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The Centre for Korean Research is pleased to present:

“Madame Shrine Keeper and the Anthropologist”



By Clark W. Sorensen
University of Washington

Friday, February 26th
3:30-5:00 pm

Room #120, C.K. Choi Building
1855 West Mall

Abstract: This paper is a first run for a final chapter to a manuscript I am writing called “Encounters with Korean Folk Religion”. The manuscript weaves together a number of stories in a memoir-like narrative. These stories are: (1) the story of an anthropologist’s encounters with Korean folk religious rites in a single village over a year’s fieldwork, and how he tried to understand them, (2) the story of the ageless seasonal rhythm of agricultural life punctuated by regular calendrical rites, and of weddings and betrothals that occur mostly in the winter, contrasted with the life crisis rituals (funerals, ritual cures) that occur irregularly (3) the story of the sickness, shamanistic treatment, and death of a prominent village woman from May to November 1977, (4) the story of the shrine keeper shaman living at the top of the mountain who was driven off the mountain in 1982, but (I only found out recently) still lives in the area. This epilogue is an attempt to write the final chapter of this last narrative by reflecting on the shaman’s fate and nature of the mountain gods after interviewing her in May 2015 thirty-eight years after I last met her in December 1977.

Bio: Clark W. Sorensen has been Associate Professor of International Studies at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington since 1992. He is Chair of the Korea Studies Program, and Director of the Center for Korean Studies there. He has adjunct appointments in Anthropology and Women’s Studies, and is currently Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Korean Studies*. He received his BA in Geography in 1970 from the University of California, Berkeley, his MA in Korean Studies in 1974, and his PhD in Anthropology in 1981, both from the University of Washington. He is author of *Over the Mountains are Mountains: Korean Peasant Households and their Adaptations to Rapid Industrialization* (University of Washington Press 1988), and has published articles in *Journal of Anthropological Research*, *Anthropos*, *Comparative Education Review*, and other journals. He is editor of the monograph series Korean Studies at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies published by the University of Washington Press, and also is editor of *The Center for Korean Studies Publication Series* that is distributed by University of Washington Press. The most recent title in the latter series is *Rethinking the Park Chung Hee Era, 1961-1979* co-edited with Hyunga Kim of Australian National University.