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**Papers of the
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Volume 5

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edited by

Gina L. Barnes

and

Beth McKillop

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Editors' Preface

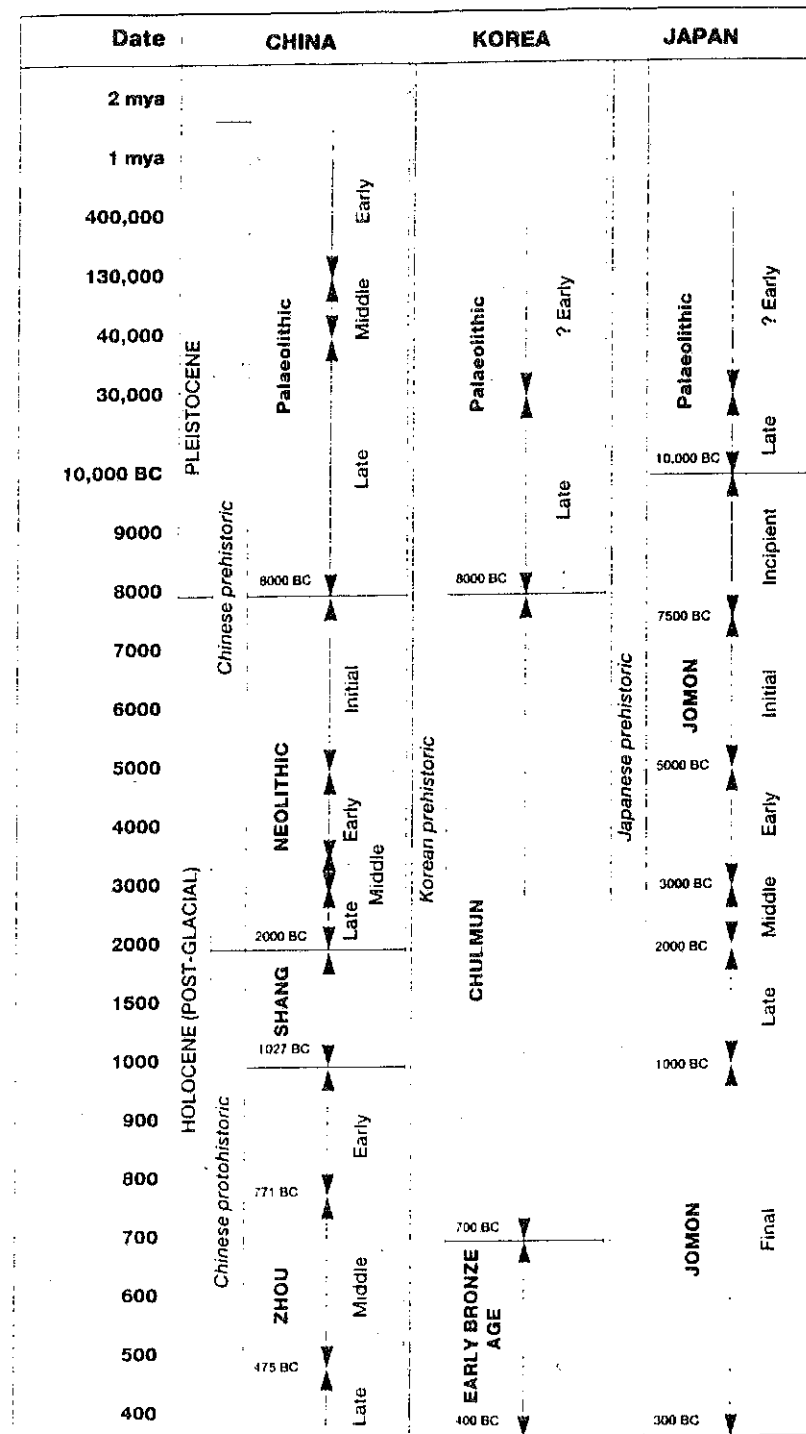
The first BAKS Workshop, on "Korean Material Culture", was held on February 13, 1993, at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Hosted by Beth McKillop, this event was also publicised as a V&A Study Day and opened to the general public. Five of the papers included in this volume (by Howard, Kikuchi, Wood, Bailey and Barnes) were presented at this Workshop; an additional presentation by Liz Wilkinson on "Birds, bats and butterflies: symbolism in the decorative arts of the Chosŏn period" is being published elsewhere. A further paper by CHOO Youn-sik was given at the BAKS Conference in 1991 in condensed form; it was decided to publish his entire work here in order to demonstrate modern thinking in archaeology in terms of how to interpret the material culture of people no longer living. Finally, the paper by LEE In-sook was accepted from outside BAKS to be included here in line with the series policy of providing a forum for all worthy scholarship on Korea, not just that generated by BAKS activities.

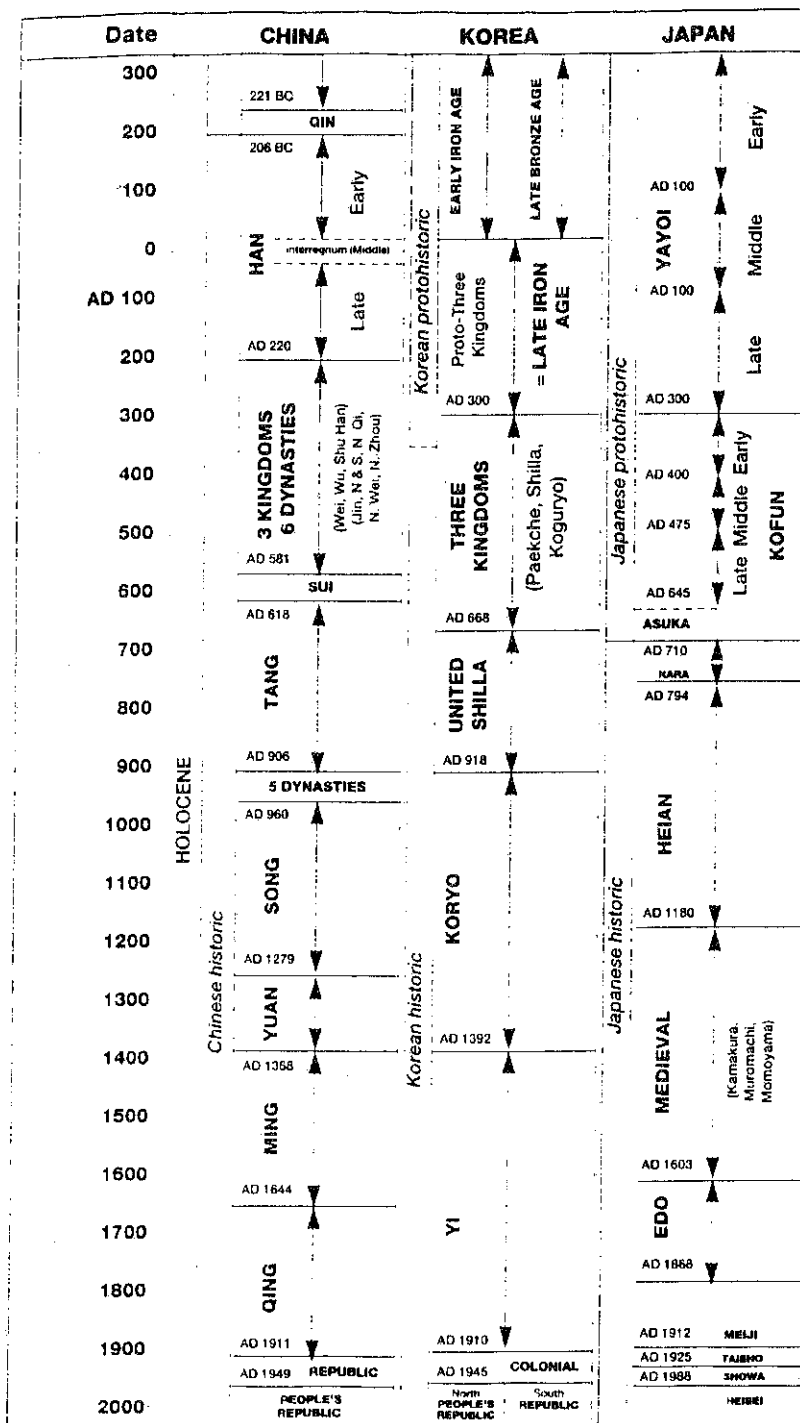
The papers here represent diverse approaches to Korean material culture: the art historical, the archaeological, the sociological, and the technological. Readers, therefore, may well find themselves faced with successively different principles of analysis or frameworks of thinking as derived from these different disciplines. All authors, however, use analogy in their arguments, even if just with their own experiences and knowledge, in order to make sense of what they are investigating. The paper by Choo, therefore, should perhaps have been presented first, since it demonstrates analogical thought processes by which we judge the material culture of different times and peoples. The process of interpretation is the foremost component in these articles; it is one task of the reader to evaluate whether the reasoning processes of these authors are successful or not.

Contrary to many studies of material culture throughout the ages, these papers are presented in reverse chronological order. Howard deals with modern Korea and his actual fieldwork experiences with instrument-makers. Kikuchi takes her topic from the early 20th century, at a time when Japanese-Korean relations were particularly difficult. Wood focusses on the medieval ceramic industries of China and Korea, beginning with a recapitulation of Chinese ceramic technology from protohistoric times. Lee's subject spans the first eight centuries AD or so, and her analysis touches on the complex trade relations of Korea's Proto-Three Kingdoms and Three Kingdoms societies with the outside world. Bailey focusses more closely on the latter period and the debt of Korean crown forms to Eurasian prototypes. Barnes takes her topic from the period of early state relations between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Islands *circa* the 4-5th centuries AD. Choo completes the cycle by examining materials of the 1st millennium BC in contrast with ethnographical data from modern Korea.

It is clear that the Korean Peninsula at no time stood in isolation from the peoples and developments surrounding it. The following charts are provided to aid in understanding these myriad and exciting social relationships that have shaped peninsular culture through the ages.

Gina Barnes
Beth McKillop
17 December 1994





The Korean *kayagŭm*: the making of a zither

Keith Howard

In February 1971, KIM Kwangju (1906-1984) was nominated by the *Munhwajae iwŏn* (Cultural Asset Committee) a *poyuja* (holder) of *Muhyŏng munhwajae* (Intangible Cultural Asset) No. 42. This was in recognition of his skill in making traditional string instruments such as the *kayagŭm*.¹ The *kayagŭm* is a 12-string half-tube zither which organologists, following the Hornbostel and Sachs system, might label as 312.22.5.² As part of a fading Korean heritage, the importance of instrument making had been recognized almost a decade earlier by the journalist, YE Yonghae. Ye described a second maker, the then 68-year-old KANG Sanggi (Ye 1963: 19):

...traditional Korean instruments incorporate the ancient philosophy of 'heaven and earth, male and female, four seasons, five lines'. Master artisans must be in the stage of nothingness, completely integrated into nature. It is said that the perfect instrument maker's search after the perfect sound is likened to a saint's search after perfect righteousness.³

¹ The incoming regime of PARK Chung Hee [PAK Chŏnghŭi] laid the foundations for a state preservation system back in 1962, and the first Intangible Cultural Assets were nominated in 1964. By the end of 1991, 98 Assets had been nominated in the fields of performance, plays, rituals, and crafts. At this time 5 had no living holders. There were 186 holders in total, each receiving a stipend equivalent to roughly half the average Korean full-time wage. *Munhwajae kwalliguk* 1992 gives the most recent published information; for general background, see Howard 1990 and forthcoming.

² This classification system dates from 1914. The standard English translation is by Baines and Wachsmann.

³ Paraphrased and corrected from the English translation; pages 207-11 in Ye's book contain the Korean article about Kang. Ye was a journalist at the *Han'guk ilbo* in 1963. During the previous four years he had published a column with the title *In'gan munhwajae*. He scoured the Korean countryside looking for craftsmen and performers who knew the dying traditions. Ye's concern over the lack of government support (1963: 9-11, 14, 17, 20 etc.) came as the government established the preservation system. And such was his influence that not only were many of those he discovered appointed as "holders" (*poyuja*), but his name for master craftsmen and performers, *In'gan munhwajae* (Human Cultural Asset), has moved into everyday speech.

Both Kim and Kang have now died. Kim trained KO Hünggon (b. 1951) who, in turn, was appointed a *pyuja hubo* (future holder) in 1990, some six years after Kim's death. By the time of writing—January 1994—Ko has not yet been appointed a holder. This conforms with the current Korean common perception that the full title, with its attendant national recognition, is not given to people under 50 years old.⁴

Kang's apprentice, Yi Yöngsu (b. 1929), was appointed a *pyuja* for the same craft in 1991 (Figure 1). Yi has carefully nurtured his reputation as a skilful craftsman, for more than a decade making the string instruments favoured by many musicians at the *Kungnip kugagwöŋ* (Korean Traditional Performing Arts Centre). In the early 1980s, he also rented out several rooms above his workshop as studios to *kömun'go* and *haegüm* teachers.⁵

Ko and Yi strive to build authentic instruments. They consider themselves inheritors of an unbroken tradition stretching back into a legendary past. According to Ko:

I build instruments just like in the past. I study the old ways of doing things and scour the country to find proper materials. Korean string instruments have a particular tone colour, a specific smell (*hyang*). Today, we can once more use really old production methods because we have found ancient instruments and old records detailing how the instruments were played. We know how instruments were made back in Silla times [traditional dates, 57 BC - AD 935]; we know how instruments were made in the Chosön dynasty [1392-1910]. Today, we also work with musicians who can trace their lineages back many generations, and they tell us if our instruments match their knowledge of ancient times.

Over the last 30 years, there have been many efforts to modernize traditional instruments (*chönt'ong akki*). But Koreans now want to preserve the old. Performers see little need to change anything. We have cleaned up and improved the sounds that instruments make; we have smartened the look of the instruments. But the right way forward is to preserve traditional forms to keep instruments just as they were in the past.

Both Yi and Ko sell instruments to performers. Ko claims a clientele which is 80% professional musicians, university students, and private devotees. The string instruments both make capture the Korean sound world, a world which—when compared with Western music—exhibits less focus on steady, clear pitches, and more timbral blurring. In 1990, both charged around 900,000 *wön* (£750) for a

⁴ Ko lives and works in what was KIM Kwangju's studio near Tongdaemun (Chongno-gu, Söngindong 57-43). The instruments he makes are *kayagüm*, *kömun'go* (6-string half-tube zither with frets; H/S 312.22.6), *haegüm* (2-string fiddle; H/S 321.313.71), and *ajaeng* (7- or 8-string bowed half-tube zither; H/S 312.22.7). I interviewed him in 1990 but have met him several times since 1984.

⁵ Yi has a house, with craft shop underneath and studios above, in Hannamdong (Yongsan-ku, Hannam 2-dong 789-7). I first met him in 1982, when I bought a *haegüm* and court *kayagüm* from him, and I returned to discuss instrument manufacturing processes with him in 1985 and 1987.



Figure 1 Yi Yöngsu, an Intangible Cultural Asset, making kayagüm bridges in his workshop.

medium quality *kayagŭm*. Ko builds copies of Silla-period instruments to order, complete with gold-leaf inlay, for 1,500,000 *wŏn* (£1,250) or more, and Yi charges similar prices for his prized court instruments. A few of Kim's instruments were still for sale in 1990, but they were priced at around £2,000. To Ko, this was a realistic price:

It's not a matter of expense for the sake of expense. Kim's *kayagŭm* were made at least a decade ago, with wood of such a high quality as you cannot find anymore. Kim has died, so few of his instruments remain; he cannot build any more. He stored wood for 10 years before using it, so now his instruments are basically 20 years old or more. They were built entirely by hand. They took much time. Even in the 1970s they cost a lot. Now, although what anybody buying an instrument pays for is the sound, in Kim's case you also pay more because we think it worthwhile to preserve his craftsmanship.

The construction of the *kayagŭm* seems to have changed little in 1,500 years, although recent developments have led to what Koreans both North and South describe as *kaeryang akki* ('improved' instruments).

The construction of traditional instruments

The *kayagŭm* resembles the Chinese *zheng*, the Mongolian *yatga*, the Japanese *koto*, and the Vietnamese *dan tranh*. Curiously, the *zheng* decreased in prominence in court ensembles from the Ming dynasty onwards (Liang 1984: 893), just as the *kayagŭm* was withdrawn from the Chosŏn ritual tradition. In contrast, the *koto* was almost exclusively a court instrument in *gagaku* ensembles until Kenjun (1547-1636) and YATSUHASHI Kengyō (1614-1685) adopted it to provide song accompaniments (Kaufmann 1976: 100; Kishibe 1982: 55-56). The *yatga*, although it had since the 14th century possessed 13 strings in contrast to the 12 of the *kayagŭm*, was revived in the 1920s on the basis of Korean instruments.⁶

In Korea, two distinct versions of the *kayagŭm* survive. The larger, associated with court and literati ensembles, is known as the *pŏpkŭm*, *p'ungnyu kayagŭm* or *chŏngak kayagŭm* (*pŏp* = law; *p'ungnyu* = 'elegant music'; *chŏngak* = 'upright' or 'correct' music). It has a body made from a single piece of paulownia wood (*odong namu*). A slightly convex front is fashioned by planing, with a soundbox hollowed out through a large rectangular opening at the back. Old wood is preferred, taken

⁶ Below I mention *se* and *zhu* zithers. The bamboo element, also present in the character for *zheng*, suggests common roots, and we can trace *zheng* back to Qin times (897-221 BC). A second element in the character, 'quarrel,' introduces a legend about how two brothers quarrelled over an instrument and split it in two, one with 12 strings and another with 13. The brothers were sisters according to Adriaansz (1973), and one emigrated to Korea with the 12-string instrument. A similar legend is present in Vietnam. In China, both 12- and 13-string *zheng* have been used. The *koto* typically has 13 strings, the *kayagŭm* 12. An epic story in Mongolia tells how Queen Agai Shabdai played, with understandable difficulty, an instrument with 8,000 strings. Connections do appear to suggest intercultural exchange. See van Gulik 1951: 13; Crossley-Holland 1959: 238; TRAN Van Khe 1967: 85-6; Adriaansz 1973; Liang 1984: 893; Nixon 1984: 884; Howard 1988: 169-70.

from high, rocky areas such as Sŏrak, Chiri and Songni mountains. Similar wood can be found in cold mountainous areas in Japan, but Korean makers prefer Korean wood, stating that this alone produces the right sound. Little suitable wood, however, remains in a countryside ravaged by war and the many decades during which poverty forced many to scavenge for firewood. Wood from the core of a trunk is considered best, cut vertically or at a slight angle through the centre. The softness of such wood is said to generate a round, slightly damped sound in a finished instrument. Craftsmen will sort through several dozen pieces of wood before choosing one they consider suitable for an instrument.

Wound silk strings, bought in country markets in spring and autumn, are still used. These are held by pegs (*tolgwae*) above a fixed hardwood bridge (*hyŏnch'im*) near the top of the instrument; they then pass over movable bridges, typically made from jujube or cherry wood, that define the sounding length. Bridges are known by their shape as *anjok* or 'wild geese feet' (*kirogi pal*) and come in sets, kept together by a thread decorated with a *maedŭp* tassel (*su*). Performers change both bridges and strings every two or three years. The strings are tied in coils at the lower end of the soundboard. The coils are held behind loops at the top end of blue, brown or red cords (*pudŭl*). The cords, in turn, are secured by passing round and through a sandalwood extension to the body described as 'ram's horns' (*yangidu*). There is no knot to hold tension in the strings. Rather, the cords are doubled back on themselves and, for reasons of aesthetics, bundled together in a decorative figure '8'.

The second instrument, now called the *sanjo kayagŭm* after a popular folk genre of the same name, has a similar but smaller body with sides and back of a harder wood such as chestnut. Makers buy hardwood direct from merchants. Since the construction alleviates any need for hollowing out a soundbox, the backpiece typically has three soundholes—a new moon (*ch'osaeng tal*) above the Sino-Korean character for happiness (*hŭi*) given as a decorated oblong hole, and the full moon (*porŭm tal*). Some older instruments have inscriptions. Ivory or plastic strips cover joints, and an elaborate inlay of wood or bone fills the area above the strings. Only an echo of ram's horns remains, again carved from a separate piece of hardwood.

The *sanjo kayagŭm* is assumed to have developed in the 19th century to facilitate the rapid flurries required by folk musicians (LEE Hye-Ku 1976: 19; Rockwell 1974: 35). We know that the repertory of *sanjo* (lit. 'scattered melodies') was first introduced by KIM Ch'angjo (1865-1918)⁷ in the 1880s. The smaller *kayagŭm* may, however, have existed earlier, not least since it is more portable than the large instrument and would consequently have been useful for travelling musicians. Also, models for its construction (with separate sides and back) had existed for centuries in *kŏmun'go* and *ajaeng* zithers in Korea and in the similar zithers of neighbouring states.

⁷ Other dates are also given for Kim in texts. Many Koreans are taught that Kim invented the genre of *sanjo*, but it is surely more appropriate to consider that he merely introduced a solo piece outside shaman ritual or entertainment ensembles. See Howard 1990.

The historical record

Three pottery artefacts provide early information about the *kayagŭm* and its predecessors (Figure 2). The first, a tall jar known as the *changgyŏngho*, was excavated in 1974 at Kyŏngju, the old capital of the southeastern Silla kingdom. This has been dated by Koreans to the reign of Mich'u (262-84) (e.g. Kwŏn 1985: 92), but Pratt (1987: 237-8) believes a later date more appropriate. The jar has a neck which incorporates human figures and animals; a pregnant woman plays the zither. A second jar also shows a woman playing, now alongside a dancing man in a state of obvious sexual arousal. Koreans make the inference from these two artefacts that the vessels and/or the zither were used in some sort of fertility rite. With the benefit of contemporary morality, the argument is taken one stage further: the instrument, it is said, was more likely used by commoners than in court rituals. This, however, is not supported by our knowledge of musical praxis, nor would it match the history of the *koto* in Japan. The third artefact is a headless clay figure illustrated in a book by the musicologist Yi Hyegu (1957: 367). All three have two characteristics common to today's *kayagŭm*: they lack frets and have distinct 'ram's horns.' Two have six strings, compared with the contemporary twelve, but the crude execution surely warns us not to take the depictions as particularly faithful reproductions.

The ram's horns and lack of frets suggest an instrument distinct from potential Chinese archetypes such as the *qin*, and similar—but not identical—to the *zheng*. Indeed, Koreans cite the Chinese Chen Suo's 3rd century *Sanguozhi* as proof that they used a "*se* (Kor: *sŭl*) that was not a *zhu*⁸ (Kor: *ch'uk*)" (e.g. Kwŏn 1985: 92). Further, the instrument is quite distinct from the *kŏmun'go* half-tube zither and the now-defunct *ohyŏn*, a 5 string vertical lute. Both of these have frets. They are depicted in northern Koguryŏ tomb paintings from the 4th century onwards (e.g. Anak Tomb #3, Tomb of the Dancers at Tongguo, and Changchuan Tomb #1).⁹

The written record offers less clarity than we might wish. The *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms), compiled by KIM Pushik in the 12th century, records that in Silla during Naehae's reign (196-230) the musician Mulgyeja played and composed music for a *kŭm* zither, while two centuries later Paekkyŏl, a teacher during King Chabi's reign (458-79) used a *kŭm* to imitate the sound of milling (Kwŏn 48; Yi 1986: 701-2). Koreans, largely on the basis of the comment that "*kŭm* in Korean means *ko*" in the 1527 *Hunmong chahoe*, a textbook for Chinese character learning, suggest *kŭm* denotes an indigenous instrument. *Kŭm* appears to be a loan word appropriated to write the purely Korean *ko* before the introduction

⁸ Koreans describe the *zhu/ch'uk* as a 13-string zither similar in construction to the *qin* (Kor: *kŭm*) (e.g., Chang 1984: 745).

⁹ See Song 1991 for illustrations of these tomb paintings. Song applies considerable detective skills in an attempt to trace the development of Koguryŏ instruments. Song 1986 offers the most complete historical picture for the *kŏmun'go* that has been published in English to date.

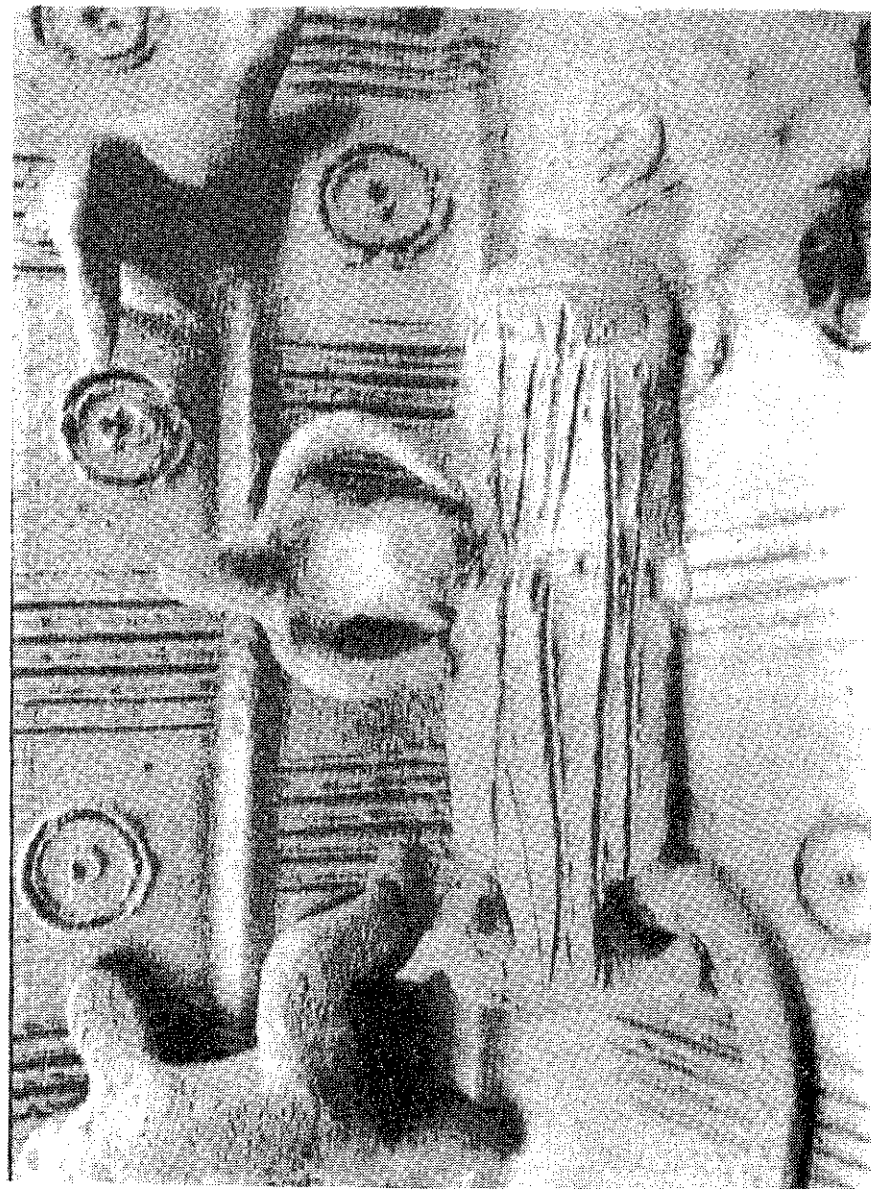


Figure 2 Detail from a stoneware jar, 5-6th century, showing an early *kayagŭm*.

of a Korean alphabet. The scholar CHANG Sahun thus refers to the “*kogŭm*” (1984: 95, 1969: 77). We should not overlook the fact that the Chinese character appropriated denotes the Chinese 7-string zither *qin*. Nonetheless, logic seems to suggest Chang is correct, not least since the *ko-* in the Japanese *koto* may be related. Four Silla zithers, known as *Shiragi koto*, survive at the 8th-century Shōsōin repository in Nara. These again have no frets, but they do have distinct ram’s horns cut from a separate piece of wood. All four have 12 strings, the pattern retained in contemporary instruments. Although the *Akhak kwebōm* (Guide to the Study of Music) of 1493 states that the body, right to the horns, should be made from a single piece of wood (YI Hyegu 1979, 2: 136-41), contemporary instruments match the Shōsōin examples and tend to have separate horns made from red sandalwood.

There is a legend about the invention of the *kayagŭm* known to virtually all Koreans today. This is recorded in *kwŏn* 32 of the *Samguk sagi*. It offers a rational explanation for the name, as a zither (*kŭm/-gŭm*) from the Kaya federation,¹⁰ but leaves several questions unanswered. Here I cite the legend as it is translated into Korean by YI Pyŏngdo (1986: 503-5); the original is repeated in a number of musicological essays (e.g. Kwŏn 1985: 93, fn. 114). The legend tells how King Kashil, ruler of Kaya, heard a Chinese *zheng* and commented that since countries do not share languages they should not have the same music. U Rŭk, a musician from Sŏngyŏl prefecture, was ordered to compose music for a new instrument. He did so, according to KIM Tonguk’s *Kaya munhwa* (1966, cited in Kwŏn 1985: 93), giving names based on places in Kaya to many of his 12 pieces: *Hagarado*, *Sanggarado*, *Pogi*, *Talgi*, *Samul*, *Mulhye*, *Hagimul*, *Sajagi*, *Kŏyŏl*, *Sap’alhye*, *Isa*, *Sanggimul*. The music does not survive, but the titles suggest the appropriation of local folk songs. In 551 U Rŭk fled with his student YI Mun (the composer of three pieces named after rats, crows, and quails) to Silla, where King Chinhŭng (r. 540-76) allowed him to settle in Kugwŏn (now Ch’ungju in North Ch’ungch’ŏng province). A year later Pŏpchi, Kyego and Mandŏk were sent to learn his music. They considered it unrefined, so they reconstructed the twelve melodies as five new works for the Silla court. This was probably designed to distance the music from its roots, for we hear how “treacherous” officials argued against Chinhŭng that music from an overrun federation should not be preserved. U Rŭk’s anger at the revisions turned to tears of joy when he heard the new pieces performed.

There are three problems with this legend. First, the story of the *kayagŭm* being a court instrument seems, perhaps superficially, to conflict with the ‘rustic’ way the instrument is depicted on two of the pottery artefacts. Second, complex instruments are typically given high value in pre-industrial societies. It seems unlikely that U Rŭk would have found an easy way to flee to a rival kingdom with what we must

¹⁰ LEE Ki-baik talks about two federations, Pon Kaya and Tae Kaya; Pon Kaya fell to Shilla in 532 and Tae Kaya in 562 (Lee 1984: 41). Many Japanese sources have claimed Kaya was merely a Japanese colony, but excavated artefacts suggest it had far more in common with its neighbouring Korean states, Paekche and Shilla.

assume was a prized *kayagŭm*. Third, Kashil is not mentioned in any other historical document.¹¹

The five revised pieces became part of the *Samhyŏn samjuk* ensemble of three strings (*kayagŭm*, *kŏmun’go*, *pip’a* [lute]) and three bamboo flutes (*taegŭm* [big], *chunggŭm* [medium], and *sogŭm* [small]) in Silla. They survived until King Sŏngjong’s reign (r. 1469-94) (Chang 1969: 79-80). The fortunes of the *kayagŭm* then became inexorably bound to the state adoption of Confucianism. Court music was codified, separating Chinese imports—as esteemed repertoires—from indigenous music. The *kayagŭm* was associated with the local, possibly because its name indicated a Korean origin. Thus, in the *Akhak kwebōm*, it is discussed after other zithers, implying a lower ranking. From then onwards it occupied a position of constantly shifting importance. It was dropped from state rituals in 1593 and thereafter moved in and out of ensembles. While many score books remain for the literati-favoured *kŏmun’go*, few survive for the *kayagŭm*. Indeed, the earliest *kayagŭm* score, the 1786 *Choljang mannok*, has yet to be fully deciphered.¹² Rockwell (1974) states that new names were adopted in attempts to raise its status, first as ‘elegant zither’ (*p’ungnyu kayagŭm*) then as ‘zither of the law’ (*pŏpkŭm*).

A hint of ambivalence remains in the position of the instrument today. Musicians still consider the *kŏmun’go* a man’s instrument but the *kayagŭm* more suitable for women. A genre painting by SHIN Yunbok (1758-?; pen-name Hyewŏn) survives as one of very few depictions of the *kayagŭm*. This work, “Picnic by the lotus pond,” is one of a set of illustrations which challenged the norms of aristocratic lifestyles in the 18th century (Figure 3). In it, a *kisaeng* (entertainment girl) stimulates her clients by playing the instrument.

Developments in *kayagŭm* today

In South Korea, *kugak* (traditional music) has since the 1960s undergone a revival. Initially government-led, this now reflects the increasing nationalism of urban Koreans. There are now four professional *kugak* orchestras in Seoul and one in each province.¹³ A dozen universities teach *kugak*, and the most popular instrument by far is the *kayagŭm*. Regular courses take place at the Korean Traditional Performing

¹¹ A “Kasul” is mentioned in one Japanese source, who could be the same ruler (Kwŏn 1985: 90).

¹² This score is also known as the *Chorong kayagŭmbo*. The compilation date is given as the 20th year of King Chŏngjo’s reign, that is, 1786. CHANG Sahun has published the most detailed account of the score that I know of, but this is still very incomplete (Chang 1983: 295-300). Chang also provided an introduction to a facsimile of the score published in *Han’guk ūmakhak ch’ongsŏ charyo* 16: 20-3, 151-61 (Kungnip kugagwŏn 1984).

¹³ The Seoul orchestras are the Kungnip kugagwŏn (Korean Traditional Performing Arts Centre), KBS, Seoul City, and Chungang. Provincial orchestras started in the mid-1980s as part of central government’s decentralization plan. Cities such as Pusan and Kwangju had for many years before this sponsored their own orchestras, hiring musicians from Seoul to play alongside more local members.



Figure 3 A painting by SHIN Yunbok (1758-?), "Picnic by the Lotus Pond," showing a female entertainer playing the kayagŭm.



Figure 4 Girls learning the 'improved' kayagŭm at the Man'gyŏngdae Children's Palace, P'yŏngyang, DPRK.

Arts Centre and the *Chönsu hoegwan*, while occasional classes are held in private institutes such as *Hansori hoe* and *Hüngsadan*.¹⁴ Consequent to this activity, there is an adequate market for instrument makers.

New diversity has led to changes in training methods. There has been a move away from oral mastery of a limited repertory towards a reliance on scores to enable the student to learn many pieces. Techniques formerly associated solely with court or folk music have merged as musicians are required to learn both traditions. Vibrato, pitch shading, and ornamentation techniques once differed substantially between the two traditions (see Howard 1988: 180-4; Chang 1982). Thus, conservative performers such as KIM Chöngja, a member of the classical *Chöngnong akhoe* ensemble,¹⁵ lament the quality of today's court music (pers. comm., 1991). Others, such as the composer and internationally-known performer HWANG Pyönggi, suggest that few musicians can today play *sanjo* with the depth of emotion—and the control of vibrato—of old performers (pers. comm., 1990).¹⁶

Kaeryang ("improved") *kayagüm* have emerged because of this interface between court and folk (Figure 4). They further accommodate the requirements of a generation of new composers. HWANG Pyöngju, a musician, recently designed and commissioned the production of a 17-string version. In 1991, this new instrument became standard issue at the *KBS Kwanhyön kugaktan*, the Seoul orchestra which gives the greatest number of concerts and has the most varied repertory.¹⁷ Hwang's design increases the 2.5-octave range of traditional instruments to just over 3 octaves (Figure 5). This allows simultaneous coverage of the low court scale (E flat—a flat'), the typical *sanjo* range (ca. A flat—e flat'), and the higher range ideally needed for *kayagüm pyöngch'ang* (B flat—f')¹⁸. But Hwang has made compromises in terms of structure to amalgamate court and *sanjo* instruments. Although separate, the backpiece of his design is paulownia like the court *kayagüm*, not chestnut. The new instrument is longer than old *sanjo kayagüm* but shorter than court *kayagüm*

¹⁴ 1711 students were enrolled in 12 university Korean traditional music programmes in 1987 (*Han'guk t'onggye yön'gam* 1987). The Korean Traditional Performing Arts Centre (until 1988 glossed in English as the National Classical Music Institute) recently began publishing yearbooks under the title *Kugak yön'gam*. The 1990 volume lists 165 courses for instruments, and its listing of concerts, recordings and lectures runs to 248 pages.

¹⁵ This group issued a four-album set of the chamber suite *Yöngsan hoesang* back in 1981 which remains the standard performance (Söngüm [SEM] SEL-100 122). Kim is a professor of *kayagüm* at Seoul National University.

¹⁶ This is a criticism often levelled at teacher-performers in universities by older musicians who learnt *sanjo* by rote from performers who gave their names to *sanjo* schools. Hwang is a professor of *kayagüm* at Ewha Women's University.

¹⁷ Founded in May 1985, the KBS orchestra now gives around 100 concerts a year divided into TV and radio performances, regular, special, school and touring concerts. From 1985 until 1992 the main conductor was the composer Yi Sanggyu, whose influence has meant that a roughly 50/50 split has been maintained between performances of traditional music and recent compositions.

¹⁸ A genre of singing, in which a singer—typically female—accompanies herself on the *kayagüm*. See Howard and Yang 1990: 75-80.

(150 cm as opposed to 145 cm and 166 cm respectively, as measured by Hwang) (Hwang 1990). The string cords of old versions are replaced by anchoring pegs that better facilitate rapid tuning and the replacement of broken strings. Wound silk has given way to nylon strings which range in thickness from 2.15 mm on string 1 to 0.8 mm on string 17. Nylon is more resilient than silk, but it restricts the potential for vibrato on any given string because it is more resistant to stretching. Further, it significantly changes the sound envelope of notes, for silk struck by a finger exhibits a gradual attack curve in which substantial noise elements feature.

Hwang's design echoes a North Korean development begun by an instrument committee set up in P'yöngyang in the 1960s. The Northern regime was concerned to update traditional instruments in a way which would both make them more popular and allow them to compete more effectively with Western orchestras.¹⁹ The development process, however, took into consideration *zheng* developments in China. A 21-string instrument was the result, with metal tuning pegs and nylon strings. It is played seated on a chair, hence requiring legs to raise the instrument. These are stored inside the instrument at the back, and a box contains the tuning pegs at the bottom front. The soundboard is comparable in length to *sanjo* instruments but is wider. One example, stored at the museum attached to the Isang YUN Music Study Institute (*Yun Isang Ümak Yön'guso*) in P'yöngyang, measures 132.5 cm long, including peg box at the base and the decorated face known as the *chwadán* above the fixed upper bridge. The soundboard is 113.5 cm long, with a maximum width of 33.5 cm. The peg box is 28.8 cm wide and 11.5 cm long. Curiously, the stylized *hüi* 'happiness' character remains as a hole carved into the backpiece.

The new instrument keeps the old range but fills in missing diatonic pitches, allowing for the introduction of harmonic and heterophonic structures unknown in the tradition. New compositions such as *Pom* (Spring) and *Pada üi sori* (Song of the Sea) include chordal structures based on Western triads; they are played in both solo and ensemble versions (Figure 6). Melodies focus on fixed, steady pitches which, as noted above, are more a feature of the Western than of the Korean tradition. Such melodies need less vibrato, and few techniques are concerned with changing pitch during the duration of a tone. Yet vibrato (*nonghyöñ*) has been retained. So has an ornament traditionally known as *ttüldong*, in which the right index finger first plucks then flicks a given string. However, there is also little use of the traditional glides between tones. And *chönsöng* and *ch'usöng*, two celebrated traditional

¹⁹ State dogma emphasizes *juche* [*chuch'e*], the spirit of self-reliance. This insists that art must be Korean yet should compete with—and be superior to—anything foreign. The retention of a necessary indigenous colour is thus tied to a modernization of instrument construction and timbres that draws on developments in instruments elsewhere. At the same time, the concept of the people (*minjok*) as controllers of the state has given rise to a concept of the popular that devalues instruments and instrumental soundworlds tied to the literati or aristocracy of the past. For a discussion, see Howard 1993.

Chŏngak kayagŭm

1. P'yŏngjo mode
2. Kyemyŏnjo mode
3. Ujo mode

Sanjo kayagŭm

typical tuning

Kaeryang kayagŭm

HWANG Pyŏngju

YI Sŏngch'ŏn
(for "Pada")
(actual pitch)

YI Sŏngch'ŏn
(for "Haebaragi")

standard
North Korean
tuning

(actual sound; original written one tone higher)

Figure 5 Various tunings for the kayagŭm.

ornaments in court music which used left-hand fingers below the movable bridges to alter pitches after the initial strike, no longer have any noticeable place. The reduction in pre- and post-tone ornaments, combined with the actual string material (nylon), facilitates greater fluidity in melodic lines. Thus, the overall effect, caused by a combination of instrument construction and playing techniques, is to replace the serenity of a Confucian world with diatonic-oriented virtuosity.

Despite North Korea's Stalinist political philosophy, one version of *sanjo* survives, played on the *kaeryang* instrument. CHÖNG Namhüi, whose *sanjo ryu* (school) tends to be known in South Korea as that of KIM Yundök, settled in P'yöngyang during the Korean war.²⁰ A measure of the change that has occurred is given by relative durations: whereas *sanjo* pieces can last up to an hour in performance in South Korea, Chöng's surviving student KIM Killan states that his piece lasts only about 10 minutes (pers. comm., 1992).²¹

Back in South Korea, in 1982 the instrument-maker, YI Yöngsu, was commissioned to make a larger *kayagüm* based on the court version. His brief was to provide an instrument which could produce louder sounds than either extant court or *sanjo* versions. This instrument was to be used to accompany opera at the massive National Theatre (*Kungnip kükch'ang*). Yi took his standard instrument and simply increased the size. More significantly, in 1984 the scholar and composer YI Söngch'ön commissioned KO Hünggön to develop two new instruments. One, to serve the needs of the Association for Traditional Music Education (*Kugak Kyoyuk Hakhoe*), was to be a scaled-down version of the *sanjo kayagüm* designed for small children, just as violins are made for children in fractional sizes. Korean craftsmen have for over 30 years built miniature instruments, designed primarily as decorations, but this was to be a real instrument.

The second commission was particularly significant. This was for a 21-string instrument, designed in spring 1984 and first shown to the public in February 1985. It evolved from the experiments of Yi and others but was developed specifically to increase *kayagüm* range. It was, then, distinct from North Korean and Chinese developments, where the overall range has hardly altered. In this new design, three strings were to be tuned lower than those of the 12-string instrument, and six higher, giving a four-octave range. The composer CHÖNG Hoegap had once commented that the traditional *kayagüm* range (of two octaves and a fifth) was too narrow to provide a suitable Korean counterpart to Western instruments such as the piano. YI Söngch'ön would have felt this acutely, since he began as a student of Western

²⁰ Kim (1916-1978) learnt from Chöng in 1947-8. Kim's student, YI Yönghüi, who worked with him from 1959 until his death, was in 1991 appointed *poyuja* for the *sanjo* Intangible Cultural Asset in the South.

²¹ I have not heard a recording of the piece. HWANG Pyönggi was given a tape by KIM Killan in 1990, but to my knowledge this has never been made public in Seoul. I visited P'yöngyang in 1991 and was told there was a tape recording of Chöng's performance but that it was locked away in a cupboard for which my hosts had lost their key.



Figure 6 A performance of *kayagüm pyöngch'ang* on *sanjo kayagüm* in Seoul, ROK.

composition under Chŏng, and his best-known work for *kayagŭm*, *Norit'ŏ* ("The Playground"; 1966), was first written as a piano suite in 1965. The adaptation of *Norit'ŏ* for *kayagŭm* required considerable down-scaling and was criticised for requiring playing techniques outside the traditional repertory. To YI Sŏngch'ŏn, the problem of range was exacerbated in traditional orchestras. There, composers were forced to rely on *kŏmun'go* and *ajaeng*, instruments with distinct and different sounds, to provide lower pitches beyond the *kayagŭm* range. This contrasted with the string section of Western orchestras, where four similar instruments blend well. The representative composition for Yi's new instrument is what he published as his 33rd acknowledged piece, *Pada* ("The Sea"). *Pada* was premiered on KBS FM radio in 1986.²² To Ko:

21-string zithers are now typical of East Asia. The Korean version is not just an invention, because similar things are present elsewhere, but it was needed to allow the *kayagŭm* to cover a wider range. It can now produce as many sounds as Western instruments. It can reach lots of high pitches and all the low pitches. And it is larger, so it can create a louder sound. In other Asian countries, silk strings have been replaced, but this takes away the characteristic tone colour. The Korean colour has to be there, focussed in the centre of a tone.

There remain drawbacks. Because the construction methods developed for old instruments are retained, high and low pitches on the 21-string instrument lack resonance and depth. This has led Yi to experiment with different tunings: two different tuning systems are used in his 1987 composition collection (cf. Figure 4). Again, silk strings tightened in order to produce high pitches are liable to break. Furthermore, performers find it difficult to match melodies in higher registers with the volume produced by strings in the mid-range, or to sustain bass notes sufficiently to underpin a multi-part texture. Nonetheless, the musical press was enthusiastic, with one critic saying that the unveiling of the new instrument was "the greatest musical event since U Rŭk."

This is not where the story ends. HWANG Pyŏngju's account of the development of his *kaeryang kayagŭm* pointedly ignores YI Sŏngch'ŏn's instrument, moving from a consideration of old court and *sanjo* versions, through modern Chinese and Japan instruments, straight to his own development (1990: 33-53). Rather than describe Yi's tuning systems, Hwang details a 21-string Chinese *zheng* tuned to a regular pentatonic (do, re, mi, sol, la) scale (Hwang 1990: 41).

The two instruments commissioned by Yi, however, have been influential. In 1989 a trio was formed by three *kayagŭm* performers, PAK Hyŏnsuk, KIM Haesuk and KIM Illyun. The trio took the small *kayagŭm* as the equivalent of a soprano instrument, the old *sanjo kayagŭm* as an alto, and the large 21-string *kayagŭm* as a

²² Yi published three pieces for the 21-string instrument in a 1987 collection of compositions: Solo Compositions 32 and 33—*Pada* (The Sea) and *Maipoegi* (Taste)—and Ensemble Composition 12, *Haebalagi* (Sunflower). The first two, along with a fourth composition, *Sanjo 2-chungju* (Sanjo Duet) are recorded on SEL-RO 187 (Seoul, Sung Eum, 1991).



Figure 7 The cover of an album released by PAK Hyŏnsuk, KIM Haesuk and KIM Illyun—the Saeul Kayagŭm Trio—in 1992.

bass. The bass instrument was soon redeveloped back to a large 12-string instrument. All three members teach at Chungang University, where they have been supported by a group of composers—PAEK Taeung (b. 1943), PAK Pŏmhun (b. 1948), YI Pyŏnguk (b. 1951) and KIM Hŭijo (b. 1920). These composers claim to reject the academic approach of those working at Seoul National and Hanyang universities in favour of a more populist style, hence they initially arranged Western music and Korean folk songs for the trio. Soon new pieces emerged, written primarily by this group of composers but also by the Seoul National-based modernist PAK Pyŏngdong (b. 1936). August 1992 saw the release of the trio's

first disc (Seoul, SKC, SKCD-K-0436),²³ a combination of arrangements, compositions, and Pachelbel's *Canon* (Figure 7). Even in Pachelbel, the old ornaments and melodic style remain: this is Korean music firmly rooted in the tradition.

Acknowledgments

Credits for Figures 1, 4, 5 to author; Figure 2, National Museum of Korea, Seoul; Figure 3, painting by SHIN Yun-bok, Kansong Art Museum; Figure 6, Korea National Tourism Corporation; Figure 7, Seung Eum Record Company.

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²³ The tracks include five Korean folksong arrangements—the local *Sangju moshimgi norae* arranged by PAEK Taeung, and the more modern, popular *Kyōngbokkung t'aryōng*, *Shin'gosan t'aryōng*, *Toraji t'aryōng* and *Panga t'aryōng* arranged by KIM Hūijo. Paek also contributes two arrangements of European classics, the quasi-popular *Java* and Pachelbel's *Canon*. Three new compositions complete the disc: Paek's *Samul Nori*, Chōn Sunhūi's *Sequence*, and Yi Pyōngguk's *Dialogue*. PAEK Taeung has also, incidentally, experimented with Hwang's 17-string instrument, and recently published his own *Sanjo* (Paek 1992).

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