

Rediscovering Traditional Korean Performing Arts

THE **a** PRO

Guest Editors

Haekyung Um and **Hyunjoo Lee**



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Pansori Opera Mr. Rabbit and the Dragon King

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About the KAMS and TheApro

The Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS) is a division of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. The purpose of KAMS is to support Korean performing arts, both traditional and contemporary, at home and abroad.

'TheApro' is the arts information portal published in both Korean and English. It is managed by KAMS to promote an active exchange of art information and develop a network between various performing art sectors and individual artists in Korea and across the globe. 'TheApro' offers a wide range of performing arts news and updates to recent trends, events and developments in the global art world. It also provides a wealth of resources, including publications of survey reports and statistical data on performing arts and the culture industry in general, podcasts, scripts of stage productions, and an extensive art directory. In addition to these online services, 'TheApro' also produces a book-length title each year with a specific focus to highlight current salient issues in the arts world. For the 2012 publication, the topic chosen was Rediscovering Traditional Korean Performing Arts in collaboration with guest editors, Haekyung Um (University of Liverpool) and Hyunjoo Lee (Ewha Womans University).

'TheApro' is available online from the following sources:

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Foreword

‘For Those Who Create and Communicate Through the Arts’

The ‘Korean Wave’ has become a significant phenomenon these days, generating ever greater attention from audiences around the globe. The driving force behind the success of ‘Korean Wave’ is not only the universality of its content, but also the way in which it has been communicated through powerful new media such as YouTube. In other words, a new technological era has ensured that globalized content of significant international interest has harmonized with the new media, underlining the reality that we are living in an era in which the medium, not the message, determines people’s way of communication, as Marshall McLuhan already pointed out in the 1960s. At the same time, the performing arts, which still primarily communicate with messages, cannot be sustained exclusively by new media. Clearly new technologies can offer many possibilities for development, but it is their content that establishes a seamless relationship with the public and this takes time to mature. I believe that as long as the Korean performing arts continue to flourish and mature they will be able to enjoy a future which allows development and even greater international standing.

The global fascination with ‘Korean Wave’ has also led to an interest in Korean culture in a broader sense, including its language, food and arts. To illuminate key trends and characteristics in Korea’s modern performing arts and to further develop the artistic exchange between Korea and other countries at a deeper level, the Korea Arts Management Service has been running ‘TheApro’, a website and arts information portal. For the 2012 publication project associated with ‘TheApro’, we have chosen to focus on Korean traditional arts with this volume, *Rediscovering Traditional Korean Performing Arts*. This work is a key restatement of the different social and cultural changes that Korean arts have undergone, from the past up to contemporary reinterpretations and renewals. Derived primarily from academic perspectives, it includes articles written by Korean and international experts in their own areas of research. We hope that this volume will be part of our efforts to discover and present the essence of those Korean performing arts which have enjoyed a rich past and will continue to enrich Korean society. We also hope that this publication will further contribute to fostering stronger relationships between artists and their audiences. The Korea Arts Management Service will do its best to help artists and those working in the artistic scene to stand as proud masters of the creative sphere where the arts are produced and communicated.

Jae-wal Jung

President of Korea Arts Management Service



Editors' Preface

Rediscovering Traditional Korean Performing Arts is a collection of new essays and articles authored by some of the world's leading academic experts in the field. The aim of this publication is to provide readers with an insightful and wide-ranging overview of different facets and developments of Korea's performing arts tradition. Although these articles are written by scholars, they are intended for the widest possible audience: anyone and everyone who wishes to learn more about Korea's artistic heritage. For that reason, each article has been written in an accessible style, and a list of suggested additional readings is also included at the end of the volume for those readers who wish to explore their interests further. A note about language: we have used the current (revised) system of Korean romanization although some words, names and publication titles are presented according to the previous system of transliteration, when published in that form earlier.

As the readers will find out from this volume, understanding traditional performing arts is not just about discovering a historical and cultural past. It is also about understanding how artistic practice continues to evolve in a new era and changing environment. The positions and roles of traditional Korean performing arts are open to various interpretations and applications, with their audiences and stage expanding globally and intercultural artistic exchange increasing. For example, as seen on the

cover of the book, the *pansori* opera *Mr. Rabbit and the Dragon King* was a product of a collaboration between the Korean National Changeuk Company and the German stage designer Achim Freyer to bring together a traditional Korean musical drama and an avant-garde theatre style developed by Bertolt Brecht. In many ways, it exemplifies how different artistic traditions across time and borders can meet to create something entirely new. Most importantly, individual and collective artistic endeavours, made by musicians, dancers and actors, are the key driving force in the creative process of Korean performing arts, by simultaneously rediscovering their traditional roots and opening up to new ideas.

The editors are grateful to all the authors for their valuable contributions which made this volume truly unique and to Tadgh O'Sullivan for his editorial assistance. We are also very grateful to the Korea Arts Management Service. Without their initiative and support, this volume would not have been produced.

Haekyung Um and Hyunjoo Lee

December 2012

Korean Traditional Music:
A Bird's-Eye View

The European Reception of *Gugak*:
Performing Korean Court Music in
Vienna, Austria

The Way of *Pungnyu*:
Musical Interactions at Private Venues in Seoul,
from the Late 18th to Late 19th Centuries

Music in Korean Shaman Ritual

How Do We Know About
the Dances of Korea's Past?

Entertaining Dances at the Joseon Court

Tradition and Innovation in *Changgeuk* Opera

Performing *Pansori* Musical Drama:
Stage, Story and Sound

To One's Heart's Content:
Baramgot and Reclaiming Creative Space
in *Gugak*

Canonic Repertoires in
Korean Traditional Music

Introduction: Rediscovering Traditional Korean Performing Arts

Haekyung Um

This volume explores traditional Korean performing arts in historical and contemporary contexts. Various genres of music and dance performed in public, private and ritual settings, different functions, aesthetics, producers and consumers are examined from both local and global perspectives. Authored by ten scholars who specialize in Korean music and dance, this book's overall scope and range of specific topics are broad and varied. At the same time, there are several common themes and overarching issues which are pertinent to the traditional Korean performing arts as understood from the vantage point of the 21st century.

The Korean word for traditional music is *gugak*, which literally means 'national music' or 'music of the nation'. Sometimes *gugak* also encompasses other related traditional genres, such as dance, drama and rituals, because of their historical ties and the stylistic relationships that they share. The term *gugak* first appeared in the mid-16th century Korean historical records, in the *Annals of King Jungjong*, which distinguished domestic music from other foreign origin music of Asia. In a contemporary context, *gugak* is usually used in contrast to Western music (*seoyang eumak*) which was first introduced to Korea in the late 19th century.

With respect to the place of traditional performing arts in contemporary Korea it is essential that they represent Korea's national culture and heritage although they do not necessarily occupy the core of everyday life. Traditional Korean performing arts are promoted nationally and internationally through the implementation of various institutional schemes and policies regarding education and performance. We can also see how traditional performing arts have served as a symbol of the nation and its 'soft power' in matters of international diplomacy. For example, the Joseon court dance performances staged for Chinese envoys (14th-19th centuries) can be compared with the 21st century European tour of the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts.

For contemporary Korean artists and audiences, traditional performing arts offer various ways to rediscover, explore and recreate their cultural roots and artistic heritage, as exemplified by the popularity of the *samulnori* percussion ensembles active since the late 1970s. Tradition also provides the artists with both inspirations and resources to create new Korean art forms for their audiences. For example, fluid relationships between individual and collective creativity, as found in the folk instrument genre *sinawi*, have been central to the Baramgot ensemble members. Restoring the authentic communicative and interactive performance space, as epitomized in the concept of '*pan*', is also equally important for some of *pansori* artists as their key performance strategies.

In addition to the significance of questions of cultural identity, there is also a shifting equilibrium between the moral and ideological principles and the experience of pleasure or enjoyment depending on the performance's functions and settings. Importantly music-making and listening as a leisure activity can also be seen as a way to display a particular type of lifestyle and personal identity across time, for example, music-making of the 19th century middle classes was supported by their increasing wealth and status.

Clearly, modernity, as much as cultural nationalism, has given shape to the current forms and state of Korean traditional performing arts. For example, we can see how the institutionalization of staging music, dance, drama and ritual performances has provided the catalyst for the creation of urban art forms. In this sense, artistic refinement and the canonization of repertoires seem to go hand in hand. The historical and contemporary selection processes have also defined what traditional Korean performing arts are in our time and this dynamic will certainly continue to shape their future. All of these influences are reviewed in this volume with each author focusing on their particular area of expertise to help us better locate traditional performing arts in modern Korea.

In his article, 'Korean Traditional Music: A Bird's Eye-View', Byong Won Lee outlines some of the key features of traditional Korean music, focusing on its performance styles, timbre and texture. This general overview also provides the historical contexts in which major musical genres and their aesthetics have been developed.

'The European Reception of *Gugak*: Performing Korean Court Music in Vienna, Austria' is Sang-Yeon Sung's case study of a 2005 Korean court music concert held in Vienna. It illustrates how overseas concerts are strategically programmed and delivered by the National Gugak Center for their international audiences. The positive reception in Austria, she

observes, confirms that the court traditional music and dance can appeal to European audiences and that showcasing Korea's historical grandeur has also helped to enhance the national image of Korea abroad.

The third article in this volume, 'The Way of *Pungnyu*: Musical Interactions at Private Venues in Seoul, from the Late 18th to Late 19th Century', by Sung-Hee Park, is an historical account of the music-making activities in the late Joseon period. She discusses the interrelationships between the dynamics of social and economic change and the significance of music-making and listening as leisure by the middle and upper classes in the capital Seoul. In this context, she explains how the aesthetic concept of *pungnyu* provided musical and social spaces in which individuals of different social classes interacted with one another.

Simon Mills' article 'Music in Korean Shaman Ritual' describes and analyses the characteristics of Korean shaman tradition and the central roles of music in various ritual procedures and contexts and in particular the way in which the percussive rhythms shape the performances. Focusing on the hereditary shaman ritual on the East coast of Korea, Mills provides a vivid ethnography of ritual and musical processes in which communal participation and healing experiences are shared. He also observes that Korean shaman ritual is increasingly becoming a shamanic ritual art or even secularized performing art presented on a stage.

The next two articles are concerned with traditional dance forms. Judy Van Zile's article 'How Do we Know About the Dances of Korea's Past?' discusses how we could interpret various iconographic depictions of Korean dance forms and styles as found in archeological and historical records. She argues that various factors should be taken into account including: different conventions of visual representation, the functions of records and other relevant historical contexts, all of which contribute to a better understanding of the historical past of Korean dance and its representations.

The second dance article is 'Entertaining Dances at the Joseon Court' by Jungrock Seo who describes how, in contrast to the common image of an austere Confucian dynasty, the Joseon court supported a considerable number of court dances for entertainment purposes. He suggests that as a 'proper' dance it was not only an entertainment but also a symbol of the state and a source of national pride. The balance between the dignity that corresponded to Confucian ideals of propriety and the capacity to entertain allowed for such practice.

The next two articles are concerned with traditional musical dramas. Andrew Killick's article entitled 'Tradition and Innovation in *Changgeuk* Opera' explicates the historical and social context in which *changgeuk* was created at the turn of the 20th century as the first theatrical genre to be performed on indoor stages. While inextricably linked to its precursor, the traditional epic *pansori*, *changgeuk* continues to take innovation as its key strategy in order to distinguish itself from *pansori* and establish its status as a new traditional opera.

In my article 'Performing *Pansori* Musical Drama: Stage, Story and Sound', I explain how the concept and practice of *pansori* staging has evolved while the *pansori* stories and themes were limited to a canon of five pieces with numerous emergent variations and adaptations. I suggest that the sound of *pansori*, including the voice color and singing along with their emotional impact, are the key factors that define this genre as a vocal art and provide the central aesthetics for new creative productions.

In her case study 'To One's Heart's Content: Baramgot Reclaiming Creative Space in *Gugak*', Hilary Finchum-Sung discusses the creative processes adopted by the new Korean ensemble Baramgot. By interpreting the aesthetics and techniques of traditional musical genres such as *sinawi* and also embracing global musical influences, Baramgot create a new form of traditional Korean music.

The last article of this volume, 'Canonic Repertoires in Korean Traditional Music' is Keith Howard's critical examination of the canonization of traditional Korean performing arts. Focusing on *samulnori* ensembles established in the 1970s, he examines the creative process and evolution of *samulnori* to become a Korean musical canon in a very short period of time. He also extends his analysis of musical canon to classical and folk vocal and instrumental genres to offer a historically informed analysis. Arguably his question, 'Will the canon survive and thrive in the future?' is pertinent to all traditional performing arts and their future prospects and development.

Korean Traditional Music: A Bird's-Eye View

Byong Won Lee

The purpose of this article is to guide readers to an understanding of the significant historical events, the status of traditional music in a contemporary context, as well as salient aesthetic and stylistic elements that contributed to the shaping of 'Korean-ness'.

Soundscape

On a sleepy Spring afternoon, one can observe the Confucian Shrine Rituals in Seoul, where spectators witness the performance of *a'ak*, the old Chinese court ritual music dating back to the 5th century B.C., which Korea imported in the early 12th century and perfected by the middle of the 15th century. In the evening of the very same day one may also be able to attend a concert of the pop singer Psy, whose video for 'Gangnam Style', available on YouTube, has been viewed more than a record 1 billion times during the five months from 15 July to 15 December 2012.

The musical culture of Korea is a fascinating subject, particularly given its social role and dynamic history. The fact that there are an unusually large number of internationally acclaimed Korea-born performers of Western art music is a reflection of local upper middle class passion and ambition for this music. The present popular music scene is moving away from some sixty years of Japanese and Western influence. By now it has gained a certain momentum and *hallyu* (the Korean Wave)¹ has emerged as a driving force in the world of Asian entertainment (Dator and Seo 2004) and K-Pop has established its own style of modern popular song. The *karaoke* bar enterprise, or *noraebang* (lit. song room), continues to prosper in South Korea, earning US\$10 billion annually. It recalls the historical remarks recorded in a 6th century Chinese document: 'drinking and performing boisterous music [continued] day and night' at the seasonal festive occasions (Song 1984: 36-37).

Internally, since the geographical and ideological division into separate republics in 1948, cultural polarization between the North and South

Koreas brought about two different conventions of musical practice in the peninsula demanding different aesthetic norms. The term 'Korean music', therefore, needs clarification with reference to the differences in music before and after the separation, and variations between the music of South Korea and North Korea. The present YouTube video clips uploaded by North Korea reveal that the socialist ideology behind musical practice in the hermit kingdom has been slowly tainted by capitalist sensuality displacing its ideological rigidity. The trend contradicts the musical guidance propounded by the late Kim Il-sung and his *juche* ('self-reliance') ideology.

Performance Styles

An old saying expresses the Korean need for a distinct performance style when a musician who does not have a recognizable personal style is admonished: 'music exists there, but you are not there'. The personal performance style incorporates a high degree of individualistic and creative variation and improvisation. Sometimes it moves beyond what is either predicted or anticipated. Such a practice has resulted in a musical environment in which individual creativity, not rigid imitation, is the norm. Adherence to a standardized performance practice was not a convention in Korean traditional music. The resultant differences emerging from such diversified performance practices have often given rise to arguments regarding the authenticity of the individual performance, while it has also brought about a rich variety of styles. The continuity of traditional musical practice in contemporary society is apparent in the realm of neo-traditional music and popular song. However, the overwhelming influence of Western music, the impact of cultural policy-making, and the desire for globalization are all detrimental influences on Korean traditional music and musical aesthetics. The extent to which improvisation occurs depends on the performer and ranges from mere ornamental deviation, as often happens in court music, to full-blown improvisation, as can be experienced in such folk forms as the *sinawi* (improvised instrumental ensemble), *sanjo* and *pansori*.

Both the classical and folk musicians of Korea have been accustomed to considerable freedom in performance. This tradition was due to the fact that many aspects of traditional Korean music are not rigidly codified. Musicians may exercise a certain degree of freedom when interpreting rhythmic nuances and embellishing the basic melody. Therefore, the music may vary with each performance. It should be noted that the austerities of Confucian prescription limited the extent of variation and improvisation in art music, whereas folk musicians enjoyed more flexibility. When

Korean musicians speak of traditional ‘improvisatory music’ (*jeukheung eumak*), they usually include *sinawi*, *sanjo* and *pansori* as the representative genres. These three genres all originated in the southwestern part of Korea, and their history is related to the shaman rituals of the region. Together with the *samulnori* (lit. playing of four instruments), the post-1970 percussion quartet utilizing folk rhythms, they are the most common forms of popular folk music in South Korea today.² Among these, *sinawi* is considered the music that demands the most extensive improvisation.

The performance of *sinawi* depends upon the highly developed spontaneous creativity of the musicians. The prescribed rhythmic patterns and abstract modal configuration are only points of reference for improvisation for the entire duration of the performance, which may last for hours in Shaman rituals. The juxtaposition of the multi-part melodies in *sinawi* is highly unpredictable; the music will be different each time it is played, even if the same musicians performed it. In a shaman ritual or a concert situation, each player has a varied number of stock melodic motifs or phrases, which rarely match the full length of the rhythmic cycle. Each motif usually consists of no more than three tones composed of intervals of perfect fourths or narrower. Although *sinawi* musicians are unaware of the number of viable and variable stock melodies, they often create new motifs spontaneously. These motifs and phrases are freely intertwined, interwoven, and juxtaposed against each other. There are virtually unlimited possibilities for melodic and rhythmic variation and improvisation.

On the surface, *sinawi* may sound like spontaneous, free-for-all music, but fundamentally the musical performance is achieved by a cohesion of the various elements through non-prescribed coordination among the musicians. The musicians are always alert to the rhythmic pattern and attempt to juxtapose their materials in (appropriate) relation to others. A truly satisfactory *sinawi* performance is possible only if the participating musicians have been playing together for a long period of time and thoroughly understand each other’s idiosyncratic musical behavior. In this sense, *sinawi* may be comparable to some Dixieland and free jazz. Presently, *sinawi* is better recognized as a staged instrumental ensemble or as accompaniment for *salpuri-chum* (dance to exorcise bad spirits), a solo dance which also evolved out of the shaman ritual.

The art of cohesively patching together instantaneously created motifs opened a way for the birth of a highly sophisticated musical style called *sanjo*, which literally means ‘scattered melodies’, the extended solo instrumental music accompanied by the *janggu*. The structure, form and performance practice of *sanjo* are coincidentally close to such classical

traditions as the Indian *raga*, Arabic *maqam* and Iranian *dastgah*, apart from the fact that *sanjo* lacks the support of a conspicuous drone.

It is a common belief among Korean musicologists that:

As *sinawi* players perform solo versions, they seek more melodic character and organized beauty, displaying virtuoso techniques. This sort of “solo *sinawi*” could be considered an archetype of the *sanjo*. Combining this with important rhythmic patterns and melodic progressions derived from other sources yielded a powerful body of musical material from which a gradual artistic development took place, resulting in *sanjo* (Hwang 1974: 279-80).

The literal meaning of *sanjo* is ‘scattered melodies’. It is no coincidence that *sinawi*, *sanjo* and *pansori* had all been rooted in Jeolla Province’s shaman music. Furthermore, most of the virtuoso musicians of these genres are from that region, and most of them have lineal relationships or occupational ties with shamans. In the traditional context, most *sanjo* players also participate in *sinawi* performance. This music also shares a common idiosyncratic musical dialect of timbre and subtle microtonal shadings, which are all characteristic of the southwestern region.

Kim Changjo (1867-1919) is credited with the crystallization of the present form of *sanjo*, an instrumental solo form combining elements of *sinawi* and other folk music materials and initially intended for the *gayageum*. Since the late 19th century other instruments, such as *geomungo* (6 stringed zither), *daegeum* (transverse bamboo flute), *ajaeng* (bowed zither) and *hojeok* (conical double-reed pipe) have also been used to play *sanjo*. Nevertheless, the *gayageum* (12 stringed zither) remains the most popular instrument for *sanjo*. When *sanjo* is played either by a wind instrument or string instrument the term *sinawi* is employed interchangeably with *sanjo*, e.g. the *daegeum sinawi* for the *daegeum sanjo* and the *haegeum sinawi* for the *haegeum sanjo*. This interchangeability of terms also underlines the common genetic relationship of *sanjo* and *sinawi*.

The improvisatory aspects of *sanjo*, as exemplified by Sim Sanggeon (1889-1965) who improvised extensively, have disappeared gradually given the constraints of modern performance, for instance, the limited durations of performances in the mass media and the teaching of *sanjo* from transcription since the 1960s. After establishing the Korean Music Department at Seoul National University in 1959, the first college degree program in Korean music, students majoring in Korean music were taught Korean music from transcription in Western staff notation,

departing from the traditional rote method. The process, especially the teaching from transcription, led to the standardization of this once highly improvised style of music. Today, it is common for each *sanjo* musician to have a number of versions whose layout formula is prescriptively set in accordance with the duration of performance. The abridged versions are re-arranged from the pre-existing stock melodies of the performer's own personal *sanjo*. At the moment it is rare to see the live performance of an hour-long full rendition of a *sanjo*.

Distinctive Timbre

There are two distinctive features of popular Korean musical instruments: (1) the ability to produce pitch variants, different pitches from the same fingering or string, and (2) the ability to produce to a certain degree a raspy, buzzing or rattling sound quality. The hoarse vocal quality of *pansori* singers supports such instrumental timbres.

Chinese instruments such as the *ajaeng* satisfied these requirements and were adapted for indigenous music with slight modifications. Even some major indigenous instruments such as the *geomungo* and the *daegeum* have gone through a certain degree of modification to emphasize the aforementioned requisite qualities. Conversely, instruments with fixed tuning, such as the *yanggeum* (dulcimer), or with a polished sound, such as the *danso* (short vertical flute), are not considered important in Korean traditional music.

The *ajaeng* seems to be one of the few existing bowed zithers used anywhere in the world today. It was imported from China during the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), but became obsolete in China long ago. Its thick strings (between six to nine strings) are bowed with a rosin-coated forsythia stick. Because of its exceptionally raspy sound, which appeals to the ears of Koreans, it gained wide popularity and became an important part of instrumentation in both court and folk music in Korea from the latter part of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910); and it is still popular in South Korea. What is most significant in the evolution of the *ajaeng* is the fact that, out of approximately fifty-eight Chinese musical instruments imported by Korea since the early 12th century, the *ajaeng* and two other instruments, the *haegeum* (two-stringed fiddle) and *dangjeok* (short transverse flute), are the only melodic instruments which have been adopted by Korean musicians to play native court banquet music and folk repertoires.

The present *geomungo* is a six-stringed zither plucked with a slim stick-plectrum made of bamboo or river reed. Strings are placed over the thirteen convex frets and three moveable bridges. The *geomungo* produces strong scraping and scratchy sounds when the strings are pushed and pulled over the wooden convex frets. The complex musical sound is compounded by the rattling noise of the three drone-strings on the movable bridges as well as the sound of the stick plectrum striking the soundboard. These percussive and scratchy sounds contribute to the shaping of the sound quality of the *geomungo*.

Some scholars believe that the ancient *geomungo* had only four strings, and two more strings were added after the 5th century. Their belief is based on the four-stringed *geomungo* depicted in the mural painting in the Dance Tomb of the Goguryeo Kingdom, located in present Jian Prefecture, Jilin Province, China. The addition of two strings probably contributed to the increase of the percussive sound. In current practice two strings are reserved for melody and the remaining four strings are open strings tuned to the same pitch in octaves. Strumming the open strings creates a markedly percussive sound.

The *daegeum* has six finger holes and one membrane-covered hole (*cheonggong*). The membrane-covered hole helps to create an extraordinary piercing buzzing sound in the high register. When the instrument has been played until the inner tube of the bamboo is well moistened the buzzing sound quality accompanies any tone during performance.

Texture

The texture of Korean music is basically monophonic and organized lineally. Unlike the sound formed by the vertical build-up of harmony in Western music, educated listeners should be able to discern each part individually in ensemble music. Each part has a different kind of ornamentation. Most of these slight variations are non-prescribed individual expressions. Sometimes, the parts may take off in quite different directions momentarily, resulting in melodic contrasts, and then meet at the same melodic line. This type of heterophony appears frequently.

Most of the rhythms of Korean traditional music are based on triple time or groups of three beats. The characteristic detail of Korean triple time is that the third beat is either articulated or accented, drawing more attention than the first beat. Duple time does exist in traditional music, but it is very rare. In folk music duple meter is always combined with

triple meter, forming a lengthy asymmetric rhythm. Asymmetric rhythms, which contain differing metric groups, abound in regional *pungmul* (rural outdoor band music and dance) and shaman ritual music. The length of these rhythms or rhythmic cycles may range from five beats (duple+triple) to as long as thirty-six beats of the *chilchae* (seven punctuations). When the rhythm is actually played by drums or gongs, the details of strokes vary considerably for each repetition to suit the melodic rhythm or to express rhythmic virtuosity.

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¹ The term *hallyu* embodies the unexpected surge in popularity of Korean pop music, movies and TV dramas, which have swept across Asia since the middle of the 1990s. Although some view *hallyu* as a passing fad, the result of the global mass media industry searching for the next new trend, others view it as the emergence of a new formula in Asian entertainment, maintaining that the phenomenal success of Korean dramas is due, at least in some part, to emerging Asian cultural confidence.

² In his 1992 interview in the KBS (Korea Broadcasting Systems)-TV1 documentary program entitled *Uri ui Mi* (Our Beauty), folklorist Sim Yooseong claimed that he coined the name for Kim Duk Soo and his colleagues when they visited him to consult him about their debut in 1978.

The European Reception of *Gugak*: Performing Korean Court Music in Vienna, Austria

Sang-Yeon Sung

On 22 September 2005, the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, formerly known as the National Gugak Center, sponsored a Korean traditional music concert in the Museums Quartier, located in the center of Vienna. The concert, presented in Halle E, included various kinds of Korean traditional court music and dance. Listened to by approximately 1,200 Austrians and Koreans, it received enthusiastic applause. This was a surprise, because Korea and its culture had been quite unknown in Austria. Since the mid-1990s, many South Korean institutions, supported by the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have promoted Korean traditional music abroad, but these groups have usually performed fusion-style pieces or smaller ensemble Korean traditional music.

Korean Night in Vienna

The concert by the National Gugak Center was part of Korean Night, an event supported jointly by the Korean embassy, *Die Presse* (an Austrian daily newspaper based in Vienna), and the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Korean Night was planned and promoted by ambassador Cho Chang Bum to introduce and promote Korean companies, such as Samsung, LG, Hyundai, and Kia, and to promote South Korean technology and culture in general. It also formed part of the National Day¹ reception. Invited opinion leaders included Johann Rzeszut, Chief Justice of the Austrian Supreme Court; Josef Moser, Comptroller General; Johannes Kyrle, Deputy Foreign Minister; sixteen U.N. ambassadors to Austria from more than forty countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan, and other members of the diplomatic corps; as well as representatives of the international organizations IAEA,² CTBTO,³ and UNIDO.⁴ Aside from the performance of music and

dance, Korean food was served, and a short video, stressing that Korea is a modern and dynamic society, was shown. According to the embassy, the Austrian audience was excited to see the video and reacted to it with loud applause.⁵

Like other countries in Asia, South Korea did not conjure up a particularly clear image in the Austrian imagination. Korean culture was not a central interest to Austrians, who lack knowledge and information about the country. Most of the news disseminated by the mass media relates to European countries, and because local interest in Vienna lies mostly in Austria and neighboring countries, little news about the rest of the world is communicated. The Asian region is seldom mentioned at all, therefore Austrians know little about Korean traditional culture and music. Austrians have great pride in their traditional culture, which includes Austrian painters such as Klimt and Schiele, and world-famous classical musicians such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and the Strauss family. Opportunities to explore Asian cultures are limited, so Korean Night provided a chance to introduce Korean traditional culture to the Austrian mass media. Barbara Wolschek, chief editor at the foreign policy department of the public broadcaster ORF, said after attending the concert, 'Now we can look beyond the EU and let our eyes turn to Asia,' thus emphasizing the usefulness of promoting the national image.⁶



Rehearsal at the National Gugak Center in Vienna, Austria, 22 September 2005
(Photo Courtesy of Jung Gae-Jong).

Promoting the Korean National Image

After recognizing the importance of developing the nation's soft power⁷ so as to compete more effectively in 21st century global society, the Korean government looked for ways to improve Korea's national image through strengthening the cultural sector (Sung 2010). The rise of the Korean Wave (*hallyu*)⁸ in neighboring countries confirmed the success of the entertainment industry and played an important role in updating the image of South Korea. In less than a decade, South Korea had become a media powerhouse in East and South Asia, whereas Koreans had formerly

considered Western culture superior to their own.

South Korea has gone through an astonishing period of economic development and democratization, but it is still seen as an exotic unknown or unimportant nation in many countries. According to Simon Anholt's Nation Brand Index, released in 2008, South Korea ranked thirty-third among fifty countries. This index is 'a report card for countries, measuring the world's perception of each nation as if it were a public brand', and among the ten 'most positively perceived countries, the ranking reveals a strong correlation between a nation's overall brand and its economic status' (Nation Branding Info 2008). However, unsatisfied with the result, Korea is making an effort to strengthen the image of the national brand. Aside from promoting Korean popular music and its stars, various cultural sectors are seen as likely useful factors to enhance the national image. For example, HanStyle⁹ support strategies are developed to upgrade the country's image abroad. *Hangeul* (the Korean alphabet), *hansik* (Korean food), *hanbok* (Korean traditional cloth), *hanji* (a Korean paper), *hanok* (a Korean traditional house), and *hanguk eumak* (Korean music) are all part of this strategy. Within this program the National Gugak Center plays an important role.

The National Gugak Center: Performance Abroad

Through the international success of its popular culture, Korea has projected a more positive image in neighboring countries and this, in turn, has motivated the *gugak* (Korean traditional music) sector to promote *gugak* both domestically and internationally. The intention is to promote *gugak* as Korea's leading brand and encourage more people to appreciate, which is clearly outlined on the homepage of the National Gugak Center.¹⁰ As part of its major marketing strategy this institution has been sponsoring international events and exchange performances, promoting traditional music through education, performance, and research, hosting workshops led by well-known music scholars, and providing lectures for foreigners both in Korea and at foreign universities. It was founded under its present name in 1950 with the stated intent of 'preserving and promoting traditional Korean music'.¹¹ Through academic courses, private study, ensembles, research, and performances, it preserves Korea's ancient musical traditions, including ancient court music. It sponsors a dance group, a folk-music group, and a court-music group. With different intentions for different purposes, it selects different styles and groups to represent Korean traditional music. For an Asian concert tour, performers based in the center usually prepare folk music and percussion music. In Shanghai in 2006 they performed *daegeum*¹² solo and folk dances such

as *ganggang sullae*, and in the same year their performance in Taiwan focused on folk music and dance. However, in the same year in Paris, they performed *boheoja* and *sujecheon*, other genres of court music. According to the National Gugak Center, the European market is the most difficult for deciding what kind of music and performance to present: on the one hand, Europeans are proud of their classical music and culture; on the other hand, Korea and even Asia are not their principal areas of interest. Furthermore, cultural exchange with Europe has not been as active as it has been within Asia. To meet the tastes of European audiences, classical court music was considered the most suitable to promote (Personal Interview with Kim Garam 2012b).



Performers from the National Gugak Center in Concert at The Berliner Philharmonic Chamber Music Hall, 11 October 2012 (Photo Courtesy of the National Gugak Center).

The National Gugak Center started giving concerts abroad in 1967, celebrating diplomatic relations with other countries, but it has only given concerts in Europe under the name of ‘European Visit Festival’ since 1985 (Personal Interview with Kim Chewon 2012a). In the first few years these concerts were rather staid events. Only after the 1980s did they become more active through *samulnori*.¹³ Assuming that East Asians prefer something more dynamic and joyful, smaller ensembles focusing on folk music and dance were presenting Korean traditional music abroad. Since 2000, the Ministry of Culture has collaborated with the National Gugak Center to enlarge and upgrade these concerts, and it has done so in a series of concerts starting in 2005 (Personal Interview with Kim Garam 2012b). Under the assumption that a German audience would enjoy listening to classical music and would have sufficient patience, the National Gugak Center performed *Jongmyo jeryeak*¹⁴ for the first time abroad. In Frankfurt in 2005 the Center performed *Taepyeong seogok*,¹⁵ exactly as if it were happening in a royal banquet in front of a king. This event required sixty performers, for whom shipping instruments and clothing was neither easy

nor inexpensive (Personal Interview with Kim Chaewon 2012a). This was part of a wider effort to differentiate itself from other institutions promoting *gugak*, therefore the Center presented a distinctive concert emphasizing the authenticity of the court music. The implicit contrast with other institutions and performance groups have been performing traditional music in a fusion style, believing that is the easiest way to introduce *gugak* to international audiences. Staff members at the National Gugak Center believe that Europe is the best place to promote authentic traditional Korean music because European audiences have already been well trained in classical music. This assumption that European audiences will be excited at Korea’s classical traditional music has proven to be correct, as exemplified by the concert held in Vienna, Austria. The concert produced by the Center in Vienna has led many audiences to become interested in Korea’s traditional music and performance and has provided a strong introduction for Korea and its culture to an Austrian audience.

Hofmusik und Hofanz aus Korea

The National Gugak Center held a concert in Vienna, Austria in September 2005 under the title of *Hofmusik und Hofanz aus Korea* as part of Korean Night. A member of the audience myself I was able to experience the reaction of Austrian friends also in attendance as well as that of some of the performers, which I will describe here.

Thanks to heavy promotion by the Korean embassy, the hall was sold out within seven days. Its capacity had been set at 870, but was increased to 1,200. The concert started at 19:30. Thirty-nine musicians and dancers participated, all performers from the National Gugak Center. They performed eight court music and dance pieces: *sujecheon*, *cheoyongmu*, *suryongeum*, *pogurak*, *taepyeongga*, *cheonnyeon manse*, *buchaechum*, and *ganggang sullae*. Each piece received loud applause and the audience seemed to react to each performance with excitement. The audience reaction not only surprised me but also the performers, who were surprised by the extent to which the audience enjoyed the music. *Ajaeng* performer Jung Gaejong said that this kind of music can be only enjoyed by European audiences, and especially Austrian audiences who really know how to listen. He thinks that this was because Austrian audiences are used to classical music as it is well known as the ‘city of music’. According to the performers, the troupe had performed in Berlin before coming to Austria, and they had experienced a similar reaction there as well. It also seemed the elaborate performing costumes and large size of the performance group both attracted and surprised the Austrian audience as well, who heavily cheered these specific performances. One university

student from the University of Vienna remarked that, 'It is amazing how much Korea is trying to promote Korean culture. I was deeply impressed by their preparation of this event. The music was great, and the costumes and dancing were elaborate and elegant.'

It was certainly the case that the National Gugak Center's concert was a successful attempt to introduce Korea's traditional court music to an Austrian audience. Through this successful concert, the Austrian audience not only obviously appreciated Korea's court music and dance but also the effort that Korea is making to get Austrians to develop a greater knowledge of Korea and its culture. It seemed that the selected pieces of music performed that night were properly chosen and it clearly communicated the presence of Korea and its music to an Austrian audience.

Conclusion

The performance of Korean traditional court music fascinated the Austrian audience with its exotic, elaborate and grand spectacle. Through the *Hofmusik und Hofanz aus Korea* concert the National Gugak Center not only successfully introduced Korean traditional music to an Austrian audience but provided a strong platform for Korea and its culture. Interest in the concert reflected the effort that Korea has been making in terms of cultural promotion. In conversations after the concert, Austrians said they were surprised to learn that a Korean institution and the Korean government would spend so much money and make such a large effort to present Korean traditional music and art to Austria. Unlike before, due to the popularity of Korean nontraditional music in Vienna,¹⁶ Korea is no longer an unknown entity to Austrians. However, the National Gugak Center's effort to perform Korea's court music has enhanced the image of Korea among Austrians.

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¹ Every year Austrians celebrate their country's declaration of permanent neutrality after World War II and the regaining of its status as an independent and sovereign nation on 26 October 1955. Around the world, Austrian embassies celebrate National Day with receptions for Austrian citizens on the anniversary of the date.

² International Atomic Energy Agency.

³ Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

⁴ United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

⁵ According to the South Korean Embassy in Austria's website (2012).

⁶ According to the South Korean Embassy in Austria's website (2012).

⁷ The term 'soft power' was coined by American scholar Joseph Nye, who first used it in 1990 in *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of America*, and it is developed further in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). He uses this term as a description of the ability to obtain things through cooption or attraction and as the mirror opposite of 'hard power'.

⁸ *Hallyu* is Korean popular culture, disseminated primarily through the mass media. First appearing in 1999, the term *hanliu* (韓流) / 한류 (*hallyu*), meaning 'Korean wave, trend, or wind', has become well-known in Asian countries, beginning with Chinese-speaking areas (the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Singapore), and later spreading to Japan, Thailand, Mongolia, and Vietnam.

⁹ HanStyle refers to the source of Korean culture representing and symbolizing Korea, thereby creating a branding of Korean traditional cultures to be used in everyday life as well as being commercialized and globalized.

¹⁰ You can see the homepage of the National Gugak Center at http://www.gugak.go.kr/eng/about_national/gree_idx.jsp

¹¹ According to South Korea's official tourist board.

¹² A large bamboo transverse flute which is used in traditional Korean music.

¹³ A genre of Korean traditional percussion music, performed with four traditional Korean musical instruments: *kkwaenggwari* (a small gong), *jing* (a larger gong), *jangggu* (an hourglass-shaped drum), and *buk* (a barrel drum similar to the bass drum).

¹⁴ The Royal Ancestral Ritual in the Jongmyo Shrine and its Music

¹⁵ It is a reproduction of a royal banquet provided by King Jeongjo for his mother Hyegyeong's 61st birthday.

¹⁶ 'Korean K-pop musician Psy ranking #2 in Top Chart Austria in December' <http://www.austriancharts.at>

The Way of *Pungnyu*: Musical Interactions at Private Venues in Seoul, from the late 18th to late 19th centuries

Sung-Hee Park

This article explores the musical interactions between patrons and musicians at private venues in Seoul during a period of profound transformation, when Korea was taking its first steps towards modernity. It focuses in particular on the concept of *pungnyu* (lit. ‘wind flow’), which can be translated into English as ‘refined pastimes’. The research is based on surviving historical sources – biographies, poetry anthologies, and paintings – and also on secondary sources and interviews.

Up until the *gabo* social reforms of 1894, the society of the Joseon period (1392-1910) was characterized by a strictly maintained stratified social hierarchy, ruled by royals and aristocrats in accordance with Confucian ideology. The records clearly show that interpersonal relations and professional specialisms remained strictly delineated by social status and education, which was a privilege of aristocratic and middle status individuals. The numbers of middle status people and commoners increased with the development of the cities and the growth of trade from the late 18th to the 19th centuries. They formed a culturally and economically powerful urban middle class. The term *yeohangin* encompasses professionals, urban administrators, urban farmers and merchants. Many wealthy *yeohangin* spent their leisure time enjoying hobbies and amusements, organizing recreational activities such as song societies, and patronizing artists. Almost all professional musicians were low-status – and only the *gisaeng* (female entertainers) were able to interact socially with members of any group, although this was dependent on their skills, official status, and connections. Many aristocrats and wealthy *yeohangin* hired female entertainers, court musicians (*akgong*) or middle status semi-professional musicians (*gagaek*) to contribute to their parties. Some aristocrats employed their own private servants those who

were able to sing, dance and play musical instruments. Some *yeohangin* patronized a certain type of song group specializing in so-called ‘mountain songs’ (*santaryeongpae*) or invited performances from semi-professional commoner status singers from the Sagyechuk area respectively, while others actively made music themselves as semi-professionals.

In certain contexts, the hierarchical levels of Joseon society were reflected in performance practice. The following extract was written by a court musician, Yu Wuchun (dates unknown, but born around 1730 and active during the mid to late 18th centuries). It demonstrates a total absence of interaction between the high-status patrons and the low-status musicians:

Whenever upper class people call for court musicians in the evening, we enter the main reception room with our instruments, where the candles burn very brightly, bowing deeply forward as we move into our places. One of the staff members says, “If you play well, you will receive an award”, and we reply in gratitude, “yes, sir”, and start playing. The string and wind instruments... play in natural harmony as though in timeless and airless space. At that moment, in the neighbouring listening room, it is very quiet and there are no signs of life, so I glance furtively across, only to discover that the man is leaning back on a cushion, sleeping. When he says “stop playing”, while stretching his body, we say “yes” and withdraw from the reception room. Later, when I return home, I realise that it was only us musicians who had listened to our music (Lee and Im 1996: 216).

Many surviving historical documents, however, describe private parties egalitarian relationship between patrons and musicians during the music-making event. In many cases, these parties are related to the concept of *pungnyu*, which will be discussed further here.

Some scholars, including Choi Jongmin (1991), think that *pungnyu* has remained a fundamental philosophy throughout Korean history. *Pungnyu* has been defined differently in different periods of history. It is recorded in *The History of Three Kingdoms* (from 1145) that as far back as the 6th century, youth groups in the Shilla Kingdom (57BCE-668CE) were taught to live according to the *pungnyu* way – cultivating moral sense, enjoying music and dance, and communing with the spirits of nature. Later, in the Goryeo period (918-1392), the word *pungnyu* became imbued with ideas derived from the state religion of Buddhism. Then, over the course of the Joseon period, the word *pungnyu* came to be used primarily

in connection with music, particularly those forms deemed to cultivate good character. In this period, certain genres are repeatedly associated with *pungnyu*, including the three song forms: classical lyric song (*gagok*), sung short poems (*shijo*), and narrative song (*gasa*). Music was at the center of the *pungnyu* life and enjoyed alongside poetry, dancing, nature, tea and wine – all of which were to be shared with like-minded companions in the context of private parties.

The surviving sources reveal a variety of different party venues: at home, in the traditional gentleman's guest room (*sarangbang*) or back garden; song society venues; picnicking or boating parties; entertainment rooms (*gibang*); riverside; or farmers' dugouts (*wumjip* or *gipeun sarang*).

The following story, from a book by Kim Ryeo in 1818 (School of Korean Traditional Arts 2000: 112-117), describes a private party that took place in the gentleman's guest room. Here, you can clearly see a close relationship between patron and musician, even though the former (Seopyeonggun) was a member of the royal family and the latter (Shilsol) was a middle-status singer:

Seopyeonggun invited Shilsol to his home every day. Whenever Shilsol sang, Seopyeonggun would accompany him on the *geomungo* zither. One day Seopyeonggun challenged Shilsol, "Can you sing something that would be impossible for me to accompany?" Shilsol immediately responded by singing *Chwiseunggok* (Monk's Music), in which he suddenly created the sound of a clash of cymbals using his voice. Seopyeonggun responded by making a rapid tapping sound on his zither. Next, Shilsol sang *Hwanggyegok* (Music of the Yellow Cock), in which he made the cock-a-doodle-doo sounds of a cockerel and then finishing by laughing. Seopyeonggun continued plucking the strings, but in the end gave up, saying, "I'm lost. Why did you make the sound of cymbals in the previous song and laugh just now?" Shilsol replied, "Because a monk finishes chanting with a clash of cymbals and men respond to a cock's crow by laughing. That's why." Everyone, including Seopyeonggun, laughed a lot ...

The next extract by Han Chaerak (dates unknown), depicts a musical party conducted in the back garden, vividly depicting the social interactions between literati friends and a female entertainer called Hyeonok:

I visited Hyeonok's house, which is called Oseonggwon (Five Castle View), with three of my poet friends. She immediately ordered a servant to clear a space beneath a pine tree in the yard and spread a reed mat under the pomegranate flowers. She brought out a *geomungo* zither and played *Yusugok* (Music of Flowing Water). After the music, we created rhyming poems while passing a wine cup around. She began with the following phrase: "Wise men come to a wilting flower" – revealing in a moment that her beautiful skills were not only in singing (Han [1833] 2007: 60).

Some *pungnyu* enthusiasts belonged to song societies, which regularly gathered to share music and poetry in their own private song society venues. The next poem from *Geumok chongbu* (Collection of Gold and Jade [c.1880] 2003: 64-65) by the middle status semi-professional singer An Minyeong (b.1816) depicts this:

A shadow is cast through the window by a Chinese plum tree,
A woman of jade-like beauty wears a slanting golden hairpin,
A few white-haired old men are playing zither and singing songs.
Time passes,
They raise their cups to drink and the moon also rises.

The paintings by the *yeohangin* artist Shin Yunbok (b.1758) depict some of the popular venues for *pungnyu*. For example, one of his paintings entitled 'Sangchun yaheung' (Admiring the Spring in the Country) shows aristocrats and female entertainers watching middle-status semi-professional musicians play 6-stringed zither *geomungo*, 2-stringed fiddle *haegeum* and transverse bamboo flute *daegeum*. Another painting entitled 'Seonyudo' (Boating Party) shows aristocratic patrons watch a servant play the transverse bamboo flute and a female entertainer play the Korean mouth organ *saenghwang*. Some *yeohangin* enjoyed the pleasurable surroundings of entertainment rooms, meeting friends, drinking alcohol, eating, gambling, and enjoying the song and dance provided by female entertainers.

When wealthy Han River merchants had free time, they would sometimes hire singing troupes to perform for them on the riverside. Meanwhile, farmers and private merchants would enjoy parties near to their working places. For example, during the fallow season, farmers would create dugouts and invite semi-professional commoner status singers or female entertainers to perform. This type of *pungnyu* party continued into the 1960s and the singer Lee Chunhee (b.1947) mentioned her recollections of it:

Outwardly, the roof was a little bit higher than ground level, with a window in it. To enter, you would open a small door and go down a ladder. The floor was covered with a patterned mattress and cushions, and the walls were decorated with wall hangings. There was a folding screen along the far wall and a brazier in the center, with a brass kettle on it and, sometimes, chestnuts roasting (Lee, Bae and Go 2000: 274-275).

The environment copied the gentleman's guest room: according to the musicologist Lee Bohyeong (personal communication, 2 April 2007), the famous singer Jeong Deukman once told him that, during the Japanese occupation, a Japanese policeman once opened the dugout's door while a performance was going on. He saw the interior of the dugout and ran away, thinking that it was a large gathering of aristocrats.

Scholars of Korean history often emphasize the strictly stratified nature of Confucian society in 18th and 19th century Korea. At the same time, people of different statuses worked and lived in separate areas of Seoul and, of course, they used a variety of means to express their social status – such as styles of dress, codes of etiquette and use of language. As I mentioned earlier, certain musical performance events emphasized differences in status between patrons and musicians. However, other performance venues – specifically private parties – provided opportunities for people of different statuses to interact on a relatively even level. Although I have only presented a few depictions in this paper – stories, poems and paintings – there are many others that also demonstrate a 'leveling out' of status during the music-making. In part, this 'leveling out' was facilitated by the fact that all people, regardless of status, enjoyed the same song forms, with the lower status emulating the tastes of the upper status (Bourdieu 1984). But the transcending of status was also a crucial product of the way of *pungnyu* as encapsulated in the following poem from Haedong Kayo (Popular Songs of the East, 1763) by the Board of War's administrator Kim Sujang (1690-c.1769):

Nothing is as enjoyable as song.
 Friends, you know the luxurious pleasures offered by
 Spring flowers, fresh summer wind, bright autumn moon, and
 snowy winter landscape,
 The pleasures of meetings in Pilun, Sogyeok, Tangchundae
 And incomparably beautiful places both North and South of the
 Han River,
 And the pleasures of drinks, meats and various barbecued sea
 foods,
 Enjoyed with good friends,
 And with a full ensemble of instruments and the best beautiful
 singers,
 Sitting beside one another and singing in alternation.

 One does not care about wealth, rank, or fame.
 One has a sturdy spirit.
 This is what I like.

The word *pungnyu* is still used in today's society, and may be considered an essential starting point for explaining Korean traditional music. Nowadays, it implies many abstract meanings beyond just the musical sphere. For example, if you say that someone knows *pungnyu*, it implies that he/she knows about art, music, love and drinking and also that they possess sensitivity, taste, composure, and artistic free thought. Accordingly, the word sometimes features in the titles of music-related products and organizations, for example, the FM radio program '*pungnyu maeul*' (*pungnyu* village), the '*pungnyu hoe*' (*pungnyu* society), and a *pungnyu*-titled folk performance theater group, online blog, and Korean music concert series. Wind flows in perpetuity as long as music goes on.

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Music in Korean Shaman Ritual

Simon Mills

It is hard to sum up Korean Shamanism in a few sentences but, in short, it could be described as the traditional syncretic folk religion of Korea. It mixes together ritual practices, beliefs, symbols and myths from Buddhism, Taoism, and folklore and adds elements commonly associated with nature, religions and shamanism – including the use of techniques such as divination, trance, and mediumship (Kim 1998: 15-32). As with many other syncretic folk religions around the globe, there is very little in the way of dogma, codified rules, or centralized leadership, which means that a great diversity of practices and beliefs can be found.

In Korea, the diverse practices of traditional folk religion are often referred to by academics as 'mu-sok', 'the customs of mediumship'. The Chinese character for this 'mu' (巫) is often interpreted as being a representation of two intermediaries standing between and linking two different planes of existence, this world and another. The intermediaries themselves, generally known as *mudang* in Korea, are usually referred to as 'shamans' in English because of similarities to other shamans around the globe, particularly the archetypical Siberian shamans. These days, most *mudang* are women – although there is a small minority of male *mudang* (who are often gay and/or transvestite) – and most of the people who attend the *mudang*'s rituals are also women. As Choi Hee An says, 'Shamanistic rituals and storytelling provide women with a cathartic release from their oppressive reality and empower them to share their pain' (Choi 2005: 17).

There are two main types of *mudang*, which were formerly located in different parts of Korea: charismatic *mudang* to the North (above the Han River) and hereditary *mudang* to the South. Charismatic *mudang*, who have so-called 'spirit power', are generally called to the profession; after finding themselves psychologically unable to conform to the social roles expected of them by family and friends, they experience a breakdown, after which they become apprenticed to a *mudang*, acquire techniques to control their own and others' spirits, and finally emerge as reconstituted healers. In their rituals, charismatic *mudang* tend to focus on summoning spirits into their own bodies, delivering oracles and displaying divine

power (often through feats involving knives). Meanwhile, the hereditary *mudang* tend not to have these powers. Instead they prove ritual efficacy by displaying extensive esoteric knowledge and impressive performing skills – performing complex and highly accomplished dance, song, and music. This latter type of *mudang* is born into the profession, learns from the family, and practices and performs in the context of a guild-like family organization, with the male family members playing music and the women officiating. The situation has changed dramatically over the course of the 20th Century: the hereditary *mudang* and the styles of ritual that they have fostered are rapidly disappearing while the charismatic *mudang* are now widespread throughout the whole country (Mills 2007: 6-16).



A Late 19th Century
Painting of a Shaman Ritual.

Many types of shaman ritual are still widely performed in Korea, including rituals to bring good luck to the individual, family, and community, rituals to expel negative spirits, and rituals to soothe the spirits of the recently dead and support bereaved family members. The vast majority of rituals are small-scale and are concerned with addressing a client's specific problems; these feature prayer and chanting (usually of Buddhist texts) but do not generally involve dance, musical performance, or song. Full rituals (*gut*) involving all types of artistic performance are far more expensive and much rarer, often requiring rental of a suitable performance space, recruitment of helpers and musicians, and extensive preparations, including the decoration of the ritual space with richly symbolic images, amulets, and props, and the setting up of an altar, laden with fruit, drinks, cakes and other offerings. Every *gut* consists of a prescribed succession of sections, each dedicated to appeasing a specific god or group of gods. First, the chosen god or spirit is summoned (into the *mudang* herself, into a spirit vessel, or just to attend the ritual space). Next, the *mudang* diagnoses the root causes of problems through

deduction, oracle, or divination and seeks to appease spirits through prayer, entertainment and offerings, providing opportunities for those present to take part in therapeutic and cathartic psychodrama. Finally, at the end of each section, the spirit is sent off. Musical instruments and the sounds they produce tend to be amongst the *mudang*'s most essential tools throughout these proceedings.

In certain traditions, ensembles of melody instruments have featured – for example in the hereditary shaman rituals of the South-Western Jeolla Provinces – but it is now very rare to encounter them in live ritual performance, given in private for paying clients. Rather, it is percussive sounds that have become utterly integral to Korean shaman ritual performance. The ritual ensemble most commonly involves a double-headed hourglass drum (*janggu*) and a large gong (*jing*), laid out horizontally on a mat or suspended on a stand. However, there may also be additional gongs, cymbals (*bara*) and bells (*bangwool*) and, in the East Coast hereditary shamans' performance, there are small hand-gongs (*kkwaenggwari*). Percussive instrumental sounds contribute to the *mudang*'s rituals in various ways: firstly, they aid the summoning of spirits and help to create the impression of divine presence; secondly, they help to banish unwanted spirits and give the impression that the ritual space is 'clean'; thirdly, they provide background accompaniment and structure for the *mudang*'s songs and sequences of ritual procedures; and fourthly, they encourage cathartic behavior amongst all the participants – especially dancing and singing (Mills 2012).



Dancing Before the Altar
(Photo Courtesy of Simon Mills).

In the charismatic *mudang's* ritual, percussive sounds often function as an aid to the *mudang's* trance state. A commonplace practice is for the ritual musicians to play repeated pulses or simple rhythms loudly and for long periods of time while the *mudang* executes vigorous repetitive physical movements, spinning around in circles or jumping up and down, and sometimes shouting out 'faster' or 'slower' or using gesture to indicate an optimal tempo to the musicians. When in a hyperstimulated state, the *mudang's* normal cognitive functions are inhibited and her sense of self has diminished; she has entered a trance state and is able to receive the invited spirit. Some *mudang* appear to require less preparation than others and there are even exceptional *mudang* who accept spirits into themselves without any prior trance-promoting stimuli at all (Walraven 2009: 75-76).

It is not only for the *mudang's* benefit that crashing percussive sounds accompany the summoning of spirits. It is, in fact, for everyone. Somewhat akin to the traditional drum roll that signals the climax of a magician's trick (but much louder and longer), the percussive sounds invoke a build-up of suspense; as soon as they begin, everyone knows from previous experience that something fantastic is about to happen. Some also consider the crashing percussion sounds effective in attracting the attention of the invited spirit – somewhat like shouting 'We're over here!' And within the confined ritual space, the deafeningly loud sounds quickly bamboozle all present so that it becomes very difficult to think of anything else but the sounds and movements of the present moment. Like the bright colours of the paraphernalia and offerings that adorn the altar and the whole space, the sounds help to take people out of themselves and transform the ritual space into a 'happening' place – a meeting venue for people and spirits, existing somewhere between the normal plane of existence and the world of the unknown.



Shaman Ritual Musicians (Photo Courtesy of Simon Mills).

Intriguingly, much the same sounds used to attract spirits are also used to expel them. Miscellaneous lowly ghosts (*japgwí* or *japshin*) are thought to linger wherever people assemble and, although they are generally thought of as rather pitiful, they are still considered to be potentially dangerous, especially for ritual attendees who are in a somewhat fragile and vulnerable state. Accordingly, before, after, and periodically throughout ritual, *mudang* perform purifying procedures to dispel these ghosts away from the ritual space. It is common for alcohol and scraps of food to be thrown outside to tempt them away and, varying according to tradition, fire, pure water, Buddhist chant, symbolic actions involving knives, and – once again – crashing percussion sounds may also be used. In the style of ritual performed by hereditary musicians in the East Coast provinces, for example, a specific rhythm is played for this purpose – a fast 4/4 rhythm called *sajapuri*, which consists of the following note durations: long, long, short, short, long. The name *sajapuri* is indicative of the rhythm's expurgative function: while the '*saja*' are amongst the scariest of all spirits – the messengers of the Kings of the Underworld who come to collect people's spirits – '*puri*' signifies 'banishment'. This rhythm is central to all exorcistic moments in East Coast shaman ritual; played vigorously with strong accents on the first two beats, it is considered an effective means to 'beat away the ghosts' (*subuchigi*) and keep the ritual space clean (Mills 2012: 149-151).

In their rituals, *mudang* tend to lead their clients through a varied programme of therapeutic episodes, seeking to address profound problems in a thorough manner. A large array of memorized texts, ritual actions, and interactive dramas are performed and, accordingly, the rituals often continue for many hours, sometimes over the course of several days. Music crucially helps to establish structure, signaling the beginnings and ends of sections, and attributing successive sections with contrasting moods. The most accomplished ritual musicians specializing in the hereditary styles of ritual employ a startling array of musical patterns for these purposes but even the least skilful of accompanists will have a small repertoire of contrasting rhythms, generally including *gutgeori* (12/8, medium/slow), *jajinmori* (12/8, faster), *hwimori* (12/8 or 4/4, fast), and a few pop-style backing rhythms (used to accompany karaoke episodes). Many *mudang* include narrative songs during their rituals. Often set to a lilting *gutgeori* backing, these songs tell of life's trials and tribulations, helping those present realize that they are not alone in their suffering and indicating effective and ineffective ways of behaving in particular situations.



A Large Community Ritual in Progress (Photo Courtesy of Simon Mills).

Many *mudang* claim that ‘*puri*’ is the overriding objective of their rituals – the ‘banishment’ not just of unwelcome spirits but of all negative feelings. Accordingly, in their rituals, they tend to look beyond simply identifying problems, diagnosing causes, and suggesting practical solutions; using a variety of psychotherapeutic techniques, they encourage all who are present to pool their energies and cathartically unleash their pent-up emotions. And after each outpouring of anger and sorrow, everyone joins together in a playful celebration of life’s most uplifting elements – good relationships, hopes for the future, and pleasurable pastimes. In many cases, these celebratory episodes are greatly enhanced by music, with the *mudang* encouraging people to get up on their feet, sing their favourite songs – popular hits with happy associations for all – and dance to the pounding rhythms of the ritual drum.

This short article has considered music’s various roles within Korean shaman ritual, as performed by *mudang* for paying clients in private contexts. It has been shown that, within these forums for therapeutic interaction, the musical components (like all other elements of ritual) are very much tailored towards providing all those present with well-rounded healing experiences. Over the past few decades, however, it has become increasingly common to encounter the shamanic ritual arts in far less interactive environments, namely on concert stages within what Park terms ‘quasi-folkloric shows’ (Park 2003: 362). Since the early 1980s, a small selection of leading *mudang* have been appointed as ‘Intangible Cultural Assets’ – the living representatives of their particular styles of ritual – and one of their duties is to perform together with their students in concert contexts. A small minority of traditions have actually now become secularized performing arts, only ever seen on stage and never performed for clients in private, and it is to be expected that several other traditions may soon follow. However, there is ample evidence to suggest

that other shamanic traditions, meanwhile, continue to flourish: these Korean traditional performing arts continue to be wholly relevant active forces for change in 21st century lives.

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How Do We Know About the Dances of Korea's Past?

Judy Van Zile

If you visit Korea today you will have the opportunity to see an astonishing array of dance: from masked dance-dramas performed by government-designated National Living Treasures to reconstructed dances said to be performed as they were centuries ago in the royal palace; ritualistic dances performed at Confucian shrines by university dance students to temple dances performed by Buddhist monks; hip-hop dances by winners of top prizes at global competitions to classical ballet choreographed by such non-Korean luminaries as George Balanchine, and musicals patterned after those in the United States and Europe but created by Korean playwrights, composers, and choreographers.¹

Besides seeing performances at theatres, temples, and shrines you can purchase DVDs or visit websites that capture many of these Korean dances. Some of the dances are described as being centuries old, having come from a time before the existence of cameras and computers, and many are referred to as being 'traditional', a term whose definition is heatedly debated. Regardless of its validity, or the details of how one chooses to define it, it is the older 'traditional' dances that are typically identified as distinctively Korean and representative of the country's cultural heritage.

Because dance is a visual form, however, and given that many of these older dances are believed to have originated long before technological modes of documentation, how do we know about the dances of Korea's distant past? Cultural beliefs as well as government mandates to document activities of the former royal court, and a long-standing fascination with dance on the part of artists such as painters, have contributed to the archive that remains. Yet since dance is a three-dimensional moving activity, representations of it in any form, even in motion pictures, must be carefully evaluated and interpreted if one is seeking factual information about performance – particularly about movements. Nonetheless, such records provide intriguing hints of what might have occurred in the distant past.

Among the oldest records of dance is part of a wall painting in what is now known as the 'Dance Tomb' (*Muyongchong*), which dates from between 500 and 650 AD (see Figure 1).² Scholars believe the image depicts dance because it includes a group of individuals who are playing musical instruments (at the bottom, only a portion of which is shown here), and because of descriptions in archaeological reports written at the time the tomb was discovered in the early 20th century (Seong 1999: 31-33). If we try to discern information about the dance the image may have portrayed, we see the number of dancers (five), their probable gender (three men and two women, based on their attire),³ their identical positions, and a suggestion of the direction in which they are traveling (to the viewer's left, based on the way in which their feet are pointing and in which they appear to be looking).



Figure 1: Artist Unknown, Detail from the Dance Tomb (*Muyongchong*), from the Eastern Wall of the Main Room of the Dance Tomb, in Gungnaeseong (Modern Tonggou), near Jian City, Jilin Province, China, 6th or 7th Century AD. Original in Color.

Although no dance performed today is said to specifically align with what we see here, specialists say paintings such as this one were intended to allow the deceased buried in the tomb to live as they had on earth (Choe 1983). Therefore, tombs were decorated with scenes of daily life and included rituals and meals, portraits of friends and relatives, and illustrations of sports and entertainments the deceased were likely to have observed or participated in. It is probable, therefore, that some sort of formalized dance was performed during the lifetime of the deceased, and that dance was considered sufficiently important to be recorded in the tomb.

Another kind of dance record is found in the 15th century *Akhakgwebeom*, a major 1493 treatise on music and dance of the royal court. In this case, the record was created to specifically serve as a kind of how-to manual for performance. Produced in the form of a woodblock-printed book, it includes line drawings of costumes and implements used in dances, verbal descriptions of movements, and images showing the placement of dancers in the performance space. For example, the page shown in Figure 2 illustrates the arrangement of performers by placing the word for ‘dancer’ or ‘musician’ or ‘banner bearer’ in specific locations on the page. (The words are written in Chinese script, since although Korea developed its own writing system in the mid-15th century, the Chinese version was preferred by scholars for several centuries thereafter.) In this case we see a circular procession of individuals and a moment from the related dance, the Dance of Cheoyong (*Cheoyongmu*), in which four dancers are arranged in the shape of a diamond, with a fifth dancer in the center of the diamond. Additional images show costume details, including the mask worn by the five dancers (Figure 3), and text contains such movement descriptions as ‘raise the right hand first, then repeat’, or ‘gesture as if poking the sky’.

Many dance records were created by official court artists in the form of horizontal scrolls, folding screens, fan-fold manuscripts, and albums resembling books.⁴ Based on information in these as well as other documents, it is known that some were intended as instruction manuals

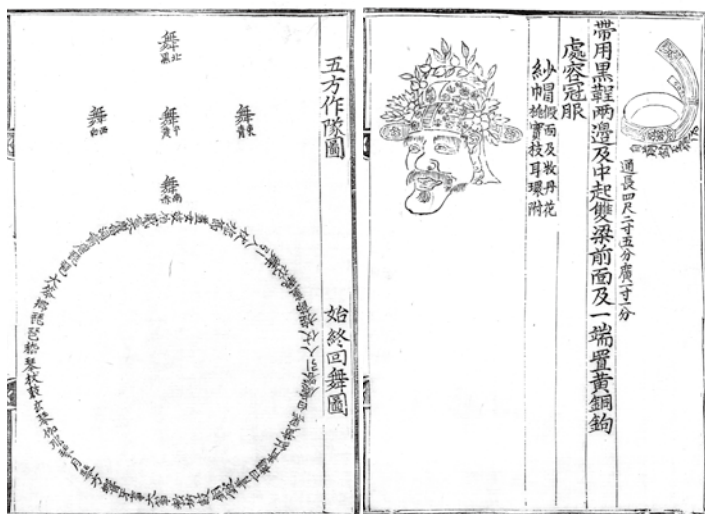


Figure 2 and 3: Page from the 1493 *Akhakgwebeom* Showing Processional and Diamond Formations for the Dance of Cheoyong (Left) and an Illustration of the Dance Mask Used (Right) (Both Images Courtesy of the Kyujanggak Institute of Korean Studies, Seoul National University).

to be used in advance preparations for events, some as directorial aids to facilitate adhering to appropriate protocol and procedures during events, and some to record events after they occurred. With the specific intent of serving as references for both current and future generations, they documented such important occasions in the royal court and throughout the country (when members of the court traveled in the countryside) as marriages of kings, birthdays, anniversaries, national funerals and the building of shrines, and these celebrations frequently included dance. Information was sometimes very detailed, including names of musicians and dancers who performed, titles and descriptions of dances, numbers of guests in attendance, activity schedules, and costs of items used, and was presented in the form of line drawings or paintings as well as in written text.

Line drawings in the book-type albums are generally rendered as woodblock prints, some of which had color added during the printing or later. One example is shown here in Figure 4. Textual information contained elsewhere in the album tells us the dance depicted was performed during activities that occurred when King Jeongjo visited the tomb of his father in the late 18th century. The image shows a large number of female dancers performing similar movements, characteristics shown in other court records and typical of the way many court dances are performed today.



Figure 4: Cymbal Dance (*Hyangbalmu*), from the Record of King Jeongjo's Visit to the Tomb of His Father (*Woonbaeng eulmyo jeongli uigwe*), 18th Century (Image Courtesy of the Kyujanggak Institute of Korean Studies, Seoul National University).

Unlike the isolated dance depicted in Figure 4, a painting from the early 18th century (not shown here) portrays a dance in the context of the event during which it was performed. In other paintings from the same period we see not only the five dancers identified in the 15th century *Akhakgwebeom* (at the top in Figure 2), but also the accompanying music ensemble, court officials, and other individuals who are likely to have attended the event. One painting depicts a private party King Sukjong hosted for senior officials over the age of seventy. The similarity in the formation of the dancers in this painting and that in the *Akhakgwebeom* (Figure 2) suggests its possible historical accuracy, but in this case the artist suggests a very lively dance in the animated positions of several of the realistic figures, as well as the environment in which the dance was performed.

A different kind of visual representation is contained in the 18th century *Notation of Current Dances (Shiyong Mubo)*, as seen in Figure 5). Like the *Akhakgwebeom*, it is an instructional album, but this time recording Confucian ritual dances in a manner modelled after a music notation system used at the time. The music notation was comprised of squares read from the top of the page to the bottom, beginning in the upper right corner, with each square approximately corresponding to what in western music would be identified as a beat. Within each square were symbols or text indicating what instruments were to be played and how (for example, the manner of striking a drum or the pitch for a wind instrument) during the respective beat.



Figure 5: Page from the Notation of Current Dances (*Shiyong mubo*), 18th Century (Image Courtesy of the National Gugak Center [Gugakwon], Seoul).

In the dance notation, human figures and text are shown in individual frames intended to provide, when strung together sequentially, a guide for producing fluid movement patterns. The images attempt to show how movement relates to its accompanying music, each block, as in the music notation, approximately corresponding to a beat. Additionally, the artist appears to enhance the record by adding words to the pictorial documentation.

Two images attributed to the court painters Kim Hongdo (1745-c.1806) and Shin Yunbok (1758-early 19th century) are among the most frequently used to represent both Korean painting and Korean dance. In Figure 6 we see a single male dancer accompanied by six musicians. The scene does not appear to depict a particular dance performed today, but does show some of the characteristics of dances seen today – the manipulation of long sleeves, the extension of one arm out to the side and the other overhead, and the lifting of one leg with a bend at the ankle. In a painting by Shin Yunbok (not shown here) from the same period we see a sword dance performed by two women for the apparent enjoyment of several men and their female companions, together with an accompanying music ensemble. Sword dances performed today are said to be based on either those seen in the countryside or on similar dances performed in the court; although the swords used today are shorter than those suggested in this image, today's version of the dance is usually done by an even number of performers who often relate to each other in pairs, as is shown in Shin's painting.⁵



Figure 6: Kim Hong-do, Boy Dancing, Genre Painting from Album, Second Half of the 18th Century (Image Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea). Original in Color.

Knowing that the kinds of documents described here are only a small sampling of dance records in Korea, and recognizing the visual nature of these documents, it is easy to assume that we know a great deal about Korea's dances of the past. However, this assumption must be tempered with caution. While dancers and scholars today mine such materials to determine past performance details, new interpretations of them lead to both new versions of dances of the past and to debates about how to read the documents, particularly with regard to how to 'connect the dots' represented in frozen moments of an art form that exists in three dimensions of space as well as in time. How much of what we see records the historical reality of an actual dance as opposed to an artist's creative vision of that reality?

If, for example, the image from the Dance Tomb is intended to be read literally, the position shown suggests a physically challenging configuration: both arms extend to the same side of each dancer's body at shoulder height, with one of them crossing behind the torso. Because this position could be achieved only by an extraordinarily flexible individual, such as an acrobatic circus performer, a question emerges as to whether these figures are, indeed, dancers. If, as archaeologists report, they are, does this mean that dances of the time involved acrobatic movements? Or, because of the unusual arm position, can we surmise that aesthetic preferences of the artist and conventions of the time contributed to choices resulting in what we see today as being a suggestion of a movement rather than a realistic depiction of it?

The scenes represented in many of these images appear to be quite realistic. However, on close examination, we may question whether the artist took license with historical facts. Did the painter use personal aesthetic preferences to represent poses or exaggerate animation of figures in a dance that might, in reality, have been rather sedate? Despite its intent to serve as a how-to manual, similar questions can be raised in relation to the documentation shown in Figure 5. The realistic representation of human figures aligned on a kind of metric notation, together with verbal notes, suggests an attempt at historical accuracy. But there are distinct challenges in interpreting the kinds of movements that would be used to transition from one position shown to the next, and in the relationship between the only suggestive verbal descriptions alongside the images. In this case, despite the likelihood of the creator's intent at accurate description and the use of multiple modes of description, constructing a 'moving' reality based on the information provided remains difficult. Figure 7 shows a moment from a contemporary reconstruction of a Confucian Shrine Dance.

When trying to read any record of dance, several problems regarding interpretation are obvious: translating from one medium (the human dancer) into a different medium (a fresco, a print, a painting of a dancer, or words), representing a three-dimensional activity in two dimensions (as in the kinds of pictorial images shown here), and depicting an activity existing in time in a static medium. But the nature of the records of dance in Korea and the diverse reasons for which they were created raise additional challenges for interpretation: How do we reconcile intent with what is depicted? How do we reconcile anatomical feasibility with what is shown? Can we determine the relationship between images and written documents that record the same events? When contemporary performances claim to include dances from centuries ago, how do we reconcile differences between records from the past and modern performances said to be based on these records?

The questions posed here are only some of the many that can be asked when trying to obtain information about the dances of the past from historical documents in Korea, and the challenges stated or implied by these questions could easily be construed as negating the value of such documents. Discrepancies between an assumed historical reality and such records of the past, however, need not invalidate the usefulness of the records. Indeed, some may simply reflect a *different* reality than what might appear to be most obvious. Records of dances from Korea's past, in whatever form, may identify specific dances performed at actual events. Rather than depicting isolated moments from these dances, however, they may suggest the atmosphere of both the dances and the events, as well as qualitative aspects or unique characteristics of individual dances.



Figure 7: Contemporary Performance of Confucian Shrine Dance by Students of Sungkyunkwan University (Photo by the Author).

As creators of records chose what they wanted to render and how to render it, they dealt with historical facts in various ways – but historical facts may be things other than literal dance positions and movements or attempts to depict details of events at which the dances occurred. While Korean artists and historians created records that are important sources for researching the past, they both revealed and concealed various aspects of dance, leading to webs of information that need to be carefully disentangled by researchers and performers today.

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¹ My research on Korean dance has been carried out during four extended periods of residence in Korea from 1979 to 1990, and during numerous shorter stays since 1990. I am grateful for research funding from the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation (Hanguk Yaesul Munhwa Jinheungwon), the Academy for Korean Studies (Hanguk Jeongshin Munhwa Yeonguwon), the Korean-American Educational Foundation (Fulbright Program), the International Cultural Society of Korea (Hanguk Gukje Munhwa Hyeophoe), and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Center for Korean Studies. Portions of this essay are taken or adapted from my own work published in 2000, 2001, 2006, and 2011.

² The dating of the Dance Tomb varies widely, from as early as the 4th to the 7th century AD. The most commonly accepted range is from the 6th to the 7th century. The tomb is located in the present-day province of Jilin, China (the central part of northeast China, originally part of the northern Korean kingdom of Goguryeo).

³ It is not possible to know for certain the gender of the figures, since a tradition of cross-dressing (men dressing and performing as women, or women dressing and performing as men) may have existed and been portrayed.

⁴ For an explanation of the nature and content of many such documents see the Autumn 2002 special issue of *Koreana*, featuring five essays on the theme 'Gyujanggak Archives of Joseon Dynasty'. For related discussions of images from the late-19th and early-20th centuries see Park 1997 and 2009.

⁵ For a discussion of one particular sword dance see Chapter 5 of my book *Perspectives on Korean Dance*.

Entertaining Dances at the Joseon Court

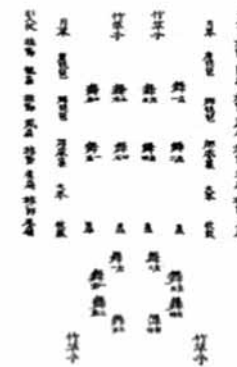
Jungrock Seo

Dance is a type of art that serves aesthetic, social and spiritual purposes and occasions. At the same time, one of the most important features of dance is its capacity to entertain, and entertaining dances are often used in the service of comedy. However, most people – whether in Korea or in other countries – assume that Korean court dances are merely solemn in nature. This hasty generalization seems to have forced many scholars to explain Korean court dances using a Confucian concept, namely the idea of ‘ritual propriety and proper performance’ (*li yue* 禮樂). According to this idea, performances in general, including dance, are intended for people’s edification.

The idea is presented extensively in a Confucian canonical work, the *Liji* (Book of Rites or Classic of Rites). For example, the chapter titled *Yueji* (Record on the Subject of Proper Performance) states that ‘proper performance is (an echo of) the harmony between heaven and earth; ceremonies reflect the orderly distinctions (in the operations of) heaven and earth.’ Furthermore, Confucians have believed that ritual propriety and proper performance are related to ethical issues. The same chapter of the book says, ‘In an age of disorder, ceremonies are forgotten and neglected, and music becomes licentious.’ Confucians considered any performances aimed at amusing an audience as examples of uncontrolled vice and licentiousness. In this respect, it is no surprise that Korean court dance after the Joseon period (the last dynasty of Korean history governed by the ideology of Confucianism) was used only in solemn and formal ceremonies. However, when we take a closer look at Korean court dance we can still surprisingly find dance pieces intended for entertainment. How could these dances have survived in the court under the formal atmosphere of this time?

Confucianism has had a long and very significant influence on Korean culture. In contrast to the emphasis placed on Buddhism in the Goryeo period (918-1392), the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897) was based heavily on Confucianism. Neo-Confucian Joseon scholars believed the fall of the Goryeo dynasty was due to indulgence and debauchery, and highlighted

Goryeo court dance and music as representative of this dissipation. This attitude led to the exclusion and reformation of many dance pieces from the Goryeo dynasty during the early Joseon period (1392-1592). Therefore Joseon court dance would seem to serve any purpose besides entertainment. Moreover, female dances were very often seen as indicative of the society’s essential licentiousness.



Dance Notation of *Bonglaeui* in *Akhakgwibeom*.

The founding fathers of the Joseon dynasty, such as Jeong Dojeon (1342-1398), Gwon Geun (1352-1409) and Jo Jun (1346-1405) derived inspiration from Mencius, who had averred ‘dynastic revolution’.¹ New dance pieces, in these circumstances, were created to justify the dynasty. One instance is *Bonglaeui* (Ceremony for Phoenix Coming), where the dancers also sang a song, *Yongbi Eocheonga* (Song of the Dragons Flying to Heaven), the first text to be written in *Hangeul*, the Korean alphabet and new indigenous writing system. This was created during the reign of King Sejong (r. 1418-1450) in official recognition of the Joseon dynasty and its ancestral heritage. According to current scholarly opinion, this song could have been the anthem of the dynasty. The dance was a less spectacular relative to the Goryeo court dance. For instance, whereas 55 dancers performed *Wangmodaemu* (Music and Dance of Fairies) in the Goryeo court, *Bonglaeui* was performed by only eight dancers.

This simplicity reflected the austerity of Confucianism and characterizes all dance pieces of the early Joseon dynasty. The best personal virtues of Confucianism were ‘contentment amid poverty and taking pleasure in acting in an honest way’. In the *Lun Yu* (Analects of Confucius)², for example, the Master – namely, Confucius – says: ‘Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single dish of rice, a single cup of drink, and

living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected. Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui!

It is certain that many dance pieces from the Goryeo dynasty were excluded in the early Joseon period. *Goryeosa* (History of Goryeo) presents a few dance titles which were transmitted during this era. Apart from information offered by the lost dance pieces' titles, it is hard to make any assumptions about the number of dances that remained. The following gives an idea of the formal atmosphere:

The repertoires of ancestral shrine ritual dance and music, the morning assembly ceremony and the royal banquet were transmitted from the predecessor [the Goryeo dynasty]. Therefore, the mood is not wholesome. These are exceedingly improper.³

This is a recommendation from the Ministry of Rites through the State Council. A further document outlines the atmosphere in more detail:

After a Royal Lecture in the court, Yi Sejwa (1445-1504) made a recommendation to His Majesty. "The female entertainers don't want to perform decent dances and music but only voluptuous ones; they have taken to an evil custom for a long time. This is exceedingly improper. I therefore earnestly request that the performances be forbidden." His Majesty asked the opinions of other retainers. Yi Geugbae (1422-1495) replied, "The recommendation is correct. However, it may take time to get rid of these abuses, due to long-established convention. Your Majesty shall order the authorities concerned to make a circumspect plan." His Majesty said, "I grant this proposal."⁴

The court held a regular academic meeting, called *gyeongyeon*, in which the king entered into discussions with his retainers. The majority of government officers were scholars as well as statesmen and administrators. *Gyeongyeon* (or Royal Lecture) was held often – around two thousand times during King Sejong's reign. The above text indicates the process of legislating enforcement, a process that was elaborately planned. The reason for the ban came from disagreements with Confucian moral standards. Yi Sejwa considered Goryeo court dance an old evil custom, and it therefore seems clear that a number of dances from the Goryeo era were excluded from the Joseon repertoire. In the Joseon period, accordingly, female

entertainers commonly performed in the royal banquet for queens or for a king's mother. In the royal banquet for kings or foreign envoys, young male performers usually danced.

The idea of ritual propriety and proper performance ensured that Joseon court performances were oriented towards dance, in contrast to Chinese court performances after the Song dynasty that were based mainly around drama with dialogue. For instance, Peking opera (*jingju*) was popular in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) court. For Joseon Confucians, however, such comic and acrobatic performances with dialogue were regarded as superficial and shallow. They were called *japgeuk* which literally means 'miscellaneous performances', and this often implied vulgar performances. In fact, 'miscellaneous performances' were performed in the court many times but were never added to the official repertoire. Moreover, when King Yeonsan (r. 1476-1506) was impeached for his immorality, one reason given in the statement of impeachment was his fondness for the lascivious performances that were known as 'miscellaneous performances'.⁵ The 'proper' dance came to be a symbol of national pride during the Joseon dynasty.

In spite of these circumstances, some female entertaining dance pieces from the Goryeo court were preserved and restored under the shelter of the royal household. Thus, some pieces outlived the austere milieu as a result of the king's concern:

Chinese envoys Jin and Li bowed on ceremonial occasions before His Majesty... His Majesty held a reception for the envoys. When female dancers came to the banquet hall, Chinese envoy Jin informed His Majesty, "Performances by women should be banned." His Majesty replied, "This is my country's own culture." The envoy said, "Then please start the performance." When the performance started, the envoys did not take delight in the performance.⁶

According to the texts, even though the female dance was regarded as lascivious and therefore eschewed by Confucians, the king tried to protect it. Considering the relationship between Joseon and Ming China (1368-1644) during the period, this protection might have been for political reasons rather than the king's own appreciation. Officially, Joseon was a solid ally of the Ming, but in reality relations between the two had subtly turned for the worse. The pivot was a contention over who should exercise dominion over Liaodong Province (Yodong in modern Liaoning). However, the tension between the two appeared in an indirect manner,

with the Ming trumping up charges on the slightest pretext, such as a lack of courtesy in Joseon diplomatic documents sent in 1395, 1396, and 1397.

When the value of a dance piece was determined, Joseon tried to preserve, transmit and develop it, as in the case of a female dance, *Gokpa* (Music Broaching), inherited from the Goryeo period:

After His Majesty watched *Gokpa* he granted two rolls of silk and 900 liters of rice as a gift to an old female entertainer, Bong Yi, and two rolls of silk, 1800 liters of rice and 900 liters of soybean as a gift to the other entertainer, Jongga. The piece has not been performed for a long time and no one can remember it. Yet, the piece does not escape their memory. Therefore, His Majesty granted them special gifts.⁷

If we extrapolate from this text, some court performance pieces from the Goryeo period were restored to their former state using the memories of older women who had formerly worked as entertainers. Philological work in this era might also have thrown open the door to restoration. During Sejong's reign, the *Goryeosa* (History of Goryeo) was compiled, and using this as a basis for an encyclopedic study of performance, *Akhakgwebeom* (The Performance Canon) was completed in 1493. In the latter, court performance pieces from the Goryeo period such as *Gokpa*, *Pogurak* (Throwing a Ball Dance) and *Yukhwadae* (Six Flowers) are found.



Pogumun of *Pogurak* in *Akhakgwebeom*.

Pogurak could be another example of female entertaining dances in the court. The content of this dance is similar to sports games today. Entertaining and exciting, the notation reveals the rules of the dance just

like basketball. The dancers are divided into two teams. They hold a ball (*jaegu*) as they sing and dance and then dance to release a shot, one after the other, into a small hole (*pogumun*). An interesting point is the 'rebound play': when the shot is not successful, the dancer is allowed to catch the ball before reaching the ground and shooting again. One light-hearted rule came in the form of punishment. If a dancer scored a goal, a referee (*bonghwa*, lit. a flower holder) would give a flower as a gift to her. If she failed, however, the other referee (*bongpil*, lit. a brush holder) would draw a dot with a brush on her face as a penalty. The penalty evoked applause and laughter. Hence, this dance is a comic one. A king normally granted royal gifts to the winning team. Given its entertainment component, it is astonishing that the dance has survived up to today.

In addition, some entertaining local dances were introduced to the court, as happened with *Hangjangmu* (Dance of Xiang Zhuang). This dance piece originated in the Seoncheon area of North Pyeongan and was brought to the court in 1873. This dance piece is based on the famous Chinese story of the Banquet at Hong Gate. The historical banquet is a meeting between two warring generals fighting for control of ancient China in the Chu-Han Contention (206-202 BCE). The banquet took place at the end of the Qin dynasty, when military general Xiang Yu (232-202 BCE) invited his rival Liu Bang (256 or 247-195 BCE) to a banquet with the intention of assassinating him. Thanks to the help of his tacticians and subordinates, Liu Bang survived this meeting. In the end, the Contention resulted in Xiang Yu's defeat and Liu Bang's founding of the Han Dynasty, with him as its first emperor. The banquet is a highlight of the narrative of the Chu-Han Contention. In *Hangjangmu* the battle of wits between the two sides is amusing and gives the dance dramatic tension. Therefore, this dance simply serves to entertain people.

It is interesting to note that the costumes and movements of this dance underwent certain transformations: while the local version contains a scene in which the character Beonkwae (C. Fan Kuai, 242-189 BCE), who is Liu Bang's subordinate, thrusts his sword through a huge roasted pork knuckle, the court version does not, indicative, perhaps, of something thought of as vulgar at the court. However, there is no denying that this dance was introduced to the court because of its capacity to entertain. This alludes to the fact that the court dance version was transformed with a view to maintaining royal dignity as well as to entertain.

Under the formal atmosphere of the Joseon dynasty, it is certain that many entertaining dances from the Goryeo era disappeared without any trace. Only a few entertaining dances could survive under the aegis of the kings. In spite of this fact, many Korean court dances have served to entertain

audiences, and these dances correspond to the idea of 'ritual propriety and proper performance'. The dances were carefully choreographed to prevent intemperance and licentious pleasures. However, this did not create an uncomfortable atmosphere, but rather a merry ambience.

Far from being solemn, in fact many Korean court dance pieces are mirthful. Representative examples are the *Pogurak* (Throwing a Ball Dance) and *Hangjangmu* (Dance of Xiang Zhuang). The comic nature of dances like *Pogurak* from the Goryeo period lent them a certain capacity to survive for future generations. Thanks to its excitement and dramatic tension, *Hangjangmu* could be included in the royal repertoire. The entertainment in these dance pieces could allow the dances to be performed in the court. In this sense, the entertaining aspect is an intrinsic attribute in Korean court dance. In conclusion, the proper performance in the Korean court dance is pleasant but not rapturous, and sorrowful without too much grief. At the same time, the age of disorder is not attributable to the dance, but rather to the dereliction of the people.

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¹ An example is found in *Mengzi* 2, *Lianghui wang* 2: 15.

² *Analects of Confucius* 6, *Yong Ye*: 11. Yan Hui (521–490 BCE) who lived a life of austerity and integrity, was Confucius's favorite disciple.

³ *Sejong Sillok* 126: 3 the tenth month 1449.

⁴ *Seongjong Sillok* 219: 13 the eighth month 1488.

⁵ *Jungjong Sillok* 1: the ninth month 1506.

⁶ *Taejong Sillok* 1: 12 the sixth month 1401.

⁷ *Sejong Sillok* 29: 17 the seventh month 1425.

Tradition and Innovation in *Changgeuk* Opera

Andrew Killick

Asian musical theater is quite well known to the world in such forms as China's Peking opera, Japan's *kabuki*, and Indonesia's shadow puppet plays with *gamelan* accompaniment. But if the phrase 'Korean musical theater' calls anything to mind for international audiences, it is probably the nonverbal musical *Nanta*, performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and elsewhere around the world (sometimes under the English title *Cookin'*) since it first made a hit in Seoul in 1997. What distinguishes *Nanta* as 'Korean' is its music, specifically the rhythms taken from traditional Korean drumming, while the idea of playing these rhythms on 'found' objects such as cooking pans and chopping boards, along with the 'physical theater' format of the show, derives from Western productions such as the 1991 British musical *Stomp*. An indigenous Korean theater format, equivalent to those of other Asian countries, does not appear to be among Korea's exports to the world.

The reasons might be sought within Korean tradition and history. Prior to the twentieth century, Korea did not have theaters as China and Japan did. It had 'theater' in the sense of performing arts that involved acting, including masked dance-dramas (*talchum*), puppet plays (*kkokdugakshi*), and the 'assorted characters' (*japsaek*) that accompanied rural percussion bands (*pungmulpae*), but these were performed outdoors and were either amateur or funded by voluntary contributions (Killick 2002). There were no permanent, enclosed theaters charging fixed prices for admission, and as a result Korean performers and their audiences did not have the same opportunities as their counterparts in neighboring countries to develop the elaboration of theatrical resources and conventions that characterizes professional, indoor theater. Hence Korea has not been able to show the world a deeply-rooted traditional theater form like Peking opera or *kabuki*.

The absence of theaters is itself traceable to Korean social and economic history. Due to a neo-Confucian state ideology that took a dim view of private trade, combined with an often exploitative ruling class that prevented commoners from accumulating capital, Korea had not developed the kind of substantial merchant class that supported

professional theater in China and Japan, as indeed in the West (Pihl 1994: 21). When merchant activity did begin to make strides following the reforms that came with the opening of this 'hermit kingdom' to the outside world in the late nineteenth century, theaters were not far behind. Trade produced a class of patrons who could afford the price of a ticket but not the cost of hiring performers to entertain them in their own homes; who worked hard but could spare a few hours for entertainment now and then; and who wanted those hours to provide a respite from the daily grind by showing them something dynamic and engaging. Compared to the old open performance settings where attention was more diffuse and long periods might pass without much happening, indoor theaters with professional performers could direct the audience's attention to the stage and ensure that something interesting was always happening there, and their ability to enforce admission charges made them commercially viable as soon as the new class of patrons reached a critical mass. In Seoul, this happened around 1900, and other Korean cities soon followed.

To those who had gained a new prosperity through the social and economic reforms that were sweeping the country, novelty must have seemed a positive value in contrast to the 'bad old days' of traditional society. Certainly novelty was part of the appeal of the new theaters; but the artists available to perform in them were only trained in the traditional Korean performing arts. To some extent, even these could produce novelty when brought into the theater, as when the general public was shown for the first time the dances of court *gisaeng* (female entertainers) that had previously been reserved for royal and aristocratic audiences. Further novelties came about when traditional performing arts began to be transformed in their new performance setting. One such novelty was the birth of the genre that forms the subject of this article, *changgeuk* opera.

Probably the most popular performing art in Korea at the time of the advent of theaters was *pansori*, a form of storytelling with sung passages accompanied by a drum. Naturally *pansori* singers were prominent among the first performers in the new theaters. But it was soon found that just performing *pansori* in the traditional way was not enough to satisfy audiences eager for something new. Ideas began to be borrowed from existing theater forms of Japan, China, and the West (Killick 2010: 52-67). Experiments began to be made with multiple *pansori* singers taking on the roles of different characters and singing in dialogue, or with the use of theatrical facilities unavailable in traditional performance settings, such as stage props and a front curtain. At least one new story was written for performance by *pansori* singers in this new mode: Yi Injik's *The Silver World* (*Eunsegye*, 1908), which would also have appealed to an audience of merchants for its portrayal of an enterprising commoner, Choe Byeongdo,

unable to advance his fortunes under the old order due to extortion by the ruling class. To emphasize the novelty of the production, Yi touted it as 'new drama' (*sinyeonggeuk*) in contrast to the 'old drama' (*guyeongeuk*) of traditional performing arts like *pansori*. Today, the same genre – definable as musical theater with *pansori*-style singing – is called *changgeuk*, literally 'singing drama'.

Before long, 'new drama' proved unable to compete for novelty value with more radically new entertainments that were being introduced to Korea, such as spoken 'new school' plays (*sinpageuk*, modeled on Japanese *shinpa*, itself inspired by Western melodrama) and silent films presented with live narration. The *pansori* singers then changed their tack and began to apply the term 'old drama' to the staged as well as the solo form of their art, basing its appeal on a sense of tradition rather than novelty. What had been 'new drama' thus became 'old drama' within the space of about five years (Killick 2010: 74-84). The subsequent history of *changgeuk* has shown a similar wavering between the appeals of the traditional and the new, along with efforts to reconcile the two.

At first, the appeal to tradition seemed successful. The benefits that some Koreans experienced through modernization of the economy were offset by the trauma of colonization by Japan in 1910, and performing arts based on tradition must have offered a compensatory sense of stability and perhaps of Korean sovereignty. 'Old drama' thus increased in popularity during the first few years of the colonial period. *Changgeuk* at this time maintained the widespread East Asian tradition of separate male and female performance troupes, and was performed either by traditional male *pansori* singers or by female *gisaeng* newly trained in *pansori* singing, but not by both together, cross-dressing being employed to represent characters of the opposite gender. It was not presented as a complete drama, but as an excerpt from a familiar story (usually one of the classic *pansori* stories) forming the finale of a variety program of music, dance, and comedy. This was possible because both *pansori* singers and *gisaeng* were skilled in other traditional performing arts as well.

By the 1920s, however, 'old drama' was coming to seem out of pace with the rapidly changing Korean society, especially in the cities, and was increasingly restricted to the repertoire of itinerant companies touring the more conservative provinces. With 'modern' entertainments now including radio and recorded music as well as Western-style spoken drama and (by the end of the decade) film with synchronized sound, there also seemed little hope for *changgeuk* to change its tack again and re-invent itself as 'new drama'. Inevitably the genre went into decline and had all but disappeared (at least from the documented historical record) by 1930.

At the same time, ironically, a development was under way that would lead to a major revival of *changgeuk* in the mid-1930s. After the March First Independence Movement of 1919, the Japanese colonial authorities had decided to provide a safety valve for Korean political aspirations by allowing expressions of a 'cultural nationalism' that sought to revitalize and reform indigenous Korean culture as a foundation for eventual independence (Robinson 1988). The cultural nationalist movement had celebrated 'grass roots' art forms like *pansori* as the purest expressions of Korean identity, originating among the common people rather than the ruling class which took much of its culture from China. To be sure, the nationalists wanted to promote these arts in their most 'authentic' traditional forms, and thus favored solo *pansori* over dramatized *changgeuk*. At first, this contributed to *changgeuk*'s decline as, already unable to compete with imported entertainments for novelty value, *changgeuk* also proved unable to compete with *pansori* in the appeal to tradition. But the revival of *pansori* as a popular performing art soon led to a revival of *changgeuk* as well.

The organization that took the lead in both revivals was the Korean Vocal Music Association (Joseon Seongak Yeonguhoe), founded in 1934 (Killick 2010: 88-97). Dedicated to presenting performances by senior *pansori* singers and training their successors, the group rode the rising tide of cultural nationalism to reinstate *pansori* in the mainstream of Korean cultural life. Collaboration with dramatists and directors at Seoul's Dongyang Theater then led to a variety of experiments combining *pansori* singing with theatrical presentation. Though rooted in traditional *pansori*, these productions made innovations that went far beyond those of earlier *changgeuk*, including the presentation of complete dramas unsupported by other acts, the expansion of theatrical resources with lavish stage scenery and costumes, the cultivation of more evocative acting, the development of new repertoire, and the use of mixed casts, an accompanying orchestra, masks for animal characters, and projected film for scenes that could not readily be represented on the stage. Their popular success produced a new generation of performers, young and glamorous if less accomplished in *pansori* singing than the veteran stars, and established the principle that *changgeuk* could experiment freely with staging conventions so long as the actors sang in *pansori* style. This principle remains in force today.



Performance of *Jeokbyeok* by The National Changgeuk Company of Korea, 2009
(Photo Courtesy of The National Changgeuk Company of Korea).

Wartime colonial administration policies led to the dissolution of the Korean Vocal Music Association, though other companies carried on some of its innovations after the end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945. These immediate post-Liberation years also saw a radical innovation of their own: the advent of all-female *changgeuk*, known as *yeoseong gukgeuk* or ‘women’s national drama’ (Killick 2010: 104-123). A far cry from the small groups of *gisaeng* performing *changgeuk* scenes in the 1910s, *yeoseong gukgeuk* presented a dazzling spectacle of costumes and scenery often based on sensational legends from the remote past. It was partly a product of the growing number of female *pansori* singers during the colonial period, when *pansori* singing had become an important accomplishment for *gisaeng*, and partly perhaps a response to Japan’s all-female Takarazuka Revue (Robertson 1998), although unlike Takarazuka it used traditional rather than Western-style music. The burgeoning popularity of *yeoseong gukgeuk* – chiefly with female audiences – led to a proliferation of troupes in which not all members can have been expert *pansori* singers, and the genre is sometimes blamed for a lowering of standards in *pansori* singing (e.g., Park 2003: 104-105). While the criticism originates from embittered proponents of the mixed-cast *changgeuk* that was being eclipsed by *yeoseong gukgeuk* in the 1950s and 1960s (and that probably shared some of the same shortcomings at the time), it is true that *yeoseong gukgeuk* has favoured a lighter and gentler style of vocal production than that of most traditional *pansori* singers. The revival of *yeoseong gukgeuk* that has been going on since the 1980s has also shown a willingness to innovate musically by downplaying *pansori*-style singing and adopting features from popular ‘fusion’ music, such as the use of synthesizers alongside traditional instruments. Such efforts to reconcile tradition with innovation have been highly prevalent in Korea at the dawn of the twenty-

first century, with the emergence of a generation quite comfortable with the idea that what is distinctively Korean can also be cosmopolitan and modern (Howard 2006: 176).

The last fifty years of *changgeuk*’s history have been dominated by the National Changgeuk Company of Korea, founded as a resident company of the National Theater in 1962. The activities of this company could easily fill a chapter of their own, and indeed have already done so (Killick 2010: 124-149), but all we can do here is to survey the main phases of its negotiations between tradition and innovation. At first, like the Korean Vocal Music Association, the National Changgeuk Company was mainly concerned with promoting solo *pansori* rather than dramatized *changgeuk*. Then, in 1967, it set up a Committee for the Establishment of Changgeuk (Changgeuk Jeongnip Wiwonhoe) whose brief was to prescribe fixed texts and performance conventions for *changgeuk* in a form that could establish the genre as ‘traditional Korean opera’. The Committee interpreted this to mean tying *changgeuk* as closely as possible to traditional *pansori*, for instance by using unaltered *pansori* texts as libretti (with the third-person narrative portions delivered by a singing narrator) and placing the instrumental musicians on the stage like *pansori*’s drum accompanist. Within a decade, however, it had become apparent that *pansori* by itself could not provide all the resources needed for a theatrical art form, and Western realist conventions were beginning to be adopted again.

In the 1980s, writer and director Heo Gyu turned away from both approaches in pursuit of a form of *changgeuk* that would be faithful to the *pansori* tradition in the ‘spirit’ rather than the ‘letter’. Using minimal stage scenery and deliberately stylized acting, Heo strove to make the performance dynamic more like that of the *madang* or village square where *pansori* was originally performed, in which there would be direct interaction between performer and audience and the imagination would supply what could not be visually depicted. But Heo’s efforts were undermined by the performance spaces in which he had to work, with their fourth-wall stages that encouraged passive viewing.



Performance of *Cheong* by The National Changgeuk Company of Korea, 2010
(Photo Courtesy of The National Changgeuk Company of Korea).

Since the 1990s, productions of the National Changgeuk Company have returned to pursuing lavish staging and free experimentation with theatrical devices, while an insistence on high-quality *pansori* singing has kept them anchored in tradition. Dramatizations of the classic *pansori* stories have continued to form the mainstay of the repertoire while new works have been developed from a variety of sources, including ancient and modern Korean history, Korean and foreign works of fiction, and topical issues in current Korean society. New ventures have included *changgeuk* for children and *changgeuk* directed by members of the company themselves, without the aid of a director trained in Western theater. Currently, the trend seems to be toward popularization through innovation rather than tradition, especially in the music, which has adopted Western instruments and harmonies, Western scales even for *pansori*-style singing, and fully written-out orchestral scores replacing the partially extemporized accompaniments of the past (Killick 2010: 209-211). But in *changgeuk*, as we have seen, tradition and innovation are not necessarily opposites. Because Korea had no traditional theater, *changgeuk* has had to innovate even in order to be traditional.

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Performing *Pansori* Music Drama: Stage, Story and Sound

Haekyung Um

Pansori is the quintessential traditional musical drama of Korea in which an epic story is delivered by a singer with drum accompaniment. Its prefix 'pan' means a place where people gather together or a stage and the suffix 'sori' means sound or singing. It originated from the folk musical traditions of Jeolla province combining the shamanist chants (*muga*) with folk entertainment (*pan noreum*). In the course of its development, *pansori* has taken up other musical elements, for example, from classical vocal genres of *gagok* and *sijo* as well as other regional folk music styles. For its text, *pansori* has incorporated a variety of sources, including legends, myths and folk tales in addition to classical Korean and Chinese literature and history, enriching the themes and narrative contents. In the early 20th century, as a result of cross-cultural and cross-genre influences new genres have emerged from *pansori*, such as theatrical *changgeuk* and instrumental *gayageum byeongchang*. *Pansori* was appointed a Korean Intangible Culture Asset in 1964 and a UNESCO Intangible Heritage in 2003.

In performance, the singer presents a dramatic story through singing (*sori*), narration (*aniri*) and gesture (*ballim*). The drummer accompanies the singing with the appropriate rhythmic cycle (*jangdan*) assigned to each song, although he may also improvise on the basic rhythmic pattern in sympathy with the melodic and textual context. Both drummer and audience give calls of encouragement (*chuiimsae*) at the appropriate endings of textual and musical phrases. Focusing on the three areas of stage, story and sound, this article will explore various aspects of *pansori* performance in contemporary Korea.

Stage: Space, Format and Interaction

Pansori used to be performed in association with other folk entertainments, such as tightrope walking, juggling, etc., in the marketplaces and plazas. Early *pansori* is believed to have been shorter and simpler than it is now

and was performed for lower class audiences. As *pansori* became popular amongst the upper class audiences, from the late 18th century onward, this folk entertainment was brought into the courtyard or sitting room of its patrons. Since the early 20th century, as with many other traditional performing arts, *pansori* has been performed in theatres and auditoriums. Significantly, since the early 1970s the complete performance of a *pansori* story, or *wangchang*, became major performance events. In fact, *wangchang* became not just popular but essential as this format of *pansori* presentation is considered to be the most 'proper' way for a singer to become fully accepted as a professional. For example, Park Yangdeok (b. 1947) gave her first complete performance of *Sugungga* (*The Song of the Underwater Palace*) in 1987 in the Small Hall of the National Theatre with drum accompaniment by Kim Deuksu (1917-1990) (see Figure 1). While this type of proscenium stage offers a clear view of the performers on a raised platform it separates members of the audience from the performers although the audience participation, with their calls of encouragement, is essential and integral to *pansori* music-making.



Figure 1: Park Yangdeok Performing *Sugungga*, Accompanied by Kim Deuksu, 1987 (Photo by the Author).



Figure 2: Singer Chae Sujeong, Standing, and the Drummer Jo Jeongnae, Seated, Performing on Insadong Street, 2003 (Photo by the Author).



Figure 3: Scene from the 3rd Ttorang Gwangdae Contest, with Kim Myeongja performing *Super Mazinger Daughter-in-Law*, Accompanied by Jo Jeongnae, 2003 (Photo by Nam Sinhui).

Some of the 21st century *pansori* artists attempt to ‘recover’ or ‘recreate’ the traditional *pansori* ‘stage’ in marketplaces and plazas. For example, a performance group called Insadong Geori Soripan (Insadong Street Stage for *Pansori*) initiated a series of Sunday afternoon outdoor events in 2002, offering free street performances to the general public (see Figure 2). Integration and interactions between the performers and audience members were also promoted through the open stage format adopted by the Ttorang Gwangdae Contest during the Jeonju Sanjo Festival. This open, communal interface also helps to create the communicative performance space of *pan* – a concept similar to Victor Turner’s term *communitas* (see Figure 3).

Story: Themes, Texts and Adaptation

The earliest written account of *pansori* dates back to the mid 18th century when the aristocrat Yu Jinhan wrote the story of *Chunhyangga* in Chinese verse. As *pansori* became popular amongst upper class audiences in the 19th century, this folk entertainment became a kind of salon music performed in the courtyard or sitting room of noble and wealthy patrons. While the gentrification of *pansori* contributed to its refinement of musical and textual contents, it also led to a considerable decrease of the *pansori* repertoire. For example, twelve pieces of *pansori* are believed to have been created, but by the end of the 19th century only five pieces of *pansori* remained. The pieces that were deemed to be ‘vulgar’ or ‘inappropriate’, from a Confucian upper class point of view, did not survive moral censorship and died out. The five existing *pansori* pieces, namely *Chunhyangga* (*The Song of Chunhyang*), *Simcheongga* (*The Song of Sim Cheong*), *Heungbuga* (*The Song of Heungbu*), *Sugungga* (*The Song*

of the Underwater Palace) and *Jeokbyeokga* (*The Song of the Red Cliff*), all conform to the five Confucian ethical codes of: loyalty to the king, filial piety, fidelity to husband, brotherhood and sincerity to friends.

While didactic and moralistic in their principal themes, *pansori* stories also contain humour, pathos and irony. This contrasting binary thematic scheme, namely the ‘surface themes’ linked by one or up to five cardinal principles of Korean traditional society conforming to Confucian ideology, and the ‘underlying themes’ which speak for the lower classes and satirize and reveal the failings of the ruling class, is attributed to the fact that there were two types of audiences from two distinct social classes, namely the upper and lower classes, and lower class *pansori* musicians had to meet the expectations and tastes of both audiences (Cho 1969). However, this balance between the two sets of themes changed as the social context changed through the history of *pansori* performance. As patronage shifted from the lower class to the upper and middle classes, who were often involved in the transcription and revision of texts, Confucian ‘surface themes’ were heavily emphasized during the second half of the 19th century. The revised *pansori* texts compiled by the lower rank local government official Sin Jaehyo in the late 19th century, and all other *pansori* texts that came afterwards clearly illustrate this ideological shift in the *pansori* texts, which in turn defined the establishment of the *pansori* repertoire of the 20th century. The 1964 appointment of *pansori* as an Intangible Cultural Asset was also confined to the five *pansori* pieces which reaffirm this selection process and the canonization of this performing art.

Pansori is also found in the Korean diaspora, for example in China and in the former Soviet Union. It has helped to create a link between the Korean diasporas and their homeland, evoking their nostalgia and a sense of belonging to the homeland which they left nearly two centuries ago. At the same time, *pansori* was strategically interpreted and translated into new styles in these diasporic contexts. When the Korean Theatre (*Joseon Geukchang*) established in Vladivostok gave their first performance of the *pansori* story *Chunhyangjeon* (*The Tale of Chunhyang*) a great deal of effort was made to ‘recreate’ a performance that was as traditional and authentic as possible. However, for the ensuing Soviet Korean theatrical production of *pansori* stories, Russian and Western dramaturgy began to influence the acting style and excerpts from North Korean musicals replaced the original songs created by the first generation artists. During and after the Soviet era, *pansori* stories have continuously been staged by the Korean Theatre, which relocated to Almaty, Kazakhstan. In the Korean Autonomous Prefecture Yanbian in northeast China, theatrical productions based on traditional *pansori* stories such as *Chunhyangjeon*

and *Simcheongjeon*, were performed by the Yanbian Theatre Troupe in 1955 and 1957. Additionally Chinese-Korean artists also began to create new productions of *pansori* and *changgeuk* as well as dance dramas that emphasized both traditional moral values and socialist realism.

What happened to those *pansori* pieces outside the five canonic stories? Are there any new *pansori* productions? The first effort to create new *pansori* (*changjak pansori*, or newly created *pansori*) began in the early 20th century. The very first of these was *Choe Byeongdu Taryeong* (*The Song of Choe Byeongdu*) created by the singer Kim Changhwan (1854-1927) in 1904. Another singer, Kang Yonghwan (1865-1938) later made *Choe Byeongdu Taryeong* into a theatrical presentation of *changgeuk*. In 1908 a playwright Yi Injik adapted the same story as a play entitled *Eunsegye* (*The Silver World*), which was the first modern Korean theatre production of a play (Yu Minyeong 1990). However, neither the *pansori* version nor the *changgeuk* adaptation of *Choe Byeongdu Taryeong* has been passed down to present day performance practice and they are known only by their titles. Nevertheless it is worth noting that this new *pansori* was instrumental in bridging the old and new worlds.

New *pansori* in the 20th century began to flourish after the Japanese annexation ended in 1945, and it had another creative peak in the 1970s. As was the case for many artistic endeavours in Korea in this period, 20th century new *pansori* was a post-colonial creation. Three different types of new *pansori* can be identified: patriotic *pansori* (*yeolsaga*) depicts acts of resistance against Japanese colonialism and was originated by Park Dongsil (1897-1968); religious *pansori* was created by Park Dongjin (1916-2003) who sang the first *pansori* with Christian themes such as *Yesujeon* (*The Tale of Jesus*); and socio-political *pansori*, such as *Sori Naeryeok* (*The History of a Sound*) and *Ttongbada* (*The Sea of Excrement*) which was created by Im Jintaek (b. 1950) based on Kim Jiha's literary works. All three types of new *pansori* express strong nationalist sentiments irrespective of their association with anticolonial, postcolonial, religious or other political aspirations. The 1970s also saw the emergence of reconstructed *pansori* – the singer Park Dongjin performed some of the 'forgotten' *pansori* pieces, namely, *Byeongangsoe Taryeong* (*The Song of Byeongangsoe*) and *Baebijang Taryeong* (*The Song of Official Bae*), based on the existing *pansori* novel texts, however, they are not widely performed.

New *pansori* in the 21st century, in contrast, began to treat modernity as one of its central themes and has taken up a range of topics associated with everyday life and personal and social problems in contemporary Korea. It has introduced many different influences including contemporary popular culture and digital and communication technology. For example, Park

Taeoh's new *pansori* *Sta Daejeon* (*Star Wars*) juxtaposes itself between the rules of the game set by the *StarCraft* computer software and the battle scene from the traditional *pansori* story *Jeokpyeokka* (*The Song of the Red Cliff*), which, in turn is based on a Chinese historical novel. When performing Park Taeoh wears a long black coat and sunglasses and holds a baton, in the style of Darth Vader-cum-Terminator from American sci-fi movies.

A gentler form of cultural nationalism and more cosmopolitan attitudes prevail with humour emphasized in 21st century new *pansori*, in contrast to the sombre, serious and even tragic new *pansori* of the twentieth century. Kim Myeongja's popular new *pansori* piece *Supeodaek Ssileum Daehoe Chuljeonggi* (*Mrs. Super's Wrestling Match*) is a comical caricature of a working class housewife and corner store shopkeeper who covets to win a refrigerator designed for Korean *kimchi* pickles at the all-women wrestling contest (Um 2008)

Sound: Voice, Singing and Emotion

What distinguishes *pansori* most is its sound – the husky and expressive voice colour, the dramatic singing style and the emotional impact that it has on both the performer and its audiences. In fact, the term 'sound' (*seongeum*) in *pansori* encompasses a number of epithetical terms that refer to voice color and vocal techniques, which, in turn, are associated with different aesthetic criteria. For example, the 'gifted voice' (*cheonguseong*) is a combination of the 'husky voice' (*suriseong*) and 'sorrowful voice' (*aewonseong*). The 'iron voice' (*cheolseong*) with a resonant and dynamic quality is also regarded as a good voice color. In contrast, undesirable voice colors include the 'tough voice' (*tteongmok*) which lacks resonance and the 'bright voice' (*yangseong*) which lacks depth.

Refined vocal technique focusing on ornamentation (*sigimsae*) and the 'shadow' (*geuneul*) are also important in *pansori* singing. The technical aspects of *sigimsae* are the first requirements in singing, while the quality of *geuneul* is believed to emerge from mastery of the technique. The 'shadow' or the depth is also associated with a husky and deep voice color and the maturity of the singer. The vocal quality of shadow is also often linked to the sorrowful *han* sentiment. A laborious vocal training is also highly esteemed, and *pansori* singers, even those with a gifted voice, must labour until they reach the stage of 'achieving the sound' (*deugeum*) in other words the ultimate standard of singing.

This sound and singing oriented *pansori* aesthetics are contrasted with the 19th century preoccupation with the moral and literary contents of *pansori* texts. The singing oriented *pansori* style owes much to the introduction of recording technology in the first half of the 20th century and the subsequent rise of recording artists and star singers such as Yi Hwajungseon (1898-1943) and Im Bangul (1904-1961). The *pansori* singing style, in the second half of the 20th century has achieved a higher degree of refinement and development, as illustrated by the singing of Seong Uhyang (b. 1935), reaffirming its position as a 'vocal art form' and Intangible Cultural Asset (Um, forthcoming, 2013)

Korean *pansori* aesthetics are closely linked to vocal production and certain voice qualities, such as the husky and sorrowful voices cited here and which are deemed the best expressions of emotional depth. However, the preferred degree of huskiness and its subsequent vocal sorrowfulness varies a great deal, suggesting that this preference has changed over time. Earlier recordings of *pansori* on short playing records suggest that singers from the turn of the 20th century had clearer and more nasal metallic voices. Additionally compared to the husky vocal timber of Korean *pansori*, second and third generations of *pansori* singers in China sing with a lighter voice on high vocal registers, which clearly illustrate Chinese Korean aesthetic preferences (Um, forthcoming, 2013).

Conclusion: *Pansori* in the Age of Social Media

Pansori staging has changed overtime, from outdoor folk entertainment to salon music, to solo art form presented in concert halls and theatres. While the institutionalization of *pansori* performance contributed to its artistic refinement, a new generation of artists aspire to 're-claim' *pansori*'s authenticity as a communicative event, by performing on open, informal stages. From their point of view, the ultimate aesthetic goal of *pansori* is to serve the masses as traditional *pansori* did in 18th century Korea.

The canonization of *pansori* has restricted the expansion of this genre's repertoire, although some new pieces have been produced in recent years. However, new interpretations and adaptations of *pansori* have not ceased altogether. For example, both the first Korean film, made in the early 1920s and the first Korean 'talkie' produced in 1935 were based on the *pansori* *Chunhyangjeon* (*The Tale of Chunhyang*). Since then there have been a number of productions based on this particular story: for example Im Kwon-Taek's visually rich film *Chunhyang* (2000), a comic drama series *Kwaegool Chunhyang* (*Sassy Girl Chunhyang*, 2005) and the film *Bangjajeon* (*The Servant*, 2010) which comically subverted the plot of the original *pansori* story.

The two South Korean pop (K-pop) idols, Super Junior's Sungmin and SISTAR's Hyorin performed an excerpt from the *pansori* story of *Chunhyangga* on a popular reality show in early 2012 which attracted enormous attention and enthusiastic responses from both national and transnational audiences online. This particular event can be understood in terms of several different kinds of interests and 'cultural intimacy' (Herzfeld 2005). From the standpoint of this art form, this proves that *pansori* is a living tradition in the 21st century. From the TV producer's point of view, it illustrates the young pop stars' respect for their tradition while showcasing their talents in a traditional genre that is very different and also quite challenging. For the young audiences in Korea, through the performance of these K-pop idols, they learn about the classical love story between the son of a gentleman and the daughter of a female entertainer and an enduring Korean performing art.

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To One's Heart's Content: Baramgot Reclaiming Creative Space in *Gugak*

Hilary Vanessa Finchum-Sung

On December 16, 2009, the Baramgot performing group staged the first of a two-night concert series in Seoul's Daehangno Lock Museum (*soetdae bangmulgwan*). In the museum's second-floor hall, rows of folding chairs back up to a small floor-seating area within inches of the floor-level performance space. The instrumentalists took their places and launched into *Chaeollim* with a rhythmic furry and infectious assuredness that has become a hallmark of the team's style. Next to me, my daughter furiously scribbled stick figures of the performers whirling in onomatopoeia—*geomungo* 'tik, teok, tik, teok', *daegeum* 'siiiii', *gayageum* 'diriri diriri', *gong* 'shu tititi'. Through comic-book imagery she captured the progressing resonance of the Baramgot experience.

In reflections on the value of present-day *gugak* (lit. 'national music') performance, 'local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination embodied in a culturally particular sense of place' (Feld 1996: 91) must be considered. Baramgot offers a perfect case study for an examination of 21st century musicians' interactions with, and reactions to, contemporary social, historical and musical developments. In musical moments like the one described above, Baramgot generates a sonic space within which the musicians vigorously engage, communicating the team's mission of breathing life into a music teetering on the edge of relic status. In this space, members of Baramgot reclaim the centrality of creativity in Korean musicianship.

This article explores the interface of creativity, socio-historical-cultural context, and performance in the production of musical meaning for one South Korean ensemble. This brief heuristic study considers the conceptual and physical spaces both structured and inhabited by Baramgot. Conceptually, the musicians harness historic realities of musician-composer and performance fluidity through rhythmic groove and play in musical production. Physically, the team employs staging devices supportive of their conceptual foundations and, thus, team

identity. A consideration of this performance offers a micro-study of the sonic habitus of 21st century *gugak* musicians.¹

The Musician-Composer

A brief deliberation on the musician-composer in Korea can illuminate Baramgot's use of this convention in their work. Many *gugak* scholars commonly state that 'composer' is a borrowed concept, nonexistent before Kim Kisu wrote a score for a traditional orchestra in 1939 (Byeon 2009). A 20th century focus on preservation in the face of tremendous cultural upheavals supports this perception. Court records, however, attest to active composition during the Joseon period (1392-1910), and individual creativity in the form of improvisation and revision (*gaejak*) has been historically central to regular performance practice in the court and folk realm.² Some scholars (Gang 2005) argue that such a personalization of performance could be interpreted as a process of composition. This harnessing and developing of familiar musical structures shapes the perspectives of many of today's musician-composers.

At a time when most *gugak* composers were not active musicians and were trained in Western tonal music composition, musician Hwang Byungki's prolific contributions to the *gayageum* repertoire in the mid-to-late 20th century inspired generations of young students and performers to find their own voices (Killick 2013). One of these was Won Il, former team member and in-house composer for Seulgidoong, who began the Puri team as a project for collaborative, performer-centered composition.³ Won, a *piri* and *samulnori* specialist, notes that the first line-up of Puri (Chang Jae-Hyo, Min Young-Chi, Kim Woong-Sik and Won) worked well, particularly because team members contributed equally to the creative framework leading to the composition of new music.⁴ Won sought an equally successful collaboration in Baramgot.

Groove and Play

Baramgot began with the idea of drawing on the performance aesthetics and ethics of Joseon-era music: each performer naturally creating his/her own music. The team – Park Suna (*gayageum*), Park Woojae (*geomungo*), Lee Aram (*daegeum*), Park Jaerock (sitar), and Won (percussion, *piri*, and vocals) – was formed in 2004 under the artistic direction of Won.⁵ Since its inception, the team has had a strong presence domestically and internationally; opening Womex in 2010 and completing artist residencies and tours in France and the United Kingdom, respectively. The team aims

to expand its repertoire by fostering creative capacities that Won believes have lain dormant in contemporary musicians.



Baramgot (l-r) Artistic Director Won Il, Park Woojae, Lee Aram, Park Sunah, Park Jaerock
(Photo Courtesy of Performing Arts Consulting Group BEONDI).

In the liner notes of their debut recording *Korean Music Ensemble Baramgot* (2010 DU 8572), the solo folk instrumental *sanjo*, the improvisatory ensemble *sinawi* and shaman ritual are cited as sources of inspiration for the team. *Sinawi*, in particular, remains Baramgot's central inspiration.⁶ In an interview with Won he stated that *sinawi*'s relative freedom from a set musical form makes it the perfect foundation for the creation of new music:⁷ 'From the beginning the team concept was *sinawi* ... We knew each one of us had to find our own path ... but that's the most difficult thing, you know.'

At the group's inception, Won decided the team would create a piece connected to the myth of Princess Bari as a way to get the musicians accustomed to composition and to work within the *sinawi* prototype.⁸ Team members were directed to come up with individual theme-based musical motives that they would then weave together in the piece. Won notes, 'We wanted to arrange these themes in the standard *sinawi* structure', and he refers to *Bari Sinawi* (The Great Journey of Princess Bari), as the team's 'first *sinawi*'.

At the center of team creativity is the rhythmic cycle (*jangdan*), which clearly connects Baramgot with *sinawi* performance practice. Improvisations on melodic motives in *sinawi* are 'anchored by the rhythmic cycle set down by the *changgo* [sic] player' (Kwon 2012: 87), something Charles Keil refers to as 'vital drive', or 'groove', in jazz improvisations (1994: 60-65). In Baramgot's composition process, Won typically sets the 'vital drive' through speed and articulation as fellow instrumentalists strive to both match the speed and find motives suitable to the *jangdan*. In the case of '*Bari Sinawi*', the use of eastern seaboard

rhythms molded the overall character of the piece.

While *sinawi* typically starts with *salpuri jangdan*, we changed it. Because this shamanic narrative is quite developed on the eastern seaboard, [we used the eastern seaboard ritual section] *punneori*⁹ ... As I played this rhythm, we added the instruments ... With this *jangdan*, it was different (Personal Interview with Won Il 2012).

Baramgot's second *sinawi* piece, *Chaeollim*, began as a challenge for performers to come up with melodies fitting the overall style of a Gyeonggi province shaman ritual *jangdan*. The method of simply playing with a rhythmic pattern together has proven effective in stirring creativity. 'Play' is central conceptually and technically to Baramgot. Won Il describes the process of 'play' as a game within which team members put forth melodic ideas and provide feedback. In Korean music, the concept of 'play' (*nolda*) cannot be understated since, according to Won, 'the mark of a true artist is the ability to play with a rhythmic cycle to one's heart's content'. 'Play' refers to the manipulation of rhythmic and melodic motives – creativity without sacrificing musical integrity.

The piece 'Compass', for example, developed initially as a programmatic piece about the team's travels in India. When the quest for individually-submitted motives was unsuccessful, the team tried 'play'. As Won performed a rhythmic pattern, team members were invited to contribute. One-by-one the instrumentalists had their chance at contributing melodic ideas as fellow team members provided in-progress feedback. When short rhythmic and melodic motives emerged, Won directed team members to work out individual parts by extemporizing on the motives established through the initial play. 'In the process of just playing the piece naturally emerged'. To add variety – and perhaps highlight the teams' inter-Asian, world music aura – an Indian classical rhythmic cadence, *tihai*, was incorporated to mark the conclusion of sections.¹⁰

Performance Space

Baramgot performances incorporate minimalist stage setting and muted attire underscoring the team's conceptual foundations. While performance stages vary, the team's characteristic setting is that of an interactive semicircle on the floor. According to Kim Seongju, multiple instruments and instrument changes make it 'safest to sit on the floor'. Another reason for such a setting remains existential: performer and audience energy

drives the performance experience. The intimate space offered by the Daehangno Lock Museum fit perfectly into Baramgot's goal of shaping a performance to which an audience can perceptually and physically connect. In this case, the audience experience was enhanced by a floor space tied to a performance space, contributing to the collaboration and communication essential to Baramgot's vision. With many performances including completely improvised segments, energy and receptivity transpiring between audience and performers contours the performance occasion.



Baramgot in Performance (Photo Courtesy of Performing Arts Consulting Group BEONDI).



Baramgot Stage Setting, 16 December 2009, Daehangno Lock Museum (Photo by the Author).

The performance moment framed not only acoustically – but also conceptually and visually – communicates musical value to the audience (Finchum-Sung 2012b). The Lock Museum, for example, was chosen for its historical aura, signifying the spirits of the ancestors (Kim 2011: 36). The space held meaning for the performers (as evidenced in the brochures and program) which, in turn, lent meaning to the performance event. In addition to the performance setting, attire enhances the acoustic event.

Team members often work with designers who abide by the individual needs of performer comfort and create designs denoting the team's 'world beat' image. Team consultant Kim Seongju notes that while performance concept influences attire color, 'Our style seems to have an Indian-type feel to it'. Most important, both color and design enhance team unity and performance ambience.

In promotional materials and concert programs, Baramgot is labeled as 'musical theater'. Such a designation affords the team maximum flexibility and creativity. The team has collaborated with playwrights, actors, dancers and vocalists in bringing to life stories drawing on Korean tradition, such as the Fall 2011 performance 'Kkokdu', which is about *kkokdu* guiding a soul reluctant to cross over to the otherworld.¹¹ The play featured the performers as part of the on-stage action. Placed in a multi-tiered structure positioned behind the actors and dancers, the performers dressed in white and played music inspired by the funeral dirges and *sinawi* of the southwestern province. The musical performance coalesced with the on-stage movement and dialogue. With performers such as these the music is not simply a sonic experience, but physical, historic and interactive. Through such multidimensional performances, the performers draw the audience into an interpretive space, furthering their contributions to the Korean socio-historic sonic experience.

Conclusion: Interpreting Baramgot

The work of Baramgot is, in essence, always engaging, always developing, and never complete (in the finite sense of the word). Today, *gugak* negotiates its place in urban, rural, old, new, and now global, contexts. Baramgot demonstrates the necessity of flexible creativity in contemporary music drawing on *gugak* roots. By emphasizing the import of the musician-composer in musical development and embracing creative aesthetics of groove and play, the team cultivates a creative freedom essential to *gugak*'s continuation. Baramgot's framing of the performance occasion through presentation style brings the conceptual to fruition. The interpretive experience of Baramgot, transient and alive, makes the moment of experiencing the acoustic layers of identity, time and place the right spot to be.

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¹ Habitus refers to the values and identity of a social group acquired through both socio-cultural memory and experiences of everyday life.

² Unlike the Western 'composer', historically the creator of music in Korea was not lauded as an individual separate from the act of performance.

³ See Finchum-Sung (2012a) for more on *gugak* teams.

⁴ Won, who holds a graduate degree in composition, is known for his orchestral and solo compositions.

⁵ The sitar's presence adds emphasis to common Asian musical roots and aesthetics and has lent the team a reputation as a 'world music' ensemble (Kim 2011).

⁶ *Sinawi* (rooted in shaman ritual) consists of melodic motives transitioning through rhythmic patterns, *jangdan*. Instrumentalists individually improvise on the melodic motives, creating a rich near-polyrhythmic texture unusual in traditional music.

⁷ Other teams, such as the JeongGaAkHoe and *Sinawi*, also draw on *sinawi* structures as their pivotal compositional base.

⁸ *Bari* is a myth about a child abandoned at birth who returns later to deliver medicinal water for her ailing father.

⁹ *Punneori* is a section beginning North Gyeongsang province rituals in which percussion instrumentalists show their skills (Mills 2007: 42-57).

¹⁰ Typical to raga performance, *tihai* means 'three times'. At the close of a phrase the same motive phrase is repeated rapidly three times.

¹¹ *Kkokdu* are wooden figurines representing archetypal spirits traditionally placed on funeral biers.

Canonical Repertoires in Korean Traditional Music

Keith Howard

A curious aspect of East Asian artistic production is how an intense period of creativity is followed by an extended period of stasis. Stasis relies on the maintenance of a limited repertoire, as a canon, which derives from material created during the initial period. This contrasts concepts of musical canons elsewhere, and challenges dominant perspectives about musical change and the sustainability of musical genres – matters that in recent years have been foregrounded as governments, journalists and scholars fret about the conservation of music as intangible cultural heritage.¹

I have recently begun to try to get a grip on the implications this observation about East Asian canons has for Korean traditional music. This article, therefore, constitutes a preliminary examination. My consideration begins with Korean SamulNori/*samulnori*, a quartet of percussionists and a genre of percussion music played on drums and gongs that is arguably Korea's most popular 'traditional' music today, but which first appeared on stage only in 1978. SamulNori/*samulnori* has become the soundworld of Korea at, say, the 2002 Soccer World Cup in Seoul, and since then with the fans who follow the Korean 'Red Devils' around the world. It is also the campus music of choice for Korean students at home and abroad.² But, wherever heard and almost without exception, *samulnori* groups play model or variant versions of a small set of pieces – the canonic repertoire – created within a fifteen-month period when narrowly defined or four years allowing for a broader catalogue of pieces to be included. After reflecting on SamulNori/*samulnori*, I broaden my discussion to ask whether similarly restricted canons sit behind other Korean traditional music genres.

SamulNori/*samulnori*

The founding quartet, SamulNori, first performed on stage in February 1978; the name came some months later. The quartet played four instruments: *kkwaenggwari* small hand-held gong, *janggu* double-

headed hourglass-shaped drum, *buk* shallow barrel drum and *jing* large gong. Three pieces were premiered within an initial fifteen months, all descending from the two characteristic flavors of percussion bands of old: local *nongak* or *pungmul* groups that once played for ritual, entertainment, farming and fishing activities, and travelling itinerant troupes, notably the troupes known as *Namsadang*.³ These three pieces were regionally distinct, using rhythmic structures from bands that had operated in the central Gyeonggi (*Utdari gut*), southeastern Gyeongsang (*Yeongnam nongak*) and southwestern Jeolla provinces (*Honam udo nongak*) respectively. To this inner canon, four additional pieces were then added, two blending rhythmic structures from different regions (*Samdo nongak*, *Samdo seoljanggu*) one creating a tight four-man version of an old staged entertainment performance (*Bangut*), and one from the Namsadang repertoire offering a prayer for blessings that could be utilized as a suitable opening piece in concerts (*Binari*) (Table 1). An eighth piece could be added, representing the second common southwestern style, *Honam jwado nongak*, but a version of this appears only on one *samulnori* recording (SamulNori 1995).

Table 1 The SamulNori canon

Name	First Performance	Alternative names (samples)
Utdari gut	February 1978	Utdari nongak / pungmul / garak, Jungbu nongak
Yeongnam nongak	April 1978	12 cha 36 garak, Yeongnam pungmul / gut / gut garak
Honam udo nongak	May 1979	Honam nongak, Honam udo pungmul / gut / gut garak
Samdo nongak	November 1979	Samdo nongak garak
Pangut	September 1980	
Binari	September 1980	
Samdo seoljanggu	June 1982	Samdo (seoljanggu) garak/nori (Seoljanggu garak)

Note: Revised romanizations; other romanizations are printed on some album covers and in programs.

There is some discussion about exactly what was played when (Ju 2010: 27), and at what point a fixed framework was established for each piece – a 1979 recording of the second piece to premiere does not follow the

canonic tight sequence and restricted time frame (Personal Interview with Nathan Hesselink 2012) and shows a greater connection to the southeastern local style (as found in Gyeongsang namdo 1989 and Kim *et al.* 1997) than does the first commercial recording, released in 1984. The framework remains in notations and subsequent recordings (1985, 1987, 1988, 1992, 1995; see Discography). SamulNori also attracted considerable criticism (reported by Hesselink 2004 and Howard 2012), precisely because in place of the percussion band repertoires of old, their pieces were fast, virtuosic, and showy.

As new quartets formed, they retained the inner core repertoire and some of the additional pieces. They sought distinction by extending or compressing pieces. Some motivic sections were lifted out for new creations, such as the '*tchaksoe*' section, where two players play intricate hocketing on two *kkwaenggwari* small gongs (from the fourth piece to premiere), and a vamp to a model *gutgeori* (6/8+6/8) rhythmic cycle under improvised patterns on four *janggu* double-headed drums (from the seventh piece). The fifth piece, compressing a longer and much varied rural entertainment, is today widely copied by Korean dance troupes. Today, the members of the original SamulNori have become teachers and managers, running a regular *samulnori* festival, working as college professors, and leading arts organizations. There are many amateur and professional *samulnori* quartets, the *samulnori* idea is embedded within numerous dance and music performance troupes, and *samulnori* is an accepted part of the school music curriculum.



Kim Duk Soo, SamulNori's *Janggu* Drummer
(Photo © Keith Howard).

The core pieces, then, constitute a *samulnori* canon, for musicians, audiences and teachers:

[One of the first SamulNori members] Lee Kwang Soo once said that diamonds are beautiful because they never change. I think that the *samulnori* pieces are, to some extent, complete.⁴

The original SamulNori members collected and compressed local rhythmic patterns into single pieces, and musicians today still play these same pieces... [no new] pieces have left as strong an impression on audiences as the original pieces do.⁵

I think the *samulnori* repertoire was created too perfectly in the first place, and this makes it meaningless to change anything.⁶

[One of the first SamulNori members] Kim Duk Soo made the *samulnori* pieces well... Musicians today should polish and complement the existing rhythmic patterns of each, but it is not good to transform the *samulnori* pieces since they are our tradition.⁷



In 1988, SamulNori trained a new *samulnori* group, under contract to Lotte World. Here we see the *kkwaenggwari* (small drum) player (left) and *buk* (barrel drum, right) (Photos © Keith Howard).

Canonic Repertoires

The *samulnori* canon tightens the prism within which canons form, thereby contrasting the familiar conception of linear and logical development over time found in, for example, Neil MacGregor's *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (2010) from the British Museum, or the longer period over which the European art music canon was established (for which, see Samson 2001: 7). Given an almost imperialistic quality of greatness and consistency in the *samulnori* set of pieces that is noted by many (including the interviewees above), it matches the concepts of canon given for art music as well as literature in, for example, George Steiner (1991), William Weber (1992), Lydia Goehr (1992) and Harold Bloom (1994). The *samulnori* canon also quickly took on an ahistorical dimension, much as Harry White (1997) tells us did the music of the Baroque within Europe some hundred years or more after its creation.

Ethnomusicologists have developed distinct notions of canon for folk musics,⁸ thereby offering a different way to approach *samulnori*. Philip Bohlman discusses three processes of canon formation in folk music – small group, mediated, and imagined (1988: 110-19). Let me consider these in reverse. It would be offensive to tell *samulnori* musicians that they play music from an imagined or invented tradition, despite the credentials that Benedict Anderson (1983) and Eric Hobsbawm (1983) bring to this constructed category, however, here I merely reiterate that neither musicians nor audiences consider *samulnori* the same as local band or itinerant troupe music. The notion of a mediated canon appears somewhat pertinent, because Korean school textbooks, and to some extent university students, today allow *samulnori* to substitute for older band music. Bohlman's small group canon also has potential utility, given that SamulNori emerged from a larger defined ensemble, the Folk Music Association Shinawi (Minsokakhoe Shinawi), supported by a group of musicians allied to a single school, the Traditional Music Arts School (Gugak Yesul Hakgyo).

In morphing from a single quartet (SamulNori) into the widely disseminated *samulnori* genre of today, it is also possible to juxtapose this percussion genre against ongoing debates about Euro-American popular music canons. On the surface, much the same applies to *samulnori* as, say, Antti-Ville Karja's (2006) concept of the mainstream Western pop canon: both operate in a modern and urban world, with a core set of pieces iconicized by millions and shared or played by hundreds of groups. While the pop canon formation suggests considerable temporal compression (into three decades in the late twentieth century) compared to the European art music canon (a century or more⁹), it still comprises, according to its fans,

some 100 or more songs. In comparison, the *samulnori* canon, with three pieces created within fifteen months or seven pieces within four years, remains highly distinct.

Canons in Korean Traditional Music

It would not be unreasonable to question whether sustaining a genre is possible with such a small and restricted repertoire as *samulnori*. Unlike *samulnori*, the comparable *taiko* percussion repertoire in neighboring Japan seems to continuously expand, allowing a blend of Japanese and foreign materials to emerge amongst *taiko* groups inside and outside of East Asia (Wong 2004: 195-231; Bender 2012). The percussion-focused Korean ensemble Dulsori, who in the last few years have featured in WOMAD festivals across the world, likewise constantly evolve their repertoire (Dulsori 2010 and 2012). However, these comparisons recede hurriedly into the background when we explore other Korean traditional music genres. Consider *gagok*, the set of 26 lyric songs in male and female versions that is today Intangible Cultural Property (*Muhyeong munhwajae*) 30. All *gagok* are set to a frame derived from what in history tracks from a single slow melody first notated in 1572, '*Mandaeyeop*', through a medium-paced '*Chungdaeyeop*' to a fast '*Saktaeyeop*'; '*Mandaeyeop*' last appears in a manuscript dated 1724, and '*Chungdaeyeop*' fell into disuse in the 19th century. Or, consider *shijo*, the three-line poems associated with the artistic preferences of the educated middle classes, all set to a single basic melody in a tritonic mode with just two additional passing tones.

Again, why are there only five core *pansori* (epic storytelling through song) pieces or stories, within a genre appointed a UNESCO Masterpiece in the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity as well as Korea's Intangible Cultural Property 5? Twelve were recorded in the late nineteenth century by the lower ranked local government official Shin Jaehyo (1812-1884), but from then onwards only five have been regularly performed. These five appear in multiple versions on multiple recordings. In recent years, and not least at the annual Jeonju International Sori Festival, new repertoires have been introduced (Um, forthcoming), but none have been taken up widely and few have been recorded outside excerpts on compilation albums. Consider, too, *sanjo*, the melodic genre for a single instrument with drum accompaniment. Tracked back to the late nineteenth century and a putative creator, Kim Changjo (1865-1918), evolutions of his piece created by his students and their students form the basis for today's six closely interconnecting *sanjo* 'schools' (*ryu*, an adaptation of a Japanese term) for the *gayageum* 12-stringed zither (see Howard *et al* 2008, Howard 2009). These have subsequently been adapted to create *sanjo*

repertoires for other major instruments, hence *sanjo* for *gayageum* and *geomungo* zithers and *daegeum* flute are preserved as Intangible Cultural Properties 16, 23 and 45. Each *sanjo*, wherever encountered, retains a common core structure: a set of movements progressing from slow to fast, each sequencing a set of motives that move towards and away from the southwestern *gyemyeonjo* mode. As with *pansori*, many attempts have been made to create contemporary *sanjo*, but none has gained wide currency.

Conclusion

Is it Western-centric to assume that sustaining a genre over time requires either a broad and extensive canon of works or the constant development of new repertoire? Given that the dominant music culture in Korea is Western – *seoyang eumak* – with Korean traditional music attracting less prestige and less audience, it is not surprising that most Korean musicians who I have talked to readily concur with this assumption. However, *samulnori*, and other Korean traditional music, begins to suggest a reassessment is needed. If Korean musicians and audiences are tolerant of restricted materials – three or seven *samulnori* pieces, five *pansori* repertoires, a single melodic structure for *gagok* or *shijo* – then commonly held notions of creativity, composition, and development need to be critiqued. And, measuring a canon in terms of discrete pieces may also be problematic since, and paralleled in *sanjo*, the motives encountered in many different performance contexts that have been lifted out of *samulnori* repertoire have potentially greater iconicity than the *samulnori* pieces themselves. Still, I sense a growing feeling in Korea that the *samulnori* canon is becoming tired; performances are critiqued for being too loud, too much the same; no young performers have gained a celebrity status akin to the founding SamulNori quartet. Will the canon survive and thrive in the future?

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¹ For discussions about the preservation of East Asian music as intangible cultural heritage, see Howard (2012); for a Korean case study, see Howard (2006a).

² Many Korean students would claim to follow older forms of percussion bands rather than *samulnori*, but space precludes developing my argument here. University websites for student groups that illustrate how the repertoire is maintained include

<http://www.indiana.edu/~samul/samul.html>

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~godong/>

<http://shinparam.org/zbxe/?mid=pungmul>

<http://music.emory.edu/performance/documents/samulnori.html>

<http://claricesmithcenter.umd.edu/2010/c/performances/performance?rowid=10367>

<http://www.mit.edu/~oori/>

<https://ulife.utoronto.ca/organizations/view/id/2973>

<http://www.srcf.ucam.org/samulnori/>

(all accessed 3 December 2012).

³ Nathan Hesselink's recent book (2012) allies the founding quartet with itinerant troupes, but the blend of sources used for this inner core repertoire, the musicians invoked as the quartet's teachers, and the way that the genre has gained popularity in student circles, all suggest to me that the genre is better defined as a fusion of local and itinerant.

⁴ Im Subin, Academy of Korean Music member, interviewed on 25 November 2010.

⁵ Chu Jaeyeon, SamulNori Hanullim president, interviewed on 4 January 2011.

⁶ Park Changbae, Yongin Traditional Arts Center president, interviewed on 17 November 2010.

⁷ Lee Jinwoo and Han Jaesook, Namdo Gugak Center SamulNori members, interviewed on 29 October 2010.

⁸ Note that I here cite Bohlman's 'folk music' canon. 'Folk' has become unfashionable within ethnomusicology circles, but remains an acceptable term for traditional music in East Asia, as the 'little tradition' in contrast to the 'great tradition' of the court, aristocracy and literati.

⁹ Samson (2001) defines the period of canon formation as from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. However, J. S. Bach's inclusion sets the clock earlier, while fast-forwarding to the late 19th century better matches the stabilization of concert programmes.

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