause of Magoism. One's sacrificial love for the whole is the hallmark of Magoist leadership. The Budoji focuses on Hwanggung, the eldest grandchild of Mago, the common ancestor of East Asians. Hwanggung is the primal Magoist leader/shaman who set her life as a paragon for forthcoming East Asians to become the oldest civilizers of Magoism.<sup>13</sup> Owing to the leadership of her and her successors, Magoist East Asians were able to become sea voyagers, teachers, philosophers, missionaries, diplomats, astrologists, musicians, mathematicians, and linguists in pre-patriarchal times. They carried out the Magoist mandate to bring all peoples of the world under the unified banner of Magoism. Nonetheless, this undivided identity of East Asian Magoists came to an end in time. Korean identity was perforce forged as the defender of Old Magoism, as Chinese rule rose to overthrow the traditional rule of Old Magoism.

The Budoji makes it possible for us to distinguish Old



Magoism from Later Magoism. Standing at the epochal junction from Old Magoism to Later Magoism, the Budoji bemoans the advent of a degenerative time. In this schema, Koreans are identified as the primary and last witness to the universalist rule of Old Magoism on earth. Ancient Koreans are the ones who remembered their ancestors as the civilizers of Old Magoism (Magoism in pre-patriarchal times). The hallmark of Old Magoism lies in its political agency. Old Magoist polities held theocracy, which I call magocracy (societies ruled by Magoist shamans). Old Magoism gradually declined due to the expansion of the Chinese pseudo-Magoist regimes. The birth of ethnocentrism, colonialism, or nationalism, offshoots of patriarchal rule, characterizes the era of Later Magoism. Although Magoism as a political system disappeared into the shadow of history, its memory lived on East Asians for centuries to come. The nostalgic ethos that longs for Mago or Magoism, sentimentalized in many texts and arts from Korea, China, and Japan epitomizes Later Magoism. Later Magoism conveys people's wish to be comforted in the memory of Old Magoism. As history ran its course, new cultural, religious, philosophical, literary, and artistic tropes began to develop. Later Magoism was widely favored and sustained by spiritualists, intellectuals, and the populace not without the exception of individual rulers and aristocrats.

The Budoji deplors the course of history that runs to degeneration. According to its mytho-historical narrative, two epochal catastrophes respectively brought an irreversible regression in history.<sup>14</sup> The first catastrophe is called "the disaster of five tastes." This is the mythic event referring to eating grapes (living organism) by a member of the Early Mago

Clan. Soon after joined by his/her sympathizers, this event brought a series of consequences. Those who ate grapes left Mago Stronghold out of shame but soon regretted it and longed to return. However, they did not know how. As they dug the ground in search of the milk-spring, which had been the source of nutrition for the divine family of Mago, the milk-spring was destroyed. All peoples now had to eat some form of living organism for food. They eventually lost the state of immortality and had to depart from the paradisiacal residence for the four corners of the world. In this context, Hwanggung, the eldest grandchild of Mago who is the common ancestor of East Asians, made an oath to Mago that She would bring all peoples to the knowledge of Mago's Origin. To remind everyone of this original event and to build unity among peoples of the world was the political and religious purpose of early Magoist polities.

The second catastrophe refers to the rise of Yao's rule, better known as one of the legendary Chinese emperors of highest antiquity. The Budoji depicts Yao as an imposter who imitated the principle of Magoism for his own ambition. Yao's rule aimed to thwart the unified forefront of Magoist polities. This resulted in a confrontation between the traditionally united force of Magoist Koreans and the newly risen pseudo-Magoist Chinese regime. Yao with his successors in time succeeded in disturbing international relations and caused havoc to the lives of ancient peoples. This brought a dispersion of Koreans into peripheral regions in the subcontinent of East Asia.<sup>15</sup> In my view, the Budoji, without regards to modern feminist discourse, makes a gynocentric argument against the

rise of patriarchal rule in East Asia. The Budoji continues to state that, as Magoism lost its political power in East Asia, Magoist Koreans were cast to the mythic realm of the bygone era.

### **Claiming Budoji as the Principal Text of Magoism**

The Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City) stands out from other sources for its systemic and refined mytho-historical account of Old Magoism. Alleged to have been written between the late fourth and early fifth century of Silla Korea (57 BCE-918 CE), the Budoji is the Sillan testimony to the history of Budo (Emblem City), a replica of Mago Stronghold. It is a book that summons ancient Koreans to remember the glorious history of their Magoist ancestors particularly Budo, better known as Dangun Joseon Korea (ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE). Budo's construction and administration in East Asia for nearly two millennia are attributed to the leadership of Imgeom or Dangun. She is the third of the triad sovereigns of Old Magoism after Hanin and Hanung. Designating the civilization of Budo as a direct successor of its previous civilization Sinsi (Divine Expo) attributed to the leadership of Hanung, the Budoji traces the Magoist pedigree of pre-patriarchal civilizations ultimately back to Mago and her paradisiacal community, Mago Stronghold.<sup>16</sup>

Composed of thirty-three chapters, its epical narrative is replete with unheard-of but resonant concepts and symbols such as cosmic music, triad, parthenogenesis, mountain paradisiacal community, genealogy, and so on. Among others,

the Budoji unleashes one most fascinating cosmogonic account yet-to-be-known, the story of Mago's beginning.<sup>17</sup> Mago, emerged by the cosmic music alongside the stars in the primordial time, began her procreation. Then S/HE initiated the natural process of self-creation. S/HE had her offspring procreate and asked them to administer the paradisiacal community in Mago Stronghold. S/HE is the cosmic being who listens to the rise and fall of the cosmic music. The primary task of Mago's community was to produce Earthly musical resonance that corresponds with the music of the universe. The sonic balance between the universe and the Earth is absolutely essential to the survival and prosperity of the earthly community.<sup>18</sup>

The Budoji not only makes it possible to recognize a large corpus of transnational primary sources as coherent within the context of Magoism but also enables the researcher to understand erosion, variation, and mutation wrought on individual data in the course of history. The Budoji's mytho-historical framework is particularly crucial in assessing the large number of folkloric and topological data that are otherwise seen as anomalous or corrupted. For example, the stories that Mago lived in a rock or Mago carried large boulders on her limbs and built megalithic structures find resonance in the Budoji's narratives. Its accounts concerning rocks and landmasses are too complex to present here. Some examples are: Mago began her act of creation by moving and dropping a heavenly landmass into heavenly water; upon death Magoist sovereigns became rocks that made resonating sounds. In short, Magoism animates pre-Chinese history of East Asia

otherwise labeled as “primitive societies.” It entertains the idea that animism and shamanism are not isolated practices but the older religious forms of Magoism.

Nonetheless, the Budoji has an issue of verification for its original account is found nowhere else today. Alleged to have been written by Bak Jesang (363-418?), the Budoji re-appeared in the mid-1980s in Korea in the Chinese written language alongside its Korean translation.<sup>19</sup> According to Bak Geum, its modern scribe and descendant of the last preserver, the original Budoji was lost or made inaccessible due to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the subsequent division of two Koreas up until today. He further states that the Budoji is the first of the fifteen volumes called the *Jingsimmok* (*Encyclopedia of Illuminating Mind/Heart*) whose authorship is attributed to the same author.<sup>20</sup> The *Jingsimmok* had been handed down in different families including the family of the author throughout the generations. Bak was able to reconstruct it almost identical to the original text from his memory of childhood reading of it as well as his translation work of it. According to Bak, he and his forefathers grew up reading and hand-scribing the *Jingsimmok*. Later during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), he translated the Budoji but was unable to publish it.

Having that said, I hold that the issue of unverified authorship does not diminish the present Budoji's value for the study of Magoism. In my view, it is unlikely that modern authors would have written the origin myth of Korea in such a full-fledged gynocentric narrative. More to the point, the mytho-history of pre- and proto-Chinese Korea is not unique

to the Budoji. It is supported by the Handan Gogi (Old Records of Han and Dan Korea) and other “apocryphal texts.”<sup>21</sup> Even the foundation myth of Korea, also known as the Dangun myth, bears witness to the Magoist pre-patriarchal mytho-history of Korea albeit in a much coarser and simplified manner.<sup>22</sup> It is unfortunate that the history of Budo, better known as Dangun Joseon, is treated as a myth that lacks historicity by mainstream historians. In fairness, we may call the Budoji an apocryphal text and its mytho-historical framework a hypothesis. Then, my study takes the task of proving that hypothesis. When Magoism remains invisible in modern scholarship, it is only a corollary that Magoist texts are labeled as apocryphal texts.

To me, the silent treatment given to the Budoji by the majority of Koreanists appears to point to something else. What is tacitly objected to is not its unverifiable authorship. It appears that what is rejected is its untamable content of Korean Magoist identity as well as its historical contention that ancient Magoists laid the foundation for East Asian civilization before the arrival of the Chinese patriarchs. Thus, that Magoism is an antithesis to the Sinocentric and androcentric views of East Asia remains a non-topic for mainstream Koreanists. However, many seem to overlook or ignore the fact that this text is a gynocentric book. The Budoji subverts modern knowledge about East Asian history and culture from a gynocentric perspective. The Budoji is subjected to double biases for its mytho-historical content and gynocentric implication.

I also argue that one's dismissal of the Budoji on account of accuracy is groundless. Bak Geum himself does not pretend that it is the origin version. He admits that a minimal degree of discrepancy is included in his work. Such discrepancy is, however, not unexpected, given that, as Bak indicates, the *Jingsimnok* was hand-copied and studied by its preservers throughout generations. In this regard, it is probable that some renditions occurred prior to its 1986 edition. When it comes to the female-related references, I detect some minor inconsistency in the Budoji to a minor degree and conjecture that previous scribes struggled over the gender implication of the text and altered female-specific concepts and terms into male or neutral counterparts. For this reason, a gender exegesis remains unsettled even in my work. What I draw from this is that these modifications are systematic rather than accidental, which makes it difficult for a gender critic to discern specific gender renditions. At any rate, the Budoji as a whole gives the impression that, while ascribing supreme authority to the Mago triad, Mago and her two daughters, male-gender rose as a major player in the mytho-history of Magoism from the third generation of Mago's genealogy. In my view, this is a misguided interpretation that needs more comprehensive gender hermeneutics.



Figure 8: Nine-headed Kannon. Horyuji, Nara, Japan.  
Wikimedia Commons.





Figure 9: Nine-tailed fox in painting, “Prince Hanzoku is terrorized by a nine-tailed fox” by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861), Japan. Wikimedia Commons.

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## Chapter 5

<sup>1</sup> The original version of this chapter, entitled “Making the Gynocentric Case: Mago, the Great Goddess of East Asia and Her Tradition Magoism,” was published in *She Is Everywhere! Volume 3: An anthology of writings in womanist/feminist spirituality*, co-edited by Mary Saracino and Mary Beth Moser (iUniverse 2012). I dedicate this article to Mary Daly (1928-2010) who has walked with me for the last sixteen years of my journey as Friend and Sister-Sojourner. Her influence is enormous in the formation of my thought on Magoism. I wrote the original article in her presence that death can’t diminish.

<sup>2</sup> See Helen Hye-Sook Hwang (2005), 35-67.

<sup>3</sup> These names are crucial in assessing how Magoism is partly filtered through Daoism.

<sup>4</sup> Wolfram Eberhard. *The Local Cultures of South and East China*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, (1968), 123-6.

<sup>5</sup> Edward H. Schafer, *Mirages on the Sea of Time: The Taoist Poetry of Ts’ao T’ang* (University of California Press, 1985), 94-95.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Ford Campany. *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth* (University of California Press, 2002), 269-70.

<sup>7</sup> Hwang (2005), 335-342; 354-6.

<sup>8</sup> A cross-examination between Xiwanmu and Mago as well as an in-depth study of Daoist Magu sources is an interesting topic to be discussed elsewhere. I have discussed it in part in my dissertation. See Hwang (2005), 353-372.

<sup>9</sup> Eberhard (1968), 125.

<sup>10</sup> For more detailed discussions, see Hwang (2005), 18.

<sup>11</sup> See Hwang (2005), 19-25. Linguistic evidence strongly suggests that “Mago” is associated with ancient Korean people and culture. The phonetic of “ma” not its meaning (hemp) is, according to Jungpyeong Noh, derived from “sam” in Korean, a homonym for “three” and “hemp.” This deliberation hinges on the ideas that Mago is also known as the Triad, Samsin (Triad Deity), and that the etymology of “the Triad” linguistically precedes “Mago.” Noh Jungpyeong (2003), 41. While Noh’s theory that “ma” comes from the homonym “sam” is plausible, it fails to note that the stem “ma” is shared in “mama” or “mother.” Scholars maintain that the stem *ma* indicates not only mother but also goddess. The mother-syllable “ma” is found in many names of goddesses from around the world. Barbara G. Walker. *The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*. San Francisco: Harper & Row (1983), 560-1. Matilda Joslyn Gage goes further to say, “The word ‘ma’ from which all descendants of those peoples derive their names for mother, was synonymous with ‘Creator.’” Matilda Joslyn Gage. *Woman, Church and State*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company (1893), 23. The link between mother and “creator” is corroborated in Magoism whereby Mago is the cosmogonic goddess.

<sup>12</sup> In the Korean language, “ma” or “mama” is a referential term to respect a person of the royal family or high status. Such words are *sanggam mama* for the ruler, king, *daebi mama* for the mother of king, and *ma nim* for a noble lady. See the *Hangukbhak daebaekgyva sajeon (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Korean Studies)*. (Seoul: Eulyu munhwasa, 1991, c1972), 468.

<sup>13</sup> I view the early Magoist leaders/shamans/sovereigns as female. However, other scholars see them as male. I argue that assigning female gender to early Korean forebears recounted in the Budoji is a more cogent measure that befits the gynocentric principle of Magoism. This requires a separate space to discuss.

<sup>14</sup> I have discussed these mytho-historical events in detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in my dissertational research. See Hwang (2005), 128-244.

<sup>15</sup>It is estimated that pre-nationalist Magoist Koreans began in mainland China and gradually migrated eastward to the Korean peninsula in remote antiquity due to the rise and expansion of the Yao (堯) regime. See Hwang (2005), 241-244.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the mytho-history of Magoism, see Helen Hye-Sook Hwang, “Issues in Studying Mago, the Great Goddess of East Asia: Primary Sources, Gynocentric History, and Nationalism” *The Constant and Changing Faces of the Goddess: Goddess Traditions of Asia* ed. Deepak Shimkhada and Phyllis K. Herman (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 10-32.

<sup>17</sup> The Budoji’s cosmogonic account is distinguished from other oral narratives from Korea. Folktales, while describing Mago as the nature-molder, are fragmentary in nature. Nonetheless, central motifs are highly reminiscent of the Budoji’s account. This is a discussion that requires a separate space.

<sup>18</sup> I have treated the Budoji’s cosmogonic account in an article. See Hwang (2007, a), 10-19.

<sup>19</sup> The first edition of the Budoji was published in 1980s by two publishing houses, Gana (Seoul) and Girinwon (Seoul).

<sup>20</sup> Bak Geum states that the fifteen books are organized to the three volumes. He recalls the titles of thirteen volumes including the Budoji. These titles indicate that the *Jingsimmok* is an encyclopaedic compendium that includes such topics as history, language, calendar, religion, astrology, geography, natural science, music, and medicine. For details, see Hwang (2005), 101-102.

<sup>21</sup> Among these books, the Handan Gogi and the Gyewon Sahwa (Historical Account of Gyewon) are counted. While both books are highly debated for their authenticity, I have discussed part of the Handan Gogi. See Hwang (2005), 115-127.

<sup>22</sup> The lineage of Hanin, Hangung, and Dangun centralized in the Dangun myth is concurrent in the Budoji as well as other apocryphal texts including the Handan Gogi. There is a substantive discrepancy between historians and the general public in Korea as to ancient Korean history. While historians continue to treat the Dangun myth and Dangun Joseon as a legendary state, the general public has accepted it as history.

# THIRD PASSAGE: THE MAGOIST CREATRIX



## CHAPTER SIX

# The Female Principle in the Magoist Cosmogony

While such deities as Xiwangmu (the Supreme Goddess of Daoism), Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess of the Japanese imperial family), Matzu (the Goddess of the Sea from Taiwan), and Guanyin (the God/Goddess of Compassion in Buddhism) represent the female pantheon of East Asia, Mago remains barely known to the world. Mago is the “forgotten” Great Goddess of East Asia. This chapter explores the female principle of the Magoist Cosmogony recounted in the Budoji. The Budoji Origin Myth redefines the Female as the principle/way of existence and invokes the deep memory of the Creatrix. Its versatile language, ripe with yet-to-be-heard sublime gynocentric symbols and concepts, speaks of the forgotten, or rather forbidden, story under patriarchy.

In assessing the Magoist Cosmogony, it is necessary to consider some Magoist cosmological assumptions. The Budoji (Epic of the Emblem City) lays out the concept of cosmic time and space in three cyclic realms: Former Heaven (Seoncheon); the intermediary realm called Jimse (Mago’s World); and Latter Heaven (Hucheon). Although the term heaven conveys a spatial dimension for modern readers, it is used to indicate both space and time simultaneously. In other words, the concept of time does not exist in isolation from space. Time is space-bound and vice versa. These three realms, furthermore,

do not represent monolithic concepts of time in which past, present, and future are construed as linearly separate dimensions. Rather, they present the spiraling of time/space evolution. The past, the present, and the future are not static but positional. In this cosmology, we humans live in multi-layered times/spaces. The Magoist Cosmology invites us to Ultimate Reality in which we encounter past, present, and future events simultaneously and in a continuum.<sup>1</sup>

### **Background Information on the Budoji**

As this chapter discusses the first two chapters of the Budoji, I will give a brief synopsis of the text's historical origin. The modern 1986 Korean translation of the Budoji was derived from the notes and memory of Bak Geum (1895-death unknown), a descendant of the alleged original author, Bak Jesang. Bak Geum, as a modern scribe of the Budoji, presents evidence proposing that this book was originally written in the early 5th century. Bak adds that the Budoji is the first of the fifteen volumes entitled the *Jingsimmok* (*Encyclopedia of Illuminating Mind/Heart*), written by Bak Jesang.<sup>2</sup> The original text of the Budoji is thought to have been lost due to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, and thus the 1986 version appears to be the sole surviving text.

My work suggests that one way to validate Bak's testimony is to read the Budoji within the context of a larger corpus of Mago sources, which I listed above. Moreover, I hold that the Budoji should be read from a feminist perspective. The female principle valorized in the Budoji may well appear irrelevant if

not spurious to scholars with androcentric perspectives who deem ancient Korean history and culture as unquestionably patriarchal. In accessing the issue of the *Budoji*'s value or authenticity as a text, one needs to consider the controversy over the history and culture of ancient Korea among non-mainstream scholars and the general public in Korea. To this day, controversy and resistance stubbornly dog the authenticity of the *Budoji*. Under this situation, mainstream Koreanists inside and outside Korea have largely kept silence about the *Budoji* along with the *Handan Gogi* (Old Records of Han and Dan), which I consider as the second major text of Magoism. In order to overcome this tacit resistance, I have endeavored to show how the *Budoji* and the *Handan Gogi* are mutually supportive; moreover, that these two texts are supported by various forms of literature not only from Korea but also from China and Japan.

Despite this silent treatment by mainstream Koreanists, which appears as both passive disinterest and active opposition in regards to both texts, I hold that my historical reconstruction of Magoism based on these two texts has far-reaching implications. It grants a new scheme in which East Asian histories and cultures are viewed in a radically new light from a female gender perspective. In fact, my work coincides with the current trends in Northeast Asia where Chinese, Korean, and Japanese peoples are engaged in the battle of re-writing their nationalist historiographies. I have discussed why my work should not be lumped together with the Korean nationalist view in my dissertation.<sup>3</sup> In my view current knowledge about ancient Korean history and culture—a



product of Chinese and Japanese imperialism as well as pro-Chinese and pro-Japanese Korean sympathizers—is on the verge of disintegration. From the perspective of Magoism, this is an event that has been long overdue. Ultimately, my reconstruction of Magoism contributes to East Asian Studies beyond the realm of historiography. It re-orient East Asian religions such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism as patriarchal offshoots of ancient Magoism. This is a complex discussion that needs a separate space for writing.

The *Budoji* contains commentary proposing that ancient (pre-Chinese) Koreans reanimated Magoism and defended it. It accounts for a coherent historical trajectory of Magoism from the mythic time of the cosmogonic origin, throughout Old Korean (pre-Chinese East Asian) states, until the early centuries of Silla Korea (ca. 57 BCE-935 CE). Its mytho-poetic language conveys pre-patriarchal consciousness, and its multi-faceted holistic view is distinguished by its non-linear, non-hierarchical, and non-monist perspectives.

The first two chapters of the *Budoji* contain only a small part of the Magoist Epic (a total of 33 chapters). I read these two chapters in light of the immediately succeeding chapters, which relate the creation acts of Mago Samsin (the Mago Triad), the procreation of HER daughters and grandchildren, the stabilization of Mago Stronghold, epicenter of the world, and the paradisiacal life of immortal ancestors. I acknowledge that my interpretation of these two chapters is influenced by other materials, including hundreds of folktales that depict Mago as nature-shaper.

## Music as Primordial Creativity

What distinguishes the Magoist Cosmogony from other origin stories is the role that cosmic music plays as part of the Creatrix.<sup>4</sup> According to the Budoji, the beginning of the universe originates from Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones):

In the realm of Former Heaven, the Great Mago Stronghold was located above Sildal-seong (Full Path Stronghold) and in parallel with Heodal-seong (Void Path Stronghold). In the beginning, there was nothing that could be seen but a warm cosmic ray. Only was there to be heard the Music of Palryeo (Eight Tones) from heaven. Sildal-seong and Heodal-seong all came from this music, so did the Great Mago Stronghold and Mago. This realm is called Jimse (Mago's World).<sup>5</sup>

Like the origin myth of female-centered indigenous religions, the Magoist origin story does not describe the “beginning” as creation from *ex nihilo* (from nothing). In fact, readers are introduced to a universe that is existent without beginning or end in *media res* (in the middle of things). The beginning of the Great Goddess begins with a warm cosmic ray. We may call it a galactic beginning of the Milky Way or Our Beginning. The first realm of Our Beginning is called Former Heaven. Amid the primordial universe, the Music of Palryeo arises. Everything – including Mago, Mago Stronghold, and two primeval moons – was born through Palryeo. Palryeo literally means “Eight Tones” (*pal* means “eight” and *ryeo* “tones”).

This cosmic music coincides with the sonic movement of the solar system, comprising the eight planets.<sup>6</sup>

The number eight in Palryeo corresponds with Mago's eight (grand)daughters. In Korean folk traditions, the numerology of eight manifests in such popular mythemes as eight female immortals and eight Mudangs (Shamans). While the iconographic image of pal-seonnyeo (eight female immortals) is still popular in modern Korea (see [Figure 12]), they favorably appear in fiction, legends, and fairy tales. Among them are *The Cloud Dream of the Nine* (seventeenth century fiction) and *The Seonnyeo (Female Immortal) and the Woodcutter* (fairy tale).<sup>7</sup> Also, in addition to the story of Mago who had eight daughters and dispatched them to neighboring islands, the record that eight Mudangs (Shamans) were dispatched to eight provinces of Korea by aristocratic women during the early period of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910 CE) sheds light on the nona-pantheon of Magoism.<sup>8</sup>

It is noteworthy that, in the Magoist Cosmogony, the unfolding of the universe, galaxy, solar system, and the terrestrial community corresponds with the establishment of the Primordial Mago Clan, the Nine Magos. The numeric motif of three, eight, and nine, in particular, reflects the progression of musical entities, cosmic entities, and the Mago Descent.<sup>9</sup> For example, the triad is embodied in the three-fold realms of Ultimate Reality (Former Heaven, Mago's World, and Latter Heaven) and the Mago Triad, whereas the number eight recurs in Palryeo and Mago's granddaughters. In any case, the number nine symbolizes a consummation of the macro and micro-cosmic worlds.

Concerning Yulryeo (Rhythms and Tones), the Budoji shows inconsistency, minor in scale but crucial in implication. Whether Yulryeo connotes a sex/gender balanced cosmic music or another representation of the sonic Creatrix (the female) remains disputable. It is true that, according to Chinese music theory, Yulryeo (Lülü) is designated as a set of twelve sex/gender balanced pitches (six male pitches and six female pitches). That is not surprising, considering that the female is not given her independent or supreme status but balanced with the male, if not suppressed, in ancient Chinese thought. We have examples of Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West) with Dongwanggong (King and Sire of the East) and Magu with Wang Bangping, to name a few. In that light, the parallel between Magoism and Daoism becomes compelling, when it comes to the principle of sex/gender. Daoism coopts the major female pantheons of Magoism and surgically reassigns to male models: “The eight female immortals” is reconfigured as “the eight immortals” (six males, one female, and one hermaphrodite) (see [Figures 12 and 13]). Also the Mago Triad is replaced by the Three Mao Brothers in Mt. Mao.

In the Chinese classic *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* (Lüshi Chunqiu 吕氏春秋), dating from 239 BCE, the story of Ling Lun explains the origin of sex/gender balanced music of Lülü:

The Yellow Emperor ordered Ling Lun to bring order to music and Ling Lun obediently traveled to the mountains where he collected bamboo with thick and even nodes.

Blowing on one of these like a pipe, he found its sound agreeable and named it the “Yellow Bell,” or *huangzhong* (黃鐘), the lowest of the twelve pitches. His attention was then drawn by the sound of phoenixes singing in the valley. The male and female phoenix each sang six tones. Ling Lun cut his bamboo pipes so that the sound produced by them matched the pitches of the phoenixes. He ended up with twelve pitch pipes, divided into two sets: six from the male phoenix and six from the female: these were called in Chinese the *lülü* (律呂) or later the *shierlü* (十二律).<sup>10</sup>

The above account whitewashes any primacy of the female. Furthermore, the Chinese musical notion is not only sex/gender balanced but also displaced by the masculine notion, as shown in the change of the term *Yulryeo* (*Lülü*) to *Sibi Yul* (*Shier Lü*). The female music of *Palryeo* (Eight Tones) is replaced by *Yulryeo* (the sex/gender balanced notion) and changed to *Sibi Yul* (Twelve Pitches). It shows the transfer of emphasis from the female to the male. That said, it remains likely that the Chinese notion of *Lülü* was imported in reverse to Korea at one point in history, which, consequently, effected the amendment of the *Budoji* to align with the Chinese concept of sex/gender balanced music. In any case, evidence shows that there is a tendency in traditional Korea to view *Yulryeo* as a sex/gender balanced dyad based on the assumption that *Yul* (*Ryul*) means male-toned music and *Ryeo* (*Yeo*) female-toned music. In this light, *Ilbu Kim* (1826-1898 CE), Korean philosopher, asserts that the term, *Yulryeo*, should be transposed to *Yeo-ryul*<sup>11</sup> to align with Korean

traditional thought that is, as he sees it, primarily female-principled.<sup>12</sup>

The Budoji shows a minor degree of inconsistency when it comes to the bifurcation of sex/gender in the genealogy of the Great Goddess. It appears that the Budoji describes the bifurcation of sexes/genders in the third generation of Mago's lineage, as it states:

Prior to Jimse, when Yulryeo rose repeatedly, stars emerged. When Jimse completed its cycles for a long time, Mago bore two daughters, Gunghui (Vault Woman) and Sohui (Nest Woman), and had them to take care of Oeum-chiljo (Five Pitches and Seven Tunes). . . . Gunghui and Sohui bore Four Heavenly Women (四天女) and Four Heavenly Men (四天人). . . and assigned the former to manage Yeo and the latter Yul.<sup>13</sup>

In the above, the terms of “Four Heavenly Women” and “Four Heavenly Men” are at point. It remains unverifiable whether they are stated as they are in the original text of the Budoji.<sup>14</sup> If we postulate so, we see the arrival of the male in the third generation of Mago's genealogy. That Mago assigns Four Heavenly Women to Yeo (Ryeo) and Four Heavenly Men to Yul (Ryul) for management provides an etymological ground to perceive the notions of Yul and Yeo—Yeo represents the female identification of music and Yul the male counterpart. Therefore, Yulryeo means sex/gender balanced music.

Evidence is palpable that Korean interpreters also view

Yulryeo as sex/gender balanced cosmic music. Nonetheless, I maintain that the Budoji account of Yulryeo is inconsistent betraying a textual error. We cannot rule out the possibility that (1) Yulryeo is not sex/gender balanced cosmic music but another term for the musical Creatrix; (2) it is an anachronistic amendment accrued at a later time. First of all, Yulryeo may not indicate sex/gender balanced cosmic music. Like Palryeo, it may represent the Creatrix, the Female. Etymologically speaking, unlike Ryeo in Palryeo (eight female-toned music), Yul (Ryul) in Yulryeo alone has no autonomous standing. In other words, in the Magoist Cosmogony, Yul (Ryul) is used only in the form of Yulryeo not Pal-ryul or the like.

Even if we posit that Yulryeo refers to sex/gender balanced music, the Budoji's mention of Yul-ryeo is inferred to be a mistaken amendment. Let's take a close look at the statement, "Prior to Jimse, when Yulryeo arose repeatedly, stars emerged." It reads that Yulryeo is the Creatrix through which stars were born during the realm of Former Heaven, prior to Jimse. That contradicts the previously quoted account that Palryeo, the female-connoted music, was the Creatrix of the universe during the realm of Former Heaven. When there is no music of Yulryeo working in Former Heaven, it means the male did not make an entry in Former Heaven. Under this scenario, Yul does not come into existence/consciousness until the birth of sons by Mago's two daughters. This suggests that the mention of Yulryeo in the above account is an anachronistic amendment, not the original account of the Budoji.

In that regard, the comment of Hyeon Bak, contemporary

exponent of the Budoji, is illuminating. He states that the mention of “Yulryeo” is mistaken and that it must be corrected to “Palryeo.”<sup>15</sup> This means that the pertinent account should be corrected to “Prior to Jimse, when Palryeo arose repeatedly, stars emerged.” Bak’s assertion is congruent with my interpretation of the female principle of the Magoist Cosmogony. Stars like Mago and Mago Stronghold emerged through the cosmic music of Palryeo (Eight Tones).

Jung-pyeong Noh, expert on Korean Shamanism, suggests a Magoist exegesis of Korean traditional music. His explanation of Palryeo (Eight Tones) and Oeum-chiljo (Five Notes and Seven Tunes), is both poetic and scientific. It sheds light on the synchronous nature of music/sound and dance/movement, as he writes:

The universe is created by Palryeo. The music of Palryeo is vibration, which is generated by the movement of the gravity axis, and goes out to eight directions. O-eum (Five Pitches) is a sound that converges from the center of the gravity axis. It circuits, crescendos and diminuendos. Chiljo (Seven Tunes) functions to disperse the direction of the sound outward, when an incoming sound reaches its zenith. Gung-hui and So-hui manage the task [of O-eum-chil-jo].<sup>16</sup>

For Noh, Palryeo is the vibration/music that arises from the self-equilibrating dance/movement of celestial bodies. It can be equated with “the Music of the Spheres” described in ancient European cosmology.<sup>17</sup> The primordial



vibration/music is induced, while the “gravity-axis” of the stars spins and rotates for balance. The planetary motion of the Earth -- self-rotations and revolutions around the sun -- are generated according to the vibrations/musicology of the cosmos. Noh’s interpretation is no mere euphemism or poetic fancy. It is drawn from his understanding of Korean traditional music.

The notion of Yulryeo appears pivotal in Old Korean culture. However, much is lost or made too technical for the general understanding. Given that the Budoji mentions that the Law of Invoking Yulryeo (律呂化生法) was enacted upon the foundation of Silla, it is inferred that early Sillan politics involved an understanding of Yulryeo.<sup>18</sup> Also, we are informed that the triad symbolism encapsulates the names of such traditional musical instruments as *sam-juk-jeok* (three bamboo flutes) and *sam-hyeon* (three string instruments). That the music of three bamboo flutes has seven tunes remains esoteric at best. While such information is too terse to draw any definite inference, it is worth noting that the numerical symbolism recurs as a central motif in the history and culture of Magoism.<sup>19</sup>

Now let us put together the above two passages from the Chapter 2 of the Budoji and see its full account:

In the realm of Former Heaven, the Great Mago Stronghold was located above Sildal-seong and in parallel with Heodal-seong. In the beginning, there was nothing that could be seen but a warm cosmic ray. Only was there

to be heard the Music of Palryeo (Eight Tones) from heaven. Sildal-seong and Heodal-seong all came from this music, so did the Great Mago Stronghold and Mago. This is called Jimse (Mago's World).

Prior to Jimse, when Yulryeo [Palryeo] arose repeatedly, stars emerged. When Jimse completed its cycles for a long time, Mago bore two daughters, Gunghui (Vault Woman) and Sohui (Nest Woman), and had them take care of Oeum-chiljo (Five Pitches and Seven Tunes).

The [Mago] Stronghold sprang forth milk [from the ground] for the first time. Gunghui and Sohui bore four women and four men and raised them with earth-milk. They assigned the former to manage Ryeo and the latter Yul.<sup>20</sup>

The Budoji's cosmogonic account culminates in the self-emergence of the Great Goddess and the establishment of the Mago Triad. Mago brought by the sonic movement of Palryeo establishes HERSELF as the Primordial Triad together with HER two daughters. S/HE opens another realm of the Divine called Jimse (Mago's World). A new realm, Jimse, marks for the Divine World of the Primordial Mago Clan, the Nine Magos.

The above chapter from the Budoji presents a curiously refreshing story. It imagines that stars are self-emerged through the music of the universe. Amid swinging crescendos and decrescendos, the music of Palryeo midwives the autogenesis

of celestial bodies. When the universe reaches an optimal equilibrium, Mago comes into being and heralds a new beginning for the solar system. Representing the Creatrix, Mago bids HER time to act in tune with the cosmic music. As the cosmic choreographer, Mago designs the Dance for the forthcoming community of the Mago Clan. S/HE sees the Whole. The next thing S/HE does is to give birth to two daughters, Gunghui (Vault Woman) and Sohui (Nest Woman). Hereupon, S/HE establishes the Great Goddess Triad, which embodies the triadic realms of Ultimate Reality. As the primordial sovereign, S/HE delegates HER two daughters to steward a feature of the cosmic music. The Earth responds to the cosmic music and gives milk from the ground. Gunghui and Sohui give birth to progeny and raise them with earth-milk. Together with Mago, they delegate their children to oversee the cosmic music.

### **The Mago Triad and the Magoist Genealogy**

The symbol of the Female that the Great Goddess embodies is not a sex/gender indicator for S/HE is whole alone and can reproduce on HER own. The Creatrix does not need to be balanced with a male counterpart. S/HE is supreme alone, lacking nothing but causing everything to be. The male is not registered in the Mago Triad. In fact, the principle of dyad such as Yin/Yang is irrelevant in explicating the divinity of the Great Goddess. It is the principle of triad that S/HE represents.<sup>21</sup>

Intriguingly, the first chapter of the Budoji's cosmogonic

account highlights the realm of Mago's World, not the first realm (Former Heaven). The following is how the Budoji opens its magnificent story of the Magoist Epic:

Mago Stronghold was located on the highest place on earth. Honoring the Heavenly Emblem, it succeeded Former Heaven. There were Four Heavenly Men [Persons] at the four corners of Stronghold who stored tubes [flutes] and composed music. The first was named Hwanggung (Yellow Vault), the second Cheonggung (Blue Vault), the third Baekso (White Nest), and the last Heukso (Black Nest). Mother of two Gungs was Sovereign Gunghui and Mother of two Sos was Sovereign Sohui. Gunghui and Sohui were daughters of Mago.

Mago was born in Jimse. Mago had no emotion of pleasure and pain. She, rendering Former Heaven male and Latter Heaven female, bore Gunghui (Vault Woman) and Sohui (Nest Woman) without spouse. Also Gunghui and Sohui, without spouse but united by Former Heaven and the Latter Heaven, each bore two heavenly men and two heavenly women, which added up to all four heavenly men and four heavenly women.<sup>22</sup>

Precisely, the Budoji focuses on the Early Mago Clan in Mago Stronghold, headed by the elders of the four racial clan communities. Here the "Mago Stronghold" is polysemic, which means the Mago Clan of the Primordial Home, the location of the Primordial Home, and the Earth at the same time. The statement "Mago Stronghold, honoring the

Heavenly Emblem, succeeds the realm of Former Heaven” is an etiological proclamation; it explains the origin of coronation, the Magoist ritual of bequeathing/ inheriting the Magoist throne performed by ancient Magoist shaman rulers. “The Heavenly Emblem” is the prototype of regalia passed down through Gut (Mudang Ritual), which are later referred to as the Three Seals of the Heavenly Emblem in the Budoji as well as in ancient Korean and Japanese myths.<sup>23</sup>

The location of Mago Stronghold, the epicenter of the world, to be on the highest place on Earth, betrays the cosmic dimension of Magoism, to say the least. Put differently, Magoism is not the tradition of Mother Earth in contrast to Father Sky. Its vision is cosmic and non-dualist. Early Mago Clans embark upon the intergalactic voyage of the terrestrial community by reading the stars and listening to the cyclic movement of cosmic music. The acoustic task shapes the life of the Primordial Community in Mago Stronghold. They craft flutes and compose music. The survival and prosperity of the terrestrial community lies in the fact that the Mago Clan maintains acoustic balance in harmony with the cosmic music.

Mago Stronghold, the highest mountain epicenter of the world, is the archetype of religious/spiritual/mythic mountain-centers in East Asia and elsewhere. The Hwangung Clan settles in Mt. Heaven (天山, Cheonsan or Tianshan), north of the projected location of Mago Stronghold, in their migratory journey.<sup>24</sup> Further resemblances to this archetype are Mt. Heavenly Star (天台山, Mt. Cheontae or Mt. Tiantai)<sup>25</sup> in East Asian religions, the Garden of Eden in the biblical tradition,

Mt. Olympus in Greek mythology, and Mt. Meru in South Asian religions, to name a few.

The Early Mago Clan comprises the four racial sibling/cousin clans, two Gung clans and two So clans. Their ancestries are traced back to the two Mothers, Gunghui and Sohui. And the two Mothers are traced back to Mago HERSELF (see [Figure 17]). In delineating the family tree of the Mago Clan, the Budoji explicitly conveys that OUR STORY is about the One Big Clan of the Great Goddess on the Earth (Mago Stronghold). Put differently, the Magoist Genealogy is an expedient means with which the Budoji accomplishes its goal, the mandate of Mago Bokbon (Return to Mago's Origin). Hearers/readers are reminded that All share the common origin from the Creatrix.

Like many other notions employed in the Budoji, the Magoist Genealogy explains the origin of genealogies. As the archetype of genealogy, it re-stores the Lost Foremother in human ancestry. Re-membered, S/HE unleashes the tabooed consciousness of the whole under patriarchy. As an indelible gynocentric text, the Magoist Genealogy lives on without end. The Magoist Genealogy is no imaginative concept. It was first charted by Goddess Goma, also known as Ungnyeo (Bear/Sovereign Woman), the founder of Danguk (ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE). It was created as a way of re-affirming the common origin of all peoples.<sup>26</sup> Invoked across time, it serves as the blueprint of human consanguinity across racial and cultural differences.

The story of Mago's beginning conjures the gynocentric consciousness. Distinguished from the patriarchal counterpart, it embraces the Whole. By definition, the gynocentric consciousness does NOT endorse the superiority of one people over another. It is pre-patriarchal in origin. It employs an alternative logic, which appears absent or meek in the patriarchal mindset. The Magoist Cosmogony stands for the All. The Mago Clan takes pride in the consciousness of WE, which does not discriminate one against another. The beginning story of the Great Goddess is meant to awaken the deep memory that has been buried under patriarchal consciousness. The gynocentric consciousness underpinning the Magoist Cosmogony is the proof that its narrative is pre-patriarchal in origin.<sup>27</sup>

The Great Goddess involves the Mago Clan cosmically and biologically at the same time. S/HE stands beyond compartmentalized human emotions for S/HE is the Whole. S/HE takes no pleasure or pain, caused by particularities. S/HE is fully transcendent and fully embodied. S/HE is both female and male. Parthenogenesis is the hallmark of the Mago Triad. Standing before the bifurcation of sexes/genders, THEY reproduce on their own. The Female self-reproduction marks the cosmic consummation of Former Heaven and Latter Heaven.

The Mago Triad is the archetype of the triad symbol that abounds in ancient Korean culture, thought, and beyond. Mago is addressed as Samsin (Triad Deity) or Samsin Halmi or Halmeoni (Triad Grandmother/Great Mother).<sup>28</sup> The Handan Gogi highlights triune theology as the traditional axiom of Old

Korea.<sup>29</sup> The Mago Triad is also embodied as Samsin Halmi in folk religions. In faith-practices enacted for her by the populace, which were popular among Koreans up until the 1970s, Samsin Halmeoni was venerated for her power to decide the life and death of children, including impregnation and child-birth.<sup>30</sup>

As seen above, the Magoist Cosmogony recounted in the Budoji lacks the characteristics conventionally attributed to the female by modern patriarchal interpreters of the ancient Goddesses. Emphasis on “fertility” and “motherhood” is simply absent. So are images like “feminine sexuality” and “voluptuous body.” Describing the Mago Triad in terms of such qualities would be a categorical error. The Creatrix is not the same as the female defined by the patriarchal frame of mind. The Magoist Cosmogony unfetters the grip of the patriarchal perception on the female/feminine and redefines the Female to be cosmic, embodied, original, causal, self-balanced, and encompassing. Both women and men embody the Female. Humankind is the offspring of the Creatrix. Accordingly, the human race is seen as the Female Race, the Mago Clan.

Emily Culpepper has pointed out the problem of overly emphasizing Goddess as Mother. For Culpepper, the “mother-based imagery” is heterosexist in orientation, as “mother” is perceived as the counterpart of “father.”<sup>31</sup> While Culpepper’s point is cogent, it seems to me that the real issue at work is the meaning of “mother” in modern languages. Our modern definition of “mother” is tainted with the patriarchal



perception that is only seen as relational to the father. In the case of Magoism, Mago is referred to as Halmi (Grand-mother, Crone, or Goddess) in folklore.<sup>32</sup> The term “Halmi” is not equated with “Mother” but “Grand-Mother.” When we call Mago “Halmi”, we are addressing HER as the Great Mother without being associated with Her male counterpart. The lack of patriarchal perceptions on the female/feminine is also true of Mago folktales from Korea. Only a small number of about 300 mythic folktales address such themes as fertility, motherhood, or female sexuality. Even the word “Mother” for Mago is rarely used with the exception of some proper nouns such as Mountain of the Great Mother (姑母山) and Stronghold of the Great Mother (姑母城).



Figure 10: Chart of the Constellations and the Regions They Govern (Cheonsang Yeolcha Bunya Jido). Originally carved on stone in 1395, Joseon dynasty.



Figure 11: Modern chart of Eight Trigrams (Pal-gyae or Bagua), Former Heaven by Fuxi. Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 12: Eight Female Immortals. Modern folk painting, Korea.



Figure 13: Daoist Eight Immortals. Modern folk painting, China.



Figure 14: Nine-Nippled Korean temple bell. Excavated in Yeouiu. Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 15: Nine-Dragon Wall. Beihai Park, China.  
Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 16: Nine-Story Pagoda, miniature reconstruction. Hwangryong-sa. Gyeongju, Korea (7th C, Silla). Wikimedia Commons.

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## Chapter 6

<sup>1</sup> For more discussion on the Magoist Cosmology, see Chapter 8 in this book.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 5 in this book, also Hwang (2005), chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> See Hwang (2005), Chapter 2, also Chapter 4 in this book.

<sup>4</sup> Ancient China shares the legacy of the Magoist Cosmogony when it comes to the cosmic music. A wealth of literature that treats music as a central theme in ancient Chinese thought is available. The following authors, albeit to different degrees, establish not only that ancient Chinese intellectuals knew a sophisticated system of musicology but also that music was understood as primordial creativity. Jao Tsung-i, “Foreword: Speaking of ‘Sages’: The Bronze of San-hsing-tui” in *Sages and Filial Sons: Mythology and Archaeology in Ancient China*, ed. Julia Ching and R.W.L. Guisso, xv-xvi (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991); Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1982); Walter Kaufmann, *Musical References in the Chinese Classics* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976); and Chao-Mei-Pa, *The Yellow Bell: A Brief Sketch of the History of Chinese Music* (Baldwin, MD: Barberry Hill, 1934).

<sup>5</sup> Budoji, Chapter 2, 26-27.

<sup>6</sup> For the discussion of Palryeo with regards to the eight planets of the solar system, see Chapter 8 in this book.

<sup>7</sup> *The Gunn-mong (The Cloud Dream of the Nine)* written by Manjung Kim (1637-1692), Confucian fiction, depicts eight immortals. Also *The Female Immortal and the Woodcutter*, a fairy tale, depicts eight immortals alongside the deer, which is an animal associated with Mago in folk art and literature.

<sup>8</sup> See *Hangukhaek Daebaekgwa Sajeon [Encyclopedia of Korean Studies, vol. 1]* (1972; repr; Seoul: Eulyu Munhwasa, 1991), 468-9.

<sup>9</sup> Such understanding is noted in traditional Chinese music theory for its cosmological role with regards to the calendar (astronomy and mathematics). See E. Geoffrey Hancock, Nick Pearce, and Mungo

Campbell ed. *William Hunter's World: The Art and Science of Eighteenth-Century Collecting* (Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 271.

<sup>10</sup> See Jonathan Service, “Chinese Music Theory” <http://hcs.fas.harvard.edu/soundingchina/Service.html> (12/28/2014).

<sup>11</sup> Pronunciation of the Korean consonant “ㄱ” changes to “ㅇ”, when it is used in the first syllable. When “올려” is transposed, it becomes “여를” not “려올.” Romanization follows this convention.

<sup>12</sup> See Jiha Kim, *Yulryeo-ran Mueosinga?* (What is Yulryeo?) (Seoul: Hanmunhwa, 1999), 30-67. Following Ilbu Kim, Jiha Kim, Korean poet and philosopher, not only affirms the sex/gender-ridden nature of Yulryeo but addresses the problem of its patriarchal implications. For more information, see Hwang (2005), Chapter 4, 131.

<sup>13</sup> Budoji, Chapter 2, 26-27.

<sup>14</sup> This is the issue that remained undetermined in my earlier work. Only in recent years, I have arrived at a definite assessment that they were redacted by a later scribe. I see the third generation of Mago's genealogy as all Female. See Chapter 8 in this book.

<sup>15</sup> Hyeon Bak stated this in his lecture of November 2002, one of the lecture series addressed to Korean Buddhists at the Jogye Temple in Seoul. His authority as an exponent of the Budoji is likely derived from the claim that he is a contemporary descendent of Jesang Bak, the alleged early-fifth-century author of the Budoji. Geum Bak, familial predecessor of Hyeon Bak and the modern scribe of the Budoji, admits that there might be some minor mistakes in his work of retrieving the text from his memory of translation and childhood recitation. See Hwang (2005), Chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> Noh (2003), 41.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 8 in this book. Also Hwang (2005), 140-143.

<sup>18</sup> See the Budoji, Chapter 29, 102.

<sup>19</sup> See the *Samguk Sagi* [History of Three Kingdoms], translated and annotated by Byeongsu Lee (Seoul: Elyu Munhwasa, 1977), 503, 507.

<sup>20</sup> Budoji, Chapter 2, 26-27.

<sup>21</sup> The principle of triad represented by the Mago Triad is distinguished from the principle of dyad, the latter of which recurs in many ancient religious traditions of the world. From the conversation with Anna Tzanova in the Mago Circle on September 19, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Budoji, Chapter 1, 17.

<sup>23</sup> In this context, it is unclear whether the Heavenly Emblem indicates the three objects or the three concepts. It is possible that they mean the three celestial bodies that are associated with Mago.

<sup>24</sup> The projected location of Mago Stronghold on the map is discussed in Chapter 4, this book.

<sup>25</sup> Mt. Heavenly Star is renowned in Daoism and Buddhism. However, that it is a center for Magoism is not widely known. In Korean folklore, Mago is frequently mentioned with regards to Mt. Heavenly Star. There are a number of places named Mt. Heavenly Star in Korea.

<sup>26</sup> To be discussed in the next book, The Mago Way Volume 2.

<sup>27</sup> Such insight lends credence to the original authorship of the Budoji possibly in the early 5th century CE, at the latest.

<sup>28</sup> “Halmeoni” is a modern standard word for “Halmi”.

<sup>29</sup> See Hwang (2005), Chapter 3.

<sup>30</sup> On popular practices of Magoism, see *Ibid.*, Chapter 9.

<sup>31</sup> See Emily E. Culpepper, “Missing Goddesses, Missing Women: Reflections of a Middle-Aged Amazon,” in *Woman and Goddess Traditions: In Antiquity and Today*, Karen L. King, ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 426-446.

<sup>32</sup> Modern Koreans would understand the term “Halmi” as grandmother or crone. In the context of Magoism, however, Halmi means Grandmother or Goddess.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# **Magos, Muses, and Matrikas: The Magoist Cosmogony and Gynocentric Unity<sup>1</sup>**

The topic of Mago remains largely unexplored in its own right in the West. If known at all, Her identity remains slippery at best. Even among Koreanists, a full-fledged study is yet to be made due largely to the peculiarities of Korean primary sources. Korean primary sources are marked by the following three traits. First, primary sources embody the gynocentric [read female-centered] principle. Secondly, they attest to an alternative view of pre-Chinese Korean history.<sup>2</sup> Lastly, a pan-East Asian manifestation of Mago makes the topic touchy. Ironically, for the three aforementioned reasons, I became interested in pursuing the topic. I encountered the one unbroken rubric of transnational context concerning Mago and named it Magoism. Magoism refers to the archaically-originated gynocentric cultural matrix, which venerated the Great Goddess/Mago. I maintain that Magoism not only underlies the edifice of East Asian civilizations but also has directly and indirectly influenced the formation of the latter.

Methodologically, this study did NOT begin with a ready-made theory to prove or counter-prove a topic that is in debate among scholars. That was likely so. I had been seeking a gynocentric perspective of East Asia/Korea in Western



academia, which was not available. Consequently, this study has chosen to follow a new path unfolded by the documentation and interpretation of pan-East Asian primary materials. In other words, method is guided by the primary sources not the other way around. The rarity of the topic has hurled this study to the uncharted territory, so to speak. My research is destined to carve out its own methodology to serve the particularities (feminist, transnational/cross-cultural, and multi-disciplinary) of what the primary sources implicate. Plainly, a mono-disciplinary approach is inadequate in treating the various and sundry data including written texts, folklore, place-names, literature, and art from Korea, China, and Japan. Naturally and consequently, a feminist, trans-disciplinary, and comparative method was taken to uncover, decipher, and connect what is intimated in the primary materials. Mythology, history, theology, and cultural manifestations within and outside East Asian/Korean Studies are chosen as major disciplines and fields for this study to interact with. Also, writing in the English language with the aim of bringing out East Asian/Korean Studies to Western audience sets this study to take a cross-cultural comparative approach, juxtaposing it with the counterpart of Euro-American perspectives.

This chapter delineates the crux of the Magoist Cosmogony that depicts Cosmic Music as ultimate creativity, and compares it with the traditions of Muses in the Greco-Roman culture and Matrikas in the Hindu tradition. It shows how both Muses and Matrikas bear a close resemblance to Magos (Mago, HER two daughters, and eight granddaughters), the first three generations of Mago's lineage. From the perspective of Magoism, I propose that parallels among these

Goddess traditions are not accidental. The Magoist Cosmogony is meant to offer an etiological framework to Muses and Matrikas. The mytho-history of Magoism has an innate purpose to tell how ancient Magoists took the self-identified mission of maintaining and spreading the Magoist Cosmogony among peoples of the world. Speaking from the perspective of the Budoji, the principal text of Magoism that gives a systematic and account of the Magoist Cosmogony, it is a corollary that the world's Goddess traditions are similar to one another, ultimately witnessing to the common origin from the Great Goddess. The Budoji, unapologetically yet nostalgically, pronounces (1) that Mago (the Great Goddess) is the progenitor of all peoples, (2) that ancient Korean Magoists were the primary forebear of the gynocentric beginning myth that involved the Great Goddess, and (3) that they were able to maintain gynocentric unity across cultures and lands in pre- and proto-patriarchal times.

### **The Magoist Cosmogony and the Mago Lineage**

According to The Budoji, ultimate creativity is attributed to Cosmic Music [read vibration or frequency], Pal-ryeo (八呂, Eight Tones) or Yul-ryeo (律呂, Rhythms and Tones).<sup>3</sup> Primordial matter came into existence through the self-equilibrating movement of Cosmic Music. In the beginning of comic time, there was only a warm cosmic ray from which Cosmic Music rose. Stars were born from Cosmic Music during the previous cosmic period. The interim cosmic period

is marked by the emergence of earthly entities. Mago, the Primordial Goddess, Mago Stronghold (Mago-seong, Earth itself),<sup>4</sup> and two other landmasses (moons) were born from the dance of Pal-ryeo.<sup>5</sup> Mago was born with and to the Earth (Mago Stronghold). She, representing the Earth to the celestial community, supervises earthly systems in accordance with Cosmic Music. In that sense, Mago is the Earth Mother. However, Her divine realm is not limited to the Earth in a dualistic sense. In perceiving Mago's divine nature, dualistic thinking Heaven vs. Earth is irrelevant. Referred to as Heavenly Deity, S/HE also represents the Cosmos to humans. In short, Mago is the Source of earthlings through whom earthlings are connected to the universe.<sup>6</sup>

Historically, Mago is revered as the progenitor, cosmogonist, and ultimate sovereign.<sup>7</sup> S/HE is the originator of Life on Earth and causes all beings to be born, flourish, and disappear. Without Her, nothing would have been existent on Earth in the first place. Prior to the bifurcation of sexes, S/HE procreated two daughters through parthenogenesis. S/HE is the original female and thus called Halmi (Goddess or Grandmother) among Koreans. Together with HER two daughters, Mago comprises the Primordial Triad. HER two daughters also each gave birth to four daughters without a male counterpart. Mago knew how to tell the cyclic nature of Cosmic Music and prepared earthly environments for creativity to take forms and run its course. S/HE is the Mover. At the opening of Yul-ryeo (Cosmic Music), S/HE moved the primordial landmass to the region of primordial water. That caused the counter-balancing movement of water and land to begin. Mago's involvement in the natural world harbingered

another cosmic period, the last of the three-fold cosmic periods, which continues to this day. Natural elements and earth energies intermingled and were placed to counter-balance each other. Optimal conditions were created for the autogenesis of potential things. All living beings including animals and plants were brought forth into existence.

In the Magoist Cosmogony, the very event of an entity's autogenesis is viewed as a sign of sonic equilibrium on macro and micro levels, a perfect harmony. To be and to become take place through the divine act of Mago in tune with the cyclic movement of Cosmic Music. Insofar as humans, whether as individuals or a community, are extant, Mago is present in humans. S/HE is "immortal" or "eternal" for humans in that humans as Mago's direct descendants carry Her DNA. Nonetheless, S/HE is present beyond humans. Biologically speaking, S/HE is in the very genome of all things on Earth. She lives in and with HER Garden, Earth (Mago Stronghold).

The Mago lineage shows that all peoples of the world are kindred, deriving from Mago, the Primordial Mother. It merits a complete picture of the family tree of human ancestors traced by ancient East Asian descendants. Everyone is consanguineous to one another, sharing the common ancestry of the Mago Triad, Mago and HER two daughters. The third generation includes the four racial clan mothers, the yellow, the blue, the white, and the black. From them, human ancestors were born. The first three generations of Mago descent are known as the pantheon of nine Goddesses (九郎, Gurang) in Korean folk traditions.

The male, evolved from the primordial female, arrives in the fourth generation of Mago's lineage.<sup>8</sup> I maintain that the original female sex remains intact—as “primordial virgin,” for the lack of a better word—up to Mago's third generation descendants, eight Goddesses (see [Figure 17] below). To be noted is that racial diversification preceded sex bifurcation in this scheme. That implies that there was a significantly long period of the Multi-Racial Clan Community of the original female/Goddesses prior to the arrival of the male. Mago's household members known as immortals or transcendents (仙, *seon* or *xian*) were able to tune in with Cosmic Music, which resulted in the stabilization of earthly environments. It made Mago Stronghold the paradisiacal community of four primordial racial clans. The task of Mago Stronghold [read earthly] residents was to equilibrate the earthly sonic representation in tune with Cosmic Music.

### **Cross-cultural Affinity in Magoist Cosmic Music and Greek Muses**

That said, a cross-cultural compassion is aptly available. Foremost, the gynocentric notion of Cosmic Music (Pal-ryeo or Yul-ryeo) in the Magoist Cosmogony is strongly evocative of the Muses of the Greco-Roman world. They seem so close in manifestation and meaning that one cannot but infer that they possibly originate from the same source in a remote past. Indeed, juxtaposing them is mutually illuminating.

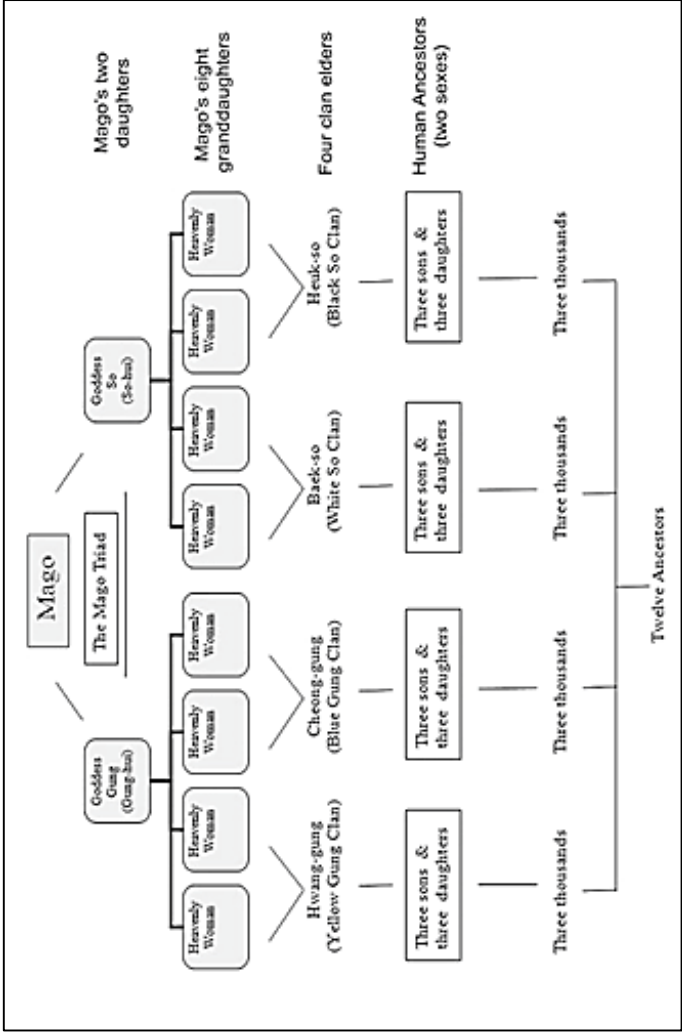


Figure 17: Mago's Genealogy of the Early Mago Clan.

On the one hand, the Magoist Cosmogony, being a systemic and comprehensive account backed by the genealogy of Mago, offers a mythological background for the tradition of Muses. On the other hand, the Muse tradition, widely recognized and explored by scholars, proffers an exegetical explanation of Magoist Cosmic Music. The etymological connection between “muse” and “music” in European languages nicely sits with the notion of Cosmic Music in the Magoist Cosmogony.<sup>9</sup> Also, the stem “mu” is similar to “ma” used in Mago and other epithets of the world’s Goddesses. In fact, the word Eomma (엄마, Moth Korean has dialectical variations that include “Eomui (어무이)” and “Eomi (어미).”

Scholarly assessments on Muses demonstrate their affinity with Magoist Cosmic Music. Mary Daly, feminist thinker of the Euro-American world, treats the gynocentric meaning of Muses. About the “Music of the Spheres,” Daly defines, “an ethereal harmony supposed by the Pythagoreans to be produced by the vibration of the celestial spheres upon which the stars and planets were thought to move.”<sup>10</sup> Precisely, the ancient Greek thought of “ethereal harmony” issued from “the vibration of the celestial spheres” parallels the self-equilibrating movement of Magoist Cosmic Music from which stars and primordial things were brought into existence. It is true that Muses are not directly associated with cosmogony. Nonetheless, the cosmogonic implication of Muses is highly plausible to consider the power and authority that were called upon them, a point to which I shall return below.

Daly goes further and quotes, “[O]riginally the Muses

were represented as virgins of the strictest chastity.”<sup>11</sup> Here, whether “virgins of the strictest chastity” is taken literally or figuratively, it echoes the parthenogenetic parturition (the so-called virgin birth) of the Mago Triad. In my view, “virgins of the strictest chastity” conveys that Muses like Magos (Mago Goddesses) are of the primordial female prior to the bifurcation of sexes. For the female principle that Muses represent, Daly states, “A woman wielding Musing Powers releases waves of meanings so that new and ancient words can be heard and spoken.”<sup>12</sup> Deductively speaking, gynocentric meanings released by Muses, as Daly enchants, strike the “waves of meanings” in the Magoist Cosmogony.

### **Numeric Resemblances in World’s Goddess Traditions**

There are also numerical parallels among the Goddess traditions of the world. As for the Magoist Cosmogony, three, five, seven, and nine appear to be the most prominent. Examples include the three-fold cosmic periods, the Mago Triad, the musical system of *o-eum-chil-jo* (五音七調, Five Notes and Seven Tunes), which Mago entrusted HER two daughters to cultivate, and the nine Goddesses (Gurang).<sup>13</sup> It is true that much about the Five Notes and Seven Tunes is, as many of the Budoji’s music-related notions, remains to be deciphered for modern people. Considering that Mago assigned HER two daughters to cultivate the Five Notes and Seven Tunes and Her third generation granddaughters (eight Goddesses) to cultivate the Original Music (Yul-ryeo or Pal-ryeo), according to the Budoji, it is possible to posit that the



Five Notes and Seven Tunes is the pivotal component of Cosmic Music.

The Triad is one of the most prevalent symbols of traditional Korea. It is inscribed literally everywhere including culture, art, thought, topography, architecture, and religions. I maintain that Magoism provides the key to unlock the origin and meaning of the triad symbolism. Suffice it to say that Mago is referred to as Samsin (Triad Deity) or Samsin Halmeoni (Triad Goddess/Grandmother). The Magoist triad has permeated the fabric of Korean culture throughout history, which include three mountain isles, three-peaked mountain, three-state confederacy of Joseon (2333 BCE-232 CE), three Sages, three states, triad bird (three-legged-and-winged bird), three-story pagoda, and three Buddhas. With regards to music, which concerns this chapter, the triad is reflected in the names of ancient Korean musical instruments such as *sam-juk-jeok* (three bamboo flutes) and *sam-hyeon* (three stringed instruments).<sup>14</sup> According to the *Samguk Sagi* (Histories of the Three Kingdoms), the music of three bamboo flutes has seven tunes. Given the role of music for kings and ruling elites in ancient East Asia, its importance for ruling elites is unequivocal.<sup>15</sup>

The three-and-seven symbolism with regards to the female divine dates back to pre-patriarchal times. I have written elsewhere that the pattern of three and seven appears on a plaque unearthed from the site of Mal'ta, Siberia, dated to 16,000-13,000 BCE.<sup>16</sup> The Mal'ta site is, as Ann Baring and Jules Cashford recount, known for its archaeological finds of at least 20 female figurines alongside a plaque that has meander

inscriptions and ivory objects of several flying geese.<sup>17</sup> Stating that this plaque has the “*seven-times spiraled dots coming out of the central hole as well as the three snake-like waves on the obverse side,*” they further comment that the seven-fold spiral is reminiscent of the seven strata notched round the head of the Goddess of Willendorf from present day Austria.<sup>18</sup> The Paleolithic origin and cross-cultural dissemination of the symbolism of three and seven, as seen in the aforementioned examples, suggests the plausibility of gynocentric cultural unity at the dawn of history. Precisely, they lend credence to the Magoist Cosmogony that pronounces the consanguineous origin of all peoples from the Great Goddess/Mago.

Three-and-seven symbols in Muses are also apparent, as Barbara Walker writes: “The Muses were originally a *triad—the primordial Triple Goddess*. [ ] The *seven-tone musical scale* was the Muses’ invention, supposedly based on their ‘music’ of the seven spheres [*italics are mine*].”<sup>19</sup> Not only the triad but also the seven-tone-musical scale is closely resonant with the aforementioned Magoist notion of Cosmic Music.

According to Glenys Livingstone, the triad symbol appears as the three priestesses at Delphi, Gaia’s city in the fourteenth to eleventh century BCE. First located at the Corycian Cave, high on Mount Parnassus, Livingstone writes that “Gaia’s sacred shrine was home to a triad of nymphs.” She continues to state:

The three sisters known as the Thriai, are said to have invented the art of prophecy, and are recognised as the

“the triple muse of divination at Delphi (McLean 1989:79).”<sup>20</sup>

In the above, that the historical women of the Thriae were perceived as the Muse Triad indicates a thematic association among the Triad, Gaia, and Muses, culturally specific and multiple manifestations of the Primordial Mother. Livingstone’s further insight about parthenogenesis for the Greek Thriae, as they were known as “bee maidens, is another signification of cultural unity found in the Great Goddess of the world.”<sup>21</sup> Images of a cave, a high mountain, muses, and parthenogenetic bees parallel the gynocentric principle expressed in the Magoist Cosmogony, which I discussed elsewhere in detail.<sup>22</sup>

Barbara Smith adds that Muses “were the fount of all knowledge, and poets would invoke them at the beginning of each declamation, thus ‘proving’ that the poet sang the truth.”<sup>23</sup> That the Muses were invoked for purpose of proving or as token of the poet’s authenticity/authority lends credence to the power associated with Muses. From the perspective of Magoism in which a ruler is deemed as the successor of Mago, it is not surprising that the tradition of Muses was revered as moral authority in remote Greek history.

The flexible number of Muses is noted in Smith’s treatment of Muses. Furthermore, the high divinity given to Muses is illumined further by the fact that ancient Greek philosophers continued the legacy of Muses, as Smith continues to write:

The number of Muses varied from three to nine; originally the triad together held the various powers, but by the Roman period each of the nine was attributed separate spheres of influence in arts. *Mousetia* were sacred places where birds sang—thought to be manifestations of the gods—and later philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, called their Schools ‘museums.’<sup>24</sup>

That Plato and Aristotle associated their thoughts with Muses by calling them “museums” parallels East Asian male thinkers such as Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi whose thoughts show a direct or distant relation with Magoism.

The inconsistent number of Muses from the original three to nine is reminiscent of the number of Mago Goddesses of the first three generations. Shown in the Table below, the first three generations in Mago’s genealogy suggest one, three, eight, and/or nine Goddesses. One is for Mago, the progenitor, three for the Primordial Triad (Mago and HER two daughters), eight for Mago’s granddaughters, and nine for Mago and HER eight granddaughters. In some manifestations, the number nine symbolism becomes prominent in a wide range of cultural and mythological themes that include the nine-story pagoda, the nine suns, and the nine-tailed fox.

### **Parallels between Magos and Matrikas**

The numeric fluidity of a particular pantheon of Goddesses from three to nine is no isolated phenomenon in Western Muse tradition only. Laura K. Chamberlain’s research on the

Hindu Goddess Matrika, one of the major manifestations of Durga, bears a close resemblance to the counterpart in Magoism.<sup>25</sup> In the story of Mago Halmi, Mago had eight daughters and dispatched seven daughters to seven regions/islands who each became the shaman progenitor of a region. She lived with the youngest daughter, whose region was the center of Magoism.<sup>26</sup> The Mago pantheon is also addressed as Gurang (Nine Goddesses) in the case of Gaeyang Halmi (Sea Goddess/Grandmother).<sup>27</sup> Among others, a parallel between Chamberlain's delineation of the worship of the Asta Matrikas (Eight Mother Goddesses) and folk rituals concerning Mago is striking with regards to the aniconic rituals offered at "crossroads, rivers, the sea, and mountains" to Matrika. In the case of Magoism, the veneration of rocks and mountains that may be seen as "animistic beliefs" is widespread throughout the Korean peninsula.

The linguistic resemblance is also present between Matrikas and Magos. According to Chamberlain, *Mai* (mother) and *Ajima* (grandmother) are the "two of the oldest names for the goddess in Nepal."<sup>28</sup> They appear analogous with the Korean words *Eomma* 엄마 (Omai 오마이, Omasi 오마시, etc. for mother) and *Ajime* (아지매, a female relative or aunt), a dialect word from which the modern term *Ajuma* (아줌마, neighbor woman often pejoratively referring to a housewife) is derived.

Chamberlain also notes the varied number of Matrikas and writes:

The inconsistency in the number of Matrikas found in the valley [Indus] today (seven, eight, or nine) possibly reflects the localization of goddesses [ ] Although the Matrikas are mostly grouped as seven goddesses over the rest of the Indian Subcontinent, an eighth Matrika has sometimes been added in Nepal to represent the eighth cardinal direction. In Bhaktapur, a city in the Kathmandu Valley, a ninth Matrika is added to the set to represent the center.<sup>29</sup>

On the one hand, it is true that the indeterminate number of Matrikas, as Chamberlain points out, explains localization of Hindu Goddesses in the Indian subcontinent. On the other hand, it is equally possible to posit that there was a Goddess myth once shared by the members of mother community in a remote past. A daughter community that resided in the mother community, came to migrate farther away from the mother community. She herself became a mother and was known as the mother community by her own daughter communities. From the perspective of the original mother community, the memory of the original myth by granddaughter communities would be fragmented and flavored with their own cultural, historical, and linguistic backgrounds. After many generations passed, granddaughter communities would lose the memory of the original myth and would not recognize kindred communities all around the world. However, the first mother was wise. She chose one daughter to carry on the legacy of the original myth. This is exactly what Mago stories tell us. When all is said and done, the numeric similarity of three, seven, eight, or nine and the inconsistency of the number are only

some of the fragmented testimonies by granddaughter communities. Under such circumstances, Mago's lineage, especially the first three generations, works as a blueprint of the family tree lost among granddaughter communities.



Figure 18: Gurang (Nine Women)/Gaeyang Halmi, Shrine of Gurang, Buan, Korea. Modern replica by Dongsik Kim (2004).



Figure 19: Nine Muses on a Roman Sarcophagus (2<sup>nd</sup> C).  
Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 20: Nine Matrikas. Government Museum, India.  
Wikimedia Commons.





Figure 21: The Nine Sisters (Volcanic Peaks). Morro Bay, California USA. Wikimedia Commons.

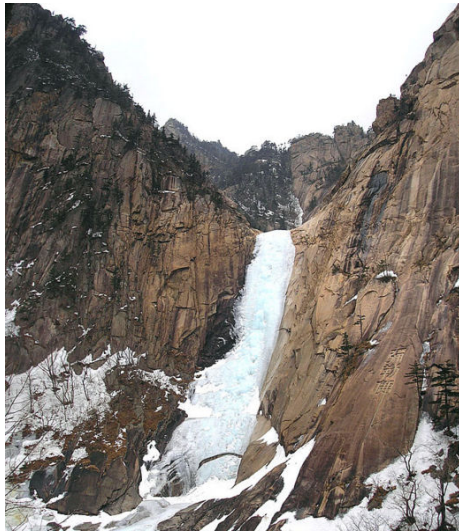


Figure 22: Nine Waterfalls.  
Mt. Geumgang, North Korea. Wikimedia Commons.

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## Chapter 7

<sup>1</sup>This chapter is a spin-off of an earlier paper, “An Investigation of Gynocentric Unity in Mago, the Great Goddess, and Elsewhere,” presented in the Conference of Pacific and Southwest Women’s Studies on April 17, 2004, in Scripps College, Claremont California. It is also slightly revised from the version that I presented at Mago International Conference, October 18, 2014, Mago Stronghold, Jiri Mountains, South Korea.

<sup>2</sup>I have discussed the issues of primary sources in “Issues in Studying Mago, the Great Goddess of East Asia: Primary Sources, Gynocentric History, and Nationalism,” in *The Constant and Changing Faces of the Goddess: Goddess Traditions of Asia*, eds. Deepak Shimkhada and Phyllis Herman. Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2008, 10-33.

<sup>3</sup>Whether Pal-ryeo and Yul-ryeo refers to the same entity or not remains a debate. It is possible to denote that Yul-ryeo is a more general term for Cosmic Music, whereas Pal-ryeo is a specific term that indicates the movement of Cosmic Music with regards to Earth.

<sup>4</sup>The transliteration of Mago Stronghold for Mago-seong owes to Rosemary Mattingley, editor-in-chief of *Return to Mago* web-magazine (<http://magoism.net/>). The term, “Mago-seong (Mago Stronghold),” is no mere fanciful imagination but eponymous of East Asian place-names and landmasses. *Seong* (Stronghold or Stonewalls) refers to a provenance or region of city-states in pre- and proto-historic times of Korea. Ki-baik Lee, Korean historian, develops the notions of “Walled-Town States and Confederated Kingdoms,” which accords with the assessment of Magoist states that I propose. Refer to Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, translated by E. Wagner and E. Shultz (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 9-13.

<sup>5</sup>The two other landmasses (moons) are Sildal-seong (Full Path Stronghold) and Heodal-seong (Void Path Stronghold). In this case, “seong” means a landmass or moon. According to Thomas Yoon, commentator of the Budoji, both Sildal-seong and Heodal-seong refer to the two moons of the Earth in the beginning. See Yoon (2003), 160.

<sup>6</sup>For detailed discussions of the Magoist Cosmogony, see Hwang (2007, a).

<sup>7</sup> The misconception of “Mago” as a name of the particular goddess hinders one’s perception of Mago’s supreme identity. The word “Mago” means the Great Goddess, a common noun rather than a proper noun. For ancients, however, “Mago” meant not only the Great Goddess but also Magoist shamans and priestesses. For that reason, it should be listed as “Magos” like Muses or Matrikas. That reflects an ancient way of thinking that one sees no distinctive demarcation between Mago and Her representatives.

<sup>8</sup> During the early years of my reading of the Budoji, I had thought that the male arrives in the third generation of Mago’s lineage. However, after taking into careful consideration folkloric and artistic expressions that depict Mago as Mother of eight daughters, thus the pantheon of Gurang (Nine Goddesses), I have reached another assessment that Mago’s third generation descendants are all of the original female, Goddesses (Magos).

<sup>9</sup> In several variations of dictionary, the word muse means “any art presided over the Muses, esp. music.” Refer to *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

<sup>10</sup> *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*. Cited by Mary Daly, *Websters’ First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language*, in cahoots with Jane Caputi (Beacon Press, 1987), 147.

<sup>11</sup> *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. Cited by Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press 1984), 304.

<sup>12</sup> Daly (1984), 301.

<sup>13</sup> I have discussed these topics to varying extents. See Helen Hye-Sook Hwang 2005 and 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Kim, Bu-sik, *Samguk Sagi (History of Three Kingdoms)*, translated and annotated by Byeongsu Lee (Seoul: Elyu Munhwasa, 1977), 503; 507.

<sup>15</sup> It is deemed that there were many books on music in pre-Qin Chinese times but lost in the course of history. It is known that one of the Confucian texts called the Classic of Music was lost as early as the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). In Korea, we have only the title of the Eumsin-ji (Book of Music and Faith), one of the fifteen books of the *Jingsimmok (Encyclopedia of Illuminating Mind/Heart)* together with the Budoji. See my dissertation, Helen Hye-Sook Hwang (2005), *the Great Goddess: A Mytho-Historical-Theological Reconstruction of Magoism, an Archaically Originated Gynocentric*

*Tradition of East Asia*. (Ph.D. Dissertation: Claremont Graduate University, 2005), 102-3.

<sup>16</sup> For details of this plaque, see my dissertation, Hwang (2005), 184-5.

<sup>17</sup> Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, eds. *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (London: Viking Arkana, 1991), 13 and 23.

<sup>18</sup> Baring and Cashford, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 701.

<sup>20</sup> Glenys Livingstone, "A Western Primordial Mother: Gaia, Her story from Greece and into Post-modern Times." Paper presented at Mago International Conference, October 18, 2014, Mago Stronghold, Jiri Mountains, South Korea.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> See Hwang (2005), Chapter 4.

<sup>23</sup> Barbara Smith, "Greece" in *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, Carolyne Larrington ed. Hammersmith, (Hammersmith, London: Pandora Press, 1992), 86.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Levy 1990; Slusser 1982, cited in Laura K. Chamberlain, "Durga and the Dashain Harvest Festival: From the Indus to Katmandu Valleys" in *ReVision* (vol. 25, no. 1, Summer 2002), 24-32.

<sup>26</sup> See Tales [9-1] and [5-3] in the Appendix, Hwang (2005), 391-8.

<sup>27</sup> I was able to join a field research trip organized by the research team of Kunguk University's Korean Literature Graduate Studies to collect the folk stories of Gaeyang Halmi, the Sea Goddess, in Buan-gun (Buan County), North Jeolla Province, South Korea July 10-12, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Chamberlain, 26.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 26.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Consciousness of WE/HERE/NOW in the Magoist Cosmogony

The Magoist Cosmogony awakens a deep knowing in us. It may be called a vision in that it is about dis-covering truth, to be precise, the gynocentric nature of Reality. We know truth intuitively. Truth is an intuitive knowing in us. The gynocentric truth speaks for itself. It is self-evident and self-revelatory. It is beautiful and metamorphic. It requires neither proof nor faith. In fact, faith is not the language of truth. The Magoist Cosmogony reveals itself through the language of etiology. It explains how human civilizations as a whole and specifically are derived from the Creatrix, the Female. The symbol of the Female (S/HE) is not a sex indicator. Encompassing the All, the Female is the Way of the Universe. Terms and notions that it employs are profusely embedded in the cultures and histories of East Asia and beyond.<sup>1</sup> Such gynocentric mythemes as cosmic music, the primordial paradise, the Triad, parthenogenesis, and the Nine Goddesses recur in ancient world cultures beyond East Asia. In the beginning story of the Great Goddess, we are invited to re-member where all things come from, how they are maintained, and where they re-turn.

This last chapter discusses the first part of the Budoji

Magoist Cosmogony, which concerns the cosmic beginning, the stabilization of the solar system, and the establishment of the Nine-Mago Clan.<sup>2</sup> The universe is existent without beginning or end. Reality is undividable but unified as one. We have only one time and one space. And they are not two separate entities. And the ultimate agent, WE, is inseparable from time/space. In other words, the universe is the one verb, “to become of WE/HERE/NOW.” Histories take place as a process, not as a single isolated event. Nature’s process of self-creation is determined by its ability to harmonize with the sound/frequency/vibration of the universe. The sonic movement of the universe gives birth to the Great Goddess/Mago with HER Garden, Earth, and two moons. S/HE gives birth to two daughters without a male mate. And HER two daughters each parthogenetically give birth to four daughters. With HER two daughters, Mago makes the Primordial Triad. The Mago Triad establishes the divine pantheon of the Nine Magos. The Mago Triad delegates the eight daughters to oversee the sonic movement of the eight planets in the solar system in harmony with the cosmic music of the Galaxy. That causes HER Garden to run the course of birthing, growing, and nourishing myriad beings.<sup>3</sup>

### **HER STORY, WE/HERE/NOW**

The Budoji stories the primordial drama of Mago’s beginning. It furnishes a yet-to-be-heard story of the beginning of the Great Goddess, the taboo story in patriarchy. It is the story of the Creatrix that patriarchy has attempted to erase. It can be temporarily forgotten but can never die because it is the story

that is at the root of patriarchy. Ultimately, it is The Story that is happening HERE and NOW.

The merit of the Magoist Cosmogony lies in the fact that it, through storying, restores the view of the whole, the macrocosmic view of the All. The holistic view necessarily involves the Great Goddess or the First Mother in that S/HE is the Creatrix. Time is not a linear concept, flowing from one end to the other. Time is the unified Present, happening NOW. It may be said that time is circular or cyclic, as all beings are constantly in motion to enhance the process of self-creation, which causes the whole to change ceaselessly. The Present hosts an infinite number of stories that take place in the undividable One Space HERE. The beginning of the Great Goddess is still happening and we are invited to re-cognize HER STORY in the HERE and NOW.

The beginning is a process, not a single isolated event that took place in the remote past.<sup>4</sup> All things exist in the process of becoming HERE and NOW as part of WE. Put differently, the beginning of the Great Goddess is the LIVE SCENE/DRAMA/STORY. We are part of HER STORY. Mago's beginning is the heart that pumps fresh blood to the body of the terrestrial becoming. The beginning of the Great Goddess is still taking place HERE/NOW.

The terrestrial beginning is attributed to the Great Goddess who is self-born through the sonic movement of cosmic light. The beginning story of the Great Goddess is no ordinary one. It is of power and truth, that is, metamorphic. It provides the original text to the meaning of "salvation." HER Beginning that is happening HERE/NOW holds all from



falling into cacophony. For one thing, it delivers us from the patriarchal misconception of ultimate reality that does away with the Creatrix. The holistic view of the Creatrix is capable of saving us from misconceptions and misconduct. Ultimately, it guides us to live our life in harmony with the whole, HERE/NOW. The Magoist Cosmogony engenders the consciousness that WE ARE HERE/NOW.

The universe is existent without beginning or end. In one ever-existing reality, things ceaselessly appear and disappear in relation to one another on all levels. All things are in the constant movement of autogenesis striving to arrive at a new position of balance. S/HE IS HERE/NOW telling us the STORY of WE. That is the source of our metamorphosis.

In the Magoist cosmology, everything is seen as the whole AND parts. And the whole and parts are in symbiotic correlation and ceaseless transformation. The whole is shaped by parts, which each embody the whole. The holistic view is characterized by the principle of balance, co-existence, and interdependence. That said, it becomes apparent what is hampered or, rather, absent in the patriarchal cosmology: the holistic view originating from the Creatrix. The male God (the assumed whole) is unable to provide the symbiotic kinship of all, while pretending he is. Symbiotic kinship cannot be maintained by the principle of domination or hierarchy. Without the view of the whole, parts are devoid of the knowledge of kinship with one another. Thus, one is prevented from seeing the interconnectedness of parts. It is the beginning story of the Great Goddess that can bring the whole picture of mosaics together.

The Budoji cosmogonic myth tells us a story of the primordial beginning that begins with the movement/vibration of cosmic light. As a gynocentric story, it delineates “a *primal history*,” to borrow Mircea Eliade’s definition of the creation myth, as he writes, “a *beginning*: a cosmogonic proper, or a myth that describes the first, germinal state of the world.”<sup>5</sup> My use of Eliade’s passage has two reasons: Firstly, the creation account of the Book of Genesis, the principal text of the Old Testament, that he tacitly refers to is the closest example that the Magoist Cosmogony can be compared with or, rather, be contrasted with. When it comes to the written cosmogony of the Goddess, the Budoji account of the Magoist Cosmogony finds no parallel in the sense that it is a sophisticated and coherent account followed by the story of ethno-genesis and the early mytho-history of East Asians/Koreans. It can be said that the Budoji is on a par with the Book of Genesis structurally and hermeneutically as an epic of a people who succeeded the first beings on the Earth from the time of the beginning. Indeed, the Budoji cosmogony not only parallels but also bears resemblance to the Genesis creation account, a topic that requires another space for discussion.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, it is to counter the assumption that the male God of monotheistic religions is superior to the female divine of other world religions, which are often assumed to be polytheistic, henotheistic, or animistic, thus implying “inferior” or “anomalous.” As this chapter shows, the Magoist cosmogonic account conveys the supreme divinity of the Great Goddess but not by reversing the sex of the God. It does NOT pose such hierarchical dualisms as the divine over humans, humans over nature, good over evil, and so forth. Also, it

concerns neither the creation “from nothing (ex nihilo)” nor the explosion of the universe (the Big Bang).

That said, the truth is that patriarchal monotheistic religions do not have a theological ground for co-existence with other religions. “The Almighty God” of the monotheistic religions needs to be supreme alone. No other Gods are made comparable to him. Apparently, many do not see that “Interfaith Dialogue” advocated by the leaders of patriarchal religions is inherently flawed. Peace among patriarchal religions is theologically implausible. The male God who is deemed “transcendent,” standing outside his creation, has no theological ground to involve his creation ontologically. Thus, he is destined to use his external force to his creation, which is an aggression in the first place.

The problem with patriarchal cosmology lies in the fact that it is incapable of seeing the whole, ultimate reality. The male God turns out to be a part or a make-believe of the whole, the Creatrix. He can elicit the consciousness of the pseudo-WE. The Magoist Cosmogony shows why. He is not supreme but only a derivative of the Great Goddess. He can't be the symbol for the Creatrix because he is not the First Mother. The Female is the original sex, which may be deemed unisexual or bisexual because S/HE can self-procreate via parthenogenesis. By definition, the male (男) does not stand alone without the female (女). The male lacks an ontological status as a full-fledged divine. That is, he is only a demigod, human ancestor.

The fact that he is not supreme creates a need for the patriarchal theology of the male God to rely on props to make

him look like the whole. Patriarchal monotheistic religions rule within the territory guarded by the interlocking sets of dogma that are supposed to prove “his supremacy.” Without the dogma, the theology of his redemption won’t work. For example, it has no power to those who refuse to call themselves born-sinners. The male God of patriarchal monotheistic religions is there to save only those who are born sinned and therefore need to be saved, a sado-masochist distortion of the human condition.

Alongside, patriarchal monotheistic religions employ hierarchical dualism to support his non-supreme status. Setting the primary dyadic hierarchy between men and women as a universal principle, patriarchal theology spawns the pattern of hierarchical dualism in all arenas. Its creation story endorses dualism: the divine over humans, humans over nature, spiritual over material, good over bad, heaven over hell, and so forth. Such a scheme is inherently divisive, crude, and disempowering, to say the least. It has created tragedy and destruction.

In the light of the Magoist Cosmogony, it becomes transparent why the creator God is portrayed as one who created the world from nothing in the beginning (because he physically can’t give birth), who detaches himself from the world he created (because he denies that he is part of the Great Goddess Clan), and who will come again to reward the good and punish the bad (because he is incapable of doing it HERE/NOW). The male God is an ontological lie, intellectual regression, and theological disaster.

## The Cosmic Beginning of the Creatrix

The Magoist Cosmogony is predicated on the Galaxy, the Milky Way, wherein we, the Mago Clan, on the Earth are located as part of the solar system. The Great Goddess comes into being within the solar system and takes charge of the Earth. The following is my summary of the first two chapters of the Budoji:

In the cosmic realm of the Former Heaven (先天), there existed only warm light. Thereupon, the cosmic music of Yul-ryeo (Rhythms and Tones) rose periodically. Stars emerged through the movement of Yul-ryeo. In due time, Mago, Mago Stronghold, and two moons were emerged through the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones). That marked the beginning of the divine realm of the Primordial Nine Magos called Jim-se (Mago's World). The Nine-Mago Clan prepared for the coming of the cosmic realm, Latter Heaven (後天).<sup>7</sup>

Mago gave birth to two daughters, Goddess Gung (Gung-hui) and Goddess So (So-hui) without a mate. Mago delegated them to manage the music of O-eum-chil-jo (Five Notes and Seven Tunes). As the Earth sprang forth milk, Goddess Gung and Goddess So respectively bore four daughters without a mate.<sup>8</sup> Thereupon, Mago delegated eight granddaughters to manage Yul-ryeo (呂律).

Mago Stronghold, honoring the Heavenly Emblem, succeeded Former Heaven. Four Heavenly Deities named

Yellow Gung (Hwang-gung), Blue Gung (Cheong-gung), White So (Baek-so) and Black So (Heuk-so) were positioned in the four corners of the Stronghold. They built pipes and composed music.<sup>9</sup>

Time and space are not two separate notions in the Magoist cosmology. The cosmic time/space of the Galaxy we are in comprises the three-fold cyclic realms: Former Heaven, Latter Heaven, and the interim period in between them, Jimse (Mago's World). The number three symbolism is no coincidence here. The three-fold time/space is the first of the triad code that recurs in the Magoist Cosmogony. Followed by the Mago Triad and the Three Seals of the Heavenly Emblem, the triad code proves to be etiological, explaining the origin of the triad that is still extant across cultures of the world beyond the mytho-history of Magoism.

The universe is potentially self-creating and self-sustaining. The cyclic movement of the cosmic music increases or decreases the innate power of the universe's autogenesis. The cosmic music refers to the vibration/sound/frequency emitted by cosmic bodies. Stars emerge through the sonic movement, Yul-ryeo (Rhythms and Tones), in the cosmic realm of Former Heaven.

The emergence of the Great Goddess marks Mago's World (Jim-se), the realm of the divine, wherein Mago, Mago Stronghold (Earth), and two moons are self-emerged.<sup>10</sup> They are brought into existence by the sonic movement of the universe, Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones). This time/space is ascribed to the stabilization of the solar system. Mago delegates HER

eight granddaughters to take charge of the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo. To be noted is the numeric symbolism that is commonly shared by the structure of the celestial bodies in the solar system and the structure of the first three generations of Mago's genealogy. Mago is to the sun as HER granddaughters are to the eight planets represented by the eight tones of the cosmic music (Pal-ryeo). In that regard, the lore about the Nine Magos (Gurang), Mago and HER eight daughters, affirms the Budoji account that Mago delegates HER eight (grand)daughters to cultivate the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo. In the folk story, Mago is said to have sent her eight daughters to neighboring islands. And the eight daughters became the shaman progenitors of those regions. In this case, the eight islands correspond to the eight planets and the eight-toned cosmic music.

The cosmic music of Yul-ryeo (Rhythms and Tones) and Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones) represents the Creatrix of the universe. While Yul-ryeo refers to the sonic movement of the universe in Former Heaven, Pal-ryeo is specifically associated with the music of the solar creatrix in Mago's World. Intriguingly, the ancient Greek thought of "the music of the spheres" that refers to the sonic movement of celestial bodies in the solar system parallels the Magoist mytheme of Pal-ryeo. When it comes to the symbolism of "nine heavens," it manifests globally throughout pre-modern times.<sup>11</sup> Ancient Greeks appear to be keenly aware of the female-connoted eight tones. In Plato's *Republic*, the story of Er, a man who went on the journey of afterlife and returned to the world, recounts his vision of the celestial spheres:

Er gets a look into the structure of the cosmos being organized in 8 whorls, that are turning around a central axis, the “spindle of necessity”. A siren is sitting on each of the whorls and each of these sirens is producing an individual tone. These 8 tones fuse to one sound of harmony. The whole system is kept in motion by the three Fates, Lachesis (the past), Clotho (the present) and Atropos (the future), who by their singing enrich the harmony produced by the Sirens.<sup>12</sup>

The Budoji account that Mago delegated HER eight (grand)daughters to oversee Pal-ryeo dovetails with the above account that the eight sirens, each sitting on one of the eight whorls that are orbiting around the central axis, produce each of the individual tones. Taken together with “the music of the spheres” and Plato’s “eight whorls,” the Budoji account of Mago’s eight (grand)daughters who are in charge of the eight tones of the cosmic music proves to be original for its cogent and systemic story of the beginning of the Great Goddess.

The Great Goddess is aware of the cyclic movement of the cosmic music. S/HE sees the pristine history of the Earth. As the Guardian of the Earth, Mago bides HER time. In due time, S/HE parthogenetically gives birth to HER two daughters, Goddess Gung and Goddess So. Mago delegates them to take care of a section of cosmic music, Five Pitches and Seven Tunes (O-eum-chil-jo). They embody the triadic reality and are referred to as the Primordial Triad of the Great Goddess. Thus is explained the folk epithet Samsin Halmi (Triad Deity Grand-mother) for Mago. In due time, Mago



Stronghold gives forth milk from the ground. HER two daughters each parthogenetically give birth to four daughters, eight in all.<sup>13</sup> Goddess Gung and Goddess So raise them with earth-milk. Finally, the first three generations of Mago's divine genealogy, the Mago Triad and HER eight (grand)daughters, are established. The Primordial Mago Clan is distinguished in the sense that they belong to the interim cosmic realm, Mago's World. They are the original divine. Lore refers to them as Gurang, the Nine Magos. Mago delegates HER eight (grand)daughters to take care of the cosmic music of Palryeo.

Mago's eight (grand)daughters, also known as Pal-seon-nyeo (Eight Female Immortals) in Korea, represent the four primordial racial clans, the Yellow Gung, the Blue Gung, the White So, and the Black So. The Budoji gives only these four names of the eight Goddesses, assuming that each name represents the clan community led by two persons of the same race. In other words, there are two Yellow Gungs (Hwang-gung), two Blue Gungs (Cheong-gung), two White Sos (Baek-so), and two Black Sos (Heuk-so).<sup>14</sup> Or, the "Four Heavenly Persons (四天人, Sa-cheon-in)" are the four representatives of the four clan groups whose ancestries derive from Eight Magos, two of them for each group. In any case, Mago's eight (grand)daughters comprise the four progenitors of the four racial clans. That said, the racial distinction of the four clan elders is depicted as Four Heavenly Kings in the Buddhist iconography, although their sex is revered as male. The color of the skin sometimes does not exactly match with the four from the Magoist Cosmogony. But at least one of them is depicted as playing a musical instrument. What is evident is,

however, that, throughout the Budoji, the incident of racial diversification is not treated as a cause for conflict or division. Racial communities remain kindred and united as the Mago Clan throughout the course of history. Noteworthy is that the stage of racial diversification precedes the sex bifurcation. Males have not yet emerged. Sons arrive in the fourth generation of Mago's genealogy. The bifurcation of two sexes harbingers the arrival of human ancestors or demigods/demigoddesses.

While Pal-ryeo is associated with Mago's eight (grand)daughters, O-eum-chil-jo (Five Pitches and Seven Tunes) concerns Mago's two daughters. As to Pal-ryeo and O-eum-chil-jo, Jungpyeong Noh sheds light:

The universe is created by Palryeo. The music of Palryeo is vibration, which is generated by the movement of the gravity axis, and goes out to eight directions. O-eum (Five Pitches) is a sound that converges from the center of the gravity axis. It circuits, crescendos and diminuendos. Chil-jo (Seven Tunes) functions to disperse the direction of the sound outward, when an incoming sound reaches its zenith. Gung-hui and So-hui manage the task [of O-eum-chil-jo].<sup>15</sup>

Noh's exegesis of Pal-ryeo broadly accords with the Greek notion of "the music of the spheres." It is possible to posit that the music of O-eum-chil-jo has to do with the movement of the pristine Earth. As Mago's eight (grand)daughters correspond to the eight planets of the solar system by token of

Mago's assignment of them to the cosmic music of Palryeo (Eight Tones), it may be possible that Mago's two daughters correspond to the two moons of the Earth by token of Mago's assignment of them to the musical property of O-eum-chil-jo (Five Pitches and Seven Tunes). The planet is maintained by the balanced pull of the two opposite movements, the centripetal force and the centrifugal force. As its force reaches the zenith, the vibration circuits, crescendos and diminuendos. The stabilized sonic movement of the Primordial Earth, Mago Stronghold, entails the incident that a spring welled up from the Earth. Consequently, Goddess Gung and Goddess So each give birth to four daughters and raise them with earth-milk.

The Goddess Triad is not unique to Magoism but, rather, widely recurs in ancient religions and cultures of the world. It is also common that the theme of parthenogenesis is present in world-wide ancient Goddess traditions. What the Magoist Cosmogony contributes to the world's gynocentric myths is that it provides a cogent background narrative about how the two are linked. As the Primordial Mother, the Mago Triad (Mago Samsin) procreate without a male mate. They are deemed supreme due to their capacity of parthenogenesis, which substantiates that they are the Primordial Mothers. The male has not yet arrived on the scene.

Parthenogenesis is noted with regards to Primordial Goddess by such scholars as Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor (1991 1987c, 2-3), Starhawk (1997, 72), Joseph Campbell (1988, 167), and Elizabeth Gould Davis (1971), to name a few. Among them, Elizabeth Gould Davis points out the parthenogenetic property of the Creator Goddess and writes,

“In early Greek mythology the creative principle is Metis—female intelligence. She is the creator of all who, like Phoenician-Carthaginian Tanit, like Tiamat, like Gaia, like ‘Anat, creates the world without a male partner.”<sup>16</sup> Early Greek mythology is, albeit remotely, evocative of the Magoist Cosmogony, when it comes to the female principle of the Great Goddess.

The parthenogenetic procreation was revered as *theaphany*, the manifestation of the Great Goddess who was alone in the beginning. S/HE belongs to the realm of Mago’s World (Jim-se) prior to the realm of Latter Heaven when the Earth, Mago Stronghold, begins to evolve to house other species and humans. Put differently, the Gods are only Female. The realm of the divine (Mago’s World) characterized by the Nine-Mago Clan is the Female. The male appears in the fourth generation of Magoist genealogy, marking the place of the human ancestors or demigods. The male god appears together with other beings on Earth.

Davis’s insight that the human race was once unisexed is reminiscent of the Magoist Cosmogony, as she writes:

Originally she was all female. By the time of Orpheus, however, she had become bisexual—a hermaphrodite, Metis-Phanes, creator and begetter in one body. Her final transformation by classical times into all male Phanes illustrates the ancient concept of the evolution of the human race; for the original femaleness of all human beings is reflected in the belief among the ancients, and voiced by Plato in the Symposium, that the human race

was once unisexed—male and female combined in one self-perpetuating female body.<sup>17</sup>

The only difference that I would like to point out is “the Female” as the Creatrix or the Divine in distinction from “the female” as demigoddesses and human ancestors. The latter, “the female,” is the sex that is in partnership with “the male,” the demigods and human ancestors. The Great Goddess may be seen as “unisexed” in the sense that S/HE procreates without sexual union with a male partner. HER procreation is a self-duplication/multiplication. In the Magoist Cosmogony, Mago’s two daughters each give birth to four daughters just as Mago did, without a male partner. However, the parturition of Mago’s eight granddaughters shows a varied version of parthenogenesis. They give birth to *sons and daughters from their sides*, a convoluted expression of parthenogenesis. This happens in another cosmic realm, Latter Heaven. Sons are born after the evolution of the Earth.

To backtrack the sequence a bit, Mago has begun to shape the natural environment of the Earth, which entails the process of autogenesis of all forms of life. All including animals, birds, and plants flourish. This causes the Earth to be indeed of people who will be in charge of supervising the acoustic quality of the terrestrial community. Hereupon, Mago allows HER granddaughters to give birth to sons and daughters, human ancestors or demi-deities. Both male and female demigods are brought into existence to undertake the task of managing the earthly resonance of the cosmic music. Sexual bifurcation marks the fourth generation of the matri-lineage of the Mago Clan. Both female and male demigods are born to oversee the

acoustic feature of the earthly community in harmony with the cosmic music. With the help of Mago's male and female descendants, Mago Stronghold reaches the sonic equilibrium terrestrially and cosmically. All beings, not only women and men but also across species, lead Life that is not demarcated by death. People drink milk sprung from the ground in Mago Stronghold. The Mago Clan participates in becoming of WE/HERE/NOW. They are referred to as "immortals" by later generations in East Asia.

In the Magoist Cosmogony, the balance between women and men does not register as an issue. The bifurcation of two sexes is not treated as a potential cause of problems in Mago Stronghold, the Primordial Home of the Mago Clan.<sup>18</sup> Nor is racial diversification. As mentioned above, the Nine Magos representing the four racial clan communities are of female siblings and cousins who remain in symbiotic kinship with each other throughout the mytho-history of Magoism. Mago Stronghold opens a new realm, Latter Heaven, as the four clan elders take leadership in producing musical instruments and composing musical pieces in an effort to harmonize the terrestrial sound with the cosmic music, also called the Original Sound.

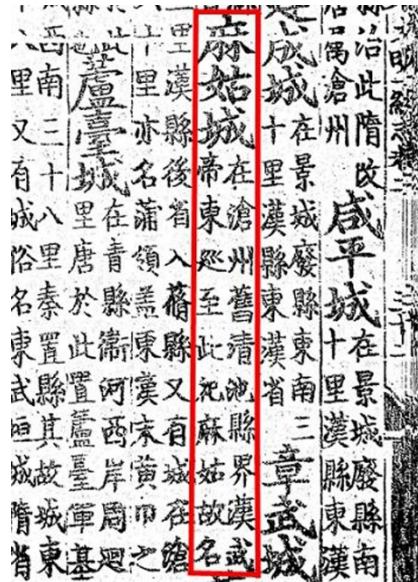


Figure 23: Mago Stronghold in Tianjin (Heavenly Ferry),  
China. Da Ming Yi Tong Zhi (大明一統志, 1461).  
After Junhui Song.



Figure 24 Mago Stronghold.  
Cheonghak-dong (Blue Crane Village), Jiri Mountains, Korea.

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## Chapter 8

<sup>1</sup> They include not only such terms as Mago, Gung-hui, So-hui, and Hwang-gung but also the triad, cosmic music (Yul-ryeo and Pal-ryeo), Mago Stronghold (Mago-seong), parthenogenesis, the Nine Magos, and the divine genealogy, to name a few.

<sup>2</sup> The Budoji allocates the next two chapters (Chapter 3 and 4) to the self-creation process of the Earth including the stabilization of calendars, numbers, animals, plants, and nature, which is not discussed in this essay.

<sup>3</sup> This is only the beginning part of the Magoist cosmogonic story that this essay concerns. Human ancestors and humans are to assist the Nine Magos by generating the sonic movement of the terrestrial community in harmony with the cosmic music.

<sup>4</sup> Process thought founded by Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and John B. Cobb shares a common premise on that regard, although it does not associate ultimate reality with the Creatrix.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade 1969, 76. Cited in Marta Weigle. *Creation and Procreation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989, 4.

<sup>6</sup> I have not attempted comparison between the Budoji cosmogony and the Genesis creation account. Parallels between the two are undeniably self-evident, each showing the archetype of a gynocentric or patriarchal narrative.

<sup>7</sup> In Korean indigenous religions, Latter Heaven is addressed as an epoch that is to come. Such founders of Korean new religions as Suwoon and Zeungsan in the late 19th and 20th centuries mention these three epochs in their teachings. Refer to *Korean Native Religions* (Seoul: The Association of Korean Native Religions, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> I have explained in an earlier chapter that the Budoji account of the sex of Mago's eight grandchildren is inconsistent, suggesting that four of them are male. See pp. 131-133 in this book.

<sup>9</sup> The Budoji Chapters 1 and 2. I have unscrambled the events according to the "natural" sequence.



<sup>10</sup> The two moons are called Sildal-seong (Sildal Stronghold) and Heodal-seong (Heodal Stronghold). Of the two, Mago moves and drops Sildal Stronghold into the realm of Heavenly Water from which lands and seas are formed. See the Budoji, Chapter 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Paradiso* from Dante's *Divine Comedy* written in the fourteenth century describes the nine spheres. Nine Heavens are also known in Buddhism and Daoism. Conversation with Mary Blair Petiet in The Mago Circle (Facebook group), September 3, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Plato's dialog on the so-called "Vision of Er" (X, 616d-617d) in *The Republic*. See also Barbara Rappenglueck, "Cosmic Music. Correlations between music and cosmo-related ideas across ancient cultures" in *Lights and Shadows in Cultural Astronomy*, ed. by: Zedda, Mauro Peppino and Belmonte, Juan Antonio. Proceedings of the SEAC 2005, Isili, June 28 – July 3, 2005, Isili, 361-369. 361-362.

<sup>13</sup> The Budoji account of the sex of Mago's third-generation deities betrays some inconsistencies. Whether Mago's two daughters each give birth to (1) two sons and two daughters or (2) four daughters is subject to debate. Although the text tends to support (1), it is not without problem. I conclude that the inconsistencies are owing to redaction by a later scribe. I posit that Mago's third generation deities are all female. It requires another space to discuss the bases of my interpretation. Suffice it to say that the female numerology of eight such as the eight female immortals are too unequivocal to dismiss. In lore, Mago is commonly said to have eight daughters whom she sent to neighboring islands. And they became the shaman progenitors in those regions. They are also referred to as Gurang (Nine Magos).

<sup>14</sup> While these four names indicate the racial diversification into the four different races, the two names of Mago's two daughters, Gung-hui and So-hui, possibly denote the same race but two groups distinguished by the type of their residence; Gungs for the low-house builders and Sos for the high-house builders.

<sup>15</sup> Noh (2003), 41.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Gould Davis. *The First Sex*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971, 33.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-4.

<sup>18</sup> A problem arises in Mago Stronghold due to the increase of population. There is no tone of blame for the problem, however, whether the female or any specific person. Nonetheless, the Budoji deplores the rise of the patriarchal [read Chinese ethnocentric] regime in the third millennium BCE. Both topics are salient to understand the mytho-history of Magoism but require another space for discussion.

# GLOSSARY

## Persons

Mago (麻姑): East Asian word for the Great Goddess. Read “Ma” as in “mama” and “Go” as in “to go.” The logographic characters are pronounced/romanized as Mago in Korean, Magu in Chinese, and Mako in Japanese. When used in historical contexts, “Mago” refers to the Great Goddess AND HER cultural matrix, Magoism (Magoist shamans/priestesses/rulers and/or the bygone mytho-history of Old Magoist Korea). S/HE represents Ultimate Reality as One Undividable Unity. The Great Goddess embodies the Creatrix, the cosmic sonic system of Life. Through HER, we enter the view of the whole, the consciousness of WE/HERE/NOW. Also known to have originated from the Big Dipper (Seven Stars) in lore—part of the Big Bear constellation—the Guardian of the Polaris, S/HE is the Guardian of the solar system. S/HE causes the stabilization of the solar system. In that sense, S/HE is the Sun Deity or Heavenly Deity. Self-emerged with Mago Stronghold (Earth) and two moons of the Earth through the sonic movement of Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones), the Great Goddess oversees the cosmic music of Yul-ryeo (Rhythms and Tones), another term for the sonic movement of the universe. Mago gives birth partheogenetically to two daughters (Gung-hui) and (So-hui). Thus, they form the Mago Triad (Samsin). S/HE delegates HER two daughters to oversee the cosmic music of O-eum-chil-jo (Five Pitches and Seven Tunes). Gung-hui and So-hui

each give birth partheogenetically to four daughters. The Primordial Mago Clan forms the Nine Magos, the archetype of Gurang (Nine Goddesses). Mago delegates HER eight (grand)daughters to oversee the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones). S/HE causes the self-evolution of the Earth through which all terrestrial beings are brought into existence. In that sense, S/HE is the Earth Deity. As Samsin Halmi (Triad Grand-Mother), S/HE controls the birth and illness of children. Mago allows the Early Mago Clan in the paradise of Mago Stronghold to procreate and entrusts them to take charge of the terrestrial acoustic equilibrium. Revered as the Cosmogonist, Progenitor, and Ultimate Sovereign, Mago delegates the Mago Descent, the entirety of the divine, human ancestors, and humans, to oversee the acoustic harmony of the Earth in tune with the cosmic music. Hereupon, the paradisiacal Home of Mago Stronghold is established. S/HE is called by many names. Among them are Samsin (Triad Deity), Cheonsin (Heavenly Deity), Halmi (Grandmother/Goddess), Nogo (Ancient Goddess), and Seongo (Immortal Goddess). Also referred to as Mugeuk Nomo (Non-Polarized First Mother) or Musaeng-nomo (Non-birther First Mother) in Daoism. Mago appears to resemble many Goddesses from around the world by way of such mythemes as the triad, parthenogenesis, cosmic music, animal companions, and the cosmogonist. “Mago” is linguistically identical or similar to “Mago” in Italian and Portuguese, “Magus/Magi” in Latin, “Magos” in Greek, “Maka” or “Ma-ga” in Mycenaean Greek, “Magus” in Old Persian, and “Ma Guanyin” in East Asian languages, to name a few.

Mago Triad (麻姑三神, Mago Samsin): The Great Goddess forms the Primordial Triad with HER two daughters. The Mago Triad corresponds to the Triadic Reality of Former Heaven, Mago's World, and Latter Heaven.

Gung-hui (穹姬, Goddess/Woman Gung): Mago's first daughter. Possibly a twin with So-hui. S/HE gives birth partheogenetically to four daughters. Progenitor of the Gung Clan, succeeded by the Hwang-gung Clan (Yellow Gung) and the Cheong-gung Clan (Blue Gung).

So-hui (巢姬, Goddess/Woman So): Mago's second daughter. Possibly a twin with Gung-hui. S/HE gives birth parthenogenetically to four daughters. Progenitor of the So Clan, succeeded by the Baek-so Clan (White So) and the Heuk-so Clan (Black So).

Hui or Ji (姬, Goddess or Woman): Read Hui in Korean and Ji in Chinese. Refers to the descent of Mago's two daughters, Gung-hui and So-hui. Used as the family name of royal families and heroes in ancient China.

Eight Heavenly Women or Eight Heavenly Immortals (八天女 or 八仙女, Pal-cheon-nyeo or Pal-seon-nyeo): Mago's eight (grand)daughters who are delegated to oversee the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones).

Four Heavenly Persons or Four Heavenly Women (四天人 or 四天女, Sa-cheon-in or Sa-cheon-nyeo): Elders and Clans of Gungs and Sos. Refer to Hwang-gung, Cheong-gung, Baek-so, and Heuk-so.

Hwang-gung (黃穹, Yellow Gung): Eldest or eldest clan community of the Gung Descent. One of the Four Heavenly

Persons.

Cheong-gung (靑穹, Blue Gung): Second eldest or second eldest clan community of the Gung Descent. One of the Four Heavenly Persons.

Baek-so (白巢, White So): Eldest or eldest clan community of the So Descent. One of the Four Heavenly Persons.

Heuk-so (黑巢, Black So): Second eldest or second eldest clan community of the So Descent. One of the Four Heavenly Persons.

Gurang (九娘, Nine Goddesses): The Primordial Mago Clan, Nine Magos, who resides in the cosmic realm of Jim-se (Mago's Period). The Mago Triad and HER eight daughters. In mytho-history, Gurang is represented by Goma and the Goma religion. It is possible that the Magoist Cosmogony is a creation of the Goma religion.

Goma: Shaman founder of the nine-state confederacy, Danguk (檀國, State of the Birch Tree Altar), who embodies the Nine Magos (the Mago Triad and THEIR eight daughters). She is also referred to as “Gom (Bear/Sovereign)” or “Ungnyeo (熊女).” Her civilization Sinsi (神市, Divine Expo) has blossomed the pre-patriarchal gynocentric civilization, which Magoist royal envoys have transmitted worldwide. She is the eponym of the nine-female symbolism in East Asia and elsewhere. Daoism remembers her as the Dark Woman of the Nine Heavens (九天玄女) who is on a par with the Nine Forms of Durga and the Nine Muses. She is best known as the mother of Dangun, founder of First Joseon (2333 BCE-232 BCE), the last of the three Old Magoist confederacies. In her myth, She,

Queen of the Royal Goma/Ung Clan-State, went out with her female fellows to the birch tree forest to pray for parthenogenesis. She succeeded in giving birth to a child without a male mate and was enthroned as the Magoist shaman sovereign of the new confederacy, Danguk, after Hanguk.

Ungnyeo (熊女, Bear/Sovereign Woman): Queen of the Magoist Bear/Royal Clan-State. A logographic word for Gom. “Ungnyeo” is best known as the mother of Dangun in the Korean foundation myth. Indicated as “ung,” she is the eponym of ancient personal (heroes and rulers) names and place-names occurring in Korea, China, and Japan.

Three Sages (三聖, Samseong) of Old Korea: The three Magoist shaman sovereigns, Hanin, Hanung (Goma), and Dangun. They respectively represent the three confederacies of Hanguk, Danguk, and First Joseon.

Hanin (桓因, Cause of Han): Magoist shaman founder of Hanguk (State of the One Big Magoist Clan), twelve-state confederacy, and the title of its sovereign. The first of the Three Sages of ancient Korea together with Hanung and Dangun. Succeeding the Magoist royal lineage from Yuin (Hwang-gung’s successor), she was succeeded by Hanung, also known as Goma or Ungnyeo.

Hanung (桓熊, Bear/Sovereign of Han): Magoist shaman founder of Danguk (State of the Birch Tree Altar, ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE), nine-state confederacy, and the title of its sovereign. The second of the Three Sages of ancient Korea together with Hanin and Dangun. Often written as Hanung (桓雄, Man of Han) by androcentric scribes over the course of patriarchal history.

Dangun or Imgeom (檀君, Leader or Ruler of the Birch Tree Altar): Magoist shaman founder of First Joseon (ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE), three-state confederacy, and the title of its head. The last of the Three Sages together with Hanin and Hanung.

### Places and Objects

Mago Stronghold (麻姑城, Mago-seong): The Primordial Home/Womb/Tomb of the Mago Clan and the epicenter of the world. Also the Earth itself. It stands for the paradise of the Early Mago Clan prior to the prototypal Diaspora, a mythic event that describes how the Early Mago Clan comes to leave the paradise for their prospective settlements in four directions of the world. The highest place on earth, which explains the mountain centers of ancient Magoist settlements and religious practices in East Asia and elsewhere. Its physical location is speculated to be the Pamir Mountains, the highest mountain range on Earth. However, given that ancient East Asians associated Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West) with the Kunlun Mountains, it may refer to the Kunlun Mountains. As a place-name, it is located in Korea (Blue Crane Village or Cheonghak-dong, Jiri Mountains) and China (Heavenly Ferry or Tianjin). Often abbreviated as Go-seong, which is found in many places throughout the Korean peninsula. Also referred to as Nogo-seong (Ancient Mago Stronghold) and Gomo-seong (Ancient Mother Stronghold). In the Magoist Cosmogony, Mago Stronghold is brought into existence with Mago and two moons at the time of the cosmic beginning. It has two moons, Sildal Stronghold and Heodal Stronghold, in



the realms of Former Heaven and Mago's World. As Mago's two daughters stabilize the sonic movement of the Earth, Mago Stronghold gives forth milk. They, after giving birth to their progeny, raise them with earth-milk.

Sidal Stronghold (實達城, Sidal-seong or Full Path Stronghold): One of the two moons that is self-emerged with Mago Stronghold through the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo. Mago draws and drops Sidal Stronghold into the region of Heavenly Water, which starts the process of Earth's self-evolution, an occurrence marking the onset of Latter Heaven.

Heodal Stronghold (虛達城, Heodal-seong or Void Path Stronghold): One of the two moons that is self-emerged with Mago Stronghold through the cosmic music of Pal-ryeo. It is the moon that is located in parallel with Mago Stronghold.

Earth-milk (地乳, Jiyu): In due time, Mago Stronghold gives milk from the ground. Gung-hui and So-hui raise their progeny with earth-milk. The Mago Clan in the primordial paradise of Mago Stronghold lives on earth-milk. However, the milk-spring is not sufficient for everyone as the population in Mago Stronghold grows. Mago Stronghold faces the threat of destruction, as people take living beings for food.

### **Underpinnings**

Magoism: In a narrow sense, it refers to the gynocentric cultural matrix of East Asia that venerates the Great Goddess.

It constitutes the foundation of East Asian cultures, histories, and thought. Shamanism or Muism (Mudang religion) is a religious expression of Magoism. Such East Asian religions as Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism show a partial appropriation of Magoism. It is referred to as “the Origin of Mago,” “the Affair of Mago,” “the Way of Mago,” or simply “Mago.” In a broad sense, it refers to the world-wide manifestation of the gynocentric cultural matrix that is derived from the knowing of the Great Goddess.

Parthenogenesis: Reproduction by the Mago Triad (the Great Goddess and HER two daughters) without a male counterpart in the realm of Mago’s World. The male has not yet arrived on the scene. For ancient Magoists, it is deemed as a sign of the manifestation of the Great Goddess. It is the archetype of “virgin birth” that appears cross-culturally. The mode of parthenogenetic reproduction changes for the third generation in Mago’s Genealogy, according to the Magoist Cosmogony. Mago’s (grand)daughters give birth by the side to progeny that includes both daughters and sons. Variations of parthenogenesis includes impregnation by the sun, impregnation by bathing in the lake, impregnation by stepping on the footstep of the Giant. Oviparous birth is deemed sacred in Korean and worldwide myths.

Mago Clan: In a narrow sense, it means a totality of the divine, human ancestors, and humans. Refers to the One Big Clan of the Great Goddess. In a broad sense, it means the totality of terrestrial beings including non-human species.

Early Mago Clan: Primordial residents of the paradise of Mago Stronghold, a totality of the divine, human ancestors, and humans.

Primordial Mago Clan: First three generations of Nine Magos (the Mago Triad and HER eight daughters), the Divine.

Prototypal Diaspora: Dispersion of the Early Mago Clan from the paradise of Mago Stronghold to the world in four directions.

Budoji (符都誌, Epic of the Emblem City): The Book of the Great Goddess that narrates from the cosmogonic beginning to the time of early Silla (57 BCE-935 CE). Alleged to have been written/compiled by Bak Jesang (363-418?), a Sillan high-ranked official. It accounts for the gynocentric cosmology and mytho-history of Magoism, succeeded and defended by pre- and supra-nationalist Old Koreans. Comprising thirty-three chapters, its narrative is cogent, systematic, poetic, etiological, and multi-valent. The current version was retrieved from the memory of its modern scribe, Bak Geum, descendant of the alleged author, and published in the mid-1980s with the translation into Korean. It is the first of the fifteen volumes compiled in three volumes, entitled the *Jingsimmok* (*Encyclopedia of Illuminating Mind/Heart*), which is deemed lost during the Korean War. Besides the Budoji, only the titles of twelve books are known.

Handan Gogi (桓檀古記, Old Records of Han and Dan): A collection of five books written by different authors allegedly from the seventh century CE through the sixteenth century

CE. Compiled by Gye Yeonsu (?-1920), it was made known to the public in the twentieth century. It addresses the supreme divine as Samsin (Triad Deity), Cheonsin (Heavenly Deity), Daejosin (Great Ancestor Deity), or Ilsin (One Deity). Because it does not mention the word “Mago,” its translators and interpreters tend to perceive the supreme divine as male. It is rich in mythological, theological, philosophical, cultural, and historical anecdotes. The mytho-history of Old Korea it recounts parallels that of the Budoji. However, unlike the Budoji, it curtails the cosmogonic story to a significant extent. Original music (本音, Bon-eum): The sonic movement of the universe, which causes the autogenesis of things. Refer to Yul-ryeo (Rhythms and Tones), Pal-ryeo (Eight Tones), and O-eum-chil-jo (Five Pitches and Seven Tunes) that the Nine Magos oversee. Cosmic musical entities correspond to the pantheon of the Nine Magos.

Yul-ryeo (律呂, Rhythms and Tones): The sonic movement of cosmic bodies, which Mago oversees. Corresponds to Mago.

O-eum-chil-jo (五音七調, Five Pitches and Seven Tunes): The sonic movement of the Earth, which Mago’s two daughters oversee. Corresponds to Mago’s two daughters.

Pal-ryeo (八呂, Eight Tones): The sonic movement of the solar system, which Mago’s eight (grand)daughters oversee. Equivalent to “the music of the spheres” in ancient Greek thought. Corresponds to Mago’s eight (grand)daughters.

Triad Symbol or Triquetra/Triskelion: Ultimately embodies

Triadic Reality. Mythologically, historically, and culturally manifested as the Mago Triad, the three generations of the Mago's Lineage, the Three Seals of Regalia, the Three Stars, the three-legged bird, the Three States, and the Three Sages of Old Magoist Korea, etc.

Triadic Reality: Comprises the three cyclic realms of Former Heaven, Mago's World, and Latter Heaven.

Seon-cheon (先天, Former Heaven): First realm of the Triadic Reality. Celestial bodies are self-emerged through the music of Yul-ryeo (Rhythms and Tones).

Jim-se (朕世, Mago's World): Interim realm of the Triadic Reality between Seon-cheon and Hu-cheon. It is the time for the stabilization of the solar system. It marks the establishment of the Primordial Mago Clan (Nine Magos).

Hu-cheon (後天, Latter Heaven): Last realm of the Triadic Reality. It is the time for the stabilization and self-evolution of Mago Stronghold, the Earth.

Mago Bokbon (麻姑復本, Return to Mago's Origin): Epitome of the Magoist teaching: Everyone needs to re-member the common origin from the Great Goddess. Its idea is that we need to re-turn to the Origin of the Great Goddess. In HER, all is found kindred and interconnected. It is the only way that the terrestrial community is going to survive and thrive. It is the Magoist mandate that enables one to enter the primordial consciousness of the Creatrix. It is a means to reach Ultimate

Reality, the consciousness of WE/HERE/NOW, in which one finds the Home/Womb/Tomb of the Great Goddess. It originates from the oath of Hwang-gung, the eldest of the Early Mago Clan, made to Mago before departing from Mago Stronghold. In order to save the endangered Mago Stronghold, the four elders have arrived at the consensus that they need to leave Mago Stronghold and live in Diaspora. Hwang-gung pledges herself to restore the memory of the Primordial Home of the Early Mago Clan, the paradise of Mago Stronghold, to all peoples of the world. Hereupon, the custom of dispatching Magoist royal envoys to different parts of the world is gestated. Wherever the Mago Bokbon teaching is told, the Magoist Cosmogony, the STORY of the Creatrix, is rekindled. It is the political and religious goal of Magoist leaders/sovereigns who have succeeded Hwang-gung. It is coopted as the Mandate of Heaven by ancient Chinese philosophers and rulers.

Old Magoism: Magoism in pre- and proto-Chinese times. Characterized by the rule of Magoist shaman rulers. Old Magoism has been shaped and defended by the Old Korean confederacies, Hanguk, Danguk, and First Joseon. It has faced the military invasion from the Chinese patriarchal regime led by Yao (堯) in the mid third millennium BCE. The disintegration of Joseon (2333 BCE-232 BCE), the three-state confederacy of Old Korea, marks the end of Old Magoism. East Asian history goes into the “Warring States” period, as traditional sub-states of Old Magoism are left without the leadership of the central state and the support of the alliance force. The subcontinent of East Asia falls into turmoil and destruction under the expansion of the Chinese

patriarchal/ethnocentric rule.

Old Magoist Korea: East Asian people of the Mago Descent and their polities during the era of pre- and supra-nationalist/ethnocentric confederacies of Old Magoism. It comprises pre- and proto-Chinese peoples and polities of Hanguk (?-ca. 3898 BCE), Danguk (ca. 3898 BCE-2333 BCE), and Joseon (ca. 2333 BCE-ca. 232 BCE), respectively founded by the Three Sages (Hanin, Hanung, and Dangun). Hanguk indicates the first of the three Magoist polities. Succeeding Hanguk is Danguk, whose founder, Hanung or Goma, brings Old Magoism to its zenith in the Neolithic/Bronze Period. Joseon revives the legacy of Danguk and blossoms the civilization of Budo (Emblem City). These polities are pre- and supra-ethnocentric confederacies ruled by Magoist shaman rulers, the descent of Hwang-gung, the Gung Clan, who originates from the paradisiacal Mago Clan in Mago Stronghold and ultimately the Great Goddess HERSELF. It is referred to as halcyon antiquity (the Sagely Era of the Grand Peace) by ancient Chinese/East Asians including Confucius. However, as the downsizing scale of confederacies from Hanguk (twelve-state confederacy) to Danguk (nine-state confederacy) and to Joseon (three-state confederacy) suggests, the history of Old Korea runs degeneratively. After the collapse of Joseon, ancient Korean states remain unprotected under the thread of Chinese dynasties. Sinocentric written history has obscured, if not obliterated, evidence of Old Korean polities.

Hanguk (桓國, State of the One Big Magoist Clan): Said to be

the oldest and first confederacy of twelve states in history. Founded by the Magoist shaman ruler Hanin, which is also the title of its head. Succeeded by Danguk ca. 3898 BCE.

Danguk (檀國, State of the Birch Tree Altar): Pre-Chinese nine-state confederacy of Old Korea founded by Goma or Ungnyeo. Traditionally dated ca. 3898 BCE-ca. 2333 BCE. One of the Three States of Old Korea, succeeding Hanguk and succeeded by Joseon. It was originally the name of the Magoist Royal Clan-State. Its mytho-history is best known through the myth of Ungnyeo, also called the Dangun Myth or the Korean foundation myth.

Go Joseon (古朝鮮, Old Joseon) or First Joseon: Proto-Chinese three-state confederacy of Old Korea founded by Dangun or Imgeom. Traditionally dated 2333 BCE-232 BCE. The last of the Three States of Old Korea, succeeding Danguk. Old Magoism declines with the disintegration of Joseon.

Sinsi (神市, Divine Expo): Capital city and civilization of Danguk, established by Goma. It was spread worldwide by Magoist shaman royal envoys. The cross-cultural manifestation of the Nona-Goddess symbolism substantiates the Magoist explication of Sinsi.

Budo (符都, Emblem City): Capital city and civilization of First Joseon, established by Dangun or Imgeom. It is a revival and innovation of the Sinsi civilization. It is distinguished from the latter in that, instead of dispatching Magoist royal envoys to the world, the Budolese have built Budo, the prototype of



Mecca, and invited people of the world to it. The structure of Budo is modeled after the Mago Stronghold paradise. Waterways and moats are built around the three mountain centers, which are later known as the three mountain-isles. It holds intercultural Sinsi (Divine Expo) celebrations every ten years as well as annual celebrations. With the decline of First Joseon, Budo disappears into the background of history. It has become a mythic location in the East Sea that is found nowhere by later generations. Most renowned is the episode that the first emperor of the Qin dynasty (221 BCE-206 BCE) of China dispatched several hundred men and women to search for the elixir in the three mountain-isles in the East Sea but none returned with it. The three lost mountain-isles are often confounded with the lost paradise of Mago Stronghold by the people of later generations.

**Magocracy:** Refers to the system of government administered by Magoist shaman leaders/rulers in the name of the Great Goddess/Mago. It is the hallmark of the three confederacies of Old Magoist Korea, Hanguk, Danguk, and First Joseon.

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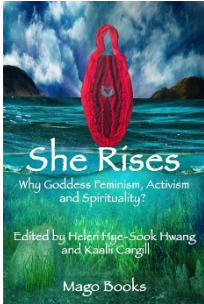
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## Books Published by Mago Books



*She Rises: Why Goddess Feminism, Activism, and Spirituality?* Co-edited by Helen Hye-Sook Hwang and Kaalii Cargill (June Solstice, 2015). Available at Mago Bookstore (<http://magobooks.com>).

This book may be seen as a guidebook to the consciousness of the Great Goddess, the primordial consciousness of WE in S/HE, by contemporary Goddessians. The question, “Why Goddess Feminism, Activism, and Spirituality?” taken as the warp, is interwoven with the weft of the answers provided by 92 contributors from around the world. *She Rises* puts forth ever-unfolding patterns of Goddessian thoughts, experiences, and visions expressed through a variety of works including short writings, poems, essays, artworks, and research papers. Our authors take us far and near, from the cosmic horizon to the very political site of one’s inner feeling. Probing the very foundation of one’s thinking/feeling/sensing, *She Rises* collectively re-memembers and re-stores what has been forgotten or rather erased in the mind of people under the advancement of patriarchal times. The acoustic/semantic/visual chorus of this book sometimes whispers and other times trumpets the premise that knowing the Goddess is the beginning of one’s action to re-create the self and the world. More to the structure, *She Rises* taps into the gynocentric power of the numeric symbolism of three and nine by (1) calling Parts as Mothers and Chapters as Sisters and (2) inventing the Nine Sisters under the Three Mothers.