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Landscape and Soundscape: Geomantic Spatial Mapping in Korean Traditional Music

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It is known that music perception maps musical parameters against a cognitive template derived from physical spatial perception such that music is experienced in terms of space. Recent research suggests that the spatial dimension of music is general, but varies according to the way different societies construct different shared cultural spaces. The culturally specific East Asian spatial template of geomancy (*feng shui* in Chinese, *p'ungsu* in Korean) can be related to the structures of several genres of Korean music, with geomantic influences exerted on the constructions of Korean performance spaces, rhythmic patterns, and pitch sets. Knowing how such practices penetrated and spatialized aspects of Buddhist, Confucian, Shaman, and even secular musical activity alike provides a powerful new interpretive tool for understanding Korea's multifaceted soundscape.

Musicology has long acknowledged a significant spatial component in human music perception. Pitch, for example, is perceived in spatial terms (as high and low) rather than in its own or some other terms, even though our ears receive pitch data temporally (as beats per second). From this it has been inferred that our brains translate musical time data (frequency) into musical space data (pitch "height"). This is considered a problem in music theory, with various mechanisms having been invoked to account for it, including innate neurological structure or linguistic metaphor.[1]

1. For example, "Perception is a natural epistemological power of the organism, which depends on no social context for its exercise. The musical experience, however,

However it is explained, examinations of indigenous terminologies for musical impressions strengthen the hypothesis that the spatial aspect of music is cross-culturally general. The spatial question thus migrates from music theory to ethnomusicology, and scholars of non-Western music now engage the space problem in new and creative ways. In particular, spatial perception is recognized as a fundamental element of cultural identity and music making, with its expressive arsenal as an important enforcer of the experience of cultural space. Amatzia Bar-Yosef has suggested that spatial perception is primarily cultural, and that music operates culturally through the mechanism of analogy, in which "the analogous properties of music and worldview [can be] interpreted as different manifestations of the same cultural characteristics."[2]

Bar-Yosef argues that different cultures demonstrate diverging perceptions of physical space and that these perceptions may be encoded into music works and performances to express that culture's ideology of space. This argument makes use of an insight that may be traced to Durkheim—namely, that "The space which I know by my senses, of which I am the center, could not be space in general, which contains all extensions, and where these are coordinated by personal guide-lines which are common to everybody."[3] Durkheim holds that because space as a whole is unknowable and the individual sensory experiences that form our bases for acts of abstraction are inadequate to derive a coherent concept of it, members of cultures could not share the common view of space that they do unless the concept derives from a common and unitary source that can only be human culture. Space perception is thus a culturally mediated interpretive act.

Bar-Yosef explores how culturally specific musical styles align their *time organizations* to express such cultural *space constructs*. This approach can be extended further to suggest how Korean traditional music analogically spatializes not only rhythmic time systems

is not merely perceptual. It is founded in metaphor, arising when unreal movement is heard in imaginary space. Such an experience occurs only within a musical culture, in which traditions of performance and listening shape our expectations" (Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], 239).

2. Amatzia Bar-Yosef, "Musical Time Organization and Space Concept: A Model of Cross-Cultural Analogy," *Ethnomusicology* 45/3 (2001), 423.

3. Emile Durkheim, trans. Karen E. Fields, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 441.

but also pitch systems and performance spaces, binding Korean music to its cultural cosmology of space. We identify this cosmology as *geomancy*, the English translation of a general East Asian spatial mapping system known as *feng shui* in China and *p'ungsu* in Korea, applying geomantic concepts to a wide range of Korean traditional music making. The incorporation of *p'ungsu* concepts into analyses of Korean traditional music and music making provides a valid and powerful interpretive tool for understanding many aspects of this music. That this geomantic dimension persists across various eras, genres, and social classes is demonstrated by analogical relationships between geomantic space concepts, musical performance spaces, and pitch and musical time systems. The goal here is to provide a more holistic approach to at least one realm of meaning in the performance and perception of Korea's multifaceted soundscape.

GEOMANCY AND GEOMANTIC-STYLE MAPPING

Despite scholars' widespread acknowledgement that *p'ungsu* landscaping and divination techniques have penetrated social barriers between the populace and the elite for at least the past six centuries,[4] in many other cultural arenas *p'ungsu*-related practices are either ignored or polarized in diametrically opposed concepts of "court" versus the "folk."[5] Indigenous musical scholarship goes a step further in its downplaying of geomancy's role in a broader, more interrelated Korean cultural landscape, with little or no mention of *p'ungsu* in standard music reference works, regardless of genre or

4. Yoon Hong-Key [Yun Honggi], *Geomantic Relationships Between Culture and Nature in Korea* (Taipei: The Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976); Lee Ki-baik [Yi Kibaek], trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Schultz, *A New History of Korea* (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers, 1984), 107–108; Linda A. Walton, "Southern Sung Academies and the Construction of Sacred Space," in *Landscape, Culture, and Power in Chinese Society*, ed. Yeh Wen-hsin (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1998), 24n.

5. See, as examples, Kim Ŭisuk, *Han'guk minsok cheŭi-wa ŭmyang ohaeng: Minsok cheŭi ŭi hyŏngsŏng iron* [Korean folk ritual and the concept of *ŭm-yang* and the five elements: A formative theory of folk ritual] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1993); Paek Yŏngja, *Chosŏn shidae ŭi ŏga haengnyŏl* [Royal carriage processions of the Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Han'guk pangsong t'ongshin taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1994), 215–216.

audience composition.[6] Such neglect may be understandable, given the vast diversity and evolutions of Korean music, with its intimate ties to various and often competing religious and political ideologies—a cultural maze through which it is challenging to trace the unifying geomantic thread. Nevertheless, it would seem reasonable to credit at least some of this reluctance to lingering biases against geomancy's presumptively "superstitious" base.

Western scholarship generally has understood geomancy rather narrowly as a topographical practice through which certain cosmological principles are imposed on physical landscapes by means of the uniquely Chinese/Sino–Korean/Sino–Japanese *geomantic map*.[7] It is also understood that in Korea geomantic principles made their way into the larger culture in part by modifying nongeomantic mapmaking practices (such as those that produced innumerable maps of Seoul and other topographical locales), rendering such maps significantly geomantic in design and concept.[8] But this does not exhaust the cultural reach of *p'ungsu*, as we will refer to the Korean variant of this principle. The geomantic system permeates all manner of cultural artifacts, from the designs of cities to those of individual structures, individual rooms within such structures, the placements of ritual or other objects or even of persons within such rooms, and of the shaping of common household and other implements. Geomantic principles also affect ritual and other human behaviors and physical movements.

In all cases, geomantic principles are imposed on their subjects to control cosmic forces posited to exist by the geomantic worldview. Under the rubric of *auspiciousness*, such forces are considered vital to the success of human enterprises. To control them is imperative, because the auspiciousness of sites is vulnerable to human activities and may be strengthened or dispersed by informed or uninformed human actions. It is geomancy's business to ensure that human activities are informed so that auspiciousness may be preserved for

6. For example, Song Pangsong, *Han'guk ŭmakhak sŏsŏl* [An introduction to Korean musicology] (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2001); Sŏ Inhwa, *Theoretical Perspectives on Korean Traditional Music: An Introduction* (Seoul: The National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, 2002).

7. See, as an example, Yoon Hong-Key [Yun Honggi], "The Expression of Landforms in Chinese Geomantic Maps," *The Cartographic Journal* 20 (1992), 12–15.

8. Oh Sang-hak [O Sanghak], "Ancient Maps Reflect the Currents of the Middle Ages," *Koreana* 16/3 (2002), 24–31.

individuals, communities, and the nation. This accounts for the supreme importance placed on activities and rituals, especially music, that project and strengthen geomantic auspiciousness.

P'ungsu, literally "wind [and] water," may thus be understood as the practice by means of which auspicious forces are controlled through such tools as the geomantic map. It is the practical application of a two-part philosophical cosmology descriptively designated as *ŭm-yang ohaeng* (*yin-yang wuxing* in Chinese), meaning "*ŭm-yang* and the five elements." The cosmology's binary yet complimentary forces of *ŭm* (or *yin*) and *yang* were rooted in the pre-Confucian classic the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, while the concept of the five elements developed from ancient Chinese ritual practices. The two belief systems were brought together initially by Zhou Yan (c. 350–270 B.C.E.), then subsequently expanded and reinterpreted by many others.[9] *Ŭm-yang* provides the explanatory basis for the formation of the universe and all within it, while *ohaeng* (the five elements) is an active operative system that defines all activity in terms of interaction, confrontation, and mutation between these elements.[10]

It is difficult to ascertain when *p'ungsu* first made its way to the Korean peninsula. Standard sources credit the monk Tosŏn (827–898 C.E.) with introducing *p'ungsu* theory from the Chinese to the Korean court, and by the early Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392 C.E.) knowledge of geomancy was required to successfully pass the civil service examination (true for the succeeding Chosŏn dynasty as well).[11] This timeline is problematic, however, as earlier migrations and contact between Korean and Chinese commoner populations meant that geomantic principles could have entered Korean consciousness unrecorded centuries before. An earlier arrival period appears plausible when we consider sources that include *p'ungsu* as part and parcel of native shamanism, which was little influenced by the court or aristocracy.[12] But for our present purposes, such historical

9. Tsao Penyeh, "Soundscape of Daoist Rituals: 'Musical' Values from the Insider's Perspective," *Tongyang ŭmak* 22 (2000), 63–65.

10. Ibid., 64.

11. See Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 118; Kim Du-gyu [Kim Tugyu] and Suh Jai-sik [Sŏ Chaeshik], "Feng Shui (Pungsu): Chain of Life that Connects Ancestors with Descendants," *Koreana* 16/4 (2002), 26.

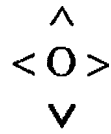
12. Jon Carter Covell, *Korea's Cultural Roots* (Elizabeth, N.J., and Seoul: Hollym International, 1985), 40–47; Kim T'aegon, *Han'guk musok yŏn'gu* [A study of Korean shamanism] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1985), 463, 471.

dimensions—while intriguing and requiring more research—are not of primary concern.

P'ungsu, then, answers admirably to Bar-Yosef's "cultural worldview," the space concepts of which he theorizes can be musically encoded. As for methodological constraints, Bar-Yosef emphasizes that "to substantiate a claim that an analogy between two domains indicates a specific cultural pattern, we need to show that the analogous properties are correlated—that, for example, in a culture where the calendric system differs from that of Java, a musical structure of coinciding cycles also does not exist."[13] To show that geomantic space concepts are coherently mapped onto Korean music, it is necessary to specify the culture-specific properties of Korean spatial mapping practices. These properties include the following: center orientation, cardinal-compass point asymmetry, cosmological meaningfulness, personification, and recursive nestedness.

The first four features are well known to the literature;[14] the fifth, recursive nestedness, begins to appear not so much in geomantic maps proper but in the projection of their first four attributes into extra-topographical cultural artifacts, including musical performance spaces; human movements, including ritual gesture and dance; and abstract organizing principles such as musical pitch and time systems. This fifth aspect has not been adequately evaluated or even mentioned in the literature, even though it is perhaps the most important mechanism through which abstract geomantic principles became exportable to domains beyond strict landscape topography.

Center orientation appears in such features as the arrangement of topographical and accessory features to face some auspicious center, as when mountains and calligraphic writing are drawn with their bases emerging, as it were, *from* such a center:



This has the effect of forcing users to rotate and thereby symbolically circumambulate the map in order to read its calligraphy. The user is drawn into ritual in the mere act of consultation.

13. Bar-Yosef, "Musical Time Organization and Space Concept," 425.

14. See, as examples, Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships Between Culture and Nature in Korea* and "The Expression of Landforms in Chinese Geomantic Maps."

Cardinal-compass point asymmetry, suggested by the asymmetrical "v" form in the graphic above, refers to the fact that the four cardinal points are unequal in value, with the all-important auspiciousness generally but not always associated with the southern cardinal point. In all cases, a single compass point is considered auspicious and its opposite either inauspicious or problematic. In no cases are the cardinal points value-neutral. This has the effect of making the center *face toward* an abstract property—the auspicious—which itself is not spatial but cosmological. Thus the map necessarily makes a cosmological value statement about space.

Maps that feature *cosmological meaningfulness* express a worldview that is apparently unique to East Asia. Such maps make ontological claims about the invisible forces that give landscapes their specific characteristics. As described by Hong-Key Yoon,

> [A]ccording to Chinese geomancy, the environment involves magical yet vulnerable forces, since the vital energy which manifests itself as "auspiciousness" is a delicate quality which can only be accumulated or flow through localities which have the appropriate geomantic qualifications.[15]

Personification refers to the function of mapping living characteristics onto topographical sites and landscape features. In all cases landscapes are imagined as quickened by unseen cosmic forces, rendering them lifelike. This is everywhere evident in standard designations of landscape features as representing snakes, cattle, and mythic animals, which give a living texture to landscape. But personification also is present in the background geomantic map format. Wherever such mapping is applied, an abstract human figure is introjected into the landscape by the consistent pairing of the east–west axis (proper to landscape) with the left–right axis (proper to the human body). This is striking in depictions of geomantically auspicious sites, which Hong-Key Yoon described as resembling abstract seated human figures inhabiting auspiciousness like householders.[16] Such axes, proper to a human body, are topographically

15. Hong-Key Yoon [Yun Honggi], "Environmental Deteminism and Geomancy: Two Cultures, Two Concepts," *GeoJournal* 6/1 (1982), 78.

16. Yoon, "*P'ungsu* or Chinese Geomancy in Korea: Its Nature and Impact on the Korean Mind-Set and Social Behavior," lecture presented at the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, November 1, 2002.

correlated such that N = back, S = front, E = left, W = right.[17] Such personifying ensures that, unlike natural objects, but like persons, geomantic centers and artifacts constrained by geomantic mapping *face* specific directions:

> unless it is stated otherwise, the top of the [geomancy] map is assumed to be the front of the auspicious site which normally faces southward (including southeast and southwest). Naturally, the bottom of the map represents the back of the auspicious site, indicating northward (including northwest and northeast).[18]

THE FIVE-ELEMENT TEMPLATE

Considering the above qualities, it is possible to identify an abstract organizing structure that we call the "Five-Element Template." It is this abstract template, and not the geomantic map per se, that forms the conceptual mechanism through which geomantic claims are enforced on cultural artifacts and human behavior, including music. The template is a culturally internalized background assumption about the abstract constitution of any intelligible iteration of physical space; it is also, more importantly, a prescription for how such objects should be constituted, oriented, or rectified to render them auspicious and thereby meaningful. The template is a *quincunx* arrangement of five objects comprising two pairs of 180° opposites quadrisecting a center. Its five elements are symmetrical with respect to the four cardinal points, yet asymmetrical in arithmetical form (4 + 1 = 5). This center/NSEW asymmetry is inherently hierarchical: Stress is placed on the central element, which defines "here," in contrast to four cardinal elements that define "there," directions *away* from a central observer or orientations *toward* the center. Around these cardinal points accrue such more-or-less personified attributes as body organs, emotions, virtues, and so forth.

It is at the abstract template level that *recursive nestedness* becomes crucial, as shown in Figures 1a and 1b, templates that schematize the Korean understanding of Korea's own geographical status. The first-order template (Figure 1a) represents the East Asian landmass, in which Korea was considered the eastern cardinal point relative to the first-order center with north China and the Son of

17. Park Sung Bong [Pak Sŏngbong], *Annotated Chinese Sources on the Koguryo Dynasty in Dong I-jeon* (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Culture, 1981), 77.

18. Yoon, "The Expression of Landforms in Chinese Geomantic Maps," 15.

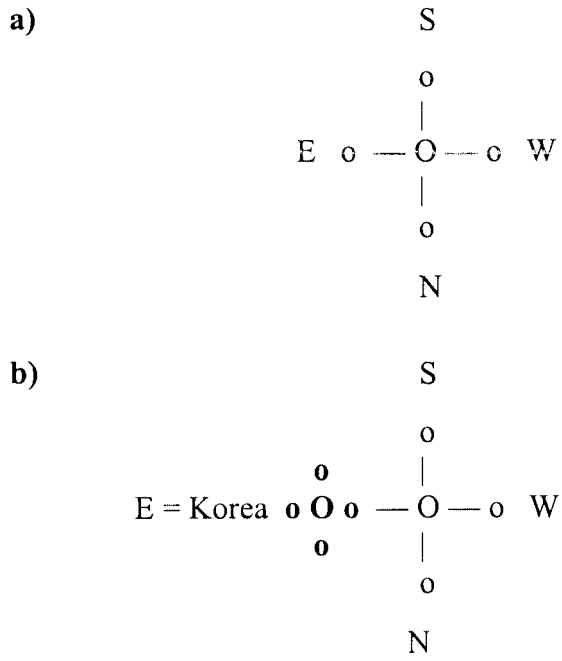


Figure 1. The five-element template (a = first-order [abstract] form, b = first-order application: East Asian land mass with North China as center and Korea as eastern element).

Heaven's ritual residence. Yet, considered from the perspective of the Korean king's residence, Korea itself became a second-order recursion with a subcenter of its own and cardinal points proper to this center, as when King T'aejong in 1409 speaks of Korea as the "eastern direction" lying *left* of China, the Korean vassal king sitting at the Chinese emperor's left hand.[19] Thus cardinal point E acquires a secondary NSEW array and becomes a second-order template nested within its template of derivation (see Figure 1b). Within this second-order recursion, a third-order recursion could be (and was) drawn at Seoul, whose royal palace acquires a tertiary NSEW. Palace grounds—a fourth-order recursion—were recursively oriented in turn *via* the template, such that *its* walls formed NSEW relative to

19. See also Lee Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, 114; Hur Young-Hwan [Hŏ Yŏnghwan], "Chosŏn Dynasty Maps of Seoul," *Korea Journal* 30/6 (1990), 28; Walton, "Southern Sung Academies and the Construction of Sacred Space," 26; Oh, "Ancient Maps Reflect the Currents of the Middle Ages," 30–31.

the inner royal chambers. Palace apartments became fifth-order recursions, ritual tables within such rooms sixth-order, and so on down.

The configurations in Figures 1a and 1b have the effect of "nesting" any given template in its higher order templates in the manner of Chinese boxes. This nested structure of template-within-template is technically a set of *fractals*, like the plant whose trunk iterates itself into branches, then into twigs, leaves, and veins. A highly stable structure, it acts something like retrofitting to buildings; that is, proof against change or external alteration. To innovate in the details of a traditional Korean room produces a dissonance read against the recursive templates of its enclosing building, building grouping, village or town, province, nation, and East Asian landmass—an enormous weight of inertial spatial consonance against which any dissonant innovation stands in disagreeable contrast. We suggest that the recursive rigidity of such nested geomantic structures helps explain the remarkable resistance of certain traditional East Asian cultural forms to innovation, and thus the impression of cultural stasis perceived, rightly or not, by the Western mind.

GEOMANTIC PERFORMANCE SPACES

The fact that this originally topography-based formula was recursively mapped onto a wide—indeed, potentially infinite—set of non-topographical cultural artifacts made it possible for musical elements to be constrained to observe its logic. Among such artifacts—which include such abstract entities as political organizations, dance patterns, and poem and song texts—music stands out because it is considered an effective mechanism for transmitting geomantic attributes (symmetry, balance, gentleness, beauty) onto neighboring artifacts. Aesthetic properties per se become bridges between geomancy and music, because geomantic auspiciousness is signaled by the presence of *harmony of parts* among its various topographical elements. An auspicious landscape is a visually harmonious and pleasing one, whereas ugly landscapes are, by contrast, geomantically inauspicious. The analogy to musical harmony (*chohwa* in the Korean language)—particularly in performance space, pitch, and rhythmic systems—is direct. In the traditional Korean view, the harmonious interrelationship between performance space, pitch, and rhythm elements forms special cases of the geomantic principle of harmony-of-elements that are not themselves specifically musical.

Under these circumstances, music is not a peripheral human activity of concern only to performers and audiences, but a crucial element in a cultural geomantic map. The goal is not to make music for its own sake, but to place music at the service of geomantic principles, organizing its spatial aspects until music does not merely rectify geomantic landscape but is itself, in a way, rectified geomantic space. Musical equivalents of geomantic spatial principles include harmonious relations among tones, beauty of intonation, proper tempo and rhythmic spacing of notes, the location of a performing ensemble within the court or village, the placement of ensemble performers, and ritual performance postures. Music operating under such a logic may not be made at just any time or in any manner, but only *when* and *where* such performances are auspicious. They are so because musical and social structures are coordinated. We therefore suggest that the Western terms *consonance* and *resolution* find their closest Korean counterparts in such concepts as [*geomantic*] *harmony* and *rectification*.

It must be emphasized that the *ŭm-yang* five-element theory was and is a foundational organizational principle of many court *and* folk traditions, regardless of class, religion, or historical circumstance. The following excerpt from a fifteenth-century description of the Terrace Orchestra in a state Confucian ritual performance shows how this organizational principle functions at the elite level:

> A single set of metal bells (*kŭmjong*) is on the east, a set of jade chimes (*okkyŏng*) is on the west; both instruments face north. A wooden box (*ch'uk*) is a little to the northwest of the metal bells, and a tiger scraper (*ŏ*) is slightly to the northeast of the jade chimes. There are two drums (*pakpu*), one north of the wooden box and one north of the tiger scraper; they face each other, pointing eastward and westward respectively. South of the metal bells are a one-stringed *kŭm* (*ch'in* in Chinese), a three-stringed *kŭm*, a five-stringed *kŭm*, a seven-stringed *kŭm*, a nine-stringed *kŭm*, and two *sŭl* (*sê*), starting from the west. South of the jade chimes is the same set of instruments, starting from the east.[20]

Significantly, the performance space is organized around a head musician placed at the center, with the king seated to the north but facing south, the most auspicious of cardinal directions.

20. Song Bang-song [Song Pangsong], *Source Readings in Korean Music* (Seoul: Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 1980), 91–93, trans. from the *Koryŏsa*, or *History of Koryŏ*.

Another aristocratic example is found in *Ch'ŏyongmu*, a masked dance historically performed by males at court. While its origins are shrouded in myth and conjecture, its religious roots are traced back to the Unified Shilla period (roughly seventh to tenth centuries C.E.) and its series of Buddhist festivals meant to rid the country of evil spirits.[21] One of the earliest documented and comprehensive records of the dance is found in the Chosŏn-period music theoretical text *par excellance*, the 1493 *Akhak kweböm*, or *Guide to the Study of Music*, where it is listed as a native Korean dance (see Figure 2).[22] The dancers' choreography is illustrated in the top half of the figure, a perfect quincunx positioning in Korean called the "five-direction (*obang*) [formation]." Each larger Chinese character stands for dance (referring to a dancer), while underneath each dancer are written two more Chinese characters, the cardinal direction plus the *p'ungsu*-associated color: north/black, south/red, east/blue, west/white, and center/yellow.

Such use of five-element performance spaces also is reflected in rural areas. Throughout the peninsula, contemporary village ritual groups make special efforts to visit each of the five directions to purify the village and its inhabitants, as shown in the following North Chŏlla province chant: "We perform this ritual for the deities of the five directions in order to drive out the host of evil spirits and ensure long life and happiness!"[23] In rural percussion music and dance (*nongak*/*p'ungmul*) during the related and ubiquitous movement called *obangjin* (five-direction formation), the band winds and unwinds around the four cardinal points, moving finally to the center (see Figure 3). Largely relegated to entertainment-oriented

21. Richard Rutt, "The Flower Boys of Shilla (*Hwarang*): Notes on their Sources," *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28 (1961): 54; Chŏng Byŏng-ho [Chŏng Pyŏngho], "Dance," in *Korean Performing Arts: Drama, Dance and Music Theater*, ed.Yang Hye-suk (Seoul: Jipmoondang Publishing Company, 1997), 83.

22. Robert C. Provine, *Essays on Sino–Korean Musicology: Early Sources for Korean Ritual Music* (Seoul: Il Ji Sa, 1988), 58; Judy Van Zile, *Perspectives on Korean Dance* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 71–73.

23. Kim Inu, "P'ungmulgut-kwa kongdongch'ejŏk shinmyŏng [*P'ungmulgut* and communal spirit]," in *Minjok-kwa kut: Minjok kut ŭi saeroun yŏllim-ŭl wihayŏ* [Folk and ritual: Toward a new understanding of folk ritual] (Seoul: Hangminsa, 1993), 134; see also Kim, *Han'guk minsok cheŭi-wa ŭmyang ohaeng*, 221, for a similar practice in South Ch'ungch'ŏng province.

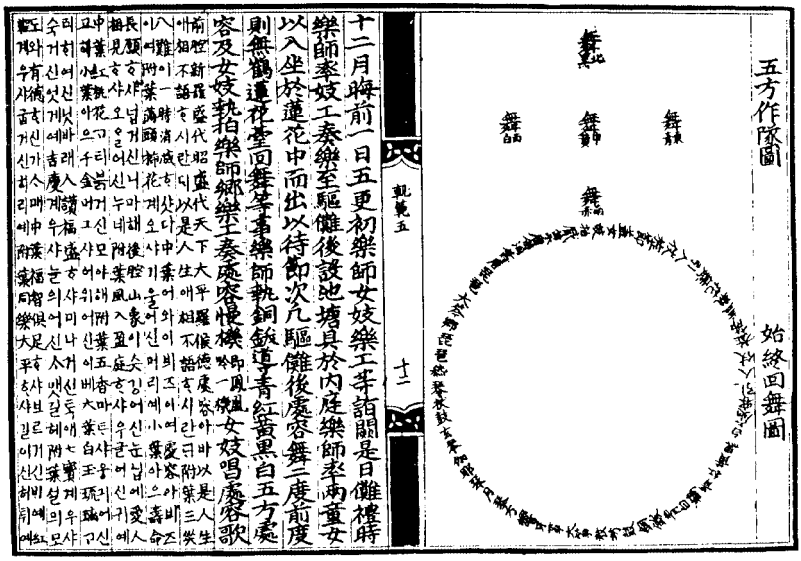


Figure 2. Illustration of *Ch'ŏyongumu* five-direction formation, *Akhak kweböm* (1493), volume 5, page 12.

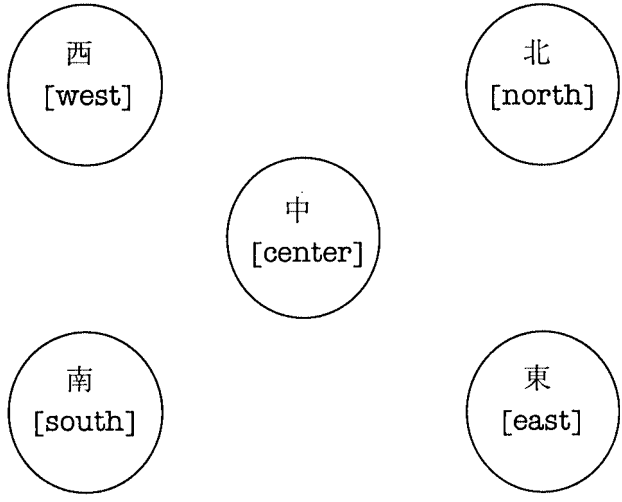


Figure 3. Schematic of five-direction dance formation.

percussion performances in the Chŏlla provinces,[24] *obangjin* continues to be a central ground formation in ritual and hence auspicious performances of the Uttari (Kyŏnggi and Ch'ungch'ŏng provinces), Yŏngnam (Kyŏngsang), and Yŏngdong (Kangwŏn) regions.[25] These village folk dances show a concern with generating at each performance site a microcosm of the center-plus-cardinal-points template, within which the center is first defined and then visited.

Five-element logic also structures the performance-space expressions of ecstasy in Chindo-island *ssikkim-gut* rituals. Nested within the rooms of the traditional home hosting the event, ritual tables are recursively oriented along the same pattern. Gods of the (often four) separate rooms are propitiated as well as the god of the central beam (4 + 1 = 5). Dining tables are aligned NSEW, with the ritual table set such that "blue things were placed to the east and white things to the west. Fish were laid on the east and meat on the west. Dry things were on the left and moist things on the right, and so on."[26] The state of spirit possession trance is ritually generated within a moving counterclockwise circle oriented by the five directions, marked off by "five direction flags" (*obang shinjanggi*).[27] The performance site is further rectified by constructing an idealized and geomantically prescribed on-site ritual template by means of accompanying song texts coordinated with these dance patterns, such as the following (notice the same pairings of direction and color as presented in the above *Ch'ŏyongmu* dance, enhanced here by a cosmic bestiary):

24. Hong Hyŏnshik, Kim Ch'ŏnhŭng, and Pak Hŏnbong, *Honam nongak* [Chŏlla-province *nongak*], *Muhyŏng munhwajae chosa pogosŏ 33* [Intangible cultural asset report of investigation #33] (Seoul: Mun'gyobu munhwajae kwalliguk, 1967), 165; No Poksun, *Nongak* (Chŏnju: Pongch'ŏn ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 61.

25. Han'guk hyangt'osa yŏn'gu chŏn'guk hyŏbŭihoe [National Research Council on Korean Local History], *Han'guk ŭi nongak: Yŏngnam p'yŏn* [Korean *nongak*: Volume on Kyŏngsang provinces] (Seoul: Susŏwŏn, 1997), 200, 214; Pak Sangguk, Ch'ŏn Chin'gi, Yi Chunsŏk, and Sŏ Hŏn'gang, *Kangnŭng nongak* [*Nongak* of the city of Kangnŭng] (Seoul: Kungnip munhwajae yŏn'guso, 1997), 128–129; Kim Wŏnho and No Suhwan, *Kyŏnggido ŭi p'ungmulgut* [*P'ungmul* of Kyŏnggi province] (Suwŏn: Kyŏnggi munhwa chaedan, 2001), 21.

26. Park Mikyung [Pak Migyŏng], *Music and Shamanism in Korea: A Study of Selected Ssikkum-gut Rituals for the Dead*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1985, 75.

27. Ibid., 78–79. See also Kim, *Han'guk musok yŏn'gu*, 362–363, for the parallel practice in Seoul.

Let's build an east foundation. A pair of blue dragons lives beneath it. . . . Let's build a south foundation, a pair of red dragons lives beneath it. . . . Let's build the west foundation; a pair of white dragons lives beneath it. Let's build a north foundation. A pair of black dragons lives beneath it. Let's build the middle foundation. A pair of turtles lives beneath it.[28]

Here the song text is also structured by the quincunx (4[dragons] + 1[turtles] = 5), and is thus geomantically orthodox.

The template's axis asymmetries shift depending on where individual performance spaces are situated. Those *at* the center (Seoul) align themselves differently than those *away from* it. In contrast to Confucian ritual practice, and perhaps court masked dance that looks outward from the Center, typical *p'ungmul* dance patterns and shaman song texts commence at the cardinal points, circumambulate the local center, then move inward and back outward. The template determines the internal organizations of individual performance spaces and axes between capitoline and provincial music-making sites, organizing all such spaces according to its quincunx pattern, but rectifying them to correct for the absolute spatial situation.

GEOMANTIC PITCH SPACE

Chosŏn dynasty scholars themselves defined what we call "musicology" itself in terms of the formation that we have called the Five-Element Template. In his *Yongjae ch'onghwa*, or *Collection of Writings by Yongjae*, Sŏng Hyŏn (1439–1504 C.E.) understood what we call "music theorists" as "those who know the principles of five tones (*oŭm*) and twelve pitches (*shibiyul*) so as to apply the theory in practice."[29] That this is a geomantic definition is evident, as the "five tones" were overt expressions of *ŭm-yang* five-element theory, as shown, for example, by the use of music in divination:

In the functioning of a government, successes and failures are all related to this [Five Element] classification . . . when the *Chou li* (Rites of the Chou Dynasty) says, "The Grand Master grasps the *yin* [*ŭm*] and *yang* pitch pipes in order to listen to military sounds and predict whether things will go well or badly"; or when the "Essay on Music" [in the *Li chi* (Book of Rites)] says, "When the five

28. Transcribed in Park, *Music and Shamanism in Korea*, 316.
29. Translated in Song, *Source Readings in Korean Music*, 81.

classifications are not disordered, there are no ominous sounds," they both refer to this [classification system].[30]

Apparently deriving from such practice, this pitch system is an analog spatial array leaving geomantic signatures in the nomenclature by which pitch elements are quantified.

That its Korean framers imagined this twelve-pitch set as a geomantic entity is further confirmed by the overtly spatial designations of its structural pitches. The Korean name for what is often called the "modal final" or "tonic" is *hwang*, meaning "yellow." This is the color of the geomantic central element, and the scholar Yoon Hong-Key theorizes that the use of *hwang* to denote the geomantic center originated in the characteristic yellow earth of North China, where geomancy is thought to have arisen, and which forms the central point of the East Asian cartographic scheme.[31] This originally geomantic term was exported in turn to nongeomantic maps to denote "center," as in the map of the five wards of the Chosŏn capital city of Seoul reproduced by Hur Young-Hwan: "Of the five colors denoting location, yellow, the color of the center, is most outstanding."[32] Following this implicit logic, we infer that Korean music theorists imagined their *hwang*-tone not via such categories as "modal final," which imply a teleological, goal-based function such as is found in Western leading-tone cadentiality, but via the Five-Element Template: *Hwang* occupies the central space of a box-like quincunx array of five essential pitch elements (*oŭm*). Therefore, what differentiates the Korean five-tone system from those of other pentatonic cultural pitch systems is its overtly spatial nature: The pitch set is imagined and employed more in the manner of a geometric object than a scale.

This interpretation is borne out by the spatial and geomantic mapping of these five tones in the aforementioned *Akhak kwebŏm* of 1493. As shown in Figure 4 (left side), a reproduction of the "Illustration of the Five Musical Tones" from volume 1, the "center" pitch of *kung*—structurally occupying the same position as *hwang*—is literally placed in the center of the diagram, with the remaining four pitches showing obeisance to it through the direction of the writing

30. From the *Aakpo* [Notations of ritual music], translated in Provine, *Essays on Sino–Korean Musicology*, 169.

31. Yoon, "*P'ungsu* or Chinese Geomancy in Korea."

32. Hur, "Chosŏn Dynasty Maps of Seoul," 21.

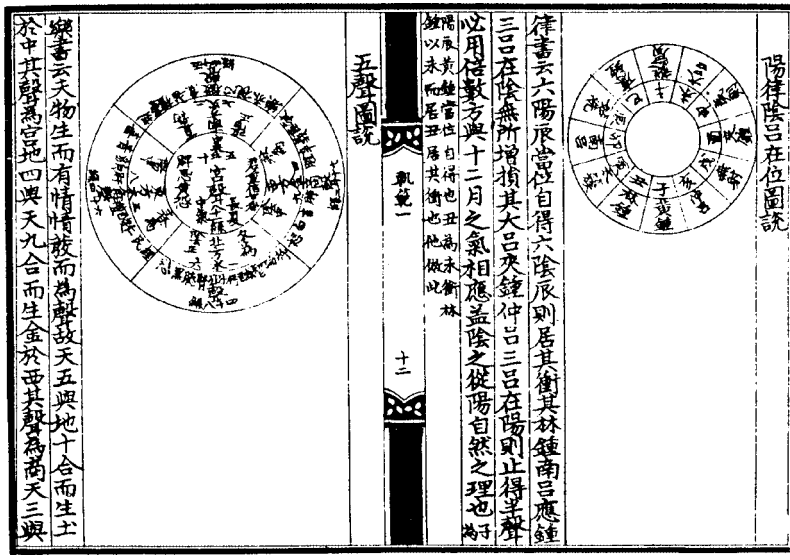


Figure 4. Illustration of the five musical tones, *Akhak kwebŏm* (1493), volume 1, page 12.

of the Chinese characters (as with geomantic maps, one must turn the page around to read the accompanying text). More significantly, the accompanying text within each space further marks the geomantic properties of these pitches within well-established *p'ungsu* parameters (creating resonances with previous nonspatial attributes):

kung pitch: center/yellow/earth/ruler/soil;
kak pitch: east/blue/spring/people/wood;
sang pitch: west/white/autumn/subjects/metal;
u pitch: north/black/winter/material things/water; and
ch'i pitch: south/red/summer/actions/fire.

This clarifies otherwise puzzling aspects of Korean pitch nomenclature, such as the designation of the pitch *ch'i* (or *nam* in the *hwang* scale structure), meaning "south." Given the geomantic spatial origin of the Korean pitch system, the appearance of this cardinal point as a pitch is only to be expected, considering that southward is the specifically auspicious direction and that music is mandated to project auspiciousness. This suggests that, like all iterations of the template, the abstract pentatonic scale comprises a personified spatial entity facing the auspicious.

This geomantic pitch hypothesis illuminates such aspects of Korean musical styles as its relatively static melodic pitch and the characteristic Korean "wide vibrato." If geomantic considerations govern certain domains of Korean pitch sense—particularly at the elite level—and if such geomantic music is intended to rectify the performance spaces in which they take place, then pitch will be associated not with motion but with cardinal direction (NSEW). Pitches are resonating compass points, and in order to function as such they must remain cartographically fixed. We may contrast Provine's description of the *Li chi*'s auspiciousness criteria of pitch with Western chromatic alteration (C into C♯), where pitch change is imagined as mutation. In Sino–Korean music theory, such a concept is impossible; chromatic pitch systems can only be "filled in" by importing to the *oŭm* alien pitches from the *shibiyul*, in the manner of inserting cartographic SW between cartographic S and W.

Constrained to relative immobility by the requirement to mark spatial points, Korean pitches must express themselves by acquiring such qualities as "mass" or "volume." This is accomplished by the technique of extending notes for what in the West would be almost intolerable lengths of time, but endowing them with extraordinarily wide vibrato, remarkable dynamic shadings, and rhythmically complex percussive accompaniments. Within this conceptual framework, "thick" vibrato is to nonvibrato as a heavy No. 1 pencil used to "shade" part of a pencil sketch is to a thin line drawn with a No. 3. One aesthetic result of this practice is the extraordinary impression of spatial stasis generated by performances of Korean *aak* of the court, the geomantic significance of which has not, to our knowledge, been properly evaluated. To contrast this five-element spatialized pitch practice with the temporalized Western cadential leading-tone practice, we suggest the term *leaning tone*: The geomantic purpose of the Korean pitch elements is to hold cardinal positions and endow them with powerful resonances while deferring to the central pitch element. In this respect Sino–Korean *oŭm* reflect a spatial microcosm of East Asian cultural-topographical space, within which King T'aejong's "eastern direction"—Korea—acts as vassal to the Chinese emperor's state, ritually bowing toward the *hwang* while continuing to remain at its station to secure order throughout cardinal point East. Were this a Western model, the vassal tone would resolve into the center as a dominant into a tonic. Here it is crucial that the vassal tone remain at a distance, securing his own tonal quadrant within an

overall field of harmony that is at the same time a guarantor of cultural–spatial stasis.[33]

GEOMANTIC RHYTHMIC SPACE

We similarly propose a geomantic perspective to explore the distinctive cultural characteristics of Korean phrase, metrical, and rhythmic groupings. At the phrasing level, the most obvious example of such orientation is the Chŏlla-province processional rhythm known as *och'ae chilgut*, literally "five-stroke road ritual." Considered one of the region's oldest and most representative patterns, its past ritual connotations have been lost in favor of its use in entertainment-oriented performances by amateur and semi-professional groups alike.[34] The "five strokes" in the name is a reference to the number of large gong (*ching*) strokes within the duration of a single cycle, each stroke indicating the beginning of a new phrase. The parallel ritual and secular processional rhythm of Kyŏnggi and Ch'ungch'ŏng provinces, called *kil kunak ch'ilch'ae* (road military music seven stroke), may feature seven strokes of the *ching* but is nonetheless always performed in the *obangjin* (five direction) formation (refer again to Figure 2).[35]

Cycles or patterns in quintuple-based meter have long been considered a prominent feature of Korean music making. Scholars stress the centrality and antiquity of pieces in the court and aristocratic repertoires that contain such rhythmic structures, works—with few exceptions—that have at least residual connections to private and state rituals.[36] Importantly, these cycles are organized according to both the *ŭm-yang* and five element aspects of our geomantic

33. While it is tempting to apply such analytical models to the practice of Korean folksong or folk instrumental genres such as the shamanistic *shinawi*, the lack of technical language and agreed-upon musicological theory prevents us from such speculation. See Keith Howard, *Bands, Songs, and Shamanistic Rituals: Folk Music in Korean Society* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1989), 147; Sŏ, *Theoretical Perspectives on Korean Traditional Music*, 88.

34. Nathan Hesselink, *A Tale of Two Drummers: Percussion Band Music in North Chŏlla Province, Korea* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998), 169–170; Yi Pohyŏng, personal communication, 1995.

35. Kim and No, *Kyŏnggido ŭi p'ungmulgut*, 21.

36. Lee Hye-ku [Yi Hyegu], "Quintuple Meter in Korean Instrumental Music," *Asian Music* 13/1 (1981), 119–129; Chun In Pyong [Chŏn Inp'yŏng], "*Man Zhong Kuai* Musical Form of Chinese and Korean Music," *Asian Musicology* 2 (2002), 15–17.

logic: Antecedent (3 + 2) and consequent (2 + 3) phrases (*ŭm* and *yang*) are paired, each with five beats. The five-beat unit similarly is generative in a large sample of folk rhythmic patterns, particularly those with direct connections to auspiciousness. Shaman rhythms from Kyŏnggi and South Chŏlla provinces, as examples, include the *t'ŏbŏllim* pattern (3 + 2 + 3 + 2) and *p'unŏri* pattern (5 + 5), constructions that mirror and reinforce the pairings found in the above more elite counterparts (see Figure 5).[37]

Such pairing of five beats (3 + 2 or 2 + 3) also has been mapped directly onto the level of beat division. This is true for the opening phrases of the previously discussed *p'ungmul* cycles *och'ae chilgut* (2 + 3 + 3 + 2) and *kil kunak ch'ilch'ae* (3 + 2 + 3 + 2), both of which contain four beats composed of either quarter notes (twos) or dotted quarters (threes). Shaman rhythms *chin soe* (3 + 2 + 2 + 3) and *ollimch'ae* (3 + 2 + 2 + 3) from Kyŏnggi province display a similar pattern. And the now largely secularized rhythm *ŏnmori* (3 + 2 + 3 + 2) from the *p'ansori* (storytelling through song) repertory is reserved

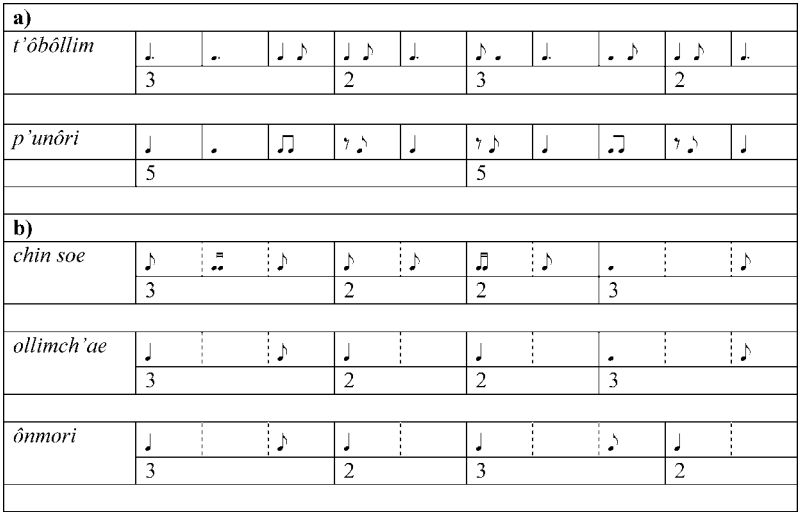


Figure 5. Rhythmic groupings (a = beat level, b = beat division level).

37. Im Sujŏng, *Han'guk ŭi musok changdan* [Shaman rhythms of Korea] (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 1999), 59, 194. See also Lee Yong-Shik [Yi Yongshik], "Speech of God: The Manner of the Deliverance of Divine Messages (*kongsu*) in Comparison with Song and Speech in Korean Shamanism," *Shamŏnijŭm yŏn'gu* 2 (2000), 183.

for specifically auspicious or mysterious scenes,[38] a cycle with roots and parallel usage in shaman rituals (see again Figure 5).[39] Even seemingly regular four-beat, triple division patterns (12/8) such as *kukkŏri* or *chajinmori* can be interpreted within a quincunx configuration. In his groundbreaking analytical study of Korean folk rhythms, folk drummer/scholar Pak Chongsŏl presented a graph for the *changgo* hourglass drum with twelve horizontal squares representing the eighth-note divisions of one complete cycle. He then made the observation that many patterns naturally divide evenly between a "front" phrase (first six eighth notes) and "back" phrase (*ŭm* and *yang*). Within these larger groupings, however, the left (open) hand tends to move in threes (dotted quarter) while the right (stick) hand pulls against it in twos, resulting in a further (3 + 2) five element manifestation.[40]

We also note the recently published children's book *Samullori iyagi*, or *A Tale of Samullori*.[41] The brainchild of the otherwise religiously unaffiliated corporation Samullori Hanullim, this culturally and pedagogically charged grand narrative aims to instruct Korean youth in the appreciation of *samullori* (or *samul nori*), a largely modernized urban variant of rural folk drumming (*p'ungmul*). Fantastic (nationalist?) claims of the instruments existing at the formation of the world aside, the text in a very clear manner presents each gong, drum, and wind instrument as the direct physical embodiment of the Five-Element Template, the combination of which contributes to the "harmonization" (*ŏurŏjida*) of the universe. In addition to the square plus center formation, aligned along the proper cardinal points and color associations, the geomantic template is further strengthened by the matching of the symbolic animal dragon with east, tiger with west, turtle with north, and phoenix

38. Chan E. Park, *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Singing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 173–176.

39. Yi Pohyŏng, "Muga-wa p'ansori-wa sanjŏ-eso ŏnmori karak pigyo [A comparison of *ŏnmori* melodic/rhythmic patterns in shaman song, *p'ansori*, and *sanjo*]," in *Essays in Ethnomusicology: A Birthday Offering for Lee Hye-Ku* (Seoul: The Korean Musicological Society, 1969), 82–84; Im, *Han'guk ŭi musok changdan*, 194.

40. Pak Chongsŏl, "Minsogak changdan kujo-e kwanhan punsŏk yŏn'gu [An analytical study on the structure of folk music rhythmic patterns]," *Han'guk ŭmak yŏn'gu* 19 (1991), 60–61.

41. Kwak Yŏnggwŏn and Kim Tongwŏn, *Samullori iyagi* [*A tale of samullori*] (Seoul: Sagyejŏl ch'ulp'ansa, 2001).

with south—pairings found throughout *p'ungsu*-influenced shaman rituals.[42]

CONCLUSION

The representative *p'ungsu*-derived Korean soundscapes that we have documented strongly support Bar-Yosef's framework of cultural space concepts imported to give meaning to cultural musical concepts. Under such a Korean worldview, this practice is ideologized by means of the *ŭm–yang* five-element theory (or Five-Element Template), which penetrates and spatializes aspects of Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, and even secular activity alike by means of the extension of the geomantic map to general cartographic practice, and from there—in the form of an abstract cognitive template—to nontopographical artifacts like buildings, tables, political structure, and musical forms. Geomancy reached far into melodic and rhythmic practices and musical performance by coordinating such abstract entities as pitch and beat to parallel spatialized geomantic elements, and then by constraining them to strengthen such correspondences by overdetermination, personification, repetition, and the recursive nesting of geomantic musical practices within larger-scale geomantic artifacts. Our examples should be viewed as representative, not exhaustive, of numerous similar occurrences.

In this respect, Korean music exemplifies Richard J. Smith's observations on Chinese cartography: "Although maps are usually viewed as representations of space, they can also be taken as spaces of representation—fields of opportunity, waiting to be cultivated by acts of physical or intellectual appropriation or both."[43] Music proved to be an outstanding field of opportunity, in which Korean culture found a mechanism for appropriating—for cultural worldview—both sound and space.

42. Covell, *Korea's Cultural Roots*, 41–47. See also Kim Hŏnsŏn, *P'ungmulgut-esŏ samul nori-kkaji* [From *p'ungmulgut* to *samul nori*] (Seoul: Kwiinsa, 1994), 98.

43. Richard J. Smith, "Mapping China's World: Cultural Cartography in Late Imperial Times," in *Landscape, Culture, and Power in Chinese Society*, ed. Yeh Wen-hsin, (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1998), 57.

SELECTED GLOSSARY

aak 雅樂 (ritual music)
Aakpo 雅樂譜 (*Notations of Ritual Music*)
Akhak kwebŏm 樂學軌範 (*Guide to the Study of Music*)
chajinmori 자진모리 (folk rhythmic pattern)
chin soe 진쇠 (shaman rhythmic pattern)
chohwa 調和 (harmony)
Chosŏn 朝鮮 (dynastic period, 1392–1910 C.E.)
Chou Li 周禮 (Chinese: *Rites of the Chou Dynasty*)
Ch'ŏyongmu 處容舞 (masked dance)
feng shui 風水 (Chinese: geomantic spatial mapping)
hwang 黃 ("yellow" pitch)
kil kunak ch'ilch'ae 길군악칠채 ("road military music seven stroke" rhythmic pattern)
Koryŏ 高麗 (dynastic period, 918–1392 C.E.)
Koryŏsa 高麗史 (*History of Koryŏ*)
kukkŏri 굿거리 (folk rhythmic pattern)
kung 宮 (center pitch)
kut 굿 (shaman ritual)
Li Chi 禮記 (Chinese: *Book of Rites*)
nam 南 ("south" pitch)
nongak 農樂 (rural percussion music and dance)
obang 五方 (five directions)
obang shinjanggi 五方新將旗 (five direction flags)
obangjin 五方陣 (five-direction formation)
och'ae chilgut 오채질굿 ("five-stroke road ritual" rhythmic pattern)
ollimch'ae 올림채 (shaman rhythmic pattern)
ŏnmori 엇모리 (*p'ansori* rhythmic pattern)
oŭm 五音 (five tones/pitches)
ŏurŏjida 어우러지다 (harmonization)
p'ansori 판소리 (storytelling through song)
p'ungmul 風物 (rural percussion music and dance)
p'ungsu 風水 (geomantic spatial mapping)

p'unŏri 푸너리 (shaman rhythmic pattern)
samul nori 四物놀이 (urban variant of *p'ungmul/nongak*)
shibiyul 十二律 (twelve pitches)
Shilla 新羅 (historical period, *c.* seventh to tenth centuries CE)
ssikkim-gut 씻김굿 (cleansing ritual)
t'ŏbŏllim 터벌림 (shaman rhythmic pattern)
Tosŏn 道詵 (monk)
ŭm-yang ohaeng 陰陽五行 (*ŭm-yang* and the five elements)
yin-yang wuxing 陰陽五行 (Chinese: *ŭm-yang* and the five elements)
Yongjae ch'onghwa 용재총화 (*Collection of Writings by Yongjae*)