Characteristics of Korean mask-dance drama

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CHARACTERISTICS OF KOREAN MASK-DANCE DRAMA

By

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B.A., Chung-Ang University, Seoul, Korea, 1980

Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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Director: Rolland R. Meinholtz

Traditional Korean mask-dance drama is investigated through its history, the common subjects treated by the plays, and religious background of the plays. This drama form originally came from Sonang-Je, as part of a village shrine ceremony, about 200 years ago. Many Korean mask-dance dramas, which still are performed in their own regions with shamans, satirize hypocrisy and immorality. They also depict the hard life and tragedy. The subjects are, however, elevated into a farce form of drama which evokes laughter from the audience and, thus, an optimistic philosophy overshadows hard-pressed reality.

The Pong-San mask-dance drama currently performed in Seoul city serves as a model for the study of stage arrangement, dialogue, farcical characters, plot, masks, costumes, music, and ritual. Korean mask-dance drama has many qualities that can be developed into a great religious festival drama. It is hoped that efforts will be expended to recover the mood of playing mask-dance drama.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

Korean people have been fond of singing, dancing, and drinking since earliest times. Even today one can come upon groups of Koreans dancing in the open countryside. Eleanor King, professor emeritus of dance at the University of Arkansas, didn't hesitate to call Koreans the Dionysians of East Asia.

They dance unselfconsciously, individually, freely, with that ineluctable sense of "mot" and "heung" (irrepressible joy from within, state of exhilaration from a deep sense of beauty) which has not changed. Their movements have subtle delicacy, and always that lift of the breath which sends them floating happily over the ground or suspended like a butterfly, on one foot, while the shoulders softly continue to dance. It is this spontaneous, instinctive expression in Korea which I like to call the lesser Dionysia, and when I think of Korean dancing, the first image which comes to my mind is how untaught countrymen and women naturally express this spirit (emphasis mine).^1

This spontaneity, regarded as an outstanding trait of Korean art, is reflected in a tendency to leave pottery undecorated. The undecorated objects elicit a delightful

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feeling of expanded space leading to a lack of artificial pretense. These qualities make it different from Chinese and Japanese art. Chinese art is characterized by an emphasis on formality, order in complexity, and technical perfection. Japanese art is marked by romantic decorativeness and sophistication in visual terms.

Korean art consistently is characterized by optimism with a preference for simplicity and naivete. It relies on beauty of line and shape rather than on costly materials. Korean artists tend to express their major themes in contour or profile forms, reinforcing their main ideas with minor details or colors. Decoration often appears to be secondary—almost an afterthought. Toyotaro Tanaka, a Japanese specialist in Korean pottery, said, "Korean ware is rather born than made. There is no inkling of hesitation on the part of the potter." Tanaka also believes spontaneity is an outstanding trait of Korean art.

This spontaneity is found even in the performance of Korean mask-dance drama. There is no sign of the high

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quality of the formal and stylized Peking Opera or the beauty and excellence of the Noh drama form. The players of mask-dance drama in Korea perform outdoors without any particular type of stage. Their movements and gestures look awkward and scenes have no logical progression. This suggests that mask-dance drama originally was improvisational theater. Players of this drama form act from a sketchy plot outline or synopsis of each scene, then improvise the dialogue, songs, action, and dances.®

There are eight major regional varieties of mask-dance drama in Korea:

1. Ha-hoe.
2. Yang-Ju.
3. Pong-San.
5. Ko-Sung.
6. Song-Pa.
8. Tong-Nae.

They were named after the small cities in which they originated (see Map 1, p. 4) and still are performed there. Unfortunately, no clear information on the recent activities of two mask-dance plays—the Pong-San and Kang-Nyong—has

Map 1. A map of Korea and selected designated provinces.
been available since the Korean War (1950-1953). These cities presently are part of North Korea. During the war, however, a few players of these dramas managed to migrate to Seoul. With other interested individuals they revived the dramas in South Korea. Since then, they have been performed mainly in the Seoul area.

After the Korean War, some scholars began to thoroughly research mask-dance in order to trace their cultural heritage. Doo-Hyun Lee, professor of Korean language education at the Seoul National University, has made a great contribution by collecting each play's dialogue—which had been handed down orally—and tracing the histories of mask-dance plays.

Modern Korean scholars have not, however, had enough time to assess this theater form in terms of dramatic value. Korean people have been busy surviving difficult social and economic hardships: colonial times, wars, and reconstructions. Yet, thanks to the efforts of some scholars and theater people, the mask-dance plays have been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property by the Government of South Korea and they are performed occasionally for a few days as part of the annual National Folk Arts Festival of Korea.

When watching performances, I often have felt that mask-dance plays could be developed into a better organized

\[7\text{Ibid., p. 44.}\]
and dramatized form of theater art without changing the traditional and ritualistic background. The first step in such a development would be to focus upon the unique characteristics of the existing theater form. Thus this study was designed to determine the general characteristics of Korean mask-dance theater rather than specific characteristics of each regional mask-dance play with, however, concentration on the Pong-San in particular.

Sources and Research
Methodology

The primary sources for this study number six:

1. Korean mask-dance drama scripts and research works about the histories of mask-dance plays collected by Dr. Doo-Hyun Lee.

2. A Pong-San play script translated into English by Dr. Oh Kon Cho, presently professor of theater at the State University of New York at Brockport.


4. The present researcher's personal viewing of a Pong-San drama performance.


6. A betamax videotape of a Pong-San drama performance, produced by KBS.
These sources were analyzed for evidence and information relating to (1) common subjects of Korean mask-dance plays, (2) historical development of the Pong-San drama, and (3) the dramatic elements of the Pong-San drama.

Organization of the Study

Although each of the eight mask-dance dramas has unique characteristics, the Pong-San is the most popular and considered the best in terms of dramatic unity. This study presents the background and characteristics of the Korean mask-dance theater in general, then concentrates on each dramatic element of the Pong-Sang mask-dance play specifically—as outlined below.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus upon the common subjects and religious background of Korean mask dance plays, respectively. These chapters sketch the contours of the dramas as a whole. Chapter 4 describes the history of the Pong-San play and chapter 5 analyzes each dramatic element in it. Chapter 6 explains the problems of current mask-dance plays and suggests ways to solve them, thereby developing the plays. This last chapter also summarizes the characteristics of this drama form in general.
Chapter 2

COMMON SUBJECTS OF KOREAN MASK-DANCE DRAMAS

The characters in Korean mask-dance drama are divided into three categories: aristocrats, monks, and commoners. Situations in this drama form, compounded by the relationships portrayed, veil the long and deep sorrow of the Korean people. Koreans long have suffered afflictions resulting from merciless foreign invaders, utter destitution and poverty, and political corruption. Amid their sufferings they learned that the silence of resignation was a realistic solution. This resignation was not necessarily pessimistic. It was a means by which to tolerate their hard-pressed reality, a passage to enlightenment, and an optimistic philosophy.

Koreans accepted and tolerated their hardships and clung to belief in a fertile land that would produce abundant crops.¹ They could, therefore, laugh and enjoy mask-dance plays when actors depicted and mimicked their hard lives, the falsehoods of aristocrats, and their social conflicts. Through eroticism, free and outspoken dialogue, and improvised dancing, the people had an emotional outlet. The

contents of the mask-dance drama stories had much in common: exposure of reality, satire, debauchery, laughter, and lamentation through the actions of characters such as a degenerate monk, foolish aristocrats, a shaman priestess, and valets and commoners young and old.

The Ha-hoe mask-dance drama is a good example. This play developed from rituals in conjunction with offerings placed before the village shrine in the Kyongsang-do area (see Map 1, p. 4). Now, as then, preparations for this event commence the end of December according to the lunar calendar. The head shaman priest selects a carpenter to build a platform in front of the shrine. Then, on the second day of January of the lunar calendar, a shaman priest and priestess offer prayers to the village god. After the god supposedly descends to shake a bell at the top of a pole draped with five-color cloths (red, white, yellow, blue, and green), the priest, priestess, and mask-dance players bear the pole and march through the village to the accompaniment of band music. When they arrive at the village square they plant the pole therein and begin to perform the mask-dance drama which consists of nine kwajangs.

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3 Ibid.

4 A kwajang is a division created by a different dance story.
In the first kwajang, or lion's dance, two men costumed in a lion outfit (front and rear), with a hood and mask, dance to the beat of the music. This is a sort of ritualistic chasing away of evil spirits. The second kwajang is a rabbit dance by a priestess, but the rabbit mask has become lost through the passage of time.  

In the third kwajang about a fallen monk, a maiden appears and dances while a monk watches. Soon they dance together. Upon the entrance of a yang-ban's servant, the monk runs away with the maiden on his back. Then appear a yang-ban and scholar who lament the corruption while their servants fall in love with one another.  

The fourth kwajang focuses upon a yang-ban and scholar. A dancing coquette tempts the yang-ban and scholar and they form a love triangle. The yang-ban and scholar each brag about the dignity of his house and his learnedness in an attempt to win the love of the coquette. The yang-ban and scholar dance with the coquette, each trying to attract her. A butcher then enters with an axe and a bull's testicle, saying that it is very good for sexual stamina. The scholar and yang-ban try to buy the testicle and pull at it. An old woman comes on stage and makes peace between the two.

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5 Lee, op. cit., p. 114.
6 An aristocrat.

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The fifth kwajang illustrates the difficulties of a commoner's livelihood. The sixth kwajang is a macabre show featuring a butcher killing and disposing of various parts of a cow. It is said that this scene originally depicted the execution of a man—which has been softened through the years. The seventh kawjang depicts the wrongdoing of provincial government officials by showing a tax collector pocketing part of an official collection of grain for himself.

The eighth kwajang, a marriage scene, portrays a wedding ceremony. The ninth kwajang shows the first night of the married couple. When the bride opens a chest after the groom has fallen asleep, her lover comes out of it and kills the groom.

Like this Ha-hoe mask-dance play, the subjects in other existing mask-dance dramas are fairly homogeneous: a ritual dance for dispelling evil spirits, satire and derision against the yang-ban class, satire against a degenerate monk, a tragedy stemming from the concubinage system, a lion's dance for dispelling evil spirits, and a prayer for blessings. A village festival thus served as a vent for the grievances of the common people against the social taboos of the times. Although each drama exhibits slight differences in its treatment of themes, the same basic outlooks prevail in the mask-dance drama of Korea.

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7Lee, op. cit., p. 125.
Chapter 3

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF MASK-DANCE DRAMA

A record of a ritualistic ceremony of early Korean people has been provided by the Chinese Jin Su:

In Mahan—a country before the Silla Dynasty [see Map 2, p. 13]—some festivals took place in May for planting, and in October for harvest, and they have worship for Ghost. The people drink, sing, and dance for ten days and nights.1

At the center of the oldest spiritual beliefs of the people of Korea is a shaman figure called a mudang.2 The mudang religion has dominated the beliefs of the common people of Korea for centuries.3 The early Koreans believed that all natural objects possessed indwelling souls whose conscious lives were expressed in natural phenomena. Spirits of great mountains, rivers, trees, and stones were worshipped as beneficial gods who brought mankind productivity and

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2Mudang in Korean means a female shaman and paksu means a male shaman, but the people generally call all shamans mudang.


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Map 2. Six maps illustrating Korean periods, dynasties, and divisions.
happiness. In time, evil spirits came into existence who took delight in disturbing the ceremony of the human world. They were placated, or diverted from their mischievous intentions, through magic incantations and exorcisms.

The mudang religion is, therefore, very practical. Its principal objective is to bring good fortune to the unfortunate—wealth to the poor, health to the sick, children to the childless, and abundant harvests of crops and fish to farmers and fishermen. Rain, courage, and victory are other objectives of mudang ceremonies.

In the early days in southern Korea, thanksgiving festivals were held biannually: after rice transplantation and after the harvest. Dances were performed by a dozen persons who lined up single file and followed a leader, raising their hands up and down and stamping on the ground to the accompaniment of music. The ceremonies were presided over by a mudang.

This festival, which seems to be connected with the Ji-Shin-Bahlp-Gi, is observed most frequently in the Cholla

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5 Ibid., p. 43.
6 Han, loc. cit.
8 The Ji-Shin-Bahlp-Gi, meaning "stepping on the ground spirits," is used to step on and press evil spirits into the earth.
and Kyongsahng provinces (see Map 1, p. 4) during the lunar new year holidays. A farmer's band goes around the village and visits each household, performing exorcist songs and dances, circling each house until all the evil spirits have been chased out or pressed into the ground (Fig. 1, p. 16). After a supplication of blessings for the year to come, the group receives money, grain, food, and wine. Under the Shamanistic influence, this Korean village ceremony still represents the largest scale combination of a holy sanctification and festival-like atmosphere by groups from neighboring village communities that gather together for this gala event.

Toward the end of the fourth century, Korean Shamanism began to welcome Buddhism. Buddhism's pliancy and leniency, manifested in the image of Buddha, made this completely foreign religion palatable to Korean tastes. Korean culture gradually absorbed and naturalized the Indian religion. Its triumph in Korea may be explained in terms of its ready accommodation with native religion. With its vividly portrayed paradise and hells, Buddhism seemed to blend well with Shamanistic religion. For example, at every temple a shrine altar honors the mountain spirit, depicted as a

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9Heyman, op. cit., p. 94.


11Ibid., p. 112.
Figure 1. A farmer's band. A shaman devil post is seen at the left.

Source

Postcard published by the Kyong Il Publishing Company, Korea.
bearded man with a tiger crouching nearby. Derived from local Shamanism, the mountain spirit receives due veneration, following ceremonies honoring Buddha in the main hall, lest the local mountain spirit on whose land the temple stands should become angry. Thus Buddhism experienced little difficulty assimilating the native gods which people understood as temporary manifestations of Buddhist gods.

Since the spread of Buddhism in Korea, many Buddhistic arts—temples, pagodas, sculptures, and paintings—have been created by Korean people; but, although Buddhism gradually mingled with the traditional mudang Shamanism and influenced many aspects of the people's culture, folk art remained virtually untouched by Buddhism. One especially finds little evidence of Buddhist impact on folk entertainment. Rather, one sees a degenerate monk being mocked for his debauchery during a performance of Korean mask-dance drama.

Nonetheless, Buddhism has had some influence upon this drama form. For example, an opening ceremony dance (Fig. 2, p. 18) dedicated to the five directions—North, South, East, West, and all-important Center—parallels a similar tradition found in Korean court ceremonies. Also, the colors of the masks are symbolic of the five directions of the compass:

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13 Han, loc. cit.
Figure 2. The sangjwas dance—opening ceremony (kwajang 1).
(Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
blue for East, red for south, white for West, black for North, and yellow for Center. The performance of this drama form often was held on April 8, Buddha's birthday.

During the Koryo Dynasty (981-1392), Buddhism reached its apex of power and influence in Korea and linked the peasant and aristocrat. At the close of the Koryo Dynasty in 1392, a dramatic change took place because Confucianism, with its greatest following among the educated and official classes, replaced Buddhism as the state religion. Later, Confucianism became the foundation of the ethical thinking of the people during the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910), and Shamanism was disregarded by the Koreans and misunderstood as being composed of nothing but superstition.

Confucianism was essentially a political ideology rather than a religion. Confucius set up an ethical-moral system intended to govern ideally all relationships in the family, community, and state. It has, as a code of morals and conduct, formed standards of ethical behavior, therefore the Korean people created almost nothing in the way of religious art because of Confucianism. In mask-dance dramas,

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16Doo-Hyun Lee, "Korean Folk Play," International Cultural Foundation (Ed.), Folk culture in Korea (Seoul: Si-sa-yong-o-sa, Inc., 1982), p. 120.

17Chang, op. cit., p. 61.
Confucianistic aristocrats are mocked by commoners because of their surface morality and loss of face.

Although the peasant and aristocrat shared Buddhism as a common religious tradition, the greatest link between them was Shamanism, symbolized primarily by a female shaman. Korean Shamanism survived the Yi Dynasty period when Confucianism was the moral doctrine of the populace. Shamanism still dominates the beliefs of the common people. Korean shamans unify the common people, encouraging them to create works of art and produce dance and musical entertainment (see Fig. 3, p. 21). An important part of the shamans' effectiveness is in their artistic productivity. One way they influence others is through their acting abilities.18

The main motivation behind Korean mask-dance drama was to present a Shamanistic ceremony to dispell evil as well as provide entertainment. For example, Ha-hoe drama was performed during Shamanistic prayer festivals on the second day of the first moon. It was played to appease the spirits of two departed women who, it was thought, possessed spiritual power over the village.19 In Korean folk belief, when people die it is said they merely have gone to another unspecified place or area. This belief seems to come from

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Korean shamans persuade members of their audience to dance and imitate their gestures. Here a mudang (right) directs a villager of Chung Ha Igari.

Figure 3. Two mudang photographs.

Source

Shamanism, thus many mask-dance dramas and puppet plays in Korea end with death.

In summary, Korean mask-dance dramas are closely linked with Shamanism. And because Shamanism is an integral part of the religious mind of the Korean people, it forms the core of mask-dance dramas.
Chapter 4

HISTORY OF THE PONG-SAN MASK-DANCE DRAMA

Origin

The Pong-San is a mask-drama form that spread throughout the Hwang-hae province area (see Map 1, p. 4) along the west coast.¹ For the past few hundred years this drama has been a popular form of theatrical entertainment. No one knows, however, exactly how the drama began, developed, and became what it is today. No historical documents remain which explain its origin.

An interesting legend exists about the origin of Pong-Sang drama:

A long time ago, there was an old high Buddhist Monk who had devoted his life to pray for Buddha. As a result, he was not only highly revered by his admirers, but also practically worshiped as a living Buddha himself. Meanwhile, there was a young clergyman, an acquaintance of the high monk, who whiled away his time by indulging in intemperate drinking and debauchery. Unaware of his own faults, he was extremely jealous of the high esteem enjoyed by the old monk. He made several attempts to tarnish the old monk's reputation, but failed each time. There was also a professional entertaining girl in the area who was well known for peerless beauty and her talent for singing and dancing. Overwhelmed by her beauty, winsomeness, and dexterity, the old monk, disregarding his long devotion to Buddha, succumbed to his desire for her, committing an offense against his religion.

When the story of his transgression was revealed, hatred and antipathy for the old monk spread far and wide. As a result, a scholar in the region wrote this mask-dance drama to prevent other monks from making similar transgressions as well as to ward off the demoralization of the people.2

While legend explains the scenes in mask-dance dramas that feature a transgressing Buddhist monk, it is difficult to be certain that the story represents the beginning of the Pong-San because therein the monk scene occupies only a part of the drama.

Most scholars today believe that this drama is a splinter form of Sandae-dogam drama,3 another kind of mask-dance theater composed of two parts—(1) song and dance, and (2) drama with a story and dialogue—which includes the present Yang-Ju drama of the Kyonggi area (see Map 1, page 4). For example, at least five scenes in the Pong-San drama deal with the same subjects and characters as appear in the Yang-Ju drama. In addition, some of the dialogue in the Pong-San is almost identical with that found in the Yang-Ju. One must, therefore, consider the origin of Sandae-dogam drama.

It is believed that the term Sandae-dogam originated from a political office of the same name which exercised control over folk performances at the beginning of the Yi

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3Lee, loc. cit.
Dynasty (1392-1910). Another theory is that it originated from the Sonang-Je and from the Kiak (Gigaku in Japanese). The latter is most convincing and provides an excellent basis for comparison. It helps explain that the mask-dance drama in its present form was influenced by plays performed at the Sonang-Je and by plays transported from foreign countries, namely the Gigaku from central Asia. Although it seems that Sandae-dogam drama derived from the Sonang-Je and Kiak, some questions remain as to how and when this drama was created.

The government office Sandae-dogam was abolished as an official ceremony in the twelfth year of the reign of King Injo (1634 A.D.) of the Yi Dynasty. Banished from court, some players journeyed to the nearby countryside where their livelihoods depended entirely on whatever income they could earn from sporadic performances, some settled near the capital, and some toured the Hwang-hae province and settled


5The Sonang-Je, meaning "village shrine ceremonies," consists mainly of music and dance.

6Kiak (Gigaku), meaning "song and dance for prayer to Buddha," is a kind of silent drama which uses gestures and pantomimes only. Originally from China, it was handed down to Japan through Korea. It no longer exists in any of these countries today.


8Ibid.
in the large towns of Pong-San, Hae-Ju, and Kang-Nyong (see Map 1, p. 4).^9

It is said that Cho-Mok An, a low ranking official living in Pong-San, revived the Pong-San mask-dance drama about 200 years ago. When, after his exile to an island in the south Cholla province, he returned to Pong-Sang, he instituted many innovations into the drama. For example, he changed the wooden masks that had been in use to paper ones. Later, with other lower officials, he took principal command of the play altogether.^10 One may conjecture, therefore, because no written record exists, that the Pong-San mask-dance play came into being 200 years ago,^11 and that the form known today has been influenced by plays from other regions since its inception.

Development

Although no record exists about the first period of Pong-San theater history, there is some information in regard to its activities during the past 50 years. Some refugees from the Hwang-hae province, who fled to Seoul during the Korean War, were seemingly the main source of this information. Other facts about its development have been collected from oral traditions.

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^9Cho, loc. cit.
^10Lee, Hanguk, op. cit., p. 182.
Early Period (1750-1900)

As previously mentioned, until the end of the Yi Dynasty the Pong-San drama usually was performed on April 8, Buddha's birthday. In addition, the mask-dance players were invited to perform at almost every temporary free market, set up for five days in the center of a village or town where people from the surrounding countryside gathered to barter their wares. In this way the drama spread throughout the Hwang-hae province.

Although the drama was performed mainly for farmers and merchants, the troupes often were summoned by local magistrates to perform for their birthdays, children's weddings, and important public ceremonies such as the entertaining of visiting Chinese envoys. The lion dance, a highlight of this drama, was introduced about 1900.

Golden Period (1901-1938)

At the end of the Yi Dynasty, the Pong-San drama became an annual, all-night event beside a bonfire on May 5. This date, marking a festival holiday called Dano in the northern part of the country, fell at the time of year when farmers had some respite before the rice planting season. The performance of the mask-dance drama was held to dispel evil and pray for plentiful crops.

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12Lee, Hanguk, op. cit., p. 183.
13Ibid., p. 184.
Approximately one month prior to the Dano Festival, all involved in the performance took holy baths. Then they lodged together in a local Buddhist temple while rehearsing the play and making the masks and properties. The number participating in the preparation and performance totalled approximately 40 people.\textsuperscript{14}

In the Hwang-hae province, Hwang-Ju, Pong-San, and Sohung were the main performance areas (see Map 1, p. 4). These towns were marketplaces for agricultural products and handicrafts.\textsuperscript{15} They were more than able to provide the financial support needed for mask-dance performances.

As the drama form developed, a mask-dance contest was held among players from different areas from May 5 through 8 at the Hae-Ju governor's residence.\textsuperscript{16} When the mask-dance theater in Pong-San moved to Sariwon in 1915, the company began to use a temporary two-story structure built for the annual Dano Festival.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Decline (1939-1945)}

During 1939 to 1945, theater was shut down in every town by occupying Japanese forces. The Japanese military, which started the Sino-Japanese war on July 7, 1938,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14}Cho, op. cit., p. 40.
  \item \textsuperscript{15}Lee, Hanguk, loc. cit.
  \item \textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 184.
  \item \textsuperscript{17}Cho, op. cit., p. 39.
\end{itemize}
ostensibly declared that no mass entertainment by Koreans should be allowed during wartime. As a result, mask-dance theater's performance was suspended until World War II was over.

**Modern Period (1945-present)**

Since the early 1950s, no clear information on recent activities of this theater form in communist North Korea has been available. Due to the efforts of Korean War refugees who fled to Seoul from towns in the Hwang-hae province, mask-dance performances were revived after World War II in the Seoul area and they again became a popular part of the annual Dano Festival. Other interested individuals helped. For example, Jin-Ok Kim, who began dancing in mask-dance plays at the age of 7 and performed for 60 years before he died, made a great contribution in this drama revival in South Korea.

In 1958 a Pong-San mask-dance drama was performed in Seoul as part of the National Folk Arts Festival of Korea. Representing the folk theater of the Hwang-hae province, the Pong-San Mask-Dance Company—which a few players from the north and some volunteers organized hastily—participated in this special event. In 1967 the Government of South Korea

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18 Ibid., p. 38.
19 Lee, Hanguk, p. 185.
20 Ibid., p. 183.
designated, as previously noted, mask-dance theater an Important Intangible Cultural Property. Since then, this company has been supported by the government. Thanks to the efforts of the government and some scholars, this mask-dance drama form, regularly performed in the Seoul area, has become well-known to South Korean people.

21Cho, op. cit., p. 38.
Chapter 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PONG-SAN MASK-DANCE DRAMA

Character Types

The following outline classifies the character types in the Pong-San mask-dance play. These character types appear in almost all mask-dance dramas.

I. Ju-Yuk (Main Role)

A. Chung (Buddhist monk)
   1. Sangjwa: a young monk who has just began being devout to Buddha. Four appear in each of the mask-dance plays.
   3. Nojang: an old Buddhist monk who has devoted his life to prayer.

B. Yang-ban (nobleman)
   1. Saennim: a dignified old aristocrat. (Under his nose there is a horizontal red scar which reaches to his upper lip.)
   2. Sobangnim: a middle-aged aristocrat. (He has a cleft palate which indicates he has a venereal disease, as in the case of Saennim.)
3. Toryongnim: a young, unmarried aristocrat.
   (His mouth and nose are askew to the left.)

C. Noin (old people)
   1. Miyal: an old woman looking for a husband who has been missing.
   2. Yonggam: Miyal's husband; he is having an affair with a young concubine.

D. Others
   1. Malttugi: a mean but smart and witty servant.

II. Dan-yuk (minor role)
   A. Miscellaneous
      2. Sadang: an entertainment girl.
      3. Domori: Yonggam's young concubine.
      7. Monkey.

Outline of the Play

Kwajang 1

The dance of four sangjwas (young monks) (see Fig. 2, p. 19). Four sangjwas, wearing monk's white coats and peaked hats, dance to the music. They bow to the deities of the four directions, a kind of opening ritual in the play.
Kwajang 2

The dance of eight mokchungs (monks lacking spiritual devotion).

Scene 1. Each mokchung rushes to the stage in turn and dances boisterously, circling around the stage and waving his sleeves and lifting one of his legs. He then recites witty poems and dances again. As each mokchung enters, he slaps his predecessor in the face with his sleeve, signaling that the now-performing mokchung is to exit.

Scene 2. Two mokchungs enter and make puns with a drum for a while.

Kwajang 3

The dance of Sadang (entertainment girl). Sadang enters in an embellished costume, followed by seven kosas (giants). She sings and dances while the kosas sing together and play various drums.

Kwajang 4

The dance of Nojang (old high Buddhist monk).

Scene 1. All the mokchungs enter, carrying Nojang's cane, dragging Nojang to the stage from the costume hall. Nojang holds one end of the cane. He suddenly drops his end of the cane and falls down. All the mokchungs, who think Nojang is dead, circle around him and perform a ritual while
reciting a yombul.1 When they see that Nojang is reviving, they all exit. Then they reenter, carrying Somu (young female shaman) on an open palanquin, which they set down a little distance from Nojang (see Fig. 4, p. 35). As soon as all the mokchungs exit, Somu begins a dance to the music.

Unexpectedly finding Somu dancing, Nojang is surprised but determined to approach her. Despite every method, he is unable to win her heart. Then he takes off his rosary and puts it on her. When she keeps the rosary, he makes a couple of jumps for joy and comes to the front of her to seduce her. For a while he dances with her.

Scene 2. While Nojang and Somu are dancing, Sinjyangsu (shoe seller) enters, looking for customers. When he walks over to Nojang, the latter strikes him in the face with his fan and wants to buy shoes for him and Somu. When Sinjyangsu opens his merchandise to pick up a pair of shoes from the bottom, a monkey jumps out. The monkey imitates his every action for a while (Fig. 5, p. 36).

Sinjyangsu sends the monkey to Nojang to collect money for the shoes. Nojang scribbles on a piece of paper, "If you want to collect the money, you must come to the corner of Firewood Street," and hands it to the monkey. Sinjyangsu thinks Nojang is going to burn him to death in a fire and he runs away with the monkey.

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1A Buddhist invocation; for example, the repetition of the sacred name of Amitabha.

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Figure 4. The mokchungs exit after leaving Somu beside Nojang (kwajang 4, scene 1). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
Figure 5. From left to right: Nojang, Somu, monkey, and Sinjangsu (kwajang 4, scene 2). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
Scene 3. Chwibali (a licentious old bachelor) staggers onto the stage as if drunk. He does a hand-dance for a while and recites poems. Nojang suddenly strikes him in the face with his fan when Chwibali comes in front of him. The two men vie for Somu's affections. Chwibali forces Nojang away, then wins Somu with money.

Kwajang 5

The dance of the lion. Eight mokchungs, chased by a lion, enter the stage together. The lion appears ready to kill and eat all the mokchungs because they tricked their master who devoted himself to praying to Buddha. The mokchungs make a circle around the stage, then exist in the direction opposite their entrance—except one who plays the role of a lion driver. He says the mokchungs regret what they have done and that they are going to devote themselves to prayer and become good disciples of Buddha. Satisfied, the lion forgives them and dances with the lion driver (Fig. 6, p. 38).

Kwajang 6

The dance of the yang-bans (noblemen). Malttugi (a servant) enters, guiding three yang-ban brothers: Saennim (dignified old aristocrat), Sobangnim (middle-aged aristocrat), and Toryongnim (young, unmarried aristocrat) (Fig. 7, p. 39). Malttugi makes fun of his foolish masters via witty remarks.
Figure 6. A mokchung (lion driver) dances to the left of the lion (kwajang 5). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
Figure 7. The yang-bans dance. From left to right: Sebangnim, Saennim, and Toryongnim (kwajang 6). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
The dance of Miyal (old woman). Miyal dances and recites poems. She is looking for her husband who has been missing since a war. She finally finds him, Yonggam, and they dance together with joy. Then Miyal sees Domori (Yonggam's young concubine). Realizing that they were cheated by Yonggam, Miyal and Domori begin to beat each other, thinking they are beating Yonggam. Miyal is knocked down and dies. Then Mudang (female shaman) enters and performs an exorcism to send Miyal's soul to paradise.

Dramatic Characteristics

Stage

Neither a permanent theatrical structure nor a formal stage existed for the presentation of mask-dance dramas. Traditionally, performances occurred outdoors. The production of this drama also required no scenic settings. Any open-air space could be converted into a temporary theater-in-the-round stage. This space was surrounded by the spectators, leaving a narrow path through which the players made their entrances and exists to a temporary costume room.2

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, a sandy beach by a river near a hill was used as a stage for the

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performance of this drama. The stage was raised approximately a foot above the ground so as to improve the audience's view. When the drama became an annual all-night event on May 5, blazing bonfires were set around the space.

After the drama performance moved to Sariwon in the 1920s, the company began using a temporary two-story structure built for the annual Dano Festival. This makeshift structure was partitioned into 28 small compartments which formed a semicircle in front of the kyungnaru. This took up more than one half the circular space. The third compartment from the left was used for the players' dressing room; sometimes the back of the kyungnaru was used for a dressing room also. The orchestra was seated in front of the kyungnaru. (See Fig. 8, diagram 1, p. 42).

The rest of the compartments usually were rented to local merchants who opened temporary restaurants during the festival— which included a performance of the mask-dance drama. The proprietors of the temporary restaurants issued invitations to their regular patrons who watched the

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3Ibid.


5A small place made of wood for viewing and resting while in the mountains.

6Cho, loc. cit.
Source


Figure 8. Two stages.
performance while eating and drinking on the upper level of the temporary auditorium.  

Members of the audience who could not afford to pay for food and drinks at the restaurants, stood on the ground while watching the performance. They paid no admission fee. It is presumed that some of these spectators seated themselves in the open air on stools or on benches brought from their homes which they arranged along the sides of the stage.

Today the Pong-San company sometimes uses an indoor stage which has a variation of a proscenium opening. Usually, though, the drama is performed outdoors where a large number of people are able to gather and watch. The company tends to select a place with trees in the background. There is no evidence to suggest that actors in the Pong-San drama made similar stage entrances of passing by pine trees like the Noh drama actors; the company just prefers a space with a natural environment for its performance. It can be conjectured, however, that players in the early period of mask-dance drama used the area behind trees as a dressing room.

A space in the Duk-Soo Palace in Seoul often is used as a stage for mask-dance performances. Because it is a famous Korean tourist attraction, sightseers in the palace can

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7 Ibid., p. 187.
8 Cho, loc. cit.
9 Donald Keen, No (Tokyo and Palo Alto: Kodansha International Ltd., 1966), p. 84.
see the performance without paying an admission fee. In 1983 the Government of South Korea arranged space for the National Theater mask-dance performances on a rectangular stage surrounded by stone steps and a chon-mak\(^1\) (see Fig. 8, diagram 2, p. 42). Although it is not an ideal stage for a mask-dance drama performance, it can be considered the first fixed stage.

**Dialogue**

One factor contributing to the mask-dance play's outspokenness is that most of the texts were transmitted orally\(^2\) and the dialogue always has been improvised as in the Italian commedia dell'arte. When compared to other mask-dance plays which use everyday speech, the Pong-San employs rhythmic dialogue loaded with poetry, songs, puns, and some Buddhist prayers.

In kwajung 1, when the second mokchung enters he starts reciting poems as follows:

Since there was no calendar in the mountains,
Unknown to me came the change of seasons.

When the flowers bloom,
It must be the spring season.

When the leaves on the trees grow,
It must be the summer season.

When the leaves of Paulownia fall,
It must be the autumn season.

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\(^{1}\)An awning.

When the snowflakes
Fall on the green pines and bamboos,
It is no other than the winter season.

I, originally a libertine of the country,
Have been engaging in a hermit-like existence
In the mountains.
But when I hear the sound of music,
I lose my interest in a prayer to Buddha.

With this elegant music
Shall I have some fun?\textsuperscript{12}

(In a pullim)\textsuperscript{13}

Although my hair is gray,
My mind is still young . . .

(He begins dancing to the music for a while)

From this first dialogue in the drama, one can grasp
the mood. The easy poem and unexpected ending with dancing
cause spectators to become absorbed in the drama from the
beginning.

This play contains more poetry than almost any other
mask-dance drama. It also contains more quotations from and
parody of Chinese classical poems.\textsuperscript{14} For example, the third
mokchung in kwajung 2 recites this poem:

\begin{quote}
After coming here,
I glance in the four directions.
Then I clearly see the four words:
"Indifference, purity, peace and tranquility"
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Oh Kon Cho, "Pong-San Talchum: A Mask-Dance Drama of
\item[13] A nonsense-syllable phrase often employed to cue the
musicians as to what type of music or rhythmic beat is to be
played for an ensuing dance.
\item[14] Doo-Hyun Lee, "Korean Folk Play," International
Cultural Foundation (Ed.), \textit{Folk Culture in Korea} (Seoul:
\end{footnotes}
When I look to the east,
I clearly see King Chu Mun,\textsuperscript{15} an eternal sage,
Who is traveling to Wisuyang.\textsuperscript{16}

When I look to the south,
I obviously find Chin Mok-Kong\textsuperscript{17}
During the Chunchu period\textsuperscript{18} . . . .

This kind of quotation contains deep meanings and the average audience does not understand these names and phrases from China.

An example of parody by means of Chinese poetry, which was monopolized by the ruling yang-ban class, appears in kwajang 6:

\begin{quote}
Saennim: Hey, brother. We are born yang-bans. I am fed up with sitting idle here. . . . What about composing a poem, one each?

Sobangnim: Fine. You begin first, my dear elder brother.

Saennim: All right. You give me un-ja.\textsuperscript{19}

Sobangnim: Certainly, I'll do that. Character san\textsuperscript{20} and character yong.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15}An ancient Chinese king.

\textsuperscript{16}A meritorious subject of King Chu Mun in ancient China.

\textsuperscript{17}It is not clear who this person is.

\textsuperscript{18}Approximately between the eighth and fifteenth centuries B.C. during the Chou Dynasty of China, as noted by Oh Kon Cho, "Pong-San Talchum: I," op. cit., pp. 48 and 69.

\textsuperscript{19}Characters to rhyme with.

\textsuperscript{20}Mountain.

\textsuperscript{21}Hill.
Saennim: Very difficult one, isn't it? My dear, listen, I am not sure whether it is well done, but I will read it.

(In the style of reciting poems)

Here and there stand the mountains. Between the Yellow River and lush mountains There has emerged the Tong son-Hill.

Sobangnim: Ha, ha!

(The two brothers laugh together)

Very good.

Saennim: Now, your turn.

Sobangnim: You give me un-ja.

Saennim: Character chong$^{22}$ and character mot.$^{23}$

Sobangnim: Very tricky un-ja indeed.

(After toiling a good while)

Now listen.

(In the style of reciting poems)

"The straw-shoes' front
Is a cloth-made front.  
At the heel of the wooden shoes
There is a clasp."

Malttugi: Saennim, please do give me un-ja so that I may compose one myself.

Saennim: They say even a dog can sing about the moon and the wind if it overhears men do it for three years. You have been staying with us yang-bans these several years. We have done it with two un-ja, but I'll give you only one. It is the character kang.$^{24}$

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$^{22}$The front part of shoes.

$^{23}$A nail.

$^{24}$Kang can mean many things. Multtugi, the servant, deliberately takes it for the last syllable of dae-gang, a slang form for head.
Malttugi: (Promptly, in the style of reciting poems)

"In the hole of the decayed reed-fence
Is a dog's pate,
And in the hole of the worn-out trousers
Is a cock's pate."\(^{25}\)

Malttugi was more successful than Sobangnim in parodying Chinese poetry through vulgar expressions. This kind of humorous response to munja\(^{26}\) was characteristic of the common people's literature during the later Yi Dynasty.\(^{27}\)

There also are a large number of comic and colloquial dialogues in this drama. Sinjangsu, the shoe seller, speaks to Nojang, the old high Buddhist monk, but Nojang plays the mute, responding with gestures only and his fan (kwajang 4, scene 2):

**Sinjangsu: (Singing)**

I am going,
Ae-yi,
I am going
To the market of good harvest.
I am going,
Ae-yi . . .

(He walks over to Nojang who strikes him in the face with his fan; Sinjangsu, shocked, recoils a few steps)

What is this? I've never been beaten by anyone before in my life. I see. Since he wears a monk's hat down to his face, a blue monk's dress, a rosary with 108 beads, and a red sash, he must be a monk. Even though monks have different customs from ordinary people, he should have greeted me, a yang-ban. Instead, he hit me.

\(^{25}\)Yoh, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

\(^{26}\)Meaning Chinese words.

\(^{27}\)Yoh, op. cit., p. 151.
Nojang: (Beckons to Sinjangsu)

Sinjangsu: (Suddenly becoming polite)

Oh, he wants me to come.

(He puts down his merchandise and goes to Nojang, speaking gently)

Do you want to buy shoes? Well, what kind?

Nojang: (Points to his shoes)

Sinjangsu: Oh, yes, I have them. What size?

Nojang: (Indicates size with his hand on the fan)

Sinjangsu: Oh, size 7½. Oh. Yes, I have them.

Nojang: (Points to Somu's shoes)

Sinjangsu: Oh, for your daughter, too? I have them for her, too. Well, what size?

Nojang: (Indicates size with his hand on the fan)

Sinjangsu: (Surprised)

Oh, my goodness, size 99?28 She must have huge feet. They can be used as boats for the flood. Yes, I have them, too.29

Sinjangsu's garrulity contrasts dramatically with Nojang's mime.

Many passages from kasa30 songs are found in mask-dance plays—most conspicuously in the Pong-San drama.31 In kwajang 7, Miyal, the old woman, is looking for her husband, Yonggam.

28Meaning her sex organ.


30Narrative songs.

31Yoh, op. cit., p. 144.
Musician: Tell me, what does your husband look like?

Miyal: He has the color of a horse.

Musician: Do you mean he is a colt?

Miyal: No, he has the color of a cow.

Musician: Do you mean he is a calf?

Miyal: No, he has neither the color of a horse nor a cow. Anyway, what's the use of knowing what he looks like? What purpose would it serve even if I tell you his true appearance?

Musician: It might be possible to find him if you would tell me what he looks like.

Miyal: (In a singing tone)

My husband's appearance?
His forehead is cliff-like
While his chin looks like a wooden spoon
With hollow eyes and dog-foot-like nose.

He looks like a servant
With a stumpy beard
And a penis like a topknot

He's only three feet four inches tall.

Musician: Ah, I see, he just went to chase the animals into the trap.

Miyal: My goodness! How stupid! They say . . . .

(Yonggam, the husband, enters after Miyal exits)

Yonggam: How should I call her?

Musician: You're from Mangmak village in Cheju Island, so you must call her to the tune of sinawichong.
Yonggam: Choljol cholsigu  
Choljori choljol cholsigu . . . .

To see my wife  
I've been searching for her  
With feelings of longing for the rain  
During the seven-year drought,  
With feelings of longing for the sunshine  
During the nine-year flood.

If I happen to see my wife  
I want to touch  
Her eyes, nose, and mouth.  

The language of the Pong-San mask-dance play is composed of poetry, narrative songs, and colloquial dialogues mixed together. The play also includes a great deal of bawdy language, which often is found in the other mask-dance plays of Korea. It is said that the lines spoken by Chwibali, the licentious old bachelor, were so obscene that women viewers usually retired before he came on stage. This bawdy language is discussed in the next section.

Farce

Situation is the main element in farce. The people involved are not fully dimensional characters but types. A character represents an entire class rather than an individual. An apostate monk, a yang-ban, and the commoner are types in the Pong-San drama. Most characters, from the mokchungs in the second kwajang to Yonggam in the last, are comically caricatured.

A second feature of farce is the use of exaggeration, comic gestures, and awkward repetition—especially in the dances. In Kwajang 4, scene 2, Nojang, the old high Buddhist monk, expresses his feelings by doing an exaggerated mime when he sees Somu, the young female shaman, dancing.

Nojang: (He tries to stand up to the music. Finally he gets up. As he leans on his cane he covers his face with a silk gauze fan. Then he looks around slowly, bending his back to see whether anyone is around him. Unexpectedly finding Somu dancing, he is surprised. He quickly covers his face with the fan; his body trembles. He crouches to the ground once again. He stands up and furtively peers at Somu between the ribs of the fan.37 (See Fig. 9, p. 53.)

Drama is not heightened by verbal dexterity alone. When a situation or character explicitly lack grandeur, burlesque has a peculiar force.38 Likewise, Nojang's dance and mimes affect farcical quality and his actions arouse laughter.

In kwajang 7, the last scene of the play, Miyal dies after she is cursed by her husband, Yonggam, and is knocked down by Domori, his concubine.

Yonggam: She is so hot-tempered, so touchy, like dried leaves set on fire. Is she really dead?

(Sings)

"Darling, darling, darling, dear me, what have you done?"

Oh, my wife, darling dear. Look, she's quite stiff. A cold wind rises from under her nose. What a lot for a woman of 80! What shall I


Figure 9. Nojang dances as he approaches Somu (kwajang 4, scene 1).
(Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
do, poverty-stricken, penniless, and in rags as I am!

(Sings)

"Oi, oi, O-oi, O-oi."

Am I now lamenting or reciting a verse? Now, there is no choice but to bury the dead. I think I've got a prodigal son. He was named after a tool. Which tool was it, I wonder? That's right. It was a tool for woodchopping. Kkak-kwi? No, it was a tokki.

(Sings)

"Tokki, are you there, Tokki?" . . ."39

This scene depicts the poverty of the common people. In spite of the unpleasant nature of the subject, it definitely involves a remarkable degree of comic spirit and gesture.40

A third aspect of farce is lechery and obscenity in movement and speech.41 In kwajang 4, scene 3 (Fig. 10, p. 55), the old bachelor, Chwibali, crawls, with dancing steps, between Somu's legs, then raises his head and says, "Shee! My goodness. It's really hot here. . . ."42 Soon after, Somu acts as though she has a stomach pain and drops a doll, suggesting she has given birth to a baby.

In kwajang 7, Miyal and Yonggam simulate sexual intercourse. Another example is in kwajang 6 when the servant Malttugi makes fun of his master, Sobangnim.

39Yoh, op. cit., p. 151.

40Ibid.

41Ibid., p. 248.

Figure 10. Chwibali dances with Somu after forcing Nojang to retreat (kwajang 4, scene 3). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
Sobangnim: Sirrah, where have you been? You should wait on me all the time.

Malttugi: Well, I ate a bowl of cold rice and soup for my breakfast, went to the stable, and pulled out Mr. Mule. After brushing him, Sir Malttugi got on his back, and then I visited every nook and cranny of the country to search for Saennim, but I failed to find him or anyone like him. So I went up to Seoul to see if Saennim was at home. Neither he nor the master of the main house was at home, only madam, whom I found all alone. Well, without removing my felt hat and my foot wraps, I knelt down and then did it and did it.

Sobangnim: You villain! What nonsense are you talking?

Malttugi: Ha, ha, you didn't get me correctly. What I meant was, when I repeatedly greeted my madam by saying, "How are you, madam?" She offered me wine to drink. She herself poured it to the brim for me. I drank one, two, three glasses. Then she produced some snacks: boiled ribs of beef on a big brass tray, pork on a small brass tray, vinegar, pepper, pickled kimchi, octopus, abalone, and a chot-daegaeni which was left over and which you brought back from your outing to the mountains last August . . . .

Although the poor found the prevailing exorcism to be an emotional outlet from the strict code of Confucianism, it should not be misinterpreted as having been practised merely as a form of obscene entertainment but as a form of imitative magic that was considered to be part of a fertility rite. The imitation of sexual intercourse and the scene depicting childbirth constitute symbolic acts of invocation for good

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43Glans or head of a penis.

harvests and other blessings in the year to come. These obscene movements and speeches are connected with Shamanistic belief.

Three farcical characteristics appear in all the mask-dance dramas. As in the Western concept of farce, they concentrate on situations over plot, on types over character development, and on energetic and ludicrous physical actions. Witty dialogue often is subordinated to those farcical qualities. The ghostly and unrealistic masks also add a farcical quality. More importantly, those qualities are kept and developed by each actor playing the same character throughout his career, like the actors of the Italian commedia dell'arte.

Plot and Structure

Despite the many interesting and amusing stories in Korean mask-dance plays, no plot develops from the beginning to the end of the play. The stories are not connected and the subjects change suddenly from scene to scene. Ideally, plot is a result of the interaction of characters. The appearance of characters in this drama is consistent with its lack of organic dramatic structure.

If they were to be judged by Aristotelian concepts, the Korean mask-dance plays' most salient feature is lack of

logic or consistency in their plots. According to Dorothy Blair Shumer, the order of the six elements of tragedy enumerated by Aristotle is, on the whole, directly reversed in Asian drama: plot, the first element, is episodic only, in many cases, and usually lacks inevitable development.

In general, the plot of Korean mask-dance plays has an unvarying situation and predictable ending, neither of which are heroic and both of which deal mostly with human and historical excesses of religious and social privilege. In short, Korean mask-dance plays consist of several different or independent scenes in which plot has almost nothing to do with a play's themes.

This drama is, on the whole, composed of the independent acts of the eight mokchungs (kwajang 2), Nojang (kwajang 4), yang-bans (kwajang 6), and Miyal (kwajang 7) to which the dance of the sangjwas (opening ceremony in kwajang 1), Sadang's dance (kwajang 3—mainly songs), and a lion dance (kwajang 5) are added. Among them, the scenes centering upon Nojang and the yang-bans have some plot and dramatic unity.

The independent plot in each scene, the lack of organic structure, and the one-time appearance of characters are

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46 Yoh, op. cit., p. 147.
49 Yoh, loc. cit.
attributable to the fact that at the beginning this drama was improvisational theater.\textsuperscript{50} Beyond a broad plot, improvisation is the order of the performance, with no kind of tight, structural progression observed.\textsuperscript{51} It is assumed that the players acted on the basis of plot outline in each scene. Using a sketched synopsis of plot, they improvised the dialogues, songs, actions, and dances. This was enhanced by each actor playing the same role with a fixed mask, costume, and individual props such as fans, canes, etc.\textsuperscript{52} Inconsistency of the dramatic structure and plot development are, therefore, one of the characteristics of this drama form.

Dance and Music

In Korea there are six varieties of traditional dance: (1) Shamanistic, (2) Buddhist, and (3) Confucian rituals, (4) court entertainments, (5) country or folk dances, and (6) the mask-dance.\textsuperscript{53} Korean dance movement has been aptly described by a Westerner, Eleanor King, in the paragraph that follows:

\textsuperscript{50}Cho, "The Mask Dance Theater," op. cit., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{51}Renouf, op. cit., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{52}Cho, "The Mask Dance Theater," loc. cit.
The characteristic Korean movements are the heel walk and turning on the heels; raising the body softly and lightly from bent knee position; slight vibrations from hips up; the pulses from the shoulders; economy of movement, and improvisation. The most distinctive of Korean movements is the suspended position, balancing on one foot with the free leg extended while the shoulders softly rise and fall. With its elan, this expression conveys a deep sense of ecstatic power. Ecstasy permeates all of the types of dance—not only the shaman and farmers' folk dance, but even extremely formal limited court dance has shoulder pulsation—actually from the chest, in breath rhythm—indicating that secret inner joy of motion.\textsuperscript{54}

In the Pong-San mask-dance drama there are eight sawis:\textsuperscript{55}

1. Ae-sawi: a dance pattern in which the arms are tossed outward in a direction away from the center of the body. The mokchungs dance this way (Fig. 11, p. 61).

2. Kop-sawi: a dance style in which the index finger of each hand is alternately brought to a position in front of the body, center, then over the head.

3. Yang-sawi: similar to the Kop-sawi above.

4. Man-sawi: a dance pattern performed in a slow movement.

5. Kkaekki-choom:\textsuperscript{56} a basic form of all mask-dance drama which requires the use of every part of a dancer's body. The tune of the taryong\textsuperscript{57} is required for this dance.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55}Dance patterns.

\textsuperscript{56}Choom means dancing.

\textsuperscript{57}A kind of ballad tune.
Figure 11. The mokchungs dance (kwajang 2, scene 1). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
6. Kungdungi-choom: a dance characterized by swinging the buttocks back and forth.

7. Muttung-choom: a dance form consisting of various styles performed by the eight mokchungs dancing together to a fast taryong rhythmic accompaniment. The basic movement consists of the dancers turning their right hands upside down, then lifting them quickly and lowering them.

8. Magpie steps: a combination of a two-step and skip step whereby a dancer, looking at the ground, takes the steps and hops while making gestures in imitation of a magpie walking on the ground.58

Dances mostly commence after performers sing a short pullim giving a cue as to the rhythmic pattern to be employed. The outstanding dances in this drama are Nojang's dance, the dance of the four sangjwas, the dance of the eight mokchungs, and the lion's dance.

Nojang's Dance

This dance is almost a mime. Mime and dance are so interrelated as to be indistinguishable (see Fig. 9, p. 53).

... As if he is determined, he nods. He is completely capitulated by the beauty of Somu. He is determined to approach Somu. He attempts to lift his cane, but it is stuck to the ground. Holding his cane, he circles around it as he dances to the tune of music while covering his face with the fan. He cannot lift the cane. Now he folds his fan. As he dances, he strikes the cane with the fan. He is now able to lift the cane. Holding the cane in both hands, he carries it on his

shoulder. As if he is ashamed of himself, he walks backward toward Somu.

Using these highly developed techniques of dance and mime, Nojang succeeds in conveying an impersonal awkwardness, which is one of the farcical qualities.

**Dance of the Four Sangjwas**

Originally, the dance was performed by males. Now, however, it is more commonly performed by females. The dancers wear Buddhist costumes and white hoods. This dance is regarded as the most feminine and most delicate of all the monks' dances. In addition, its technique, charm, and quiet movements make it rich in essences and one high in artistic merit as well (see Fig. 2, p. 19).

**Dance of the Eight Mokchungs**

This is perhaps the most vigorous and most masculine of all Korean dances. Performers wear robes with long sleeves fully covering their hands. The sleeves are gaily thrust up and down and twirled around in rapid movements (see Fig. 11, p. 61). Each mokchung boasts unabashedly of his special dance prowess.

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60 Yoh, op. cit., p. 148.

Lion's Dance

One lion is composed of two persons, one in front and the other in the rear. The lion dances around in a large circle, after which he sits down, walks, or jumps in the center of the stage, turning his head from left to right, biting at his body lice, switching his tail, or scratching his body. (See Fig. 6, p. 38.)

When performing the different movement patterns, players usually dance unselfconsciously, individually, and freely. The most distinguishing quality of Korean dance is mut and heung. Compared to the decorative, restrained Japanese dances with their tightly controlled formalism, Korean dances are spontaneous and instinctive. The Korean dancer is not interested in external aspects of acrobatic physical motion but in expressing metaphysical joy, that is, mut and heung.

Comparatively little of interest is to be found in the accompanying music, which is subservient to the dance movements and whose heterophonic melodies are repeated throughout by the orchestra. The small orchestra for the production of this drama usually is made up of two piris.

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62 Ibid., pp. 8-9.

63 Translated by King, op. cit., p. 63 as "irepressible joy from within, state of exhilaration from a deep sense of beauty."


65 Bamboo oboes.
a taegum,66 (Fig. 12, p. 66), a haegum,67 (Fig. 13, p. 67), a changgo,68 (Fig. 14, p. 68), and a barrel drum. During a performance, the musicians play a variety of tunes, including the yombul, taryong, and kutkori,69 which enables the players to do a number of different dances.

Masks and Costumes

Masks used in the Pong-San are made of paper. Since masks are turned into ashes after a performance, the mask makers have to depend entirely upon memory. It therefore is presumed that mask shapes and appearances have changed continuously. Mask making is explained as follows:

To make a mask, first the clay archetype was created for each mask. When this clay archetype dried, several thin layers of parchment paper soaked in light glue were laid on it one at a time. Then the clay archetype was removed from the paper when it had completely dried. After that, the mask was painted according to the characteristics of each individual, adding certain items such as fur eyebrows, beard, and mustache if necessary. But the lion masks, which were the largest, were never made with paper. The material for the construction of these masks was usually dried willow branches. Then the lion masks were also covered with parchment paper. After this process, they, too, were ready for painting.

66Plute.

67Korean two-stringed fiddle.

68The yombul is a six-beat rhythm in 6/4 time not unlike a Buddhist invocation. The taryong is a 12-beat ballad rhythm in 12/8 time accented on the ninth beat. The kutkori, also a 12-beat rhythm in 12/8 time but with no especially sharp accent executed, is played in a smooth, rippling tempo somewhat like a waltz.

69Hourglass-shaped drum.
Taegŭm (large transverse flute). The history of this large transverse flute dates back to the seventh century, during the Unified Silla Kingdom. The taegŭm has played an important role in court orchestral music ensembles, and is still used in both court and folk music. The instrument measures two feet five inches in length, which is slightly longer than the Japanese shakuhachi and the Chinese f. Since the taegŭm has an extra hole covered with a thin membrane—besides its blowing hole and six finger holes—its timbre reveals uniquely Korean characteristics, producing a somewhat buzzing sound. The vibration of the membrane gives the instrument a beautiful and expressive tonal quality.

Photo courtesy of Hal Cohen

Figure 12, Taegum.

Source

Keith Pratt and Bong-song Song, "The Unique Flavor of Korean Music," Korean Culture 1, No. 3 (Summer 1980): 7.
Figüre 13. Haegum.

Haegüm (two-stringed fiddle). This is the Korean counterpart to the Chinese fiddle called hu-ch'in. The instrument is believed to have been introduced into Korea from China during the Koryō period (918-1392). Since then the fiddle has been used as an important melodic instrument in Korean music (hyangak) ensembles, and it is indispensable to court and folk music ensembles accompanying dance. The instrument has no fingerboard, but is played vertically with a bow while being held on the left knee. The tone quality is quite nasal, and the sound of the instrument is remarkably penetrating. The haegüm is always found in Korean court, chamber, and folk music ensembles.
Changgo (hourglass drum). The hourglass drum is the Korean counterpart of the Chinese chang-ku and the Japanese san no tsuzumi, but is larger than both. Ancient pictures are found in mural paintings in Koguryo tombs and are inscribed on the bodies of various Buddhist bells of the Unified Silla Kingdom. Since the early period of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) the changgo has been used in court music performance, and today it is the most frequently used accompaniment instrument for almost all kinds of Korean music. The thick skin of the left side is struck with the palm and gives out a soft and low sound; the thinner skin of the right side is struck with a bamboo stick and sounds harder. The right side can be raised or lowered in pitch by moving the central belts that encircle the V-shaped laces to the right or left, thus tightening or loosening the tension of the drum head.

Figure 14. Changgo.

Source
Keith Pratt and Bong-song Song, "The Unique Flavor of Korean Music," Korean Culture 1, No. 3 (Summer 1980): 11.
When it was completed, a piece of dark cloth, which was called t'alpo, was sewed along the edge of the mask. This cloth was used to cover the back of the wearer's head as well as to fasten the mask around the head with it.  

Although the characters in the drama number 34, only 26 masks are made because the masks for the kosas are also used for the mokchungs and the Somu mask is also used for Sadang and Mudang.  

The masks and costumes of the characters follow:

**Sangjwa**

**Mask.** This whitish mask for the young Buddhist monk has ink-drawn hair and eyebrows. A thin ink-drawn line encircles the eyes. The lips are rouged bright red.

**Costume.** The player wears a monk's white dress and a white peaked nun's hat. A red sash is slung across the shoulder. Red wristlets, which cover the hands, are attached to the sleeves of the coat. (See Fig. 2, p. 19).

**Mokchung**

**Mask.** This orange-colored monk's mask has numerous black spots on the lower half of the face. There are seven horn-like protuberances on the face: two on the forehead, two between the eyebrows, two on the lower cheeks, and one on  

71 Lee, "Mask Dance Drama," op. cit., p. 56.
the chin. All the protuberances are covered with beaten gold. The vertical line of black and white make up the eyebrows. The protuding black eyes are encircled with wide gilded lines which are again encircled by thin black lines.

Costume. The player wears a jacket, a pair of short pants, and a monk's coat. A bell is attached to either knee and a willow branch hangs from the lower back. (See Fig. 11, p. 61). The bell symbolizes hypocrisy and outward show. The willow branch is used for hiding one's face.

Nojjang

Mask. The old monk's maroon mask has printed eyes with gold encircled with ink-drawn lines. The eyebrows are gray. The protruding lips are painted rouge. There are five protuberances: two on the space between the eyebrows and three on the lower chin. These protuberances are covered with beaten gold.

Costume. The player wears a monk's robe, a hat, and a long rosary made of 108 beads. A red sash is slung across the shoulder. The player covers his face with a silk gauze fan. (See Fig. 5, p. 36.)

Sinjangsu

Mask. The shoe-seller's skin-colored mask has ink-drawn eyebrows and beard. The lips are rouged.
Costume. The player wears a black jacket and white pants. He carries a bundle of wrapped merchandise on his back in which the monkey is included. (See Fig. 5, p. 36.)

Chwibali

Mask. The mask for the old bachelor is similar to the mokchungs' masks, but it is slightly longer. There are twelve protuberances on the face: four on the forehead, six between the eyebrows, and two on either end of the mouth. It has gray hair and a beard. A lock of gray hair hangs between the eyes to indicate the bachelor is old.

Costume. The player wears a red jacket with green sleeves and a pair of red pants. He carries a willow branch. A large bell is fastened to one of his knees. (See Fig. 10, p. 55.)

Miyal

Mask. The old woman's dark blue mask has many white and red spots. The lips are rouged.

Costume. The player wears a white jacket and a skirt. She also wears a towel around her head. She carries a fan and a bell.

Yonggam

Mask. Miyal's husband wears a whitish mask with ink-drawn eyebrows and a gray beard.
Costume. The player wears a white full-dress attire and trousers, leggings, and a dog-fur hat.

Domori

Mask. Yonggam's concubine wears a whitish mask with ink-drawn hair and eyebrows. The lips are rouged. The chignon-style hair is decorated with a red ribbon.

Costume. The player wears a yellow jacket and a red skirt.

Mudang

Mask. This whitish female shaman's mask has ink-drawn hair and eyebrows. The lips are rouged bright red. There are red spots on the forehead and cheeks.

Costume. The player wears a blue jacket, a red skirt, dark blue armour, and a felt hat. She carries a fan and a bell. (See Fig. 15, p. 73.)

Saennim

Mask. The old aristocrat wears a whitish mask with a fur beard and eyebrows. Under the nose there is a horizontal red scar which reaches to the upper lip. A horsehair headband is ink-drawn.

Costume. The player wears a white full-dress attire, white trousers, white leggings, and a many-cornered horsetail
Figure 15. Mudang, a female shaman, performs an exorcism with a fan and a bell. Namggang Noin stands near her, listening to what she says (kwajang 7). (Photographed by Jin-Hi Kim)
hat. He carries a white fan in his left hand and holds a bamboo cane in his right hand. (See Fig. 7, p. 39.)

Sobangnim

 Mask. The mask of the middle-aged aristocrat is basically the same as Saennim's except that it has a single cleft palate.

 Costume. The player wears the same outfit as Saennim. (See Fig. 7, p. 39.)

Toryongnim

 Mask. The young, unmarried aristocrat wears a soft pink mask with ink-drawn hair parted in the center and eyebrows. The lips are rouged. The mouth and nose are askew to the left.

 Costume. The player wears a white dress with blue armour, a dark blue headcover made of cloth, and leggings. He carries a fan. (See Fig. 7, p. 39.)

Namggang Noin

 Mask. The old man's mask is identical to Yonggam's.

 Costume. The player wears a white, long coat, trousers, and a horsehair hat. (See Fig. 15, p. 73.)

 In Chinese opera, strict conventions demand that the colors and costume styles correspond with the status of the
Different face colors represent different characteristics. By contrast, mask colors used in Korea are symbolic of the five directions of the compass, as previously noted: blue for East, red for South, white for West, black for North, and yellow for Center.

When Nojang, the old monk, who wears a black mask, is defeated by the licentious old bachelor, Chwibali, who wears a red mask, and when old Miyal, who wears a black mask and is a first wife, is defeated by the young concubine who wears a white mask, this is symbolic of the Battle of Summer and Winter, held at seasonal feasts, and of the blessings of the year to come. Burning the masks after a performance, and the Battle of Summer and Winter symbolism, constitute elements of ritual in this drama as discussed in the next section.

Elements of Ritual

Ritual drama is considered the earliest form of drama. The theater developed from rites in which primitive man resorted to magic. Primitive man was faced with a world

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73 Ibid., p. 41; red signifies royalty and uprightness, purple signifies the same as red but to a lesser degree because of old age, black signifies simplicity and straightforwardness, blue signifies obstinancy and ferocity, and yellow signifies craftiness or cleverness.

74 Lee, "Mask Dance Drama," op. cit., p. 36.

75 Ibid.
he knew a great deal about but could not control, thus rites of birth, initiation to manhood, fertility, and death (the well-known rites of passage) were far more important than realistic details of everyday actions. These kinds of ritual concerns still exist in the traditional drama forms of many countries in Asia, as well as among African tribes and the American Indians of the United States.

Korean mask-dance drama is not an exception. Having originated from Sonang-Je, as part of village shrine ceremonies, Ha-hoe mask-dance drama retains the Sonang-Je tradition by using priests and priestesses (see p. 9). During the golden period of Korean mask-dance drama, one month prior to the Dano Festival, all involved in the performance took a holy bath and lodged together in a local Buddhist temple while rehearsing the play and making masks and properties. Instruction of new performers was done by the Elders of the group. The instruction method was imitation.

Once a performance began in the evening, players, wearing different colored masks symbolic of the five directions of the compass, created a festival atmosphere that lasted until dawn the next day. What they depicted was the Battle of Summer and Winter (see p. 75). These Sonang-Je elements—its origin, the holy baths, communal instruction by the Elders, the Battle of Summer and Winter, and the festival atmosphere of the actual performance—all are indicative of the ritual roots and continuing ritual character of Korean mask-dance drama.
Within ritual dramas there are many common characteristics which have a high probability of incidence in all cultures. Many of these common characteristics are present in Korean mask-dance dramas as detailed below.

1. Ritual plays quite often are written in verse. As has been stated previously in this thesis, Pong-San drama is literally crammed with verse, song lyrics, and quotations from Chinese verse.

2. The usual setting for a ritual drama is an outdoor stage with nonscenic elements. Pong-San drama habitually has been performed outdoors and has even less scenic elements than most extant ritual dramas.

3. Ritual drama includes dancing as an integral part of the drama performance. Such dancing often is slow, repetitious, and somewhat monotonous. Korean mask-dance drama has multitudinous examples of the above. At times it seems as though there is more dancing than dialogue, especially in the Pong-San drama. Even the costumes in Korean mask-dance drama are graceful extensions of the performers' dance movements, for example, the elongated sleeves which extend well beyond their arms. The super sleeves are symbolic of the dispelling of evils. The lion dance also is a ritualistic chasing away of evil spirits.

4. Several types of drums are used for sound and music in ritual drama. The changgo (see p. 68) and a barrel drum are used in Korean mask-dance dramas.
5. Talking animals often are prominent in ritual drama. In Korean mask-dance dramas, however, a lion listens but only nods his head to what a lion driver says instead of talking.

6. Costuming always is important in ritual drama. As in all Oriental countries, the costumes are dazzlingly colorful in Korean mask-dance dramas.

7. Emphasis upon situations commonly takes precedence over character in ritual drama. The yang-ban versus commoner, monk versus commoner, and commoner versus commoner situations are more important than the individuals in Korean mask-dance drama. Thus situation is a main element in this farce form of drama.

8. Ritual drama makes extensive use of a changing, speaking, and singing chorus. In addition to Sadang (entertaining girl), kosas (giants), and musicians, a singing chorus also is heard in the Pong-San mask-dance drama (kwajang 3).

9. Ritual drama often contains a character known as a spielman. His role, although ostensibly that of a minor character, is really that of prompter and stage manager. In Korean mask-dance dramas, a musician plays the spielman role. For instance, in kwajang 7 a musician talks to Miyal and Yonggam, goading them to follow their own inclinations.

10. Ritual drama creates a unifying mood. One often sees, after Korean mask-dance performances, members of the audience dancing with the players—especially in the rural areas of Korea.
11. Ritual drama features many processions as a regular part of its theatrical form. When an audience is assembled for a mask-dance play to begin, the four sangjwas enter and perform an opening procession and ritual dance. It is, as previously noted, a dance dedicated to the five directions, North, South, East, West, and the all-important Center.

After the sangjwas dance, each mokchung enters in turn and recites poems. While dancing, the second mokchung appears and strikes the first one, driving him away. All the mokchungs enter and exit in the same manner, one after another. This part is thought to be symbolic of driving out evil and, therefore, is a dance of exorcism. The prevailing eroticism and scene depicting childbirth can be considered part of a fertility rite and a symbolic act of invocation for a good harvest and other blessings in the year to come.

In the last scene of the play, Mudang, a shaman, enters to send Miyal's dead soul to paradise. The shaman begins to perform an exorcism as she dances. Namggang Noin, a neighborhood old man, stands near the shaman, listening to what she says. Once in a while he responds to the shaman, saying, "That's right, that's right" (Fig. 16, p. 77).

Mudang: This is a grave
This is a grave
This is a grave
For the woman of a family . . . .

76 Ibid., p. 53.
77 Ibid., p. 36.
Ae-hae-ae-ae
It's a pity
It's a misery.

Here I am. Here I am.
After I have prayed for the mouth and body
Of the dead person
I am here.

Here I am 0-0-0
Without accomplishing her hopes.
She has become a guest in Hades . . . .

Yi-Yi-Yi
The spirit after Death
Please send this poor dead soul
To paradise.

On the soul board, her soul.
On the spirit board, her spirit.
Send them to the lotus blossom peak.
Olso!

(She dances)

Namggang Noin: That's right, that's right.
Go to the paradise. An exorcism is
performed to send you to the good place.
Go only to paradise.

(Mudang dances as she rings a bell;
after a while, she exits)\textsuperscript{78}

Thus the Pong-Sang drama ends. A table with food and
wine is brought to the stage. All the players toss their
masks and properties, frequently including their costumes,
into a blazing bonfire as they repeatedly bow solemnly with
their palms together.\textsuperscript{79}

The meaning of burning the masks and properties is
explained as follows:

\textsuperscript{78}Cho, "Pong-Sang Talchum: I," op. cit., 57.

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid.
... The masks and properties which were constructed with great labour and time for the performance turned into ashes and smoke after a single use. They were burned because the people believed that the masks and properties which were once used for the production of this drama were supposedly bedeviled with the demonic spirits. In order to get rid of devils and cleanse the players and audience, it was necessary for them to burn the bewitched masks.80

All these aspects of ritual are protected by other characteristics of this drama such as farcical qualities, variety of dancing, and songs. Without these elements, serious ritual scenes on stage could not keep an audience's interest. These secular elements are rough and earthy: Chwibali's obscenity, the vulgar scene of sexual intercourse between Yonggam and Miyal, and the servant Malttugi's outspoken dialogue. In this theater form, vulgarity and obscenity are joyously comingled for the audience.

Despite these exceptions, it is clear that Korean mask-dance drama was, in its inception, and is, in practice today, a ritual drama. In a strict sense, however, it is by no means a form of sacred drama.

First, much of the play, as previously mentioned, is improvised from a scenario by the actors. Sacred drama, on the other hand, features holy or magic words that must be repeated verbatim each time the drama is performed. Second, sacred drama often features the punishment and conversion of a person who has broken the religious taboos of the culture which created the drama. Pong-San drama's depiction of the old monk who degenerates into a lecher, would seem to be such a situation. The monk is not, however, really a monk

80Ibid., p. 41.
(he is played by an actor) and he demonstrates absolutely no tendencies toward repentance. Third, the cast of a sacred drama normally will contain many performers who are actually playing themselves (e.g., the Mudang in the final scene of the Pong-San drama is a professional Mudang). Performers who are impersonating their characters (actors), while often carrying the most important roles in a sacred drama, are decidedly few in number. A ritual drama that has become a secular entertainment reverses the situation and utilizes a majority of actors. In Pong-San drama productions, as seen in Seoul City, the only performers not actors are the Mudang and the musicians. All other performers are actors impersonating the roles they play. Finally, despite the fact that the concluding scene of the Pong-San drama (the funeral for Miyal) is a religious ceremony conducted by an actual Mudang, audiences respond in a fashion that clearly indicates that they know it is not to be taken as a religious ceremony. They laugh at the mime and dialogue, applaud what particularly pleases them, visit among themselves if disinterested, and generally demonstrate a complete lack of awe or reverence for the scene onstage.

Therefore, while Korean mask-dance drama is strongly ritualistic and gains power from that quality, it nonetheless is not sacred. This presents the possibility of modern Korean theater professionals borrowing and adapting freely from the mask-dance drama in order to create a contemporary and unique Korean theater.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS: THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Summary

Infused by Shamanistic belief and influenced by Buddhism's morality, mask-dance drama was an annual event performed as part of the May 5 Dano Festival during the late Yi Dynasty (1382-1910). The performance started in the evening and lasted till dawn the next day. It also was performed in the center of a marketplace during the daytime. The Pong-San mask-dance drama was performed mainly in Pong-San city, presently part of North Korea. Since 1953, after the Korean War, this theater was revived by refugees from North Korea and other interested individuals.

Compared to the mask-dance plays of other regions, the Pong-San drama is considered the best in terms of dramatic unity. Seven characteristics of this drama follow:

1. Performance: outdoors with no setting.
2. Characters: one-time appearance.
3. Language: poetry, narrative songs, and colloquial dialogue.
4. Farcical quality: earthiness—even vulgarity—in situations and word play.
5. Improvisation: dancing and mimes.
6. Inconsistency: dramatic structure and plot development.

7. Ritual.

In Oriental drama, one of its most striking elements is joyfulness. From its early origins in dance and songs, Japanese drama has placed more emphasis upon spectacle and melody (or music) than upon the literary quality of the dramas.\(^1\) A Kabuki audience shows pleasure in an actor's performance by shouting his name or uttering some other suitable cry when he enters, strikes a pose, or speaks lines in a particularly pleasing way.\(^2\) Chinese theatergoers go to the theater not to watch a play but to see and hear their favorite actors show their mettle.\(^3\)

While watching the performance of mask-dance drama, a Korean audience is not solemn and hushed. The people talk, drink, eat, and often shout, "Cho-ta" or "Olsigu."\(^4\) This intimate audience-actor relationship creates a roughness—salt, sweat, noise, and smell—\(^5\)—and laughter and delight are aroused. Thus a sense of joy, reflected


\(^4\)Bravo.

in a feeling of participation, exists in most Oriental dramas.

Rapport between the players and audience in Korea is nowadays observed mostly in rural areas. Having been modernized and developed, the vitality and crudeness which existed in Korean art, including mask-dance dramas, have been lost. Like other Asian people, Koreans have been impressed and influenced by Western stage techniques with their realistic portrayals of contemporary events and society. As the realistic Western-style plays gained popularity, Korean comedy, in the traditional sense, almost disappeared. In the last 60 years, Korean drama has lacked the strong comic sense and critical spirit found in the early mask-dance plays. Furthermore, the rigidity of the political situation, in which freedom of expression is limited, prevents writers and producers from criticizing reality point-blank.

Via developing and emphasizing the different styles of musical performance, it seems that American theater today is trying to recover the sense of joy which existed in the Elizabethan theater. Realizing the importance of recovering cultural identity, Korean theater also began, in 1970, to inject Korean tradition in the contents and forms of modern art.

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drama.\textsuperscript{8} Thanks to a group of youthful playwrights, dramatic creation now is characterized by a heavy reliance on themes and motifs drawn from traditional folklore and old literature.\textsuperscript{9}

Recommendations

Although new dimensions in Korean theater are being explored, the high degree of comic sense and critical spirit existing in the former performances of mask-dance plays has not been reached. Through reconstructing traditional dramas, while remembering that unchanged performances will not satisfy theatrogoers who are accustomed to seeing the Western stage, perhaps their nature and spirit can be recreated. To achieve this goal, five recommendations follow:

1. Efforts should be expended to recover the mood of playing mask-dance dramas, then developing them and solving the dramatic problems unfavorable to a modern audience. Since the mask-dance play was an improvisational performance, it should be flexible to change for the modern audience.

2. Outdoor stages should be built in big cities as well as in rural areas. The same kind of stage as at Sariwon city in the 1920s (see Fig. 8, p. 42) would be better than the thrust-style stage recently built near the National Theater. The intimate feeling between players and audience via a

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., p. 156.
\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p. 155.
3. Dialogue and plot problems should be considered. Many quotations borrowed from Chinese history are not understood by the average audience. These could be removed or changed to quotations that a modern audience could easily understand.

4. Although the lack of organic structure is one of the interesting qualities in this drama form, the independent stories should casually progress from scene to scene, thereby creating more interesting dramatic unity. For instance, while reciting his poems, a mokchung in kwajang 2 could mention his master Nojang, and refer to a trick designed to tarnish Nojang's reputation. This would provide a smooth connection to kwajangs 4 and 5, Nojang's scene and the lion's dance scene. In this manner, the scenes could be related from the beginning to the end of the play.

5. Systematically training the actors should be required. Although the players dance beautifully and improvise funny gestures, many moments need sensitive acting. Awkwardness is one of the qualities required in this kind of farce drama, but too much awkwardness bores an audience.

Other changes, too, could be effected, little by little, to make this drama form a great religious festival in this modern period. Great theater artists already have dreamed of creating a modern equivalent of the Greek festival spirit. Jean Genet believed that drama creates beauty out of
excrement by employing elements of ritual: rich and rhythmic language and gesture. Theater should, therefore, present the vulgar, the horrible, and the obscene with the ceremony of a mass. This concept is related to Scheckner's idea of greater freedom against restraints in modern ritual drama.

Korean mask-dance dramas have many qualities that can be developed into a great religious festival-drama form: farce with vulgarity, improvisational dance and mimes, rich language, etc. Recovering the mood of playing and making a better traditional drama form would be great experiments in this modern period because there is no permanent fixed art form and the past often becomes the future.

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