Korean *P'ansori* in Yanbian:

Transmission, Development, and Preservation

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1. Introduction

In December 2013, during the Fifth National Ethnic Minority Quyi Show, the *p'ansori* showcase performed by the Yanbian Dance and Song Troupe won the national first prize for the first time in this competition(Liu, 2013). As an important cultural heritage of Korean ethnic group (Chaoxianzu, 朝鲜族), *p'ansori* (盘索里) is a singing and narrative storytelling performance in the genre of narrative song (*quyi*, 曲艺), an art form which integrates speech and song to tell complex stories accompanied by some kind of musical instrument, and is usually performed by a specialized artist with profound knowledge in history and culture (Tian, 1998). The term *p'ansori*

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is derived from the words *p'an* and *sori*. The literal translation of *p'an* is an open space where many people gather. It symbolizes the arena for total participation, both physically and mentally, and contextualizes the occasion as well as specifying the stage, time, and situation. *Sori* is the word for sounds or song, but in this particular performance it also assumes the meaning of storytelling (Park, 2000). The word *p'ansori* refers to the original performance venues, which are mostly informal. Indeed, a straw mat is all that is needed to set the stage.

P'ansori is performed typically by one vocalist traditionally called *kwangdae*(which refers to "clown" in Korean)and a drummer (*gosu*) who plays the single barrel drum *buk*. The *kwangdae*, or "singer of tales," alternates between *ch'ang* (singing) and *aniri* (speaking, narrating). The tales introduce the background, characters, plots, and settings, and facilitate understanding through explanation and commentary, while singing heightens the emotions conveyed and draws the audience to a deeper dramatic immersion (Park, 2000). The narrative structure of *p'ansori*is a serial alternation between tension and relaxation (Seo, 1988), combining the senses of hearing and seeing perfectly and presenting the audience with a unique viewing experience.

P'ansori, like all other art forms, has undergone significant transformations in the multimedia-based world. In an effort to preserve this performance tradition, *p'ansori* was declared as an "intangible cultural asset" by the South Korean government in 1964, and was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 (proclaimed in 2003)(P'ansori Epic Chant). It was also included in the third list of Intangible Cultural Heritage selected by the State Council of China in 2011, originally declared by northeastern regions

of China including Tieling City of Liaoning Province and the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Jilin Province(ICH China, 2011). Despite its rich historical background and cultural significance, *p'ansori* remains a relatively less well-known performance tradition in China, and this research strives to explore the history and evolution of *p'ansori* as it spread from Korea to China, as well as the future of *p'ansori* in China in the digitized information age.

2. History and Geographical Prevalence of *P'ansori*

Originating from the late 17th century to early 18th century in the Jeolla region of Joseon Korea, *p'ansori* is a performance tradition that is hypothesized to have emerged from shamanism, because of its similarity with *muga*, or shamanic songs (Chun, 2004; Park, 1998; Park, 2003), while various other influences like folk entertainment (*pan noreum*) have also been absorbed in its development process (Mills, 2012). Some scholars have also posited that *p'ansori* was influenced by Chinese *guci* (鼓词) (Guo and Min, 2011), a type of narrative song performance popular in the North. At its initiation stage, the lyrics were relatively short, and the melodies were much simpler as well. The twelve repertoires of *p'ansori* were created, and these works reflected the social phenomenon through tragic and humor, using a variety of rhetorical techniques including pun, slander and parody to mock and satirize the upper class noble people (Kim, 2008a; Jang, 2013; Pihl, 1993). As *p'ansori* reached its golden age in the 19th century, it became widely enjoyed by both common people and the elites. This is reflected by the change in its vocal techniques and

melodies, as well as the adoption of Confucian ethics and teachings. As a result, *p'ansori* began to offer moral instruction in addition to entertainment and satire.

Following the immigration of Korean people during the early 20th century, *p'ansori* has also become part of the cultural tradition of the Korean diaspora in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Jilin Province, China. Chaoxianzu started to take form in the Qing Dynasty, during which the majority of immigrants from the Korean Peninsula were people from the lower caste of society, who faced increased control from the Qing government in an attempt to assimilate different cultures. With the formation of the Republic of China, ethnic Koreans were suppressed by Japan and the Northeastern warlords. After the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, further measures were taken by Imperial Japan to oppress the culture of ethnic Koreans, including honoring the Japanese emperor, forbidding the use of Korean language in schools, and adopting Japanese names (Xu, 2010; 2012).

After the end of the Chinese civil war, Yanbian became an autonomous region for ethnic Koreans in 1952, and was designated as an autonomous prefecture in 1955. It has become an economical and geographical center of Northeast China (Xu, 2010; 2012). The dual-history and background of ethnic Koreans contributed to their unique culture as a member of one of the many ethnic groups in China, also influencing the development of *p'ansori* in Yanbian.

The introduction of *p'ansori* into China can be roughly divided into three stages (Bian, 2009; Jin Yilan, 2012). The first one is natural diffusion through immigration in early 20th century to the 1950s, when *p'ansori* was mainly performed during festivals, wedding, funerals, and other occasions.

The second period marked the systematic study of local performers by the Yanbian Song and Dance Troupe, with the adaption of song cycles into *Yueju* opera (越剧), Peking Opera (京剧), and other theatrical productions (Jin Changhao, 1987). *P'ansori* was banned during the Cultural Revolution, and starting from the 1980s, new cultural heritage inheritors, including Jiang Xinzi (姜信子), witnessed the third period of development that contributed to the significant differences between Yanbian *p'ansori* and Korean *p'ansori* (Ning, 2008, 2012), including the following aspects:

(1) Singing style. With the influence of Western music and aesthetics, performers became critical of the original way of singing, and rough sound typically employed in *p'ansori* is no long appreciated. Instead, Yanbian *p'ansori* resembles bel canto more, which is clear, sonorous, and resounding, and has somewhat lost its narrative aspect of performance.

(2) Musical accompaniment. *Janggu* has replaced the Korean barrel drum in Yanbian *p'ansori*, and on some occasions other traditional instruments are used to add to the melody and harmony of music as well as to enhance stage effects.

(3) Audience. The range of audience *p'ansori* targets has become much narrower, and the viewers also ceased to actively participate in the performance through words of encouragement. Because *p'ansori* is performed in Korean, there exists a substantial difficulty in understanding the content of the performance for most viewers, which led to the lack of interest in Chinese audience and the marginalization of Yanbian *p'ansori*.

(4) Preservation. The significant number of sheet music and other written or multi-media materials demonstrates the transformation of *p'ansori* from an oral performance tradition to a well-documented one for better preservation. Current performances also lack its original

improvisatory nature but are formalized and standardized.

(5) Transmission. From *kou chuan xin shou* (口传心授), which means oral instruction that seeks to inspire understanding, to systematic school education, the original instructional method has become supplementary to learning through sheet music accompanied by piano. This change at the same time, also influences ways of practice and the understanding of what characteristics constitute an ideal performance (Bian, 2009; Jin, 2012; Ning, 2008, 2012; Wang and Jin, 2013).

3. Content and Repertoire

As mentioned above, due to the influence of Neo-Confucianism that became the ruling principles of Joseon Korea, control exercised by the upper class patrons over the content and texts led to rejection of obscene and inappropriate themes (Jang, 2013; Um, 2008). By the late 19th century, the *p'ansori* repertoire shrank from the original twelve major works to six, compiled by the scholar Sin Chaehyo (1812-84), whichwere deemed as the most presentable. The Song of Pyon Kangsoe was later dropped due to its vulgarity (Park, 1998), and the remaining five pieces are: the Song of Ch'unhyang (*Ch'unhyangga*), which tells the story of a beautiful woman who showed unwavering love and fidelity to her husband; the Song of Sim Cheong (*Simcheongga*), which is about a filial and pious daughter who was willing to sacrifice her own life to help her father regain eyesight; the Song of Heungbu (*Heungbug*), a story about a kind but poor man and his evil, avaricious elder brother; the Song of the Underwater Palace (*Sugungga* 水宫歌), a fairy tale about a loyal turtle and a witty hare; and

the Song of the Red Cliff (*Jeokbyeokga*赤壁歌), which depicts the battle of Jeokbyeok from the Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi*三国演义) (Park, 2003; 2008; 2013).

The main themes of these works all coincide with the five cardinal relationships or ethical codes of Confucian ideology, including loyalty to the king, filial piety to parents, fidelity to husband, respect for elder brother, and trust between friends (Um, 1992; 1993; 1999; 2008). All *p'ansori* narratives relate the trials and hardships the protagonists have suffered, and a happy ending is accorded to each story following the tribulations. Indeed, the mainstreaming of Confucianism following the denial of Buddhism as national religion in Joseon Korea was responsible for the decrease in repertoire and the preservation of the remaining song cycles (Um, 2008). Social order based on Confucianism was understood as universal moral order (Haboush, 1995). The shift of *p'ansori*'s main patronage from common people to elites(*yangban*) in the 19th century, and the advent of upper-class *p'ansori* performers, also significantly influenced the censorship of the texts to purge inappropriate, vulgar, and obscene themes that contradicted Confucian ideology. This also marked the transformation of *p'ansori* into a form of pedagogical tool for teaching morality and principles (Piao, 2009).

The upper-class critics also led to the refinement of the texts to include more elegant lyrics. Lines of Chinese poetry and classical literature/ allusions were borrowed, and many expressions mimicked the written language to cater to the tastes of the upper elites and aristocrats(Pihl, 1993). For example, in one scene of *Ch'unhyangga*, when Lee Mongryong first met Ch'unhyang, many Chinese classical allusions were employed to describe Ch'unhyang's beauty (Zhao, 2013). Humorous

works decreased greatly, as the upper class patrons were preoccupied with appropriate literary content (Um, 1992; 1999) and favored elegance, seriousness, and tragedy, which conformed to the Neo-Confucian teachings and ideals of temperance (Kim, 2008a).

Furthermore, Neo-Confucian influence also shaped fundamentally how women were portrayed in *p'ansori* performances. In a highly hierarchical society ruled by Confucian ideology, patriarchal oppression and subordination of women were omnipresent. Women were marginalized in society, shielded from public domains, and restricted to the domestic sphere. This phenomenon became increasingly evident as the male-dominant discourse and Confucianism's gender-restricting morality became more repetitive and repressive (Lee, 2010), and as a result restrictions on women's behavior and comportment became even more rigid. Perhaps due to the need for education of proper behavior for women, females were favored as central characters in *p'ansori* works. Interestingly however, they were not presented as distinctive individuals but as what they should be like as exemplary roles in a patriarchal and patrilineal society (Park, 2008). A uniform portrait of women was typically featured in all types of works in addition to *p'ansori*. For example, the main character Ch'unhyang in the representative *p'ansori* play *Ch'unhyangga* struggled to preserve her dignity and chastity when being separated from her husband. This gender construction of femininity was reflective of the Confucian ideal of cultivating proper female characteristics. *P'ansori*, as a tool of the *yangban* class, was used for the indoctrination of women to have proper modes of conduct, and the idealized imagery of them as loyal wives and filial daughters highlighted the virtues such as chastity and filial piety, while overriding their

importance as specific individuals.

In spite of the limitations to *p'ansori* imposed by Neo-Confucianism, the themes of these works to some extent facilitated the integration of this performance genre in China. Despite the oppression of Confucianism from the 1950s to the period of Cultural Revolution, Confucian teachings still remain a significant part of Chinese philosophy widely adopted by contemporary people and create an important link between the culture where *p'ansori* originated and the current performance context of Yanbian *p'ansori* (Li, 2013). These texts also emphasize "universal values" of punishing wrongdoings, rewarding good deeds, fidelity between husband and wives, and tending one's parents (Zhao, 2013), which are easy for modern audience to understand and resonate with.

4. Music and Performance: Continuation and Differences

Originally performed in the marketplace and other public locations and gradually gaining popularity among the upper class, *p'ansori* exhibits several features that remain fairly constant throughout its development and are crucial to appreciating this performance tradition.

1) Musical structure

Singing and narration are central to the performance; they complement each other to facilitate the development of the story through emphasizing the image of the characters and inner thoughts, as well as to express appropriate emotions and create an artistic balance between tension and

release (Li, 1989). A few elements are characteristic of the musical structure of *p'ansori*, including *jo* and *jangdan*.

Jo is the melodic modes created through an arrangement of usually five musical notes (Kim, 2008b), the use of which is determined by the sentiments that need to be conveyed. *Gyemyeonjo* is based on shaman songs, and many ornaments are used to evoke sad feelings. P*yeongjo*, on the other hand, is characterized by calm and peaceful sounds and is thus used to depict bright, peaceful emotions and cheerful situations. Finally, *ujo* expresses a masculine voice and elicits grand feelings, and is often used to describe heroic figures or magnificent scenery (Kim, 2008b; Um, 2013).

Jangdan, which translates literally into "long-short," refers to different rhythmic structures. The role of *jangdan* illustrates the importance of the drummer who sets the rhythm, and hence the saying, "first the drummer, second the singer." For example, *jinyang* is the slowest form of *jangdan*, and consists of four units. Each unit is comprised of *naego, dalgo*, *maetgo*, and *pulgo*, meaning starting, hanging, tension, and release. This is mainly used to describe scenery and grand feelings. *Jungmori* is a medium-tempo *jangdan* most frequently used in *p'ansori*. It is the most basic pattern and is used for describing sorrowful sentiments or peaceful scenes. *Jajinmori* is a fast-tempo *jangdan* for tense situations, or for enumeration of objects. *Hwimori* is the fastest *jangdan* often used to depict dramatic situations, while *eotjungmori* is used for final scenes (Um, 2013).

The music structure of *p'ansori* is highly stylized and standardized, and imparts different characteristics and symbolic meanings that suit the narration of the story (Willoughby, 2000). Multiple *jo*, *jangdan*, alteration between singing and narration, and other performance keys discussed later are usually used in combination to create a sense of shifting and add

to the viewing experience. Proper use of different modes and rhythmic patterns are also necessary for conveying underlying meanings and messages of the texts. Several differences in Yanbian *p'ansori*, however, should also be noted. As mentioned before, the musical accompaniment changed from barrel drum to *janggu*. Because of barrel drums' relatively richer timbre and performance techniques, *janggu* may in fact be less expressive compared to the barrel drum (Ning, 2011). Furthermore, the traditional Chinese music philosophy of *qi cheng zhuan he* (起承转合), which means beginning, elaboration, turning/transition, and conclusion, also replaced the "*naego-dalgo-maetgo-pulgo*" structure. As mentioned earlier, *jangdan* in Korean *p'ansori* typically follows the structure of "*naego-dalgo-maetgo-pulgo,*"with each unit representing the beginning, suspense, tension, and release. The accompaniment of the drum also follows the rule of *yin* and *yang*, the balance of which is reached through the unity of heaven (*yang*, positive), human (neutral), and earth (*yin*, negative). The musical structure of *jangdan* starts with neutral and is followed by *yang*, and finally the release of tension is *yin*. This music structure, in fact, could also be seen as a reflection of the relationship between music and the cosmos or nature (Ning, 2011). In Chinese philosophy however, *qi* refers to the beginning – it sets the tone and introduces the story, while *cheng*is the continuation and development of *qi*. *Zhuan,* or transition, as the name suggests, brings change and sharp contrast through various elements of music, and finally,*he*is a variation of *cheng* and summarizes previous units, bringing closure to the whole piece. This difference in musical structure and philosophy between Korean and Yanbian *p'ansori* thus also led to considerable differences in interpreting the same piece of music.

2) Sound qualities

Traditionally, the rough voice is typically favored in Korean *p'ansori.* Examples include the "gifted voice" which is a combination of husky and sorrowful voices, and the "iron voice" that is resonant and dynamic (Um, 2012). This harshness of sound blends seamlessly with the content of the text to illustrate and accentuate the tense, painful, and emotional scenarios. A smooth voice quality, on the other hand, lacks dramatic expression, while a bright voice lacks depth, both of which should therefore be avoided (Willoughby, 2000).

Intensive training to reach the desired timbre is highly esteemed. In fact, singers with undesirable voices can overcome their shortcomings through laborious training (Um, 2013). In traditional Korean *p'ansori*, the art is passed down from master to disciple and is somewhat hereditary in nature (Pihl, 1981). Training typically starts in the youth, and in the initial years the novice learns the basic techniques and interpretations. To develop their own specific voice traits, disciples often sequester themselves and practice alone in the mountains or sing under waterfalls. This is the most demanding period of training, a period of seclusion, deprivation, and commitment to acquire the desired timbral qualities before becoming a master singer (Pihl, 1981; Willoughby, 2008). It is common for the vocal chord to be so strained that it will bleed and develop calluses, and it is said that if the singer can outdo nature, then the appropriate level of volume and timbre have been achieved (Pihl, 1994; Um, 2013; Willoughby, 2000).

Preference for timbral qualities, however, started to change as *p'ansori* spread to Yanbian, where as discussed earlier, a clear bright sound is

favored due to Western aesthetic influence. Perhaps partly related to this different timbre preference, also changed is the instruction method – from a hereditary, master-to-disciple instruction to more formalized school education. While a bright sound deflects from the Korean performance tradition and somewhat overshadows the sorrowful emotions most *p'ansori* pieces tend to convey, it does however, makes this unfamiliar genre more accessible and easier to appreciate for Chinese audience.

3) Performance

Storytelling is not only defined by the stories themselves but also by the way they are delivered (Park, 1998). Thus like other Asian theater, the actor is central to *p'ansori* and is the focus of audience's attention. Because the performer needs to alternate back and forth between different roles, there are high standards set for the performers, and four major skills are emphasized, including *inmul* (good features) which refers to physical appearance and stage presence, *saseol* (narrative) which is the ability to deliver the text in an appropriate and convincing manner, *deugeum* (attaining the desired voices), and *neoreumsae* (dramatic gesture) (Kim, 2011; Willoughby, 2008). The first- and third-person points of view are frequently used in alteration. The performer is able to portray the story vividly by becoming a part of it, pulling the audience into the story to experience the emotions of the characters vicariously. At the same time, third-person narrative facilitates understanding through background introduction, explanation, and commentary. It also pulls the audience back to reality (Piao, 2000).

The drummer on the hand, does not merely accompany the singer

passively, but instead is an integral part of the performance. The drummer not only sets the rhythm and adapts to the tempo defined by the singer, but also offers assistance by calling out words of encouragement (*ch'uimsae*) (Jang, 2001), as well as sympathizing with or countering against the singer. In this way, the drummer serves as a link between the performance and the audience, enabling the bidirectional communication of emotions (Li, 1989).It is therefore self-explanatory that without the drummer, the skills of the singer cannot be fully displayed.

In the past, when performances were largely improvisational, performers usually accommodated the specific audience present, and the audience in turn, helped shape the content of the performance. The viewers would also provide *ch'uimsae*, a display of appreciation through words of encouragement, which supports the performer, enhances the overall atmosphere, and blends into the whole performance (Jang, 2001; Park, 2000). It also allows the audience to become more engrossed in the story and experience catharsis together with the performer. For modern viewers, however, offering *ch'uimsae* correctly is difficult since most people are not familiar with *p'ansori*. The current locations of performance such as auditoriums also make audience feel embarrassed to do so. As discussed earlier, this lack of audience participation is also a significant difference of Yanbian *p'ansori* (Jang, 2001) from its origin. Nevertheless, some scholars believe that instead of becoming a unidirectional conveyance of emotions and messages controlled by the performer, bilateral communication still exists in the form of communication with the general public by referring to mainstream culture, instead of with the specific viewing audience (Ning, 2012).

For the Korean diaspora in Yanbian, *p'ansori* is important not only as a

performance genre but also because of its historical significance, which is embodied and reflected through the sentiment of *han*.*Han* is a mixture of complicated and negative emotions such as pathos, regret, sorrow, loss, and frustration (Shim, 2004), and is central to the aesthetic experience of *p'ansori* (Um, 2013). Indeed, many passages in the *p'ansori* tales, which reflect the lives of the common people, are expressions of *han* (Willoughby, 2000). When the performer mirrors the realities of everyday life, the suffering and lamentation is more important than the happy ending, and instead of furthering the development of the plot, they serve a more important function of satisfying the audience's need for catharsis (Pihl, 1994). *Han* is not only an emotion, but rather it is the result of the history, social structure, and all the sufferings Korean people have endured – it is an integral part of the culture of the Korean diaspora that warrants attention and preservation. The following section, therefore, examines the currents problems facing the protection and preservation of *p'ansori* as well as potential solutions that could be adopted.

5. Transformation and Adaptation of *P'ansori*

1) Problems

P'ansori in Yanbian serves multiple societal, educational, and artistic functions. It links Korean diaspora in China with their original culture, and presents a unique aspect of the life, history, and cultural values of Chaoxianzu that helps strengthen their identity and cohesion (Wang and Jin, 2013). There are however, multiple issues that render

p'ansori"out-of-date;" some parts require change while others could be molded to highlight the function of *p'ansori* not just as a form of entertainment but also as a potential pedagogical tool.

Other problems also contribute to modern Chinese viewer's lack of interest in *p'ansori*. This performance tradition is usually performed in Korean, and various local dialects and antique usages are often included. The content of the performance is relatively limited as well, and *p'ansori* faces substantial difficulties in absorbing social changes. Because of the cultural and linguistic barriers, it is difficult for *p'ansori* to appeal to a population outside the Korean language group.

In addition to competing against popular culture, there is a huge variety of performance genres associated with different ethnic groups, and thus equal governmental funding and attention are hardly possible. Because of this, currently *p'ansori* is still in a marginalized position. Without enough sponsorship, it is also hard for Chinese performers to attend performance showcases and conferences regularly held in Korea that could potentially aid the development of Yanbian *p'ansori* (Jin, 2012).

There is an equal lacking of highly professional inheritors to this performance tradition. According to Jin (2012), there is only one scholar, Jiang Xinzi, who is currently teaching *p'ansori* in Yanbian University, where such educational programs are offered exclusively. A greater problem lies in the younger generations' lack of understanding of *p'ansori*. Without being formally taught at school or repeatedly presented in real life, many traditional art forms may be facing similar future threats.

As *p'ansori* traveled from Joseon Korea to Yanbian, China, it is constantly being interpreted and adapted to fit the new performance contexts and cater to the audience's tastes. As one of the many

performance traditions, *p'ansori* is increasingly faced with pressure to change and innovate in order to meet the demands of other Chinese viewers. Yet this should not be viewed as a threat but as an opportunity for *p'ansori* to further transform and grow in creative ways. Multiple ways exist to elevate the status of *p'ansori* as an indispensable performance tradition, both in terms of the performance itself and in its preservation and education in general.

2) Performance adaptation

(1) Translation

As pointed out earlier, *p'ansori* is often performed in the Korean language, and for most Chinese viewers the content of the performance is difficult to understand. Although some television programs provide descriptions in Mandarin Chinese, those illustrate mostly the gist of the story and many details are omitted. In addition, subtitles can be distracting sometimes and many people may find it hard to concentrate on the performance itself while busy reading the subtitles, further detracting the audience from engaging fully with the story and experience the emotions vicariously.

In an effort to expand the popularity of *p'ansori* internationally, Park (2003, 2008) proposed a solution that involves changes done performatively, that is the creation of "bilingual"*p'ansori*, which is based on the basic structure of alternating between singing and speaking. In this form of performance, singing represents the tradition, whereas speaking is presented in English and incorporates cross-cultural commentaries to

introduce the storyline and familiarize the audience with the background. In this way, “spoken passages are expanded from their minimal role to serve as an indispensable translingual, cross-cultural connector or facilitator. They foretell, recapitulate, and mediate even within songs: they show up wherever explanation is called for” (Park, 2003:252). Such changes in narration are accompanied by changes in drumming as well. This is an efficient way of combining traditional elements of *p'ansori* while allowing for better comprehension without resorting to cumbersome subtitles, and could potentially be adopted by Yanbian *p'ansori*byalternating between singing in Korean and speaking in Mandarin Chinese.

(2) Expanding repertoire

Traditional *p'ansori* only has five song cycles, all of which are associated with Neo-Confucian cardinal values. This presents substantial difficultyfor *p'ansori* to generate genuine interest from the audience and especially young people. In addition, the fact that the five song cycles came into being in the 19th century reflected the social context of that particular time period, which stressed Confucian teachings. It is evident that the content of *p'ansori* changed to adapt to the relevant sociopolitical environment, and thus the guiding influence of society and culture on traditional performances cannot be ignored (Ning, 2012). A strict adherence to these pieces has rendered *p'ansori* institutionalized, focusing mainly on the skills and perfection of the performer while ignoring the experience of the audience (Um, 2008). From this point of view, *p'ansori* in contemporary society also needs to expand its repertoire to reflect

current interest, social issues, and cultural values, in order to engage the audience on a deeper level by addressing topics that pertain to their own lives.

20th century Korea witnessed the emergence of patriotic *p'ansori* (shortly after the Japanese colonial period), religious *p'ansori* with Christian and Buddhism themes, and sociopolitical *p'ansori*, which targeted contemporary social and political issues (Um, 2008). As we move on to the 21st century, a greater range of topics has been covered in *p'ansori* performance, including daily life situations and social problems facing different generations, and popular cultural elements are frequently mentioned as well. There are also special performances that are based on children's stories to target a younger population (Um, 2008). *P'ansori* scholars in Yanbian should also take note of such performances and create new pieces that Chinese audience can easily identify with. Because of the strong time-relevant characteristics of these works, it may be inevitable that people will gradually lose interest in them and new stories are needed, but such demand could become the exact source that motivates and stimulates constant development of *p'ansori* in order to not only keep the performance tradition, but to make it "alive" (Li, 2008).

(3) Costumes and settings

As the repertoire of *p'ansori*expands, similar changes in costumes should also be made to accommodate the performance. It may not be necessary to wear traditional clothes on all occasions, and particular costumes could be designed for specific pieces along with special props to enhance the visual experience (Um, 2008).

In addition, modern *p'ansori* performers are becoming less improvisational, and audience participation is rare. Traditionally, when *p'ansori* was performed in less formal settings, audiences played a substantial part by displaying certain emotions, cheering, and shouting out encouragement as prompted by the performers. But as formal environment becomes the common setting for *p'ansori* performance, people are generally limited in providing spontaneous responses and thus audience participation has become largely passive(Jang, 2001).The large number of written documents about *p'ansori* available also impedes the performers' improvisation skills. There are, in fact, certain ways of modifying the content of the performance to cater to the local audience. For example, Park (2003) suggested that local culture could be weaved into each piece to add "emergent" and "novel" elements into the scripted performance. Even in modern performance settings, as long as *p'ansori* performers are creative and original, there are still various opportunities to "improvise" to create a fresh viewing experience for different groups of audience.

Finally, more performance venues and different types of performance could also help promote *p'ansori*, and South Korea has set a good example for Yanbian *p'ansori* scholars and performers. Many local contests are held annually in South Korea that encourage performance of new *p'ansori* compositions appealing to modern audience, and such performances do not necessarily take place in formal settings (Lee, 2008). The Lightening Sound Street Performances, for example, were presented in subway stations, temples, and other informal places, and after the show, the performers would share food and drinks with the audience, a ritual typical of traditional street performances (Kim, 2008a). The positive response from the audience suggests the possibility of accessing a wider audience

and encourages the creation of more *p'ansori* pieces. Although such practices may not be exactly replicable in China, they nevertheless point to the benefits of shifting from formal performances in auditoriums to a more casual and relaxing environment where it is easier for the audience to interact with the performers, just as they did hundreds of years ago.

3) Promotion

In addition to adapting the performance itself to gain wider popularity among the many performance traditions, specific steps also need to be taken to preserve *p'ansori*, the most important of which is education.

Currently *p'ansori* education is only available in Yanbian University, and *p'ansori*performance is also limited to singing and dance troupes in Yanbian. This geographical limitation greatly impairs the transmission of *p'ansori*.More college educational programs are also needed, and those universities can organize regular field trips to Yanbian to facilitate learning (Wang and Jin, 2013). The number of students in Yanbian University that major in *p'ansori* is also far from promising. According to Wang and Jin (2013), there were 23, 5, and 6 students who matriculated in the years 2010, 2011, and 2012 respectively. The lacking of interest in *p'ansori* among college students reveals deeper issues that are not restricted to higher education, but originates from problems in elementary and secondary school education. It is necessary to establish traditional culture classes starting from elementary school, and *p'ansori* (as well as other performance traditions that are relevant to that particular region) could be incorporated into musical education. In South Korea, students are often required to attend traditional performances and reflect upon that

experience (Li, 2007), and similar measures could also be adopted in China. Early education can gradually introduce students to the basic features of *p'ansori* performance, and encourage them to experiment with the props such as the performer's fan and drum. The key is familiarity — once children become more familiar with this performance genre, it will be easier for them to regard *p'ansori* as part of their regular viewing experiences in addition to popular music.

The education of *p'ansori* could also be combined with education of Confucian classics, an area that has regained significant importance in recent years, especially among school-aged children. The ideas stressed in traditional*p'ansori*, such as filial piety in the *Song of Sim Cheong*, also represent values greatly emphasized in modern China (Li, 2013). Combining*p'ansori*education with Confucian classics, therefore, could bring about mutually reinforcing benefits for both the learning of the performance tradition and Confucian teachings.

Furthermore, other media such as television and film could also be utilized to promote *p'ansori*. For example, the movie *Chunhyang* (2000) directed by Im Kwon-taek is a famous rendition of traditional *p'ansori* in modern film. The story is based on the original song cycle and *p'ansori* performance is weaved into the whole movie. This film, which received significant attention and accolade, was entered into the 2000 Cannes Film Festival, and was the first Korean film to be presented at the 2000 Telluride Film Festival, in addition to other awards (Um, 2008). Similarly, the film *Seopyeonje* by the same director also presents a heartrending portrayal of the sorrowful emotions and feelings of *han p'ansori* strives to convey. Thus for *p'ansori* scholars, it is necessary to look beyond *p'ansori* performance itself and to take advantage of modern media and technology

fully to raise people's awareness of this performance genre. Technology is also useful in other aspects that relates back to education. Some scholars have started designing internet-based interface that aims at developing traditional culture learning systems for *p'ansori* to make it easier for children to understand and to disseminate learning materials conveniently (Kim and Choi, 2013). Such materials could prove to be useful forboth formal educational programs as well as informal ones.

Finally, *p'ansori* is a performance tradition that originated from Korea. Despite its transformations in Yanbian, there remains a significant overlap between the performances in these two regions, yet each is unique and valuable in distinct areas. This calls for the need of communication and mutual assistancebetween Chinese and Korean scholars. Substantial benefits could be gained potentially through collaboration between the two countries in terms of research and engaging in dialogues on preserving and promoting *p'ansori*, an art form that represents an exemplar of cultural exchange and interaction in shaping a genre of traditional performance. Through such joint efforts, it is possible to bring *p'ansori* from Korea and China to the global stage.

4) Balancing past, present, and future

According to Park, "tradition is the creation of the future out of the past, and history is an artful assembly of materials from the past, designed for usefulness in the future and remain open to endless revision" (2008:159). Indeed, the above-mentioned ways of modifying and preserving *p'ansori* come with an important premise that must not be forgotten, which is the necessity of balancing past, present, and future. In

order for *p'ansori* to remain as a viable "living" performance tradition, scholars should not merely adhere to the so-called tradition but to explore new models and paths for its preservation. To do so requires bridging tradition and modernity, and retaining the essence of *p'ansori* while incorporating a certain degree of flexibility. Current Yanbian *p'ansori*performers suggest that the original style needs to be adjusted to fit the general public's tastes while at the same time the core features should still be characteristic of the culture of Chaoxianzu (Ning, 2008). Nevertheless, such flexibility is only made possible after the performers have grasped the traditional aspects of *p'ansori* (Ning, 2008).

Preservation does not equal inhibition of development. For each performance tradition, there is constant change with time and the larger social context. These traditions should not be locked up in museums or time capsules that do not allow for further adaptation; instead they need to be reinvented and modified (Li, 2008), since "music cultures are not monolithic in their definitions but emergent, evolving and influencing one another within the society at large" (Park, 2003:274).

6. Conclusion

This paper presents a brief outline of the history, content, and performance of *p'ansori*, an invaluable performance tradition of Chaoxianzu. As the above discussion points out, *p'ansori* has undergone significant changes as it travelled from the Korean Peninsula to Northeastern China with earlier immigrants in the Qing Dynasty and develops into the 21st century. Although itsmain features have been

preserved in Yanbian *p'ansori*, this performance tradition nevertheless needs to adapt to the local culture and performance context in order to appeal to the public. Indeed, the initial Confucian influence of *p'ansori* in Joseon Korea suggests that any performance genre is the inevitable result of continued change according to social, political, and cultural environments. Multiple methods have been proposed in an effort to introduce *p'ansori* to a broader audience as well as to improve educational programs to cultivate people's interest. There is however, still much that needs to be done in terms of *p'ansori* preservation, and it is hoped that this analysis has helped highlight the importance of balancing between development and protection of traditional performances, and devise and propose possible ways of innovating and promoting *p'ansori* to bring it to a bigger stage.

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Abstract

Korean P'ansori in Yanbian:
Transmission, Development, and Preservation

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P'ansori is a form of Korean narrative song typically performed by a solo singer/narrator accompanied by a drummer. The performance genre has become part of the cultural tradition of the Korean diaspora in Yanbian, China following the immigration of Korean people to China during the early 20th century. While *p'ansori* performances in Korea and China have been explored in depth by scholars from respective countries, few studies have directly compared and contrasted Korean *p'ansori* with Yanbian *p'ansori*. The major role that culture and society played in shaping the performance tradition as it spread from one community to another also failed to receive considerable academic attention. This article seeks to address these issues by examining the origin and development of *p'ansori* as well as its process of transmission to Yanbian.The influence of Neo-Confucianism on the content and repertoire of *p'ansori* performance during its heyday in Joseon Korea is discussed, as well as how culture and aesthetics have changed the preference of performers and audience in terms of timbral qualities, music structure, and performance style. In addition, the study considers the status quo and problems faced by *p'ansori* in China and the future of *p'ansori* protection in the digitized media age, stressing the necessity of education and innovation, the need for cultural communication, and the importance of balancing past, present, and future.

Key words : *p'ansori*, Korean ethnic group in China, Neo-Confucianism, musical structure and performance style of *p' ansori*, preservation of folk performance

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