



Shincheonji Church of Jesus, "Shamanic Ritual Never Happened. An Official Appeal Will be Made."

Shincheonji Church of Jesus the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony (hereafter Shincheonji Church of Jesus) announced that Shincheonji Church of Jesus will make an official appeal against the court's verdict regarding the articles made by Christian Broadcasting System (CBS) claiming "Shincheonji Church of Jesus performed a shamanic ritual" is not illegal.

In June 2013, CBS reported articles on three separate occasions insisting that Shincheonji Church of Jesus performed a shamanic ritual causing several million dollars. As a result, last May, Shincheonji Church of Jesus filed a lawsuit for damages against CBS for disseminating false reports claiming that Shincheonji Church of Jesus carried out a shamanic ritual as an attempt to get help from Shamanism.

At that time, CBS relied solely on groundless rumors posted on anti-Shincheonji websites and made out news reports. Also, during the course of the trial, the people whose statements were used in the article testified that they had not seen the shamanic ritual allegedly conducted by Shincheonji Church of Jesus but had just heard the rumors. The person who insisted Shincheonji Church of Jesus's commitment of shamanic ritual and took CBS's side stated that there was no shamanic ritual of Shincheonji Church of Jesus and submitted a statement to the court.

A shaman, surname Lee, who CBS has interviewed, has stated "an unidentified man called several times to ask about the shamanic ritual requested by the chairman of Shincheonji Church of Jesus. However, Lee stated, "It is unclear if this man is one of the congregation members of Shincheonji Church of Jesus or a party of concern. Also I have never held an shamanic ritual for Shincheonji Church of Jesus." Ultimately, CBS failed to prove in the trial the authenticity of the claims regarding the shamanic ritual.

However, the court has come to the conclusion that "the evidence submitted by the plaintiff is insufficient to assert that each report showed false information and there is no evidence to prove otherwise."

The court's verdict is to broadly protect the freedom of the press and it is by no means acknowledging that what CBS reported is true.

The verdict declares that “the content of the reports used expressions that can cause misunderstanding that Shincheonji Church of Jesus or their chairman, himself, performed an shamanic ritual.” The court also acknowledged that this report was defamatory to Shincheonji Church of Jesus.

Shincheonji Church of Jesus emphasized that “The person who was appointed as a person concerned who is claiming Shincheonji’s shamanic ritual has testified that “it is not true at all”. The shaman also stated that “I’ve just overheard and have no idea of Shincheonji’s shamanic ritual.”. In the end, there is no evidence to prove whether those reports are true or not.

It was pointed out that “CBS has taken the lead in damaging the image of Shincheonji Church of Jesus with unconfirmed information and an attitude that if the information is proven to be false then ‘oh well,’ which violates the standards of news coverage. The problem is that the content of defamation, which is hard to verify, is tolerated under the judgment of the judicial system, due to their priorities being the protection of the freedom of the press.” Furthermore, they also emphasized that “Even though the verdict only came out to protect the freedom of the press, CBS abuses the court’s decision by releasing subsequent reports continuously as if the shamanic ritual took place.”