

Turning Songs into Poems and Poems into Songs: Intersections of Literary Sinitic and Vernacular Korean in Chosŏn Literature

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Abstract: This article investigates the dynamic intersections of Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean and their impact on the innovations in poetry and song in fifteenth- through nineteenth-century Chosŏn Korea. More specifically, it traces the evolution of poetry or song discourse and explores the different strategies employed by Chosŏn poets and songwriters to render oral songs into text. It also investigates the differing views on the function of poetry and song, musical and textual preservation, and emotional and lyrical immediacy, which influenced the composition and translation of song-poems. The article probes the creative collaboration and competition between Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean, and the fluid relations between translation and vernacularization. On the whole, it explores the ways in which the evolution of poetry-song discourse and the ensuing literary innovations contributed to Chosŏn's complex linguistic ecology.

Keywords: poetry-song relations, Literary Sinitic, vernacular Korean, poetry, song-poems, translation, vernacularization

Introduction: The Problems of Poetry and Song in Premodern Korean Literature

In Korea, as in other ancient civilizations, native songs were composed, performed, and transmitted orally from generation to generation prior to being written down. Before the invention of the Korean alphabet in the mid-fifteenth century, Koreans adopted the use of Sinitic as their writing system. To the ancient Koreans educated in Sinitic, the Chinese script was not perceived as a “foreign language” but rather as a “cosmopolitan script” (Kornicki 2018: 41, 54). Literary Sinitic was used in both official and personal writings. Poetic competence, in particular, came to be seen as a mark of personal and cultural cultivation, and gifted writers vied for fame in the literary arena. However, the poems composed in Literary Sinitic could not be performed in the native tongue without translating the original text into the vernacular or adding vernacular grammatical elements to render the text recitable. Moreover, when it came to recording colloquial songs of the people in words, the use of Sinitic posed difficult conundrums because of its inability to preserve the sound of the songs.

Prior to the fifteenth century, the most common method of recording the songs was by translating their meanings into Literary Sinitic. Examples of these

translated poems are found in the writings from the Three Kingdoms period (57 BCE–668 CE) (McCann 2000: 14). Perhaps unsatisfied with the results of translated songs, the scholars of Silla devised *hyangch'al* 鄉札, a writing system that used sinographs to represent the “meanings, sounds, and grammatical inflections” of spoken Korean (McCann 2000: 15), to record their song-poems known as *hyangga* 鄉歌 (native songs). *Hyangch'al*’s use, however, was limited and only a small number of works (twenty-five in total) have survived. During the succeeding Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), vernacular poems and songs were transmitted only orally until they were transcribed in the Korean alphabet three centuries later (Lee 2003: 99).

A landmark achievement, the invention of the Korean alphabet in 1443 opened the floodgates for changes in the literary scene of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910). The new script facilitated the documentation of vernacular songs and poems, which led to dynamic interactions between and discussions of vernacular and Sinitic literature. This article investigates the intersections of Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean and their impact on the innovations in poetry and song in fifteenth- through nineteenth-century Chosŏn. More specifically, it will trace the evolution of poetry or song discourse and explore a number of different strategies employed by Chosŏn poets and songwriters to render oral songs into poems and poems into songs.

The Korean Alphabet and Vernacular Literature in Fifteenth-Century Chosŏn

The Korean alphabet was invented during the Chosŏn dynasty under the sponsorship and direction of King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418–50) with a clear goal of creating a vernacular script to aid the masses. In the preface to the *Hunminjeongeum* 訓民正音 (The Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People), the document that introduces the script for the first time, the king clearly lays out his vision that the new vernacular script would offer a means of written communication for daily use for the less educated members of society. He calls attention to the differences in speech between Korea and China and the challenges of acquiring literacy in Sinitic. As Kim-Renaud (2000: 14) points out, Sejong’s new script promoted “a universal creative literacy” and aimed at facilitating individual expressions of ideas.

The new alphabet, however, was not welcomed by all Chosŏn literati (Lee 1993: 519–20) as it lacked the prestige of Literary Sinitic. The new script was at first put into use in a series of translation projects. Sejong sponsored the translation of instructional language texts, Confucian classics, and other didactic texts for women, youths, and children with the goal of promulgating the values of an ideal Confucian society (Chŏng 2018; Pak 2019). Later, Buddhist texts, as well as medical, agricultural, and military texts, were translated into vernacular Korean (Yu 2004: 82–85; Kim 2014). As for literary works, in 1443, the year of the Korean alphabet’s official announcement, the king ordered the translation of the works by the Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712–70). The project took thirty-eight years to complete and culminated in the publication of the *Tusi ŏnhae* 杜詩諺解 (Vernacular Explications of Du Fu’s Poems), which included annotated translation of Du’s 1,647 poems in their entirety (Traulsen 2016; Sin 2019).

In order to promote the use of the new script and to elevate the royal lineage,

Sejong produced two original literary works, the *Yongbi ŏch'ŏn ka* 龍飛御天歌 (Songs of Flying Dragons), published in 1445, and the *Wŏrin ch'ŏn'gang chi kok* 月印千江之曲 (Songs of the Moon's Reflection on Thousand Rivers), published in 1449. The first is a long epic eulogy of the royal ancestors of six generations in 125 cantos, composed by select scholar-officials. Later, music was composed for five chapters, and the songs were performed during court ceremonies (Pak et al. 2011). The second is a compilation of over five hundred Buddhist songs attributed to Sejong, composed in memory of his deceased queen (Sa and Sa 2012). The fact that these two earliest Korean language publications of original literary works featured songs reveals the usefulness of the new script in rendering and transmitting the sound of native songs.

The state also initiated the collection and recording of vernacular songs from the Koryŏ dynasty. Known as Koryŏ songs (*sogyo* 俗謠), they comprised lyrics of folk songs, Buddhist songs, and shaman chants, and most of them sing of the joys and pains of love (O'Rourke 2006: 22; Lee 2002: 10). During the process of compilation and transcription, however, these songs were censored and edited to reflect the Confucian moral norms of the Chosŏn state. The sentiments conveyed in many of these once popular songs were characterized as vulgar and obscene by the state compilers of late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Chosŏn. As a result, they were excluded from official anthologies, and only a limited number of anonymous songs survived in collections of unknown origins (Lee 2003: 100). Overall, the early Chosŏn vernacular publication, translation, and compilation projects were supported by the state and involved multiple translators, authors, and compilers (Kim Mubong 2012; Kim P'unggi 2012). Their main goal was to produce literature in vernacular Korean for people who were illiterate in Literary Sinitic or were still in the process of learning it.

Two different approaches were employed by the Chosŏn state that would impact the subsequent development of the relationship between poetry and song in the Chosŏn dynasty: namely, vernacular translation of Literary Sinitic poetry and vernacular composition of songs. As exemplified in the publication of the *Tusi ŏnhae*, the Chosŏn state deemed it necessary to translate notable poetic works in Literary Sinitic into Korean. The Korean translation of Du Fu's poetry was not regarded as a poetic text in its own right but as an interpretive supplement to the original works in Literary Sinitic (Yŏ 2015). The readers were expected to use the annotated translation to aid their understanding of the original poems. In other words, the translation served a strictly educational purpose. Later, as we will see, efforts were made to transform Literary Sinitic poems into vernacular songs through flexible translation and creative adaptation. Likewise, the early Chosŏn writers of vernacular songs considered their compositions to be distinct in nature from Literary Sinitic poetry. More importantly, as time went on, a greater degree of integration between poetry and song came about, most notably in the development and popularization of new indigenous genres of vernacular song-poems—namely, the *sijo* 時調 and *kasa* 歌辭.

Turning Poems into Songs: Sixteenth-Century Developments in Poetry

The *sijo* as a literary genre began in the late fifteenth century and matured in subsequent years in tandem with the *mandaeyŏp* 慢大葉 musical score (Park and

Kim 2017). *Mandaeyŏp* was a type of slow lyrical song performed to the accompaniment of a zither, and it enjoyed great popularity in early Chosŏn. A *sijo* has a regular form—a total of three lines with each line consisting of fourteen to sixteen syllables. In the sixteenth century, *sijo* song-poems regularly appeared in literati's private collections of writings. The *kasa* genre, which originated in the fifteenth century, is similar to the *sijo* in its meter but is longer, consisting of varying numbers of lines, from thirty to over a thousand (McCann 1988: 27). As they were first trained in Literary Sinitic poetry, the literati composers of *sijo* and *kasa* works introduced their knowledge and vocabulary into these new vernacular literary genres. Their *sijo* and *kasa* poems repeated popular themes in Chinese poetry, such as expressions of loyalty to the state, Confucian moral teachings, social and political critiques, wartime reflections, life experiences of scholar-officials, and records of history and customs. The earliest recorded *sijo*, “Songs of Four Seasons by the Rivers and Lakes” 江湖四時歌 by Maeng Sasŏng 孟思誠 (1360–1438), was a Korean vernacular adaptation of a popular theme in Literary Sinitic poetry (although the *sijo* version was shorter and was intended for singing).

In addition to thematic borrowing, the literati composers of *sijo* and *kasa* also included vernacular translations of poetic phrases in Sinitic into their song-poems. In order to signify the local context, they changed the Chinese references found in Literary Sinitic poems into Korean ones (An 1998). However, even the *sijo* works based on established themes and formats demonstrated marked differences from the original poems. For example, when comparing the *sijo* and Literary Sinitic poems on the topic of the Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers 瀟湘八景, it can be observed that the *sijo* examples focus more on the expression of feelings while the examples in Literary Sinitic focus more on the creation and description of poetic scenery (Chŏng 1992). The poems in Literary Sinitic, following the tradition of landscape poetry, underscore the eight views of the two rivers. The *sijo* poems instead emphasize the emotions of the narrator-singer intended to be expressed through singing.

Throughout the sixteenth century, *sijo* grew in number and prestige as leading intellectuals of the time participated in this new literary trend. Influential sixteenth-century *sijo* writers included Chu Sebung 周世鵬 (1495–1554), Yi Hyŏnbo 李賢輔 (1467–1555), Song In 宋寅 (1517–84), and Yi Pyŏl 李鼈 (sixteenth century) (Yi 2001; Na 2008; Yu 2011). Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501–70) and Yi I 李珥 (1536–84), the two most prominent scholars and leaders of competing Neo-Confucian schools, composed *sijo*, and their students and admirers followed suit (Han 2013). In the preface to his celebrated *sijo* “The Twelve Songs of Tosan” 陶山十二曲, Yi Hwang clearly lays out the intention behind his composition:

“The Twelve Songs of Tosan” was written by Old Man Tosan. Why did he write these songs? That the songs of our country are mostly vulgar needs no further explanation. For example, the “Song of Confucian Scholars” 翰林別曲 and the like, despite having come from the mouths of the literati, are haughty and dissolute, disrespectful and mischievous. These are certainly not what a gentleman should aspire to. Only recently came the “Six Songs” 六歌 by Yi Pyŏl 李鼈 (sixteenth century), which has become pop-

ular throughout the country. Though an improvement, I regret its message of cynicism and its lack of gentleness and sincerity. I do not understand music at all but still know that I detest listening to vulgar music. During my free time, while living in relaxation to attend to my illness, I expressed myself in poetry whenever my emotion and nature were inspired. But today's poetry is different from ancient poetry; it can be recited but cannot be sung. If I wish to sing it, I must compose it in local speech; that is to say, I cannot do it without using our own script. Therefore, imitating the song by Yi, I composed two "Six Songs of Tosan." The first describes my will, the second my learning. I wish to have children sing the songs day and night, so I can listen to them while leaning on a table. It is also my wish that children will sing and dance to the songs. The songs will be able to clear away impropriety and inspire and arouse harmony and understanding. Then singers and listeners alike will not be without benefit. (Yi 1843, 43:23b–24a)¹

In this preface, Yi Hwang explains that his composition responded to two issues: first, his distaste for contemporary Korean songs due to their degenerate content, and second, his aspiration to write song-poems that can inspire moral transformation of the people and betterment of society. As he states, these aims could only be achieved through the composition of songs in the vernacular script. The result was twelve short songs that articulate the ideas and hopes of a Confucian scholar in a language that children could understand and sing. As Yi asserts, repeated exposure to the songs was believed to offer the unique advantage of helping both singers and listeners absorb and internalize Confucian moral teachings and transform their lives in due course (Pak 2017: 143). It is important to note that while the songs with their unsophisticated messages were written in the vernacular script, the preface, which sketches out his noble objective, was composed in Literary Sinitic, as its intended audience was not those for whom the songs were written.

Yi I, who established a rival Neo-Confucian school to Yi Hwang's, also wrote *sijo* and *kasa*. His most influential *sijo* was "The Song of Mount Ko's Nine Bends" 高山九曲歌. Composed in 1578, the song-poem was Yi's imitation of the celebrated poem "The Boat Song of Wuyi's Nine Bends" 武夷九曲棹歌 by the Chinese Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Zhu Xi's poem, written in 1185, describes the scenery of the Nine Bends River of Wuyi Mountain, the home of his renowned academy. The poem consists of ten verses: an opening verse that is then followed by nine verses dedicated to the scenery of each of the nine bends. The story of Zhu Xi and his students singing the boat song while cruising the river became an integral part of the collective memory of later Neo-Confucians. The Chosŏn Neo-Confucians composed numerous matching poems in Literary Sinitic in response to the original work by Zhu Xi. But their poems could not be sung, making the reenactment of the experience of Zhu Xi and his disciples problematic for Chosŏn literati.

To create a poem about the Nine Bends that could be sung, Yi I decided to write a *sijo*. In his opening verse, Yi openly acknowledges that his intention of composing the *sijo* was to follow the example of Zhu Xi.

高山九曲潭을 살룸이 몰으든이
誅茅卜居하니 벗님네 다 오신다
어즘어 武夷를 想像하고 學朱子를 후리라

Mount Ko's Nine Bends Pool was not known to people.
Cutting the overgrown grass and settling here, now friends all come and visit me.
Ah! I will imagine this is Wuyi and imitate Master Zhu.
(Yi 1713: 15b)

The rest of the poem, following the structure of Zhu's original poem, introduces the notable points of scenery of the nine bends in turn. Yi's *sijo* was sung by his students and later followers, and Mount Ko and its Nine Bends Pool came to be regarded as a home of Neo-Confucian learning comparable to Wuyi and its Nine Bends River, the cradle of Neo-Confucianism in China. Indeed, the act of singing the song allowed Yi and others to re-create and relive the experience of the Chinese Neo-Confucians (Han 2013).

Like Yi Hwang, Yi I also wrote a number of *kasa* works. Yi I's best-known *kasa*, "A Song of Self-Discipline" (Chagyŏng pyŏlgok 自警別曲), is an extensive text consisting of 986 lines, written for the enlightenment of the general populace (Chŏng 1961). In it, Yi expounds on the cardinal social relations, proper social functions, and guidelines for personal life. The poem as a whole presents a message of Confucian social order and harmony with an emphasis on learning and moral cultivation. While a song of this length might not have been sung often, if at all, by the people for whom it was intended, it was written in the vernacular to instruct the masses, much like the state-sponsored publications of the fifteenth century.

Thanks to the spread of literacy in both Sinitic and vernacular scripts, sixteenth-century poetry witnessed a diversification of styles and topics. Contemporary literary icon Chŏng Ch'ŏl 鄭澈 (1536–93), for instance, wrote extensively in both Literary Sinitic and the vernacular. A comparative study of his poems in both scripts reveals differences in audience and functions (Chŏng 2011). His poems in Literary Sinitic were produced exclusively to be read by and exchanged with members of the literati class. Often, the poems were addressed to particular individuals and reflected the poet's personal circumstances at the time of composition. Chŏng Ch'ŏl's *sijo*, on the other hand, addressed a wider audience, including the king and his subjects, women and men, and the old and the young. His *sijo* celebrate the joys of commoners' daily work and life, as in the following example:

오늘도 다 새거디 호미메오 가자소라
내 논 다 미여든 네 논 점 미여주마
울 길히 쑥 빠다가 누에먹켜 보자소라

The day has ended, so let's go home with our hoes on our shoulders.
When I am done weeding my paddy, I will weed yours, too.
On the way back, why not pick some mulberry leaves for the silkworms?
(Chŏng 2011: 396–97)

The *sijo* eulogizes the enjoyments of agricultural work and mutual cooperation. Many of Chŏng's *sijo* also address an unspecified audience and speak about shared human experiences, such as life, aging, death, and the loss of loved ones.

이고 진 더 늘그니 짐프러 나를 주오
나난 점었거니 돌히라 무거울가
늘거도 설 웨리키든 짐을 조차 지실가

You, elderly sir, with loads on your head and the back! Put down your burdens and give them to me.

I am still young, so how would even rocks be heavy!

Old age is sorrow enough—must you also carry a heavy load?

(Chŏng 2011: 397)

This simple yet moving song-poem underscores the communal responsibility of caring for the elderly, especially the less fortunate ones. These examples show how vernacular song-poems in the form of *sijo* allowed Chŏng to step out of his class-bound identity and ruminate on the experiences of collective humanity.

Increasing Integration: Developments in Seventeenth-Century Literature

The next century saw an increasing integration of poetry in Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean. As the *sijo* and *kasa* became more established, more literati came to use the two genres as channels for self-expression, something that was previously reserved for poems in Literary Sinitic. Consequently, the divide between the poet and the narrator evident in sixteenth-century *sijo* and *kasa* grew narrower in the seventeenth century. Moreover, there was a vibrant exercise of poetic creativity as many literati experimented with poetic genres in both scripts to discover and construct their own poetic voices. A comparative analysis of two poets, Pak Illo 朴仁老 (1561–1642) and Chŏng Hun 鄭勳 (1563–1640), illustrates the richness and diversity of poetic discourse in seventeenth-century Chosŏn (Chŏng 2014a–b; Yi 2019).

Pak Illo, a distinguished military official who served in a number of key posts, including naval commander in chief (*sugun chŏltosa* 水軍節度使) and commander of royal guards (*sumunjang* 守門將), was an important contributor to the popularization of *sijo* and *kasa* in seventeenth-century literary circles. An accomplished poet and gifted singer, Pak composed *sijo* and performed them at literati gatherings (Pak 1831: *kwŏn* 3). More important, he personalized his *sijo* and *kasa* to a great extent. As mentioned in the previous section, most literati poets of sixteenth-century Chosŏn discussed and expressed their private feelings and thoughts through Literary Sinitic poems and used *sijo* and *kasa* to explore more universal human experiences and emotions. Pak Illo tried to bridge this gap by situating his *sijo* and *kasa* in specific private contexts. While it was common for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century vernacular song-poems to be without titles or prefaces, Pak's surviving works have titles as well as information on the background of composition, similar to the manner in which poems

in Literary Sinitic were recorded. The details about when and where the poems were written and their intended audience intensified the personal qualities of these works.

A comparative study of Pak's *sijo*, *kasa*, and Sinitic poems reveals the ways in which these different literary genres influenced the poet's engagement with the topic. Pak wrote a poem in each genre on the topic of his life in seclusion, and each genre highlights different aspects of his experience.

蘆溪卜居

離群脫俗入山中
獨釣苔磯細柳風
千載非無西伯獵
可憐虛老一溪翁

Choosing a Dwelling Place by the Reed Stream

Leaving the crowd, escaping the mundane,
I enter the mountain.
Sitting on a mossy rock, I angle alone
in the breeze from the thin willow branches.
After a thousand years, there should be
West Earl who comes hunting.²
Such a pity! I've aged in vain,
and became an old man by a stream.
(Pak 1831, 1:4a)

In this Sinitic poem, Pak explains his sentiments on life in retirement. He expresses his deep disappointment at not realizing his political aspirations. In contrast, his *sijo* with a similar title paints a starkly different picture of his life in seclusion.

蘆洲幽居

어화아히들아 후리치고 가자스라
田園이 뷔엇거니 엇지 아니 가로소냐
道川上 明月淸風이 날기드리기 오리니라

Living in Seclusion in the Reed Islet

Come, Children! Let's leave everything behind and go!
The fields and gardens are vacant, so why not go there?
Over the Toch'on River, the bright moon and clear breeze have long awaited me.
(Pak 1831, 3:32b)

In this *sijo* with its liberating and uplifting message, the poet invites the children to come and join him in his adventure to explore an uninhabited paradise and escape the constraints of everyday life. Echoing the famous poem "Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields" 歸園田居 of the Tang poet Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427), Pak describes his move to the Reed Islet as a homecoming experience.

In his *kasa* poem "The Song of the Reed Stream" (Nogyek ka 蘆溪歌), Pak recounts in detail the joys of his life in seclusion in 103 lines. He enumerates the scenic sites surrounding his abode and expresses his gratitude toward the state and his benevolent king. The final stanza of the poem reads:

山平解渴도록우리聖主萬歲소서
 熙嶼世界에三代日月빛취소서
 於千萬年에兵革을쉬우소서
 耕田鑿井에擊壤歌를불리소서
 이몸은이江山風月에늘글주를모로로라

Until mountains are leveled, and rivers dry up, may our sage king live ten thousand years!
 In this harmonious world, may the sun and moon shine like the time of the Three Dynasties!³
 May armed struggles cease for thousands and thousands of years!
 May we sing the Ground-Thumping Song while working the field and digging the well!⁴
 In these rivers and mountains, in this wind and under this moon, I forget I am aging.
 (Pak 1831, 3:19b–23a)

Keeping in mind that one can have conflicting feelings about the same experience and that these feelings can change over time, the different poetic renditions of Pak's retirement in these three modes represent complex social functions of human experience. As pointed out by Chŏng Soyŏng (2014b: 86) in her analysis of Pak Illo's poems, the differences in their tones—the lonely and self-reflective tone of the first poem versus the collective and festive tone of the second and third song-poems—might be related to the fact that the song-poems in the vernacular were designed for entertainment and performance. They were songs meant to be shared with community, whereas the Sinitic poem functioned more like a poetic entry in Pak's diary. On the whole, Pak Illo's *sijo* and *kasa* poems featured more personal and less didactic content, but the musical and performative nature of the genres continued to shape their subject matter. While maintaining the collective spirit of *sijo* and *kasa*, Pak incorporated more expressions from Literary Sinitic into his *sijo* and *kasa* poems, as evidenced in the excerpts translated above. The results were a creative blending of poetry in both scripts through which the poet created a meaningful dialogue between Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean, the private and the public, and text and music.

Chŏng Hun was another distinguished seventeenth-century poet. Of *yangban* descent, Chŏng refused to enter into politics and lived his whole life as a destitute scholar in the countryside. Like his contemporary Pak Illo, Chŏng explored both *sijo* and *kasa* as channels for self-expression but did so more radically by delving into deeply private subject matters. His *sijo* and *kasa* poems describe his life in poverty, his yearning for his deceased wife, and his unflattering self-reflection (Chŏng 1970). Unlike his contemporary literati, Chŏng left behind more vernacular song-poems than Sinitic poems, and even exchanged *sijo* with friends in the manner that most literati exchanged poems in Literary Sinitic. His “To Wŏlgok, Songs in Response” (Wŏlgok tapka 月谷答歌) features ten *sijo* he exchanged with a friend named Wŏlgok. The first of them reads:

옛 사람 이제 사람耳目口鼻 같건마는
 나 혼자 어찌하여 옛 사람을 그리는고
 이제도 옛 사람 계시니 그 내 벗인가 하노라

People of the past, people of the present, all have the same ears, eyes, mouth, and nose.
Why is it that I alone am missing the people of the past?
Yet even now, there is a person of the past, and it is he, my dear friend.
(Chǒng 1970: 259)

Altogether, the ten poems celebrate their friendship and their shared commitment to the values of the ancient worthies. Chǒng's highly individualized *sijo* and *kasa* seem to undermine the communal and musical qualities of the genres described earlier. Certainly he used *sijo* to carry out the social function of poetry that had traditionally been reserved for poems in Literary Sinitic. Yet, a closer look at his Sinitic poems reveals that Chǒng was not attempting to replace Literary Sinitic with vernacular Korean.

When composing Sinitic poems, Chǒng did not confine himself to the usual poetic conventions. If these rules impeded the delivery of his intended meaning, he was not afraid to break them. For instance, some of his poems show lines of irregular lengths, such as the one below:

寄友人

世間雖多人
五倫知幾人
攀龍附鳳願卜鄰

百年何容易
難可所願伸

To a Friend

Though there are many people in the world,
How many of them understand the Five Relationships?
Mounting the dragon, and riding the phoenix, I want to dwell near
you.
Reaching a hundred years is easy.
What's difficult is fulfilling my aspirations.

(Chǒng 2002: 14)

The poem does not follow any standard format in Sinitic poetry. With the extended third line and the addition of the fifth line, it clearly deviates from the popular five-character quatrains. By exercising flexibility in his composition, perhaps Chǒng was trying to write poems that conveyed his poetic conception in a more natural manner.

Chǒng also explored bilingual composition by writing two versions of a poem—one each in Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean—like the ones below:

歎北人作變歌

後山之結雲延及蔽中天
風耶雨耶霜耶雪耶
未知天意竟何然

Song of the Northerner's Changing Heart

The clouds forming behind the mountain behind stretch
out to the middle of the sky.
Is it going to be wind, rain, frost, or snow?
I still don't know what the sky wills. What to do?
(Chǒng 2002: 55)

聞北人變

뒷 뒤희 뭉킨 구름 앞 들에 퍼지거다
바람 불디 비 올지 눈이 올지 서리 올지
우리는 하늘 뜻모르니 아므랄 줄 모로리다

Hearing of the Northerner's Changing Heart

The clouds above the mountain behind stretch over the field in front.

Is it going to be wind, rain, frost, or snow?

I still don't know what the sky wills. What to do?

(Chōng 2002: 26)

It is not known which of the two poems he composed first. The poem in Literary Sinitic follows the three-line structure of the *sijo*, and no effort was made to translate the *sijo* into the more common heptasyllabic lines of Sinitic poetry. The slight variation of meaning in the first lines presents a more complex relationship between the two poems and illustrates that, rather than simply translating, the poet adjusted the expression to what he found to be appropriate in each language. The poems display Chōng's efforts to foster interactions between Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean through sensitive and fluid translations.

Pak Illo and Chōng Hun represent seventeenth-century Chosŏn literati who transformed and redefined both vernacular song-poetry and Sinitic poetry through cross-generic compositions. By actively exploring *kasa* and *sijo* as channels of self-expression, they proved and expanded the creative potentials of vernacular song-poems. Their works testify to the mounting popularity of and the increasing trend toward documenting vernacular songs, a development that became full-fledged in the following century.

Recording the Songs: *Sijo* Anthologies and *Sijo* Translations (Eighteenth to Early Nineteenth Century)

Throughout the eighteenth century, endeavors to compile and publish vernacular songs greatly increased. These efforts were manifested in two contrasting ways: through the production of *sijo* anthologies and of Literary Sinitic translations of *sijo* song-poems. These divergent approaches, however, were inspired by the shared desire to preserve and disseminate vernacular songs for their contemporaries and for posterity. In their publications, various anthologists and translators presented their views on the nature of and relationship between poetry and song and addressed the issues of spontaneity and universality in poetic composition.

Sijo Anthologies

A number of important *sijo* anthologies were published during the eighteenth century. The *Ch'ōnggu yōngŏn* 靑丘永言 (Eternal Words of the Green Hills), compiled and published by Kim Ch'ōnt'aek 金天澤 (b. 1690) in 1728, is regarded as the oldest surviving *sijo* anthology (Nam 2002; Kang 2010). It contains 580 *sijo* organized into categories of musical type, period, and author. The compiler Kim, a member of the *chungin* 中人 ("middle people"—specialists and technicians) who worked as a police lieutenant (*p'ogyo* 捕校), was a famous singer and composer of many works of *sijo*. Together with like-minded *chungin* singer-songwriters, Kim formed a singers' group called the Kyōngjōng Mountain Singers' Circle (Kyōngjōngsan kadan 敬亭山歌壇), dedicated to the promotion of *sijo*. Kim's introduction to one

of the sections in his anthology clearly outlines his view on the song-poems and their connection to Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean:

The songs we Koreans compose mostly use Korean speech, mixed in with expressions from Literary Sinitic. Compiled in vernacular publications, these songs are circulated throughout the kingdom. This is because the use of our vernacular is indispensable for our customs. Although our songs cannot be compared to the folk songs of China, they also deserve to be viewed and heard. What the Chinese refer to as songs are all ancient folk songs and new sounds performed to the accompaniment of music.

Although our people speak the sounds of a frontier people, we have adopted the Sinitic script. While we are different from the Chinese in this regard, if our songs describe affective scenery and are harmonious with music, they make people sing and unwind, with arms swaying and feet stomping. All songs come from the same origin. (Kim 1948: 464)⁵

In the first paragraph, Kim stresses the importance of native speech and the vernacular script in song writing. The second paragraph, which is a quote from the postscript by the seventeenth-century scholar Sin Hŭm 申欽 (1566–1628) to the *kasa* poem by Yi Sugwang 李睟光 (1563–1628), highlights the universal quality of songs that transcend linguistic boundaries (Sin 1629, 36:11a–12a). It expounds that the commonality between Chinese and Korean songs is found in their function, namely, their ability to express and arouse emotions (Cho 2016).

The preface to the *Ch'onggu yŏngŏn*, written by Chŏng Naegyo 鄭來僑 (1681–1759), offers a more complex historical and moral justification for the production of the *sijo* anthology. Juxtaposing the *sijo* with the ancient Chinese folk songs recorded in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry), which later came to be called the Three Hundred Poems, Chŏng explains:

All ancient songs were poems. What was sung was written down and became a poem. A poem accompanied by music became a song. Poetry and song, therefore, were one. Then the Three Hundred Poems became Ancient Style Poems 古體詩, and Ancient Poems changed and became Modern Style Poems 近體詩. Afterwards, poetry and song were separated into two. Since the time of the Han and Wei, the poems that fit the tunes were called the *yuefu* 樂府 (Music Bureau) poems, but they were not used in rural areas or foreign countries. . . . Generally speaking, one cannot write songs without literary skills and musical talent. Those gifted in writing poetry might not be so in writing songs. Those gifted in writing songs might not be so in writing poetry. Although our dynasty has never wanted for talented writers, almost none wrote songs, and the songs we have could not be handed down for long. Could this not be because people in our country value literature but overlook music? . . . Ah! All songs not only describe thoughts but also bring an end to distress, so people can be moved and elated by the songs and even dwell in them. Hence, if we record our songs and use them among the rural people, that also will lend a hand in civilizing them. Although songs might not be as refined as poetry, they offer greater benefit to society. How could the gentlemen of the world forsake them and neglect to collect them! Could it also be that those who appreciate the sound are few? Should we not examine ourselves more critically? Realizing this problem, Kim Ch'ŏnt'aek

has gathered the songs from the past several hundred years that have not yet disappeared into oblivion, wishing to record and pass them down to posterity. (Kim 1948: 1)⁶

In his preface, Chŏng, a literatus friend of Kim's, explains the relationship between poetry and song and the significance of collecting and publishing *sijo* from the perspective of a scholar sympathetic toward the literary activities of commoners like Kim. Chŏng highlights the intrinsic, inseparable, and mutually influential relationship between poetry and song and describes how their unfortunate divide developed over time. He illuminates the complexity of song writing and gently rebukes his fellow literati for failing to recognize the value of composing, collecting, and recording vernacular songs. He also asserts that songs could offer greater social benefits than poems by inspiring and transforming the general population.

The postscript by Yi Chŏngsŏp 李廷燮 (1688–1744) provides yet another crucial perspective in support of the *sijo* anthology. Reminding the readers that the *Shijing* is a collection of ancient folk songs gathered and recorded by Confucius, Yi repeats the widely held interpretation of poetry as an expression of human nature and emotions, which, he argues, are also richly reflected in *sijo* song-poems. He claims that vernacular songs that “express heart-felt emotions through everyday language can inspire people who sing them,” and as such they “originate from true nature” (Kim 1948: 580). Yi's theoretical validation, together with Kim's functional and Chŏng's historical reasoning, present a well-rounded support for the publication of the vernacular anthology of *sijo*.

Similar arguments were put forth by later writers and compilers of *sijo* anthologies. The preface to the *Haedong kayo* 海東歌謠 (Songs from Beyond the Eastern Sea), a 1763 *sijo* anthology published by Kim Ch'önt'aek's friend and *sijo* singer-songwriter Kim Sujang 金壽長 (b. 1690), stresses the practical social functions of vernacular songs, in particular their role in the promotion of social stability and harmony (Kim 1930: 3). Contesting the accusation of vulgarity, it suggests that the *sijo* are refined cultural creations that can enhance the sophisticated cultural pursuits of a Confucian gentleman. Through their publication efforts, both Kim Ch'önt'aek and Kim Sujang sought to raise awareness of the value of nonelite culture and their vital contribution to creating a thriving society. Similar arguments were also made by Hong Taeyong 洪大容 (1731–83) in his preface to the *Taedong p'ungyo* 大東風謠 (Songs from the Great Eastern Kingdom). In it, Hong, a leading intellectual and reformer who challenged the Sinocentric ideology and elitism of his contemporary scholar-officials, asserts that the harmonious relationship between poetry and song can create a channel of communication between the elite and nonelite social classes (Hong 1939, *naejip* 3:26b–27b).

Taken as a whole, these discussions surrounding *sijo* anthologies underscore the belief that vernacular songs communicate natural emotions and are valuable cultural inventions worthy of documentation and preservation. Regarding the relationship between poetry and song, these texts stress the mutually dependent relationship between the two genres while giving greater recognition to songs as a more spontaneous and natural form of poetry.

Literary Sinitic Translations of *Sijo* Poems

Another important literary development that occurred in tandem with the publication of *sijo* anthologies was the production of Literary Sinitic translations of *sijo*. The efforts to translate *sijo* and *kasa* works into Sinitic started in the seventeenth century, but the translations were limited to certain key works, and their purpose was more political and ideological in nature. For example, Yi I's *sijo* "The Song of Mount Ko's Nine Bends" and Chŏng Ch'öl's *kasa* "A Song to Instruct the People" (Hunmin ka 訓民歌) were translated into Literary Sinitic by members of their scholarly and political cliques (Kwŏn 2012: 155). By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, translating vernacular songs into Literary Sinitic became a fad within literary circles, and translations increased in both number and variety. These translated poems were included in the poetry section of the translators' *munjip* 文集 (collected works), often under the category "songs."

Like the producers of *sijo* anthologies examined above, the translators of *sijo* also discussed their objectives in their writings. Yi Hyŏngsang 李衡祥 (1653–1733), a translator of 71 *sijo* poems, explains the issue he saw with vernacular songs in the introduction to one of his translated poems. He writes,

Folk songs (*akpu* 樂府) must first have vigor (*ki* 氣) before anything else. Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) was born and raised in Shu, therefore, his speech leaned toward palatal sounds. His pronunciations were almost balanced, but not quite fully. His vigor was likewise. Korean pronunciations lean toward dental sounds, so how can [our folk songs] be disseminated? We have only used three musical modes in our local speech, the *p'yŏngjo*, *ujo*, and *kyemyŏnjo*.⁷ If we wish to preserve the Five Notes, would it not be an impossible task? (Yi 1774, 3:34b–35b)⁸

Contrary to the supporters of *sijo* anthologies who traced the origin of songs to shared human emotions, Yi identifies vigor (*ki* 氣) as the source of all songs. This vigor, he argues, reflects and is shaped by one's origin and speech. He points out the differences between Chinese and Korean pronunciations, and even the dialect diversity within Chinese, and suggests that the nature of differences in regional speech makes the task of singing songs correctly, in accordance with the classical pentatonic scale, almost impossible.

The problem of regional speech was also raised by Hwang Yunsŏk 黃胤錫 (1729–81), who offered a more historical perspective (Pak 2014). In his preface to "Ancient Songs, New Translations" (Koga sinbŏn 古歌新翻), Hwang writes,

The songs gathered here were written by past worthies, poets, drifters, and longing wives. Among them, we often find songs with cultured messages and astonishing lines that deserve to be passed down. They could contend with China's *yuefu* 樂府 poems, but because the sounds of our local speech are different from those of the Chinese, they have remained songs. Songs like these are all in our local speech [Korean], and those written in Literary Sinitic are truly rare. Despite people's desire to pass them down, very few works have been transmitted. If these songs disappear, how can they compete with ancient *yuefu* poems? For example, there is a song from Paekche, entitled "Flowers in

the Mountain” (*Sanyuhwa* 山有花), whose music has survived but not the lyrics. This must be because while the song enjoyed popularity during its time, it was not recorded in Literary Sinitic. . . . In my spare time, I have searched for a few songs and translated them into Literary Sinitic. In translation, I have largely followed the original words and just added a little luster. There is no need to try hard to make them look like ancient *yuefu* works and in so doing forfeit their original meanings. (Hwang, n.d., 1:66b–67a)⁹

The text outlines Hwang’s clear aim, that is, to elevate the prestige of outstanding works among vernacular songs to the level of *yuefu* poems in China. He claims the reason these excellent Korean songs were passed down and remained as “songs” was due to the failure to record them in Literary Sinitic. If recorded, Hwang believes, they could rival China’s *yuefu* poems, which were also the lyrics of popular folk songs. Hwang also insists on the longevity of music and ephemerality of lyrics. The latter, therefore, demand literary intervention to make the words last. He does not consider the vernacular script as a desirable means for recording the songs, and to support his view, he cites the example of a disappearing song from Paekche. The preface as a whole expresses Hwang’s hope to transform admirable vernacular songs and raise them to their rightful place in the realm of literature.

The interest in Literary Sinitic translation of *sijo* continued into the nineteenth century. The writings of nineteenth-century translators reveal an expanding discussion on the nature of Korean speech and its influence on the development of poetry and song in Korea. They generally emphasize the uniqueness of the Korean context that led to the separation of poetry and song. One of the strongest cases in support of this argument was made by Kang Ich’ön 姜彝天 (d. 1801) in his essay “A Discussion on Song and Dance” (Kamu ūi 歌舞議). Kang writes:

The music of Korea is different from that of ancient China in two ways: first, the separation of our poetry and song, and second, the asynchrony of our song and dance. Why are our poetry and song separated? When the ancients wrote a rhymed composition, it had to be in accordance with the Eight Notes. When they wrote a poem, it could be sung, and a song was made from the Eight Notes by adding rhythm. The Classic says, “Poetry expresses what is intent upon the mind, and song makes language last long.” . . . But in our country, the spoken language and the script have served different purposes. Therefore, our songs have all used words in Literary Sinitic mixed in with vernacular Korean expressions, and people have tried to match them to the rhythm of the music. This is the reason why poetry and song became two separate entities. . . . Now, it is appropriate to take these songs, remove vulgar vernacular expressions, seek out the meanings in the songs, rewrite them using Literary Sinitic, compose poems based on them using rhymes, and make them refined and elegant in accordance with poetic rules. These poems then can be circulated today and passed down to later generations. They can be a tool for observation and collection and can be utilized to enhance the work of the sages. This is not a trifling reason. (Kang, n.d., 4:4b–5b)¹⁰

Kang declares that the separation of poetry and song in Korea resulted from the division of spoken and written languages as well as the difficulty of creating

rhymed composition using Korean speech. This argument stands in opposition to the view of the *sijo* anthologists who explained the song-poetry division not as a particularly Korean predicament but as a collective challenge that followed the demise of sage rule. Furthermore, in Kang's view, poetry takes precedence over song, and song is seen simply as a continuation of poetry. This view is in contrast to the belief of the *sijo* anthologists, who recognized song as the natural origin of poetry. Another crucial difference in their positions concerns their understanding of the linguistic composition of song. Kang claims that vernacular Korean songs "all use words from Literary Sinitic mixed in with vernacular Korean expressions," and this reality justifies his decision to remove "vulgar vernacular expressions" from the songs and translate them into Literary Sinitic. This view is almost a mirror opposite of the idea put forth by the *sijo* anthologist Hong Taeyong, who argued that vernacular Korean songs "all use vernacular expressions mixed in with words from Literary Sinitic" (Hong 1939, 3:26n–27b). Considering this conclusion, Hong makes a case for recording vernacular songs in the vernacular script. These differences in understanding regarding the linguistic makeup of songs are important as they served to validate Kim's and Hong's distinct methods of recording the songs.

Sin Wi 申緯 (1769–1845), another nineteenth-century scholar who translated *sijo* poems into Literary Sinitic, is notable for attempting to standardize the format of translated poems into heptasyllabic quatrains. Sin took a more balanced approach toward the song-poetry and vernacular-literary debate by combining both universalist and particularist interpretations. Sin writes:

The spoken language and script of our country show great disparity in complexity. The songs from the past were all created by combining expressions in local [Korean] speech and words from Literary Sinitic. Therefore, in the beginning, without distinguishing level and oblique tones, people vocalized songs following their harmonized rhymes. By making long and short sounds with the throat, and loud and soft sounds with the lips and tongue, some songs became fast and short, and some became slow and long. Following this method, lyrics were divided to match the rhythm. Then people called the falling sound the fifth note, and the rising sound the second note. This describes the technique of song writing when people were among the flowers and facing their wine cups. It can be called an extremely crude method. Nevertheless, to the accompaniment of pipes and strings, the songs naturally became music, changing people's mood to be both sorrowful and joyful, moving their hearts and minds. From this, we can understand that there is natural music in Heaven and Earth that transcends the limits of geographical boundaries.

Today, people wish to collect these lyrics and insert them into poetry. Some lengthen or shorten the lines, apply scattered rhymes, and inappropriately call them Ancient Style poems. When you chant and mull them over, they quickly break apart in sound and fail to capture the original essence of the songs. This is a task of utmost difficulty! The difficulty lies in discerning how to deal with the songs. Thus, everyone in literary circles puts them aside as if they do not hear them. Eventually, we will hear that the songs of the luminous times are disappearing and not passed down. How deplorable! Yi Chehyŏn 李齊賢 of the Koryŏ dynasty selected songs and turned them into heptasyllabic quatrains and called them "Minor folk songs" (*soakpu* 小樂府). None of the songs in his

collection are performed by today's musicians, but their lyrics did not perish thanks to his poems. Is not writing an important calling of all literati? Delighting in his poems, I too took the songs that I can remember from our dynasty's time and turned them into heptasyllabic quatrains. (Sin, n.d., 17:3)¹¹

Taking a more neutral stance, Sin recognizes both vernacular Korean and Literary Sinitic as linguistic bases of equal importance for the songs. While critical of the simple method of song writing, Sin, like the *sijo* anthologists, also acknowledges the universality of music and song. Simultaneously, he argues that one cannot leave the task of transmitting the songs to musicians, citing how the songs from the Koryŏ period, collected and translated by Yi Chehyŏn, are no longer remembered by musicians. Like other literati translators of *sijo*, Sin stresses that it is the literati's duty to preserve these songs for posterity by translating them into Literary Sinitic, even though he disapproves of flexible translation and calls for standardization in form.

Despite their differences, both vernacular anthologies and Literary Sinitic translations of *sijo* developed out of the desire to make these songs last through textualization. In this process, the original musical quality of the *sijo* was undermined, and the *sijo*'s connection to classical poetry, especially the *Shijing* and *yuefu*, was accentuated. In general, the anthologists viewed the *sijo* as folk songs akin to the Three Hundred Poems, which were regarded as expressions of universal human nature and emotions. They argued that the natural sound and essence of these songs can only be captured in the vernacular script. By contrast, the translators regarded the *sijo* as raw material for poems in Literary Sinitic. Highlighting the limitations of vernacular language, they suggested that, if properly translated into Literary Sinitic, these folk songs could be transformed into poems that could match the *yuefu* poems in China. These contending claims demonstrate the complex discursive and genealogical constructions of the *sijo* genre based on its perceived relationship to other literary genres.

Turning the Poems into Songs: Nineteenth-Century Developments in *Sijo* Based on Sinitic Poems

By the late eighteenth century, *sijo* had developed into a site of dynamic exchanges and contentions between vernacular Korean and Literary Sinitic. Attempts to create purely vernacular *sijo* continued, but for the most part, the *sijo* text became increasingly infiltrated with Literary Sinitic. The new genre of narrative *sijo* (*sasŏl sijo* 辭說時調) illustrates this trend. Narrative *sijo* allowed the authors to develop more sophisticated story lines in multiple stanzas. Written by authors from diverse social backgrounds, the form was characterized by bold and realistic descriptions of a wide range of topics inspired from everyday life. Concurrently, however, narrative *sijo* facilitated a greater integration of Literary Sinitic expressions into the *sijo* text, including selective borrowing and adaptation of Literary Sinitic poems (Cho 2007).

A notable development in nineteenth-century *sijo* was the rise of the *hyŏnt'o* 懸吐 type *sijo* (*sijo* with vernacular grammatical particles), which were almost entirely based on poems in Literary Sinitic with added Korean grammatical particles. Although this type of *sijo* did not gain wide popularity, as a literary development it illustrates an

important trend toward another form of vernacularization. The *sijo* of this type display a varying degree of borrowing from popular poems in Literary Sinitic. An example of complete borrowing can be seen in the anonymous *sijo* below based solely on the poem “White Linen Songs” (Baiyu ci 白紵辭) by the Tang poet Li Bai 李白 (701–62), with inserted grammatical particles in the vernacular to facilitate reading:

揚清歌發皓齒이
北方佳人과 東鄰子 | 로다
且吟白紵停綠水요
長袖로 拂面為君起라
寒雲은 夜卷霜海空이요
胡風이 吹天飄塞鴻이라
玉爲滿堂樂未終이요
館娃에 日落하고 歌吹顔을 虧소라
(Kim 2000: 66)

Clear songs rise from gleaming teeth,
fair ladies from the north and the east.
They sing the tune of White Linen, then the tune of Green Waters.
With long sleeves they touch their faces, inviting you to rise.
Cold clouds clear at night. The sea of frost is gone.
The Tartar winds blow. The geese from the frontier glide in the sky.
Faces like jades fill the hall, and the music knows no end.
The sun sets over the Palace of Beauties as their songs drift far.

Other examples append an interpretive conclusion in the last line, such as this *sijo* adaptation of “A Fisherman’s Song” (Yugezi 漁歌子) by the Tang poet Zhang Zhihe 張志和 (ca. 730–810):

西塞山前에 白鷺飛하고
桃花流水에 鯉魚肥라
青箬笠 綠蓑衣로
斜風細雨不須歸로다
이제는 張志華 업손이 이 興味를 놀과 議論하리요
(Chöng 1966: 1121)

Before the West Fort Mountain, white egrets soar.
Peach petals flow downstream, the mandarin fish are stout.
In my blue bamboo hat and green straw cloak,
I shall not return despite the slanting wind and fine rain.
Now that Zhang Zhihe is gone, with whom shall I discuss this appeal?

Most of these *sijo* were based on well-known Tang dynasty poems, and some drew on popular Korean poems, such as this one by the Koryŏ dynasty poet Chöng Chisang 鄭知常 (d. 1135):

雨歇長堤 草色多々訖니
 送君南浦 動悲歌를
 大同江水 何時盡고
 別淚年年 添綠波라
 勝地에 斷腸佳人이
 몇몇인줄 몰래라
 (Chōng 1966: 1589)

When the rain stops, the long riverbank turns luxuriant green.
 Seeing you off at Namp'o moves me to sing sad tunes.
 When will the waters of the Taedong River run dry?
 Tears at parting each year add more blue swells.
 I wonder how many ladies' hearts were broken at that scenic place?

Again, the *sijo* version includes an additional line at the end to fulfill the three-line structure of the standard *sijo* format. Other examples have been found that abridge or delete lines from the original poem in Literary Sinitic (Chōng 1970: 272). But in general, the *hyōnt'o*-type *sijo* present Literary Sinitic poems in their entirety, even if cases of partial borrowing, such as individual couplets, have been identified (Cho 2006: 82–83). It has been shown that the producers of this new type of *sijo* were *chungin* songwriters and that these songs were circulated largely within *chungin* cultural circles beginning in the late eighteenth century (Kim 2000: 17). The *hyōnt'o*-type *sijo* and earlier developments examined throughout this article bring to light the convoluted debates surrounding the song-poetry and vernacular-cosmopolitan relations that evolved along with *sijo* and *kasa* literature.

Conclusion

In this article, I have traced the evolution of the poetry-song debate in the Chosōn dynasty in connection with the shifting discourse of the relationship between vernacular Korean and Literary Sinitic. The article has also examined the politics of producing, recording, propagating, and interpreting vernacular songs. In the fifteenth century, vernacular songs were produced as part of state-led educational projects. The songs created clearly reflected the Chosōn government's Neo-Confucian ideology and glorified the royal lineage. In the sixteenth century, while the state-led publication efforts continued, leading elites and scholars who supported the government's vision of its civilizing mission began producing their own *sijo* and *kasa*. They saw the benefits of using the vernacular script to compose songs that could be sung for both self-cultivational and educational purposes. The seventeenth century witnessed a gradual integration of song and poetry, vernacular Korean and Literary Sinitic. As shown in the comparative analysis of poetry and *sijo* by Pak Illo and Chōng Hun, a growing number of literati began to experiment with cross-generic compositions to redefine literary conventions. Through creative blending of poetry in both scripts, they traversed the traditional boundaries of private and public, and of text and music, in literary productions.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, with the spread and popularity of the *sijo*, the question of recording these songs for posterity surfaced as a topic of discussion. The various debates that ensued highlight the complex relationship between song and poetry and vernacular and cosmopolitan inscription. The *chungin* singer-songwriters emerged as leaders in the creation and dissemination of *sijo* anthologies. Seeing themselves as a new cultural force, the *chungin* anthologists like Kim Ch'ont'aek and Kim Sujang believed they were in a particularly privileged position to produce and record vernacular songs. At the same time, literati translators of *sijo* claimed that transforming vernacular songs into Literary Sinitic poems was the best way to preserve these songs for later generations. They hoped that their translated poems could match the *yuefu* poems of China and help elevate the prestige of Korean literary tradition.

All in all, the literary innovations examined here evince the diverse efforts to forge a unique literary identity in light of the “awareness of growing cultural and linguistic distance from both Chosŏn Korea’s classical roots and their common heirs in China” (Wang 2019: 40). In rendering song-poems, the poets and songwriters of Chosŏn grappled with questions concerning the function of poetry and song, musical and textual preservation, and emotional and lyrical immediacy. Different individuals and groups participated in this process with the aim of exploring and disseminating their visions of poetry and song, resulting in creative collaboration and competition between Literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean and between translation and vernacularization. On the whole, the shifting discourse of poetry and song demonstrates the complex inscripational ecology of the Chosŏn dynasty that fueled creativity in the literary scene, where songs became poems and poems became songs.

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NOTES

1. 陶山十二曲跋 右陶山十二曲者。陶山老人之所作也。老人之作此。何爲也哉。吾東方歌曲。大抵多淫哇不足言。如翰林別曲之類。出於文人之口。而矜豪放蕩。兼以褻慢戲狎。尤非君子所宜向。惟近世有李麓六歌者。世所盛傳。猶爲彼善於此。亦惜乎其有玩世不恭之意。而少溫柔敦厚之實也。老人素不解音律。而猶知厭聞世俗之樂。閒居養疾之餘。凡有感於情性者。每發於詩。然今之詩異於古之詩。可詠而不可歌也。如欲歌之。必綴以俚俗之語。蓋國俗音節。所不得不然也。故嘗略倣李歌。而作爲陶山六曲者二焉。其一言志。其二言學。欲使兒輩朝夕習而歌之。憑几而聽之。亦令兒輩自歌而自舞蹈之。庶幾可以蕩滌鄙吝。感發融通。而歌者與聽者。不能無交有益焉。

2. West Earl refers to King Wen 文王 (1152–1056 BCE) of the Zhou dynasty who, before the founding of the dynasty, served as West Earl of the Shang dynasty. It is said that while on a hunting trip, he met Jiang Ziya 姜子牙 (ca. 1156–1017 BCE) whom he later appointed as Prime Minister of Zhou.

3. The Three Dynasties refer to the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties.

4. It is said that during the reign of great peace under the sage emperor Yao 堯 (2356–2255 BCE), peasants sang the Ground-Thumping Song 擊壤歌 while working the fields.

5. 我東人所作歌曲。專用方言間雜文字。率以諺書傳行於世。蓋方言之用。在其國俗不得不然也。其歌曲雖不能與中國樂譜比並。亦有可觀而可聽者。中國之所謂歌。即古樂府暨新聲。被之管絃者俱是也。我國則發之藩音協以文語。此雖與中國異而若其情境咸載。宮商諧和。使人詠歎淫佚。手舞足蹈則其歸一也。

6. 古之歌者必用詩。歌而文之者爲詩。詩而被之管絃者爲歌。歌與詩固一道也。自三百篇而爲古詩。古詩變而爲近體。歌與詩分爲二漢魏以下。詩之中律者號爲樂府。然未必用之於鄉人邦國。... 蓋歌詞之作。非有文章而精聲律則不能故。能詩者未必有歌。爲歌者未必有詩。至若國朝代不乏人而歌詞之作。絕無而僅有亦不能久傳。豈以國家專尚文學而簡於音樂故然耶。... 嗚呼。凡爲是詞者非惟述其思宣其鬱而止爾。所以使人觀感而興起者。亦寓於其中則。登諸樂府。用之鄉人亦足爲風化之一助矣。其詞雖未必盡。如詩歌之巧。其有益世道反有多焉則。世之君子置之而不採何哉。豈亦賞音者寡而莫之省歟伯涵。乃能識此於數百載之下。

7. *P'yŏngjo* 平調, *ujo* 羽調, and *kyemyŏnjo* 界面調 are the three basic pentatonic modes in traditional Korean music.

8. 凡所謂樂府。必得中氣然後可也。東坡生長於蜀。所偏只腴。音欲諧而未諧者。氣類然也。吾東聲音已偏於齒。何能普也。只依方言之平調,羽調,界面調。要不失五音。則何不可之有。

9. 右歌詞雜山於賢人騷客蕩子思婦之屬。而其間往往有礪俗之意。驚人之韻。皆可傳諸後世。以與中原諸樂府馳聘而上下。而顧我方言異於華音。故其爲歌也。悉以俚諺。... 而以文字者實少。雖欲傳諸後世而曾未幾傳。何便失其真。矧能與古樂府齊駢哉。又如百濟山有花一曲。只有其聲而其詞則亡。此必只行當世而未托於文字故耳。... 頃於閑隙搜得若干。譯以文字要隨本語。而少加潤色而已。又不必拘拘於古樂府之效顰。而反失其本意云爾。

10. 小華之樂。與古異者有二。一曰詩與歌之分爲二。一曰歌與舞之不並用。何爲詩與歌之分爲二。古人韻語之作。蓋必叶諸八音。有詩便爲歌。歌者所以備八音之節者也。故典曰詩言志歌永言。... 蓋我國言與文異用。故其歌辭之作。皆以文字而雜之方言。以求其合於樂之節。此其詩與歌之所以分而爲二也。... 今宜就其歌辭。芟除其方言之近俚者。徇其意而易之以文詞。綴之以聲韻。使皆雅馴有法度。行之於今。傳之於後可也。其爲備一方觀採之具。爲聖人制作之用。非細故也。

11. 東國言語文字。繁簡懸殊。古來詞曲。皆參合言語文字而成也。故初無秩然之平仄句讀之叶韻。但以喉嚨間長短唇齒上輕重。或促而斂之。或引而申之。以準其歌詞之刻數。然後墜之爲羽聲。抗之爲商音。其視花間罇前填詞度曲之法。亦可謂鄙野之極矣。雖然被之管絃。自成律呂。哀樂變態。感動心志。是知天地間原有自然之樂。有不可以限地分疆而論也。今欲採其辭入詩。則或可以長短其句。散押其韻。強名之曰古體。然吟咏咀嚼之間。頓乖聲響。非復詞曲之本色。儘可謂戛戛乎。其難於措手矣。是以文苑諸公。置若罔聞。將使昭代歌謠。聽其散亡而不傳。可勝哉。高麗李益齋先生。採曲爲七絕。命之曰小樂府。今在先生集中。舉皆今日管絃家不傳之曲。而其辭之不亡。賴有此詩。文人命筆。顧不重歟。余竊喜之。就我朝小曲中余所記憶者。亦以爲七言絕句。

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