CHAPTER 15

If You Are a Great Shaman, Do You Possess the Gift of Miracles?

Once upon a time, Lee, magistrate, arrived at his new post on Cheju Island. He then destroyed five hundred shrines and five hundred temples.

There was a last shrine where the last daughter of the King of Heaven who settled under the tree which had lived for ten thousand years was worshipped. She was exiled from Heaven and was living there helping people. Lastly, Magistrate Lee tried to destroy this shrine.

‘Call the shaman who is worshipping at this shrine’, ordered Magistrate Lee.

A great shaman called Ko Manho had been worshipping at the shrine at that time. He was so virtuous that he knew everything about what happened in the world of the dead when he closed his eyes, and what happened in this

Fig. 70 The document of the official announcement showing Lee Hyŏngsang’s assignment as the magistrate on Cheju Island in 1702. After he arrived on Cheju Island, he burned 129 shamanist shrines and oppressed Buddhism under the good name of getting rid of all superstitions, and exhorted Confucianism, a state religion in those days.
world when he opened his eyes. Therefore, Magistrate Lee called the great shaman Ko.

When the great shaman was prone in front of the office, the governor asked, ‘Are you great shaman Ko?’

‘Yes’, said the great shaman.

‘If you are the great shaman, do miracles occur in your shrine?’ asked Magistrate Lee.

‘Yes, miracles do occur in my shrine’, said the great shaman.

‘Then, show me a miracle’, ordered Magistrate Lee.

‘Yes, I will show you a miracle’, replied the great shaman.

After the great shaman had made a promise to Magistrate Lee, he reflected on the promise on his way to his home. ‘Is he going to kill me with this request?’ The great shaman was filled with worries and anxieties.

After sending the great shaman Ko back, Magistrate Lee called a monk and asked the same questions, ‘Do miracles occur in your temple?’

‘Yes, there are the miracles of the Buddha’, replied the monk.

‘Then, show me a miracle of the Buddha’, ordered Magistrate Lee.

‘Yes, I will do what you ordered’, said the monk.

Eventually, on a certain date, Magistrate Lee laid down a statue of the Buddha and ordered the monk to pray to the Buddha to make the statue stand up. However, the monk failed to show a miracle.

When Magistrate Lee was about to order the great shaman Ko to do something else, he spotted the flags stuck on the roof of the great shaman’s shrine, and asked, ‘Can you make the flags stuck on the roof of your shrine walk to this place?’

‘Yes, I can. However, before I do that, I’d like to say a word’, said the great shaman.

‘What is it?’ asked Magistrate Lee.

‘I cannot pray alone for that. Please give me seven more days to prepare with devotion’, said the great shaman.

‘I see’, said Magistrate Lee.

After returning home, the great shaman prayed to the goddess who he had been worshipping in his shrine for six days. And on the seventh day, he called several shamans to help him at the yard of the government office, and prayed for his goddess with music and song.

A few hours passed in a shamanic ceremony. Even though the flags did not walk to the yard of the office, Heaven and Earth were shaken as in an earthquake. And suddenly, all the leaves and the branches of the ten-thousand-year-tree were shaken as if they were in a roaring wind, and made the sound of a whirlwind. All the flags began to fall down from between Heaven and Earth.

Magistrate Lee clapped his hands and said, ‘I destroyed and burnt five hundred shrines and temples, but there is no doubt that miracles do occur at this shrine.’ Magistrate Lee left Cheju Island without destroying the shrine.

As a result, the shrine has been preserved to this day.