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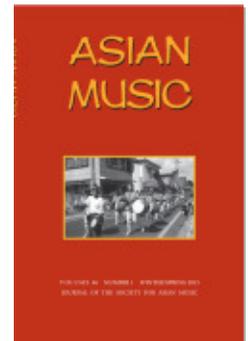
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Regulating and Negotiating in *T'ûrot'û*, a Korean Popular Song Style

Min-Jung Son

T'ûrot'û (its name derived from the Korean pronunciation of the English, *trot*) is a South Korean sentimental love song style performed with an abundance of vocal inflections. While this popular music has existed in the music scene of Korea for more than eight decades, it has been received differently at different times throughout its history. For instance, *t'ûrot'û* enjoyed its heyday as the dominant Korean popular music until the 1970s, and it remains popular particularly among older adults (*sôngin*) and working people (*sômin*). According to a survey by the Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) program *Kayosho* (Popular Song Show) in 2003, 64 out of 100 of the all-time favorite Korean popular songs were *t'ûrot'û* songs.¹ Hence, this grassroots popular music genre can be easily heard in such spaces as taxis, buses, marketplaces, local festivals, and *noraebang* (private rooms for karaoke).

In addition, the social meaning of *t'ûrot'û* has been complicated by its relations to successive ideological structures of Korea, such as the elite nationalism of the Japanese colonial period (1910–45), the cultural imperialism of the Cold War period (1950s–1970s), and the strategic essentialism of the military dictatorship (1960s–1980s). In the beginning, even though the song style was well accepted particularly by the urban bourgeoisie during the period of modernization, the early elite nationalists considered it to be a cultural threat. Since the nationalists during the Japanese colonial period intended to canonize traditional Korean music as a high-modern Korean culture, they worried about the impact of modern popular music and favored the resurrection of traditional musics (Robinson 1998, 372).

Later, in 1984, the early elite nationalists' standpoint strongly influenced the postcolonial debate over the nationality of *t'ûrot'û*.² In fact, the postcolonial argument has relentlessly been the main issue of *t'ûrot'û* since the introduction of governmental censorship in the 1960s. During the dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s, the government viewed *t'ûrot'û* as a cultural vestige of the Japanese colony that needed to be erased. As seen in a number of cultural theses

in the Cold War years, many South Korean scholars of those times, furthermore, asserted that the colonial cultural flows eventually would be connected to the economic, political, and even military power involved, spreading foreign cultural values and practices at the expense of local cultures (Manuel 2001, 20:162). Consequently, the practice of *t'ûrot'û* has been transformed throughout history within a process of negotiation with circumstantial forces.

As a result, *t'ûrot'û* as a style should be understood as a musical, metaphorical, and physical expression of the modern South Korean identity. As has been pointed out by Steven Feld (1988, 75), "style constitutes the universe of discourse within which musical meanings arise." The style *t'ûrot'û* does not comprise only its musical elements but also popular discourse, bodily performance, knowledge, and emotion. Taking this standpoint into consideration, our examination of the South Korean song style *t'ûrot'û* will begin and end with two quintessential questions: how has *t'ûrot'û* been *regulated* in socio-political and historical contexts? And how has *t'ûrot'û* *negotiated* with the contextual forces? This paper incorporates both historical and ethnographic research³ in examining four phases of the *t'ûrot'û* experience: its formation between the 1920s and 1945, maturation between 1945 and the 1970s, localization since the 1980s, and traditionalization since the 1990s.

The Formation of *T'ûrot'û*: The 1920s to 1945

The Emergence of Korean Popular Music

Blurring the hierarchical division between high culture and low culture, both at the ideological level and in practice, popular culture arose in Korea in the late nineteenth century. The new culture, as an intermediate one, synthesized the higher and lower cultures, and included *p'ansori* (a dramatic narrative form for solo voice and drum), Chinese literature produced by members of the commoner class, and subjective representation in paintings (Eckert et al. 1990, 191). Another musical and literary exemplar of popular culture was *chapka* (lit., miscellaneous songs). By the late nineteenth century, one of the exclusive high musical cultures, *sijo*, had evolved into a longer form with vernacular verses, which was called *sasôl sijo* (long *sijo*). The form and the text of *sijo* transformed into a longer song/poem with lighter themes on a faster tempo. Eventually the longer form of *sijo* came to form the main body of *chapka*. Some scholars have asserted that the early Korean popular songs were developed from this intermediate song/literature style, *chapka* (Kang 2002, 253–55).

To many observers, however, the history of Korean popular music begins with the translation of Western or Japanese popular songs, called *yuhaeng ch'angga* (lit., popular version of *ch'angga*), for these songs comprised the first

commercially produced music in Korea. Subsequently, Koreans wrote their own popular music, adopting the previously imported Western or Japanese popular song styles. The name for these newly composed Korean popular songs was *yuhaengga* (music in fashion), which was later replaced with a new name, *taejung kayo* (mass popular song), referring to popular music in general. Meanwhile, the early Korean popular songs, once called either *yuhaengga* or *taejung kayo*, acquired another new name, *t'úrot'ú*,⁴ differentiating them from the other recently arrived Western-type popular songs, such as those in rock, blues, and pop styles.

The term *ch'angga* (song) originates from the Japanese *shōka*, a word used to refer to the European-style songs mostly encountered in the school curriculum in Japan after the mid-1880s (Park 1992, 25). *Ch'angga* was itself the name used for the music curriculum in Korean schools during the period of the Japanese colonization. However, use of the Korean *ch'angga* extended to include many of the different kinds of Western songs with Korean words that were mainly sung between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s. At first, the songs of *ch'angga* were deeply associated with Western missionaries in Korea. Due to this association, the initial popular definition of *ch'angga* was centered on Christian hymns in the Korean language. The themes of the songs, however, soon focused on Korean patriotism, producing a genre called *aeguk ch'angga* (patriotic *ch'angga*). Historian Young Ick Lew analyzed the music in the following:

So-called *ch'angga*, songs of a new type sung to Western melodies, were immensely popular from around 1900. *Ch'angga* owed their beginning to the introduction of Protestant hymns, but they became songs of the whole people and were sung everywhere throughout Korea. Many *ch'angga* inspired love of country, glorifying independence and the new education and culture. Such *ch'angga* were sung joyously by students and by independence fighters, to uplift their spirits. (Lew in Eckert et al. 1990, 253)

The production of *ch'angga* was fueled by the political demand for national independence. Nationalist intellectuals in the colonial period were anxious to produce songs that could evoke patriotism from the Korean people. Representative publications of early *ch'angga* include *Pot'ong Ch'anggajip* (Compilation of Ordinary *Ch'angga*), published by Kim In-Sik⁵ in 1912, and the 1921 *Kúnhwa Ch'angga* (*Ch'angga* published by *Kúnhwa*) (Park 1992, 164–5). These two songbooks were published privately by nationalist intellectuals.

Meanwhile, the Japanese colonial authorities prohibited the patriotic version of *ch'angga*, and the censorship produced a new trend in the development of *ch'angga*, the popular *yuhaeng ch'angga*. Songs in this new version of *ch'angga* addressed themselves to sorrowful love and the vanity of life, and

they were in general more secular than previous *ch'angga* songs had been. The best-known songs of the early *yuhaeng ch'angga* include "K'ach'usa" (Song of Katherine) and "Changhanmongga" (Song of *Changhanmong*). Both were Korean translations of Japanese popular songs. Another huge hit for *yuhaeng ch'angga* was "Saui Ch'anmi" (Adoration of Death) in 1926. Its melody came from Iosif Ivanovici's "Waves of the Danube." The singer was soprano Yun Sim-dök, who had acquired her Western musical education in Japan.

Following this period, *yuhaengga* began to be produced by Korean songwriters and composers. The first notable song was "Nakhwa Yusu" (Falling Flowers and Flowing River),⁶ written and composed by the urban bourgeois Kim Yông-Hwan⁷ in 1927. The lyrics, also known as "Kangnamdal" (Moon South of the River), describe the lonesome life of a *kisaeng* (a traditional Korean female entertainer). The song's thematic differences from previous folksongs are found in the expression of personal emotions of love and life, rather than the collective descriptions of nature, such as the river, the mountain, the four seasons, and so forth. The personalized expression may be seen to symbolize the concept of modern individuality associated with Westernization.

The Sounds of the Early Musicians

In the early production of *yuhaengga*, most of the male songwriters at the time were urban intellectuals who had received modern, higher education. The ethnomusicologist Song Bang-Song (2000, 5–109) has analyzed the educational and class backgrounds of those who led the development of early Korean popular music, classifying them as composers, songwriters, or singers. Song analyzed 1,304 popular songs recorded in the 1930s. Three songwriters, Lee Ha-Yun (1906–74), Park Yông-Ho (1911–53), and Yu To-Sun (1904–38), wrote a substantial number of early lyrics, which amounted to 227 songs. Among these three, Lee Ha-Yun and Park Yông-Ho had acquired their college educations in Japan, a common practice among the privileged bourgeoisie in Korea in the early twentieth century. Each of these three writers was engaged with the new modern literature and journalism, while working for major recording companies, such as Columbia and Sieron. Several composers at the time had also pursued advanced studies in Western art music. Kim Chun-Yông (1908–61), one of the most prolific composers of the time, was a pianist who had also studied composition in Japan. Among the composers who acquired their higher music education in Western music are Lee Chae-Ho (1914–60), Son Mok-In (1913–), and Lee Myôn-Sang (1908–89).

Unlike these songwriters and composers, singers, whether female or male, came from diverse social strata, even if the highly educated intellectuals even-

tually left the popular music scene in Korea as art music and popular music became increasingly hierarchically divided. As for the male singers, there were two categories: highly educated intellectuals, on the one hand, and *sinjin*, who made their debut through song contests or recording company auditions, on the other. Examples of the first category include Ch'ae Kyu-Yôp (1906–49) and Kim Yong-Hwan (1912–49), while singers in the second category include Ko Pok-Su (1911–72) and Nam In-Su (1918–62).

While there were a number of female singers involved in the early production of Korean popular music, female songwriters and composers were more difficult to locate. Generally, there were three categories of female singers: *kisaeng*, *sinjin*, and theater or cinema actresses. Most of the earliest female singers, however, were *kisaeng*, who were trained in traditional Korean music. Consequently, they performed the new songs using traditional Korean performance practices. For instance, there were no harmonic or melodic musical instrumentations in their early recordings. The traditional Korean percussion instruments, such as *changgo* (an hourglass-shaped drum) and *puk* (a barrel drum), were used only for the rhythmic accompaniment.

Supposedly, the singers and the accompanists did not follow the measure-basis rhythmic rendition in their performance. The singers prolonged the last note of each phrase as long as they wanted. In addition, the female singers utilized the traditional Korean vocal techniques in the new music rendition, while the early male singers perfectly reproduced Western operatic sounds. The female vocal performance practice eventually evolved into the very trademark of the song style *t'ûrot'û*. Lower tones are sung with very wide vibrato, while the upper tones are preceded by an upper appoggiatura sliding downward, called *kkôngnûn sori* (breaking throat). Even the soprano Yun Simdôk, who had a strong Western music background, still used the Korean vocality in her recordings.

In those years, *kisaeng* were also devoted to recording the traditional Korean folksongs called *minyo*. The male intellectuals' efforts to revive traditional Korean folksong also supported the development of folksongs, even if the newly composed songs they produced, called *sin-minyo*, could not be categorized as folk music any more. *Sin-minyo* were composed and recorded by professional musicians, while the traditional folksongs were anonymously and orally passed down. More often than not, popular musicians of those times produced both *yuhaengga* and *sin-minyo*, crossing over musical differences. Representative *sin-minyo* of the time include "Taehan P'algyông" (Korean Landscape), sung by Sônwoo Il-Sôn, "Nûngsu Pôdûl" (Weeping Willow), by Wang Su-Bok, and "Nodûl Kangbyôn" (Riverside of the Plain), by Lee Ūn-P'a. In the end, *sin-minyo* withered, giving way to the new popular song style *t'ûrot'û* around the end of the formative period of Korean popular music.

The Maturation of *T'ûrot'û*: 1945 to the 1970s

In tracing the development of the *t'ûrot'û* genre, I adopt the idea of “saturation and maturation” suggested by Peter Manuel. According to Manuel (2001, 161), some transculturations follow a process of “‘saturation and maturation,’ in which a foreign (often Western) music, after an initial period of domination, is eventually absorbed and either stylistically indigenized or abandoned in favor of syncretic local genres.” In his analysis, Manuel emphasizes local agents’ creative interpretations of the foreign music, as well as the locally re-invented music itself. This being the case, we might say that *t'ûrot'û* was initially developed from a translation of Western or Japanese popular songs, while it was performed with traditional Korean vocal techniques. Since its first stages, *t'ûrot'û* has gone through a stylistic maturation process to become the hegemonic sound in Korea of the 1960s and 1970s. As mentioned above, the maturation of *t'ûrot'û* occurred within multi-dimensional negotiations between contextual forces, particularly political regulations, and the sound itself. In this section, I examine two fundamental questions: How was *t'ûrot'û* politicized? And: How did the sound of *t'ûrot'û* change?

Political Culture

After the country achieved independence on August 15, 1945, Korea went through a period of political turbulence. The first administration was corrupt to the extent that the majority Liberal Party (established in 1951) resorted to blatant, wholesale fraud both to win elections and to amend the constitution. Moreover, there were many suspicious incidents that occurred in each presidential election, such as the sudden deaths of rivals right before election day. Presidential opponent Sin Ik-hûi, for instance, suffered a fatal heart attack after campaigning in Honam province (the southwestern area of South Korea) a week before the 1956 presidential election (Eckert et al. 1990, 352).

The constraints governing public discourse concerning the suspicious deaths of presidential candidates were revealed in several episodes related to popular songs. At that time of Sin’s death, there was a song titled, “Pinaerinûn Honam-sôn” (Raining Honam Railroad), which was written by Son Lo-Won, composed by Park Si-Ch’un, and sung by Son In-Ho. The song was a simple lamentation of a lover’s departure. However, the song had to undergo governmental scrutiny simply because its title mentioned the same place where the presidential rival had recently died. The song was not legally banned in the end, but the government repeatedly interrogated the composer, the songwriter, and even the singer (Yun 1984, 113).

Another musical example was related to the sudden death of presidential candidate Cho Pyông-Ok on February 15, 1960. The song was titled, “Yujông Ch'ônri” (A Long Way with Love), written by Pan Ya-Wól, composed by Kim Pu-Hae, and sung by Park Chae-Hong. The incident began with a newspaper article saying that high school students sang the song with different lyrics, explicitly lamenting the presidential candidate's death. After the publication of that article, the government searched the middle and high school students' pockets thoroughly all over the country looking for the new lyrics (Yun 1984, 113).

As the corruption of the first postwar administration became apparent, on April 19, 1960, urban intellectuals rose up against the government. Nevertheless, it was the new military force that in fact overthrew the republic, eventually controlling the South Korean government for nearly two decades. New president Park Chông-Hûi tried to put in place what was termed “Korean-style democracy,” in effect an authoritarian system of government (Eckert et al. 1990, 353–4). Park geared his administration toward efficient governance in the service of rapid economic development, rather than the realization of a democratic society. The principal missions of the Park administration were the strengthening of anticommunism, rooting out of corruption, and laying of the foundation for a self-reliant national economy (Eckert et al. 1990, 353–4). President Park eventually transformed the presidency into a legal dictatorship, formulating the new *Yusin* Constitution (Revitalizing Reforms) in November 1972.

During the era of the dictatorship, South Korean popular culture was particularly victimized. The administration established censorship committees in order to control popular cultural production for political reasons, considering popular culture as a symbolic carrier of social criticism. There were two governmental committees for the censorship of popular songs: Han'guk Kong-yôn Yulli Wiwônhoe (Korean Performance Ethics Committee) and Pangsong Simûi Wiwônhoe (Broadcasting Consultation Committee). The former was established in May 1976, following the disbanding of its predecessor Han'guk Munhwa Yesul Yulli Wiwônhoe (Korean Culture–Art Ethics Committee), which had been established in January 1966. The mission of the committees was the censorship of inappropriate songs, decisions said to be guided by Korean traditional ethics and morals and the national law and order of those times.⁸ According to research by culture critic Yun Chae-Gól, the former committee banned 1,269 songs (382 Korean songs and 887 foreign songs), while the banned songs by the latter were 1,868 (834 Korean songs and 1,034 foreign songs) between its founding in March 1981 and April 1984 (Yun 1984, 107).

For instance, the South Korean government banned a huge *t'ûrot'û* hit, “Tongbaek Agassi” (The Camellia Girl), sung by the Queen of *T'ûrot'û*, Lee Mi-

Ja, in 1965. The stated reason for the banning was the allegedly Japanese musical aspects of the song: its use of the *yonanuki* scale, duple meter, and certain vocal inflections. Composed, however, of a number of complex issues involving such elements as anticommunism driven by international ideological conflict and the anti-Japanese sensibilities directed by an essentialist nationalism, the broader dynamics of *t'ûrot'û* in the 1960s and 1970s further underlay this incident. Anticommunism has been a prominent and contentious issue in the legislative operations of South Korean administrations since the First Republic until the 1980s. In order to eradicate the ideological values of communism on the deepest level, South Korean administrations tried to manipulate popular cultural productions. The direct musical result was the Westernization of *t'ûrot'û*, as well as the unprecedented fashion for American popular songs in the 1970s. The simple logic was that American culture was considered as the opposite value to the communism, connoting safety in the South Korean context, in particular from the 1950s through the 1970s.

In addition, nationalism was one of the most preferred ideological tools used by South Korean administrations to manipulate popular music production in those years. While people demanded national security, the administration sought to invent a new national identity for popular culture, asserting that South Koreans needed pure Koreanness in their culture. As a result, a new Korean identity was expressed musically, incorporating American musical idioms while at the same time attempting to clear away all traces of Japanese musical influences.

T'ûrot'û of the Golden Era

In the atmosphere of emotional and economic turmoil between independence and the Korean War (1950–3), Hyôn In's "Sillaûi Talbam" (Moonlight of Silla), released in 1945, became a national hit. Since the major American recording companies withdrew from Korea, as well as from Japan, during World War II, it was not surprising that this song's record label, Lucky, would be owned by its composer Park Si-Ch'un and songwriter Yu Ho. Rhythmically, the song was written on a two-beat bolero instead of the two-beat slow trot of the other *t'ûrot'û* songs. The subtly exotic effects of the new rhythm helped the song to become a huge success in the late 1940s. As the volatility of Korea's relationship with Japan was more troubling to Koreans than was the superimposition of Western culture over the local, South Koreans were willing to digest the song's exotic musical idioms, particularly those of American music.

Korean musicians, moreover, drew on American popular musical trends of those times in order to appeal to the American soldiers stationed in Korea,

as well as to bring exotic musical effects to South Korean audiences. There were even special Korean musical troupes, called *Mi-8-gun shodan* (American Eighth Brigade show troupes), who performed only at American military camps in South Korea during the Korean War. Immediately, many *t'ûrot'û* songs began to adopt American popular musical elements, and the lyrics often portrayed America as a dreamland. Examples include Kim Chông-Ae's "Nilliri Mampo" (Nilliri Mambo) in 1952, Song Min-Do's "Naûi T'aenggo" (My Tango) in 1953, Paek Sôl-Hûi's "America Chinatown" in 1954, Yun Il-Lo's "Kit'a Pugi" (Guitar Boogie) in 1955, and An Chông-Ae's "Taejôn Purusû" (Taejôn Blues) in 1956.

While suffering under the weight of political regulations, *t'ûrot'û* saw its golden age in the 1960s. During this period, there were four superstars — Lee Mi-Ja, Pae Ho, Nam Chin, and Na Hun-A — who contributed to the standardization of *t'ûrot'û*. Lee Mi-Ja expressed the female aesthetic of *t'ûrot'û*, lamenting sorrowful love. For his part, Pae Ho extended the thematic material of *t'ûrot'û* to an urban aesthetic, even as his songs still lamented tragic love. In Pae's singing, *t'ûrot'û* came to the dark side of the urban area: his intelligent, urbane image and thick voice reinforced the urban stories of his songs, while their musical styles were still within the recognizable boundaries of *t'ûrot'û*.

Finally, there was a scandalous yet productive rivalry between two major singers, Nam Chin and Na Hun-A. As Nam Chin incorporated features of American rock music, *t'ûrot'û* became danceable: its rhythm got faster and diversified, and the performance style became more flamboyant. In addition, his musical and visual emulation of Elvis Presley brought musical variety and unprecedented popularity to *t'ûrot'û*. Na Hun-A, the other side of the rivalry, returned to the genre's roots and reinvented a typical performing style of *t'ûrot'û*. He focused on traditional characteristics of *t'ûrot'û*, such as vocal breaks and heavy vibratos, while refraining from introducing new effects. His singing style was more traditional than ever before. In the end, the performing style that Na Hun-A established became the performing mark of *t'ûrot'û*.

As *t'ûrot'û* became standardized it also lost its novelty, and by the mid-1970s, it had begun to experience a decrease in popularity. At that moment, a favorable political incident occurred: the South Korean government finally allowed Japanese of Korean descent to visit South Korea. The South Korean government had not openly permitted such visits until that time in part because some of the Korean Japanese were socialists or communists originally from North Korea. However, as the South Korean regime began to have closer relations with Japan, South Korea had to lift the ban on Japanese visits. The resurrection of *t'ûrot'û*, initiated by Cho Yong-P'il's "Torawayo Pusanhange" (Come back to Pusan Harbor), was one of the cultural manifestations of this political transformation.

Cho Yong-P'il was originally an underground rock singer in the Pusan area. One day he saw an advertisement looking for a singer with recording experience. He desperately needed the job and promptly recorded the song "Tora-wayo Pusanhange" without concern for its difference from his own musical background. The song was an immediate success, with more than one million copies sold. Cho's success stimulated other rock singers to produce *t'ûrot'û* songs. Their own transformation could not have come at a better time, since Korean rock singers were under investigation by the government because of marijuana scandals, and they had to change their musical color in order to escape surveillance. This rearticulation of *t'ûrot'û* was fueled by its melding with rock in the 1970s, producing a new subgenre sometimes called *t'ûrot'û gogo* (Lee 1999, 248). Songs in this vein include "Odongnip" (Paulownia Leaf), sung by Ch'oi Hôn in 1977, and "Changmibit Scarf" (Rose-Pink Scarf), sung by Yun Hang-Ki in the late 1970s.

There was a notable insider/outsider difference between Cho Yong-P'il and earlier *t'ûrot'û* singers. Previous *t'ûrot'û* singers, such as Nam Chin and Ha Hun-A, began their musical career with *t'ûrot'û* and moved away from the inside, absorbing outside musical influences like a rock beat and Latin dance rhythms. Meanwhile, Cho Yong-P'il, who was the leader of the *t'ûrot'û* revival in the 1970s, came from the outside, from rock music. However, ultimately their original musical identities did not cross paths: Nam Chin and Na Hun-A have long been considered *t'ûrot'û* singers, while Cho Yong-P'il became an esteemed purveyor of the Korean pop-ballad in the 1980s.

Localizing the Sound of *T'ûrot'û*: The 1980s to the Present

T'ûrot'û gradually lost its dominance in the 1980s, as the easy-listening pop ballad rose to prominence. In this crisis, cassettes had a huge impact on the production of *t'ûrot'û*. As pointed out by Simon Frith (1988, 22), the importance of cassettes was not limited to their economic efficiency. Due to the particular technology involved in cassette production, producers and engineers became more important than in the past, thereby changing the production process of popular music. In other words, a number of small-sized recording companies could easily acquire access to the music business and could participate in the creation of new musical styles. The so-called *t'ûrot'û* medley was invented in this way by small-sized local companies that utilized the cassette technology to reflect local tastes.

The *t'ûrot'û* medley is a seamless rendition of numerous *t'ûrot'û* hits re-arranged over a unifying rhythmic accompaniment. Generally speaking, the musical characteristics of the *t'ûrot'û* medley include lots of echo effects,

double-tracked vocals, danceable rhythm, and synthesizer-oriented small instrumentation. It is mostly produced as cassette music and sold in such spaces as local marketplaces and highway rest areas, rather than in record stores. Although it is hard to measure the size of the market for medleys, it remains easy to find a cart selling these cassettes in marketplaces. Deeply part of the grassroots, *t'ûrot'û* medley tapes have, thus, been commodified as an everyday part of life, particularly for working-class people. The question here is how and why this new sound was invented and preserved as a local musical identity of South Korean working people.

Inventing the Sound of the T'ûrot'û Medley

The *t'ûrot'û* medley initially trickled into the popular music mainstream in the late 1980s via the successes of a couple of big name stars, such as Chu Hyôn-Mi (1961-). Chu Hyôn-Mi is a Chinese-Korean female *t'ûrot'û* singer. The following is part of the text found on a poster for her dinner show, titled “Queen of *T'ûrot'û*, Chu Hyôn-Mi,” on Cheju Island in 2003:

In the mid-1980s, her *t'ûrot'û* medley of old-time hit songs, *ssangssang p'at'i* (couple party), could be heard everywhere in the nation, either on the streets or inside public transportation means, such as buses and taxis. As a heroine, she played a key role in resurrecting *t'ûrot'û* in the 1980s . . . Gaining an unexpected success of the *t'ûrot'û* medley album, she helped develop a new style of *t'ûrot'û*, called *new t'ûrot'û*, which was attractive even to teenagers. . . . (<http://www.yettz.com/culture/hankook>, accessed on November 3, 2003).

Quitting her day job as a pharmacist, which was a respected occupation in South Korea, she began her music career as a *t'ûrot'û* medley singer. Emphasizing her intelligence, she was often called *yaksa kasu* (pharmacist singer). *Ssangssang P'at'i* (Couple Party), released in 1984, was her first *t'ûrot'û* medley album of old-time hit songs. As connoted by the title, *ssangssang* (couple), female singer Chu Hyôn-Mi and male singer Kim Chun-Kyu sang alternately. It is said that the cassette tape sold over a million copies (Kim 1994, 599). As noted by music journalist Kim Yong Jun, Chu Hyôn-Mi was one of those singers who were not strategically promoted by the mass media, but who literally gained enormous popularity from the people themselves on the streets. Chu's success influenced the ensuing *t'ûrot'û* songs, once she made her mega success as a regular *t'ûrot'û* singer after the success of the first medley album.

During a personal interview, a female singer in her mid-thirties, Lee Su-Jin, described how Chu Hyôn-Mi was different from previous singers in terms of vocal style. Chu hardly sang a single note without changing its vocalization, Lee remembers, utilizing a variety of vocal techniques and vocal timbres.

Chu indeed brought a new sound to *t'ûrot'û*, but Chu's impact was beyond her personal vocal style, engaging in the formulation of the *new t'ûrot'û*. In fact, there were several different names for this new music, such as *high-t'ûrot'û* and *semi-t'ûrot'û*, implying the same style of *new t'ûrot'û*. This *t'ûrot'û* has a faster tempo, uses the major diatonic scale, and sets lighthearted lyrics. The new type of *t'ûrot'û* emerged just as the genre was being heavily influenced by medley production, a stylistic change that favored an up-tempo disco rhythm and lighthearted playful lyrics.

One of Chu Hyôn-Mi's hit songs is "Sinsadong Kû Saram" (That Man of Sinsa Street), released in 1988. In contrast to the previous *t'ûrot'û* songs, this is a cheerful and relatively fast love song built from primary chords (Ab, Eb⁷, Db) within the key of Ab major. The lyric is a woman's monologue about a man whom she met once in a nightclub in Sinsadong, a well-known street of nightclubs in Seoul especially frequented by older men and women past the age of forty. This song presumably concerns a casual relationship between a middle-age woman and a man, which conflicts with the emphasis on devotion in marriage espoused in the deeply rooted Confucian morality of Korea. It is a problematic image that could also conflict with the traditional image of *t'ûrot'û* itself, and so we should not interpret the story literally but merely consider it a caricature of the life that middle-aged people would like to have, such as might be portrayed in television dramas.

Chu Hyôn-Mi never lost her charming yet reserved smile with the golden dimples on her cheeks. She might not be so pretty, but her impeccable personality attracted the hearts of South Koreans. Her college-level educational background helped her to create an elegant image, while her songs contained frivolous lyrics. Chu changed the musical scene in her own way, and her impact was to the extent that *t'ûrot'û* regained its vitality. Surely a particularly distinctive vocalization had been the essential element of *t'ûrot'û* for a long time before Chu's appearance. However, Chu took it to another level, in which the vocalization could be tearful (*han*) as well as joyful (*hûng*).

From Local To Global

One more memorable name is Epaksa (Ibaksa, Dr. Lee), which is the stage name of a *t'ûrot'û* medley singer, Lee Yong-Sôk (1954-). Lee had worked as a highway bus-tour guide and singer in South Korea for eleven years in the 1980s and 1990s. Highway bus touring, called *kosok-bus kwan'gwang*, has been a uniquely popular cultural activity for South Koreans, particularly for middle-aged tourists, since the 1980s. As the economy grew miraculously and a web of highways covered the country, South Koreans who had suffered through the

bloody Korean War and the ensuing poverty could afford to go out touring their countryside on a highway bus. The three- to four-hour driving distance to almost every destination in South Korea initially helped to bolster the fervor of group bus touring.

Along with this phenomenon of group bus touring, singing and dancing on the highway buses became itself a site for the production of South Korean popular culture. A karaoke system, equipped with a cassette tape playback machine, a prerecorded tape of the musical accompaniment, and one or two microphones, transforms the tour bus to a new cultural space. The group singing and dancing is, at the same time, motivated by appreciation of the traditional Korean custom of engaging in group activities. This custom centers on the *kye* (lit., agreement or bond), which is a social organization of ten or twenty individuals who share the same interest: the people might be neighbors, friends, relatives, or business contacts. All the members contribute money to a weekly pot for a communal purpose, such as group touring, attention to family matters, or finance. This traditional group has not been only a communal financial support but also a cultural space for those participating.

The newly formed cultural space was a pseudo-disco floor, and it was the danceable *t'ûrot'û* medley, called disco *t'ûrot'û* medley or dance *t'ûrot'û* medley, that was invented for the group dancing and singing culture. The typical recording here consists of ten to twelve similar *t'ûrot'û* songs laid over the same rhythmic accompaniment: that is, pseudo-disco. The rhythm should not be too complicated, nor too fast. Its beat is basically grounded upon a strong two-beat trot, instead of the sixteen-beat rhythmic layer as in regular disco. Epaksa's first album was also made up of disco *t'ûrot'û* medley. His mega hit cassette tape, titled *Sinbaram Epaksa* (Excitement Epaksa), sold more than 400,000 copies.

In 1995, Epaksa signed a three-year contract with Sony. It is said that the president of Sony was immediately attracted to this local sound, once he heard Epaksa's music at a highway rest area while traveling around South Korea, and he himself approached this unknown singer. Since then, Epaksa has been recording in Japan, and he even received recognition as "New Singer of the Year" at the Japanese Popular Music Awards in 1996 for his first album in Japan, *Ppongchak Paekkwâ Sajôn* (Encyclopedia of Ppongchak). Four years later, in 2000, Epaksa returned to South Korea with his new album with Sony, *Space Fantasy*. For this album, he incorporated the old-fashioned *t'ûrot'û* medley with highly updated musical concepts such as techno rhythms.

Later, Epaksa's techno *t'ûrot'û* medley acquired a stable fan base to the extent that it became an independent sub-genre of the *t'ûrot'û* medley and was adopted by young punk rock groups such as Polppalgan and Talp'aran. These young rockers even invited Epaksa as a guest singer to their live concerts, at

which the audience was mostly composed of college students. Epaksa's acutely satirical lyrics and versatile improvisations expressed people's voices in the way that traditional folksongs like *p'ansori* used to centuries ago, while his adaptability made this particular local culture become a cultural product that could generate its autonomous marketability to the extent that it attracted foreign investments from the likes of Sony Music.

The T'ûrot'û Medley Production Process

The *t'ûrot'û* medley cassette is an extremely efficient commodity. The price of a medley cassette tape is around 2,500 *won* (approx. US\$2.00), less than half the price of a regular cassette tape. Despite the remarkably low price, this musical production is absolutely legal. The practice of compiling either contemporary or legendary hits on one tape, a medley cassette tape, has become routine in South Korean popular culture, and the legal procedure of musical ownership and copyright has had to be adjusted accordingly. There are generally two ways to purchase the ownership or copyright for a medley production in South Korea. The first type of medley production records hit songs that were produced at least one and a half years before the release of the medley. In this case, the producer has to register and pay for the songs through the Korea Music Copyright Association (KOMCA). The fees for the purchase are fixed, no matter how successful the hit songs were in the past. The second type of medley production re-records hit songs produced within the past one and a half years. This procedure may be extremely personal. Sometimes, a producer can obtain rights to the songs he or she wants to use for free, as long as he or she has a personal connection with the songwriter. Otherwise, the producer is obligated to pay a fee that satisfies the songwriter's pride. The negotiated fees are confidential and even highly exaggerated for the sake of the songwriter's fame.

Experienced producer Chông Chin-Yông has described the process through which *t'ûrot'û* medley tapes are produced. First of all, a producer decides who will be the main audience, where will be the main market, and so forth. As will be seen in the ethnographies regarding its marketplaces, the character of each *t'ûrot'û* medley is closely related to its expected marketplace and intended customers. Second, after the paperwork regarding the copyright is complete, the producer requests a midi-instrumental tape for the sound engineers. The midi-instrumental tape is full of electronic and synthesized sounds with an incessant two-beat rhythm, in either fast or slow tempo. The midi-instrumentation should be small and simple, because the vocals are destined to be more important than the accompaniment in a *t'ûrot'û* medley. Next, the producer contacts guitar and/or saxophone players who are well known for decorating the

midi-instrumental tape with guitar arpeggio solos or saxophone solos. Chông reports that there is a small number of specialists in this field, and that they are able to create their solos within a few moments after first hearing the midi-instrumental tape. The guitar and saxophone embellishment is patterned as a counterpart to the vocal, imitating the vocal performance of the main melody.

According to Chông, the *t'ûrot'û* medley sound should not be too clean, because such cleanness may disturb the togetherness and intimacy created by the group dancing on the highway bus. More often than not, sound engineers even add echo sound effects onto the double-tracked vocals for the very same reason, making the so-called sticky sound (*kkûnjôkhan sori*). Chông went on to assert that the recording sounds of *t'ûrot'û* medley tapes should reflect the Korean traditional marketplace. Realizing the importance of local tastes, he named this particular configuration of sounds the *changbadak* sound (the sound of the traditional marketplace), associating it with its representative marketplace through the term *chang* (traditional marketplace).

Marketplaces, People, and Music

In February 2003, I visited a Seoul street market outside the Royal Ancestral Shrine in Chongno. The area has a park where older middle-class and working-class citizens, particularly men, spend their time playing Chinese chess (*changgi*) and Korean chess (*paduk*; Japanese: *go*). There are charity concerts organized in the square every one or two weeks, and one I attended took the theme *hyo*, the Confucian ethic of filial piety and respect for elders. The repertory was mostly *t'ûrot'û*, both old hits and more recent songs. The audience participated actively, dozens of old men coming out and dancing to the music in the middle of the square.

The very small street market (small in terms of both physical size and capital scale) consisted of a couple of old men sitting on little benches behind cassettes spread on the ground. The price of the tapes was, at around 2,000 *wôn*, affordable for any retired men. The customers did not seem to care about the sound quality. One I talked with said he looked for any medley tape; he listened to them when his grandchildren were out because they did not like *t'ûrot'û*. There were two kinds of medley tapes available: an omnibus version of hits sung by well-known performers, and the so-called faceless medley singers' renditions. Both retained the stereotypical duple meter in slow tempi, and the songs were mostly old hits, including classics from the 1930s and 1940s.

A month later I visited a second marketplace, the much larger, more popular, and more famous Namdaemun Sijang, near Seoul's South Gate. There were large displays of cassettes. One salesman told me he had all kinds of popular

songs on his cart. He claimed to be able to change the entire South Korean music market, since customers were inclined to buy the tape that was playing when they paused at his stall. Customers tended to buy compilations evoking a certain aura or style, rather than a particular song. The market caters to a variety of people in terms of age, class, and gender, and I could find any number of different medley tapes, such as café *t'ûrot'û* medleys, disco *t'ûrot'û* medleys, and techno *t'ûrot'û* medleys. The first of these, café *t'ûrot'û* medleys, is produced mostly for middle-aged housewives and fits stylistically between typical *t'ûrot'û* and 1980s ballads. Their rhythmic base can be more Western, often using Latin dance rhythms, and the vocal inflection simpler than the profuse ornamentation of regular *t'ûrot'û*. The medium tempi suit the café environment, and the text themes are generally contemporary and romantic. The salesman, though, told me that customers who were drivers of buses or taxis mainly bought disco *t'ûrot'û* medleys.

One such disco *t'ûrot'û* medley on compact disk that I was given by Chông Chin-Yông, titled *2002 Medley*, begins with a strong Latin beat, followed by a splendid acoustic Latinesque guitar solo above a full orchestra, and ending immediately before the vocal with a brief electric guitar solo. The rhythm settles down to the typical *t'ûrot'û* duple in fast tempo once the vocalist enters, while the instruments combine with a techno backing. The double-tracked vocal preserves the essence of *t'ûrot'û*, with heavy vocal inflection, nasal production, breaking-throat falling appoggiaturas, and echo effects. The album's themes range from the typical longing for a lost lover to particularly modern behavior such as a woman's explicit flirting. It is notable that as the rhythm of *t'ûrot'û* got faster in the late 1980s, so the themes changed to reflect contemporary life.

Highway rest areas remain one of the most convenient marketplaces for highway bus drivers and truck drivers to purchase cassette tapes. Due to government control over public spaces, record stores in rest areas are neat and modern. They sell *t'ûrot'û* medleys, but at a price slightly higher than other markets. The salespeople are young uniformed women who package the cassettes in fancy plastic bags, and it is hard to find any personal bonding between them and their customers. I noticed that the market consisted mainly of *t'ûrot'û* and adult comedy tapes containing sexually explicit jokes.

Bonding between salespeople and customers is more a feature of the final and crucial type of marketplace, *changt'ô* (traditional fairs). Moran Changt'ô is one such fair. Held in the south of Kyônggi province, it takes place on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month in a huge parking lot near a subway station. In 2003, when I visited, I was surprised because I had not expected to observe so many old cultural practices that these days are largely confined to movies, such as those featuring snakes and acrobats. There was a music wagon

at one corner of the fair, similar in layout to the carts of Namdaemun Sijang, and on this were a variety of *t'ûrot'û* medley cassettes. Customers ranged in age from the mid-thirties to eighties, both men and women, and the most popular *t'ûrot'û* subgenre appeared to be disco medleys, with most customers requesting cheerful songs. A second small cart contained daily necessities such as small batteries, torches, and calculators, but also songbooks and *t'ûrot'û* tapes.

The owner of this cart told me that his main customers are old men, just like him, and the songbooks he had on display contained lyrics of old songs in big fonts, suitable for the old to read, while his *t'ûrot'û* tapes mostly featured old hits. Coming to this marketplace, he said, was all about nostalgia, sharing feelings and togetherness. I also encountered a performance of *t'ûrot'û* at Moran Ch'angt'ò. This event featured the pseudo-traditional song-drama *Kaksôri T'aryông*, a beggar's play presented by an actor, a drummer, a salesman, and a saleswoman. The actor performed a few *t'ûrot'û* songs, and then the crew sold both traditional sweets (*yôt*) and *t'ûrot'û* medley tapes.

It took about three decades of economic growth after the end of the Korean War for South Koreans to finally acquire sufficient disposable income to be able to afford entertainment. Working adults began to go out together, traveling through their rejuvenated countryside, once destroyed by the war, along their proudly constructed highways. All the social dynamics involved in this phenomenon resonate through the production of *t'ûrot'û* medleys. A particular form of local culture, the *t'ûrot'û* medley has been produced since the 1980s, incorporating the familiar song style of *t'ûrot'û*, harnessing cassette technology and dance fervor. As *t'ûrot'û* was localized in medley form, the music, once a hip part of urban bourgeoisie culture, was embraced by the working class.

Traditionalizing the Practice of *T'ûrot'û*: The 1990s to the Present

Surprisingly, in recent years *t'ûrot'û* has come to be regarded as a symbolic composite of traditional Korean social values. *T'ûrot'û* is now referred to as *chôn't'ong kayo* (traditional popular song) in South Korean popular discourse, an ironic name given the debates over the genre's inherent Koreanness in the 1970s and 1980s. *T'ûrot'û* singers, in addition, have acquired the image of true Koreans dedicated to the preservation of traditional norms such as *hyo*, *innasim* (perseverance), and *chinjiam* (sincerity). The singers now usually wear formal suits or traditional Korean costumes expressing their respect for the audience. They bow deeply and gently to the audience before and after (even in the middle of) their performances. They also try to describe their sincerity and integrity as good Koreans in many different ways, such as presenting wholesome versions of their life stories on the Web, performing at charity concerts

for the elderly, and so forth. Here, I conclude this study with an ethnographic examination of the new meaning that is being created in the present performance practice of *t'ûrot'û*.

Television Shows

South Korean television programming contains a number of concert-type shows that feature popular music. Today, there are approximately four different shows⁹ on national channels dedicated to *t'ûrot'û*, while a few others also include it in their main repertoire. What follows is an examination of two representative shows: *Kayo Mudae* (Popular Song Stage) and *Kayo K'onssôt'û* (Popular Song Concert). In this analysis, the arenas of the contemporary television shows include the interactions between the listeners/viewers and performers/producers on the Web. Since July 1997, most South Korean television programs have provided their own Internet broadcasting with supplementary services like an opinion board, advertisements, and so forth. As a result, the tremendous accessibility and interactivity of the Internet services have enhanced the intimate relationships between the listeners/viewers and the performers/producers (Hwang 1997, 28).

The first case is *Kayo Mudae*, a one-hour television concert that has been aired through the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) at 10:00 p.m. every Monday for several decades. It is the only television show specializing in *t'ûrot'û* songs of previous eras.¹⁰ The target audience is the elderly population and the show is programmed in a respectful way.

For instance, the Internet free ticket promotion for the show embodied the social values that the show itself promotes and, at the same time, makes use of. A free ticket was not given away to anyone who applied; rather, it was given only to those who sent in stories conforming to the criteria. One of the criteria can be seen in the title of the promotion: *hyo*. Basically, the free tickets were intended to be given to those who wanted to go to the concert with their parents or elders.

The show itself also functions as social cement, reinforcing traditional values by introducing certain stories during the broadcast. The following is a transcription of a part of the story-telling sections of an airing of *Kayo Mudae* from January 2003:

The host: The next story has been sent by an old lady who has been suffering from her illness for a long time. She requested this song because she wants to thank her patient husband for taking care of her, even though he is also sick and old . . . [The host reads her letter.]

The host: The next story came from China. The man who wrote the letter, a

Korean-Chinese, used to work in South Korea two years ago. After the economic crisis in South Korea, he had to return to his home in China without getting paid for the last couple of months. However, a year later, he received a letter with money from the former boss of the company in South Korea. The man was deeply moved, and sent a letter to this show to thank the honest and sincere boss . . . [Camera focuses on the boss among the audience.]

The host: This story was written by an old soldier who wants to find his comrade during the military services in the 1970s . . . [The camera focuses on the old picture of the soldiers.]

The selected stories engage values of the traditional Korean ethos: *jông* (Korean sentiment) and *ûiri* (faithfulness). The show host read the stories before different singers' performances, through which each song could be made to be associated with certain stories of a certain ethos. The song style *t'ûrot'û* was, in this way, symbolically invested with the values that the show promoted.

Unlike *Kayo Mudae*, *MBC Kayo K'onssôt'û*, a one-hour television concert broadcast by Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), is programmed for middle-aged adults. The major repertoire of the concert consists of contemporary *t'ûrot'û* songs, and the majority of the singers are new faces. I attended the concert on March 10, 2003. Even though its airing time is at 11:00 a.m. every Friday, the concert was held at 3:00 in the afternoon on Monday. Admission was free and on a first-come basis. The line to get in formed more than an hour before the start of the show, and most of those waiting were middle-aged housewives, middle-aged self-employed men, or the elderly. Once the audience was seated, there was a short and casual song contest intended to set the proper mood. Then, the host showed up with the spotlight, singing and walking slowly down the stairs. He wore a white suit matched with a white hat. After finishing his singing, the host bowed deeply to the audience, complimenting the audience's attendance at his humble concert. All the singers of the concert performed contemporary lighthearted and playful *t'ûrot'û* songs.

This show also has its own webpage. The objectives of the show that are posted on the Web (www.imbc.com/tv/ent/produce.html, accessed on April 3, 2003) are:

*Taehanmin'guk kungminiramyon nuguna jûlgilsu innûn Yuk'waeahan Live Concert!
Talk Concert! 100% Live! T'ûrot'û Kasu!*

Joyful Live Concert that every South Korean citizen can enjoy! Talk Concert! 100% Live! *T'ûrot'û* Singer!

Here, four words stand out for examination: *nuguna* (everyone), *yuk'waeahan* (joyful), *talk concert* (talk concert), and *100% live*. First of all, the producer of the concert insists that *t'ûrot'û* should be regarded as the authentic Korean

popular music, stating that every South Korean citizen (*Taehanmin'guk kung-miniramyôn nuguna*) can enjoy the show. Second, the webpage defines *t'ûrot'û* as a joyful song style by characterizing the concert as a joyful (*yuk'waehan*) show. Third, the concert is said to be a talk show, even though talk, as such, is not the main mission of the event. Instead, during the concert, the host Park Yông-Kyu, a middle-aged actor, sings and talks with the singers between the performances. The conversations are mostly about life, weather, love, and everyday life. Lastly, the concert is designed as a live show, unlike other television concerts for younger viewers, emphasizing the sincerity of the show. In short, the concert is presented as a sincere live show, defining *t'ûrot'û* as the authentic and joyful Korean popular music.

Local Festivals and Song Contests

There are a number of festivals in South Korea named after famous songwriters or singers of *t'ûrot'û*. Nanyông Kayoje was titled after the great female singer Lee Nan-Yông (1916–65), Nam In-Su Kayoje after the great male singer Nam In-Su (1918–62), Pae Ho Kayoje after the singer Pae Ho (1942–71), and Un-Bong Kayoje after the singer Ko Un-Bong (1920–2001). The festivals, as commemorative ceremonies, are mostly hosted either by private organizations that commemorate the particular musicians, or by local broadcasting stations of the regions in which the musicians were born. The festivals are not programmed only for commemorating the late musicians, however, but also for establishing the song style *t'ûrot'û* itself as a traditional Korean song style and producing new *t'ûrot'û* singers who conform to the images conveyed in the festivals.

For instance, there is a festival/song contest, Kayo Hwangje Nam In-Su Kayoje (Song Festival for the Emperor of Popular Song Nam In-Su). Nam In-Su was a first-generation singer of *t'ûrot'û* who reached a pinnacle of popularity in the 1930s and 1940s. A private association cherishing the late singer, Kayo Hwangje Nam In-Su Sônseong Kinyôm Saôphoe (Commemorative Business-Association of Sir Nam In-Su, Emperor of Popular Song), has hosted the festival for the last decade. I attended its thirteenth festival on a Sunday afternoon, April 13, 2003. It was held at an outdoor concert hall in the Children's Grand Park in Seoul.

The festival began with the Korean traditional dance *salp'uri*, because the late Nam In-Su was known to have a great affection for the dance. Then the host read a poem about the late Nam In-Su, while the audience observed a moment of silence. The beginning part of the festival was designed to be an authoritative commemorative ceremony for the late Nam In-Su. The festival was followed by professional *t'ûrot'û* singers' performances and an amateur song contest.

Among the professional singers were established artists and young new faces. Each group's backstage activities differed from the other's. Big-name singers were invited to the festival only for their performance, while the younger ones came to engage in other activities, including guiding the older singers around the stage area and serving food to the performers. Even though the junior singers could not perform in the festival, they were, out of respect, willing to participate in the event as helpers. Female singers mostly wore the Korean traditional costume *hanbok*, while men preferred Western suits. As could be seen in most formal ceremonies like weddings and funerals, men's Western suits and women's *hanbok* have been formalized, expressing dignity and respect in modern South Korean culture.

The audience of the festival was mostly composed of senior citizens and middle-aged people. As the excitement increased, a group of old men came to the front yard right below the stage and danced along with the music, while the rest of the audience clapped together. They shared their togetherness through this particular song style, *t'ûrot'û*. Soon, the sharing of emotion was followed by a sharing of ethics, which was an award ceremony for the singers who successfully performed one of the Korean traditional virtues, *sônhaeng* (good conduct). The awards for the good conduct implied that bodily performance of traditional morals should be considered to be as important as the sonic performance, particularly as far as *t'ûrot'û* is concerned.

The Nam In-Su festival was, thus, a field for the reproduction of *t'ûrot'û*. It began with a commemorative ceremony for the late Nam In-Su, establishing a connection to the past. Thereafter, the whole festival was geared to traditionalizing *t'ûrot'û*, incorporating bodily performances of traditional Korean values, such as the respectful relationship between senior and junior singers, the traditional Korean costumes of female singers, and the award ceremony for the singers' good conduct. Finally, it finished with a song contest, in which new *t'ûrot'û* singers were produced, conforming to the images that the festival had created.

Afterthoughts

My research indicates that there have been different characterizations of *t'ûrot'û* identity throughout its history. Even though they overlap in many ways, I categorize them into three standpoints: 1) essentialists, in particular cultural imperialists, who assert that *t'ûrot'û* originated from a Japanese musical tradition, 2) essentialists who assert that *t'ûrot'û* originated from a Korean musical tradition, and 3) evolutionists who deal with *t'ûrot'û* as an organic Korean music. While many early studies focused on the origin of *t'ûrot'û*, the

present work has examined the evolutionary process through which the concept of *t'ûrot'û* has come to be multilayered, dealing with dialectical relationships between the music and the society. For this purpose, in dissecting the politically and historically positioned knowledge regarding *t'ûrot'û*, I have invoked different voices involved in its cultural production, including those of producers, critics, musicians, and listeners, as well as my own. In conclusion, *t'ûrot'û* has had different meanings and different sounds throughout history, and these have been negotiated within the relationships existing between the music, politics, and the public consciousness.

Notes

¹The program was aired on April 19, 2003. If consistent with the main viewership of the program, the survey was conducted with adults in their late thirties and older. *T'ûrot'û* is in this light considered as a Korean adult music, often called *sôngin kayo* (adult popular song) in the public domain, such as in the titles of television shows.

²Traditional Korean musician Hwang Pyông-Ki initiated the debate, and then musicologist Sô Woo-Sôk and popular music critic Kim Chi-P'yông responded in the newspaper. Basically, they argued about the origin of *t'ûrot'û*, analyzing its essential musical elements and comparing them with either Japanese musical traditions or Korean musical idioms. Hwang asserted that *t'ûrot'û* was a cultural remnant of the Japanese colonial period, while Sô and Kim insisted on its Korean origin. Both perspectives, as essentialists, focused on the nationality of *t'ûrot'û* on the basis of its scale and rhythm.

³The ethnography is based upon fieldwork in Seoul and Kyônggi province (surrounding Seoul) undertaken in 2002 and 2003.

⁴Another popular name of this music is *ppongtchak* (imitating the sound of duple rhythm). The term *ppongtchak* has been widely used since the 1950s (Hwang 2001, 814). However, since it was considered as a derogatory name ridiculing the music, a number of popular musicians and music critics suggested that it should be renamed with a nobler term, such as *sôjông kayo* (local popular song) or *chônt'ong kayo*.

⁵Kim In-Sik was one of the pioneers who introduced Western art music into Korea. He was one of the first teachers at the first Western music school in Korea, Chosôn Chôngak Chônshûpso (Chosôn Art Music School), beginning in 1913.

⁶Music critic Lee Yông-Mi, on the other hand, asserted that the 1932 "Hwangsôngûi Chôk" (Empty Space of the Yellow Old Castle) was the first *yuhaengga*, pointing out that the previous songs, including "Nakhwa Yusu," were not quite separated from the children's songs or traditional Korean-style songs (Lee 1999, 59). One of the differences that Lee focused on was that "Hwangsôngûi Chôk" began to use the authentic *yonanuki* minor scale that eventually became a musical element of the early *t'ûrot'û*. In fact, the early *t'ûrot'û* songs produced before 1945 were mostly based upon three-note motives, such as the descending trichord motive (*mi*)-*do*-*ti-la* and an ascending melodic figure with the pentatonic scale *re-ti-do-mi-fa* (Shin 2001, 295).

⁷ Kim Yông-Hwan was born into the lower class, with a mother of the *kisaeng* profession. He was not only a songwriter, but also one of the most famous *pyônsa*, narrators for the silent movies. He also wrote film scripts.

⁸ The censorship is based upon four criteria: anything undermining the national security, indiscrete imitation of foreign songs, defeatist or negative themes, and decadent or lascivious expressions (Yun 1984, 112–14). In particular, *t'ûrot'û* was considered to be associated with the first, second, and third items of the criteria.

⁹ The four television shows are *Kayo Mudae* (Popular Song Stage), aired by KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), *Kayo K'onsôt'û* (Popular Song Concert) by MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation), *Kayosho* (Popular Song Show) by SBS, and *Sôngin Kayo Pesût'û 30* (Best 30 Adult Popular Songs) by iTV (Kyôngin Broadcasting Limited).

¹⁰ The repertoires of the show sometimes contain a variety of songs of old times such as ballads and *t'ong-kit'a* songs (acoustic guitar music; South Korean youth music in the early 1970s). However, they mostly belong to *t'ûrot'û*.

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