

THE EXCHANGE OF MUSICAL INFLUENCES BETWEEN KOREA AND CENTRAL ASIA IN ANCIENT TIMES

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Introduction: The Influence and Acceptance of Foreign Music

Korea has enjoyed a continual exchange of cultural influences with her neighbors throughout history, particularly in the realm of music. Present day Korean music originated in the Three Kingdoms period of Koguryo (37 B.C.-A.D. 668), Paekche (18 B.C.-A.D. 660), and Silla (57 B.C.-A.D. 935). Korean music was closely related to the musical culture of her immediate neighbor, China, as well as to that of Central Asia. It is the author's understanding that the major theme of the current UNESCO-sponsored international seminar on "Korean Culture and the Silk Road" is designed to explore, academically, various fields of Korean culture, each from its own angle.

The terms "influence" and "acceptance" are two academic terms of significant importance which are invariably used in any discussion on the mutual relationship in cultural exchanges with neighboring countries. Consequently, the two terms have to be clearly defined and differentiated, according to how the relationship with the foreign culture is

viewed. We will use the term “influence” to describe the reception of one culture by that of another.

The influence and acceptance of foreign culture take place repeatedly in history. A particular cultural aspect of a nation may dominate another, or a culture of one nation may accept that of another of its own volition, while the two may interact with each other on equal terms. The issues of influence from and acceptance of foreign culture are so complex and diverse that they are quite difficult to grasp. However, the author will attempt to explore how music from Central Asia was accepted in the ancient history of Korean music, from the Three Kingdoms period until the Unified Silla period. We will cover four subjects in terms of acceptance of music from Central Asia: Buddhist chant (*pomp'ae*) of Unified Silla; Ch'oe Ch'i-won's *Hyangak chabyong osu* or “Five recited poems of *hyangak*,” the traverse flute (*hoengjok*) and five-stringed lute (*ohyon pip'a*) of Koguryo; and modal terms (*wolcho*, *pansopcho*, *hwanjongo*) of Tang music in the three bamboo instruments (*samjuk*) of Silla. On the basis of research in progress, an overview will be conducted in the following three sections.

Pomp'ae of Unified Silla and Ch'oe Ch'i-Won's Hyangak Chabyong Osu

Buddhist chant (*pomp'ae*) is an important musical genre which developed in close relation with Buddhist rites. Though it is said that the root of *pomp'ae* may be traced back to Brahmanism based upon Indian Vedic thought, the ancient *pomp'ae* is known to have been derived directly from the Chinese *fanbai* initiated by Cao Zhi (Cho Sik in Sino-Korean: 192-232) of the Wei Dynasty in the third century.¹ If Chinese *fanbai* was rooted in the Buddhism of India, then it may be reasonable to assert that Korean *pomp'ae* might have been historically related to the musical culture of Central Asia.

Buddhism was introduced into Koguryo in 372 (second year in the reign of King Sosurim), then into Paekche in 384 (first year in the reign of King Ch'imnyu), and then to Silla in 535 (twenty-second year in the reign of King Pophung). Thus *pomp'ae* seems to have been introduced into the Three Kingdoms along with the introduction of Buddhism, because religious rituals must have been indispensable in spreading Buddhism along with the three Buddhist treasures (priest, scripture, and statues). There is, however, no bibliographical data extant today to prove this except for two historical materials containing the record on Silla *pomp'ae* during the South-North Dynasties period in China: the monumental inscription for the Zen monk, Chin'gam, and Ennin's (Won In in Sino-Korean: 793-864) *Diary of Pilgrimage to Tang in Search for the*

Law (*Nitto guho junrei gyoki*). *Pomp'ae*, as practiced in Unified Silla, may be summarized as follows.²

Zen monk Chin'gam, a high Silla monk, (Hyeso: 774-850) went to Tang in 804 (fifteenth year in the reign of King Aejang), returned home in 830 (fifth year in the reign of King Hungdok), and taught *pomp'ae* at a famous Buddhist temple now known as Ssanggyesa. He introduced *pomp'ae* of the Tang style to Silla society in the early ninth century. At about the same time, a Japanese high monk, Ennin, toured Tang from 838 to 847, and recorded in his travelogue that three styles of *pomp'ae* were practiced at a Silla temple (Choksanwon) located in the Shantung peninsula of China. They comprised the first Silla style in practice in Silla society, the second Tang style then popular in Tang society, and the third Japanese style then in vogue in Japanese society.

As the Zen monk, Chin'gam, taught *pomp'ae* he had learnt in Tang, China; it must have been the Tang-style *fanbai* of the early ninth century as referred to in Ennin's travelogue. It may also be safely assumed that *pomp'ae* of either the Silla or Japanese style must have been played respectively in Silla or Japanese society prior to the ninth century. One of them must have been what the Silla accepted and developed into a more enriched Silla form.

The five poems of *hyangak* (*Hyangak chabyong osu*) in Chinese characters by Ch'oe Ch'i-won (born in 857) are important documents which depict an aspect of the performing arts in Silla society towards the end of the ninth century. Ch'oe Ch'i-won went to Tang in 869 (ninth year in the reign of King Kyongmun) at the age of twelve, passed the state civil service examination, served in a government post, and then returned home in 885 (fifth year in the reign of King Hon'gang). The five poems of *hyangak* category may be found in the court ballet performance of the *hyangak* and the *tangak* in his *Koryosa* (History of Koryo).³ It may be construed that Ch'oe Ch'i-won labeled the five performing arts of Central Asia as *hyangak* (native music), because the masked dance plays had already been accepted in Silla society towards the end of the ninth century. The five mask plays, *Kumhwan*, *Wolchon*, *Taemyon*, *Soktok*, and *Sanye*, are said to be typical of Silla music *hyangak*, but in the field of Korean studies, evidence suggests that they were in fact derived from the performing arts of Central Asia.

Kumhwan was assumed to have been related to a play called *lungwanxi*, a kind of ball game from Central Asia, while *Wolchon* was thought to have been a sort of masked dance play handed down in the Hetian region of Yutian, now Hotan in Central Asia. *Taemyon* was described as having been related to *Ta-mien-hsi* (lit. "big mask play") of Tang—deriving from the barbarian dance of Kuei-tsu, a kind of Shamanistic dance play from Central Asia.⁴ *Soktok* was interpreted as a

sort of dance play originating from Soghd, now the Tashkent and Samarkand regions of Central Asia. *Sanye* is thought to have derived from a lion's mask play belonging to the Gnizi tradition of Central Asia that is believed to have been related to the Chinese *Xiliang ji*.

The Transverse Flute and the Five-Stringed Lute of Koguryo

Koguryo, bordering on the Asian continent proper, was the first nation among the Three Kingdoms to develop Korea's ethnic musical culture in its continual cultural exchange with the continent, and thereby spread its prestige abroad. A number of research articles on the musical history of Koguryo and Central Asia have already been published in the field of Korean historical musicology.

The musical culture of Koguryo has been recorded as *Koryoak* (*Gaoli yue* in Chinese) or *Koryogi* (*Gaoli ji*) in the authentic histories of China, and as *Komangaku* in Japanese historical documents. Although the musical culture of Koguryo in the Three Kingdoms period has been highlighted in various ways by historical documents on music, its relationship with Central Asia will be surveyed in terms of two musical instruments in use at the time; that is to say, the transverse flute (*hoengjok*) and the five-stringed lute (*ohyon pip'a*), since those instruments were closely related to the *hyangak* instruments of Unified Silla (668-935).

The Koguryo flute, played in a horizontal position like the present-day bamboo flute, was recorded in three ways in authenticated Chinese histories: *hoengchi'wi* (*hengchui* in Chinese), *chok* (*di*), and *hoenjok* (*hengdi*); and *yokobue* in the Japanese historical documents.⁵ According to these literary documents, the transverse flute is assumed to have been played in Koguryo society up to the sixth century. The relevant archaeological source is a mural painting on Tomb No. 17 at Chiban (Qian), Manchuria, which is thought to have been built in the sixth and seventh centuries.⁶ A mural painting of a musical performance on Tomb 1 at Changcho'on (Changchun), Manchuria, would suggest that the historical origin of the Koguryo flute can be traced to the following literary sources.

In view of the fact⁷ that the transverse flute was played not only in *Koryogi* (*Gaoli ji*), but also in *Kanggukki* (*Gangkuo ji*), *An'gukki* (*Ankuo ji*), *Sorukki* (*Shuchi ji*), and *Kujagi* (*Guizi ji*) from among seven performing groups called *Ch'ilbugi* (*Qibu ji*) during the Ta-yeh period (605-616); the origin of the Koguryo flute and the Chinese transverse flute may both be traced to Central Asia. Such regions as Suchi (now Kashgar), Kangguo (Samarkand), Anguo (Bukhara), and Quizi (Kucha) had been historically linked to the caravan route between China and Central Asia, namely the Silk Road.

The five-stringed lute of Koguryo, related to musical instruments of Central Asia, was recorded as *ohyon* (*wuxian*) or *ohyon pip'a* (*wuxian pip'a*) in the authenticated Chinese histories, but recorded as *hyang-pip'a* (lit. "native lute") in the *Samguk sagi* or *History of the Three Kingdoms*.⁸ *Ohyon pip'a* was the name given to the lute because it had five strings. Since the lute had a straight neck, however, it was also called *chikkyong pip'a* ("lute with a straight neck"). The five-stringed lute with a straight neck (*ohyon pip'a*) differs structurally from *sahyon pip'a* or the four-stringed lute which was also known as *kokkyong pip'a* ("lute with a curved neck") or *tang pip'a* ("Chinese lute").

According to the seven or nine performing groups (*Qibu ji* or *Qiubu ji*) and the ten performing groups (*Shibu ji*) of Tang China,⁹ the five-stringed lute was also played in *Koryogi* (*Gaoli ji*) and in such performing groups as *Anguo ji* (Bukhara), *Shuchi ji* (Kashgar), *Xiliang ji* (Hexi region upstreams on the Yellow River), *Guizi ji* (the Kucha center on the northern route along the Tianshan Mountains), and *Tienzhu ji* (India). Thus, the origin of the five-stringed lute may lie in Central Asia. Chinese historical documents and archaeological evidence have revealed that the five-stringed lute of Koguryo was played in the sixth century. The mural painting on Tomb No. 1 at Changchuan, Manchuria, however, suggested that the five-stringed lute was played in Koguryo society as early as the fifth century.¹⁰

As the transverse flute and five-stringed lute were used for *Guizi ji* and *Xiliang ji* music, which came to light after the conquest of Central Asia by Lu Guang in 382 (eighteenth year of Qianyuan), the two instruments must have been introduced into China towards the latter half of the fourth century. It may be safely assumed that the two natural instruments might have been available in Koguryo in the fifth century. In addition to the mural painting on Tomb No. 1 at Changchun, evidence to suggest that the transverse flute and the five-stringed lute must have been accepted in Koguryo society stems from the fact that Koguryo started active cultural exchanges with the earlier Qin State from around the end of the fourth century. Buddhism was introduced into Koguryo in 372 by the monk, Sundo (Sundao), from the earlier Qin State.

Wolcho, Pansopcho, and Hwangjongjo in the Three Bamboo Flutes (Samhyon) of Silla

The musical culture of Unified Silla (668-935) in the North-South Dynasties period of China can be viewed from two angles. Internally, the music of Unified Silla accepted the musical culture of Paekche and Koguryo, and developed them anew. Externally, Unified Silla accepted

the mature musical culture of Tang China, thereby lending the musical culture of Silla a new dimension. After achieving unification of the Three Kingdoms, Silla accepted the transverse flute called *chok* of Paekche and the flute called *hoengjok* of Koguryo, and proceeded to develop the flutes into the three-bamboo flutes (*samjuk*) of Silla *hyangak*,¹¹ while the twelve-stringed zither (*kayagum*) of Kaya State, the six-stringed zither (*komun'go* or *hyon'gum*) and the five-stringed lute of Koguryo Kingdom were also accepted as the three-string instruments of Unified Silla *hyangak* in the North-South Dynasties period of China. The musical culture of Unified Silla was able to pursue further development in terms of native Korean music known as *hyangak*.

Cultural exchange with Tang was quite active in the North-South Dynasties period of China, and musical exchange between Unified Silla and Tang was no exception. The Buddhist chant (*pomp'ae*) of Zen monk, Chin'gam, and the Tang-style *pomp'ae* as referred to by the Japanese monk, Ennin, can serve as examples of musical exchange at the time. Another example is the musical features of the three modal systems of Tang music, *hawangjongjo* (*huangzhong*), *pansopcho* (*pan-she-t'iao*), and *wolcho* (*yueh-t'iao*), as referred to in the *Samguk sagi*.¹² These systems of Tang music were derived from the twenty-eight modal terms used in the secular music (*su-yueh*) of Tang. Musical features of the three modal systems follow.

Pansopcho is also known as *t'aejgyunjiujo* or *t'aejuu*, another modal term used in the form of Chinese *yayue*, which means *u*-mode (*yutiao*) in the *t'aeju* (*t'ai-t'su*) key. The modal term *wolcho* in *t'aeju* identical with *hwangjonggyunjisangjo* or *hwangjongshang* in the Chinese *yayue* form, i.e., *sang* mode (*shangtiao*) in the *hwangjong* (*huangzhong*) key. *Hwangjongjo* (*Huangzhongtiao*), also called *hwangjonggyunjiujo* or *hwangjongju* in the Chinese *yayue* form turned out to be a mode (*yutiao*) in the *hwangjong* key. Such modal terms in the fashion of Chinese *yayue* as *t'aejuu* (*pansopcho*), *hwangjongsang* (*wolcho*), and *hwangjongju* (*hwangjongjo*) are to be interpreted not in terms of *wijosik* (*weitaioshe*) but of *chijosik* (*zhitiaoshe*).¹³

Pansopcho turned out to be related to *pandam* (*bandan*) from among seven modal systems of So Chi-p'a (Suizhipo), and the Chinese term *bandan* (*pantam* in Sino-Korean) was a Chinese transliteration of the original Sanskrit term, *pancama*. *Wolcho yuetiao*, otherwise called *irwolcho* (*yiyuetiao*) derived from the *iwolcho* (*yiyuetiao*) was used in the ancient music of Piaoquo, now Burma, under the influence of Indian music at that time.

In the sum, since the three modal systems of Tang music for the three-bamboo flutes turned out to have been part of the twenty-eight modal systems of Tang secular music, which had been accepted in Silla society during the eighth century, it can be safely assumed that, from the

standpoint of the overall context of Asian musical history, some Central Asian music was produced in Tang in the eighth century, and was reaccepted as musical culture for the three-bamboo flutes in the latter Silla period (780-935). In other words, the three modal systems of Tang music for the three-bamboo flutes constitute a clear proof that Silla society accepted Tang music as something new in its own musical culture. It may be assumed that the three modal systems were an outcome of cultural exchange undertaken through the Silk Road between Tang and Central Asia, and that outcome was accepted by Silla society in the ninth century.

Concluding Remarks: The Ancient History of Korean Music and the Silk Road

In the historical development of Korean music, the Three Kingdoms and the Unified Silla periods were ages when the active acceptance of foreign music was pursued most vigorously. The transverse flute (*hoengjok*) and the five-stringed lute (*ohyon pip'a*) of Koguryo played an important role in developing the musical culture in the Three Kingdoms period towards a new direction. The Silla *pomp'ae*, five poems of *hyangak*, and the three modal systems of Tang music were actual examples of the acceptance of foreign culture and their development into outstanding performing arts in the Unified Silla.

Although part of the musical culture achieved in Koguryo and Silla societies was accepted by neighboring China, we have seen that the transverse flute and the five-stringed lute of Koguryo, *pomp'ae*, masked dance plays, and the modal systems of Tang music in Silla were closely related to the musical culture of Central Asia which China had accepted via the Silk Road. One can observe that ancient Korea, rather than having been predominantly influenced one-sidedly by foreign culture, accepted foreign music and remodeled it as her own.

In the case of Koguryo, if they had failed to accept such foreign musical instruments from Central Asia as the transverse flute or the five-stringed lute, and failed in making of them their own instruments, they would not have been able to export their music, *Koryoak* (*Komagaku*), to the ancient Japanese court.¹⁴ The fact that Silla and Paekche as well as Koguryo influenced the ancient music of Japan is well known in the field of Korean and Japanese historical musicology. That is why more weight should be given to the term "acceptance" rather than "influence" in an account of the ancient history of Korean music and its relationship with foreign music.

While some of the Central Asian performing arts, accepted in China via the Silk Road, were accepted by the Korean people, the pattern of acceptance resembled various small streams in the overall flow of the ancient history of Korean music. The independent-minded Korean people have amply displayed their potential in the wide gamut of world-wide culture, including that of music, throughout the Three Kingdoms and North-South Dynasties periods. In a general survey of ancient Korean music, the important role played by Korean musicians in influencing the development of ancient Japanese court music has to be cited as an effect of the independent-minded capacity of the Korean people to accept foreign culture. This can be substantiated by the *Komagaku* tradition in present-day Japanese court music known as *Gagaku*.

Notes

1. Kim Tong-uk, *Han'guk kayo ui yon'gu* (Seoul: Uryu munhwasa, 1961), p. 10.
2. Lee Hye-ku (Yi Hye-gu), *Han'guk umak yon'gu* (Seoul: Kungmin umak yon'guhoc, 1957), pp. 252-59; Song Bang-Song (Song Pang-Song), *Han'guk umak t'ongsae* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1984), pp. 126-30.
3. *Koryosa*, juan 71.1b1 (*Honsondo*), 4b8-6a9 (*Suyonjang*), 6a1-8b8 (*Oyangson*), 8b9-12a2 (*P'ogurak*), 12a3-13a8 (*Yonhwadae*); *Koryosa*, juan 71.31a3-31b6 (*Mugo*), 31b7-32a8 (*Tong-dong*), 32a9-33a1 (*Muae*), in which the court dance of Chinese origin (*Tangak chongjae*) and that of Korean origin (*Hyangak chongjae*) were listed as *tangak* and *sogak*.
4. Lee Du-hyun (Yi Tu-hyon), *Han'guk ui kamyon'guk* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1979), pp. 58-66.
5. *Suishu*, juan 81.2a10-2b1; *Beishi*, juan 94.8a5-6; *Kujiryuen*, juan 30.905; and juan 34.11a15-16 (*Komagi*), juan 30.909 (*Komagaki*); juan 30.908 (*Yokobueshi*, and *Yokobuesei*).
6. Lee Hye-ku, *Han'guk umak yon'gu*, pp. 200-9.
7. Ibid, pp. 195-96; Kishibe Shigeo, *Kodai shiruku rodo no ongaku* (Tokyo: Kotansha, 1982), p. 105.
8. Song Bang-Song, *Han'guk umak t'ongsae*.
9. See Note 7.
10. Song Bang-Song, *Hankuk kodeumaksa Yeongu* (Iljisa, Seoul, 1985), pp. 22-36.
11. Ibid, pp. 77-109; Song Bang-Song, *Koryo umaksa yon'gu* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1988), pp. 137-67.
12. Song Bang-Song, "Silla samjuk ui tangakcho yon'gu," *Han'guk hakpo*, vol. 56 (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1989): pp. 2-53.
13. Kishibe Shigeo, *Kodai shiruku rodo no ongaku*, pp. 164-202; Song Bang-Song (trans.), "Tangsogak isipp'alcho wa kuja soyok ch'ilcho," *Han'guk umak sahakpo*, vol. 2 (Kyongsan: Han'guk umak sahakhoe, 1989), pp. 125-53.
14. Song Bang-Song, "Han'guk kodai umak ui llbon chonp'a," *Han'guk umak sahakpo* vol. 1 (1988): pp. 7-40; or *Kusagawan nonch'ong*, vol. 1 (Kwach'on: Kuksa p'y-onch'an wiwonhoe, 1989): pp. 27-53.