writers may not have used the term 'intellectual history', but their research is the groundwork that will enable the construction of Thai intellectual history. It is invidious to single out one writer but the work of Thongchai Winichakul in *Siam mapped: a history of the geo-body of a nation* (Honolulu, 1994) can be described as a work of intellectual history. He demonstrates that traditional concepts of frontiers and the exercise of layers of political control came up against a foreign import, mapping, that defined boundaries precisely. This was a tool, moreover, which was adopted consciously and with enthusiasm by the rulers in Bangkok who understood the power that it conferred on them. This work links with the examples given by Wyatt of past rulers adopting and adapting ideas to allow new developments in their society. It is also pertinent to some of Wyatt's pleas for a fresh look at the boundaries and frontiers that define Thai history.

This book demonstrates that there is scope for the development of an intellectual history of Thailand, and Wyatt tells us that he could have written four or five times as many chapters. It may be some time, however, before Thai intellectual history can become a subject of public debate: it is significant that in recent years some topics, which would seem uncontroversial elsewhere, have been prohibited from public debate, demonstrating that, in due course, they will form part of Thailand's intellectual history.

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Korean Shamanism. The Cultural Paradox (Vitality of Indigenous Religions). By Chongho Kim. pp. xxii, 248. Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003.
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Shamanism is usually defined as a magico-religious system of archaic origin whose main characteristic is communication with the spirit world. Its main protagonist, the shaman, mediates between the spirit world and this world in a state of ecstasy induced by drumming and rhythmic music and dance or while being 'possessed'. She or he often has a helper from the spirit world, sometimes in the form of an animal. The main purpose of shamanism in archaic societies was to secure the wellbeing of the tribe, whose members periodically participated in the rites, joining the shaman in singing and dancing. Its secondary but by no means less important purpose has always been to answer anxieties of families and individuals concerning their success in life and their mental and physical health with rituals conducted more or less in private. Most definitions of shamanism still show the influence of the pioneering work of Mircea Eliade, although his stress on ecstasy and the shaman's 'cosmic flight' is no longer regarded as a necessary ingredient of shamanic procedures. Eliade particularly studied Siberian forms of shamanism since they have preserved their vitality among Siberian tribes well into modern times. Shamanism in China, Korea and Japan still betrays its Siberian roots. But in these culturally advanced societies shamanism has been looked down upon and often even persecuted. The most drastic example of its persecution, however, was attested in the former Soviet Union. Hunters in Siberia were still paid in the 1930s with money and vodka for every head of a shaman. Yet shamanism survived underground and has bounced back after the collapse of the communist regime.

Although the shamanic rituals are nowadays used mostly for healing purposes, shamanism was once a complex system of beliefs with its own spiritual discipline, mythology, creation stories and legendary accounts explaining the beginning of civilisation. This is still traceable in Korean shamanism, which counts among its deities Hwanung, the son of the heavenly king; he descended to earth, taught people agriculture, crafts and social skills and founded a dynasty. Of other deities the most conspicuous is Sansin, the spirit of the mountains. Then there is the earth goddess, usually referred to as Grandma.

Some generals – heroes famous from the innumerable battles fought over the centuries against enemies invading Korea – have also acquired divine status and are occasionally contacted in shamanic rituals. Shamanism shares its main deities, and some other features, with the ancient Korean religion, which has no generally accepted name, although it is sometimes referred to as *sinkyo* or *sunkyo*; it survives in rural areas and is in evidence in periodic folk festivals, besides also enjoying a revival on a minor scale even among wider circles of the population. Research into the ancient Korean religion, including its modern surviving and revived forms, and into shamanism as a complex system and into the mutual relation of the two has up to now been scanty so that large grey areas remain.

When Buddhism was introduced into Korea in the fourth century CE and became the state religion, it absorbed some shamanic features and ancient deities, in particular Sansin, who has his own shrine in practically every temple precinct. Shamanic dances were incorporated into Buddhist funeral rites and into memorial rituals for ancestors that are still performed on behalf of patrons in some temples, even in Seoul. These rituals contain also a Confucian element despite the fact that when Confucianism replaced Buddhism as the state ideology during the Chosŏn (Choseon) period (under the Yi dynasty 1392–1910), shamanism was persecuted and Buddhism partly suppressed.

The aspect of shamanism concerned with healing or dealing with personal misfortune by summoning the assistance of spirits was widespread over the centuries and was the main target in times of persecution, as well as during the post-war period of rapid modernisation of Korea, when the government designated shamanism as superstition. It is still illegal in Korea to perform shamanic healing rituals. However, anthropological research conducted by westerners, who were soon joined by newly trained Korean anthropologists, led to the discovery of great artistic value in some shamanic rituals and to their acceptance as a specimen of traditional performing arts which, separated from its original purpose, has become hugely successful both at home and abroad.

The book under review does not deal with the wider perspectives of Korean shamanism outlined above. It is a result of field research narrowly focussed on illegal shamanic rituals in a small rural area. The author graduated in anthropology from the Korean National University in Seoul and worked for some years as an anthropological researcher in the field of health-care in villages, at one time on a project supported by the World Health Organisation. Having come across instances of shamanic healing, he regarded their utilisation at the time as a phenomenon of medical pluralism and argued in an article (1988) that shamans should be recognised as a 'health-care resource' and accepted along with other traditional systems of 'ethno-medicine', such as herbal medicine. He advocated this stance also in some lectures delivered in Korean universities. He then embarked specifically on research into shamanism when he was part-time lecturer in anthropology in Seoul in 1991. In 1993, at nearly 40 years of age, he joined a PhD programme in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia, and as a part of his studies he carried out fieldwork on and off for several months in 1994–96 in the same rural area in which he had once worked as a health-care researcher. He eventually gained his PhD in 2001. The book gives the story and the background of his research and some resulting conclusions.

One of them was that the views expressed in his 1988 article and in his University lectures were mistaken and he apologises in his book to the readers of the article and to his students as well as to physicians who attended his lectures prior to their posting to rural areas. He now sees that he was misled into adopting those views, while working as a health-care researcher, by some leading western medical anthropologists. But now it becomes clear to him that shamanism could not be classified as a sort of traditional medicine that deals with 'the field of health-care', and therefore coexists and sometimes competes with bio-medicine, because it deals essentially with 'the field of misfortune'. Korean shamans are concerned not with illness as such, but with misfortune or ill-luck, most often than not caused, in their perception, by dissatisfied or offended spirits, even though

illness is often a part of it. In that respect, the government statistics were correct to include shamans among "practitioners of superstition", together with "diviners, face readers, horoscope readers, hand readers, bone readers, geomancers and sutra chanters", although these other practitioners are much less stigmatised in contemporary Korean society than shamans and some, like the geomancers, are rather valued.

The stigmatisation of shamans would appear to be almost universal in Korean society, despite the fact that many Koreans of all classes use their services and pay high fees for them, but they do so secretly and as a last resort. The government's drive to eradicate superstition and mete out considerable punishments to shamans caught practising secret rituals for clients has greatly contributed to their low social status. The economic success of the country, the rapid modernisation of many forms of life and the spread of western ideas make, in the author's changed perception, nonsense of the shamanic ritual procedure in which the 'spirits speak'. Yet assistance by shamans appears indispensable to many Koreans under certain circumstances. Therein lies 'the cultural paradox' of the author's subtitle to the book.

During the shamanic ritual, called *kut* in Korean, the spirits may speak directly through the shaman or through the 'spirit stick' held by the shaman or even the client, for sometimes it is the client who becomes possessed by the invoked spirit, who may be the one causing trouble or a deceased relative whom the client wants to consult about the trouble and how it can be remedied. Communication with spirits is, according to the author, essential in Korean shamanic ritual, which is successful only if the evoked spirits actually do speak. Most aspects of shamanic procedures and their meaning have been, in the author's view, missed or misinterpreted by current research, mostly anthropological in nature, because it has focussed either on the life histories, careers and motivations of the shamans or on the folkloric elements of their trade – the ritual, the 'paraphernalia' (costumes and implements), chants, recitations, symbols and myths, the informants being the shamans themselves. This approach does not explain why Koreans resort to shamanic services in spite of being ashamed of it because of the stigma of superstition attached to them. "Shaman-centred studies are ultimately incapable of understanding the cultural paradox of shamanism" since "shamans and their clients interact in a cultural environment where shamanism is not reconcilable to the dominant culture". The author therefore focuses on ordinary people, the problems which they refer to shamans and the contexts in which they manage to cope with or resolve their problems within the shamanic framework.

Almost all shamanic rituals (*kut*s) for clients suffering from some misfortune are performed in secrecy, without an audience. It took some time for the author to gain the confidence of the villagers, some suspecting him to be a spy, but eventually he was accepted as an onlooker and could even make notes and exceptionally also tape recordings during some of the *kut*s. Most shamans in Korea are women and so are most of their clients. But the author disputes the view of some western feminist anthropologists that shamans are dominant in Korean women's lives or that shamanism is closely related to the development of Korean feminism; he points to the active discouragement of the use of shamanism by Korean women's organisations and to the fact that the Ehwa Women's University has not included shamanism in its courses on feminism.

The dominance of women in Korean shamanism is explained by their greater liability to experience misfortune in a culture that is still largely male-dominated, despite the recent inroads of modernity. Forced marriages, bereavement when losing children, divorce, widowhood (while there is still prejudice against the remarriage of widows), illness or financial mishap in the family are among factors which may be experienced as "signs of shamanic calling" and result in "a transformation of the experience of misfortune into a relationship with the spirits within the framework of shamanism". This, however, can be the solution for only a small minority. Most women struck by misfortune resort to the services of a shaman. In many cases it is a kind of 'cultural rebellion' against the strictures imposed on suffering

women by a traditional society. A solution may sometimes be achieved by inviting the village or immediate neighbours to the *kut* during which, for example, the summoned spirit of a respected ancestor resolves the problem in his answers to guided questions put to him by the shaman if the client is 'possessed', or by the client if the spirit speaks through the shaman. Thus a problem, which could never become the subject of open discussion in the village, can be ventilated and a non-traditional solution accepted. (One such *kut* is described by the author and one can wonder to what extent there existed a pre-arranged scenario between the shaman and the widowed client. Or was the shaman's intuitive or consciously sympathetic attitude responsible? And can we categorically reject the possibility of the involvement of the ancestral spirit?) After the *kut* the matter and the achieved resolution are never again discussed because shamanism just is not a part of the everyday life. This again confirms, to the author, the cultural paradox of the position of shamanism in Korean society, which he expresses in a way imitating Zen *koans*:

> Shamanism is superstition, so it should not be used.
> Shamanism is not superstition, because it is actually used.
> Again, shamanism is superstition, so, paradoxically, it is used.

The author describes several *kut*s he was allowed to witness and it becomes obvious that as a Korean steeped in the native culture he is not immune to the paradoxical effects of shamanism. He admits as much in a section headed 'A field worker in fear'. He refers to the negative influence of shamanism as "the smell of cultural toxicity" of shamanism which lingered around after a *kut* like the smell of the primitive toilets of the village and was experienced in this way also by the villagers; shamanism was on the fringes of their community life just as toilets were located in the far corners of their properties. This provoked in him "anthropological curiosity", but he was also afraid of misfortune as a result of the poisonous influence of shamanism on him, possibly in the form of mental illness, as he suffered from nightmares during his fieldwork. On one occasion when he brought a client to a secret *kut* during a cold and windy night he left the performance to shelter in his car, but was soon overcome by a haunted feeling and fear of ghosts coming at him which subsided only under the soothing influence of a piano sonata by Tchaikovsky when he turned on the car radio. He knew he faced a dilemma: as an academic researcher he was supposed to be detached, but really to understand shamanism he had to allow his own native closeness to Korean culture to come through, but this was coupled with the experience of the toxicity of shamanism to which western researchers were not sensitive.

He also admits to several strange incidents purporting to be brought about by spirits. Thus, when driving to a *kut* in woods on a freezing night, the car engine stopped and would not start again, so that he and the client's sister, who was his landlady and had secured for him the permission to see the *kut*, had to walk some distance to join the shaman and her client. The ceremony had already begun and the spirit, the client's "grandpa", warned of the approach of some "impurity". Appeasement was reached after a substantial donation by the author and his landlady and the grandfather then even promised to let the car start. When some hours later the author and his landlady left the *kut*, the car started straightaway, although the temperature was below minus 10 degrees centigrade. Other incidents involved sudden healing after protracted unsuccessful treatments by medical specialists.

A jewel of a chapter is the last one, called 'National Living Treasure'. It gives the story of Kum-Hwa Kim, 'a superstar' shaman. Born in poverty in North Korea, suffering from ill-health and the aftermath of an early abortive marriage, she was initiated by her grandmother at the age of 17 and managed to escape to the south when the Korean war broke out three years later. As a practising shaman she experienced hard times during the modernisation movement, but after entering a traditional arts competition in 1966 she successfully performed in the 'Folk Village' near Seoul and other tourist sites. In 1974 she received a government award. In 1981 she performed an initiation ritual for 'a high class' graduate of the National University of Korea studying for a PhD degree in anthropology in

the University of California. It was watched by scholars, some from abroad, and later televised. An invitation from the Smithsonian Institute to perform shamanic rituals in the USA as a part of the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Korean-American diplomatic relations followed (1982) to the embarrassment of the Korean government, who initially refused her permission because, in its view, superstitious rituals performed in America would disgrace the Korean nation. When threatened with the cancellation of the programme by the Smithsonian Institute, the government relented, but insisted on replacing the reference to shamanic ritual with traditional dance. After numerous other performances at home and abroad, including academic gatherings, she was awarded the highest governmental recognition as the 'Carrier of the Skill of the Intangible Cultural Property No. 82-B for the Western Coastal Boat Ritual and the Community Harmony Ritual'. The title is vested with a life-long stipend to train disciples. Fame as a performer of shamanic art and the financial security did not make Kum-Hwa Kim give up her shamanic vocation, but she makes a clear distinction between her shamanic theatrical performances and the secret *kuts* for clients, some of whom are even from governmental circles, despite the illegality of the practice.

The book is a good read for anybody. It is also, in spite of some drawbacks, a must for anybody interested in or researching shamanism. It is chatty and rather personal, on occasions repetitive, and the pieces of information relevant for academic research and the author's conclusions on important points are scattered almost haphazardly throughout the book. Although the author says that his book is a revised version of his thesis, I can hardly imagine that it would have been acceptable in its present form, because a thesis should have a more systematic structure. So maybe the book is a rewrite for a wider public. I have the impression that there is a certain ambiguity about the whole project; I would regard it in the final assessment as rather inconclusive and not sufficiently thought through. Even so, it does contain some original material and some original ideas as well as useful references to a large number of academic and other sources. The details given about the author's fieldwork experiences with ordinary village folks who availed themselves of the services of shamans are very important to know about. The author's insistence that a true picture of Korean shamanism can be obtained only if it is studied within the cultural context of village life and not only from the point of view of shamans, especially those in an urban setting, is no doubt fully justified.

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Japanese Army Stragglers and Memories of War in Japan, 1950–1975. By Beatrice Trefalt. pp. 272. London & New York, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
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Though much has been written about it, Japan's attempt to create an empire in East and South East Asia in the twentieth century is still difficult to explain and understand. David Calman has written of it as 'an anachronism . . . [Japan's] "modern" imperialism belongs to the seventeenth century' (*The Nature and Origins of Japan's Imperialism*, London & New York, 1992, p. 209). Perhaps there can be no anachronisms in history. But the extraordinary ambitions of the modern period indeed had some sort of precedent in earlier centuries. "Even China will enter my grip", Hideyoshi had claimed in the 1590s (quoted in Mary E. Berry, *Hideyoshi*, Harvard, 1982, p. 207). "With proper spirit and discipline on our part", Sato Nobuhiro asserted more than two centuries later, "China would crumble and fall like a house of sand within five to ten years" (quoted in W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, Stanford, 1972, p. 80).