

# The Celebration of Children's First Birthday (*Asyandi*/асянди) in the Korean Community of the Primorye Region in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century: History and Significance<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*Asyandi* (асянди) in Hamgyŏng dialect (in Seoul dialect, *tol* 돌) is one of the most important holidays in the Korean diaspora around the world. It is the celebration of the first birthday of a child. In addition to an evening meal organized in honor of the birthday child, a form of divination is also carried out in the morning. This event, according to Korean tradition, determines the life of the child. The form of divination in the Primorye region is very different from the equivalent event in areas of the Korean Peninsula in modern times. The aim of this research note is to study *asyandi* as an event and consider its significance and processes in the local Korean diaspora in the southern part of the Russian Far East where this celebration is observed.

Keywords: ethnography, Far East, Russia, Korean diaspora, traditions

## The history of *asyandi*

We do not have precise data on when the traditional ceremony of *asyandi* (*асянди*) came into practice. According to information from the oral history of Russian Koreans in the Primorye region, this event was established in the areas of the Korean Peninsula in the period of the Koryŏ Kingdom (고려 or Goryeo) (916–1392). However, of course, this information cannot be considered exact and is not supported by written sources; we shall discuss this later. The main problem of the study of *asyandi* in the Korean community of the Primorye region (Koryo saram 고려사람) is the absence of documentary materials about the traditions of Russian Koreans in the nineteenth century. This was a result of the discrimination policy of the Russian Empire,<sup>2</sup> and also partly because of the nationalist attitude in the Soviet Union towards non-Slavic ethnic groups. In this situation, the state had no interest in researching the ethnography of national minorities. These trends against studying different ethnic groups in the country have persisted in the modern Russian Federation too. Some attempts are made by enthusiasts, but in small numbers. In some books, dealing with Korean anthropology, we can find isolated mention of *asyandi*.<sup>3</sup> However, these comments are fragmented and contradict each other for several reasons, which are discussed below.

Some Korean scholars believe that divination on the first birthday of the child arrived in Korea from China. Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531–591) wrote *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 (The family instructions of Master Yan). One passage mentioned divination for a boy.<sup>4</sup> The divination dealt with the future of the boy, primarily focused on his career. However, *asyandi* concerns the whole future life of the child, not only their career. In addition, we cannot see any mention of similar ceremonies for girls in the Chinese text.

However, in our opinion, the traditional ritual, *asyandi* of the Koryo saram, had ancient roots in animism. This event has practical aspects. For example, the choice at the first birthday arises from the child having survived the most perilous period of their young lives. The system of divination provides evidence that the Korean ancestors regarded this celebration very seriously and believed spirits could help the child. As a result, we can surmise that divination on the first birthday of a child existed in the Korean Peninsula from ancient times, before the arrival of different religions from China. Moreover, we have found information that the aboriginal peoples of the Russian Far East have similar traditions to celebrate the first birthday of a child.<sup>5</sup> Probably, *asyandi* was to some extent influenced by national minorities of the Far East. A similar ceremony can also be observed in nomadic tribes living in the Primorye region.<sup>6</sup>

## Materials

We have concentrated on the collection of oral information,<sup>7</sup> materials on the internet, and our own visual sources. Over five years, the authors of this article collected different kinds of materials on this subject from representatives of the older generation of Koreans from Primorye and Central Asia.

The methodological base of this research has two strands—hermeneutic and historical-comparative methods. In our work, we wanted to consider the traditional version of *asyandi*, which has become unfamiliar to many people already. However, we also used information about the modern version of the celebration of this event. Because almost all of Primorye's and Central Asia's Koreans have already forgotten elements of the traditional version of *asyandi*, different practices have been adopted over the years. However, almost all Korean families celebrate this ceremony (excluding those belonging to different Christian churches—we shall consider this question at the end of the article).

Recently, in almost all cases of first birthday celebrations, this event has been part of a formal ceremony, and reflects the process of assimilation in other ways in the USSR. But we must note that in mixed marriages (between Koreans and Russians) many Russian mothers wish to have *asyandi* for their children.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in the Russian Federation, current Russian language internet sources give information about *asyandi* and its elements (though with many errors).<sup>9</sup> Many people have uploaded video files to social networks such as YouTube about the celebration of the first birthday.

## The order of *asyandi*

As is known, the emergence of this event is linked with historical processes on the Korean Peninsula. Low levels of medical care and standards of living, and high child mortality, especially among infants, led to the deaths of many infants before their first birthday. Those who lived one year could reasonably be expected to survive much longer. As result, for many Koreans, the first birthday was seen as a good indicator of likely survival to adulthood. For this reason, the infant received its name at that time. Initially, then, *asyandi* was a celebration for the child, because they had survived the most dangerous period of their life and had also received a name.

Clearly, *asyandi* has links with ancient beliefs of animism. In the Korean Peninsula there existed many different religions—Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and later Christianity. However, animism retained some role in Korean society, as reflected not only in *asyandi*, but in many other events such as parents' day and the celebration of the harvest festival.

Koreans arrived in the areas of the southern part of the Far East of modern Russia in the nineteenth century, almost all of them born in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula (Hamgyŏng province) or regions of northeastern China. Accordingly, they used the Hamgyŏng dialect of the Korean language, which is very different from the dialects of the modern South and North Korea (very few Koreans in the Primorye region know the Hamgyŏng dialect today). As a result, the names of celebrations (such as *asyandi*) and elements of the traditions are different in the Hamgyŏng dialect from their equivalents in the languages of the modern Korean Peninsula. Moreover, we can see many differences not only in terminology, but in practice, too. Of course, some elements are the same, but much divergence is apparent in, for example, the period considered best for divination during the morning.

Among Soviet Koreans, the *asyandi* was considered a main cultural tradition, supported by all representatives of the Korean diaspora in the Soviet Union. It is linked with the history of the Korean ethnic group in the USSR. In 1937, almost all Koreans in the Soviet Far East were deported to Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> As a result, there remained very few people within the Korean diaspora in the areas of the Far East. Moreover, after the deportation of 1937, many ancient traditions disappeared or changed in the new conditions prevalent in the Central Asian Soviet Republics.

Korean ethnic schools were closed (in the Primorye region and, later in the Soviet period, in Central Asia). The same happened to newspapers in the Korean language and cultural institutions (some were re-established only at the end of the 1980s, but not in all Soviet republics where Koreans lived). Therefore, representatives of the Korean diaspora did not have the opportunity to study their language in the Soviet Union.

As result, many Koreans did not know their language and could use only some words and sentences from the Hamgyŏng dialect. Therefore, for them, instead of language, cultural traditions became the focus of ethnic identification in the USSR. Strong discrimination against Koreans in the Soviet Union actually proved a reason for Koreans to cling to the remnants of their cultural heritage.<sup>11</sup> One of these remnants was the celebration of the first birthday of a child.

Usually, *asyandi* takes place in the house of the birthday child, as that is more convenient for the parents. Sometimes, the event can be held in the house of the grandparents, in the main room. Of course, it depends on factors such as the location of the main group of relatives. The *asyandi* celebration starts with divination (in Hamgyŏng dialect—*saa pakinda*, *caa пакунда*) in the morning. This event has some rules—divination must take place by 11 AM for girls and by 12 noon for boys. This timing connects with the belief that good spirits are

benevolent at this time and can positively influence the life and fate of the child. Moreover, the time of the divination plays an important role—divination for girls is early in the morning because in the past they needed to be married at a young age in their adult lives.

According to the old traditions of Korean society, girls were not as important to family and relatives as boys. This was not only due to the economic importance of males for the family, but also to the high status of men in East Asian societies generally, including on the Korean Peninsula. Men are more suited to the physical work required in agricultural society than women are, and the early marriage of a young woman meant one less mouth to feed for the birth family. Moreover, at that time, people believed that a married woman should give birth to children at a younger age.

However, the situation for boys was different. In many cases, early marriage was not desirable for them. This was because, before marriage, men had to work for the family, acquire property, and gain important experience. This is reflected in *asyandi*, too, with divination for boys happening later than for girls. In any event, regardless of the gender of the child, only close relatives are invited. They were already prepared for *asyandi* and knew the conventions—no speaking loudly during the ceremony or attempting to influence the child's selection by different methods.

Relatives were not allowed to give advice to the child or do anything that might affect their selection. As a rule, other children did not attend *asyandi* (as it made no sense). The only person outside the family permitted to attend was the *chitisa* (reader or interpreter чтица), but in many cases she was also a relative. Her role is discussed further below.

For the morning divination, a low dining table is prepared (for a long period Koreans used ancient traditions of eating while seated on the floor and so dining tables were low in the Soviet period, too). However, the size of the table is important for another reason—it is comfortable for a one-year-old during *asyandi* and they can easily reach anything placed on the table. This table is also big, so the parents can put on it the many objects needed for the divination. This tradition has continued among the post-Soviet Korean diaspora until modern times (see Figures 4 and 5).

## Goods on the table

Numerous items needed at the time of divination are placed on the table. Each of these objects has its own significance, depending on whether the child picks it up or handles it.

These are ordinary objects, used in daily life, and without any religious significance. In the traditional form of *asyandi*, the following items were usually located on the table. Foremost was a bowl with Korean rice bread (*chaltegi* [찰데기] in Hamgyŏng dialect, see Figure 2). The bowl was located at the farthest corner of the table, far from the child, and was seen as a symbol of a happy life. Usually, at the time of divination, parents put on the table three bowls with *chaltegi*. Sometimes in the *asyandi*, *chaltegi* was changed to *ch'apssal* (찰쌀) (an expensive glossy, white variety of rice, considered good for health, see Figure 3). However, some Koreans from Central Asia believe that *chaltegi* in the *asyandi* is a symbol of an honest but poor life for the child.<sup>12</sup> We must note that many Koreans confused the significance of the *chaltegi* and red beans in the *asyandi*.<sup>13</sup> The items on the table include:

- Bowl with plain rice (*ssal* 쌀): A symbol of abundance in life. The main interpretation is this person will not be hungry in life.<sup>14</sup>
- Bowl with red beans (*kho* 코): Red beans are considered a sign that the child will be a hardworking person in a responsible position. Sometimes it is seen as confirmation that the infant will not have a problem with measles (*morbilli*)<sup>15</sup>—one of the more worrying diseases for children in ancient times.
- Sword or knife (*kŏm* 검 or *k'al* 칼 usually a toy): In the Soviet period, it was considered a symbol of the army, and meant the child would be an officer in the military. More recently, this object in *asyandi* is considered a symbol of a career in any power structure (such as politics, or prison or military service). Earlier, the sword or knife was placed on the table only for boys, not for girls. But now, in some cases, (with the number of women in the Russian army increasing) the practice is changing.
- Scissors (*kasya* 가사): This object is only placed on the table for girls. It is the symbol of a good housewife.
- Needle (*pan'ul* 바늘): This object is only placed on the table for girls. Choosing this item means the girl will be a good mother. Something is put on the point of the needle so that the child does not injure herself when choosing it.
- Book (*ch'aek* 책): Sometimes, instead of a book, a notebook is used, with both representing a “scroll,” the symbol of erudition and wisdom. Of course, it is also easier for a child to pick up a notebook than a book.
- Pen or pencil (*yŏnp'il* 연필): In ancient times, a calligraphy brush was used. This indicates the child will be engaged in intellectual work, such as writing or scholarship.

- Thread (*sil* 실): This means that the child will live a long life
- Phonendoscope or stethoscope (*sangchingi* 상진기):<sup>16</sup> This is a symbol that the child will be inquisitive. In modern times, many Koreans consider it the symbol of a medical doctor.
- Money (*tong* 동): The choice of this object indicates that the child will be rich.
- Pliers (*p'enchi* 펜치) or a hammer (*mangch'i* 망치): This is a symbol that the child will be thrifty.<sup>17</sup>

As we can see, objects on the table in the *asyandi* are different according to gender and are associated with future jobs.

The main public part of this celebration, a lavish meal and ceremony with practices such as offering congratulations, takes place in the latter part of the day, usually in the evening. Many objects have been added to the table over time, but we shall consider in this part of the article the traditional form of divination in the *asyandi* in the community of the Primorye Koreans. All items on the table have to be in soft colors, as bright colors are more likely to attract the child's attention; this ensures no undue influence is exerted on the child's choice.

Because of this, the divination for the first birthday soon became only a ritualized formal ceremony and many Russian Koreans forgot the specific details of the event. Often, in modern times, the *asyandi* is held in the evening. This trend developed as many relatives cannot arrive for the divination in the morning for various reasons, such as work. Consequently, for many Korean parents in the Russian Federation, the evening became the optimal time for celebrating the *asyandi*. Moreover, recently, in the modern ceremony of the *asyandi*, children of different ages have been also permitted to attend (see Figure 5, second picture).

In modern days, we can see the influence of the Republic of Korea on this ritual. Marriages between Primorye Koreans and citizens from South Korea introduced new details to the celebration in the region. For example, new objects were added to the table for divination—a microphone (symbol of a singer or entertainer) and a small hammer (a mark of judicial rank), among others.<sup>18</sup> For *asyandi*, the parents have started to dress the child in *hanbok* 한복 (traditional Korean clothes worn in the states of the Korean Peninsula) (see Figure 4, second picture and Figure 5, first picture). We must note that before the 2000s, in the Primorye and Central Asian regions, Koreans did not use *hanbok* for *asyandi*. Children were dressed in regular baby clothes for the ceremony (see Figure 6).

The difference in dress arose from differences in interpretation—in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, the first birthday of the child was

considered a celebration in all its aspects. However, in the Primorye region, among Koreans who supported old cultural traditions, the *asyandi* was considered not only a celebration but also a significant birthday choice by the child. Therefore, this event was a celebration only for close relatives. As result, *hanbok* did not have a place in the *asyandi*, as it did in the Republic of Korea.

So, in recent times, the changes in divination have centered around the objects on the table. In the twentieth century in the Primorye region, the *chitisa* interpreted the actions of the child in the divination and used her knowledge or information from older people to interpret details about the life of the child. But now, new principles have been introduced. Recently a toastmaster,<sup>19</sup> possibly a Russian with little knowledge of Korean culture, or one of the relatives, such as a mother-in-law,<sup>20</sup> might interpret the activity of the child in the *asyandi* (see Figures 1 and 5).

Moreover, interpretations of some objects on the table have changed in many cases. For example, some representatives from the Korean diaspora in Russia believe that a choice of beans in the *asyandi* is a symbol of sickness in the child,<sup>21</sup> or an indication of a poor life.<sup>22</sup> We do not know how such an understanding arose, because in the Republic of Korea the meaning of beans in the divination is similar to that in the Primorye region during the Soviet period. We can only guess that the connection of beans with sickness or poverty comes from the traditional beliefs of the aboriginal population of Central Asia. As a result, many parents put beans on the table out of easy reach of the child (like *chaltegi*) or do not include them at all in divinations (see Figure 5, first picture). It is similar to the location of objects on the table. In some cases, parents do not include many traditional objects for divination (see Figure 7). As we can see, in the Central Asian and Primorye regions, other rules were used in the *asyandi*.

Peoples from these regions believe that divination at the first birthday of the child will reveal something about the future of the baby—their profession, wealth, and so on. However, we must note that in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, specialists in ethnographical fields believe that many cultural aspects in the Republic of Korea are changing under the processes of westernization in the country. While the main traditional events do continue in the Republic of Korea, they do so largely in a formalized manner. Local beliefs and outlooks have similarly influenced the Korean diaspora in Central Asia. Moreover, in the 1930s, Koreans in Central Asia, after deportation, had problems with mere survival, because of hunger.<sup>23</sup> In such conditions, many Korean cultural traditions were forgotten. Some Koreans lived in small groups in the many Soviet Republics in widely varying conditions of daily life.<sup>24</sup>



We can consider an interesting nuance in this situation: the older generation of Primorye Koreans (including some people who were born in the 1970s) think that the actions of a child at the time of the divination can provide information about his future life. Almost all the Koreans who were asked said they believed that the objects chosen and the related actions of the child, including their individual experiences, could give information about the future of the child. It is true even of those who scattered objects on the table at the time of divination.

On the other hand, among the young generation of the Korean diaspora, born in the 1980s or later, there are few who believe this event has any significance for their life. Indeed, many cannot remember what they had picked up in the *asyandi*. It is the same in the Republic of Korea. Clearly, many young Koreans consider *asyandi* as part of an ancient cultural tradition or a mere curiosity.

So, as we can see, the traditional form of the *asyandi* is dying out. This is because of many factors, primarily connected with the assimilation of the Korean diaspora in different ways. Clearly, too, there are influences from Central Asian and South Korean cultural elements. Finally, the celebration of the first birthday of the child faces practical difficulties in modern times, such as finding a person to interpret the activity of the child at the time of the divination.

The traditional style of the *asyandi* has been dying out among the Korean population in the southern part of the Russian Far East, a process that started very suddenly in the 2000s. A similar trend can be seen with other traditional events in the Korean diaspora of this period, arising from the influence of Christian churches. Some priests from various countries, living in the territory of the former Soviet Union, disapprove of traditional ceremonies practiced by the post-Soviet Koreans. Therefore, they try to prevent their parishioners of Korean origin from participating in traditional events,<sup>25</sup> or try to replace these celebrations with religious events of a Christian nature. This is probably because some priests consider the traditional ceremonies of Primorye Koreans to be paganism, which must be combated.

This process is a part of the struggle with the ancient traditions of the Russian Koreans in the region and has led to the destruction of the cultural base for many parishioners. Naturally, this has also given food for thought to members of the local Korean diaspora who belong to Protestant denominations.

## The role of the *chtitsa*

The *chtitsa* had an important role in the *asyandi*—an old woman, usually a relative of the child, but in some cases, such as when the relatives did not know such a “specialist,” she could be from outside the family. Her role was important, because

she had to objectively help the child at the time of selection and “read” (interpret) their activity at the time of divination. The child might recognize they are the focus of the event with so many guests and preparations and so might feel unsettled, and this could affect how they behaved.

*Asyandi* in its traditional form had some special rules. For example, the *chtitsa* could not be a man and a male *chtitsa* is indeed unknown. Probably, this arises from the fact that women could remember such celebrations (with different rituals) better than men.

The *chtitsa* had to stay near the child at the time of divination and exert a positive influence on them. Usually, the *chtitsa* could take the child in her arms, and rock them to calm them down before the time of divination. She also had to cover the birthday child with her back from their relatives, as the child could become unsettled by the close attention of the people gathered in the *asyandi*.

After this, the *chtitsa* had to slowly and carefully lead the child to the table for the selection. In other words, she had to correctly interpret what the actions of the child meant for their future life.<sup>26</sup> In some cases, the *chtitsa* said to the child before the time of divination the words: *artartur, artartur* (артартур, артартур).<sup>27</sup>

The choice of an object by the child in the *asyandi* played an important role in this event, but the activity accompanying it was more important. For example, if the child took a pen, but before or during this choice they touched and played with the rice or money on the table, it meant that the child would receive employment and profit in their life through intellectual work. However, if the child scattered objects from the table during divination, it could mean that they might become a criminal and spend time in prison.

According to old Korean rules, the child in the process of *asyandi* should take only one object at the time of divination, and any subsequent selections were not considered significant to their future life. After this, the relatives would put money on the table on the right side of the child so that they could see the objects.

However, even in the 1970s, not every Korean family in the Soviet Union was able to invite a *chtitsa* to the *asyandi* of their child. The number of Koreans living in cities may have been small, but so was the number of *chtitsa*. As a result, parents had to arrange for such people well in advance. We believe that securing a *chtitsa* in the same city was not considered expensive, particularly as the first birthday of a child was seen in the Korean diaspora as a more important celebration than a mere birthday (which happens each year, but *asyandi* happens only once in a lifetime). In the Soviet era, *Asyandi* was considered a celebration of equal

importance to marriage in the life of a person. Naturally, parents could only spend money on a *chtitsa* if they were aware one was available. In the 1950s–1970s, cameras were relatively rare among the Soviet population (including Koreans), and as a result pictures from *asyandi* are not plentiful and information is limited (see Figure 6).

Thus, in the 1980s, there is little information about the part played by *chtitsa* in the vast majority of *asyandi*. This is all tied in with Korean traditions as members of the community do not remember the great number of interpretations, which could be in the hundreds or even thousands depending on the actions of the child and the interpretation of the *chtitsa* at their first birthday. As a result, *asyandi* was changed after the 1980s so that in the ritual only the selection of the object was considered significant. In spite of the simplification of the ritual at that time, *asyandi* (see Figure 1) continued to play an important role in the Korean diaspora of the southern part of the Soviet Far East and the divination remained a morning ritual (see Figure 4).

The celebration of the first birthday changed dramatically in the 1990s, when Koreans from Central Asia and citizens from the Republic of Korea began to arrive in the Primorye region. They introduced new elements into the *asyandi*. As the number of immigrants from Central Asia was greater than the local Korean population, it, of course, influenced many Korean traditions, including *asyandi*.<sup>28</sup>

For example, Koreans from the Central Asian post-Soviet republics started to use the rule of three choices on the table at the time of divination. After the first two choices, the parents took away the selected objects from the child, so they had to take a different item. In this way, it was believed that, at the time of *asyandi*, the child has three important paths (based on the three choices) in their life and they might select only one of them or use all three.

As a result, among immigrants of Korean nationality from Central Asia it was widely held that the best choice in the *asyandi* was money. Three different objects on the table at the time of the divination could increase the chances of making a choice for money. This understanding played a role in another tradition—in modern times many relatives put money for the child on the table for the divination before the process, so that money covered almost the whole table and the child could not see the other objects (see Figure 5, second picture). As a result of this obvious “trick,” the child would of course take the money left by the relatives. Clearly, in this variant of *asyandi*, the *chtitsa* was not needed.

In this development, we can trace the influence of a Central Asian mentality—traditionally peoples from this region believe that wealth is one of the most important conditions for a good life. A further factor could be the

deportations in 1937—when material factors of survival played an important role. Capitalist tendencies in the 1990s also played a part in areas of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, money became the main part of *asyandi*.

Certainly, *asyandi* dates back to ancient times and has connections with animistic beliefs. Setting the time of the divination for support from good spirits and the belief that the selected object will guide the child through life and will exert an influence—all these are rooted in ancient times in Korea, before Buddhism arrived in the Korean Peninsula. We believe that the presence of the *chtitsa* at the first birthday of the child and many other elements of this event are probably remnants from these times. We can surmise that the role of the *chtitsa* in the *asyandi* derives from female shamans and belief in some functions of the *chtitsa*, such as interpretation of the activity by the child in the divination, setting the time of *asyandi* for support from good spirits, helping the child at the time of the choice of the object, and in other ways.

Female shamans played a major role in Korean society as late as the nineteenth century. According to P. Yu. Shmidt, a Russian traveler who stayed in the Korean Peninsula at that time, female shamans were highly respected among the Korean people: they could protect the family against many troubles, engaged in various types of fortune-telling, and were familiar with demons and other similar matters.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, based on this information from the Russian traveler, we can surmise that female shamans would take part in the *asyandi*. However, in the Korean diaspora in the areas of the former Soviet Union, the role of female shamans was not established, and there only some traditions remained. Shamans were present in the Republic of Korea, but they had other functions.

## Conclusion

As a ritual, the *asyandi* can be considered very special—on the one hand, it was the first birthday of the child, who had survived for one year in often very uncertain conditions, and so was a great celebration. On the other hand, it represented a decision about a child's future life, and was therefore more serious than a mere celebration. In spite of many traditions of the Primorye Koreans being already forgotten under the impact of various hostile forces in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, *asyandi* persisted in the Korean diaspora of the southern part of the Russian Far East, though often changed in details and significance. Unfortunately, we are unable to find information about the nuances of this tradition from that time, particularly as very little of the ancient form of *asyandi* remains.

## Figures



Figure 1 *Asyandi* in 2016 in the Primorye region. Grandmother and granddaughter before divination. Picture courtesy Mariia Surzhik.



Figure 2 *Chaltegi* (in other pronunciations—*chaltog*, *chartogi*). Picture from author's social media profile.



Figure 3 *Chapssal*. 찹쌀. 찹쌀 Picture from the author's social media profile.



Figure 4 Picture of *asyandi* in modern times. Picture courtesy of the participants.





Figures 5a–c Children in the *asyandi* in *hanbok*. Pictures courtesy of the participants.



Figure 6 A rare black and white photo of *asyandi* from the 1970s. Picture courtesy of the relatives.



Figure 7 Divination in 2019 in the Primorye region. In this picture, we can see that the traditional order of goods on the table was not right; some goods were changed. Picture courtesy of a participant.



## Notes

1. This article was supported by the 2020 Korean Studies Grant Program from the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2020-R06).
2. Mariia Surzhik, "Vospriyatie korejtsev-perselentsev russkimi s kontsa 19 v. po 1910," *Russian Studies* 28.2 (2018): 255–288.
3. T. S. Chen, *Traditsionnaya korejskaya kuhnya* (Almaty: Poligraf Ministerstva pechati i massovoj informatsii Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1994), p. 354.
4. Conversation with Dr. Woo Song-min, faculty member at Northeast Asian History Foundation.
5. This information came from conversations in 2019 with Valentin Andreytsev, head of the Association of aboriginal people in the Primorye region. He is a representative of one of the local national minority groups. Originally, Koreans are from the South Tungus branch in terms of ethnicity, while almost all the aboriginal population of the Russian Far East comprises North Tungus people. We can therefore surmise that the tradition of *asyandi* existed among Tungus groups before the two branches divided. We are planning to consider this question in the upcoming work "Specifics and Significance of the Celebration of the First Birthday of a Child among the Aboriginal Population of the Russian Primorye Region".
6. Conversation with Lyubov Efremkina in 2019. Efremkina is a representative of the nomadic tribe Kryma. Her group lives in the territory of the southern part of the Russian Far East. Details will be presented in the upcoming article "Main Celebrations among Gypsy Tribes of the Russian Far East".
7. The authors thank Lyudmila Tsoi, Mira Tsoi, Clara Yun, Irina Lee, Valentina Lee, Yulia Song, Natalia Tsoi, Galina Yun, Olga Tsoi, Pavlenia Kim, and others who wish to remain anonymous for their support in collecting these materials.
8. Conversations with Galina Yun and other persons in 2016–2017. There were 45 participants.
9. See the resources at <http://асянди.рф>.
10. Alexander Kim, "On the Preparation and Conduct of the Repression of Koreans in the 1930s Soviet Union," trans. Kees Boterbloem, *The Historian* 75.2 (2013): 262–282.
11. Alexander Kim, "The Repression of Soviet Koreans during the 1930s," trans. Kees Boterbloem, *The Historian* 74.2 (2012): 267–285.
12. Conversations with Irina Lee in 2019.
13. Conversations with Natalia Tsoi in 2019. Antonina Park said in October 2019 that in the *asyandi*, *chaltegi* was located in the farthest corner of the table because usually the child wanted to take it.
14. Antonina Park said in October 2019 that it is a symbol of rich life, though other people have not confirmed it.
15. Conversations with Clara Yun and others in 2017. Antonina Park said in October 2019 that a red bean in the *asyandi* was a symbol of immunity against measles.
16. We don't have information on which object was used in *asyandi* in ancient times before this modern medical tool. We know that the phonendoscope or stethoscope started to be used in the *asyandi* only toward the second half of the twentieth century.
17. Conversations with Mira Tsoi in 2018.
18. We shall consider specifics of "tol" in the Republic of Korea in the upcoming work, "Divination in the Tol in South Korea."
19. Conversations with Valentina Lee in 2019.
20. Conversations with Natalia Tsoi, Galina Yun, and Olga Tsoi in 2019.
21. Conversations with Natalia Lee in 2019.
22. Conversations with Natalia Tsoi in 2019.
23. Kim, "The Repression of Soviet Koreans during the 1930s."

24. Andrei Lankov, “Korejtsy SNG: stranitsy istroii,” *Seulskij vestnik*, 13 February 2002.
25. Conversations with some women from Primorye or Central Asian Koreans who go to churches in the Primorye region.
26. Conversations with Lyudmila Tsoi in 2015.
27. Conversations with Lyudmila Tsoi in 2015. We do not have exact information about the meanings of these words. It could be a special poetic form of the “chtitsa” for the child or part of an already forgotten prayer, spell, or call to spirits to help the child make a good choice.
28. We shall consider this question in detail in the upcoming work, “Asyandi in the Central Asia—Specifics and Changes”.
29. P. Yu. Shmidt, *Koreya i korejtsy* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiya aktsionernogo onshchestva Brokgaus-Efron, 1900), pp. 40–41.

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