

한국어문화의 심화와 확산  
온라인 강의 동영상 가이드북

# The Roots of Korean Culture

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# The Roots of Korean Culture

## 강의 계획서

과목명: The Roots of Korean Culture

분과: 고전문학

강사명: Charles La Shure

수준: 초급

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## 강의 목표

This class is designed to give you a taste of the various and diverse aspects of traditional Korean culture, including the history and language of Korea, its religions and philosophies, its art and architecture, its music and performing arts, and its literature and folklore. Given the broad scope of the class, it will naturally not be possible to dive too deeply into any single subject, but it is hoped that these lectures will give you a foundation on which to understand Korea and whet your appetite to explore Korean culture further.

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### 수강생 유의사항

1. 학습활동으로 제시된 퀴즈, 토론, 보고서 과제들을 충실히 수행해야 합니다.
2. 강의 내용 및 학습 과정과 관련해 질문 사항이 있는 경우 K-MOOC 강의 게시판 또는 서울대학교 한국어문학연구소 K학술확산연구센터 홈페이지의 질문 게시판을 이용하기 바랍니다.

## 〈Lecture 1〉

# Korean History

– From Prehistoric Times to the Colonial Period,  
in Brief

### Class Goals

1. Get an overview of Korean history
2. Understand the divisions of Korean history
3. Provide historical context for understanding the traditional culture of Korea

### Summary

In this class, we looked through Korean history from prehistoric times to the colonial period.

The Korean peninsula has been inhabited since Paleolithic times, but the earliest kingdom is known as Old Joseon. The Three Kingdoms, known as Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, emerged after the fall of Old Joseon. Silla rose to ascendancy in the 7th century. Chinese culture was introduced to Korea during this period.

Next, we have the North and South Kingdoms period, with Balhae in the north and Unified Silla in the south. Bulguksa and Seokguram are examples of Unified Silla art.

Goryeo unified the Korean peninsula in 936. There were internal pressures, including factional strife, and external pressures from northern tribes. Buddhism and Buddhist art flourished due to royal patronage. Neo-Confucianism was introduced in late Goryeo.

Yi Seonggye carried out a coup and founded Joseon in 1392. The new yangban order was established, and Neo-Confucianism dominated society. There were invasions by Japanese and Jurchen, which divide early and late Joseon. The invention of hangeul is a notable accomplishment of Joseon.

In the late 19th century, there were attempts to cope with imperial incursions, but Japan annexed

Joseon in 1910. Japanese colonial rule went through three phases: the “Dark Period,” “Cultural Rule,” and the last period of Pacific War. The Korean Language Society worked to standardize Korean language in the colonial period.

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Overview

### Class goals

Hello and welcome to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today, for our first class, we're going to be talking a little bit about Korean history. And we're going to be going from prehistoric times up to the colonial period, but only in brief. The goal of today's class is to just to give you an overview, since Korean history covers a very long span of time. The goal is really just to give you a sense of where things fall within the scope of Korean history, so later when we're talking about other aspects of Korean culture, you have an idea of where these things fit in.

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7. Korea, Interrupted: Early Modern Korean and the Colonial Period

So, the Korean peninsula has been inhabited since Paleolithic times, but recorded history obviously does not begin until relatively recently. The earliest kingdom in Korea is known as Old Joseon, we're going to be starting with that, and then we're going to be going into the aftermath, after Old Joseon fell. We're going to be going into the rise of what are known as the Three Kingdoms, then the struggle between those Three Kingdoms, how the kingdom of Silla rose to ascendancy, and then into the period known as the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, where Silla ruled in the south and Balhae ruled in the north. After this, we go into the Later Three Kingdoms period, which was followed by the unification of the peninsula by Goryeo, which may sound familiar because it sounds a little bit like Korea, that's where the name Korea came from. After the Goryeo period, we have the last traditional Korean dynasty, known as the Joseon Dynasty. After this, this follows into the early modern period and the imperial age as Korea's neighbor of Japan entered the club of imperial powers. And in the first half of the 20th century, they colonized Korea, that is where our history of Korea is going to. And so that's just a basic outline of what we are going to do today, and next, we're going to go straight into prehistoric times and the Old Joseon kingdom.

## 2. From Stone to Iron: The Early Kingdoms

### • Prehistoric times

So, to begin at the beginning, it was originally thought that there were no Paleolithic settlements on the Korean peninsula. Palaeolithic, of course, means the Old Stone Age. However, in the past 60 years, so starting in the 1960s, there were excavations done that actually showed that there has been a human presence on the Korean peninsula for tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of years. Obviously we don't have any records from that period, so our information is very scarce.

But after the Paleolithic period, Neolithic humans, that is the New Stone Age, started to settle in the Korean peninsula, or Neolithic society started to develop, after the Ice Age. That would have been around 6000–5000 BCE. These Neolithic humans would have lived in houses that are known as dugout houses. You can actually see some of these in Seoul today in the Amsadong region where they have recreations of these huts.

After the Neolithic period, we have the Bronze Age, which, as its name implies, begins with the introduction of bronze tools and weapons, etc. This is thought to have begun around the 9th or the 8th century BC, when societies began to coalesce into larger political entities. And one of the things we can see as actual evidence of this on the Korean peninsula is what we call goindol, or, in English, we call them dolmens. These are actually Bronze Age tombs and they indicate a rather developed society because you would have needed to have some sort of social structure to get a number of people together in order to build these tombs, which involve placing very heavy rocks on top of each other. The development of these Bronze Age societies was accelerated by the introduction of iron tools and weapons. And that would, of course, have been the Iron Age.

## • Old Joseon

The first kingdom, though, the first kingdom that we have historical records of is known as Old Joseon. And the “Old,” just to clarify here, the “Old” part was added by later historians. They didn’t call themselves “Old Joseon,” they just called themselves “Joseon,” but the “Old” was added later in order to distinguish between the original Joseon and the later Joseon Dynasty, which we are going to get to in a moment. But this kingdom is probably most known to most Koreans for having been founded by the mythical founder known as Dangun. And he later became known as the ancestor of all Koreans.

According to the myth of Dangun, which basically tells about a heavenly being, the son of the Emperor of Heaven looks down on earth and he sees a place that looks good to rule. And he comes down and he encounters a tiger and a bear that want to become human beings. So, he sets them a task and one of them succeeds and one of them doesn’t. I’m going to sort of leave it as a kind of cliffhanger there because we’re going to come back and talk about 〈The Dangun Myth〉 later on in the class when we deal with Korean folklore and mythology.

But for the time being, according to the myth, the date of the founding of Old Joseon is 2333 BCE, although there is a lot of disagreement among scholars about this date. Some scholars believe that this is a mythical date, that it’s not a historical date, but there are some scholars who argue that “Yes, Old Joseon could have been founded at this time.” So, that is anyway, that is the historical date for the founding of Old Joseon, for the founding of the earliest kingdom on the Korean peninsula.

## • The fall of Old Joseon and the emergence of confederated kingdoms

So, although there is some disagreement about when exactly Old Joseon was founded, there is agreement that it fell around 100–108 BCE due to a combination of internal factors. There was a lot of social upheaval; as I mentioned before, the introduction of iron tools and weapons was a very important point in the development of society and this actually caused a lot of upheaval. There were also external factors, which were basically conflicts with Chinese dynasties and other nations in the area.

So, in very rough outline, at around this time, Old Joseon fell and this was followed by a period of confederated kingdoms. And these confederated kingdoms were small kingdoms that started from walled towns, so you had towns that were fortified against their enemies, and there were a number of these across the Korean peninsula. You had what were known as the Three Hans in the South (Mahan, Jinhan, and Byeonhan) and Buyeo is another very famous walled town and confederated kingdom in the North. These developed gradually over time and a lot of these were around during the time of Old Joseon. But they emerged as powers, you could say walled powers or peninsula powers, at any rate, they emerged only after the fall of Old Joseon.

And once you have the rise of these walled towns leading into these confederated kingdoms, you are setting the stage for what becomes known as the Three Kingdoms period.

### 3. The Three Kingdoms Period: Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla

So, moving on into the Three Kingdoms period. It's so named because of the three main kingdoms. There were obviously more kingdoms than three at that time, but the three main kingdoms were known as Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla. And these kingdoms rose out of the confederated kingdoms that I mentioned a moment ago and they came to strive for supremacy on the Korean peninsula.

#### • Goguryeo

So, starting with the first kingdom that I mentioned, the kingdom of Goguryeo. Again, we have a foundation myth known as 〈The Jumong Myth〉. Jumong is the name of the divine founder of Goguryeo. He founds the nation before the turn of the millennium, so before the entrance into the Common Era. He is of divine birth, but he is raised under the protection of the king of Buyeo, and Buyeo was one of those confederated kingdoms that I just mentioned. So he's raised sort of as a foster son of the king of Buyeo. But he uses his wits, he uses the aid of Providence (the heavens), he also has his mother's help, which is very heartwarming, but he was able to flee to the south and found his own nation. And this becomes the nation of Goguryeo.

#### • Baekje

The second kingdom that I mentioned is Baekje. We don't actually have a Baekje foundation myth recorded in the old records, but we know that it was founded at a similar time, founded in the southwest, unlike Goguryeo in the north, in the territory of one of the Three Hans, specifically the Mahan confederated kingdom.

At the height of its power, which was about the 4th century, it occupied the Han River valley. And if you know anything about the geography of Korea today, the Han River is the river that runs straight through Seoul, the capital of Korea, where I'm standing right now. And you can see some relics of Baekje-period rule, specifically in Mongchontoseong, which is the Mongchon Earthenworks Fortress, and that's actually right in the middle of the Olympic Park. So, if you ever happen to come to Korea and go to Olympic Park, look for the Earthenworks Fortress. They've done a lot of excavations on it and they've excavated a lot of old pottery and other artifacts that are on display.

#### • Silla

The third kingdom that I mentioned was Silla. And Silla was founded, again according to the myth,

by Bak Hyeokgeose. We actually, yeah, we don't know exactly how his name is pronounced. That's the pronunciation of the Chinese characters that are used for his name, but there was likely a different pronunciation. We'll talk a little bit more about that when we talk about the Korean language in our next class. But according to this myth, Bak Hyeokgeose founded the nation, he founded it in the southeast. He was born of a red egg and he was made king of six villages of Jinhan, one of the Three Hans. This reflects the confederation of smaller societies, like I mentioned before.

### • Gaya

And I said this was the Three Kingdoms period, but there was actually a fourth kingdom that we should mention, which was known as Gaya. This was again another confederation and we have a foundation myth for the founder, known as Kim Suro. And again, this is similar to the Bak Hyeokgeose myth in that there is a divine personage who comes down and he rules an existing group of people and he sort of brings together a collection of, interestingly enough, six villages once again. I'm giving you the mythology here in brief only, but again, don't worry, we're going to come back to the mythology. It's one of my favorite subjects, so we'll come back to that in more detail later on.

### • The struggle for supremacy

Once you have these three kingdoms, or, the four kingdoms actually, of Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla and Gaya, starting in around the 3rd and the 4th century, these kingdoms consolidate their power, they come together and now they're ready to sort of vie for control of the peninsula with each other. So in the late 4th century, Baekje, which again, remember, is in the south, they drive north into Goguryeo. So Goguryeo strikes back in the 5th century, driving Baekje back south again. So Baekje allies with Silla. And this is a common story. You see the different kingdoms allying with each other against their opponents.

Unfortunately, this alliance between Baekje and Silla did not last for long. Later on in the 5th century, Silla betrays Baekje and Baekje's king is killed in battle. So after this, Baekje allies with Goguryeo instead and they're mortal enemies of Silla. They're repeatedly attacking Silla at any opportunity they can find. In the mid-6th century, Gaya is defeated by Silla and is absorbed into Silla territory.

But that isn't the end of the story. It's not just an internal conflict between the Three Kingdoms. There are also external factors as well. So you have the dynasties from China play a big role throughout Korean history actually. But, starting here in the Three Kingdoms period, they play a very specifically important role.

The Sui and the Tang dynasties in the late 6th and 7th century, for example, clash often with the kingdom of Goguryeo. So Goguryeo attacked Sui, they fended off a counterattack, then Tang, the Tang Dynasty, invaded them again in the 7th century, but again Goguryeo resisted them. However, what happens is, later on, in response to some of the victories by Baekje, Silla allies with Tang, and this brings about the final stage, I guess we could say, of the war between the Three Kingdoms for the Korean

peninsula. So Silla allies with the Tang Dynasty and enters war with Baekje and Goguryeo. And in the mid to later 7th century, this Silla-Tang alliance defeats Baekje in 660, defeats Goguryeo in 668.

Now, Tang did not ally with Silla out of the kindness of their hearts. Their ultimate goal was to seize control of the peninsula. So they attempted to do this by establishing what are known as commanderies, but Silla did not like the idea of becoming a puppet state. So they resisted, they recaptured Baekje territory in 671 and then they drove out the Tang Dynasty in 676. So, that's the rough history. And if you don't remember who attacked who, all you need to know is that it was a very tumultuous time and there was a very drawn-out war between the Three Kingdoms that ended with Silla triumphing over Goguryeo and Baekje and then resisting the attempts by the Tang Dynasty to control the peninsula.

### • The cultural development of the Three Kingdoms period

So, beyond just the history of the battles, there are a lot of important developments that we should talk about during the Three Kingdoms period because they are foundational for Korean culture as we know it today.

And the first of these is the influence of Chinese culture. So, even though there was often an antagonistic relationship with China, so, as I mentioned before, the Sui and the Tang dynasties were often clashing with Goguryeo, and then Tang tried to establish control over the peninsula and make Silla a puppet state, even though you had this relationship that was often antagonistic, the cultural relationship was a very important one and one that was welcomed by the Korean kingdoms. So they would often welcome the Chinese culture.

The written Chinese, which we will get into in more detail in our next class, but the written Chinese, the Chinese characters, gained prominence as a writing system during this period. They were introduced much earlier. We don't know exactly when they were introduced, but we do know that during the Three Kingdoms period, they played a very important part in society and culture, specifically in terms of the development of the aristocratic culture.

They also played an important part in national histories being written. So during the Three Kingdoms period, there were a number of national histories that were written to establish the legitimacy of the kingdoms. Unfortunately, none of these remain today, but we do have other histories that were based on them. So we have records of them and we have signs that they were written.

The Chinese writing system, known as hanmun, remained the writing system of choice for the elite and the aristocratic class actually until modern times, so it's a very important part of Korean history and it remains an important part of Korean culture today.

Another example of this influence would be in the introduction of Confucianism and Buddhism. Buddhism originally came from India, obviously, but it was introduced from China along with Confucianism. So, Confucianism provided a ruling ideology, because Confucianism deals with social relationships and ruling ethics, etc. And Buddhism provided sort of a spiritual unity; it brought the nation together in a religious sense. We'll discuss both of these in much more detail later on. But for now, just know that they were introduced during the Three Kingdoms period and they went on to

play very important roles throughout Korean history and continue to play an important role in Korean culture today.

Aristocratic society was something that was characteristic of culture during the Three Kingdoms period. So as these kingdoms developed, you had a small number of aristocratic households who would come into power. And this meant that society became heavily stratified. So there was a very strict hierarchy with the aristocrats at the top and the common people, or below that, at the bottom. Politically speaking, these were kingdoms. So you did have a king who exercised central authority. But there were also councils of aristocrats and these councils of aristocrats were there to decide important matters of the state. So the king sort of shared his authority with these aristocrats, and these councils allowed the aristocratic families to maintain their power in what would otherwise have been a centralized government.

Now in terms of the arts and sciences, we don't really have a lot left from the Three Kingdoms period in terms of architectural remains like I mentioned the Mongchon Earthenworks Fortress in Seoul. If you go see it today, it's really just a bunch of mounds. That's all that's left. So we don't have a lot of architectural examples from this time.

But we do have sculptures that are still around, paintings from the Three Kingdoms period, mainly tomb mural paintings are some of the important works that are left to us today. And we'll take a look at these when we talk specifically about the arts or architecture, or that sort of thing. So that's a little bit about the Three Kingdoms period, which ended with Silla victorious over the other kingdoms, and it led us into the North and South Kingdoms period.

## 4. The North and South Kingdoms: Silla and Balhae

So, Silla defeated Goguryeo and Baekje and became the... well, did they become the pre-eminent power in the peninsula? That's the thing. This period that follows this used to be known as the Unified Silla period. But actually Silla only unified the southern part of the peninsula. So, what was formerly their territory, the territories of Baekje and Gaya, those became Silla territory.

However, most of the former Goguryeo territory in the north actually becomes the nation that is known as Balhae. And this was founded by a general from Goguryeo and he and his ruling class considered themselves to be successors to Goguryeo. So, nowadays, this is called the North and South Kingdoms period, as opposed to just the "Unified Silla" period. So, in the north, Balhae remains antagonistic with Silla and with Tang, so they're sort of enemies with everyone around them. The relationship with Silla is so bad that Silla even builds a border wall on the border with Balhae in the early 8th century.

### • The fall of Balhae and Silla

Unfortunately, there are a lot of ethnic differences between the rulers of Balhae, who come from Goguryeo, and the people who are being ruled. And the people who are being ruled are primarily people called the Mohe, which are a Tungusic people. This conflict between the rulers and the ruled, this ethnic conflict, leads to social divisions that end up weakening Balhae society. Balhae ends up being conquered by the Khitan, which is a nomadic tribe from the north, in 926, leaving Silla in the south.

So Silla controls the southern half of the peninsula. And in Silla society, the aristocracy remains influential, but the power of the king is strengthened quite a bit. So there is what is known as an executive council that is established, and this council is different from the aristocratic council. This council is designed to answer only to the king and it's supposed to be a check on the power of the aristocratic council.

However, those developments aside, the aristocracy remains quite wealthy while the common people grow poorer. So the social stratification only increases in severity. However, they start to push back – the aristocracy, that is. They start to push back against royal authority as early as the 8th century. And this leads to a period of unrest in Silla. So there are rebellions throughout the countryside and you have these wealthy nobles who live in the countryside who start to raise their own armies to carry out these rebellions.

So as this power of the aristocracy grows, consequently the royal authority starts to weaken and you have the founding of new nations. So these started out as rebellions that gained power and it got to the point where the leaders of these rebellions felt that they had enough power to found their own nations and these nations claimed to be revivals of the earlier Three Kingdoms. So you had the Later Baekje kingdom and you had the Later Goguryeo kingdom (Hubaekje & Hugoguryeo).

And both of these were founded, well, Later Baekje was founded a little bit earlier, by 892, and then in 901 Later Goguryeo was founded as well. In 918, Later Goguryeo, they simplified their name to just Goryeo. So these two kingdoms, they struggled with Silla for control of the peninsula and you had a, I don't want to say a repeat, but you had another conflict between three kingdoms for the rule of the Korean peninsula. So, as I mentioned before, Balhae was conquered by the Khitan, they collapsed in 926, and the survivors of Balhae fled to Goryeo, because they were from the original Goguryeo kingdom and they felt that Goryeo was the successor to that. So they joined with Goryeo. In 935, so about ten years after that, Silla surrendered to Goryeo and Baekje surrendered a year later.

And as a result, Goryeo actually unified the peninsula. So if you look at a map of what Goryeo looked like at the height of its power, it looks very similar, almost the entirety of the Korean peninsula today. So this was more of a true unification of the peninsula, and we'll get into that next.

### • The cultural development of Unified Silla

But first, to talk a little bit about the some of the, again, the important developments of culture, arts, religion, etc. during the Silla period, Buddhism is something that we should mention. Something known as Pure Land Buddhism. In Korean, it's known as Jeongto Bulgyo. "Jeong" means pure, "to" means land.

And then “Bulgyo” is, of course, Buddhism.

Pure Land Buddhism gains great popularity through the efforts of monks, such as Wonhyo, who is a very famous Korean monk. He went around, he travelled a lot, and spread the message about Buddhism. So, the Pure Land is the home of the Buddha and it's a very appealing religion, or appealing version of Buddhism to the common people, because a believer could be reborn in the Pure Land simply by reciting the name of the Buddha. So to the common people who were illiterate, they couldn't read, they didn't have access to a lot of the canonical Buddhist knowledge, just knowing that all you needed to do was express your faith by reciting the name of the Buddha and then you too could be reborn in the Pure Land, that was obviously going to be very appealing. So that was one important development.

Another important development in Buddhism was the introduction of what is known as Seon Bulgyo. You may be more familiar with this as Zen Buddhism. “Zen” is the Japanese pronunciation, “Seon” is the Korean pronunciation, so from now on I'm going to be saying “Seon Buddhism.” So understand that it is a meditative form of Buddhism. The idea of Seon Bulgyo, unlike some of the other forms of Buddhism, which pursue enlightenment through the study of Buddhist texts, known as sutras, Seon Bulgyo is about pursuing enlightenment through meditation. So this was another important development during this time.

So, we still had Confucianism, of course. Confucianism remained an important philosophy during this period. You had the foundation of the National Confucian College in the late 7th century. And then at the end of the 8th century, you had the establishment of the national examination system, which is a very important development because we've been talking a lot about the aristocracy and how maybe a few families have monopolized power in the government, etc. Well, what the national examination system was designed to do was it was designed to award appointments based not on what family you were born into, but based on your skills. So, it was essentially an attempt to introduce a meritocracy, that you would gain a government position, that you would gain entrance into the halls of power based on your merits.

Now these merits in particular are proficiency in the Confucian classics and these Confucian classics were written in hanmun, as I mentioned before, hanmun being the Chinese writing system. And you had to know your Confucian classics inside and out. You also had to be able to compose in hanmun, etc. So, even though this was a step in the right direction definitely in terms of instituting a meritocracy in opposition to the aristocracy, in fact only the aristocrats were able to devote the amount of time and effort that was needed to study the subjects that were going to be on the civil service examination. But, it was a very important development and it remained an important institution throughout the remainder of the Korean kingdoms that ruled the peninsula.

So, in terms of the arts and technology, architecture, etc., the best examples of Silla architecture and arts are going to be found in Gyeongju, which is the former capital. Bulguksa Temple, Bulguk-sa, the “sa” character at the end, of course, means temple, is very famous for its architecture. The staircase, sort of the rainbow arch staircase at the front, is a very early example of this type of architecture. The pagodas that stand in the courtyards are also famous examples of architecture. And if you get a chance to go, don't forget to go to Seokguram, the grotto, which is a, it's a cave that is carved on the inside with very intricate Buddhist carvings. But you can go to Silla today and you can see a lot of examples of Silla architecture and history there still being preserved for us.

You have, for example, the Cheomseongdae Observatory as well, which is a very famous example of a building that was used for early astronomy that's still standing today. The literature of the Silla period is also important. Again we're going to come back to literature later on, but there's a form of poetry known as hyangga. And hyangga is unique in terms of poetry at that time because it uses something known as hyangchal to express the sounds of the Korean language. And this was something that would have been impossible in hanmun, because hanmun, the written Chinese language, was designed to express Chinese, not Korean. So in our next class on the Korean language, we're going to come back to this and talk about this a little bit more, how they sort of created this system to use hanmun to express the Korean language.

## 5. Unification of the Peninsula: Goryeo

So after the Later Three Kingdoms period, after the fall of Silla, we finally have what we can call the unification of the Korean peninsula by the kingdom of Goryeo.

- **Gwangjong's reforms to strengthen royal authority**

So, in terms of how history develops throughout the Goryeo period, you do have in the beginning, in the mid-10th century, the Goryeo king Gwangjong started to institute reforms in order to strengthen the royal authority and weaken the power of the military officials who had founded Goryeo. Again, this is a common theme where you see this conflict between the central authority of the king and then the authority of the aristocrats, or the other officials.

So he instituted some reforms like freeing the commoners, who were enslaved during the Later Three Kingdoms period. The point of this, of course, was to weaken the power of the slaveholders. Most of the slaveholders were the aristocracy, the military officials, so, as opposed to being sort of a goodwill gesture to try to free the people, it was more of a gesture to try to weaken the power of the officials. He also introduced the civil service examination, very similar to the examination system in Silla, with a very similar goal: to introduce a meritocracy.

So unfortunately, after Gwangjong died, these reforms ended up failing. They were only successful during his lifetime, but after his death, we sort of reverted to the status quo. The people who led the government were actually Confucian scholars from the former Silla kingdom. Even though the civil service examination allowed for a certain amount of social mobility, occupations were still primarily hereditary, so occupations were being passed down from father to son. And society ended up being very hierarchical, aristocracy at the top, slaves at the bottom, and both of these classes are hereditary, so they're passed down from generation to generation.

### • The internal and external pressures

Goryeo suffered from constant pressure from the northern tribes. So for example, the Khitan tribe, which was the tribe that defeated Balhae, that conquered Balhae, and you also had the Jurchen tribe, which is a Manchurian tribe, known in Korea as the Yeojin tribe. They ended up founding a dynasty later on known as the Jin Dynasty in China. Once they founded this dynasty, they demanded recognition of their suzerainty from Goryeo. So just to explain a little bit what that means is that at this time the Chinese dynasties were what we call suzerains in East Asia. The Chinese ruler was the emperor and then you had kings in the various kingdoms around there, in Korea, in Japan, etc. At this time, when the Jin Dynasty demanded recognition, Goryeo agreed in order to avoid conflict. And sometimes, that's what you need to do.

However, there were also internal pressures. Specifically, you had power struggles between the different factions in the governments, you had a number of uprisings in the 12th century. Two of these were unsuccessful, but the third uprising, the uprising of military officials, was successful, and in 1170, they seized power and they executed many of the civil officials. And these two branches, the military officials and the civil officials, became very important. The military officials were the ones who had founded the Goryeo Dynasty, the civil officials were the ones who had ended up ruling later on, but the military officials seized power and they executed many of their enemies.

After this, you have a period of clashing warlords. You have a number of warlords rising up, trying to gain control. A lot of social upheaval in addition to the warlords fighting with each other. You also have peasant and slave uprisings. So it's a time of very bitter struggle and people trying to fight for a better society on the lower ends of the social ladder and, on the upper ends of the social ladder, people trying to fight for control of the government, control of the peninsula. Peace was finally restored when the Choe family came into power. However, in 1231, those external factors invaded again in the form of the Mongols.

They seized most of the mainland of Goryeo. The royal court actually retreated to an island off the western coast of Korea, known as Ganghwado, and there they established a new capital. And they were fairly safe there because the Mongols were a little bit hesitant to cross the water. If you know anything about the history of the Mongol Empire, you know that they didn't have a lot of good fortune when it comes to crossing water. But the royal elite were very comfortable on Ganghwado. But they left the rest of the population, the common people, on the mainland, where they suffered under Mongolian rule.

So, after the invasion by the Mongols, the Goryeo king was assassinated in 1258 by a group of military officials, who wanted to have peace with the Mongols. The last rebels were finally defeated in 1273, and this was two years after the Mongols founded what is known as the Yuan Dynasty in China. So finally you had peace, but you had Goryeo ostensibly being ruled by Yuan Dynasty. However, as happens, Yuan Dynasty was weakened by uprisings internally in the mid-14th century, and at around that time, Goryeo was able to finally free itself from Mongol rule.

### • The fall of Goryeo

And King Gongmin, who was the king at the time, he attempted once again reforms to restore royal authority and weaken the power of the aristocratic families, but once again he failed. So, once again you have that conflict between the throne, the royal throne and the aristocratic families, and the aristocratic families maintain their sort of stranglehold on power.

But even though the Mongols are gone, Goryeo is under continuous attack by brigands, by pirates. The wako from Japan, for example, were a big threat. These were pirates who would raid along the coast of Korea and they were based in islands off of Japan.

There were a number of generals that were very successful at fighting these pirates. For example, Yi Seonggye was one of those generals who was very successful. He rose to prominence specifically because of his success against the pirates. He was ordered to attack the Ming Dynasty in 1388, but on the way, he actually abandoned this campaign and he carried out a coup to establish the Joseon Dynasty. So that brought an end to the Goryeo Dynasty, which, as you can see, was full of a lot of internal and external strife.

### • The cultural development of Goryeo

But, there are some very important developments during the Goryeo Period that are still very proud parts of Korean history today. Of course, you still have the ideologies. So in terms of Confucianism, once again you had the establishment of a national university in 992. This was intended to improve Confucian education, so education in the Confucian classics. It's very interesting because, like a modern university, it consisted of a number of different colleges. So, it was sort of a model for what you might see today in a modern university. Confucianism provided, like I mentioned before, this moral code and it also provided a guide for governing social relationships between people. So it was thought of as being very important in maintaining an orderly society.

During the late Goryeo period, after the collapse of military rule, there was a new class of scholar-officials, known as the literati. In Korean, they're known as the sadaebu. This new class of scholar-officials emerged and with them came the ideology of Neo-Confucianism. This is a more metaphysical version of Confucianism and unlike the original Confucianism, which co-existed with Buddhism in a complementary relationship, Neo-Confucianism had a very antagonistic relationship with Buddhism. And there was a lot of persecution of attacks on Buddhism. So Buddhism did flourish during the Goryeo period, thanks mainly in part to royal patronage – a lot of the royal family were believers of Buddhism. But this conflict with Neo-Confucianism would become much more severe in later times.

So, as I mentioned before, when I talked about the introduction of Seon Buddhism during the Three Kingdoms period, you had this dichotomy, I guess, in Buddhism, between the textual schools, so the schools that relied on Buddhist texts, known as the Gyo schools, and the meditative schools, known as the Seon schools. And as time went on during the Goryeo period, this conflict sort of increased between the two factions within Buddhism. So after the introduction of Seon Buddhism during the Three Kingdoms period, as I mentioned before, you had these two types of schools. The textual schools that

relied on studies of Buddhist texts, known as sutras, which were the Gyo schools, and the meditative schools, known as the Seon schools.

As time went on, this sort of conflict between the two types of Buddhism intensified and you had the development of what is known as the Cheontae Order, the Order of the Heavenly Mountain, was introduced in order to unify the textual and the meditative varieties of Buddhism. There were also reforms within Seon Buddhism that led to the establishment of what is known as the Jogye Order of Buddhism. This is actually the largest Buddhist order today and you can visit the main temple of the Jogye Order, which is known as Jogye Temple, in Seoul. They have very lovely lantern festivals around the time of the Buddha's birthday.

Another very important development during the Goryeo period was the printing of the Goryeo Tripitaka. And this is related to Buddhism because the Tripitaka is essentially the entire collection of Buddhist scriptures. So, they created a set of woodblocks. And if you're not familiar with woodblock printings, basically what they do is they carve the characters in reverse onto a set of wooden blocks and then they put ink on that and they press the paper onto that and in that way they can print multiple copies of a text. So they made this massive collection of woodblocks. The first version was made in 1087. Unfortunately, it was destroyed during the Mongol invasion. And that would have been horrible, it was horrible, but they actually remade this set of woodblocks in 1251 and this version survived and it's actually housed in Haeinsa Temple in the southern part of the Korean peninsula where you can go see it today.

Speaking of printing, another important development was the invention of movable metal type. So we have records that show that books were printed as early as 1234 using movable metal type. We don't have these books today, unfortunately, but we do have one book, the earliest book known to be printed by movable metal type, known as *⟨Jikji⟩*, which is the Korean name. The Korean name is actually much longer, it's just called *⟨Jikji⟩* for short. This was published in 1377 and it has been recognized by UNESCO as the oldest book in existence printed with movable metal type. It's actually 70 years before the Gutenberg Bible, so interesting fact there.

In terms of… Since we're talking about printing, we can talk about histories. I mentioned earlier that national histories were written during the Three Kingdoms period, but we don't have these books remaining to us today. There were some books written during the Goryeo period that we still do have today. For example, *⟨The History of the Three Kingdoms⟩* (the *⟨Samguksagi⟩*) or *⟨The Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms⟩* (the *⟨Samgukyusa⟩*). These were two books that were written in the 12th and early 13th centuries. They remain important sources for Korean history, myth and legend today. In fact, some of the founding myths that I mentioned before come from these books.

And then if you're familiar with anything from the Goryeo period, you might be familiar with this example of Goryeo art. It's known as celadon or Goryeo cheongja. It's a type of ceramics with a very specific glaze that has this beautiful sort of green-grey color. Now, neither ceramics nor celadon glaze were invented in Goryeo. They were both invented in China. But even at the time, even the contemporary Chinese recognized Goryeo celadon as the finest example of the form. And we're definitely going to be taking a look at some of these fine examples when we talk about the arts of ceramics in particular later on.

## 6. The 500-Year Dynasty: Joseon

So as I mentioned before, Yi Seonggye founded the Joseon Dynasty. He carried out a coup. And in 1392, he founded the capital at Seoul, which remains the capital of Korea today. Early developments during the Joseon period probably were highlighted by the reign of the ruler known as King Sejong the Great, who was the 4th ruler. We'll talk a little bit about some of the things that he did in a moment and also in our next class as well.

### • The new yangban order

There was a new political order established by Sejo, the 7th ruler, who usurped the throne from Danjong, which ended up being a very important event, not just for the transfer of power, but because of the reaction to it.

The literati that I mentioned from the end of the Goryeo period became known as the yangban. And as I mentioned before, you had the military officials and you had the civil officials. Well, these were the two branches or the two orders of officialdom. And that's what yangban means. "Yang" means both sides or two and "ban" means order. So if you hear people talking about yangban, that's what they're referring to. They're referring to these government officials who are either civil or military officials.

The civil service examination was very important, as it was in previous kingdoms, because it was the only path for advancement for the yangban. So, if you wanted to get a government job, which was basically how you succeeded in Joseon society, then you had to take the civil service examination and you had to successfully pass it; if you did not, you did not have too many opportunities for advancement in society.

But you also had a sort of middle group of people, literally a middle group because they were called the jungin, and jungin means middle people. This was a class of people who were not yangban, so they were not aristocrats. They did not sit for the examinations that the yangban sat for. But they were not commoners who were farmers or butchers, etc. Well, butchers wouldn't have been commoners, but yeah that's another story. They were technical officials. So, in other words, they were interpreters, they were lawyers, they were doctors, etc.

So they performed the necessary tasks of society that the yangban would not have performed because they were, they considered themselves to be above that. So for example, if you had government officials going on an embassy to China, the yangban could write in classical Chinese, and they would often exchange written missives with their Chinese counterparts, but they needed someone who spoke Chinese, and that's where the jungin came in. They were the people who interpreted for the yangban or did the things that practically needed to happen.

These jungin were actually looked down on by the yangban because they did not primarily study the Chinese classics, but the jungin would become much more powerful as time went on because they were the people who did the things that made society go around.

### • Four literati purges

I mentioned before that Sejo's rule, particularly his usurping of the throne, had important consequences. And these consequences were partly reflected in the Neo-Confucianist movement. So I mentioned that Neo-Confucianism was a product of the Goryeo period, but it particularly gained strength after Sejo's death, perhaps as a response to the ethical issues of having a king usurping the throne.

There were throughout the, say from around the mid-15th century, or the late 15th century to the mid-16th century, a number of what are known as literati purges, which is basically an attempt by the government to wipe out the Neo-Confucian scholars. So beginning in 1498, and in 1504, 1519, 1545, on four separate times, there were these purges of the literati, which was basically an attempt to stave off, I guess you could say, this Neo-Confucianist movement.

But, even though a lot of people fell victim to these purges, the movement ultimately failed and Neo-Confucianism became the dominant ideology in the Joseon period. So factional strife between these various factions, you had factions like the northerners and the southerners and the westerners and the easterners, you had the old doctrine, you had the new doctrine, a lot of different factions. This factional strife was a constant reality throughout the 16th century.

### • The Japanese and Manchu invasions

Now, elsewhere, in Japan, you had the nation of Japan embroiled in what was known as the Sengoku period. Sengoku means the Warring States Period. So it's basically a period of civil war where all of the different clans are vying for power. And this was going on since the mid-15th century. Now, at about the time that you have all this factional strife in Joseon, Toyotomi Hideyoshi unifies Japan in 1590, and two years later, he invades Joseon. So, the Japanese armies at first are very successful on land against the inexperienced Joseon troops and a government that seems to be very complacent.

However, there is one saving grace and that saving grace is the Joseon admiral known as Yi Sunsin. He's so great that there is a statue of him standing in downtown Seoul that you can still see today. He defeated the Japanese navies at sea and he was basically the saving grace of Joseon during that time. You also had what were known as righteous armies, Uibyeong in Korean. These were guerrilla forces that sprung up throughout the countryside to resist the Japanese.

And the Ming Dynasty also sent troops over to help combat the Japanese. There were some peace talks but those broke down and Japan invaded again in 1597. However, in 1598, Hideyoshi died and the Japanese withdrew. However, this, even though it ultimately ended in failure, it ravaged the countryside, it ravaged the kingdom of Joseon, and it also drained the Ming Dynasty. This was one of the factors that led to the weakening of the Ming Dynasty. So this very important event forms the dividing line between what we know as the early Joseon period and the later Joseon period. So if I later on I talk about the early Joseon period, I'm talking about prior to the Japanese invasions. If I talk about the later Joseon period, I'm talking about after the Japanese invasions.

So, the Ming Dynasty declines. The Jurchen, that I mentioned before, who later became known as the Manchus, rose to power, and the Manchus invaded in 1627 because Joseon was pro-Ming, they were

allied with the Ming. So the Manchus invaded to establish their dominance over Joseon and they won some quick victories. They established what is known as the Qing Dynasty in 1636, and they demanded recognition from Joseon. Joseon refused so the Manchus invaded again and again they defeated Joseon. So this period, from around the end of the 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century was a period of great turmoil, foreign invasions and a lot of suffering in the Joseon period.

### • The rise of Practical Learning

So, as we move on into the 17th and 18th century, you still have a number of these prominent families, a small number of them dominating the political stage. But because of everything that had happened, with the Japanese invasions, the Manchu invasions, and a lot of the weaknesses, really, that were revealed within the government, there were a certain section of Confucian scholars who sought to carry out reforms across all aspects of society, including politics, science, literature, agriculture, etc.

This group of scholars was later named the Practical Learning School or Silhak, and we'll come back and we'll talk about Silhak later on. But they are a very important movement and they play a role throughout sort of the movement into modern Korea.

### • Social unrest in the 19th century

So once we get into the 19th century, we see more social unrest, particularly among the fallen yangban. And when I say "fallen yangban," this is a time where the yangban class is sort of declining economically. A lot of yangban don't have political power, they don't have economic power. But the peasants as well have also been suffering a lot. So you see a lot of peasant uprisings breaking out across the country and, interestingly enough, these peasant uprisings are often led by the fallen yangban. So the fallen yangban, they hadn't been able to perform the role that they were originally designed to perform, but they end up leading these peasant uprisings.

### • The imperial incursions in the latter half of the 19th century

So in the latter half of the 19th century, once we start getting toward the end of the Joseon period, Joseon starts to become more and more isolationist in response to Western imperial incursions. So Joseon does succeed in repelling some expeditions from France and the US, but it's surrounded by larger and more powerful neighbors like Japan, Russia and the Qing Dynasty, and these powers are all interested in the Korean peninsula as a vitally important geo-political location. So in 1873, the architect of this isolationism, known as the Daewongun, who is the father of King Gojong, he is forced out of power. And this ends Joseon's isolationism.

Shortly after this, in 1876, Japan forces Korea to sign an unequal treaty, the first of many unequal treaties that Korea had to sign. But this treaty was known as the Treaty of Ganghwa, in 1876, and from

this time Japanese influence starts to grow.

In 1894, you have the Donghak Peasant Revolution in response partly to local government abuses but also partly to the growing Japanese influence. So the Donghak armies were attempting to accomplish two things at once. They were trying to defeat what they saw as a corrupt and inefficient government, but they were also trying to drive out Japanese influence. They were very successful in the beginning, but then the Joseon government asked the Qing Dynasty for help and they managed to come to a truce with the Donghak armies, but both the Qing Dynasty and the Japanese had sent troops to Korea because of the Donghak Revolution, and these troops clashed, they clashed with each other in what is known as the Sino-Japanese war. Japan was victorious here and China finally relinquishes its suzerainty over Korea. So after this time, Japanese influence dominates until King Gojong flees to the Russian legation, and then the Japanese forces are removed in favor of Russian influence, but really, you just have Gojong going from one foreign influence to another.

As a final measure, Gojong eventually establishes what is known as the Great Korean Empire, the Daehan Jeguk. This officially ends the Joseon Dynasty, but unfortunately, it's not going to be enough, as we'll see in a moment.

### • The cultural development of Joseon

So, really quickly, just to talk about some of the important aspects of culture during the Joseon period. As I mentioned before, Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism don't really get along with each other, so Neo-Confucian scholars were very critical of Buddhism and Buddhism was suppressed during the Joseon period, with some brief exceptions under some sympathetic rulers.

As I mentioned before, you had the Practical Learning scholars. In their attempts to introduce reform, they ended up introducing Catholicism to Korea in 1784, which they called Western Learning. And this was... they were more interested in the enlightenment aspects of it than they were in the religious aspects of it, but it is the beginning of Catholicism on the Korean peninsula.

The Donghak Revolution that I mentioned before, "Donghak" actually means Eastern Learning and this was founded to counter the Western Learning which was seen as coming from the outside. So the goal of Donghak was to provide a sort of native-grown religion that would provide hope for the people. Donghak told of a new world order that would arrive, so it was as much as social movement as it was a religion.

And then later, after this, at the end of the 19th century, 100 years after the introduction of Catholicism, in fact, you had Protestantism. It was brought to Korea by foreign missionaries. And these foreign missionaries brought in a lot of modern ideas and modern institutions, such as hospitals, universities, etc.

One thing that we're going to talk about in much greater detail in our next class though is the invention of hangeul. As I mentioned before, King Sejong the Great, who again also has a statue in downtown Seoul very near the statue of Yi Sunsin, he invented this writing system specifically for the Korean language. And we'll spend a lot more time talking about that in our next class.

As far as the arts go, you had developments in ceramics, such as buncheongsagi, or buncheong stoneware, and later the white porcelain, known as Joseon baekja, and various schools of painting that we're all going to come back to in our arts class as well.

## 7. Korea, Interrupted: Early Modern Korean and the Colonial Period

So we've reached our final period of Korean history that we're going to be talking about today at any rate, and this is the period from essentially around the foundation of the Great Korean Empire through the colonial period with Japan.

### • The Independence Club

So, in the lead up to the colonial period, you had, even before the foundation of the empire, you had the foundation of something known as the Independence Club, which was founded in 1896, and this was actually an enlightenment movement. And the goal of this movement was to secure independence from foreign powers, because, like I mentioned before, you had all of the imperial powers trying to establish their control over the Korean peninsula. So, the Independence Club wanted to secure independence from those powers and they also wanted to establish democracy, which was something that wouldn't happen in Korea for almost another century.

In the beginning, they were supported by the government, but as time went on, they came into conflict with Gojong's court, so Gojong saw them as being a subversive element, and the Independence Club was disbanded in 1898. But, you did have this early movement toward democracy that maybe hints at what might have happened if history had followed a slightly different course.

### • The Japanese annexation of Joseon

Unfortunately, we can't know what that course might have been because in 1904, Japan launched a surprise attack on Russia. And to the great surprise of the Western imperial powers, Japan won. Nobody thought that an Asian power could defeat a Western imperial power. But Japan did defeat Russia. And as a result, they had defeated Qing China, now having defeated Russia, they had sort of paved the way for their influence on the Korean peninsula. And as a result of the Russo-Japanese war, all of the Western imperial powers as well, they recognized Japanese influence in Korea, sometimes through secret agreements.

So, in 1905, a year, well, a year after the start of the Russo-Japanese war, but only a month or so after the end of it, they forced Korea to sign what is known as the Protectorate Treaty, and this gave Japan control over Korea's foreign affairs. So, Korea was technically still independent, but Japan controlled all of Korea's foreign affairs.

Now, King Gojong publicly protested this, he declared it null and void, and he even sent a delegation to the Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907. Unfortunately, this did not have any effect other than to cause Japan to tighten its grip on the peninsula. The righteous armies that were led by Confucian scholars, that we talked about earlier, they reappeared, and this time they were joined by ex-soldiers, because the army was disbanded in 1907.

So these righteous armies rose up once again to resist the Japanese, but they were defeated, unfortunately, and Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910. So this starts the colonial period, which we can divide, obviously this is going to be a little artificial, but roughly speaking, we can divide it into three periods. You have the first decade of colonial rule, and then you have, after the March First Independence Movement, the second decade, and then the last period is the period of the Pacific War.

### • The three phases of the Japanese colonial rule

So the first decade started with very harsh repression. So you weren't allowed to assemble in public. People weren't allowed to get together without police permission. Newspapers and other publications were shut down. Any political opposition was crushed. Education was designed to inculcate Japanese values and also teach the Japanese language, so the Korean language was actually relegated to second language status. As a result of these policies, access to higher education was very limited for Koreans. So if Koreans wanted to access higher education, in other words, if they wanted to go to university, if they wanted to get a degree, they actually had to go over to Japan.

And this had a sort of ironic effect, because when they went to Japan, they were exposed to political activism in Japan, and they actually came home to play an important role in the nationalist movement in Korea. There was also a growing nationalist movement at this time in exile, so in places like Manchuria, Russia, or the US. These various movements, they didn't change the situation in Korea, but they spread the word about the situation abroad.

At the end of this decade, toward the end of this decade, you have the end of World War I. And Woodrow Wilson, the US President at the time, gave a speech at the end of World War I, known as the Fourteen Points Speech, where he references the principle of self-determination in government. In other words, he says that people have the right to choose who will rule over them.

Now, the Korean nationalists heard this and they thought, 'This is our opportunity. We want to choose who should rule over us.' So, one thing that happened at the time was that the former emperor Gojong died and there was a funeral planned for March 3rd, so the activists planned to have a demonstration at that time. And they actually moved this up to March 1st because they were afraid of being discovered. So on March 1st, they declared independence from Japan and there was a nationwide movement in Seoul, but also in other places around Japan, where the citizens rose up and demanded

independence. The Japanese police cracked down on these demonstrations, arresting, injuring and killing many of the demonstrators.

Unfortunately at this time, the Western powers did not come to Korea's aid. The hope was that the Western powers, such as the US, would see these uprisings and they would come to Korea's aid and they would help Korea gain independence. Unfortunately, Japan was an ally in World War I against the central powers, so the Western powers such as the UK and the US were very reluctant to go against their former allies. And you also have to remember that the Western nations had colonies of their own at the time, so it would have been very hypocritical for them to demand that Japan give up their colony. So, due to the geopolitical situation, the March First Independence Movement ended up being a practical failure. But it did have the effect of unifying the nationalist movement in Korea. So it brought together all the various nationalist movements and it encouraged nationalist movements in exile. So, a provisional government was established in Shanghai the very next month, for example.

It also had the effect of forcing Japan to reconsider their approach to colonial rule. Like I said, the first decade was very harsh, but after the massive demonstrations, they decided that they needed to take a different approach. So they instituted what they called *bunka seiji*, or a "Cultural Rule," which allowed for greater cultural and political freedoms. So, keep in mind that these new freedoms did not compromise Japanese control, so they allowed newspapers and magazines, etc., but they were still going to be heavily censored.

However, there was more cultural and political freedom to a certain extent. To give you one example of the cosmetic nature of some of these changes, the new government, in the form of the Governor-General, he ended the police policy of violent oppression, so the police no longer would beat people on a regular basis. But, he also increased the size of the police force. So, there was a little bit of give and take here.

However, like I said, there were freedoms during the 1920s. As the 1920s went on, these freedoms gradually began to be rolled back and the turning point was probably in 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria. And this began what in Japan was known as the Pacific War.

So at this point, you started seeing political activities being curtailed. Cultural activities continued, probably up until about 1937, when Japan and China engaged in full-scale war. But from 1931 to 1937, you had this gradual curtailing of these freedoms. So, for example, in 1934, new education regulations eliminated the study of Korean language entirely. It forbade Korean to be used by teachers and it forced the use of the Japanese language. In 1935, students and government employees were required to attend ceremonies at Shinto shrines, so they were required to worship there. And in 1937, Japan started mobilizing Koreans for war and clamped down on all freedoms. So all organizations were disbanded, they began to recruit Koreans to the Japanese army and many more Koreans were forced to work in Japanese mines and factories to support the war effort.

There was also an increase in what we might call assimilation efforts. So, in 1939, there was a decree to "allow" Koreans to adopt Japanese-style names. You didn't have to do it, but it was encouraged. And this was known as the *Changssigaemyeong* in Korean. And if you did change your name, supposedly that would allow you more access to society under Japanese rule. However, it is important to note that these assimilation efforts did not mean equality. So, there was still discrimination against Koreans. Even

if they changed their names, even if they complied with all the regulations, Koreans were still being discriminated against. So that's an important note to make.

The situation obviously grew worse after Japan attacked the US in 1941 and the Pacific War joined with World War II, but in August 15th 1945, Japan surrendered to the allies and Korea was liberated. And that is where we're going to end the historical aspect of this.

### • The cultural development of the colonial period

And before we wrap things up, even though the colonial period was a time of great repression and great oppression, there were some still important cultural developments that were being made.

For example, you had the foundation of the Korean Language Research Society, the Joseoneo Yeonguhoe, which was founded in 1921, and they worked to standardize Korean grammar and spelling and compile a dictionary of standard Korean, known as Mal-Mo-E. There's actually a film called 〈Mal-Mo-E〉 that talks about this, if you ever get to see it. Their efforts were closely connected with the nationalist consciousness of Korea and, as a result, they posed a threat to the Japanese rule. So, in 1942, thirty-three of their members were arrested and the society was shut down. However, the society lives on today as the Hangeul Hakhoe, or the Hangeul Society.

You also saw the flourishing of modern Korean literature, so you had newspaper serial novels, you had short stories and poems in literary magazines. They were subject to censorship, so authors had to be very subtle if they wanted to convey a political message, but there was a lot of development at that time in these fields that we'll talk about when we talk about literature. You saw development in theater and cinema as well, although they were probably subject to even harsher regulations.

You had the Donghak movement, which was renamed to Cheondogyo, which means Religion of the Heavenly Way, in 1906. This actually remains a living religion in Korea today, so there are people who are adherents of Cheondogyo. Cheondogyo leaders joined other religious leaders as part of the leadership of the March First Independence Movement.

### • Closing

So, unfortunately, if you know anything about Korean history, you will know that the joy of liberation after Japanese colonial rule was short-lived because you did have the Korean War and this led to the state of affairs on the peninsula today, where Korea is divided into the North and South. But, this is beyond the scope of our class. So, the goal of today's class was simply to provide you with a foundation, a framework within which you will hopefully be able to place the elements that we talk about, whether they be religion, philosophy, art, architecture, literature, etc., just to give you an idea of where they fall within this larger framework.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. Silla defeated Goguryeo and Baekje to unify the entire Korean peninsula. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

2. Pure Land Buddhism was a form of Buddhism that believed people could be reborn in the “Pure Land” as long as they recited Buddha’s name, even if they had no knowledge of Buddhist scripture. It was a popular religion among common people during the Silla period. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

3. Following the orders of the king, the Goryeo general Yi Seonggye conquered the Ming Dynasty and improved ties with the Yuan Dynasty. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

4. From the 17th to 18th centuries in Joseon, a group of Confucian scholars named Silhak-pa or Practical Learning School aimed to carry out reforms across all aspects of society including politics, science, literature, and agriculture. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

5. In 1905, when Japan gained control of Korea’s foreign affairs by forcing them to sign the Protectorate Treaty, King Gojong declared this treaty null and void. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the Korean peninsula during the prehistoric age and its early kingdoms?
  - a. There is no evidence that humans existed on the Korean peninsula before the Neolithic period.
  - b. The existence of goindol or dolmens shows that societies began to coalesce into larger political entities by the Bronze Age.
  - c. Dangun from Old Joseon's foundation myth was later accepted as the common ancestor of all Koreans.

Answer: a

2. Which of the following is an accurate statement about the Three Kingdoms period?
  - a. Goguryeo maintained friendly relations with the Sui and Tang dynasties.
  - b. Buddhism directly imported from India took prominence as the ruling ideology.
  - c. The Chinese writing system emerged to play an important role in the development of aristocratic culture.

Answer: c

3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Goryeo?
  - a. The new class of literati known as sadaebu emerged during this period and pursued harmonious coexistence between Confucianism and Buddhism.
  - b. In 1231, when the Mongols invaded, Goryeo moved the capital to Ganghwa Island.
  - c. Cheongja (celadon) produced during the Goryeo period was recognized by the Chinese as the finest form of ceramics.

Answer: a

4. Which of the following is an accurate statement about Joseon?
  - a. High government posts were usually inherited within the aristocratic family.
  - b. In 1592, Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded Joseon only to be defeated by Yi Sunsin's navy.
  - c. In the late 19th century, Daewongun actively pursued political and cultural exchange with the West.

Answer: b

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the Japanese colonial period?
  - a. Although the March First Independence Movement of 1919 ended in failure, it had the effect of bringing together various nationalist movements.
  - b. After the March First Independence Movement, Japan engaged in strict censorship of the media and publishing under the guise of Cultural Rule.
  - c. Koreans who adopted Japanese-style names were given the same rights as Japanese citizens.

Answer: c

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, as it is known in Korean, was printed during the Goryeo period and is recognized by UNESCO as the oldest book in existence to be printed with moveable metal type.

Answer: Jikji

2. \_\_\_\_\_ refers to a class of technical officials—interpreters, lawyers, and doctors—who were looked down on by yangban, but who grew as the main power in society toward the late Joseon period.

Answer: Jungin

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is a native Korean religion founded to combat Catholicism (at the time referred to as Seohak) and was as much a social movement as it was a religion.

Answer: Donghak

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Describe the history of Buddhism's introduction and development in Korea and explain how the status of Buddhism changed in relation to Confucianism.

\* Answer guide

Korean Buddhism was introduced from China with Confucianism during the Three Kingdoms period. By the North and South Kingdoms period, Pure Land Buddhism had become widely popular among the common people. Seon Buddhism, which pursued enlightenment through meditation, was also introduced during this time. During the Goryeo period, Buddhist culture flourished as it was promoted by the state, but by the end of the Goryeo period, with the introduction of Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism lost its supremacy. By the Joseon period, Buddhism became an object of suppression.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Explain the policies that Japan used to suppress Korean language and culture during the colonial period and briefly describe the various subversive efforts that arose to further the development of Korean language and culture during this period of strict censorship.

\* Answer guide

From the early period of the Japanese occupation, Imperial Japan created policies that would suppress Korean language and culture. By the 1930s, this intensified. On the one hand, the use of Korean by teachers was strictly forbidden and the use of Japanese was made mandatory, and on the other, there was strict censorship of Korean language published materials. Despite this suppression, the Korean Language Society was founded in 1921, hangeul spelling was standardized, and Korean language dictionaries were compiled. Modern Korean literature, which used various tactics to avoid Japanese censorship, flourished while conveying furtive messages.

## 〈Lecture 2〉

# Korean Language

– Korean as it is Spoken, Written, and Lived

### Class Goals

1. Identify characteristics of Korean language compared to other languages
2. Learn about the principles of the hangeul writing system and the basics of Korean phonology
3. Understand the three types of honorific speech in the Korean language

### Summary

In this class, we learned briefly about the history and basic characteristics of the Korean language. We also discussed in more detail the hangeul writing system and the social aspects of Korean language.

The Korean language has traditionally been thought of as a member of the Altaic family, although some recent scholars believe it is a language isolate. Korean has been going through historical development since it was unified after Silla unification.

Korean is different from English, especially in terms of syntax, morphology, and phonology. A majority of Korean words are Sino-Korean in origin. Korean shows surprising dialectical diversity for a small country. The complex speech protocol known as the honorific system is an important characteristic of the Korean language.

In the Three Kingdoms period, Chinese characters were also used to transcribe spoken Korean by reading them for their meaning or sound. Hangeul was invented in 1443, and it was in greater usage than hanmun by the late 19th century.

Hangeul is a featural alphabet. Hangeul vowels are formed according to the Heaven-Earth-Human principle. The shapes of basic consonants reflect the place of their articulation. Vowels and consonants are combined in Korean, with initial and final consonants being optional. There are many pronunciation rules related to final consonants.

Speech protocol in Korea depends on your relative position in the social hierarchy. It is classified into subject honorifics, object honorifics, and counterpart honorifics, with grammatical and lexical elements to express deference.

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Overview

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today, we're going to talk a little bit about the Korean language.

### Contents

1. Overview
2. The History and Characteristics of the Korean Language
3. Writing Systems: Hanmun and Hangeul
4. A Brief Study of Hangeul and Korean Phonology
5. Social and Cultural Aspects of the Korean Language
6. Closing

And like all languages, Korean has a very long history, and it has developed considerably over the past centuries and millennia. So, in today's class, we're going to start with a little bit about the history, and the genetic affiliation of the Korean language, then we're going to talk about the basic characteristics of the language as it is spoken today, then we're going to do with writing systems, we mentioned last time briefly the classical Chinese writing system known as hanmun, and also hangeul, we'll talk more in detail about those. Then we're going to go into a little more detail on hangeul itself, how it is written, how Korean is pronounced etc., and finally we're going to wrap up with some of the social and cultural aspects of the Korean language.

### Class goals

So, the goal of today's class is not to give you a complete overview or understanding of the Korean language, but just a little bit enough to maybe learn a little bit something about Korean, to introduce the spoken and written aspects of it, and to give you something to draw on throughout the remainder of our classes, because I will be using Korean words and you will be seeing hangeul on the screen, so just to get you a little bit familiar with that.

## 2. The History and Characteristics of the Korean Language

### • The genetic affiliation of the Korean language

So we'll start off with the history and some of the characteristics of the Korean language in terms of genetic affiliation, etc. Obviously, as with any language, we do have a lack of records from when the language was first created, which only makes sense because language has existed before we had writing systems. So, establishing the origins of any language with any level of certainty is impossible. However, there are a number of hypotheses that linguists have that will point to perhaps where the language came from or what other languages it might be related to.

So, the most commonly cited theory or hypothesis in Korea is known as the Altaic hypothesis. And this states that Korean, the language, is a member of the Altaic family. The Altaic family includes Turkic languages, Mongolian languages and Tungusic languages. And Korean is specifically part of that Tungusic part of the Altaic family. So, the original idea is that Altaic is thought to have originated in North or North Central Eurasia, somewhere around the Neolithic period, and there is evidence for this hypothesis. For example, there are a lot of similarities in phonology, so, for example, a lot of the speech sounds are similar, some of the vowels and consonants, etc. There are also similarities in vocabularies, some of the words are similar. Somewhat less important but also can be cited as evidence are grammatical similarities and morphological similarities. And morphology simply refers to how words are formed.

Another hypothesis that's a little more recent and has a little more currency with scholars outside of Korea is known as the language isolate hypothesis. So, this basically states that Korean is genetically unrelated to any other language. In other words, when we say that it is genetically unrelated, we mean that it has no ancestor in common with any other existing language. You may be familiar, for example, with the Basque language in Europe that's also considered to be a language isolate. So, we can't really say which of these two theories or hypotheses is correct but they both do have some evidence for them and there are two ideas as to where Korean might have originated from genetically speaking.

But before we move on, I do want to mention really quickly about the relationship with other East Asian languages, because we talked a lot last time in particular about the Chinese influence and how Chinese culture, and the Chinese language as well, has had a strong influence on Korea and the Korean language throughout history. So a lot of Korean vocabulary has been heavily influenced by Chinese, and we'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment, but in terms of the genetic aspects of the language, Chinese and Korean are actually completely unrelated and very different from each other. So even though there have been cultural and vocabulary influences, the languages are not similar at all. And this will be very important when we start talking about hangeul.

Japanese on the other hand is much closer to Korean in terms of the syntax, morphology, etc. So there are some scholars who believe that there is possibly a genetic relationship between the two but that's a little bit of a controversial theory and unfortunately we don't have time to educate that here today.

### • The historical development of the Korean language

In terms of how the Korean language developed over history, it's important to note that Ancient Korean, the oldest form of Korean that we know of, was not actually one language. There were actually two groups of languages. You had the northern languages that were spoken in Goguryeo and Buyeo and the northern areas like that. They were one distinct group of languages. And you had the southern languages, so in the southern areas where the Three Hans would have been or later where Silla and Baekje would have been. Those formed another distinct language group.

Contemporary Korean descends from those southern languages, specifically the language of Silla, and this is now known as Old Korean. So when Silla unified the southern half of the peninsula, that southern group of languages could be considered to have been unified.

Middle Korean, the next stage of Korean, starts in the Goryeo period and it goes through the early Joseon period, so in other words up until the Japanese invasions. Unfortunately, it's very difficult to detect any sort of changes in the language up to this point because all of the records were written in Chinese and as I mentioned before, Chinese and Korean are very different, so the Chinese records give us information but they don't actually tell us how the Korean language sounded at the time. This would be similar if you want to think of it this way. Imagine if you were trying to detect changes in the English language if all of the records were written in Latin – that wouldn't give you a good idea of how English was spoken. So up until this point, up until, prior to the invention of hangeul, obviously, it was very difficult to detect changes in these various forms of the Korean language.

Modern Korean, though, starts with the later Joseon period after the Japanese invasions, and it goes into the end of the Joseon Empire, around the Joseon Dynasty and the Great Korean Empire. And then contemporary Korean, of course, is what we have from the twentieth century to today.

## • The characteristics of the Korean language

As far as the characteristics of the Korean language go, I'll just give you a few examples of ways that, for example, Korean is different from English.

And we'll talk, for example, about the syntax. So, English syntax is subject-verb-object. You have "I go to school," "I give the book to him," etc. Korean syntax on the other hand is subject-object-verb, so the verb comes at the end of the sentence. "나는 학교에 간다." "간다" is the verb that comes at the end.

Another way of thinking of this would be to think of languages in terms of branching. So, English is right-branching and Korean is left-branching. So for example if I give you an English sentence, "I recognized the student who took my class last year." We have "I recognized," "recognized" being the verb. Who did I recognize? I recognized the student. Who was the student? Student who took my class. When did they take my class? Last year. So you notice how the sentence branches out to the right. It starts with the verb on the left and then it branches out to the right. Korean, on the other hand, if you were to take that same sentence, "작년에 내 강의를 들었던 학생을 알아봤다." So "작년에" is "last year." And then we have "내 강의를 들었던" – "who took my class," essentially. "학생을" – "the student." "알아봤다" – "recognized." So "recognized," the verb, is at the righthand side of the sentence, and then it branches off to the left. So that's what we mean when we say that English is a right-branching language and Korean is a left-branching language. That's another way of looking at the syntax.

Another aspect of the syntax is in terms of the subject and the object. If the subject and the object are obvious from context in a Korean sentence, they are often dropped. So for example the English sentence, "I love you." "I" – subject. "Love" – verb. "You" – Object. If you watch Korean dramas, which you very well may have, and someone says to someone else, "I love you," they will say something like, "사랑해" or "사랑한다." And that's just the verb. That just means "love." It's a conjugated verb but there's no subject and there's no object because if you have two people talking to each other, it's pretty obvious that "I" is the one who is doing the loving and "you" is the one who is being loved. So you will often see especially the subject being dropped but also a lot of times the object will be dropped as well.

In terms of the morphology, in other words the way that words are formed in Korean, Korean has what is known as an agglutinative morphology, which are two rather complicated words, but if you look at the word "agglutinative," you'll see "glu" in the middle there. Just think of it that way. Things are glued together to form words. So you have nouns + postpositions, in English we have prepositions, in Korean they are postpositions, they come after the word. So if I say, "I go to school," for example, "학교에 간다," the "에" is stuck to the end of "학교." In the case of verbs, you have verbs + various endings. And there are a ton of different endings that we don't have time to get into unfortunately, but that can be one of the most challenging things about learning Korean. If you happen to be learning Korean now, you'll know that getting a handle on all the various verb endings and word endings can be very challenging.

Another way of thinking of this is that Korean is a highly inflected language. So, a lot of it depends on the various endings that are given to the verbs. English on the other hand is nearly uninflected, there's very little inflection in terms of word endings when it comes to verbs and that sort of thing.

As far as the phonology of Korean goes, and phonology is basically how the language is pronounced. So just a few quick characteristics here. There are certain sounds that Korean does not have that English does have. So we have no labio-dental or dental fricatives, which are basically the [f] or the [v] sound, the [th] sound. And in English actually has two versions of [th]. You have “that” or you have “this,” “that” – those are all examples of voiced. But you also have unvoiced such as “thick.” Korean doesn’t have those sounds. There’s no technical distinction between letters like b and p, d and t or g and k, although we’ll come back to this a little bit later on because there is a slight distinction between the two, but technically we don’t distinguish those sounds as we do in English. Instead, when it comes to pronunciation and articulation, you have lax, tense, and aspirated articulation, which I’ll come back to and I’ll talk about more. So those are some of the examples in the way that Korean differs from English in terms of pronunciation.

We also have what is known as sound symbolism and vowel harmony. So Korean is very rich in mimetic language, and mimetic language includes what we would call in English onomatopoeia, but it also includes words that sound like what is being described but also words that look like what is being described – they mimic the appearance in addition to just the sound. And nuances in these words are achieved through the use of the consonant articulation, whether it’s lax, tense or aspirated, and the vowel nature, and when I say the vowel nature, we’re talking about where it’s an eum or a yang vowel and again I’ll come back to this in more detail in a moment.

In terms of the vocabulary, like I mentioned before, Korean has been very heavily influenced by Chinese vocabulary. So majority of the words that you’ll find in the dictionary are actually Sino-Korean in origin. A much smaller percentage of words but growing all the time is loan words and loan words mostly come from English but they also come from other languages as well. Like 아르바이트, for example, which is the word for a part-time job, that comes from the German *arbeit*, 飯, which is the word for bread, comes from the Portuguese, for example. And the rest are what we would call native Korean words or pure Korean words that don’t have any corresponding Chinese characters.

Korean also has a large number of dialects, so even though it’s a relatively small country, it has a surprising number of dialects and a surprisingly wide range of diversity. Scholars disagree about exactly how many different dialects there are or how many dialectical regions there are. There’s also a trend in recent scholarship to refer to the Jeju language rather than the Jeju dialect. So, Jeju’s that island off the southern coast of Korea. It used to be known as the Jeju dialect, these days you’ll more often hear scholars call it the Jeju language because of the extreme differences.

And then of course perhaps one of the most, I don’t know if it’s the most important aspect of it, but one that you will definitely come across a lot is the speech protocol in Korean. So Korean has a very complex honorific system, a way of determining what type of language you use to speak to someone depending on their relationship with you. And we’ll talk about that more at the end of class.

### 3. Writing Systems: Hanmun and Hangeul

So next, I want to talk a little bit about the writing systems before we get into the specifics of how Korean is pronounced etc. And this was again something that we mentioned last time when we were talking about history.

#### • The introduction and the use of hanmun

We mentioned that the early writing system was known as hanmun, and this is essentially written Chinese or classical Chinese. We don't know when exactly Chinese characters were introduced to Korea. It is generally thought to have been sometime during the Old Joseon period, perhaps toward the end of the Joseon period when you had some refugees from China who emigrated, I guess you could say, to the kingdom. But unfortunately we don't know exactly but the general opinion is that it was sometime during the Old Joseon period.

However, we do know that it was during the Three Kingdoms period that classical Chinese, written Chinese, came into broad usage. And the current pronunciation of these Chinese characters, which differs from the way they are pronounced in China and also differs from the way they are pronounced in Japanese, this pronunciation is thought to have developed from the Chinese pronunciations during the Sui and the Tang dynasties, so somewhere around the 7th and 8th centuries. And obviously from that point on, modern Chinese developed their pronunciation in one way, Korean developed its pronunciation in another way and then you had Japan in another way. So they sort of started from there and then developed their own distinct pronunciations. A lot of the times they are very similar but there's definitely differences in the way that they're pronounced.

So the Chinese characters were used to read and write classical Chinese, obviously, so a lot of classical Chinese works were written both in China and Korea. But it was also used to transcribe spoken Korean and as I mentioned before Korean and Chinese are completely different in terms of the syntax, the morphology, the pronunciation etc. So they had to come up with some unique ways of using Chinese characters in order to express the Korean language.

And what they did in terms of expressing the language was achieved by reading the Chinese characters either for their meaning or their sound. So, in other words, each Chinese character has a sound the way that it's pronounced, and because Chinese characters are not letters in the way that English, the alphabet, is letters, each character also has a distinct meaning. So they have two aspects – you can read them either for their meaning or their sound.

So, the first method, what you would do is you would retain the meaning of the Chinese character, but instead you would use the Korean pronunciation. So for example, if you take the Chinese character that is pronounced in Korean as “명” (myeong), but instead you kept the meaning which means bright, and you use the Korean pronunciation of that which would be “발” (bal), or “발” (balg). So you wouldn't use the “명” (myeong), you would use “발” (bal) instead.

And then the second part of that, the flip side of that coin, is using it for the sound, but you ignore the meaning. So this is a little bit counterintuitive because all Chinese characters have meaning, but you're essentially just using it as a symbol for the sound and you're divorcing it from its meaning entirely. So this was often used in cases of particles or word endings, etc. So, for example, the character that would be pronounced “기” (gi), for example, for 기약 (giyak). You would use that sound “기” (gi) but it would not have the meaning that it normally has.

And if you combine these two methods, and I chose these two characters in particular because they come from a hyangga poem. So you'd have “밝기” (balggi), “발기” (balgi), or “밝은” (balgeun) in modern Korean, which would mean bright and that's from the first line of a very famous hyangga poem known as 〈Cheoyongga〉. So it's super complicated, this method of transcribing the Korean language.

This particular version that I've shown you is hyangchal. There are some other ways to do this as well, but you get the basic idea. So, obviously, this is not an ideal system. This system is obviously no longer in use today. In Korea, characters are only read for their meaning. In Japanese though, they still do have a dual system. So each Japanese, or each Chinese character in Japanese, will have a reading that is your native Japanese, but it will also have a Chinese pronunciation as well. So Japanese is a little bit more complicated in that regard.

So, as we mentioned in the last class, having literacy, being literate, being able to read and write, in classical Chinese, was very critical for the ruling class. Only aristocrats really had the time and the resources, to become proficient in classical Chinese. So even when the civil service examinations were introduced, as we discussed, social mobility was limited to the ruling class, the aristocrats, or the yangban later on. So, the change, the historical change that happened, came about during the Joseon period with the invention of hangeul, again as we have discussed before. So I want to talk a little bit more in detail about the invention of the system, why it was invented, etc.

### • The invention and development of hangeul

So the turning point in terms of the writing systems in Korea obviously came with the invention of hangeul, which happened, as we mentioned last time, in the middle of the 15th century, during the reign of King Sejong the Great. He and his scholars devised a new writing system that was specifically designed for Korean. So, in other words, unlike classical Chinese, which was originally designed for Chinese, but wasn't really suitable for Korean, this new writing system was specifically designed to express the Korean language. And I've been calling it “hangeul” so far, but originally it wasn't called hangeul. Originally, perhaps obviously but also somewhat ironically, it was given a name in Chinese characters known as 훈민정음 (Hunminjeongeum). And this literally means, “훈” (Hun) means to educate, “민” (min) means the people, “정” (jeong) means proper or correct, and “음” (eum) means sounds. So we could translate that as “The proper sounds for instructing the people.”

It wasn't actually called hangeul until the early 20th century by Ju Sigyeong and others in the Korean Language Research Society. And this word 한글 (hangeul) – “한” (han) is a native Korean word that means big or great and “글” (geul) is a native Korean word that means writing, so it's like “The great writing system.”

So it was invented, hangeul or Hunminjeongeum, was invented in 1443, and it was used in works such as 〈Yongbieocheonga〉, which is translated into English as 〈Songs of Flying Dragons〉. And this is actually, it's a poem, but it's sort of an epic poem that talks about the history of the Joseon Dynasty, so it talks about the ancestors of the first king of the Joseon Dynasty. And part of this project, part of the goal of this project, was to demonstrate its suitability as a writing system, so you want to show that you can write this sort of literary works that the nation would need, so it functions both as a literary work but also as a sort of historical work, a work that lends legitimacy to the dynasty. You want to just demonstrate that you don't need to use classical Chinese, necessarily.

However, despite his efforts, the system was not initially adopted by aristocratic men, because they had too much invested in the classical Chinese writing system. All of their power, basically, was based on the fact that they were fluent and literate in classical Chinese and that they had read all of the classics, that they could write in hanmun, etc. So they saw hangeul as a lower writing system, something that might be suitable for women.

And women were in fact the first major adopters of the system, specifically, aristocratic women, not commoner women necessarily. But aristocratic women used the system to write letters to their husbands, their sons, etc. And their husbands and sons when they wrote back, they would use hangeul, but they would only use it to write to their wives or their mothers, and you can even see in the Hangeul Museum here in Korea, you can see hangeul letters that were written by kings to their queens, etc. But at that time, they even called it like "women's writing," that was a term that they used for the system.

It wasn't until later on that everyone started to adopt hangeul. So it started with the aristocratic women, then it filtered down into the common people, but hanmun actually remained the official writing system of the government until the end of the 19th century, so quite a ways into the modern period. And it wasn't until after that point, when we get into the 20th century, that we really had this universal adoption of hangeul by everyone.

So, in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the development of a national identity in the face of what was going on in the world at the time, so if you remember when we talked about the history at that time, you had a lot of influence from other countries in the West, also from Japan, and as this greater influence from without was increasing, you had certain groups of people who were trying to develop a sense of national pride, a national consciousness, and this led to a greater use of hangeul over hanmun and hanja. And that was really when you started to see that switchover. You still had some people using hanmun, but throughout the first part of the 20th century, you saw the switchover to hangeul.

And today, nobody uses hanmun anymore really. Hanmun is read in academic settings. I know very few people personally who write in hanmun. I only know of one person who writes in hanmun still. But hanja, the Chinese characters themselves, you'll still often see those in signs, newspaper headlines, etc. If you go on the subway, all the names of the subway stations are written in Chinese characters as well. But the classical Chinese writing system, the writing of full works in classical Chinese, that is no longer really current in Korea today.

### • A quick note on the romanization system

So before we move on, I want to make a quick note on the romanization system that you're seeing on the screen and that I'll be using throughout this class. Many linguistic texts, so we're talking about the language today and we're drawing on a lot of that linguistic theory, and if you look at a lot of the books on the Korean language written by linguists, you'll notice that the romanization system, basically the way Korean is transcribed using English characters, is very different from the system that I'm using. The system that linguists use is called the Yale System and it's really only used in linguistics.

However, there's another system that's in use in the U.S., the United States, primarily, called the McCune-Reischauer system. So if you're in the U.S. and you've read books about Korea, you may have seen a slightly different romanization system.

The system that I am using in this class is called the Revised Romanization system, which is a system that was put out by the Korean government in 2000 and I'll be using that throughout this class. So if this looks a little different from what you've seen before, that's why. I just wanted to mention that very briefly before we move on.

## 4. A Brief Study of Hangeul and Korean Phonology

So next, I want to dive a little bit deeper into hangeul itself. And naturally that is going to also entail a dive into Korean phonology, or the way that Korean is pronounced, so I'm going to show you a little bit about how hangeul works as an alphabet, and also the way that the different characters, the different letters, are pronounced.

### • Hangeul as a featural alphabet

So hangeul is sometimes called a featural alphabet. And what this means is, it is an alphabet – so, an alphabet is a writing system that represents both consonants and vowels – but it's called featural because the letters are not arbitrary. So, for example, in English if you have the letter "a," if you look at the letter "a" here, the shape of this letter has nothing to do with the way that it's pronounced. However, in Korean, the shapes of the letters, the way the letters are written, are somewhat related to these phonological features, the way that the characters are pronounced. And I'll get into that in more detail as we talk about the individual letters.

### • Vowels

So, starting off with the vowels. The vowels are formed according to what is known as the Heaven-

Earth-Human principle. 天地人 (천지인)/Cheon-ji-in), and these are the Chinese characters for heaven, earth and human. So, heaven, and this is something that is common throughout East Asia, heaven is thought of as being represented by a circular shape. So the little dot represents heaven. Earth, well, earth is round, but when we're standing on it, it looks relatively flat. So Earth is represented by the flat line. And human beings, as they stand upright on the earth, is represented by the vertical line. So if you take these three elements, you take the dot, you take the horizontal line, you take the vertical line, and you combine them in various ways, you can basically get all of the different vowel shapes that are used for Korean.

So if you look at the table here on the screen right now, this is a table that shows us all of the different vowels, and you'll see the vertical lines, the horizontal lines, and you won't see any dots but if you see those short horizontal lines, those are the circles. In modern times, they are written as short horizontal lines or short vertical lines and this primarily comes from the use of brushes to write the characters, they get sort of extended. But if you look at some older texts, you may sometimes see the use of dots instead of these short lines. But I'll go through these really quickly.

If you look at the top row of the table here, if you want, as I pronounce these characters, you can try to practice and say them along with me. I'll just go through them relatively slowly. If you want, you can always rewind and try it again.

So on the left, we start with ㅓ, ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅓ, ㅗ, ㅗ, and ㅜ. And those are your basic vowels. And you can see how they're sort of in pairs here – ㅓ and ㅓ, ㅏ and ㅏ, ㅓ and ㅓ are a little bit special, they don't have a pair. ㅗ and ㅜ are a pair as well.

And if you go down to the second row, you'll see that they look very similar, but they have the addition of one stroke. So instead of ㅓ you have ㅓ, from ㅓ you get ㅕ, from ㅓ you get ㅕ, from ㅓ you get ㅕ, ㅗ goes to ㅕ and ㅜ goes to ㅕ. So these are what we call the y-glides. And basically, you add a "y" in front of the vowel and you get a new vowel form. So in English, the "y" is considered a consonant. But in Korean, the y sound is considered to be part of the vowel.

The last row on the bottom is what we called the w-glides, so if you imagine you add a "w" to the front of the vowel sound. So ㅓ would be ㅚ, ㅏ -> ㅕ, ㅓ -> ㅕ, ㅓ -> ㅕ, ㅓ -> ㅕ, and then the last two don't really fit necessarily with the other sounds, that's why they're in a different color. So you have ㅚ and ㅟ.

So yeah, if you want to practice the sounds, I'd recommend you rewind or go back to the beginning and you can practice them with me as I say them. One thing I will note is that you'll notice that there are a lot of circles here in addition to the vertical lines, the horizontal lines and the different strokes. That circle there, in this case, functions as a null consonant. So, in other words, if it's just a vowel, you put the circle in front of it or on top of it. And that indicates that there's no consonant. And I'll come back to this when we talk about the consonants, how the consonants are formed.

So just a few quick notes on the pronunciation. I know that one of these characters tends to be a little difficult to pronounce and that is the ㅗ character. So if you're having difficulty with the ㅗ sound, an easy trick is to make the mouth shape for ㅓ. So, say ㅓ with me, ㅓ. And then keeping your mouth the same shape, try to pronounce the ㅗ sound. So don't round your lips. ㅓ, ㅓ, ㅗ, and then you get the ㅗ sound there. So if you're having trouble with that, that's a good trick for getting started.

I'll also note that the sounds for 애, ㅏ + ㅣ, 애, ㅓ + ㅣ, and then if you go down at the bottom and you see 왜, 웨 and 오, those sounds are very similar, but older speakers in particular will draw a distinction between the three. If you hear younger speakers speak, those sounds will often sound very similar. So if you have difficulty telling them apart, don't worry about it.

### • Vowel harmony

So that's the basic vowels. I mentioned before the idea of vowel harmony, though. So I want to talk about that a little bit more. The vowel sounds for ㅏ and ㅓ are known as 양 (yang) vowels. If you're familiar with the yin and yang, in Korean "yin" is "음" (eum) and "yang" is "양" (yang). So 양 represents the bright, the warm aspect. And ㅓ and ㅗ are considered the 양 vowels. ㅏ, ㅓ, and ㅗ, considered the cooler or the darker sounds, the 음 sounds. And if you say them as well, ㅏ, ㅓ, they sound brighter than ㅓ, ㅓ and ㅗ. Those sound a little bit darker. And then you have the neutral sound, ㅣ is the neutral.

So what does this mean when we say that there is vowel harmony? Well that means that, if you look back at the chart, you can have vowels like 왜, ㅓ + ㅏ, and you can have vowels like 웨 or you can have vowels like 왜 and 오, but you can't add ㅓ and ㅏ, you can't add ㅓ and ㅏ to make a vowel. So you don't see those on the chart because those don't fit in with vowel harmony.

There's another aspect of this nature of the vowels being either light or dark and that comes into play in what I mentioned before as well, which was sound symbolism. And this is important for those mimetic words, what in Korean are known as uiseong-eo and uitae-eo. "Uiseong-eo" are words that mimic the sound. "Uitae-eo" are words that mimic the appearance of something.

So, the light yang vowels are for light things and the eum, the heavy vowels, are for heavy things. To give you a quick example, one of the mimetic words that is used in Korean is the word "팔팔" (palpal) for a boiling substance. So if you have a small amount of liquid on the stove that is boiling, you would say "팔팔팔팔팔팔" (palpalpalpalpal). It's boiling. You get that light boiling sound. If you have a larger amount of liquid, you have a great big cauldron that's boiling, that might be going "펄펄" (peolpeol). So 팔팔 versus 펄펄. You have a lighter versus a heavier, smaller versus a bigger.

You're familiar with the nursery rhyme "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." In Korean, that song is known as "반짝 반짝 작은 별" and "반짝 반짝" (banjjak banjjak) is the sound used for the twinkling of something small, like a little star. If it's something that is flashing, something that's much bigger, maybe flashing a little bit more slowly or a little more, what shall we say, gravely, I'm not sure, we might say "번쩍" (beonjjeok), "번쩍 번쩍" (beonjjeok beonjjeok). A little star goes 반짝 반짝, something that's flashing, something that's very big, we'd go, 번쩍 번쩍.

The same thing for blinking, when you blink your eyes for example. If you just blink really quickly, "깜박 깜박" (ggambak ggambak), just the ㅏ sound. If you're blinking slowly, you'd be going "껌뻑 껌뻑" (ggeombeok ggeombeok). So the use of the different vowels, even though it's the same word, you just change the vowel sound and that changes the feeling of the word, whether it feels light or whether it feels heavy, whether it feels small or whether it feels big. So that's a very interesting aspect and something that's very fun about the Korean language. Those words can be very fun to use.

## • Consonants

So, moving onto the consonants. The basic consonants reflect the phonological features. This is partly where the idea of hangeul being a featural alphabet comes from. The specific phonological feature that's represented in consonants is the place of articulation, or the mouth shape, in other words. So, not all of the consonants are like this. We'll look at the chart in a moment and we'll get into some of the details. But some of the basic consonants, for example the ㅁ (ㅁ읠; mieum) consonant, you can see it looks like a box. This represents the two lips. The character that looks like a box also happens to be the Chinese character for mouth, so that helps as well. But sounds that are made, sounds that are called bilabial, two lips, like [m] or [b], those are bilabial sounds. Those are represented in that shape that stands for the two lips.

You also have alveolar shapes, so where the tongue, the tip of your tongue, will touch the alveolar ridge, or basically that is the ridge in your mouth behind where your tooth sockets are. If you feel the inside of your mouth, you'll feel this ridge there right behind where the back of your teeth are. If you do that now, you can feel that. And when your tongue touches that you get the [n] sounds. Also the [d] sounds. So the shape of the ㄴ (ㄴ읠; nieun) character represents the tongue going up there and touching that alveolar ridge.

The ㅅ (ㅅ읠; siot) character that sort of looks like, well it sort of looks like the character for a human being, but it represents the tongue nearly touching the alveolar ridge. So these are your sibilant sounds, where [s], you have the air that goes through that space. It represents the tongue going up but not quite touching.

The ㄱ (ㄱ의; giyeok) vowel (\*consonant). You see, it almost looks like the ㄴ (ㄴ읠; nieun) character but just flipped over. So you see how the back of the character sort of rises up and that represents the back of the tongue rising up against the soft palate. So when you say letters like g or k, you have sort of the back or the middle of your tongue rising up against the soft palate. That shape is represented there as well.

And then lastly you have the ㅇ (ㅇ읠; yieung) character, that circle that I was talking about. This has changed over time, but it was supposed to represent the open throat. And this holds true for ㅎ (ㅎ읠; hieut), which looks like the ㅇ with a hat on top of it, but these days the ㅇ character is not distinguished as it was in the past. There used to be distinction between what we call the null consonant and the actual ㅇ character, there was a difference with whether there was a line on top or not. That distinction is no longer made in Korean. But the [ŋ] is articulated very similarly to ㄱ (ㄱ의; giyeok), but originally this was related to a different set of consonants. It's a bit complicated and we won't get into it because it's not really related to modern Korean.

So, you start off with these basic shapes. And then in order to get the other characters, the principle, according to the designers of the writing system, was to add strokes to create the remaining consonants. So you start off with the ㅁ (ㅁ읠; mieum) and then you add some strokes to get ㅂ (ㅂ읠; bieup), ㅍ (ㅍ읠; pieup), ㅃ (ㅃ이; ssangbieup). And then you start off with ㄴ (ㄴ읠; nieun) and then you add strokes to that to get the other characters. ㅅ (ㅅ읠; siot) you add strokes on top or you double them. ㄱ (ㄱ의; giyeok) you add strokes or double, etc. And then with ㅇ (ㅇ이; yieung) originally there were other consonants in there that we no longer use, but these days the only other consonant that comes from that

is the ㅎ (ㅎ|읕; hieut) consonant.

So if we look at the chart here, this is the consonant chart. You can see that I've arranged these in a particular way. The ㄹ (리을; rieul), the L/R character, L/R letter, and the ㄴ (\* ㅇ; ㆁ|읕/yieung), the ng letter, are colored differently because they don't quite fit into the scheme, but they had to go somewhere so I just put them here. But there is a rhyme and a reason to the placing of the rest of them. So you'll notice that you have the ㅁ (미음; mieum) character, the one that represents the two lips. And then you add the strokes, if you go down that column, those are all related to that character. They're related both in sound and in their appearance. So again, that's a relation that we can point to when we talk about hangeul being a featural alphabet.

The same thing with ㄴ (나은; nieun). You add some strokes to that and all of these characters are related because of their sound and their place of articulation. The mouth shape is the same. The same thing with ㅅ (시옷; siot), you double the ㅅ to go from [s] to [ss], a very strong s sound. You get the [ㅈ], [ㅊ], [ㅉ], and same thing with ㄱ (기역; giyeok) at the end there. And then ㅎ (ㅎ|읕; hieut) is all there by itself. Originally, it was associated with the ㆁ (ㆁ|읕; yieung) character, but in terms of articulation, ㆁ is similar to the ㄱ character, so that's why I've placed it there.

And the other important thing to notice. So we've looked at the columns. If you look at the rows, those indicate the methods of articulation. So, the lax consonants are your normal pronunciations. So if we start at the left, you have [ㅂ], [ㄷ], [ㄴ], [ㅈ], [ㄱ]. Aspirated consonants is you take that sound and you put a puff of air behind it, [ㅍ], [ㅌ], [ㅋ], [ㅊ], [ㅎ]. And then the last row on the bottom is the tense sounds, you make a very tense sound and release it without that puff of air, [ㅃ], [ㄸ], [ㅆ], [ㅉ], [ㄲ]. So you can see how it fits very nice and neatly into this form here in terms of how the characters, how the letters are created, and also in terms of the articulation.

### • Different theories on the invention of hangeul

So what I described to you above is the historical theory that a lot of Korean linguists and scholars described to you today. And this was a theory that was described in the texts that were written to accompany Hunminjeongeum, when it was first created.

There are some modern theorists who argue against these theories. So for example, Gari Ledyard believes that Sejong was inspired by something that is known as the 'Phags-pa script. This was named after a monk, a Buddhist monk, called 'Phags-pa, who was, he served under Kublai Khan actually, and he created the script to be used with Mongolian. So, there are different ideas about whether did King Sejong really come up with this all by himself, did he really come up with this according to the shape of the mouth. Scholars have disagreements about that.

However I think that most scholars would agree, Gari Ledyard himself agreed, that the invention of hangeul was a very great achievement, and even if Sejong was influenced by other languages, he was a very learned king, he was known for being a very educated and learned king. So he would have known about these other writing systems like 'Phags-pa. It's not surprising that he would have been influenced by them. He was also very familiar obviously with classic Chinese. So he would have been influenced by

that as well. Regardless of the influences though, it was a very great achievement to be able to come up with a system. No matter where it came from, that was suitable to the pronunciation and writing of the Korean language, something that didn't exist before.

So whether we can say it was invented out of whole cloth, out of thin air? Probably not. There were definitely influences. But it was still a great achievement and this is something that remains a great achievement today, and something that a lot of Koreans are very proud of having this very scientific writing system.

### • The methods of articulation and sound symbolism

So as I mentioned before, when we're looking at the chart, those methods of articulation, the lax articulation, the aspirated articulation, the tense articulation, those are similarly important in terms of sound symbolism, as the vowels are important, something we talked about the light or the heavy nature of the vowels. Those ways that the consonants are articulated have a similar effect on words, and how they are perceived.

So basically what we can say is the progression from a lax vowel, to a tense vowel, to an aspirated vowel, represents a strengthening of the impression given by a word. So I give you an example. The one of the mimetic words for spinning around, for example, would be “빙빙” (bingbing). And “빙빙” is using the lax vowel. If you want to make that sound a little more intense, you might say “뻔뻔” (bbbingbbing). If you want to make it sound really intense, you would use aspirated vowel “펑펑” (pingping). So this might describe spinning around slowly, spinning around little bit faster, and then spinning around really really fast. So it's sort of intensifies the feeling.

Similarly if you're striking a hard object, like if you're taking a hammer to something, you might say “똑딱” (ddukddak). “똑딱”, it sort of represents knocking of the hammer. If you want to make it a little more intense “툭탁” (tuktak). “툭탁”. Similarly for the creaking or grating of a, say you're opening a metal gate, and it creaks or door grates, it might go “비거덕” (bigeodeok). “비거덕.” If you want to make that more intense, you go from “비거덕” to “삐거덕” (bbigeodeok). “삐거덕.” And you'll notice how the vowel sound becomes a little more intense.

So this idea of sound symbolism is affected by both the vowels and by the consonants. And that's represented in the mimetic language which, as I mentioned before. And as you can see in these examples here, it has a lot of fun. So if you're learning Korean, I hope you're having fun with that.

### • The syllabic structure and pronunciation

So we've talked about the vowels, we've talked about the consonants, what they look like and how they're formed, and the next step is how do we put them together to make syllables? Because in addition to being a featural alphabet, hangeul is also syllabic, so it puts together those letters in syllable blocks.

And there's a number of different possibilities. The simplest possibility is just to have a vowel. So every syllable must have at least a vowel, starts with that. Then in addition to that, you can add a

consonant to the front of it, so you can have consonant + vowel, and you can have a consonant at the end of it as well, so you can have vowel + consonant, or you can have consonant + vowel + consonant. You have initial consonants and you have final consonants. And for the final consonants there's an option to have double consonants as well. So that's a little bit of a rarer occurrence, but it does happen. But that vowel is sort of the seed for everything, that's the key. You have to have a vowel and then you can add consonants either before and or after to make the syllables.

So to give you some examples, and again you've seen these syllable blocks already when did the vowels. Because if you have just a vowel, in order to make a syllable block, you add the circle, you add the ㅇ character. So here are some words in Korean that consist of just vowels. 우유 (uyu), 우유. That's the word for milk, and it has the 우 vowel and it has the y-glide version of that, the woo. And you can see both of those vowels with the null consonant on the top, the circle on the top. Another word would be 이의 (yiui), 이의. And this means to have a different opinion or to object to something, for example. 아예 (aye), 아예. 아예 is a little bit difficult to translate, but it means like from the very beginning or completely or something along those lines. It doesn't really translate into a single word, it just has sort of a nuance to it.

But anyway, these are examples of words that are just composed of vowels, have no consonants to them. If you complicate things a little bit, then you add an initial consonant to the vowel. So, some examples of words that have consonant + vowel would be 고기 (gogi), 고기. That's the word for meat, 나무 (namu), 나무 is the word for tree, 사과 (sagwa), 사과 is the word for, well it can mean apple, it can also mean apology, depending on what the Chinese characters are. But these you can see you have the initial consonants, so 고기, the initial ㄱ+기, ㄱ+기, 나무, ㄴ+무, ㅁ+과, 사과, ㅅ+과 and ㄱ+과 vowel.

So here's where I want to come back to something that I mentioned earlier, when I mentioned that Korean doesn't have a distinction between consonants like b and p or t and d. So, listen to 고기 again. 고기, 고기, 고기. Those two consonants probably sound a little bit different to you. Now if you ask a Korean if those consonants are different, they'll say no, it's the same consonant. And technically it is. But the difference between the initial and the medial, or consonants that come in the middle of a word, there is a slight distinction in the pronunciation.

The initial consonant, when it comes at the beginning of a word, is a little harder. It's not quite the same as an English [k], which is more aspirated, like carrot, which begins with a "c" but has the same sound, carrot, cake, you can hear that aspiration there. 고기, 고기 does not have that aspiration. So it's in between sort of a [g] and [k] in English. The medial consonant on the other hand is more of like just a regular "gi" sound. Gi, kogi, kogi. So, that's something that even though it's the same consonant, there is a slight distinction in the pronunciation. And the same thing happens for other consonants like the b/p sound, like 바보 (baboo), 바보, which means fool or idiot. 바보, it sounds a little bit like [p] and [b]. So, those are your slightly more complicated consonant + vowels.

Now, the most complicated syllable that you can get is a consonant + a vowel + a final consonant. So, to give you some examples, 강 (gang), 강. That's the word for river, or one of the meanings could be river. 책 (chaek), 책 means book. 돌 (dol), 돌 means stone. And when this final consonant and this final consonant, and I'll be using this word a lot, is known as a 뱜침 (batchim) in Korean. This "\_batchesim," "\_batchesim" means like a support, something that supports something else, like a base.

When this final consonant, or this **받침** is followed by a vowel, it's released, it sounds as normal. So if you have **갈** (gal) + **아** (a), it sounds like **가라** (gara), if you have **복** (bok) + **이** (i), it sounds like **보기** (bogi). So I say that the consonant is released. If you do not follow it with a vowel, if you just have, for example if you go back to those words, **강** (gang), **책** (chaek), **돌** (dol), notice **강**, there's no releasing of the consonant sound. **책**, **책**. You may not even be able to hear at first the [k] sound at the end there. So I'm not saying like the English word "check," "Check please!" "Check." You can hear the [k] at the end. In Korean, it's just **책**. You don't release that sound unless there's a vowel after it.

So, things get a little bit more complex when you start having consonants next to each other. So if you have a consonant followed by a vowel, pretty straightforward. But once you have the consonant, the final consonant, the batchim, and then you have an initial consonant come together, then things will get a little bit interesting.

So **받침** (batchim) is one example of that. **받** (bat), **침** (chim), **받침**. That final consonant, the **ㄷ** (디귿; digut) is going to sound a certain way. If that final consonant were a **ㅅ**, it would sound the same way. So in other words, consonants that have the same place of articulation sound the same when they're not released. So, **ㅂ** (비읍; bieup), **ㅍ** (피읍; pieup), **ㅆ** (쌍비읍; ssangbieup), they all sound the same as final consonants. **ㄷ**, **ㅅ**, **ㅈ** (ㅈ읁; jieut), **ㅌ** (ㅌ읁; tieut), **ㅊ** (ㅊ읁; chieut), **ㄸ** (쌍디귿; ssangdigeut), **ㅉ** (쌍지읁; ssangjieu), **ㅆ** (쌍지읁; ssangjieu) and even **ㅎ** as well. They all sound the same. **ㄱ**, **ㅋ** (ㅋ읁; kieuk), **ㄲ** (쌍기읁; ssanggyeok), these all sound the same as well.

To give you an example, I'll just put some words on the screen here. 낫다, 낫다. You see the **ㅅ** at the bottom there. 낫다. You see a different consonant there, you see the **ㅈ** at the bottom. 낫다. That's a different consonant as well. But they're all pronounced the same because they're not released, so they have the same sound as **받침**.

When this **받침** sound meets a nasal or liquid consonant, then it transforms. So, for example, it's easier to describe with examples, **합** (hap), **니** (ni), **다** (da), **합, 니, 다**. This is a formal word ending. It's a verb that means to do. So, if you say this not as three separate syllables, but you say it together, **합니다** becomes **함니다** (hamnida). **합니다** → **함니다**. **갔** (gat), **나** (na), **갔나**. This is a question form of the verb "to go." **갔나** sounds like **간나** (ganna), **간나**. **작** (jak), **문** (mun), **작문** means like writing composition. **작문** becomes **장문** (jangmun). So you have this sort of elision of sounds, if it's followed by a liquid or a nasal sound, then those final consonants become liquid or nasal sounds themselves.

So, in the case of the liquid consonant, the **ㄹ** consonant, when I say liquid consonant, basically I'm referring to an [l]. The [l] becomes an [n] sound. So, **폭** (pok) **력** (ryeok), **폭력** is the way that it's written in Korean. This means violence, by the way. But it's pronounced **蓬력** (pongnyeok), **蓬력**. So the **ㄱ** sound becomes the **ㅇ** and then the **ㄹ** becomes the **ㄴ**. So what looks like **폭력** is actually pronounced **蓬력**.

And an important thing to note in modern Korean, or modern South Korean at any rate, North Korean is a little bit different, in modern South Korean, this liquid [l] cannot begin a word. So it's either going to be transformed into a **ㄴ**, like the "래" (rae) character or the "란" (ran) character, **내란** (naeran), **난리** (nalli). It's transformed into a null consonant, in other words a vowel. Like **손녀** (sonnyeo). **녀** (nyeo) is the character for woman. At the beginning of **여자** (yeoja), you don't get that [n] sound. For loan words like **라면** (ramyeon) or **라디오** (radio), it's not an [l] it's a flat [r]. So the "ㄹ,"

that character, that letter, I should say, is a little bit unique in modern South Korean. North Korean is different. North Korean has words that begin with the ㄹ sound, so there is that distinction between North and South Korean.

Another change that happens is if you have a lax consonant that is followed by the ㅎ, the [h] sound, it becomes aspirated. So 뽑 (bbop), 히 (hi), 다 (da) becomes 뽑피다 (bbopida). 뽑히다 becomes 뽑피다. So that's another change that happens.

And then when you add the ㄹ, the [l] sound plus the [n] together, they become a double ㄹ. A very famous holiday in Korea is 설날 (seollal), 설날. It's written as 설 (seol), 날 (nal), but it's pronounced 설랄 (seollal). We also talked about Silla, the Silla Kingdom, right? Silla is written 신 (sin), 라 (la), it's pronounced 실라 (silla) because when you have those two characters meet, they become the double [l] sound.

So that's probably a lot to digest, but just to give you an example of the way that Korean is pronounced when it's written in hangeul, it's not... it doesn't always sound the way that it looks. Especially when you have a final consonant and an initial consonant in the next symbol. When they come together, that's when you need to be careful. There's a lot of these different rules about how the pronunciation changes. So, if you're new to Korean, that's probably going to be a little bit confusing and a little bit much to digest. If you're learning Korean now, you're probably nodding your head and saying, "yup." But, trust me, you get used to it very quickly. This discussion really is just to introduce you to some of the intricacies and some of the complexities. I don't expect you to have mastered it. But later on, if I'm talking about Silla, for example, and you see "신라" on the screen, now you know why I'm saying "실라" and not "신라."

## 5. Social and Cultural Aspects of the Korean Language

Okay, so, lastly, I want to talk a little bit about some of the social and cultural aspects perhaps of the Korean language. Move away from the weeds a little bit. So as you probably know, if you speak a language, which, hopefully you speak English at least, all languages allow for different ways of talking to people depending on your relationship with them. So, even in English, I would talk to my friends differently from the way that I would talk to someone I was meeting for the first time or someone who's my superior, that sort of thing. Korean, however, has certain aspects of this baked into the language, and I'll explain what I mean by that.

### • Types of politeness

We'll start off with a quick discussion of politeness. Types of politeness. And we can divide politeness into two basic types.

The first type of politeness is strategic politeness, also known as pragmatic politeness. So this is politeness using certain strategies. So, there are linguistic strategies that you can use to be polite or to develop a relationship with someone. One example would be what we call phatic expressions. A “phatic expression” is an expression that doesn’t necessarily impart information, but it maintains the goodwill between two people. So, if you’re listening to someone and they say something interesting and you say, “You don’t say.” You’re not literally telling the person that they didn’t just say that, but you’re just responding in a way that’s like “Oh yes, I’m interested in what you’re saying.” So that would be an example of a phatic expression. Sometimes, even “How’s it going?” “How’s it going?” can be a phatic expression because have you ever asked someone “How’s it going?” and then they start to reply with a very detailed explanation of how it’s going, and then it gets a little bit awkward because you weren’t actually interested in how it was going. You’re just, “How’s it going?” It’s a greeting that you use. You’re starting the conversation, you are sort of entering into this relationship, this dialogic relationship with the person.

Other strategies are intonation, the way that you speak, the way that you use the tone in your words. These are all different strategies that you can use to be polite. And there’s other versions of that as well, certain words that are used etc.

The second type of politeness though, and this is where the Korean system comes in, is what is known as normative politeness. So this is the sort of politeness that is embedded in the language. I referred to it earlier as “speech protocol,” sometimes it’s also called “honorifics,” probably more commonly known as “honorifics.” But “speech protocol” is probably a more accurate term because it encompasses both reverential speech and also very familiar speech as well.

So, if we call it “speech protocol,” speech protocol in Korean depends on the relative positions of the people in the conversation as far as the social hierarchy goes. And this is one example why the hierarchy is inescapable in Korea. So, whenever you talk to someone, and this might seem a little bit overwhelming at first, but you have to consider a number of things. A) You have to consider your relative position in the hierarchy. B) You have to consider the relative position of the person you are speaking to. And you have to also consider sometimes the position of the person you are speaking about. And I’ll come back to this with some examples a little bit later on.

However, there are some exceptions to this in Korean, believe it or not. And one exception, one very interesting exception in modern South Korean society, is some online communities. So there are online communities where familiar informal speech is universal and in fact enforced. If you go into this community and you use honorific speech, the moderators will come along and chastise you, so you have to use informal speech, or *banmal*, with everyone. It’s a way of sort of equalizing the playing field and it works because in an online setting, people are sort of anonymous. You don’t know who the other person is.

But outside of settings like that, in normal face-to-face or even online settings over Zoom, etc., in situations like that, the hierarchy is very important. You always have to be aware of everyone’s position in order to figure out what sort of language you’re going to be using with this person.

### • The specifics of the honorific speech

So, specifically, how does this work? You want to know. There are many different parts of this. And they can be sort of divided into categories. For example, subject honorifics. These are the honorifics when you are expressing deference to the subject of an utterance. So for example if you're asking someone to do something or if you're making a sentence where that person is the subject of the sentence. Grammatically, so in terms of the grammar, there is the suffix that we use, the **시** (si) suffix, which sometimes changes to **세** (se). So the verb "to give" is **주다** (juda), **주다**. If we use the honorific version of that, it's **주세요** (juseyo), **주세요**. **오다** (oda) means to come → **오세요** (oseyo). So if you invite someone to your house and you want to speak honorifically, you would say "**오세요.**" "**우리 집으로 오세요.**" There's also the postparticle **께서** (ggeseo). So, each subject has a particle after it and if you want to use the honorific version, you would use "**께서.**" That's just some ways that the subject is being honored.

In terms of the lexical options that you have, lexical basically refers to the words that you use, there are special nouns that are used honorifically. So **말** (mal) means speech or talk, you would instead say "**말씀**" (malsseum) instead of "**말**." **밥** (bap) is, it literally means rice but it means food or meal, **진지** (jinji) is the honorific version of that. If you ask someone their name, if you're being familiar, you could say, "What is your **이름** (ireum)?" "**이름이 뭐예요?**" But if you want to be honorific, you would say "**성함**" (seongham), "**성함**." So if you go out to a restaurant, they'll ask you your "**성함**" not your "**이름**." And **나이** (nai), for example, means age. You wouldn't ask someone their "**나이**," you would say "**연세**" (yeonse). "What is their **연세**?" "**연세가 어떻게 되세요?**" These words are used for both subject and object. They're not limited to subject necessarily, but these are some examples of that. Verbs as well. The verb "to be," **있다** (itdda), to be somewhere, **계시다** (gyesida) is the honorific form. The verb "to eat," **먹다** (meokdda), **잡수시다** (jabssusida) is the honorific form. "To sleep" is **자다** (jada), but honorifically you would say "**주무시다**" (jumusida). Even "to die," **죽다** (jukdda) means "to die," but you wouldn't use that if you want to be deferential to the person. You would say "**돌아가시다**" (doragasida). "**돌아가시다**" literally means to return to where someone came from.

And you also have terms of address, like what you call people. One interesting aspect of speech protocol in Korean is that names are often not used. They're generally only used between close friends. Usually, you're going to use a title instead, like **선배님** (seonbaenim), which means your senior, someone who's older than you, **선생님** (seonsaengnim) is your teacher, **어르신** (eoreusin) is someone who's older. If you look in a dictionary for "you," you may find **당신** (dangsin) which does mean "you," but you have to be careful using that sort of word because it can be a little bit rude depending on how you use it. There's other words for you, like **자기** (jagi), **자네** (jane), **너** (neo), so all of those depend on your relationship with that person. Probably the easiest way of referring to someone, if you have a relatively equal relationship but you still want to be polite, is to use **씨** (ssi). "**누구누구 씨,**" "**민정씨,**" something like that. It's just a polite way of referring to someone, but it's not super honorific.

So in terms of object honorifics, when you want to be deferential to the object of an utterance. In terms of the postparticle, for example, for the subject we had "**께서**," for the object we would have **께** (gge). This is the particle that you would put on the end of an object. The nouns, similar to what we mentioned before, you would use the same sort of nouns. "**말씀**" instead of **말**, "**진지**" instead of **밥**,

that sort of thing. But there are different forms of the verbs, so you have subject honorific forms of verbs and you have object honorific forms of verbs. So 주다 (juda) would become 드리다 (deurida). 데리다 (derida) which means to take someone with you, for example, is 모시다 (mosida). To see someone, to meet someone, 보다 (boda), becomes 뵙다 (boepda). To ask someone a question, 묻다 (mutdda) means to ask, you would say “여쭈다” (yeojjuda) or “여쭙다” (yeojjupdda). Those words are very similar. You would use the similar terms of address, 선생님, 선배님, etc.

And finally, you have the counterpart honorifics. So, right now, up until this point, we've talked about the subject and the object of the sentence. But your counterpart, in other words, the person you are speaking to, they may not necessarily be part of the sentence, but you still want to express deference to them. And grammatically speaking, that's pretty simple. You add the **요** (yo) suffix at the end of it. Or, in very formal situations, you might add the **옵니다** (eumnida), **습니다** (seumnida) suffix at the end.

So, bringing all these things together, you might have to use one, two, or all of these different honorific particles, etc., words, depending on the situation. So, for example, if you are talking about your friend with another friend, so you're all friends, than you would use familiar language. So you would say, if you're asking your friend, “Did the other friend leave?” “걔 갔어?” “걔 갔어?” Very simple. All banmal. You don't use honorifics for anybody.

If, however, you're talking about your professor with your friend, you might say, “선생님 가셨어?” “선생님 가셨어?” So using “선생님,” that's the honorific title of address, “가셨어?” is the “시” particle in there. But you're not using “요” at the end, because you're still talking to your friend.

But then if you're talking about your professor with another professor, you might say, “누구누구 선생님 가셨어요?” So now you want to use the “요” particle in there. So those are all the same sentence, basically. But depending on who you're talking to, who you're talking about, how those people relate to you, you would use different words, different forms of verbs etc. And that's one of the trickiest things to get a handle on, I think, when people first start to learn Korean.

### • Softening strategies

But I talked about strategies earlier, and there are other strategies that you can use that include honorifics, but they soften the word through the use of certain ways of phrasing things. So I'll just give you some quick examples. If you wanted to ask someone, or tell someone to close the door. So if you're telling someone to close the door, the very simplest way to do that, and when I say simple here, this also means sort of the most brusque, and it might be rude in certain situations, but if you're talking to your friend for example, a good friend, you might say, “문 닫아.” “문 닫아.” “Close the door.” “문” → “door,” “닫아” → “Close.” If you want to soften that a little bit, you want to make it more of a request than a command, you say “문 닫아줘.” “문 닫아줘.” If you add the “주다” verb, which means to give, at the end, that turns it into a request. You can soften it even further, “문 좀 닫아줘.” “문 좀 닫아줘.” “좀” is sort of a difficult word to translate, but in this case it operates as a softening. It can mean “a little” or “a bit,” but it softens the sentence here, “문 좀 닫아줘.” Now these are all sentences you would use when speaking to a friend, when you don't need to use honorifics.

However, if you want to use the honorific, “문 닫으세요.” “문 닫으세요”. Now this can still be a little bit rude because it’s a command, right? You’re using “-시다,” “-시,” “-세요,” and you’re using the “요,” but it’s still a command. So, if you want to make it a request, you would say, “문 닫아주세요.” “문 닫아주세요.” Again, you can add the “좀,” “문 좀 닫아주세요.” If you wanted to make it even more polite, it’s already a request, but you can make an even politer request, you could say, “문 닫아주시겠어요?” “문 닫아주시겠어요?” This would be similar in English to something like, “Would you close the door?” and similar, “문 좀 닫아주시겠어요?”

Now if you wanted to be really polite, you might say something like “실례합니다만 혹시 문 좀 닫아주실 수 있을까요?” Now notice how that got a lot longer. “실례합니다만” means something like “Excuse me.” “혹시” → “You wouldn’t happen to be able to close the door for me, would you?” Something along those lines. If we were to use an English version of this, we might say, “Sorry to bother you, but I was wondering if you might be able to close the door for me.” Now, it’s a very simple command or request, “Close the door.” But we’ve added a lot of different elements to it to make it more polite.

So, in Korean and in English, we all have these strategies, but the difference between the two is that some of these strategies in Korean are, again, baked into the language. They are part of the language itself. So, if you remember one thing about all of this, remember this. It’s that, whenever you’re talking to someone, you always have to think about your relationship with that person and the way that you fit into the world around you in order to figure out what sort of language you can use with that person.

## 6. Closing

So, I hope you got something from today’s class. We talked a little bit about the language, we talked about hangeul, we talked about how the language is used in society. I want to leave you with one famous saying from King Sejong, the inventor of hangeul. He’s purported to have said, “A wise man can learn it (learn hangeul) in a morning. Even a fool can learn it in ten days.”

So, we didn’t quite have a morning, we had significantly less than that, but hopefully this was enough to give you a start in at least having an appreciation for hangeul and having a little more of an appreciation for the Korean language and how it is used, and hopefully throughout the rest of the class, when I come back and I use the Korean language when I’m discussing certain aspects of Korean culture, hopefully you’ll be able to come back to this and maybe you can even review this if you want a refresher for it.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. Ancient Korean was separated into northern and southern languages, and contemporary Korean descends from the southern languages. (T/F)

Answer:

T

2. Because Korea is a relatively small country, it does not have dialects. (T/F)

Answer:

F

3. There is no difference in spelling between the Korean used in South and North Korea. (T/F)

Answer:

F

4. When you change yin vowels to yang vowels in Korean onomatopoeias, it creates a smaller and brighter feeling. (T/F)

Answer:

T

5. Because the shapes of consonants and vowels reflect phonological features and are not arbitrary, hangeul is categorized as a featural alphabet. (T/F)

Answer:

T

### Multiple choice (5 minutes)

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the Korean language system?

- a. The Altaic hypothesis, which states that Korean belongs to the Altaic family of languages, and the language isolate hypothesis are both theories that exist about Korean language.
- b. A lot of Korean vocabulary has been heavily influenced by Chinese.
- c. In regard to sentence structure, Korean is more similar to Chinese than it is to Japanese.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Korean sentence structure?

- a. Unlike English, Korean syntax is subject-object-verb.
- b. In Korean, it is very rare to omit the subject or object of a sentence.
- c. In English, the verbs branch out to the right, whereas in Korean, they branch out to the left.

Answer: b

3. Which of the following is an accurate statement about hangeul?

- a. Aristocratic men actively used hangeul because they considered it an advanced writing system.
- b. Aristocratic women used hangeul to write letters to their husbands and sons.
- c. After the invention of hangeul, all official documents of the royal court were written in it.

Answer: b

4. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Korean pronunciations?

- a. Korean pronunciation of Chinese characters is thought to have developed from the Chinese pronunciations during the Sui and Tang dynasties.
- b. In Korean, the same consonant is always pronounced the same regardless of its location in a word.
- c. In Korean, there is no equivalent to the English f, v, and th sounds.

Answer: b

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the social and cultural aspects of Korean?

- a. In Korean, it is common to refer to superiors using titles instead of their names.
- b. By using specific particles, nouns, and verbs, you can honor the person you are speaking with.
- c. You can always use the Korean word “당신” when referring to someone in the second person.

Answer: c

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank(s) with the appropriate word(s).

1. In order to write Korean before the invention of hangeul, people sometimes used \_\_\_\_\_, which used both methods of reading Chinese characters based on either their sound or their meaning. Poems written with this were called hyangga.

Answer: hyangchal

2. In the middle of the 15th century, King Sejong and his scholars invented a new writing system for the Korean language and called it \_\_\_\_\_, which means “the proper sounds for instructing the people.”

Answer: Hunminjeongeum

3. Hangeul vowels were based on the shapes of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer: heaven, earth, human (order not important)

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Explain the limitations of the writing systems used to record the Korean language before the invention of hangeul and briefly explain the significance of hangeul’s invention.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Using specific examples, compare another language with Korean in terms of syllables, pronunciation, syntax, and sociocultural characteristics.

## 〈Lecture 3〉

# Korean Religion

### – From Native Beliefs to Foreign Creeds

#### Class Goals

1. Learn about the main ideas and history of shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Donghak in Korea
2. Understand how Koreans accepted foreign creeds and established religious communities in their society
3. Gain an insight into the interaction between native and foreign religions in Korean society

#### Summary

In this class, we learned about the main ideas and the history of native and foreign religions in Korea.

Korean shamanism features internal trance. Shamans are classified into possessed shamans and hereditary shamans. Artistic elements are found in the reception stage of *gut*, or shamanic rituals. Shamanism was persecuted during the Joseon and colonial period. Negative views on shamanism have begun to change over several decades.

Buddhism is based on the concept of four noble truths. Buddhism was introduced to Korea during the Three Kingdoms period. Silla monks Wonhyo and Uisang contributed to deepening philosophical Buddhism. Seon Buddhism was brought to Korea as early as the 6th century and *ganhwa seon* meditation was developed in the Goryeo period.

Catholicism was first studied as a part of “Western Learning.” 1784 marks the starting point for Catholicism in Korea, when Yi Seunghun was baptized in Beijing. As Catholics refused to perform ancestral rites (*jesa*), many Catholics were martyred in the mid 19th century. Protestantism emerged in

Joseon in the 1880s. A number of missionaries came to Joseon and introduced Western medicine and education. Protestantism became the largest religion by the colonial period.

Eastern Learning was founded by Choe Jeu in opposition to Western Learning. After the Donghak Peasant Revolution, Donghak went underground and reemerged as Cheondogyo in 1905. Successors of Choe introduced the concept of God existing in everyone. Donghak saw foreign powers as threat, but Cheondogyo leaders cooperated with Christian leaders in the March First Independence Movement.

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Overview

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today we're going to talk a little bit about Korean religion. And this is a bit of a tricky topic because we sort of need to start with the question of "What is religion?"

### • What is religion?

There are a lot of different definitions we could use. For example, the French anthropologist Émile Durkheim called religion "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them." Now there's some key words here that you might have heard—unified, sacred, unite, moral—that paint a very specific picture of what a religion is.

The *⟨Oxford English Dictionary⟩* on the other hand has a much simpler, much broader definition. Simply, "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods." So, we can see even in these two definitions by very respected sources that there's a lot of disagreement about what exactly a religion is, whether you define it very narrowly or whether you define it very broadly.

However, even with a perfect definition of religion, even if we did have such a definition, the line between religion and philosophy in practice is often unclear. So, for example, Buddhism, which we are going to talk about today, has both religious and philosophical strands. Confucianism, which we're going to talk about next time, is not inherently religious, but it has taken on religious aspects. Ultimately, all of the classifications and distinctions that we make are artificial and academic. So, I would advise you instead to think of this class and the next class as two parts of a connected topic. This class is talking about religion, the next class is talking about philosophy. But think of them as connected. So don't think of them as necessarily too distinct and separate.

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3. Korean Buddhism
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5. Eastern Learning
6. Closing

So, for today's class we are going to start off with Korean shamanism and then we're going to move on to talk about Buddhism and Christianity, and finally wrap things up with Donghak and Cheondogyo, and you'll recognize these different religious traditions from our history lesson, hopefully. We don't have time to cover every possible religious tradition. For example, Taoism is a tradition that has been influential on the peninsula. But we're going to focus mainly on these traditions in particular. And this class and next class hopefully will serve as an introduction to some of the important philosophies and ideas that helped shape and continue to shape Korean society.

## 2. Korean Shamanism

### • Terminology

So, starting off with Korean shamanism. The first thing we need to get out of the way is the issue of terminology. Shaman, shamanism, the word "shaman" comes from the Tungusic "saman," which comes in term from the Sanskrit term "sramana" for an ascetic, in other words someone who devotes their life to religious pursuits or ideals. This is a word that is used in many religious traditions around the world and Korean shamanism does share some similarities with those other traditions, but there are also some significant differences. So, there are a lot of people who disagree with the idea of calling Korean shamanism "shamanism." They want to use different terms.

So, what are some of the Korean terms that are used? Well, academically speaking, shamanism is generally referred to as 巫俗 (musok), which literally means shamanic customs. So the "巫" (mu) character here, this is the character that means shaman. And the "俗" (sok) character is, again I said this is an academic term, it doesn't really refer to it as a religion, it just refers to it as customs or practices or that sort of thing. It's not a term that shamans themselves would use to talk about their practice or their tradition. So, that's also a little bit problematic in terms of what we call shamanism.

The common term for shaman in Korean, mudang, is also generally not considered to be a positive term. Shamans themselves will generally prefer to call themselves mansin, or be called mansin. On Jeju Island, the term simbang is used. So, a lot of the terms that are used in Korea to talk about shamanism are terms that were created by scholars, academics, other people to talk about shamanism, but they're in anthropology or folklore what we would call etic terms, they are terms from the outside, not terms from the inside.

So, there is unfortunately no ideal terminology, but for lack of a better word, and because we are discussing this in English, I will continue to use the term "shamanism." Just be aware that it is a specific brand or specific variety of this and it might be different from other types of shamanism that you're familiar with.

### • The characteristics of Korean shamanism

So, the characteristics of shamanism. I guess the first thing we can say is that it's somewhat related to animism, but animism and shamanism are not quite the same thing. Animism is the belief that all things, living or not, so rocks, trees, etc., are imbued with spirits. So shamanism does have some animistic aspects, but they're not identical. Shamanism is more concerned with the spirit world and with the relationship with the human world, the relationship between the human world and the spirit world.

An important aspect of shamanism, an important characteristic of it, is known as the trance. And the "trance" is a state of altered consciousness, extreme altered consciousness. And there are two different types of trance, to put it very simply. There is the internal trance and the external trance. And the external trance is something that you might be familiar with in other forms of shamanism in the form of the spirit journey. So the shaman's spirit will leave his or her body and travel to another realm to solve whatever problem it is that the shaman's been called upon to address. Many varieties of shamanism in Continental Asia have this sort of trance where shamans go on spirit journeys. The internal trance, on the other hand, is a possession, where the shaman's spirit does not leave his or her body but instead another spirit enters the shaman's body. And this is the type of trance that Korean shamanism is characterized by. The shamans are possessed by other spirits.

Another important aspect of shamanism, probably the most important aspect, would be the concept of mediation. So in other words, shamans mediate between the spirit and the human world. What they are trying to do is to restore balance. Shamans are generally only called upon when the balance is out of whack, when something is not in balance, so they are trying to restore the balance to restore the harmony between the spirit and the human world. And in Korea in particular, this makes them liminal characters, they exist between the two worlds, and as a result they are often perceived as being dangerous because of their contact with the potentially harmful spirit world. However, their goal, even though they're personage themselves, they may be considered to be outsiders or inbetweeners, ultimately, their goal is to restore and maintain harmony.

Now, as far as what shamanism focuses on, the key focus of shamanism, although shamans deal with spirits, and they also deal with the spirits of the dead and perform rituals for the spirits of the dead,

shamanism in Korea is primarily concerned with the world of the living. So even rituals that are held for the dead are often held in order to maintain harmony between the spirit and the human world, in order to ensure that those who are still here and living in the human world are at peace.

So shamanism wouldn't really fit religion in terms of being the type of religion that Durkheim saw, in other words in "organized religion." There is no distinct moral community, there is no shamanic church, there are no institutions, there are no clergy other than the shamans themselves, there's no prescribed code of behavior, for example there's no ten commandments of shamanism, etc. So, it's more of a belief system and a way of thinking about the world and where humanity fits in that world. And when we say "the world," we mean including the spirit world as well. There are established places of worship, such as there are shamanic shrines for example that are dedicated to specific deities, but there's no church building per se and many shaman rituals, many shamanic rituals, are held in spaces that would otherwise not be considered sacred. So, for example, traditionally, and even today, shamanic rituals are often held in people's homes. And these spaces become sort of sacred spaces when the rituals are being held there.

### • The types of shamans in Korea

So, there are two types of shamans traditionally in Korea. You have the possessed shamans, and these ones are actually possessed by the spirits. These are known as *gangsinmu*. "Gangsin" literally means the spirit or the god comes down. Historically speaking, they're located in northwest Korea, the north of the Han River, west of the Taebaek Mountains. And they're chosen by the gods to serve and generally you know that you're chosen because you will often suffer what is known as a spiritual illness, a *sinbyeong*, and this spiritual illness will not be curable by any modern medicine. So, the only way to cure this illness is to be initiated as a shaman and you have another shaman perform that initiation ritual, which we call a *naerim-gut*, which literally means a bringing down ritual. So most of the shamans historically and even today are women, although some men are possessed shamans. There's a special term for possessed men shamans. They're called *baksu-mudang*. "Mudang" generally just refers to women because women comprise most of the shamans that are out there. These are the most common type of shaman today.

But the other type of shaman historically have been hereditary shamans, known as *seseummu*. And these are shamans where the position is handed down from generation to generation. Historically, they were located in the southeast. So, the possessed shamans were located in the northwest, the hereditary shamans were located in the southeast. They don't experience the spiritual illness, they're not possessed by the gods. It's more of a professional position. It is possible for them to be possessed, of course, but ironically, if a member of a hereditary shaman family is possessed, they're not allowed to perform the rituals. Only the non-possessed professional shamans were able to perform the rituals, and only the women were allowed, the men would perform as musicians.

So, with the collapse of the traditional status system in modern times, when we reached the end of the Joseon period and you saw the collapse of that system, the shamans were no longer confined to their low social status that they had been confined to throughout much of the history leading up to that. As

a result, you tend to see more possessed shamans now than you would see hereditary shamans because there's now greater room for social mobility.

### • The practice and art of Korean shamanism

In terms of what shaman's do, the key thing that a shaman does, in fact what defines a shaman, is the ability to perform a shamanic ritual. And these shamanic ritual are known as gut. They can be performed at shrines, like I mentioned before, but usually they're performed wherever is appropriate. So, if it's a ritual for a village, they'll be held in a public space, a communal space like a village square. If they're being held for personal reasons, they'll be held in a home. And they have a general structure where you start with the purification of the space. Again, because rarely is it being held in a specifically ritual space, you need to purify that space so the ritual can be held there. Then you would call the spirit to come, so the spirit that is going to be the focus of the ritual is called. Then you receive the spirit, so you entertain the spirit in some way. Then you make your prayers or your requests or your supplications, etc., that's the whole point of this ritual, and then once that's done you send the spirit back to where they came from. You don't want them to stay there, you want them to go back to where they belong so you can maintain the harmony between the human and the spirit world.

And the artistic parts of this ritual generally fall during the reception stage. So, if you've seen shamanic rituals before, you've probably seen that part of the ritual. There are dancing and musical elements, so they might dance with bells or other instruments. The possessed shamans, for example, will sometimes perform feats of power in order to demonstrate the power of the god that is possessing them. So, if their patron deity is a general, a general from the military in the past, they might have to demonstrate that they have the bravery or the strength of a general. And some famous examples of this are knife walking, so they'll make a sort of staircase out of knife blades and they'll walk on top of that without being hurt, they'll lift extremely heavy objects with their mouths, so they'll tie a cloth around it and they'll just lift it up with their mouths. But these are the sorts of feats that demonstrate basically that they are possessed by this actual general deity.

There's also shaman songs that shamans will sing. These are known as muga, which literally means shaman song, or bonpuri, which means, it's another word for myth, it means explanation of origins. But these are long narrative chants, poetic chants, and they tell the mythology of the god that is being worshipped or entreated here. And we don't have time today, I think, to get into details about that but when we talk about mythology, I'll come back and talk a little bit more about shamanic songs at that point.

Another important aspect of the rituals, though, is the fact that shamans often perform essentially as counselors. And this is something that gets overlooked by a lot of people. When people have a shamanic ritual performed for them, it's generally because they're having some sort of difficulty in their lives. Maybe they're grieving for a loved one that they've lost or they're overwhelmed by something that's happening in their life. So shamans actually also perform a lot of what we call emotional labor. They provide emotional support and comfort and they act as counselors for people. So that's a little bit about

what Korean shamanism is.

### • The historical attitudes toward Korean shamanism

If we look at the history of shamanism and the attitudes toward it, like we mentioned in the history lesson, Dangun was thought to have been a shamanic figure and then it continued to be important throughout the Three Kingdoms period as well. There's many mentions of shamanism there. So, it was held in relatively high regard.

But once we get into the Joseon period, then you start seeing a lot more persecution of shamans, and we'll get into the reasons why in our next class, but during the Joseon period, shamanism was really shunned and shamans were persecuted. It was also suppressed during the colonial period and it was suppressed because it was considered to be a manifestation of the native Korean spirit. So it was seen as something that was dangerous not because of its contact with the spirit world but because it was something that could be identified with the Korean identity. So, the Japanese colonial rulers suppressed it during that colonial period as well.

Even after the colonial period, during, for example, the Bak Jeong-hui administration, they had a movement to stamp out superstition known as misin-tapa. Shamanism was seen as an obstacle to modernity. It was seen as being something that was going to hold the nation back. At best, even the scholars would think of shamanism as a relic of the past as opposed to a living tradition.

However, in recent years attitudes have begun to change. Shamanism is still very much alive and well, it is not a relic of the past. There are still practicing shamans, even though the tradition is still stigmatized in many places as backward and ignorant, and there's a lot of conflict with Christianity as well. And you can see some of these attitudes in some of the recent political scandals. So you can see that there are some lingering prejudices. But shamanism is actually still alive and well and it's actually thriving online as shamans are allowed to speak with their own voices and they don't have to speak through other people. So, even though it's the oldest religious tradition on the peninsula, it's not just something that's in the past, it's something that remains very important in Korea today.

## 3. Korean Buddhism

### • The origin of Buddhism

So, moving onto Buddhism. We'll start at the beginning. And there's some disagreement about when exactly this happened. Sometime around the 5th century BCE, at any rate. You may know the story of the Indian prince Siddhartha, who took on the name Gautama later as a monk. He left the royal palace to see the world and when he was out there he saw three sights that sort of changed... well, there were things that he had never experienced before. He saw sickness, he saw aging and he saw death. And these

experiences sort of shocked him into changing his view of the world. He had, up until that point, lived a very sheltered existence.

And after he saw a wandering monk trying to achieve liberation from the sorrows of life, he was inspired. He was driven to seek enlightenment himself. So, at that time, the existing religious traditions around him taught of what we call the cycle of rebirth, or known as samsara. And these traditions all tried to reverse this cycle, because this cycle of rebirth was not considered to be a positive thing. You were continuously being reborn into this world of suffering. So the whole goal of these traditions was to try to reverse this cycle or to escape from this cycle.

But none of the traditions achieved this, at least in the eyes of the Buddha, so Guatama meditated for a week beneath a tree, as the story goes, and he achieved enlightenment. And this enlightenment, when we talk about “enlightenment,” we mean he sort of transitioned in his consciousness. His consciousness transitioned from one state to another. So once he achieved this enlightenment, he travelled to Deer Park to give his first sermon and that’s where we get the basics of Buddhism.

### • The basic teachings of Buddha

And the basics of Buddhism are more or less the same, the very fundamental principles, they’re the same in India and in China and in Korea.

Most famously, the four noble truths, which you’ve probably heard of before. If you haven’t, we’ll begin with the first noble truth of Dukkha, in Korean it’s called 고 (苦; go). It refers to unsatisfactoriness. It’s sometimes called suffering, but to be not satisfied is probably a better way of saying it. “Suffering” has a very specific meaning, but “unsatisfactory,” it just refers to a general state of mind. So, this could refer to being exposed to things that we don’t like. So, we don’t like pain, for example. We don’t like sorrow. So being exposed to that is “unsatisfactoriness.” But, also being separated from things that we do like. We can suffer in that sense as well. So we might be suffering from being unable to achieve our desires. We might be suffering because we can’t identify ourselves, we can’t figure out who we are, deep down. So that’s the first noble truth, that the state of our existence is characterized by this unsatisfactoriness, our human existence.

The second noble truth is Samudaya, 집 (集; jip) in Korean, which is sometimes called origin, it means arising together. And very simply put, this suffering, this unsatisfactoriness that we experience, has a cause. It’s not just the natural state of existence, but there’s a reason why we are in this state of unsatisfactoriness. And the reason is our desires or our cravings, which stem from our ignorance or illusions.

The third noble truth, this is where we get into the hopeful aspects of it, this is Nirodha. And this is called 멸 (滅; myeol) in Korean, often translated as cessation. So, simply put, this suffering will ultimately cease, because everything will ultimately cease, everything ceases to be in every moment. But you can achieve cessation of this suffering or unsatisfactoriness through enlightenment.

And then the last noble truth is the “how,” Magga, or 도 (道; do), the way/the path. And this is often called the eightfold path because there’s eight parts of it. And they all start off with the word

“right” or “proper.” So, you have the first part is the right view, having the right perspective on reality. Right intention, so your thinking is in accordance with that right view. Your right speech, right action, right livelihood, so what you do for a living, your occupation, your livelihood etc., is in line with all of this. Right effort, we have to make a constant effort to ward off these undesirable states of mind. Right concentration. “Right concentration” is sometimes in the West called mindfulness, for example. And then right meditation refers to the ability to focus without wavering.

There are other important aspects of the Buddhist teachings. For example, the idea of no self. And this was something that was really different from the previous traditions. The Buddha believed that there was no permanent unchanging or distinct self. So, everything changes, thus the “self” must change also. So, trying to find a distinct self is going to be a task doomed to failure because there is no unchanging self.

There was also the idea of what is known as dependent co-origination. That is, there’s no distinction between real and unreal. There’s no higher plane of existence where the true self lives. And because there is no true self, there can be no true self determination, but everything is sort of connected. Those are just some of the key concepts, just to give you a quick idea of the original elements of Buddhism as the Buddha was preaching it. It’s obviously a lot more complicated than that.

### • Religious Buddhism and philosophical Buddhism in Korea

But when Buddhism came to Korea, we actually saw a very different kind of Buddhism at first. As we mentioned during the history class, Buddhism was first adopted during the Three Kingdoms period. So, firstly by Goguryeo in 372, and then about a decade or so later in Baekje, and then it wasn’t until the early 5th (\*6th) century that it was adopted by Silla. But by the main, by the mid-6th century, it was the main religion of the Three Kingdoms. So, over a few centuries, it developed into the primary religion of the Three Kingdoms.

However, the Buddhism that we saw at that time was not what I was just discussing when I talked about the “four noble truths” or the “no self.” It was actually introduced sort of as an answer to folk religions. So monks would perform miracles in order to demonstrate the power of the Buddha, they would heal disease, etc. And they wanted to demonstrate how powerful the Buddha was to the royal families so the royal families would adopt Buddhism. It had nothing to do with philosophical Buddhism, the four noble truths, etc. They also used the doctrine of karma, and the doctrine of karma is that your actions in this life will affect your next life. But they used this doctrine in a different way to convince kings to support Buddhism, basically saying that “if you support Buddhism, if you build Buddhist temples, etc., then you will be protected from your enemies,” which is not actually what karma means, but it was used in a way that sort of resembles folk religions instead. So, the very early forms of Buddhism were nothing like what the Buddhism was that was preached by the Buddha himself.

It wasn’t until later on, during the Silla period, that you really saw the deepening of Buddhist philosophy in Korea, and the two monks Wonhyo and Uisang played a big part at this time. And there’s a very famous story where they were going to study in China and at the time, if you wanted to study

Buddhism, then you would go to China because that's where Buddhism was introduced from. But on their way, they got caught in a storm and they had to take shelter in a cave. And in the middle of the night, they got thirsty. So Wonhyo reached for a gourd that was next to him and he drank water from this gourd and it tasted so good because he was so thirsty. And then the next morning, when they woke up, they found out that the cave that they had taken shelter in was actually a tomb and the gourd that they had drank water out of was a skull. So the water they had thought was so sweet and refreshing the night before was now dirty and unclean. And at that time, Wonhyo realized that his reality was shaped by his thoughts. The way that he thought about things was, that's what created his reality. When he thought it was water from a gourd, nice and refreshing, it was refreshing. When he saw that it was a skull and he thought about that, it was no longer refreshing. So, that was his enlightenment, basically.

And he returned to Silla, he never went to China to study. Uisang went onto Tang and he played a very important part there. I'll talk about him in a moment. But Wonhyo went back and he wrote many commentaries in an effort to reconcile a lot of what, at the time, were thought of as seeming contradictions. And these commentaries, very importantly, they deepened the philosophy of Korean Buddhism.

Wonhyo's philosophy was characterized by openness, by non-attachment to particular ideas or views, he was very open to a lot of different views etc. At the same time, even though he played a very important role in deepening philosophical Buddhism, he also understood the danger of focusing too much on these really esoteric and metaphysical contemplations. So he emphasized right action as a result of right thought. In other words, you didn't just have to think in the right way, you also had to act on those thoughts.

If you know anything about Wonhyo, you'll know that he was also very famous for not adhering to the rules of monastic Buddhism. You may think that Buddhist monks behave in a certain way, no alcohol, no women, etc. Wonhyo ignored all of that. So he was very much open in that regard as well. He also went around and he spoke directly to the common people, to the marginalized people in society. In that regard, he was actually a very similar figure to the way that Christ went around and ministered to the masses. But, as I mentioned in the history lesson, one of the things that he did in addition to his deep philosophical commentaries, was he also preached Pure Land Buddhism to the masses, which was a very very simple form of Buddhism and a very very simple way of appealing to the common people.

Now, as I mentioned, Uisang went onto study in China and he played a very important role in the development of Huayan Buddhism, known as the Flower Garden (\*Garland), Flower Garland Buddhism, pardon me. And this is based on the Avatamsaka, or the Flower Garland sutra. There are a couple of ideas that are important to this school of Buddhism. For one the idea of interpenetration. So, in other words, everything is contained in everything else. You may have heard of the idea of the entire world being reflected in a mote of dust. Each mote of dust contains the entire world. That's an important concept in Flower Garland Buddhism. There was also the concept of sudden enlightenment. Because everything is contained in everything else, then the Buddha nature is already inside every being, and all we have to do is realize it and we can be suddenly enlightened. So those are some of the key concepts and they'll come into play later.

But Uisang played an important role in China, and then he returned to Korea to found the Flower

Garden (\*Garland), I keep saying Garden, Flower Garland school in Korea as well, known as the Haweom school. And he founded many monasteries throughout the country as well.

So this philosophical Buddhism, it obviously did not appeal to the common people who could not read the texts or had no discipline to meditate. So, instead, they were more influenced by religious Buddhism. And religious Buddhism is the type of Buddhism that has the many different gods. Pure Land Buddhism is a type of that as well. Religious Buddhists sought to live good lives and they were promised passage to the Pure Land if they passed the ten judges, and the ten judges judged people after they died for different sins like laziness, or lying, or violence, etc. There was a period of forty-nine days after their death where they were judged by these ten judges and if they passed, they were allowed passage to the Pure Land. If you've ever seen the film *⟨Along with the Gods⟩*, which is based on a webtoon, that's what that's about. That's where that comes from.

### • Seon Buddhism in Korea

Another important element of Buddhism in Korea is Seon Buddhism, which again, we mentioned during the history lecture. This is, to refresh your memory, this is the meditative variety of Buddhism called Zen Buddhism in Korea (\*Japan), Chan Buddhism in China. It's traditionally understood to have been brought to China by Bodhidharma, who was an Indian monk, later brought to Korea as early as the 6th century, perhaps, but it wasn't until the 9th century that it became a full-fledged movement.

It sought enlightenment again through meditation rather than studying sutras, so rather than studying the Buddhist texts, meditation was the way to enlightenment. And the goal was to move past our limited thinking of the self as separate and individual, so me, I'm a separate self, and to move past that limited way of looking at the world. It was heavily influenced by the Flower Garland school. So, for example, the idea of sudden enlightenment, that's where that comes from. And the idea of interpenetration as well, this also influenced Seon Buddhism.

So during the 9th century, you had nine different temples that were founded that became known as the Nine Mountains of Seon Buddhism, sort of the headquarters, the various headquarters of meditative Buddhism in Korea.

Now, in terms of how this developed, something called ganhwa seon developed during the Goryeo period. This was one path to sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. So you could become enlightened suddenly, but then you had to be very diligent in cultivating that enlightenment. And ganhwa seon is based on meditating on keywords, or hwadu in Korean, from what are called public cases or gong-an. If you're familiar with Japanese Zen Buddhism, you know the phrase koan, the word koan, it's the same in Korean. But this actually developed in Korea before it developed later in Japan. These public cases were basically discussions between masters and students, so the student would ask the master a question and the master would answer. And the keyword, or the key idea, is some shocking statement by the master that is meant to shock the listener out of their preconceived notions and provide the seed for further meditation. This remains an important practice in Buddhism today, especially in the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.

### • The achievements of Korean Buddhism

So in terms of the achievements of Korean Buddhism, these are some of the things that we've talked about before, but just again to provide a little bit of a refresher, Buddhism was at its peak during the Goryeo period, prior to the rise of Neo-Confucianism, and it was at this time that we had the printing of the Tripitaka Koreana, or the, "Tripitaka" means "three baskets," refers to the sutras, the scriptures, the commandments and the commentaries, so all of the Buddhist scriptures as a whole are called the "three baskets" or the "Tripitaka." So this is a set of woodblocks, there were over eighty thousand, eighty-one thousand something, woodblocks that were created so that the Buddhist scriptures could be printed. And, as we mentioned during the history class, they were originally completed in 1087, destroyed during the Mongol invasion, and then a second set was completed in 1251 and you can find them in Haeinsa Temple today.

I also mentioned movable metal type. Well, that's also related to Buddhism because the first texts that were printed with this movable metal type were Buddhist texts. And that book that I mentioned, *⟨Jikji⟩*, which has a very long name, that's originally a collection of teachings of Seon Buddhist monks. So, even though the movable metal type is a general achievement of that time, it's also very closely related to Buddhism in Goryeo. And we'll discuss some of the other artistic achievements later on when we talk in a little more detail about Korean art.

### • Is Korean Buddhism unique or universal?

So, I want to finish up the discussion of Korean Buddhism with a quick question—whether Korean Buddhism is unique or whether it's universal, because there is some disagreement. There are different arguments being made. Some argue that it is unique. In other words, it's not like Chinese Buddhism, it's not like Japanese Buddhism, it's a very specific type of Buddhism that is Korean. Others argue that it is universal and they argue that the idea of a unique Korean Buddhism is actually a product of modern nationalism.

But I would tend to agree personally that maybe it's both, because there are some that argue that it is unique and universal at the same time. Because it is part of the greater world of East Asian Buddhism, of course, it is part of that greater context, but it also does have unique characteristics as it has developed over time. And I think it might be worth keeping in mind the Buddhist idea that the self is not separate and distinct, or the concept of "interpenetration" that we talked about, that everything is contained in everything else. From a Buddhist perspective, we might not even be asking the right questions. So, I just want to leave you with that as a final thing to think about before we move on.

## 4. Korean Christianity

### • Catholicism as Western Learning

So, moving onto Christianity in Korea. This starts with Catholicism and Catholicism was introduced to China around the end of the 16th century, beginning of the 17th century, primarily through the efforts of an Italian missionary, named Matteo Ricci. Important to note about him is that he sought to achieve a synthesis between Confucianism and Catholicism. So he sought to bring the two together, to find the similarities between the two because at the time Confucianism was the dominant ideology in China and that was his way of sorting, sort of bringing in Catholicism as well.

The first Christians that ever set foot on the Korean peninsula were probably Catholic priests that came with the Japanese during the Japanese invasions. And then when the Japanese left, when they took Korean slaves back to Japan, some of them did convert to Catholicism.

Also, after the Manchu invasions at the beginning of the 17th century, Korea was required to send regular envoys to Qing China. One of these brought back a text by Ricci and this was actually the first introduction of the ideas of Christianity to Korea itself.

So at that time, in the early to mid-17th century, you had various Confucian scholars commenting on Ricci's ideas. And they often agreed with his morality, with the ethics, because, again, he took great pains to make favorable comparisons between Confucianism and Christianity, Catholicism in particular. So they agreed with his morality and his ethics, but they often took issue with the spiritual aspects. For example, the idea of Christ, who is the son of God, becoming a man and then consorting with the masses, that sort of runs counter to the Confucian idea of the hierarchy and of being in an exalted place. So these writings and other writings that had come in at the time from the West were all grouped together under the name of Western Learning. So, Catholicism was part of that greater umbrella idea. But it came to sort of represent this idea of Western Learning.

### • Catholicism as a faith

Now, as far as Catholicism being more than just an academic curiosity, becoming a faith, it was adopted by a group of Neo-Confucian scholars in the 18th century, so in the following century after that. The most famous of these was Jeong Yakyong, who we'll talk about later on. However, his less famous older brother, Jeong Yakjong was actually more influential in spreading the teachings of Catholicism and he wrote a lot about that and he played a very important role there.

So, the Neo-Confucian scholars, when they first adopted Confucianism, they were looking to sort of improve on Confucianism. They were looking to fill in some of the gaps, I guess, in what they saw as Confucianism at the time. And Catholicism offered some answers for them. For one, it offered an explanation for human evil. Because Confucianism, as we will discuss next time, teaches that humans are inherently good. But Catholicism teaches that humans have this evil nature that came about for a very specific reason. It also offers a path for overcoming this evil. And there is the idea of a personal

God, for example, which is something that was lacking in Confucianism and that appealed to some people. Perhaps one of the most important things was the fact that Catholicism often had what they considered to be new rituals or techniques that would allow them to become sages, which was the goal of Confucianism. These new rituals were known as the sacraments, of course.

So, in terms of the starting point for Catholicism, like I mentioned, it happened over a very long period of time, very gradually. However, if you were to point to a certain year as the starting point, it would probably be 1784, so we're getting towards the late 18th century. This is when Yi Seunghun, who was baptized as Peter, he went to Beijing, was baptized as a Catholic, and then returned to Korea. And that sort of started, I guess officially we can say, in the Catholic Church, traces the beginning of Catholicism in Korea back to this point.

And at this time, they had regular meetings in the home of a man named Gim Beomu, who was actually, he was not a yangban, he was not an aristocrat, he was a jungin. And a jungin, if you remember, is one of those middle people, one of those technical officials, who was not an aristocrat but he performed a lot of the practical jobs in the government. So he was sort of the host for a lot of these early church meetings, the Catholic church meetings.

However, in 1785, so the year after Yi Seunghun came back from Beijing, after Peter Yi came back from Beijing, his house was raided by the authorities and Gim Beomu was arrested. He died in prison after torture, becoming the first Catholic martyr. And actually Myeong-dong Cathedral, the very famous Catholic cathedral in Korea, was actually built very near to the sight of his house. However, the yangban who were with him at the time only received reprimands before being released. So even here you can see sort of the discrimination against the jungin as opposed to the yangban.

But at this time, when this conflict with the government started to occur, Peter Yi, Yi Seunghun, appealed to the bishop in Beijing for guidance on what to do. Unfortunately, the bishop forbade the Catholics in Korea from performing the ancestral rituals, jesa, because the pope had banned ancestral rituals earlier that century. But jesa was required by law in Confucian Joseon society, and we'll get into why that was in our next class when we talk more about Confucianism. But, basically, you were breaking the law if you refused to perform jesa, if you refused to perform the ancestral rituals. And any Christians who broke the law in this way were executed. So persecution was very severe throughout the 19th century. Many early Christians were martyred. In fact, from the period from 1866 to 1877 (\*1871), which was a period of extreme persecution, 8,000 Catholics were tortured and executed.

And there were a number of reasons for this. One of the main reasons was the refusal to perform the rituals. And this is because of, again something we'll get into more detail in the next class, but basically, rituals—what you do, the way you practice is extremely important in Confucian society, not so much what you believe, but the rituals that you perform. So this refusal to perform rituals was probably one of the triggers for this persecution.

But there were other factors as well. Catholicism focused more on the individual. So, as an individual, you had faith, you had a personal relationship with God. And Catholic believers saw themselves as sort of like a separate community that was distinct from the rest of society, and that's something that was very dangerous to the Confucian rulers at the time.

There was also the idea that Catholicism actually introduced monotheism to Korea. Prior to the

introduction of Christianity, the idea of there being one supreme God did not exist. There were many different gods. But many different gods can be ruled over by the state because they're not as important. But if you have one supreme God, that one supreme God can be a threat to the state. So all of these things taken together led to this extreme persecution of Catholicism.

Another important fact about early Catholicism is the role played by women. Women played a very important role, partly because Catholicism appealed to them in terms of the equality that it offered. But after a century of Catholicism in Korea, the church ended up being dominated by male clergy, often foreign male clergy, and they held their masses in Latin and women played a much smaller role. As a result, when Protestantism was introduced, it once again started to appeal to the marginalized groups in society like women, for example.

### • Protestantism, the new Christianity

So, moving onto Protestantism. Persecution of Christianity officially ended in 1880. This was, again, almost a hundred years after Catholicism had been introduced into Korea. So, by that point, Catholicism had retreated from the stage of society, I guess you could say, and it had become very insular. And as a result, during the modernization period, Catholicism didn't play as big a role as the other religious traditions did. However, this end to persecution did come just in time for the introduction of Protestantism. So, after the end of persecution, you saw Bible translation into hangeul begin in the early 1880s, so the scriptures were distributed in Korea before the first foreign Protestant missionary arrived.

You also during this time saw a lot of treaties between Korea and Western powers. So, for example, you had the Ganghwa Treaty that was in 1876 between Korea and Japan, and then after that you saw various treaties with the other imperial powers at the time. Once those treaties were in place, missionaries felt a little bit safer. And in 1884, exactly one hundred years after Peter Yi returned from Beijing baptized as a Catholic, the first Protestant missionary, named Horace Allen, he was from the U.S. and he was a presbyterian, arrived in Korea. He was also a medical doctor and in addition to being a missionary, he introduced Western medicine and he was a doctor to the royal court, etc.

So, these missionaries, if they had medical expertise, they introduced medicine. They also focused on education, particularly for the poor and the lower classes. The aristocracy had their own education systems, but women, the poor, the lower classes did not have access to education. So, they founded universities, like Ewha Women's University or Yonsei University in Korea today, those universities were founded by missionaries to provide education for the masses. So as a whole, Protestantism made a great effort to improve the lives of the lower classes. And this made it very popular.

So once again, women played a very important role because women were one of those marginalized groups. And there was a missionary named Mary Scranton who brought together a group of women that she called Bible Women and they were women who went around the country as sort of native missionaries. In addition to being missionaries themselves, they also challenged the traditional ideas of what sort of role women should play in society. They were thought of as very modern women.

So, Protestantism had a number of advantages over Catholicism, some of which I've already

mentioned. There was the better environment, so Protestant missionaries didn't have to worry about official persecution. There were better relationships with Western nations. They also focused on reaching the lower classes, like I mentioned, through education in medicine.

But one thing that I didn't mention that was a big advantage was financial support. So these Protestant missionaries had a lot of support from their wealthy home nations, like the United States or Great Britain. So mission societies in the U.S. or Great Britain would send a lot of funds that allowed them to found these universities or hospitals or other facilities. Catholic priests did have some support, but they had vastly less support. I think during that time, after Protestantism was introduced, one Catholic priest actually complained about having like one-sixth of the support that the Protestant missionaries had. So, due to all of these advantages, Protestantism ended up being much more successful.

In addition to trying to improve society, though, the missionaries also took an interest in Korea and Korean culture. So, a lot of the early translators of Korean literature were missionaries. James Scarth Gale, for example, was a very famous translator who translated many Western works into Korean, but he also translated Korean literature into English. So, he played a very important role there.

Homer Hulbert was another missionary, a Methodist missionary, who attempted to help Korea fend off Japanese influence. So, he had been in Korea since 1886 and when Japanese influence started to increase after the signing of the Protectorate Treaty in 1905, for example, he was… I mentioned that King Gojong sent a group of diplomats to the Hague Peace Conference. Well, Homer Hulbert was one of those envoys who was sent by Gojong, so he played a very important role there. He also wrote a book about Korea in an attempt to tell the world about Korea's plight. But unfortunately, for reasons that we mentioned in the history lesson, not too many people were listening at the time. But, many members of the Independence Club, for example, were Protestants or they converted to Protestantism later. So, in addition to the cultural aspects, Protestantism was also a very powerful political force as well.

The turning point, I think, for Protestantism probably came in 1907 when a series of revival meetings were held in Pyongyang. And it had already been a very popular religion up to that point, but after those revival meetings, by 1910, the number of Protestants in Korea was double that of Catholics, despite the fact that Catholicism had been in Korea for a hundred years more. It became the largest religious community in Korea by the 1930s, even larger than Buddhism, etc. And Protestantism continued to grow in modern South Korea and it continues to grow today. So it's… Catholicism is still around as well and both of these strands of Christianity remain an important part of Korean society.

## 5. Eastern Learning

So, the last religious tradition that we're going to talk about today is the religious tradition known as Eastern Learning. And again, you'll remember this from our discussion of history. But I want to talk in a little bit more detail about how this was founded and what exactly this tradition entails or what it exactly believes.

### • Choe Jeu and the founding of Donghak

So, it was founded by Choe Jeu and Choe Jeu grew up in actually a very illustrious yangban family, a very famous yangban family going back many many many generations. But he himself was the son of a third wife and as a result he was very disadvantaged in the Confucian society of the time. So for example, because he was not a son of the first wife, because he didn't descend in a line, a straight line from generation to generation, he could not perform jesa, he could not perform the ancestral rituals. And we've already mentioned how important these rituals are. So being unable to perform these rituals for his ancestors was a huge blow to him. He also really had no hope of advancing in society and this was actually a common plight during the Joseon period.

Among sons of concubines and second wives and third wives, etc., these were known as seoja, and it's actually a very common theme that these individuals, even though they were technically yangban and they were born into these really illustrious yangban families, that they were discriminated against. A famous novel was written about a hero who emerged from this sort of background. But that's the sort of background that Choe Jeu came from and it may provide us with a little bit of insight.

Because he is sort of on the outside looking in, he might be the type of individual to found a new religion. So how this happened was that he suffered a strange illness. He had chills, it was unexplainable. And right before he had this encounter, he had this strange illness, and then he had this encounter with a being that identified himself as the one true God. And this idea of the strange illness, it does remind us a little bit of the spiritual illness of shamanism, doesn't it?

But the one true God appeared to him and told him, Choe Jeu, that he was to be the savior of the people. And this happened in 1860 and, from that point on, he became very famous for his visions and his ability to cure the sick. He actually had talismans, paper talismans that he used to cure the sick. But his ministry did not last long. He was arrested in 1862, again for various reasons that I'll get to in a moment. But he was released after his initial arrest, but then he was arrested again in 1863 and he was actually tortured and executed in 1864. So, from the founding of Eastern Learning in 1860 to his execution, it was only four years. He had a relatively short ministry, I guess we could say, similar to Christ's ministry of three years.

So, Eastern Learning, Donghak, which is what Choe Jeu called it, was founded in opposition to Western Learning, as I mentioned in the history class. Choe Jeu saw Western Learning, saw Catholicism and the other ideas linked to Western Learning, as being part of European aggression in Asia. This was a time when many European and Western powers were coming into Asia and he saw Western Learning as part of that. So, he very deliberately named his religion "Eastern Learning" to sort of provide a counterbalance to that.

He also incorporated Confucian themes and morality into his religion because he's most familiar with Confucianism. Coming from a yangban family, he's going to be steeped in Confucianism. For example, he supported the Confucian hierarchy, that people had their prescribed places in society. He also wrote his scriptures in hanmun, in classical Chinese. He wrote two books. One, 〈The Book of Hymns〉 was written in hangeul, but the scriptures themselves were written in hanmun. So, he did make these appeals to his upbringing in Confucian society.

So why was he arrested and executed? The ironic thing is that even though he founded this religion in opposition to Western Learning and he tried to appeal to Confucianism, it was the similarities of Eastern Learning with Catholicism that got him in trouble. The fact that Eastern Learning is monotheistic. There's the "one true God." The fact that followers of Eastern Learning believed themselves to be separate from the rest of society. The fact that they had illegal rituals, rituals that were not condoned by the state. These were all the same reasons that Catholics were persecuted and it was the same reason why Choe Jeu was arrested and executed.

But the religion did not die with him and it did become the first organized indigenous religion in Korea. Shamanism is the first religious tradition, but it was not an organized tradition. Eastern Learning is the first organized native religion to Korea.

### • The beliefs of Donghak and Cheondogyo

So what exactly are the beliefs of Donghak, of Eastern Learning, and Cheondogyo, as it later came to be called? When Choe Jeu first started preaching, he preached the coming of a new world, a new era, in which all of the problems of the present world would be eliminated, very similar to the idea of millenarianism in Christianity, the idea that the old world will pass away and a new world, where there's no suffering etc. That's the sort of thing that he preached. And as you can imagine, this preaching in and of itself was also considered very dangerous by the ruling class. The people in power don't want to hear that their social order is going to collapse and a new world is going to be introduced.

This is probably, at least partly, what led to the Donghak Peasant Revolution, which I'll discuss in a moment. But after this revolution, which was ultimately defeated, Donghak sort of went underground. And it reemerged in 1905 as Cheondogyo, and Cheondogyo literally means "the Religion of the Heavenly Way," under Son Byeong-hui, who was one of Choe Jeu's successors.

So, after Choe's death in 1864, his successors, the leaders of Donghak, and later Cheondogyo, they tried to move away from this concept of God as a distinct individual and toward God, or heaven, or the idea of divinity, in other words, as existing in everyone. So similar to the Buddhist idea of interpenetration, where the Buddhist nature exists in everyone, there is a key tenet of Donghak and Cheondogyo that is known as 人乃天 (인내천; in-nae-cheon). And it basically means, 人 (인; in) is humanity, 乃 (내; nae) is to be or 곧 (got), and 天 (천; cheon) is heaven. So "humanity is heaven," "men and women are heaven." Not God necessarily, so it's not so much the idea of a personal entity known as God, it's this idea of divinity. Everyone has that divine spark within them.

And there were three, well I should say "are" because Cheondogyo is still around today, there are three cardinal virtues in Cheondogyo. And the first one is sincerity. And this is very similar to Confucianism. The idea that you put the community, you put the group before the self. So before your own selfish interests, you put the interests of your community. Very similar to Confucianism, but again, the early Donghak believers saw themselves as sort of a separate community.

The second cardinal virtue is reverence. In other words, you respect the divine presence. You respect that divine spark in everyone. Because everyone has heaven within them, you have to respect everyone

equally. This kind of runs counter to the Neo-Confucian hierarchy, even though Choe Jeu himself supported the idea of a hierarchy, this idea of equality did run counter to Confucianism.

And the last cardinal virtue, of course, is faith, this belief that everyone contains heaven within themselves.

And like I mentioned, Cheondogyo is still around today. It's not a very popular religion. There are not many proclaimed adherents, so in other words, not many people who officially say, "I am a member of the Cheondogyo church." But there are still adherents, they still have services. And they have four basic objectives which have developed over time. So some of them you can see go back to the original goals of Donghak, but some of them have also sort of developed.

And the first objective is to support the nation and to comfort the people. And this in Korean is known as 보국안민 (boguk-anmin). This was actually one of the primary goals of Donghak in the first place and it was the most political of its objectives, supporting the nation, in other words, supporting the nation against foreign influence. Nowadays, it's interpreted a little more broadly as "you want to help the people."

The second goal is to spread virtue, or truth, throughout the world and in Korean this is 포덕천  
하 (podeok-cheonha). So Cheondogyo is a proselytizing religion, just like Christianity, they send out missionaries, they try to bring others into the faith.

The third goal is saving all people from suffering, 광제창생 (gwangje-changsaeng). And the idea is that you need to eliminate sufferings so that the truth of Cheondogyo may be known.

And the fourth goal, and again this relates to the original idea of the coming of a new era, is to establish heaven on earth, 지상천국 (jisang-cheonguk). So, the current era that we're seeing right now is just the, shall we say, what we see before we have the coming of the new era of peace. In addition to this new social order, this creation also involves a new consciousness, so people are sort of elevated in their consciousness as well. And that's an important distinction to make because Cheondogyo doesn't have a doctrine of the afterlife like Christianity does. When you die in Cheondogyo, you return to the cosmos, you return to the great universe as a whole, your pre-birth state. So there's no heaven necessarily and there's no hell. It's very much focused on what we do here.

### • The Donghak Peasant Revolution

And I mentioned this before, just to come back to this in a little more detail, probably the most striking example of Donghak in action in history would be the Donghak Peasant Revolution. So, in addition to seeing the Western powers as a threat, Choe Jeu also saw the Japanese as a threat, as he saw all the foreign powers at the time. It turns out that he was right. And the Japanese were... they did have designs on Korea. So after Korea was forced to sign the Ganghwa Treaty in 1876, and then for the next ten years signing various unequal treaties with foreign powers, this increased foreign pressure and influence led to an increase in followers of Donghak because Choe Jeu was preaching, "We have to defend our nation against these foreign influences," and everyone can see that that influence is increasing. So more and more people started to follow Donghak.

The original revolution began as uprisings that were initially a reaction against corruption and mistreatment by local government officials, so local government officials would mistreat the people, they would collect unfair taxes, etc. But it was also a reaction against the foreign influences as well. It wasn't the first peasant revolution. It wasn't the first peasant revolt in late Joseon. Late Joseon was a period of great civil unrest. It just happened to be the latest one. For example, as early as 1811 you had the Hong Gyeongnae Rebellion. And you had a number of rebellions throughout that century. The last one of the 19th century happened to be the Donghak Peasant Revolution.

It was initially successful. You had the Donghak armies who were led by yangban and achieved great success against the government forces. They actually forced the government into negotiations and they reached an agreement. But then Chinese and Japanese troops were sent to Korea. As we already mentioned during the history lesson, the rebellion was crushed, and this led to the Sino-Japanese war on the Korean peninsula between China and Japan.

The perhaps ironic postscript to all of this is that a few decades later, after Japan had colonized Korea, during the March First Independence Movement in 1919, Cheondogyo and Christian leaders actually got together to organize the March First Independence Movement. So even though Donghak was originally founded sort of as an antidote, or against the idea of Western Learning and Christianity, after the nation fell, the religious leaders came together to enjoin forces against a common enemy. And, like I mentioned, that was probably the most striking example of Donghak and Cheondogyo in history. But the religion is still around today and they still have services, and it's still part of the religious landscape in modern South Korea.

## 6. Closing

So, we talked about a number of seemingly disparate traditions today. We started off with shamanism, and then went onto Buddhism and Christianity and Eastern Learning. All of these would seem to be at odds with each other. But, as I hinted at just a moment ago, these religions had not always hostile relations with each other. They often influenced each other.

So, for example, you can see a lot of influence between Buddhism and Shamanism. A lot of the elements of religious Buddhism, for example, with the various gods, they intersect and overlap with shamanic deities as well. You can see shamanic deities, deities that are worshipped in shamanism, you can see shrines at Buddhist temples. Shamans will often borrow the vocabulary of Buddhism and some of the symbology as well. You can see some interactions between shamanism and Christianity as well. The nature of Christianity in Korea, I think, has been somewhat influenced by the nature of shamanism as well.

We don't have time to get into that too much, but these traditions, they existed alongside each other and they naturally influenced each other, even if they would seem to be at first opposed, even diametrically opposed, such as in the case of shamanism and Christianity. So, even though I discussed

these in separate blocks, they all sort of work together to form the tapestry, the landscape, the religious landscape in Korea. And even though we didn't discuss this today, we will come back next time and talk more about Confucianism and how Confucianism related to these traditions as well. Because, even though I've split up these two classes, that's just a matter of time and academic distinctions. They're all very carefully and closely related with each other. No religion exists in a vacuum and no philosophy exists in a vacuum either.

So, in recent years, we can see from statistics that over the half of the population in Korea claims to be non-religious. So, it would seem to be the case that people are moving somewhat away from religion and toward a more non-religious affiliation. That being said, these all continue to play important roles in Korean society today.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. Korean shamanic rituals are only held in places that were created specifically for shamanic rituals. (T/F)

Answer:

F

2. One of the unique characteristics of Korean shamanism is that the shaman's spirit doesn't leave his or her body during trances, but instead another spirit enters the shaman's body. (T/F)

Answer:

T

3. Wonhyo and Uisang deepened understanding of Buddhist philosophy through Chinese Confucianism. (T/F)

Answer:

F

4. Donghak's founder Choe Jeu was born to a commoner family and sought to overthrow the system of Confucian hierarchy. (T/F)

Answer:

F

5. Cheondogyo and Christian leaders banded together to organize the March First Independence Movement. (T/F)

Answer:

T

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Korean shamanism?

- a. Musok is a term used in Korean academia to refer to Korean shamanism and reflects the view that Korean shamanism is not a religion but merely a set of customs.
- b. Korean shamanism is primarily concerned with the world of the living.
- c. Shamanism has no influence in modern Korea.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about shamans?

- a. On Jeju Island, the term “simbang” is used to refer to shamans instead of “mansin.”
- b. Shamans have throughout history been revered as entities that comfort people.
- c. The goal of a shaman is to restore and maintain harmony between spirits and humans.

Answer: b

3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Korean Buddhism?

- a. Buddhism was first introduced to Korea during the Three Kingdoms period.
- b. Early Korean Buddhism had strong philosophical tendencies.
- c. Tripitaka Koreana, which is currently stored in Haeinsa Temple, gives evidence that Buddhism was promoted nationally during the Goryeo period.

Answer: b

4. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about early Christianity in Korea?

- a. Catholicism was first introduced to Korea during the early 17th century by proselytizing missionaries from Europe.
- b. During the late Joseon period, many Catholics were executed for refusing to perform ancestral rites.
- c. Early Protestantism in Korea worked to improve the lives of lower-class people through medicine and education.

Answer: a

5. Which of the following is an accurate statement about Donghak and Cheondogyo?

- a. The ideas of Donghak, which preached the coming of a new world, were attractive to the ruling class.
- b. Donghak was the first organized indigenous religion in Korea.
- c. Cheondogyo acknowledges the existence of an afterlife.

Answer: b

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, which refers to shamans who start their life as a shaman when they suffer a spiritual illness (sinbyeong) and are cured by another shaman via an initiation ritual (naerim-gut), is one of two types of shamans in Korea, the other being seseummu.

Answer: Gangsinmu

2. \_\_\_\_\_ is a form of Buddhism that seeks enlightenment through meditation rather than studying sutras.

Answer: Seon Buddhism

3. The central tenet of Cheondogyo is known in Korean as \_\_\_\_\_ and means “men and women are heaven.”

Answer: in-nae-cheon

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Describe the different types and roles of Korean shamans and briefly explain the attitudes toward shamans in Korean society through the Joseon period and the colonial period.

\* Answer guide

There are two types of shamans in Korea: gangsinmu, who start their lives as shaman when they suffer sinbyeong and go through naerim-gut, and hereditary shamans known as seseummu. Historically speaking, gangsinmu were located the north of the Han River and west of the Taebaek Mountains, and seseummu were located south of the Han River and west of the Taebaek Mountains. By performing rituals that combine artistic elements, shamans try to restore the broken harmony between the spirit world and the human world, while also serving the role of counselors that provide emotional support for grief and hardship. However, during the Joseon period, shamans were persecuted because

shamanism was considered to spread dangerous myths. By the Japanese colonial period, shamanism was again suppressed because it was considered to be the manifestation of the native Korean spirit. Despite the negative views about shamans that continue into modern day, shamanism is still practiced in Korea.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

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Describe the adoption and spread of Christianity in Korea from the late Joseon period to the Japanese colonial period while also mentioning the different situations Catholicism and Protestantism encountered in Korea.

\* Answer guide

Christianity in Korea has its origins in the academic tradition of Western Learning, which started with the introduction of Western culture via envoys who regularly visited Beijing. In terms of Christianity as a faith, 1784 marks the beginning of Catholicism in Korea, when Yi Seunghun was baptized in Beijing and returned to Korea. In the early stages of Christianity in Korea, a lot of Catholics were executed because their religion forbade them from performing ancestral rites. Eventually, the persecution of Catholicism was officially stopped and Protestant missionaries began entering Korea as relations with Western countries improved. Because these Protestant missionaries worked to improve the lives of lower-class people through medicine and education, Protestantism gained much popularity. In addition, since Protestant missionaries were given more financial support from their home countries, Protestantism spread farther in Korea than Catholicism did.

〈Lecture 4〉

# Korean Philosophy

– The Development and Importance of Confucianism

## Class Goals

1. Learn about the key concepts and history of Confucianism in Korea
2. Understand the relationship between Confucianism and other philosophies or religions in Korea
3. Have a proper understanding of the influence of Confucianism on Korean culture today

## Summary

In this class, we learned about the key concepts of Confucianism and the history of Confucianism in Korea.

Adherents of Confucianism aims to perfect the self and become a sage by following the Way. Benevolence (仁; yin), the Five Relationships, the Superior Man (君子), and Heaven (天) are basic concepts of Confucianism. Mencius expanded on this by emphasizing the innate goodness of human nature, developing the idea of the Four Beginnings (四端) in the human mind.

Confucianism first became prominent during the Three Kingdoms period. Confucianism grew in Unified Silla and Goryeo, and it became the state ideology of Joseon. Despite literati purges, Neo-Confucianism emerged as the primary ideology.

Principle (理) and material force (氣) are key concepts of Neo-Confucianism. In 16th century Joseon, there was the “Four-Seven Debate,” which discussed the relationship between the Four Beginnings and the Seven Emotions. It dealt with the problem of evil, and participants in this debate had different perspectives on principle and material force.

Buddhism was criticized and suppressed in Joseon due to the philosophical conflicts with Neo-Confucianism. Shamanism was not even recognized as a religious tradition in Joseon. Catholicism was seen as threat to the Joseon government because Catholics refused to perform ancestral rites. Practical Learning emerged as a reaction against the metaphysical nature of Neo-Confucianism.

## ❖ Script ❖

### 1. Overview

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today we're going to be talking about Korean philosophy, specifically talking about Confucianism and some of the issues related to that.

#### Class goals

As I mentioned in the last class, religion and philosophy often are difficult to separate. Confucianism is originally more of a philosophy, but it also had some aspects that could be considered religious. And we'll talk about those a little more later on. So, as I mentioned last time, think of our last class and this class as sort of being one continuum, where we're talking about both religion and philosophy.

And one caveat I want to give you before we begin is that I find that students and observers of Korea are often tempted to attribute everything to Confucianism. So when they see some aspect of Korean culture they say, "Oh that's because of Confucianism." And Confucianism is definitely an important ideological influence in Korea, but it exists in a relationship with other ideological traditions, such as the ones we talked about last time, and other cultural influences. So, we're spending an entire class on Confucianism today, not because it's the answer to everything but because I believe to have a proper understanding of it is very important.

#### Contents

1. Overview
2. Origins and Key Concepts of Confucianism

3. History and Development of Confucianism in Korea
4. Philosophy of Neo-Confucianism
5. Confucianism in Korea's Ideological Tapestry
6. Closing: Confucianism Today

So, in today's class, we're going to start off by talking about the origins of Confucianism and some of the key concepts of the early philosophy, then we're going to go into the history and the development of Confucianism in Korea, and then we're going to talk about the very important development of Neo-Confucianism later on. And then we're going to examine Confucianism sort of in the context of some of the things we've been talking about since our last class, so Korea, the relationship that it has with Buddhism and Christianity and other sorts of philosophies and religion. And in closing we'll talk a little bit about what Confucianism is like and what it means today.

## 2. Origins and Key Concepts of Confucianism

### • The origins of Confucianism

So, starting off with the origin of Confucianism. As you probably already know, it begins with the teachings of Confucius, which is a westernization of the Chinese name Kong Fuzi. And he lived from 551 to 479 BCE. He did not necessarily come up with all of these ideas himself, of course. He was more of a synthesizer. So he took ideas that existed before that and he brought them together into one coherent philosophy that could be considered a form of early Chinese humanism. And obviously other contributions were made by other scholars, particularly Mencius, who made some important contributions a few centuries later.

So the original goal of Confucianism is to perfect the self. I suppose you could say it's sort of a self-improvement philosophy. Not just becoming better, though, but you want to become what is known as a sage by following the Way, so very high goals. Not just becoming a better person but being the best person that you can be.

### • The key concepts of Confucianism

And the key value, or the key concept I suppose, in Confucianism, is known as… it's alternatively translated as humanity or benevolence, in Korean the character is pronounced 은 (yin) and if you look at the Chinese character, you'll see that it's composed on the left of the radical for "person" [人] and

then on the right the character for “two” [二]. So, originally this character “仁” (yin), or rén in Chinese, indicated a close relationship between two people. And it was redefined by Confucius as the way that two people should act toward each other, the way that two people should have a proper relationship. So, following the Way, as it is known in Confucianism, obviously each philosophy and religion has its own Way, but in Confucianism, following the Way means to practice and cultivate this humanity, this benevolence, this “仁.”

You can see this in perhaps one of the most famous aspects of Confucianism, which is the Five Relationships. And these are relationships between two different sets of people. So, you have, starting out with, the ruler and the ruled, so the king and his subjects, for example. You have the father and the son. You have the husband and the wife. You have the older brother and the younger brother. And then you have the relationship between one friend and another friend. So you may have noticed that the first four relationships here are hierarchical. In other words, there is an upper member and there is a lower member. And each member in this relationship has a responsibility to the other member. So the lower member owes respect to the upper member in the relationship. And the upper member owes this benevolence, this humanity, this 仁 to the lower member. Society can only function properly if each individual plays his or her proper role. And what's important here from the modern perspective to understand is that equality is not as important here as harmony. So, we'll come back to this issue later on when we talk about how Confucianism fits in with modern Korean society.

So, I talked before about how the goal of Confucianism is to become a sage, to perfect yourself to the highest level. And this highest moral state specifically is in English often translated as “Superior Man” and in Korean this is 君子 (군자; gunja). And again, we can see the Chinese characters. “君” (군; gun) on the left is the character for the ruler or the king and “子” (자; ja) is the character for son. So literally this character originally meant prince or son of the ruler. But once again Confucius repurposed this term in order to subvert the existing ideas about where someone's quality or worth came from. So, you had these ideas, not just in China of course but universally, that the nobles or the ruling class or the kings were somehow special because of their blood, that they received a mandate and this mandate was handed down from father to son, from ruler to prince. Confucius was basically saying, “No, it's not superior blood that determines a man's worth, it is the superior character.” So, this idea of the “君子,” or “Superior Man,” that's what you were striving for.

Another important concept is the idea of Heaven, 天 (천; cheon), the character here. This is drawn from the existing Chinese theology. So there was already an idea of Heaven as this sort of supernatural force. But in Confucianism, it's not meant as a specifically personal God or specifically personal supernatural force. Instead, it refers to the ultimate order of the universe and this is the source of the morality that the Superior Man wants to follow. So, again, he did adopt an existing idea, but he took a more philosophical approach to it as opposed to a religious approach. And this is an important thing to touch on before we move on because there's always the question, “Is Confucianism a philosophy? Is it a religion? Is it both?”

So, there are mentions of gods and spirits, in other words, there are mentions of supernatural beings in the 〈Analects〉, which is the collection of Confucius' teachings. However, according to 〈Analects〉, the 11th chapter and the 12th verse, there's a very important, I think, saying from Confucius where Chi

Lu asked about serving the spirits, Confucius said, "If you can't yet serve men, how can you serve the spirits?" It goes on and Lu said, "May I ask about death?" Confucius said, "If you don't understand what life is, how will you understand death?" So even though Confucius, although he himself was a ritual master, which means he was in charge of performing rituals for spirits that might otherwise be considered religious, he himself was primarily concerned with the world of the living and he felt that this came before the spirit world. So before you could even think about religious concerns, you had to get your affairs in order in this world.

So as I mentioned before, there were also some later contributions, developments in Confucianism, by Mencius. And these become important, well these are naturally important, but they also become important later on when we're talking about Neo-Confucianism. But some of the things that he developed in terms of the philosophy was that he emphasized the innate goodness of human nature, so that humans by nature were good beings. And this is exemplified in what he called the Four Beginnings, or the 四端 (사단; sadan) to give the Korean pronunciation. These are the four, or what he thought of as, the four basic aspects of human nature that gave rise to different frames of mind or dispositions. So, for example, you had compassion, which would be a disposition, arising from humanity 仁 (인; yin). You had shame arising from righteousness or 義 (의; ui). You had modesty arising from propriety or 禮 (예; ye). All of these are important key concepts. And finally you had moral discrimination arising from wisdom or 智 (지; ji). So you had the four basic aspects of humanity, righteousness, propriety and wisdom, and they all gave rise to certain aspects of human nature or certain dispositions.

The famous example that if you've studied this you may have heard, was the example of the child about to fall into a well. So if you see a child who's about to fall into a well, what do you do? And everyone is going to say, "Well, I'm going to call out or I'm going to try to help the child, try to prevent the child from falling into the well." No one is just going to stand there and watch the child fall into the well. So this example was used as evidence of the innate compassion that we had, and our innate good nature. And that led to a universal duty. So we all had this duty to cultivate our humanity and exemplify that with compassion.

So another important aspect was that this innate moral nature, this innate good nature that we had needed to be cultivated by education. So, we had a good nature that we were born with, but an improper environment or improper education could lead to bad moral choices. So we were good by nature, but if we were not properly cultivated through our environment or education, we might not always make the best moral choices. So we had to cultivate that moral nature through education and that's where the importance of education really comes in.

So that's a little bit of background about Confucianism as it developed in China and there's obviously a lot more to it but that should give you enough to go on. And now we're going to move on to the history of Confucianism in Korea and how it developed over time.

### 3. History and Development of Confucianism in Korea

#### • The introduction and development of Confucianism

So it was introduced from China, obviously, during what is known as the Warring States period in China. This was from the end of the 5th century to the early 3rd century BCE. We don't have an exact date as to when Confucianism was introduced, so there's no date that we can point to. But we know that it was at some point during that period, from the end of the 5th century to the early 3rd century BCE.

It first became prominent during the Three Kingdoms period. So Goguryeo established a Confucian academy in 372 in the Common Era. Baekje then transmitted Confucian texts to Japan. And in Silla, we had a group of elite warriors known as the hwarang, who have become very famous even in modern times through the various legends about them, they were heavily influenced by Confucian values in addition to Buddhist and Taoist values as well. So, they weren't just entirely a Confucian warrior corp, but Confucianism did play an important part. And they were one example of how Confucianism influenced life and culture in Silla.

Another important example that we've mentioned before on a number of occasions was the civil service examination. And this was first instituted in the Unified Silla kingdom during the North and South Kingdoms period in 788. And again, as we've mentioned before, this system made knowledge of the Confucian classics essential for gaining a government post. So, obviously if that's the way that you're going to succeed in society, then everyone who wants to be successful, have a government post, is going to need to study Confucianism. So already we can see the importance of the philosophy there.

#### • Confucianism in Goryeo

It remained important in the Goryeo period, where, Goryeo also had a civil service examination system that was instituted in 958 and continuing the trend from the Silla period. They also established the state Confucian academy and local academies as well, known as hyanggyo. And all of these academies were devoted to the study of Confucian classics in order to raise up students who would later be able to take the civil service examination and serve their nation properly.

At this time, another important element was the systemization of the rituals for jongmyo and sajik, and these are going to come into play later on as well. "Jongmyo" is the royal shrine where ancestral rites are held, so it contains the ancestral tablets for all of the kings of the kingdom. And it's very important that you hold ancestral rites for your ancestors, but obviously most important that the kings be honored in this way. So jongmyo was a shrine that was set up for this specific purpose.

And "sajik" or "sajik-dan." "Sajik" is the altar to the gods of earth and grain and this is another example of a religious aspect, but it's also sort of a political aspect because the government was considered responsible for the prosperity of the people. So if you go back to the Five Relationships, for

example, the first relationship between ruler and ruled, the ruler was responsible for the wellbeing of those he ruled over. And what is the most fundamental aspect of a people's wellbeing? It's "Can they eat? Do they have food to eat?" So building an altar to the gods of the earth and the gods of grain where you can hold rituals for good harvest and prosperity, that is a religious aspect, but it's also a very important political aspect because you're fulfilling your responsibility as the ruler of the nation. So this systemization of jongmyo and sajik, it's partly a religious aspect, but it's also a very important aspect of, we can say, applied Confucianism.

So in the late 13th century, the works of Ju Hui, to give the Korean pronunciation, were brought from China and these introduced Neo-Confucianism, which we'll discuss in more detail in the next section.

### • Confucianism in Joseon

Confucianism as the state ideology of Joseon can be seen in a variety of aspects. For example, after the invention of hangeul, as we talked about in our class on language, a number of works were created in order to show the merits of hangeul and show that it could be used to compose literature etc. One of those is called the 〈Song of Flying Dragons〉, or 〈Yongbieocheonga〉, and this, if you look at it, establishes the Joseon kingdom as a Confucian kingdom by praising the great deeds of the royal ancestors and it compares them with Chinese kings and sages. So it places them in the same context, on the same level. But that's just one example drawn from literature. But once we get into the Joseon period, Confucianism becomes the primary ruling ideology and it becomes very important throughout the five hundred years of that kingdom.

So there was a lot of factional strife within Confucianism during the Joseon period. A lot of different factions, depending on how exactly you interpreted Confucianism or what type of Confucianism you were following. And this factional strife led to four, what are known as, literati purges, where literati, specifically of the Neo-Confucian persuasion, were persecuted over four separate events. But these purges were not effective. In other words, they did not succeed in their goal of sort of suppressing Neo-Confucianism. And it endured and became the primary ideology by the late 16th century in the Joseon Dynasty. So with the dominance of Neo-Confucianism, there was an increased importance on propriety or etiquette, 禮 (예; ye), as we mentioned before, and also the moral obligations that Confucian scholars or Confucian rulers had.

So Confucianism was challenged from various perspectives, from various angles during the late Joseon period. Obviously during this time, as we discussed in the history class, there were many incursions by imperial powers from the West in particular. And this led to sort of a reaction against this that was known as the "Defend Orthodoxy, Reject Heterodoxy" movement, known as Wijeong-cheoksa in Korean. So this was a conservative reaction to the influx of not just political influence but also cultural influences from the West. "Orthodoxy," of course, is orthodox Confucian belief and "heterodoxy" is these new Western beliefs coming from outside. So conservative factions reacted in this way. Liberal factions, on the other hand, advocated enlightenment and modernization. And again we'll talk a little bit

more about some of the more progressive factions a little bit later on.

The conservative policies that Joseon ended up adopting during this period led to it being known abroad as the hermit kingdom. So if you've ever heard Joseon or Korea called the "hermit kingdom," it comes from that period, the early modern period where Joseon was very conservative and sort of tried to close itself off from the rest of the world, which, as we know, eventually did not work.

Also, as mentioned during the history class, when the Japanese were on the peninsula, many of the righteous armies that were fighting against the Japanese were led by Confucian scholars, so not all of them were... I mean, they were philosophers of course, but they weren't just philosophers. Many of them did try to put their beliefs into action by defending the nation, by leading the people, and they didn't just sit up in their ivory towers and worry and philosophize over metaphysics.

## 4. Philosophy of Neo-Confucianism

So next, we're going to delve into a little more detail on the philosophy and the various, well I don't know if you could say it's one philosophy, but there were different philosophies of Neo-Confucianism.

### • The origins and key concepts of Neo-Confucianism

So it began in China, once again, with a revival of Confucianism in Song China. And this once again was a series of ideas that had been building up for quite some time and it was brought together by one individual, Ju Hui, as we mentioned before, in the 12th century.

The key concepts here in addition to the concepts that we've already mentioned, are the idea of principle, or 理 (리/li; 이/yi), and material force, 氣 (기); gi in Korean, to give the Korean pronunciations. And these, principle and material force, are the generally accepted and used English translations, but don't get too attached to them because there are a lot of nuances of meaning here.

So this idea of principle is the idea of a pattern or patterns by which the material force is organized. And the important thing here is that this pattern or these patterns are thought of as being immaterial. So you have the, let's say for example you're putting together a piece of furniture, you have the actual pieces of wood and the screws and the nuts and bolts etc. But you also have a set of directions that tell you how to put this piece of furniture together. To give you a supreme oversimplification, that set of directions would be the pattern that you are following, that would be the principle.

If we look at the work of Don Baker as well, he tells us that the pattern or the principle may also be thought of as one's social duty defined by one's place in society. So, for example, your principle will depend on your role. So when I was a student studying in graduate school, then I would act according to that principle. I would act as a student. And then later on when I became a professor, I would act according to that principle. So students act like students, professors act like professors. That goes back to

the idea of each person having their own role and playing that proper role. That's the idea of a principle, you could think of it as sort of a pattern of sorts.

On the other hand, the material force is, on the other side, the manifestation of this pattern, of principle, in the material world. So each individual being, each human being, is comprised of this material force. Each being, not just humans, but every being has this material force and it is manifested, it is put together according to the principle. And this relationship between principle and material force is very complicated and it was something that scholars disagreed on. So I'll come back to that in a moment.

Once again we have the idea of human nature, so every human has an innate moral or good nature, again as Mencius discussed. This good nature comes from principle and the physical nature that we have comes from the material force. So the idea was that the principle was always and naturally good, but the material force, manifested in the physical nature, could contain both. So both good and evil were possible and this was manifested in our human emotions, for example.

So the material force, *gi*, leads us to act in our own interests. So the principle will lead us to act according to our universal duty, for example the idea of compassion arising from humanity, that comes from the principle, and if we follow the principle, we will act in a morally good way. But because our material force is our individual manifestation, it will lead us to act in our own interests, not necessarily in the interests of the community. So it is important to cultivate our innate good nature in order to act appropriately and "appropriately" here means acting for the benefit of society as a whole, not just acting as someone who's benefiting only themselves. You're manifesting, you're expressing, you're living this concept of humanity.

So this cultivation, this cultivation of your innate good nature is achieved through a number of things. Firstly, it's achieved through ritual. And we've discussed before the importance of ritual in Confucianism and we'll come back to that today, but the rituals that you performed is one way of cultivating your good nature. The second way of cultivating your innate good nature is studying the classics, so reading the classic Confucian texts, studying them, taking their lessons to heart.

And the third way was something that was known as investigation of things or *gyeokmul* (격물; *gyeokmul*) in Korean. "Gyeokmul" refers to the investigation into principles or patterns behind all things as a method of achieving true knowledge or wisdom. So Ju Hui emphasized both deductive reasoning, which would be pursuing a conclusion based on accepted premises, and he also emphasized inductive reasoning, which was arguing from individual instances toward general principles. So they work in opposite directions. He also emphasized objective empiricism, so based on your own personal experience and intuitive understanding, so using your intuition.

So even though he emphasized all of these things, it's important to realize that *gyeokmul* was actually primarily a way to overcome your individual material force in order to cultivate your innate moral or good nature, as opposed to just being a general scientific approach to the world. So using inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, empiricism, intuitive understanding, it sounds like the scientific method, but what Confucian scholars were primarily concerned with was overcoming your innate selfishness, I guess, and learning to act for the benefit of society as a whole.

So to give you one example here of this idea of looking into things and trying to determine patterns,

if you're familiar with the Confucian classic the 〈Book of Changes〉, it's a very famous book that's well known in the West as well and it's often thought of as a divination book and it's used as a divination book as well, you cast lots, so to speak, to divine what is going on in the world. But if you look at it closely, it's actually an attempt to determine what the currently active pattern or principle is. So there's 64 different patterns in the book and this method of divination is essentially saying which pattern is active right now, because different patterns can be active at different times, and depending on which pattern is active, that will tell you how you should act and what an appropriate action would be.

### • The Four-Seven Debate

So, as we already mentioned, Neo-Confucianism first appeared in late Goryeo period, but it rose to prominence during the Joseon period. And probably the most important contribution to Neo-Confucianism from Korea during this time is something that is known as the Four-Seven Debate. There were actually two phases of this but the most famous participants were Yi Hwang who's also known as Toegye, and actually he's so famous that you can find his portrait on the Korean 1000 won bill. And the second individual is Yi Yi, also known as Yulgok, and his portrait is on the 5000 won bill. So two very famous philosophers, famous enough to get their face on currency. They did not debate each other directly. So they participated in two different sort of phases of the debate. But their philosophies gave rise to two different understandings of the relationship between principle and material force.

So this debate, it's called the "Four-Seven Debate" because it was a discussion of the relationship between the Four Beginnings, as we mentioned above from Mencius. So just to refresh your memory, you had "compassion arising from humanity," you had "shame arising from righteousness," "modesty arising from propriety," and "moral discrimination arising from wisdom." Those were the Four Beginnings. And then the "Seven" refers to the Seven Emotions that are laid out in the 〈Book of Rites〉 and these emotions are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, like and dislike. The number "seven" is simply meant to represent the entire range of human emotions. So if there's an emotion that you can think of that's not in that list, it's just meant to cover all of human emotion.

And the central question of this debate is, "If human nature is good, why do people do things that are not good?" And this is something that is discussed in many philosophies and many religions, it's known as the problem of evil. And in Christianity, you have the idea of theodicy, which is basically, "If God is good, why is there evil in the world?" It's all really asking the same question.

So there were different answers to this and they can be summarized in two different theories. So on the one hand, the earlier theory was the dualist theory of principle and material force, known as Yigi-yiwonnon, also known as the theory of the primacy of principle, or Juriron.

So the idea here is that the principle and material force are separate things. So the principle precedes material force, it is the source of the Four Beginnings, and the material force comes after as a result of the principle and it is the source of the Seven Emotions. So in terms of how principle and material force manifest themselves within human beings, within the mind of human beings, principle is seen as the substance of the mind, in other words the innate goodness, and material force is seen as the function

of the mind, so those emotions that can be both good and that can be bad due to the good human emotions like love and the less than good human emotions like anger, for example, or dislike.

So this theory stresses the importance of mindfulness, always being aware of your state of mind. And this leads to good actions, if you are constantly mindful, good behavior.

On the other side of this equation, the later developed theory… So the first theory would have been developed by Toegye, or at least he was a proponent of it, and the second theory, Yulgok's theory, was known as the monist theory of material force, Gi-irwonnon, also known as the theory of primacy of material force, Jugiron. So this happened during the second cycle.

So the key idea here is that principle and material force actually manifest together. So since principle has no form, it's just this pattern, it cannot actually manifest without material force. And material force, having no pattern, cannot manifest without principle. So one cannot precede the other. One cannot come after the other. They have to sort of arise together. So it's important to note that this does not deny the role of principle, it just simply says that they are one, that they cannot be separated. And that they are both the source of the Four Beginnings and the Seven Emotions.

And these two theories, the dualist theory and the monist theory that arose from this Four-Seven Debate are a very important contribution that's recognized universally as being one of the most important contributions of Korean Neo-Confucianism and it remained, for the remainder of the Joseon Dynasty, it remained an important debate, whether you followed one or the other and what you thought of in terms of why reality was the way it was.

So that is a very brief introduction to the basic ideas of Confucianism, how it developed into Neo-Confucianism and then a little bit of a discussion about the relationship between principle and material force. If it all sounds a little bit confusing, don't worry, because it is. And like I said, this argument remained a topic of heated discussion throughout the Joseon period, especially the later Joseon period, where different scholars had different opinions, and that was okay. They agreed on the fundamentals, the fundamental ideas of wanting to cultivate humanity and benevolence, they agreed on the rituals that were to be performed. But in terms of the specific details of the philosophy, the metaphysics, there was disagreement and there continued to be some disagreement. But I want to move on to talk about how Confucianism fit in to perhaps what we could call the ideological tapestry of Korea. In other words, how it related to other philosophies and other religions in Korea. Because they did not all exist separately, they all existed in mutual relationships with each other.

## 5. Confucianism in Korea's Ideological Tapestry

### • Confucianism and Buddhism

So early on during the Three Kingdoms period and during the Silla period as well, Confucianism co-existed with Buddhism. So each philosophy played its own role. Confucianism was seen more as a guide to behavior in every day life and Buddhism was more of a spiritual guide. So in other words, they had

separate spheres of influence. One dealing with the spiritual aspects of life, one dealing with the more practical everyday aspects of life. So they didn't really come into too much conflict. They existed in a co-operative relationship, I guess you could say.

However, once we had the introduction of Neo-Confucianism and as that developed beginning with the late Goryeo period, Confucianism started to come into conflict with Buddhism. And it came into conflict with Buddhism because of the differences of opinion, well, philosophically speaking at least, because of the differences of opinion on the nature of self and the nature of reality.

So if you remember going back to what we talked about in Buddhism, there is this idea that everything changes, and this is something we can see as we look at the world around us, the fact that everything changes is evidence of the illusory nature of reality, that in fact what we think of as reality is just an illusion and it's based solely on our perceptions. So if you remember the story of Wonhyo and the skull, when he drank the water, when he thought it was from a gourd it was nice and fresh and clean and tasty, and then when he realized it was from a skull, he thought it was disgusting and he understood that his perceptions influenced his reality. So you have this basic idea that reality is illusory.

And you also have, in terms of the understanding of the self, it's understood that the self as we understand it normally is a limitation and Buddhism tried to overcome that limitation of individuality by denying the existence of a differentiated self. So in other words, when I say "I," I think I am referring to a person that is distinct from other people, but in fact there is no differentiated self that is distinct from others. We are all connected together would be a simple way of putting it. So these are the basic, just to give you a quick rehash of that, the basic ideas of how reality and the self are perceived of in Buddhism.

Now Neo-Confucianism on the other hand, and this is something that we have already discussed, Neo-Confucianism already deals with change, but the idea is not that change means that reality is illusory, but that reality itself is change. In other words, the fundamental aspect or level of reality is that change and that change is exemplified or manifested in the patterns that we talked about, "理" (yi). So yi is those changing patterns. And the real world that we see is created by the interaction of yi and gi, the interaction between principle and the material force. So it's not an illusion. We can understand it and we can see how it comes about. So there's a fundamental difference there in the perception of reality.

As far as how Confucianism thinks of the self, once again it has a similar starting point, that the self, that individuality, is a limitation. That if we all think of ourselves as individuals separate from everyone else, then that's not going to lead to the desired outcome, which is harmony in society. But Confucianism takes a different approach and attempts to transcend the limitations of individuality by defining the proper place and the role of each self. So it's sort of actually the opposite of Buddhism, that not that there's no undifferentiated self, but that there are many differentiated selves and these differentiated selves have specific places and roles and only by playing, if each individual plays that proper role within the changing universe, will order and harmony be established. So philosophically speaking, you can see that Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism are really quite opposed.

So prior to the introduction and development of Neo-Confucianism, when Confucianism and Buddhism dealt with separate fields, separate realms, they did not come into conflict. But once they started talking about the same things, that's when they started to come into conflict.

So Buddhism, as we mentioned last time, was predominant during the Goryeo period, but once we

get into the Joseon period, which was essentially a Neo-Confucianist society, Buddhism was suppressed by the government. So monks were not allowed to enter the capital, for example. Lands were taken from monasteries, etc. And there's a practical aspect to this as well, there's not just a physical aspect. Because Buddhism during the Goryeo period had grown quite powerful and quite wealthy. And a lot of these monasteries had become rich and powerful and sometimes this leads to corruption. So there was as backlash against this corruption both real and perceived within the Buddhist establishment. So that's a practical aspect of that as well.

As far as some of the criticisms that were levelled by Neo-Confucianists against Buddhism, and if you look at the world from a Neo-Confucian perspective, these make sense. So one criticism for example was the idea that Buddhist monks in particular renounced their responsibilities to their family and to their societies by hiding away in their monasteries. A good Confucian is supposed to perform their duties to the various people that they have relationships with. But monks go off into their monasteries and they sort of separate themselves from society. So this was seen as almost a sin in Confucianism, the idea that you would place your individual contentment above your duty to the community and by doing so, failing to make any kind of practical contribution to society.

There were arguments, of course, in favor of Buddhism and there were learned Buddhists who made these counterarguments. One argument was that the goal of Buddhism was actually the same as Neo-Confucianism—to bring peace to the self, to the family, to the community. And they would point to the fact that the Buddha himself helped to liberate his parents, so he helped to enlighten his parents. And that's an example of the Buddha fulfilling that relationship between father and son, this idea of filial piety. And there was an argument for the unity of the three teachings, what was known as the three teachings. And the “three teachings” was a term used for the three major teachings that had been introduced from China. There were Buddhism, Taoism, which we haven't discussed in detail but we will mention in passing at times, and Confucianism.

Unfortunately, the Neo-Confucian establishment was very inflexible and Neo-Confucian scholars would deny any connection with or influence from other traditions. So they saw Confucianism as being very different from Buddhism, very different from Taoism, very different from any other tradition. Even though of course they did exist in that relationship of mutual influence, the Neo-Confucian world view was very exclusivist and very inflexible. So those arguments made by members of the Buddhist establishment fell on deaf ears, essentially.

## • Confucianism and shamanism

We also talked previously about shamanism being an important tradition in Korean society and going back as far as the Old Joseon kingdom. Once again, during the Joseon period, shamanism was very much suppressed. So shamans were treated even worse than monks. They were not allowed to enter the capital, etc. Buddhism was recognized as a religion. It was recognized as sort of an organized institution. But shamanism was not recognized as an institution or even a religious tradition. So when it's mentioned in the *Annals of the Joseon Dynasty*, and the *Annals of the Joseon Dynasty* is a very very valuable

source of history, it's an official record of everything that happened during the reigns of the Joseon kings, and if you look through this, you'll see that there are mentions of shamans, but the beliefs, there's no mention of shamanism, of a tradition. The beliefs are generally referred to as superstition or false rituals, or that sort of thing.

And this obviously was a very negative view of shamanism. It was seen as something that was not just not correct, it was something that was leading the people astray and it was something that was putting bad ideas into people's minds. So this tradition of seeing shamanism as a harmful influence that began in the Joseon period actually continues into modern times. And for various reasons even today, although the perception of shamanism has changed and continues to change, there is still a negative perception of shamanism as being something that's sort of backward, an obstacle to the nation moving forward. And that's something that's very much part of the tradition that came from the Neo-Confucian philosophy of the Joseon period.

### • Confucianism and Catholicism

We also discussed last time the idea of the introduction of Catholicism in particular. So, as we mentioned last time, Catholic teachings were initially rejected by Neo-Confucian scholars due to their spiritual aspects, but then later they were accepted. Neo-Confucian scholars were always open to new ideas and doctrines. And once again going back to this idea of the discussion of principle and material force, how these two were related, that was fine, having this open discussion about how we interpret the various ideas of Neo-Confucianism etc., that's fine. You can have new ideas, you can have new doctrines as long as you don't touch the foundations.

So Catholicism wasn't necessarily a threat because it was a new idea. Obviously, some of the more conservative elements did see all of those new ideas as threats. But fundamentally, it was a threat because it was a threat to the authority of the state. And this was best exemplified in the conflict over ancestral rites, known as jesa. So we do need to talk about this for a bit because this is an important aspect of the relationship between Confucianism and Catholicism and this is something that still influences Korea today.

If you look at the Catholic missionaries in 17th century China, there were different ideas about how ancestral rites should be perceived. So the Jesuits, for example, believed that jesa were not religious and thus they were compatible with Catholicism. So Matteo Ricci, who we talked about last time, he viewed jesa as being acceptable. The Dominicans and Franciscans on the other hand initially disagreed and they thought that jesa were religious so they could not be accepted. Later on, many of them did change their minds and agreed with the Jesuits, but the Church in Rome ended up banning jesa in 1704. So at the beginning of the 18th century, the pope banned jesa, banned the practice of jesa. And this was confirmed again in 1742.

This was obviously before the introduction of Catholicism into Korea. So by the time Korean Catholics appealed to the bishop in China for guidance, this was something that had already been established for decades, and they were forbidden from performing jesa. And this act of rebellion, not

performing the state-prescribed rituals, that was really the core of the conflict and why you had that persecution of Catholicism. So it's worth asking the question, "Is jesa actually religious? Is it a religious ritual or is it not?"

So there are mentions of ancestral rites in the *〈Analects〉*, again going back to the sayings of Confucianism. If we go to chapter 2 verse 5, there is this saying, and this is a direct quote from Confucius himself, it says, "When your parents are alive, serve them according to propriety or 禮 (예; ye); when they die, observe their funerals according to propriety, and observe the memorial rituals, 祭 (제; je), according to propriety." So all three of these actions that are mentioned, serving them while they are alive, performing their funeral rites, performing their memorial rites, these are seen as fulfilling "propriety." And what that means is that the children are fulfilling their filial duty to their parents.

So sometimes if you look at English translations of the *〈Analects〉*, "祭" (제; je) is sometimes, this character, is sometimes translated as worship. That's a very very unfortunate translation because it misunderstands the Confucian idea here. It's not necessarily that you're worshipping your parents or your ancestors as gods or as spirits, which would make it an entirely religious ritual of course, but that you are performing your duty. You're performing the rituals that have been prescribed because that is how you cultivate the good aspects of your nature. So fundamentally, there's definitely an argument for jesa not being religious. But the way it was perceived in the West, because of perhaps a lack of understanding of what was going on, the Catholic Church ended up banning it.

And in practice, it is, it can be a little bit vague or a little bit on the border, I guess we could say. But the fundamental idea is not a religious one. There's another example from the *〈Analects〉*, and this is chapter 2 verse 24, "To perform rituals to other than one's ancestral spirits is flattery." So in other words, you do not perform rituals to just any spirits, but just to your ancestral spirits. And that would seem to indicate that ancestral rituals are not in fact a form of worship. So that's another piece of evidence in favor of them not being a religious worship.

So due to the importance of ritual in cultivating the innate moral character in Confucianism, as we mentioned before, it was this refusal to perform the ritual that essentially was seen as not just a political rebellion but also moral rebellion. So Neo-Confucianism, being very exclusivist, reacted very harshly to this early Catholic refusal to perform jesa and it led to a lot of persecution and a lot of martyrs being killed by the government.

Now in the 20th century, in 1939, the Vatican did revisit the issue of ancestral rituals and it lifted the ban actually. So after two centuries in change, they finally went back and they lifted the ban on rituals. So today in Korea, Catholicism does allow some aspects of jesa. So Catholics are allowed to perform some aspects of these jesa rituals.

Protestants, however, Protestantism having been introduced later on, after the persecution of Christianity was officially ended, they did not necessarily have to compromise. So Protestants in Korea today tend to see jesa as religious rituals and they hold instead memorial ceremonies. Many Protestant families will still hold ceremonies on the anniversary of the death of a parent or a grandparent, but they are not Confucian rituals, they are actually Christian ceremonies where they read scripture, they pray, they sing hymns etc. In other words, it's a religious ritual. So the view of whether or not jesa are religious does differ depending on your specific tradition. So that's the relationship of Confucianism with

Christianity, which has been very complex.

### • Practical Learning

But moving onto something that I've mentioned before, the idea of Practical Learning. This is actually, it's important to note that it's a modern term applied by modern scholars to reform-minded Neo-Confucian scholars, such as, for example, those who first introduced Catholicism. At the time they did not call themselves Practical Learning scholars. There was no Silhak-pa that existed at that time, it's just a term that was applied later. It was sort of a general social movement among scholars.

And it was a reaction against what they saw as the increasingly metaphysical nature of Neo-Confucianism. So they took example, as I mentioned before, gyeokmul, they took issue with this as being purely a philosophical pursuit, and they thought, 'We should be investigating things in the modern scientific sense.' So these scholars, who were later identified with the term Practical Learning, they advocated the pursuit of modern science, modern technology and modern learning. So fields like geography, to get a modern understanding of the world, the modern technology that was being introduced at the time, a study of history was very important, to have a proper understanding of where Korea fit in the greater scheme of things. But they also studied very practical things like agriculture. "How do we increase the yields? How do we make life easier for farmers?" So they were very early modernists. And this was a trend that was, it was a very important trend at the time among a number of Neo-Confucian scholars. And it led to a lot of important developments that developed Korea and make Korea what it is today.

## 6. Closing: Confucianism Today

So I want to wrap things up today by looking at what Confucianism is like today. What does it mean for Korean society today? Because as I mentioned at the beginning, a lot of, in my experience, a lot of students that I have for example, they tend to just fall back on Confucianism as an easy answer for why Korea is the way it is. Hopefully some of the things that we've talked about today will give you a better idea of what exactly Confucianism was and how it might influence, or continue to influence, Korean society today. But to wrap things up, I want to go into a little more detail about that.

So, as we mentioned, Confucianism was the ruling ideology of the Joseon kingdom. So once the Joseon Dynasty fell after the transition to the Great Korean Empire and then into the colonial period, the end of the Joseon Dynasty essentially also meant a severe decline in the influence of Confucianism in Korea. Institutionally speaking, the hyanggyo, which were the local Confucian schools around the nation, there are still many hyanggyo that are around today. They're still there. They're under the jurisdiction of Seonggyungwan, which is the national Confucian academy, and you may have heard of Seonggyungwan

Daehak, Seonggyungwan University. But these hyanggyo, they rely on donations from the community, or they rely on government subsidies. Many of them have been designated as cultural heritage sites and as cultural heritage sites they get funds from that. So they're not self-supporting, necessarily. They're still around but they don't play nearly as important a role as they used to. And obviously we don't have... there is a civil service examination system of course in Korea, and you still have to take an exam if you want to become a civil servant, but it's not based on the Confucian classics, it's a much more modern system.

Jesa, as I mentioned before, is still a very important ritual. Even though it is no longer prescribed by the state, you are no longer required to hold jesa, most families still hold jesa, except, as I mentioned, Protestant families. Particularly the head families of clans still hold jesa for four generations of ancestors. So the head family, the jongga, is the family that descends in a straight line from the progenitor, or the founder, of a particular clan. So it passes down from eldest son to eldest son to eldest son to eldest son. And this jongga actually still plays a very important role in keeping these traditions alive and they hold jesa for four generations of ancestors and they hold a number of rituals throughout the year. In fact, I have visited a number of these jongga houses, these jongga families, and I was talking with one of the wives and she was saying that basically half of the year is spent either performing jesa or preparing for jesa. So most normal families only hold jesa for like their parents or their grandparents, but in these head families, they're still a very very important part of life, very elaborately held, very time-consuming.

The royal ancestral rites as well. We mentioned earlier on the idea of jongmyo, which is the royal ancestral shrine. Every year, royal ancestral rites are still held at jongmyo. They're held on the first Sunday of May. If you ever happen to be in downtown Seoul on the first Sunday of May and you want to go see what these rites look like, you can go check them out. The rites and the ritual music that is performed, known as Jongmyo jerye-ak, both of these have been actually designated by UNESCO as Korea's first masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This was in 2001. So they're still considered to be a very important part of Korea's culture and Korea's cultural heritage.

That being said, very few people will identify as Confucianists. It's not really an identification that you would see on censuses. You have people who identify as Protestants, you have people who identify as Catholics, you have people who identify as Buddhists, you even have people who identify as followers of Cheondogyo, as we talked about last time. But people don't identify as Confucianists. It's not something that exists as a separate belief system. It's just sort of part of the general current, or the general underpinning, of society.

So there's a lot of influence that still remains even though it's not as much in the fore as it was during the Joseon period. And this influence can be seen in a number of ways. Probably the most important and the most obvious example of this influence is in the social hierarchy. So, as I mentioned at the beginning, Confucianism places a greater importance on harmony than equality. And this is something that... I guess we could call it a different concept of equality. So the idea that everyone has different roles to play does not necessarily mean that they're not equally important. So there's the idea that everyone has equal importance, but they're different and they're not the same. This philosophy does not really mesh with modern ideas, especially in a modern liberal democracy. These ideas of equality. So in a modern liberal democracy, a modern society, the idea that everyone is equal means that everyone

should have the same opportunities, everyone should be on the same playing field. So that is something that these different ideas of equality don't really fit with each other. And as a result you do have tension when it comes to the hierarchy in Korean society, especially generationally speaking. This hierarchy is most tangible, most visible in language use, as we've discussed before when we talked about language.

So, I mentioned speech protocol, or what are known as honorifics. And I used the term speech protocol in that lecture because it does not just mean deference to those who are higher than you. It means just how you should speak to anyone depending on their relative position to you. So in Korea, if you do not speak deferentially to those higher than you, that will make people very uncomfortable. But if you are excessively deferential to people who are lower than you, that also makes people very uncomfortable. And that's something that's a little bit difficult to get used to at first. You want to be polite to people, but if you are excessively deferential to someone who's much lower than you, that will actually make people uncomfortable, because you are not playing your proper linguistic role. And if you don't play that proper linguistic role, if you don't play that proper role in the hierarchy, it disturbs the social order. So language use is probably the most obvious invisible aspect of that, but obviously the hierarchy exists in other places as well that may be slightly less difficult to see but also can still be pretty obvious.

Confucianism has often been blamed, since we're talking about the hierarchy, for the lower place of women in society. This is not completely untrue, of course. It's also not the full picture. We know that women have been oppressed and kept down in many non-Confucian societies as well, so there must be something else going on that's not just about Confucianism. But it is, of course, this idea of the husband and the wife being in this hierarchical relationship, this was an important aspect of Confucianism. The idea was that they would respect each other and they would treat each other with 仁 (yin), with humanity, but unfortunately, this idea of the two-way nature of the Five Relationships is often forgotten. So whether it's the ruler and the ruled, and these days we could talk about presidents and citizens, but in terms of everyday life, your boss and employees, that's a ruler-and-ruled relationship, often what happens in reality is that the higher member demands loyalty from the lower member without giving anything in return. This is not the idea that Confucius had in mind, but this is unfortunately what happens when human beings gain power over others. A good Confucianist would practice this humanity. But ideologies in reality are as they are practiced, not as they are professed. So we do have to admit that the way that Confucianism influenced society did have some negative effects that remain today. And this is something that is recognized in Korea as well. There was even a book published in 2001 with the title, 〈Confucius Must Die in order for the Nation to Live〉, that talked about the very negative influences of Confucianism.

But there are characteristics, like this emphasis on propriety, etiquette etc. The emphasis on the proper way to do things. Emphasis on relationships. Emphasis on education. These are also elements of Confucianism that have influenced Korean society perhaps in a less negative way, sometimes a positive way, sometimes less positive. But people following a certain etiquette, that's not necessarily a bad thing. This emphasis on relationships, for example, is also important. Education is something that we could probably spend an entire lecture on as well. There are good aspects of that. There can also be negative aspects of that as well. We don't have time to go into that in great detail, but the current emphasis on

education in Korea is definitely a legacy of Confucianism, in addition to the other things that we've talked about.

That being said, once again, just by way of closing, I want to say that Confucianism is still just one thread in the tapestry of Korean culture. So it is very important, but be careful about attributing any cultural phenomena in Korea solely to Confucianism and understand that all of these traditions that we've talked about, all these philosophies and all of these belief systems, etc., they influenced each other, and in their mutual relationships, they've also influenced how Korean society and Korean culture have developed.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. The hwarang of Silla show how Confucian values influenced the lives and culture of people in Silla. (T/F)

Answer:

T

2. After the establishment of the civil service examination during the Unified Silla period, knowledge of Confucian classics was essential for gaining a government post. (T/F)

Answer:

T

3. Ancestral rites performed at jongmyo and sajik were purely religious and had no political aspects to them. (T/F)

Answer:

F

4. Neo-Confucian scholars recognized shamanism as a traditional culture and respected it. (T/F)

Answer:

F

5. Literati who believed in Neo-Confucianism tried to purge other literati who believed in other religions through the four literati purges. (T/F)

Answer:

F

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the key concepts of Confucianism?

- a. Following the Way means to practice and cultivate humanity (仁; yin).
- b. The word “Superior Man” (君子) originally meant a person of high status, but Confucius repurposed the term to mean someone of high morality.
- c. In Confucianism, Heaven (天) is worshiped as a type of personal God.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Confucius and Mencius?

- a. Confucius took existing ideas and brought them together to create one coherent philosophical system.
- b. Confucius believed that to understand the human world one first had to understand the spirit world.
- c. Mencius used the observation that everyone tries to help a child about to fall into a well as evidence that humans are inherently good natured.

Answer: b

3. Which of the following is an accurate description of the various perspectives about the religious nature of ancestral rites?

- a. In the 17th century, Jesuit missionaries didn't consider ancestral rites as religious acts.
- b. From *Analects* we can tell that Confucius considered ancestral rites to be a religious obligation.
- c. In modern Korean Catholicism, there are rules that forbid ancestral rites.

Answer: a

4. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Neo-Confucianism?

- a. Before the introduction of Neo-Confucianism, Confucianism and Buddhism dealt with separate realms and did not come into conflict.
- b. Unlike Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism saw reality as unchanging.
- c. Neo-Confucian scholars criticized Buddhist monks for renouncing social duties.

Answer: b

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the Four-Seven Debate?

- a. The Four-Seven Debate sought to find the answer to the question, “If human nature is good, why do people do things that are not good?”
- b. Scholars who believed that everything is made from two things, principle (li) and material force (gi), emphasized the importance of mindfulness.
- c. Yi Yi continued the scholarly work of Yi Hwang and further systematized Juriron.

Answer: c

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank(s) with the appropriate word(s).

1. The Four Beginnings, the dispositions arising from the human nature, are compassion arising from \_\_\_\_, shame arising from \_\_\_\_, modesty arising from \_\_\_\_ , and moral discrimination arising from \_\_\_\_.

Answer: humanity (仁), righteousness (義), propriety (禮), wisdom (智)

2. \_\_\_\_ refers to the investigation into the principles or patterns behind all things as a method of achieving true knowledge or wisdom. It is primarily considered as a way of overcoming material forces and cultivating good nature.

Answer: Investigation of things (gyeokmul)

3. During the late Joseon period, conservative factions, in reaction to the large influx of Western imperial powers, tried to protect Confucianism and prevent Western political and cultural influences. It is called \_\_\_\_ movement.

Answer: “Defend Orthodoxy, Reject Heterodoxy” (Wijeong-cheoksa)

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Using specific examples, describe the conflict between Confucianism and Catholicism over the religious nature of ancestral rites, and explain the current view of ancestral rites in modern Korean Christianity.

\* Answer guide

Of the many Catholic missionaries in China during the 17th century, the Jesuits did not consider ancestral rites as religious in nature. However, in 1704, the Vatican banned ancestral rites, leading all Catholics to reject ancestral rites. In Joseon, where Neo-Confucianism was the state ideology, the rejection by Catholics of ancestral rights was considered political and moral rebellion, and Catholics

were subsequently executed. The ban against ancestral rites in Catholicism was finally lifted in 1939, and in modern Korean Catholicism, ancestral rites are partially allowed. However, in Protestantism, where such rites are considered religious, there is a trend of replacing these Confucian rituals with Christian rituals when honoring the dead.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Briefly describe the relationship between Confucianism and various religions in Korea including shamanism, Buddhism, and Christianity, from the Three Kingdoms period to the Joseon period.

\* Answer guide

During the Three Kingdoms period and the North and South Kingdoms period, Confucianism and Buddhism dealt with separate realms and did not come into conflict. Confucianism dealt mainly with how to act in daily life and Buddhism acted like a spiritual guide. Although Buddhism flourished during the Goryeo period, Neo-Confucianism emerged during the late Goryeo period, and Buddhism became an object of national suppression during the Joseon period. Shamanism was suppressed even more severely than Buddhism because it was considered a system of dangerous myths and beliefs that conflicted with Neo-Confucianism. Catholicism rejected ancestral rites, which was considered very important in Confucianism. Because of this, in the early phases of Korean Christianity, many Catholics were persecuted.

## 〈Lecture 5〉

# Korean Architecture

– Harmony in Form and Function

### Class goals

1. Identify the basic characteristics of Korean architecture
2. Diachronically examine three major categories of Korean traditional architecture
3. Learn about some representative examples of Korean traditional architecture

### Summary

In this class, we learned about the basic characteristics of Korean architecture and diachronically examined three main categories of Korean traditional architecture.

Korean architecture is characterized by a mixture of straight and curved lines. Houses are built in human scale in Korea to harmonize with nature. Philosophical influences such as feng shui and the Daoist concepts of yin, yang and the Five Elements are also found in Korean architecture.

Residential architecture in Korea starts with dugout houses in prehistoric times. The midori house was developed in the Three Kingdoms period. In Unified Silla, there were strict house construction laws based on social status. During the Goryeo period, houses consisted of a number of buildings with different functions. Influence of Confucianism is found in Joseon residential architecture, as exemplified in the division of space according to hierarchy.

In terms of state architecture, we have city walls from the Three Kingdoms period. City walls and palace complexes of Goryeo remain in Gaeseong. Much architecture of Joseon is preserved in Seoul, and Gyeongbok Palace is the most famous example. Suwon Hwaseong, which was constructed in the 18th century, represents advancements in construction in late Joseon.

For sacred architecture, we have famous temples from Unified Silla including Bulguk Temple, Seokga Pagoda and Dabo Pagoda in Bulguk Temple, and Seokguram are also exquisite examples of Silla Buddhist art. Temple architecture flourished in Goryeo. One of the famous examples is Muryangsujeon in Buseok Temple, which features slightly convex pillars. In Joseon, there was no major temple construction in the provinces, partly due to the suppression of Buddhism.

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Overview

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today, we're going to be moving on from the religion and philosophy that we talked about last time to architecture, although as you will see, there will be some connections between the subjects.

### Class goals

So, architecture is a very broad subject. We're going to divide it into three major themes, three major ideas, three major types of architecture, and then we're going to examine each of these types diachronically, in other words how it has developed throughout history.

### Contents

1. Overview
2. Basic Characteristics of Korean Architecture
3. Residential Architecture: Home, Hearth, and Hanok
4. State Architecture: Palaces and Fortress Walls
5. Sacred Architecture: Temples and Pagodas
6. Closing

We are only going to be going up to the Joseon period today. Modern architecture, from the colonial period on, is a bit too broad, so we're going to be focusing primarily on traditional architecture, up to the Joseon period. And we won't be able to actually cover every aspect of traditional architecture as well, but hopefully it will give you a good understanding and a good overview of Korean architecture. So, we're going to start with a discussion of the basic characteristics of Korean architecture, and this is where some of those connections with the various philosophies and ideologies we talked about will come in. This will serve as a general introduction to architecture in Korea. Then we'll move onto residential architecture—how people lived. Specifically, the development of what is known today as hanok, or Korean houses. The second theme is state architecture and this refers to city walls and palaces in particular. And finally, we're going to look a little bit at sacred architecture as well, specifically Buddhist temples and pagodas.

## 2. Basic Characteristics of Korean Architecture

So, starting with the basic characteristics of Korean architecture, we're just going to talk about a few ideas that will come up again and again and that you might see in some of the examples of architecture that we look at.

Geometry is one interesting area to look at because Korean architecture is a mixture of straight and curved lines at its most simple level, both in the structure and also in the decoration. So, in terms of the structure of buildings, you can see straight lines in the layout, if you were to look at it from the top down, for example. The pillars are straight, the walls are straight, the rooms are straight lines, boxes, rectangles, squares etc. However, we also have curved lines in the roofs and the eaves, which form catenary lines, in order to harmonize with the natural landscape. You can also see natural curves preserved in what otherwise might be considered straight elements, so beams, thresholds, for example. Instead of being cut and smoothed into perfectly straight elements, they might preserve the natural curve of a piece of wood, for example.

There's also the understanding of space in Korean architecture. And this is something that might be a little bit different from some Western examples. So, especially later on, you have the idea of separate buildings that are then subdivided into rooms. And these buildings and rooms have specific functions. So we'll talk about the details of that later, but essentially you have the alternation of positive and negative space. So you might have one building and then around that building there will be a yard, and then around that there will be other buildings that are arranged. Around those other buildings, there will be another negative space, and then there'll be a wall and then outside of that wall there'll be the negative space of the area outside the house. And here, the idea of the positive and negative space, of course, isn't a value judgement, it's just positive space being space that is taken up by something that has a specific function, like a building or a wall etc. And negative space is... you can also think of it as white space, empty space, blank space. It has its function as well, but it's not occupied by a structure.

There's also, in terms of this, talking about this concept of space, there's this relationship between

open spaces and closed spaces. So this is probably best seen in the relationship or the contrast between what are known as ondol rooms and what are known as maru rooms. And I'll get into what these are specifically in a little more in a moment. But ondol rooms are naturally closed. So they are enclosed spaces, but they can be opened up and they can become open spaces. Maru rooms, on the other hand, are naturally open, but they can be closed. So these spaces can be adjusted depending on the specific needs at the moment, depending on the environmental factors, etc.

Another aspect of Korean architecture that we can discuss is the scale of the architecture. And Korean scholars often refer to Korean architecture as having a human scale. Partly, this can be seen as a result of the fact that traditionally people sit on the floor. Chairs are something that were only introduced in modern times. And even today, a lot of restaurants that you go into, people still sit on the floor. You can see this in some houses as well. So the fact that people sit on the floor leads to more what we might say is human-sized houses. In other words, you don't see high ceilings, for example, in traditional Korean architecture, that you might see elsewhere. But also, this scale can be seen in the palaces as well. So if you've ever been to the Forbidden City in Beijing, for example, the scale of that palace is quite huge. Or even in palaces or buildings in other areas in China as well, they're quite massive and grand in scale. Korean palaces and structures tend to be a little more modest in size. So you can see that scale in the larger buildings as well. Houses should also be in harmony with nature, as opposed to competing with it. So that also leads to this idea of buildings being in a sort of more modest human scale.

There are some very important philosophical influences that we could talk about as well. So we have the idea of feng shui, which in Korean is known as pungsu. And pungsu was introduced during the Three Kingdoms period, it thrived during the Goryeo and Joseon periods. And pungsu is used to determine the locations of palaces, houses, cities, even tombs, and their arrangement, etc. I'll go into more detail about this later, but it's a very important ideological influence, especially once we get into the Goryeo and Joseon periods. You also have the idea of eumyang-ohaeng. "Eumyang" refers to what is generally referred to in the West as yin and yang and if you remember when we talked about language and we talked about vowel nature, we talked about how vowels have a yin and a yang nature. That's one example of an application of this philosophy of eumyang-ohaeng. The "ohaeng" part refers to the Five Elements. In architecture, the five colors that are associated with these Five Elements and these five directions are very important. So, for example, in the easterly direction, you have blue or green, in the western direction you have white, in the southern direction you have red, in the northern direction you have black, and in the center, considered the fifth direction, you have yellow. And these five colors are used in decorating palaces and other buildings and this is known as dancheong, the dancheong decoration. So that's an example of how the five elements are reflected in architecture. And as I mentioned before, this harmonizing of buildings with the natural landscape, this is influenced by the eumyang part, the yin and yang part. So Korea is a very mountainous country. A lot of mountains. It's very difficult to go anywhere in Korea where you can't see mountains. You're generally always going to be able to see mountains. And mountains are yang, or yang. So in order to harmonize with them, you don't want really tall houses, you want low houses, which are eum, or yin. And this creates a harmony between what people build and what nature has built.

You also have Confucianism, which we just covered in our last class. And as we mentioned then,

the idea of hierarchy was very important in Confucianism. And this hierarchy carries over into the structure of buildings, the structure of houses and in the division of space. Of course, this is not the only reason why hierarchy might appear in architecture. Obviously other non-Confucian nations also have hierarchical elements in their architecture. But this is one reason in Korea at least why you see some of these hierarchies. Probably the most prominent example of this is in the idea of namnyeo yubyeol, which is that men and women should be separated. So you have separate spaces for men, separate sleeping and living quarters for men, and separate sleeping and living quarters for women. Also, the importance of jesu, the importance of ancestral rites later on led to the building of separate spaces for carrying out these rituals. So you can see the influence of Confucianism specifically in those aspects.

Buddhism obviously influenced temple architecture, the idea of the temple as a spiritual journey, for example, that when you are going through a temple, when you enter a temple and you progress through the temple, that you are removing yourself from a mundane world and that you are entering a spirit world. You can see, obviously as you would expect, a lot of elements of Buddhist ideas, worldview and philosophy expressed in the elements of architecture that you see in temples.

And we also have the idea of harmony with nature so this is seen in, we already mentioned, pungsu, or feng shui, and in eumyang-ohaeng, that deals with harmonizing with nature. You also have natural materials that are being used like wood, stone and clay. You have the desire not necessarily to perfect everything, as I mentioned before. Sometimes elements like beams or thresholds might be left in their natural form. So leaving these natural imperfections rather than trying to impose some sort of artificial perfection, this represents a harmony with nature as well. And the idea that you would seek to complement the terrain rather than dominate it, as I mentioned before, having low houses against high mountains, that sort of thing. Gardens are also a very good example. Gardens are an aspect of architecture that we're not going to be able to discuss in detail today, unfortunately, but they are a good example of how Korean architecture tries to harmonize with nature. I'll mention them briefly at the end of the lecture today. And then of course you have the architecture adapts to the climate. So, rather than trying to fight the different climatic conditions, the architecture seeks to adapt to it instead.

### 3. Residential Architecture: Home, Hearth, and Hanok

So, we're going to start off with the first subject that I mentioned, the first topic, which is residential architecture, basically, how people lived, what sort of homes they built. And we've already seen some examples of this from our history class when we talked about the early history of Korea.

### • Prehistoric times

So, specifically during the Neolithic period, some of the early examples that we have today, obviously these are reconstructions, they're not the surviving examples. But there are sites that have been excavated that have shown us how these houses were built. These are known as dugout houses and they're called dugout houses because they were dug into the earth. So you have maybe, I don't know, go down a meter or so into the earth, and they would dig out a large space either circular or perhaps a little more oval, and then what they would do is they would put pieces of wood that would go up in sort of what we might call a teepee shape and cover that with thatched coverings. It would look like from the outside, it would look like a very low, conical sort of house. But in the entrance, you would go in the entrance and you would find that it would actually go down into the earth so that you would have room to actually stand up. And one of the aspects of these houses, of course, is that they were single-roomed houses. You didn't necessarily have divisions into separate rooms. So all of these activities were carried out within this single room. You might have different areas of the house, like this area would be used for sleeping, this area would be used for cooking, etc. But it was all carried out in a single room. Those were the earliest examples of dwellings that we have on the Korean peninsula.

Now, you started to see above-ground houses developing as well. These included what we would call log cabins, so houses that were built by arranging logs one on top of the other, cutting them flat and then arranging them in a log cabin shape. You also had houses that were raised on platforms, so raised up above the ground.

One of the important characteristics of these houses that were above ground as opposed to being dugouts was the introduction of what is known as gudeul. And these were L-shaped, the first gudeul were L-shaped gudeul. And they were basically trenches that were dug below the floor and then they were lined with stone and then there was a stone, or many stones, placed on top of them to form a sort of channel and then the floor of the house would be built on top of that. Why would they do this? Well, originally, in the dugout houses, you had a fireplace just out in the open. A fire would be built someplace in the floor, possibly, depending on how big the house was, you might have multiple fireplaces. And then the smoke would rise up and it would naturally just sort of filter out through holes in the roof. These gudeul, these channels in the floor, were an improvement over that because they led the smoke out through this channel in the floor and then out to a chimney that was located outside the house. So you still had the fire within the house, but then the smoke would sort of follow this channel through the floor and then it would exit through the chimney. And in addition to carrying the smoke out, it also did carry the heat out through the floor and it heated part of the house in the process. So these L-shaped gudeul, these L-shaped channels, existed as far back as the Bronze Age, according to excavations that were made.

### • The Three Kingdoms period

When we move onto the Three Kingdoms period, houses start to develop into what are known as midorijip or midori houses. And these are houses that are sort of precursors to what you might be more

familiar with if you've seen traditional Korean architecture. These are houses where the roof beams or the girders are placed directly on top of the columns, so there's no lintels or brackets for support. So you can see we're developing from those earlier styles into sort of an intermediate style before we develop that bracket or support structure that you see in later examples.

So as far as the specifics of the Three Kingdoms go, during the Goguryeo period, we do have tomb murals. So, for example, murals in some of the tombs from that period, such as the third tomb in Anak, these show separate buildings for different functions. So, we're moving away from the single building for everything and we're starting to have like a separate kitchen, a separate storage room for grains, separate sleeping areas, etc. You also had gudeul, those channels in the floor being excavated from Goguryeo ruins as well. So you see that tradition did continue. And you saw a distinction in particular in the way that the roofs were constructed depending on your class. So commoners would have thatched roof houses and the nobles, the aristocrats, would have tiled roofs, which are much fancier and much more durable. A thatched roof house, if you know anything about that, you do have to rethatch the house after a certain amount of time has passed. They don't last forever. A tiled roof house is not only more waterproof, but it also lasts for a longer time, so you saw this distinction in the houses manifested in the way that the roofs were made.

Baekje was very similar to Goguryeo, so you saw a lot of similarities there, although there is evidence, there is archeological evidence of straight gudeul. So originally, as I mentioned before, the gudeul would run along one wall and then it would make a sort of L shape and then it would go out through the chimney. You did see evidence of gudeul that would just run straight along the floor. This may have been the origin of what would later become ondol and I'll mention ondol in a moment.

As far as Silla goes, because Silla eventually unified the southern part of the peninsula, it's difficult to find evidence prior to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms period. So I'll just move on and we'll talk about the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, because most of what we know about Silla houses comes from that time.

### • The North and South Kingdoms period

And we do know that there were very strict laws based on social status or class that determined how you could build your house or how you could decorate your house, or what sort of materials you could use for your house. So for example, if you weren't above a certain class, if you were a lower class or a commoner, you couldn't use dancheong. You couldn't use those five colors to decorate your house. You couldn't use smooth cut stones for stairs. You had to use rough stones, or more natural stones. So those smooth cut stones were preserved for upper class and royal houses etc. Aristocratic houses were obviously very lavish. But even commoner houses were of good quality in the capital of Gyeongju. And we have records that tell us that at the height of the Silla Dynasty in Gyeongju, there were almost 180,000 houses in the capital and very few of them had thatched roofs. So that indicates that even the commoners had a fairly high standard of house construction within the capital of Silla.

The floors were made of three different types of materials, so you had wooden floors, you had

stone floors, and then you had floors that were just tamped earth. And this would continue, these different types of floors would continue throughout the remainder of the history of traditional Korean architecture. And you can see in some examples that are still around today the distinction between these different types of floors.

At this point during the Unified Silla period, during the North and South Kingdoms, the L-shaped gudeul became universal, so you saw them in all sorts of houses. We may have already seen at that time a crossover to what we know as ondol today. The difference between gudeul and ondol is gudeul is a single trench that is dug into the floor. Ondol is basically where you have a number of straight trenches that cover the whole floor. So with a single gudeul, only a part of the floor would have been warm, but with ondol, the idea was to carry the warmth of the fire throughout the whole floor and warm up the entire room.

In Balhae, which is the other kingdom that existed during the North and South Kingdoms period, we don't have much archeological evidence about Balhae houses, but the evidence that we do have points to a continuation of Goguryeo style and traditions, and that would make sense as Balhae, they thought of themselves as sort of the successors to Goguryeo. So, we see them in sort of the same tradition there.

### • Goryeo

After the Silla period, of course we had the Goryeo period. And in this time, once again, we know that houses consisted of a number of buildings according to function divided into various rooms, just as we saw in Goguryeo. Obviously, this is talking more about the houses of well-to-do families. So commoner houses may have had only one or two buildings at most. So when we talk about this division of space, we are referring mostly to middle or upper class families. Well, there wasn't really a middle class at the time. But upper class aristocratic families would have had those different buildings for different functions, whereas commoners would have had maybe a single building divided into rooms that had different functions. But you did see that division according to function.

And the different floors would be used for different functions, as I mentioned before. You had the different types of floors. You had the earthen floors, which were basically earth that was tamped down, or pressed down, to form a hard surface. This was the type of floor that you would see in a kitchen or in a storeroom. Then you had the ondol floors and by this point, by the 13th century, during the Goryeo period, you would have these gudeul covering the entire room, and at this point, the fireplace would no longer be inside the room. So the fireplace eventually moved to outside the room. It was originally inside and then eventually you had what is called an agungi. An agungi is a little space which is accessed from outside the room and you would build a fire in there and that would give you hot air that would go underneath the entire floor and then it exits from the chimney on the other side. This is the modern, or what became the later ondol type of floor. These rooms were used for sleeping or living spaces, so places where you would want to have a warm floor. And then finally you would have maru rooms, as I mentioned before, for open spaces. And the maru were inherited from the Three Kingdoms, as I mentioned before. These are the wooden floor rooms and they're sort of the opposite side of the coin

from the ondol, because maru rooms have the wooden floor, but there's also usually a space underneath. It's not just wood that's directly on top of the earth, it's usually raised from the foundation somewhat so that you have airflow that can go beneath the maru floor. And that keeps the floor and the room as a whole very cool.

So once we had the introduction of Neo-Confucianism in the late Goryeo period, as we discussed last time, once Neo-Confucianism became important, you started seeing family shrines being built in homes. So, for aristocratic houses, for example the jongga, the head families that I mentioned last time that have to perform the rituals for all of their ancestors, for the four generations of ancestors, these types of families would build a separate building on the outskirts of the house. They'd be located in the back against the wall and there'd be a separate building where they would house the ancestral tablets and where they would perform the rituals for their ancestors. Within commoner houses, or houses that weren't as wealthy or well-to-do, there might be a separate room, for example. There might be a small room or a small space that would be devoted to the rituals and a place for keeping the ancestral tablets. So you see that development, that comes directly from the influence of Confucianism.

Obviously at this time as well, you had a continuation of the strict regulations on house building, so people of certain status or certain classes could only build houses based on their status. They couldn't rise above their station, in other words.

And, this is something that I've mentioned before, I mentioned that feng shui was very influential during the Goryeo period. This influenced the location of villages very heavily. So, in feng shui, the idea is that you would want to have certain geographical features around the area where you're going to build your village or where you're going to place your tomb or where you're going to place your palace or whatever. The simple way of understanding it is that there's going to be sort of a mountain in the back, there are other mountains that are arranged in other areas, but you're going to have a mountain in the back, meaning the north, and then you're going to have water flowing to the south. And there's a practical aspect to this as well because cold winds usually come from the north so having a mountain to block the cold wind can be very handy. This was also when you saw a lot of the influence of the eumyang-ohaeng, the yin and the yang, with the low houses being built to harmonize with the mountains.

## • Joseon

Moving on, lastly, into the Joseon period. The Joseon period had the most strict regulations on housing based on their various classes, starting with the yangban, as we discussed before the yangban being the highest class, and then you had the jungin being the middle people, as I mentioned previously these were the technical officials, etc., and then you had the commoners like the yangin and the cheonmin, and the yangin were sort of the higher class commoners and the cheonmin were the lowest class commoners. House sizes were regulated and these house sizes were determined by the number of kan. So they didn't have square meters or even the measurement of area that's used in Korea today, known as pyeong, when houses are measured today. You do have a square meter measurement, but you also will still see houses

measured in pyeong. One pyeong is about 3.3 square meters. But back then, house sizes were actually measured in kan. And a kan is the space between pillars. So if you had four pillars, one, two, three, four, like that square described by those four pillars, that's known as a kan. And you might think, "Well, that's pretty vague." So because it's pretty vague, there were also very strict regulations on how wide the beams could be between the pillars, etc. But depending on your class, there was a very complicated set of regulations. So, at the time, large private houses became known as 99-kan houses, because only palaces could have one hundred or more kan. A private house could go up to ninety-nine at the most. So even if it didn't have ninety-nine kan, there was this phrase, 99-kan house. It meant a very wealthy, private family. A wealthy, private house. You also had regulations about decorations. So the use of dancheong, as I mentioned before. The use of smooth cut stones for stairs and for pillar foundations. What you could use for roof brackets, etc.

There were so many, of these numerous complex regulations that, in practice, a lot of these were ignored and some of them were changed later. But this was all part of the mood of the time. Very specific regulations, specific rules about what you could or couldn't do and making sure that everyone was in their proper place in the hierarchy. That was obviously partly the influence of Confucianism.

You can see the influence of Confucianism in other ways as well. For example, it was very common, especially with well-to-do families that had bigger houses, it was very common for three or four generations to live in the same house. Because you want to take care of your parents, you want to take care of your grandparents, etc. And the best way to do that is to have them live with you so you could take care of them on a day-to-day basis.

Again, you had the division of space and that division of space was carried out in accordance with the hierarchy. So priority was given to the head of the family, the male head of the family, and also to the oldest son. You had that separation between men and women. I mentioned before, you had men's quarters and you had women's quarters. So in well-to-do families, you would have the sarangchae and the sarangchae is the men's quarters, it's a separate building. And then you had the anchae. The anchae, or the inner quarters, those were the women's quarters, a separate building. For commoners' houses, maybe where you only had one building, you would have the sarangbang, which is the room, and the anbang room. In fact, anbang is still used today to refer to the bedroom of a Korean house. But you did have this separation between men and women at that time, and you saw this distinction in the way that the various quarters were positioned, the sarangchae, the men's quarters were positioned toward the front of the house and the women's quarters were positioned toward the back, but also the gates leading into the various quarters. The men's quarters would have a high gate where the gate would rise up above the wall around it and the women's quarters would have a low gate that would be more in line with the wall. So you saw this distinction in that hierarchy.

Of course, you had a continuation of the family shrines, so especially in well-to-do families, they would obviously have to build a shrine in the back of their house, a place where they could have those rituals and a place where they could really keep their ancestors, so to speak, that's where they would keep their ancestral tablets.

And another interesting example of Confucianism is the development of what are known as clan villages. So you have villages that would be occupied by a single clan, which is a large extended family.

One famous example of that is Hahoe Village, down in Andong, which is a village that was populated entirely by the Ryu family. And even in my personal experience, my wife's grandmother lives in a small village that is entirely one clan, so whenever I go there, I know that I am somehow related to everyone who lives there. But that was something that's, again you have this extended relationship as an influence of Confucianism.

As I mentioned before, you still had that influence of feng shui in the selection of village sites and the arrangement of houses. Later on in the Joseon period, or once we get to the later Joseon period, you even had certain shapes that were considered to be more auspicious than others. So, like the square shape, the character 口 (gu) for mouth, the character 日 (il) for sun, if you had a house shaped like that, that was auspicious. Certain shapes on the other hand were to be avoided, like the character 妻 (si) for, it basically means corpse. You didn't want your house to be in the shape of a corpse. 工 (gong) is a character that's used for artisan, it's used for construction. But the 工 character, it sort of indicates a lot of smashing and things being hit with hammers, etc. and that's not something that you wanted for your house. So the, you might call them superstitions, but the beliefs surrounding what made an auspicious house and what made an inauspicious house, sort of developed as time went on.

Of course, you also saw the influence of climate. So as you go further north on the peninsula and the weather gets colder and the winters get harsher, you would see more ondol rooms, these are the rooms with the heated floors. As you went south and the winters got milder and the weather got warmer, you would see more maru rooms. So you could sort of trace the way the houses changed from north to south depending on how many ondol rooms they had compared to how many maru rooms that they had.

And all of this Joseon residential architecture culminated in what is known as hanok today. And hanok, "han" meaning Korean, "ok" meaning house, literally means Korean house, but you will very often hear this term hanok as sort of encompassing this type of architecture, this aesthetic. You might even hear the phrase "hanok village," for example, might be an area where the traditional houses have been preserved and you can find several of these hanok villages around the country including in Seoul and places like Jeonju and in the south as well.

## 4. State Architecture: Palaces and Fortress Walls

### • Prehistoric times

So moving onto what we're calling state architecture, specifically palaces and fortress walls. We know from our discussion of history that defensive walls were long important. As we mentioned, during the Bronze Age the walled towns were the primary political entities. So we know that walls have been built for quite a long time.

### • The Three Kingdoms period

Moving into the Three Kingdom period, though, we see the city walls as defensive structures becoming a little bit more elaborate. And of course the palaces would act as the seats of state power. Now, because the palaces were primarily built of wood, as with houses and as with temples, the primary material used for construction is wood on top of perhaps stone foundations. So we don't actually have any palace remains from the Three Kingdoms period. We do have sites where we know the palaces were and there are some reconstructions, but none of the actual palaces remain. However, we do see some remains of city walls that we can still see today.

So if we start with Goguryeo, the examples of Goguryeo city walls are located in China, what is modern day China, because Goguryeo extended far past what is the Korean peninsula today. So Gungnaeseong, or Gungnae Fortress, Gungnae City, was the capital of Goguryeo until 427, when the capital was moved to Pyeongyang. The city walls for this city were stone walls and we know that they were cut stone that were placed on top of earlier earthen foundations. So there were earthen walls that existed before that and then on top of that they put cut stones. And you can see some examples of what these might have looked like in Jilin in China.

In Baekje, this is something that we mentioned during the history class, the Mongchon Earthen Fortress, the Mongchontoseong, which you can still see in Seoul today in Olympic Park, this fortress was built using, well it was built and sort of established using natural hills. So what they did was they used the hills in the area and they found the hills that sort of formed a defensive parameter and they would cut the outside of the hills, so that the sides are facing out, the part that you want to defend. They would cut those straight to form walls and they would leave the hills on the inside. Now obviously because this was a rolling hilly area, there were going to be some areas between the hills where the enemy could get in. So what they did was they would build up these low areas by building up areas of tamped earth. So they would put earth down, they would tamp it down, very solid. They'd put another layer, tamp it down. And they would essentially build it up until you had a complete ring of earthenworks fortifications around the area with the outside being cut sort of straight, vertical to act as a wall. In places where they needed extra protection, they would have added wooden palisades as well, and these were basically logs that were set up vertically, often with sharpened tops to provide sort of an extra layer of protection, an extra wall there.

In Silla, similarly to what we see in the Mongchon Earthen Fortress, we have Wolseong in Gyeongju, also known as Banwolseong, because it's shaped sort of like a half moon. It actually looks more like a crescent moon, but you know, close. This was built in Gyeongju in 101. It's an earthenwork fortress and the royal palace was built within that. You can still see, if you look at aerial pictures, you can still see sort of the outline of that fortress today and you can see how it sort of looks like a crescent moon or a half moon. There was no outer fortress wall, there was just the inner wall and then the palace inside that. But they did build several mountain fortresses, so they would build fortresses on top of mountains surrounding the area in order to protect the city.

### • The North and South Kingdoms period

So, during the North and South Kingdoms period, Silla did not move its capital. Goguryeo and Baekje did move its capitals, but we're not going to go into that. Silla didn't move its capital, so they didn't build any new city walls. However, toward the end of the 7th century, they did built what is known as Anapji, which is, "ji" is a pond. And they built this artificial pond, they surrounded it with stones, carefully selected stones, in order to represent mountains. It was planted with many flowering plants and populated with rare birds. This was part of a detached palace complex. It has since been restored and you can actually see this. It's a very lovely area and you can see maybe what it might have looked like at the time. Obviously the complex is not original, it's something that was restored later on.

Again, in Balhae, in the north, obviously we do have some partial remains of stone city walls in China, particularly in Manchuria, so you can see examples of what that might look like. It's going to look similar to some of the stone walls that we saw before. Once again, we don't have any remains of the palaces from that era.

### • Goryeo

Moving on into the Goryeo period. The capital at Songdo was the first capital. This is actually the modern day North Korean city of Gaeseong. It had many names throughout history, but when it was founded there, it was founded according to feng shui. So, as I mentioned before, the geographical, topographical conditions were very important, having that mountain in the north, having the water in the south, those were very important considerations when determining the site of the capital.

So they built their fortifications using some of the existing fortifications from the Silla period. So there were fortifications around Songaksan, Songak Mountain, that existed. And they built their city walls extending those fortifications. They also built outer city walls after there was a Khitan invasion in the early 11th century. So they built outer city walls as sort of an extra layer of defense. And these city walls that they built, a very standard sort of construction that you might see elsewhere as well. They were filled with earth and then they were faced with stone. So you had stone on the outside and then you had earth on the inside. And then they were topped with layers of, you had layers of clay mixed with a soft kind of stone and red earth, and you had alternating layers of these that were then tamped down to form a hard surface on top on which people could walk.

So earlier palace complexes, again, we don't have examples of them, but we do have archaeological sites so we know what the palaces looked like. The earlier complexes were built along a single axis, so you had a straight line from the front gate then going into the first courtyard, then going into the next gate, into the next compound, and you could see that they were organized along this single straight axis. However, the Goryeo palace actually had a misaligned axis and this was due to a desire not to tamper with the natural topography. So, instead of trying to flatten the land and make everything nice and straight, they basically just placed the buildings where they would best fit. So you would have started out this way, but then it sort of goes off to the side a little bit and it's a long a different axis. And this is a respect for nature. It's also part of the influence of feng shui, trying to best fit the structure into the

landscape, rather than trying to alter the landscape to fit the structure the other way around.

### • Joseon

Moving into the Joseon period. So, a few years after, a couple years after Joseon was founded, the capital was moved to Hanyang, and this was two years after the foundation of Joseon. In 1394, the capital was moved to Hanyang. This is, of course, modern day Seoul. So, Seoul has more or less been the capital of Korea since the end of the 14th century. As a result, much of the architecture that has been preserved is going to be here and there's a lot in Seoul to see when it comes to some of this traditional architecture.

So the first thing you do when you found your capital, is you have to determine the sites for some of the important state buildings. And the most important building is going to be the palace that's going to be in the center. And then you're going to have Jongmyo, which is the shrine, the royal ancestral shrine. Jongmyo will be located to the east of the palace. And Sajikdan. Sajik, as we mentioned last time, refers to the gods of earth and the gods of grain, and Sajikdan is the altar to those gods. That is going to be located to the west of the palace. And if you look at a map of Seoul, you can see that there's the palace, there's the Jongmyo, there's Sajikdan, and it follows that layout. Construction of these buildings was carried out beginning in 1394 and it was completed in 1395.

So Gyeongbokgung is the main royal palace and this is like, if you're coming to Seoul, you want to see one palace, you want to go to Gyeongbokgung and you want to experience that. After the initial construction, which was completed in 1395, it was added to, particularly during the reign of King Sejong in the following century. So the Eastern Palace, Donggung, was built in 1427. And it's called the Eastern Palace because it's to the east, it's in the eastern section of the palace, but it was designed as a residence for the crown prince, so the prince who was next in line for the kingship.

You also had Gyotaejeon, built in 1440, and this is basically the queen's quarters. So, as I mentioned before, in a well-to-do aristocratic house, you would have the sarangchae for men and the anchae for women. Gyotaejeon is essentially a royal anchae, a royal women's quarters, and it was built to keep with the Confucian principle of the separation of men and women. So these are just some examples, but you did see sort of successive periods of construction where buildings were added over time.

Unfortunately, during the Japanese invasions, at the end of the 16th century, you saw the destruction of the palace. Gyeongbokgung Palace was burnt down during the Japanese invasions and it was actually left empty. So the site was left as sort of a wasteland until the middle of the 19th century, when it was reconstructed by the Daewongun. And the Daewongun, I believe I mentioned them briefly in the history class, but the Daewongun is the title of King Gojong's father, who ruled in Gojong's stead. And from 1865 to 1867, he carried out a massive reconstruction project, during which Gyeongbokgung was rebuilt and restored. It was again partially destroyed by fire in 1876, again it's a wooden structure so fire is always going to be a concern. After the 1876 fire, it was rebuilt in 1888.

Almost all of the buildings were then dismantled a few decades later by the Japanese during the colonial period for various reasons. Sometimes they dismantled buildings to build other buildings or to repair other buildings elsewhere. And they also built their Government-General Office, the office of the

government, right in front of the Geunjeongjeon, which is the throne room of the palace, as sort of a symbolic gesture. The throne room is the seat of power of the Joseon kings and they basically put their government office smack dab in the palace right in front of that to block the view of that so you could only see the Government-General Office. This was built in 1926 and it actually stood for quite some time. When I first came to Korea, it was actually still standing. It wasn't actually torn down until 1995. So I remember seeing the Government-General building when I first came to Korea.

They also, the Japanese, also moved Gwanghwamun. Gwanghwamun is the front gate of the palace, they moved that to the east of the palace. A very important structure that was unfortunately destroyed during the Korean War. But now, it has since been rebuilt and restored to its original location.

Much of the palace has been restored so if you go to the palace today, you can see there's quite a few buildings that have been restored after they were dismantled during the colonial period. Some of the buildings are original, I'll talk about some of those in a moment. But the restoration work is actually ongoing. It's a project that's been going on for decades now and it's slated to last for quite a while longer. So there's always something that's going on, there's always something else that's being restored. And actually, every time I go to a palace, at the palace I often see something new that's there. So eventually the goal is to restore it to its original form.

So some of the notable buildings, I mean there's a lot to see in the palace, but just to give you sort of a quick tour of some of the notable buildings in the palace. There is Geunjeongjeon and that is the throne room that I just mentioned before. "Geunjeong" literally means diligent rule, so it's the Hall of Diligent Rule. And this is the structure that you see once you pass Gwanghwamun and you pass through the first gate, you enter into that courtyard, you see this wonderful looking building, this imposing building. Still with that human scale, but it is very imposing. And it has been sort of recreated to look like what it might have looked like at the time, so you can see the throne there, behind the throne you have what is known as the 〈Irworobongdo〉, or the 〈Painting of the Sun and the Moon and the Five Peaks〉, and that painting only appears behind where the king sits, so it's a very special painting. And if you look up when you go to see that building, if you look up, you can see a dragon on the ceiling as well and the dragon is another symbol of the king. And this building is actually the original building from the 1867 reconstruction, so it's a very important building there.

Another important building is Hyangwonjeong and Hyangwonji. Again, "ji" means pond. So Hyangwonji is the pond and Hyangwonjeong is the pavilion that sits in the island in the middle of the pond. This was built in 1873, and it's again the original structure, and it was built when there was a separate complex called Geoncheonggung built in the north of the palace. This was built as a separate royal residence for Gojong to sort of get away from all of the things that were going on at the time. The pavilion at the center was originally reached by a wooden bridge that came from the northern side, it came from where Geoncheonggung would have been, and this was the longest bridge in the Joseon period that was built entirely from wood. Unfortunately, it was destroyed during the Korean War. A new bridge was built on the southern side following the same design. And it was recently restored, it was actually restored in 2019, so you can see the new and restored version of Hyangwonjeong, Hyangwonji and of the bridge as well.

Perhaps one of the most famous buildings, that you often see in a lot of pictures, is Gyeonghoeru,

which was also from the original 1867 rebuilding. And it's a beautiful building that stands by a lake. It's probably the most photographed building in Gyeongbokgung. A lot of people love to take pictures in front of it because you can see the building reflected in the water. Especially at night, when it's lit up, it looks beautiful. This was built as a place to entertain foreign dignitaries. So it was built for state events. If you wanted to impress someone, you brought them to Gyeonghoeru.

Sujeongjeon is another building that is from the original 1867 reconstruction. It's located just south of Gyeonghoeru. It was built during that reconstruction and in the late Joseon period, it was used as the cabinet building. So that was where the cabinet for the Joseon government would meet. It's also important though because it stands on the site of Jiphyeonjeon. Jiphyeonjeon was the building that stood there before Sujeongjeon was built and Jiphyeonjeon is important because it's essentially the birthplace of hangeul. That's the building where the scholars met to discuss with King Sejong the creation of hangeul. So if you go, the original Jiphyeonjeon building is not there, but Sujeongjeon stands on that site, that's sort of the spiritual home of hangeul, so a very important place in Korean history.

Gangnyeongjeon and Gyotaejeon are the two buildings that, again, are the equivalents of the men's quarters and the women's quarters. So Gangnyeongjeon is the king's quarters, Gyotaejeon is the women's quarters. They were both reconstructed in 1867. Unfortunately, they were dismantled by the Japanese because there was a fire in another palace in 1917 and they used the materials from Gangnyeongjeon and Gyotaejeon to rebuild the buildings in that other palace. So the current buildings were restored in 1994, they're relatively new buildings. But one thing that is interesting to see, and it's quite a famous site, is the garden behind Gyotaejeon known as Amisan, which is named after a famous mountain. It's actually a garden that's built in terraces, so you sort of have this terraced garden with pine trees and you have strangely shaped stones, and you have some very famous chimneys. You can see these chimneys built from orange brick in octagonal shapes with designs on the front. These chimneys are from 1869, so that's a very famous site within the palace as well.

And as I mentioned before, there were other palaces. There were secondary palaces that were built. There were five palaces in total. Gyeongbokgung was the main royal palace, but you also had Changdeokgung. Changdeokgung was used as the royal palace after the Japanese invasions. I mentioned that Gyeongbokgung was burned down and it wasn't reconstructed until the mid 19th century. Well, until that reconstruction, Changdeokgung acted as the royal palace. You also have Changgyeonggung, Deoksugung and Gyeonghuigung. And all of these palaces have been restored and they're all quite worth visiting today. So those are the palaces within Seoul. The palaces of the Joseon Dynasty.

As far as the city walls go, work began on the city walls the year after the palace was completed in 1396. So the original walls were actually a mixture of earthen and stone walls. In areas of the city where the area was low and the ground was wet, they would drive piles into the ground and build the walls on top of that so the walls wouldn't sink. Most of the earthen walls, the original earthen walls, were rebuilt during the reign of King Sejong with stone. So the walls today have been mostly restored and you can see that they're all made of stones. There are some areas where you can see some of the original stones, but you can also see the stones sort of as a timeline. You can see original stones, you can see stones from later reconstructions, and then you can see stones from modern reconstructions as well. So this wall was built around the city of Seoul at the time. Then they put in four gates at the cardinal directions, the north,

south, east and west, and they put four gates in between those at the ordinal directions, the northwest, northeast, southeast, southwest.

Probably the most famous of these gates, these main gates in the city walls, is Sungnyemun, known colloquially as Namdaemun, and “Namdaemun” means Great South Gate. This was built in 1396 at the same time as the wall, of course. It was rebuilt in 1448 once again during the reign of King Sejong because it was thought to be too low and it was not fitting with feng shui, so it didn’t fit its proper shape to fit in with the surrounding environment. The walls around the gate were demolished in 1908 to make way for roads. And this state of affairs lasted, when I first came to Korea again I remember that Namdaemun sat in sort of the middle of a traffic circle and it wasn’t very accessible, you couldn’t really get to it. It was dismantled and repaired from 1961 to 1962 and at the end of 1962 it was designated National Treasure No. 1, so it was considered a very important structure. I am using the past tense, because unfortunately the wooden super structure was mostly destroyed in 2008 due to a fire. The stone structure was unharmed, but most of the wooden structure was destroyed. So it was rebuilt starting in 2010 and the reconstruction was completed in 2013. In addition to restoring the wooden super structure, they actually restored more of the wall using a mixture of new and original stones, so the wall extends a little bit further on either side than it did originally. And most importantly for us, the gate is now approachable. You can actually reach the gate and there’s an area in front of the gate where people like to go and visit it. So, it is very unfortunate that the gate was destroyed, but one benefit of the reconstruction is that it’s now much more accessible to people.

And then you had Cheonggyecheon. So going back to the idea of feng shui, we have the mountain in the back and then we have the water in the front. Cheonggyecheon is a stream that was dug in 1412 to gather waters from the west and the northeast of the palace, to gather them together into one stream to flow east and empty out into the Han River. The Han River flows east to west, actually. Cheonggyecheon was constructed to flow in the opposite direction because this would better satisfy the demands of feng shui.

And the last example that I just want to talk about of state architecture from the Joseon period is Hwaseong, Hwaseong Fortress in Suwon. Just because it’s a great example of some of the advancements in construction in the late Joseon period, and it’s also a complete city wall that’s in great shape and it’s great to go visit and you can see the various aspects of this type of architecture. So after the Japanese invasions, there were a lot of improvements being suggested for fortifications. Obviously the invasions were a horrible time. Then you had the invasions, the Manchurian invasions, after that. So a lot of improvements were being suggested to fortifications, such as the building of bastions and other structures. So these improvements began to be implemented in the 18th century. And then when King Jeongjo moved the tomb of his father, Sado Seja, which is another story, there’s actually a film about Sado Seja if you’ve seen it, we don’t have time to get into that now, but the important point is that he moved the tomb of his father to Suwon in 1789 and then from 1794 to 1796, he had a fortress constructed there called Hwaseong, named after the mountain Hwasan. And this was designed by the Silhak scholar, the Practical Learning scholar, Jeong Yakyong, who we mentioned in our discussion on Catholicism. He drew on advanced techniques in construction and he used complex pulleys and other machines to build the walls. The fortress as it’s seen today was restored in 1975 and if you go and visit, I’ll point out some

notable features that you might want to take a look at.

The gates, for example, one of the improvements to the gates was something that is called an ongseong, and if you look at the gate, you'll see that there's this wall that extends out in a semi-circular pattern and it provides an extra layer of protection, so you can't approach the gate directly, you have to go around that semi-circular gate. There's also postern gates, or ammun, which literally means dark gates. These are gates without gate towers, they are small gates that are sort of hidden and they are used for going in and out of the fortress without being seen. There's also towers, called gongsimdon, which literally means empty-hearted towers, and you can see the bastions that we mentioned, these are fortifications that extend out from the fortress walls and there'd be little buildings that are built there to allow for a better field of fire. You also see the signal fires and the five signal fires to act as sort of a communication device. And the floodgate also, where you would allow the water to leave, but also to provide a gate there. The floodgate is also an important aspect of Suwon Hwaseong.

## 5. Sacred Architecture: Temples and Pagodas

### • The Three Kingdoms period

So lastly, I want to talk a little bit about sacred architecture. Specifically Buddhist temples and pagodas. And we'll start with the Three Kingdoms period because this was when Buddhism was first introduced and the first Buddhist temples were introduced. So, as we mentioned in our discussion of Buddhism, 372 is the date for the introduction of Buddhism into Goguryeo and you saw the first Buddhist temple being built in 375. Unfortunately, no temples remain from this period. Once again, they were wooden constructions, so for the entirety of the Three Kingdoms period, actually, we don't have too many temples remaining. But you do have temple sites, which give some idea of how they were constructed. And we do know that most of the temples of the time were built in lowland areas. Something that will change later.

Some of the things that we do have, that remain, are what are known as pagodas. And these are originated from designs for stupas. And a stupa is sort of a tower, a small tower, with an area inside that is used to hold the remains of a famous monk or a Buddha, or that sort of thing. So these stupa designs led to a variety of pagodas being built. They were built from a variety of materials. You did have some built from wood, you had some built from brick, you had some built from stone, most of them were built from stone, you even had some that were built from bronze. Only a few of these stone pagodas from this period do remain today. We start seeing more once we get into the North and South Kingdoms period, particularly in Silla.

## • The North and South Kingdoms period

Some of the developments of temple architecture during the Silla period were… for one, you had the introduction of two pagodas in front of the main temple hall. So the main temple hall was where the main worship of the Buddha would be held and then in the courtyard in front of that you had two pagodas, one in the east and one in the west. This was a development that you can still see in temples today, it was something that began during the Silla period.

At this time, you also started to see temples being built more and more in the mountains. If you visit Korea today and you go to a temple, more often than not, you're going to be going into the mountains. So this was the time where you started seeing temples going up into the mountains. However, you did also still have some temples at this time being built in the lowland areas. So some of the famous temples from the Silla period include Haeinsa, which I've mentioned previously as the home of the Tripitaka Koreana, that is a temple from the Silla period. There is also Buseoksa and Bulguksa.

Buseoksa was founded in 676 and it's named after a legend of floating stones. "Buseok" literally means floating stone or levitating stone. This is an example of some of the folk religious qualities of Buddhism as opposed to philosophical Buddhism. So this temple was built on a series of level platforms that were cut out of the mountain and they were supported in front by stone embankments. So you sort of cut into the mountain to form a level platform and then you would face it with stone in order to support that, to support the weight of the buildings that were built on top of it. This would be pretty typical for mountain temples and it's the sort of style of temple architecture that you can see today if you visit temples in Korea. Due to the influence of Pure Land Buddhism in particular, the main hall of Buseoksa contains a statue of the Amitabha Buddha, and if you remember when we talked about Pure Land Buddhism, that was the idea that if you recited the name of the Buddha, you would be reborn in the Pure Land. So you can see the influence of Pure Land Buddhism in the Buddha that is enshrined in the main hall there.

Bulguksa is possibly the most famous temple from the Silla period. It was founded in 752, again built on level platforms cut into the mountains. And you can see the eastern and western pagodas in front of the main hall. The eastern pagoda known as Dabotap, which I'll talk a little bit more about in a moment, and the western pagoda is Seokgatap. So these are two very famous examples of the east and west pagodas. You also have the arched stairways leading up to the main courtyard, Cheongungyo and Baekungyo. "Cheongungyo" meaning Blue Cloud Bridge, "Baekungyo" meaning White Cloud Bridge. These pagodas and these arched stairways are all actually national treasures. And there are other national treasures located in Bulguksa as well. There are two gilt bronze Buddhist statues and there's a stupa, and all three of these are national treasures as well. So it's housing a lot of cultural heritage.

To go back to the pagodas for a moment, if you look at Dabotap and Seokgatap. "Dabo" literally means abundant treasure, so The Pagoda of Abundant Treasure, and it refers to the Prabhutaratna Buddha. This is a Buddha who appears in the Lotus Sutra, who comes and he praises Shakyamuni as he's preaching. "Seokga" is the Korean pronunciation of Shakyamuni, so it makes sense that they would appear side by side. Seokgatap, The Pagoda of the Shakyamuni, is a more standard construction that you would see at the time. Dabotap on the other hand, you can definitely see here how it is a much more

unique construction, has a much more, perhaps you could say, a less rigid, more elegant flowing style to it.

Nearby Bulguksa is another important national treasure known as Seokguram, or, Seokguram is sort of the common name, Seokbulsa, literally means the temple of the stone Buddha. It follows the tradition of grottos transformed into hermitages that came from India. So, if you go today, you might think that it's built into the side of the mountain, it's been carved out of the rock. But actually what they did was they constructed it out of granite, so they built a granite chamber with all of the carvings in it and then they covered it over with earth so that it looks like a cave in very similar style to the way that burial mounds were built. So if you go in, you'll find that there's a rectangular vestibule, an entryway, leading into a circular domed main chamber with a seated Shakyamuni Buddha on a lotus flower platform and all of the walls are covered with very exquisite examples of Buddhist sculpture. They're considered very very fine examples. So if you go to Bulguksa, don't forget to go to Seokguram as well.

From Balhae, and I feel this is sort of becoming a running theme, we don't have a lot of examples left of sacred architecture from Balhae. We do have two examples of brick pagodas, but there are unfortunately no examples of temples remaining from the Balhae period.

### • Goryeo

Moving into the Goryeo period, obviously this is going to be a very important period because Buddhism flourished, Buddhism was at its height during the Goryeo period. And even though a large number of temples had already been built during the Silla period, in the year of the founding of Goryeo alone, already you had ten new temples being built. So, during the Goryeo period, you had some developments such as the name of the main temple hall became known as the daeungjeon. "Daeungjeon" literally means the hall of the great hero. And if you go to a temple today, the main hall of the temple is probably going to be called daeungjeon. So that's something that originated during the Goryeo period. Another aspect that was introduced at this time was the building of smaller shrines to sansin, which is the mountain deity, and chilseong, which is the seven stars deity, and these sansin and chilseong are gods of folk beliefs and they have shamanistic significance as well. So you sort of see this syncretism, or this blending of Buddhism, with some of the native folk beliefs as well.

Buseoksa is an example here and I just mentioned Buseoksa as a Silla temple and it was originally built during the Silla period. However, the main hall of Buseoksa, known as Muryangsujeon, was built during the Goryeo period. Most of the rest of the temple was actually restored during the Joseon period, so even though it was first built during the Silla period, it was restored later over a number of successive stages. It was damaged in fire in 1358 so there was a fire there and it was rebuilt in 1376, but even though it was rebuilt at the end of the 14th century, it did follow the 11th century style. And you can see in the main hall, Muryangsujeon, you can see examples of that 11th century style in what is known as jusimpo style. So if you look at the pillars, and if you look at where the pillars meet the roof, you'll see that on top of the pillars there are very complex system of brackets that hold up the roof. But in between the pillars, there are no brackets. So this is known as the jusimpo style. "Po" is the brackets, "jusim" means centered on the pillars.

Another important aspect of this building is that all of the pillars are what are known as baeheullim-gidung, and baeheullim-gidung is like the sort of the belly that flows outward, in English it's known as entasis. If you're not familiar with it, it just means that the pillar is shaped so that it sort of bows out in the center. And this is designed to correct an optical illusion. Because if you have a tall, straight pillar, it sort of looks concave a little bit. So the actual shape is made convex so that it will look straight even if it's not straight. Another example of correcting for an optical illusion here is that you can see the corner pillars are actually slightly taller, because otherwise the building will look like it's sort of bending down, like that. So they were very careful in the techniques that they used to make sure that it looked aesthetically pleasing and that it looked straight and orderly. Obviously, you can see the eaves and the roofs have those famous catenary curves that are very typical of construction at this time.

As far as the stone pagodas go, the early stone pagoda construction followed the Silla and Baekje styles, eventually combining the two styles in the mid Goryeo period. There was also the influence of octagonal and other types of pagodas from China and you can see for example in Silleuksa Temple in Yeouj a very famous example of a brick pagoda of the Goryeo period as well.

One other thing that we can say about sacred architecture during the Goryeo period is that due to the popularity of Buddhism and the emergence of many famous monks, you also have a lot of stupa construction. As I mentioned before, stupa is a small stone structure designed to store the remains of famous monks. So, from the Goryeo period, you have a lot of stupas that are still around today.

## • Joseon

Lastly, as far as sacred architecture goes, you have the Joseon period. As we mentioned during the religion and philosophy classes, Buddhism was systematically oppressed during the Joseon period, so monks were not allowed in the capital, etc. and there was a policy of oppressing Buddhism and supporting Confucianism. So, after the Japanese invasions, you did have monks who fought against the Japanese and as a result they did receive slightly more respect after the Japanese invasions, but they were still treated as the lowest members of society, as the cheonmin class.

So there were temples that were built during the Joseon period like Heungcheonsa and Wongaksa, but especially out in the provinces there was no major temple construction as far as new temples being built, which was partly due to the suppression of Buddhism, but also it was due to the fact that so many temples had been built in the previous eras that there didn't seem to be in need to build more temples. So more of the focus was on repairing and restoring existing temples like Buseoksa, so like I said before, a lot of that temple was restored during the Joseon period. So you did see temple construction in buildings that were restored in temples that were already there.

One characteristic that you can note from the Joseon period is the daposik construction. This is actually from the late Goryeo period, but it's the evolution of the jusimpo construction. So instead of having the brackets just on top of the pillars, "da" means many, "po" means brackets, so it's a many-brackets-style construction. You can see, you have the brackets on top of the pillars, but in between the pillars as well, you have brackets running all across the line beneath the roof. This is something that was

introduced in later Goryeo but it became universal in the Joseon period and you can also see it in the architecture of the palace as well. So this is something that was not just an issue in sacred architecture but in royal architecture as well.

## 6. Closing

So we can see how architectural styles developed naturally over the centuries both according to the influence of natural conditions but also the influence of the philosophical foundations of the various kingdoms as well as the political conditions etc. I think what's important to note in architecture here is that there are functions to architecture, both practical and symbolic. So the practical function, obviously, is pretty obvious. But the symbolic function is important as well. So you can see how houses and palaces have inner and outer spaces, how they reflect the hierarchy for example. And, as I mentioned at the beginning, temples as symbolic of the spiritual journey. If you go to a temple, you're generally going to be climbing up the mountain, you can sometimes climb for quite some way before you reach the temple itself. And then once you get to the temple, you'll cross over a stream on a bridge that sort of represents leaving the mundane world behind, you pass through a number of gates and various courtyards before you reach the main hall, etc. So you can see this symbolic function in architecture as well.

Again, I want to emphasize the aspect of harmony and adaptation rather than dominance. So, even fortresses and city walls would utilize the existing terrain as opposed to trying to impose a design. They would be built in such a way as to best make use of the existing terrain. And obviously houses and palaces and temples as well are going to be built in a way that they best fit the terrain.

There are other important types of architecture that we didn't get to cover today. For example, tomb architecture is a very important type of architecture. We will be discussing tomb murals in the class on art though, so I will come back to that again briefly. I also mentioned garden architecture, which is a very interesting and very important part of architecture that unfortunately we didn't get to cover. But you can see, again, this example, as an example of this harmony with nature, the way that gardens are traditionally built, you do have gardens like Amisan, behind Gyotaejeon in Gyeongbokgung, which are artificially constructed, but for the most part, gardens are just a very slight cultivation of nature. Maybe you build a pagoda here, add a viewpoint to give you a view out over nature, but there's not a lot of order that's being imposed on nature itself. So compared to some European gardens, or Japanese gardens, where order is very important, nature is often left in its natural state, and then you just have a few elements that make it into a garden. There are other, obviously, elements of state architecture, like the hyanggyo, the Confucian schools, the seowon, the academies, etc., that we did not discuss.

And then there's the what I would call borderline architecture, like Jongmyo and Sajikdan, which we didn't discuss in detail, but they sort of exist on the border between state and religious architecture. However, the basic principles that we discussed today apply to all of these various types of architecture. So, even though we didn't get to cover all of it, hopefully this discussion today will give you a good

starting point for understanding the traditional architecture of Korea and how it might have shaped the culture on the Korean peninsula.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. Korean traditional architecture was designed around sitting culture. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

2. The reason why the pillars of Muryangsujeon at Buseoksa are thicker toward the center is related to the architectural limitations of the Unified Silla period. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

3. The head families of aristocratic houses during the late Goryeo period built separate buildings to enshrine ancestral tablets. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

4. Before the Joseon period, structures for lighting fires for heating and cooking resided inside rooms. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

5. Hwaseong Fortress in Suwon built by Jeong Yak-yong is an example of the architectural advancements of the late Joseon period. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about a basic characteristic of Korean traditional architecture?

- a. The structure and décor of buildings used a mixture of straight and curved lines.
- b. Korean traditional architecture prioritizes harmony with nature.
- c. Buildings in traditional Korean architecture have taller ceilings compared to Chinese buildings.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about feng shui (pungsu)?

- a. It was considered good feng shui to build houses with mountains in the back and a flowing river in the front.
- b. During the Joseon period, feng shui lost its importance as it was considered superstitious.
- c. The design of a house was believed to be connected to good and bad fortune.

Answer: b

3. Which of the following is an accurate statement about early pieces of Korean architecture?

- a. The first houses in Korea, called dugout houses, had a conical shape and were not divided into separate rooms.
- b. Commoners usually lived in houses with tiled roofs.
- c. People of low class decorated their houses in the colors of dancheong, which consisted of simple colors.

Answer: a

4. Which of the following is unlikely to have been an influence that Confucianism had on Korean traditional architecture?

- a. Clan villages were developed so that members of the same clan could live together.
- b. The structure and décor of a house was strictly regulated by one's social class.
- c. There was a tradition of erecting shrines to the mountain deity and the seven stars deity in Buddhist temples.

Answer: c

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Gyeongbokgung?

- a. Gyotaejeon functioned as a living space for the king and queen.
- b. Gyeongbokgung was lost to a fire during the late-16th-century Japanese invasion and was rebuilt by Daewongun in the late 19th century.
- c. Until Gyeongbokgung was restored, the king used Changdeokgung.

Answer: a

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. The traditional form of heating in Korea, in which entire rooms were heated via flooring made of flat stones, is called \_\_\_\_.

Answer: ondol

2. \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the most famous temples of Silla from the North and South Kingdoms period. It is home to Seokgatap, Dabotap, Baekungyo, and Cheongungyo, which are considered national treasures.

Answer: Bulguksa

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the main gates of Hanyang, the capital of Joseon, and was originally called Sungnyemun. It was listed as a national treasure in 1962, destroyed by a fire in 2008, and subsequently restored in 2013.

Answer: Namdaemun

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Describe using specific examples how Korean traditional architecture pursues harmony with nature.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Using specific examples of structures and space allocation of buildings, briefly describe the effect Confucianism has had on Korean traditional homes.

## 〈Lecture 6〉

# Korean Traditional Fine Arts

– Visual Expression of the Creative Spirit

### Class Goals

1. Give an overview of the development of various art forms in Korea
2. Appreciate representative examples of Korean art throughout history

### Summary

In this class, we appreciated representative examples of Korean traditional art and examined how various art forms developed throughout Korean history.

Some of the oldest examples of graphic art are rock carvings. Earthenware vessels with comb patterns show the characteristics of prehistoric pottery. The mandolin-shaped bronze dagger is one of the few artifacts from Old Joseon.

Tomb murals are the best examples of Goguryeo art. The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner and Rock-carved Buddha Triad are representative Baekje art works. Famous examples of Silla art include the Painting of Heavenly Horse, the Gilt-bronze Maitreya Bodhisattva Seated in Meditative Pose, and the Golden Crown from Great Tomb of Hwangnam. For Gaya, we have Iron Armor from Tomb No.38 in Bokcheon-dong, Busan.

The Statue of Seated Shakyamuni Buddha in Seokguram Grotto and the Sacred Bell of Great King Seongdeok are notable art works of Unified Silla. We have bricks with lotus patterns from Balhae, which are distinct from the Silla brick design.

Goryeo was the golden age of Buddhism. Buddhist paintings by No Yeong represent the development of Buddhist art during this period. Goryeo was also at the peak of ceramic arts,

exemplified by Goryeo celadon. Goryeo celadon come in various forms, including melon-shaped vases and incense burners with openwork designs.

The most art remains from the Joseon period, particularly paintings and ceramics. We appreciated famous paintings by Gang Huian, Sin Saimdang, Kim Si, Byeon Sangbyeok, and Jeong Seon. Genre paintings, folk paintings, and royal paintings are another important part of Joseon art. Buncheong stoneware gradually replaced Goryeo celadon in early Joseon. White porcelain later replaced buncheong stoneware.

## ❖ Script ❖

### 1. Introduction

Hello, and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. In today's class, we're going to be looking at fine arts, specifically from the traditional period. Art is in general the human expression of beauty or aesthetics and it can be manifested through many different media, such as graphic arts, like painting, or plastic arts, like sculpture, carving, etc. Most of the well-known examples of Korean art are probably painting and ceramics and we'll focus mainly on those, but we'll also show other art forms, especially from the earlier eras, where maybe we don't have as much painting remaining to us. So, the goal of today's class is basically just to show you some representative examples of Korean art from throughout history, from the prehistoric times through Old Joseon and then the Three Kingdoms period, the North and South Kingdoms, the Goryeo period and then the Joseon period as well. And this is in an attempt to give you an overview of the development of the various art forms.

### 2. From Prehistoric Times to Old Joseon

So the oldest examples of graphic art that we have are from rock carvings, from the prehistoric times. And we can see some examples of these, for example, in the rock carvings at Bangudae. These are located in Ulsan and they're a good example of depictions of specific, real objects. So here you can see animals that are being depicted, probably in hope perhaps for a bountiful harvest in terms of hunting, although some scholars say that the large number of animals and fish that are being represented here may actually be the expression of a creation story.

We also have rock carvings elsewhere, such as the rock carvings at Yangjeon-dong. This is in Goryeong, in North Gyeongsang province. These are a little bit different. If we look at them, they look sort of like circles and dominoes, a little bit more abstract. They're thought to represent sacred figures, in this case perhaps sun deities. And you see carvings like this found throughout central Asia. The Korean

versions, though, tend to be more abstract with the circles perhaps representing the sun and you can see some of the rays coming off some of the bodies of the figures that they may represent sunrays as well.

In addition to rock carvings such as these, we also have pottery and metalwork. So, for example, previously we mentioned the prehistoric remains in Amsa-dong during the architecture class. From that site, in addition to those dugout huts that we looked at in the architecture class, there have also been a number of earthenware vessels that have been unearthed. And here we can see a characteristic prehistoric pottery vessel. The shape is somewhat conical, it comes down to a point at the end. Most interesting, though, is the pattern, the linear geometric styles that have been engraved on the surface. This is called comb pattern pottery because it is presumed that the parallel lines were created through the use of a comb that was run through the clay while it was still wet before it hardened.

We also have other artifacts and this is here one of the few artifacts that we actually have from the Old Joseon period, known as the mandolin-shaped bronze dagger. In Korean it's "비파형" (bipahyeong) and "비파" (bipa) refers to an instrument that might be a mandolin or a violin, or something to that effect. If you look at the shape of it, you can see it maybe looks a little bit like a violin or a cello. It is a practical item, of course. It's a dagger so it's a tool or a weapon. But you can see in the very smooth and delicate curves the artistic intention of the craftsman who made this.

### 3. The Three Kingdoms

So, if we move onto the Three Kingdoms period, starting with Goguryeo, the best surviving examples of Goguryeo art can be found in two murals. For example, we have the tomb at Anak, the third tomb at Anak, which has a number of very interesting murals. Here, we're looking at a depiction of the man who is buried in the tomb. There are two murals here representing one the husband and one the wife. And you can see that they're both being depicted in a much larger size than the figures around them. This is obviously not a literal representation of their size but a representation of their importance compared to the servants who are attending to them because they are the protagonists of this story. If you look at the decorations and the design, for example, of the pavilions that they're seating under, there are lotus flowers at the top of the pavilions and the seated, the way the husband is seated in particular, these may be examples of Buddhist influence.

In that same tomb at Anak, the No. 3 tomb at Anak, there is another mural that shows a scene from daily life, which is actually very interesting because it shows how people lived at that time during the Goguryeo period. And here, what is most interesting for us, perhaps, is that you can already see the division of functions among the different buildings. So we talked about this, if you think back to the architecture class, how different buildings were used for different functions in everyday life. So you have one building that is being used to store the palanquins, or the wheeled carts, another building that is used to hang up meat, etc. So, works like these are obviously very important for their artistic merit, but they're also sort of historical evidence for the way people lived around that time.

In another tomb, which is known as the Tomb of the Dancers, Muyongchong, it's known as the Tomb of the Dancers because of this particular mural that we're looking at here, which is known as the Mural of the Dancers, or Muyongdo. It depicts dancers, which you can see in the centre, following a leader at the top left, and then spectators along the bottom. You can't really see it in this particular picture because of some of the damage that the mural has sustained, but on the left, actually there is a man on horseback watching the performance and some scholars say that this may be the person who is buried, this may represent the person who is buried in this tomb. But it's a very interesting mural because unlike the previous murals that we looked at in the Anak tomb, this is much more dynamic and it captures the movements of the dancers in action, so you can see their arms stretched back out and their long sleeves hanging down. So it's very dynamic, very graceful and it's sort of like a snapshot of what's going on at the time.

Another mural from that same tomb that is quite famous is Suryeopdo, or the Hunting Mural. This also captures movements. You can see the hunters riding on horseback and shooting their bows at deer and tiger and it is, like I said, it's very dynamic. It shows a scene that almost looks like it could come to life in front of us. But it's also quite realistic. You notice that the bows that they're shooting are the sort of bows that one would shoot from horseback, very short bows that wouldn't get in the way.

Another tomb mural that we can look at is from the Great Tomb at Gangseo and this is one of the directional deities. There are obviously a number of different murals that represent the different directional deities and when I say the directional deities, I mean the deity of the north, the guardian deity of the east, west, south, that sort of thing. So this particular creature depicted here is known as a “현무” (hyeonmu) in Korean, and in English, often translated as “the black tortoise.” And it's considered the guardian of the north. Black is the colour that is associated with north and this creature is associated with that direction as well. And it's guarding that direction as, say, the phoenix would have guarded the south and then you have the dragon and the tiger guarding the east and the west. Here, if it looks like there are two heads, there are. One of those heads, coming out of the shell, that's the head of the tortoise. But the other head, you can see there's a long serpent that's sort of coiled around the tortoise's shell. And this is a very common motif. You generally don't see the hyeonmu appearing by itself, but it's often appearing in a confrontation with a serpent that's wrapped around it.

So, if we move to the Baekje period, Baekje also had tomb murals, for example this tomb mural in Neungsan-ri, which depicts clouds that are being blown by the wind and lotus flowers. And, again, you have the very graceful lines in the clouds and a very artistic representation of these natural themes. But you also have very famous relics that are not paintings or not murals, specifically in the form of bronze and stone carvings.

So here, this is a gilt bronze incense burner with a dragon base and a phoenix lid. So if you look at the base of it, you can see that there is a dragon around the base and on the very top, that bird-like creature that's standing there is a phoenix. The body of the incense burner itself depicts the mountain island home of the immortals and if you look closely, you can see the wavy peaks of the mountains. And among those wavy peaks, there are immortals doing various things. Some of them are playing instruments, some of them are meditating, some of them are fishing, etc. Obviously this product has been heavily influenced by Taoist ideology and views of the afterlife, what the afterlife might look like

according to the Taoist worldview. And this was actually only relatively recently excavated, back in 1993, so it hasn't seen the light of day for too long in the greater scheme of things, considering how old it is.

Another very famous relic of the Baekje period is this carving of the Buddha and two bodhisattvas next to it. This is carved in relief in a rock face that's facing Seosan. So the Buddha in the centre is thought to be the Shakyamuni Buddha and the standing Buddha on the left, so in the photograph on the left on the Buddha's right, is thought to be the Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, or “관음보살” (Gwaneumbosal) in Korean. The half-seated Bodhisattva on the right, on the Buddha's left, is thought to be the Maitreya. And this is considered to be a representative example of the very graceful and gentle Baekje aesthetic. If you look at the image of the Buddha itself, you can see the graceful smile, which is often very much associated with Baekje artistic works. His right hand is being held up in what is known as the Abhaya mudra, which is a… “mudra” means sort of a sign that one makes with one's hand. You often see Buddhist figures in these various poses making various signs with their hands. This sign, this mudra, is related to protection, to peace, to driving away fear. And his left hand is making the Varada Mudra, which is a sign of generosity or granting the wishes of the people.

Moving onto the Silla period, again tomb murals are the only example that we have of the Silla painting, nothing else has survived beyond that. But there's also some good examples of fine sculpture and goldwork that we'll look at. So starting off with the tomb murals, this is a very famous mural here and one of the few examples that we do have remaining to us, known as the Heavenly Horse, or Cheonmado and again this is found in what is known as the Heavenly Horse Tomb. The tomb is named after the mural. It depicts a horse racing through the sky, so you can see the depictions of the clouds at the bottom and around the sides of the mural. And you can see the horse's hair flowing back from his tail and his mane, almost like speed lines on a car, indicates the great speed with which he is flying through the air. And the breath, you can see breath emanating from his mouth as well, indicates his power and his strength. On the body of the horse, we can see some crescent shapes, which resemble myths from Scythia, which is western, if you go much further to the west in central Asia. Some scholars have thought that there might be some Persian influence as well, but as yet, we have not been able to establish a definitive connection there.

This next piece is a piece of earthenware pottery and it's interesting because of the figures that are attached to the top of it. If you look at the top around the shoulder, in addition to the designs that are carved into the pot itself, there have been earthenware figures that have been attached to the pot after it was made and before it was fired. These are various animals and human figures that are thought to have a magical significance. So, for example, if we look at the lower right section of the shoulder of the pot, if you look a little bit closer at that, you'll see that there's actually two human figures that are engaged in sexual intercourse. And that is thought to be a magical wish for fertility and prosperity. It's very common to see images like this at around that time, both for prosperity and fertility in terms of obviously human abundance but also for a good harvest, etc., that sort of thing.

Perhaps one of the finest examples of Silla art, though, is this gilt bronze statue of the Maitreya Bodhisattva seated in a meditative pose. This is, as you can see from the fine craftsmanship here, this is a national treasure. The pose that the Maitreya is seated in here is said to be the pose that was adopted by the Buddha, by Siddharta, later Gautama, later Shakyamuni Buddha, the pose that he adopted

when he was contemplating human suffering and the meaning of human existence before he achieved enlightenment. And it is an expression of peace and serenity.

Another national treasure is this crown, this golden crown, which was excavated from the Silla royal tomb. And we can see the gold is still bright, the jade hanging off of it, it looks like it could have been made yesterday. If we look at the design of it, especially in the front there, you can see sort of the stem going up with the branches off to the side. It brings to mind tree branches and this is thought to be the influence of early shamanic beliefs. So on the one hand you had the veneration of nature, of course, but also you had the idea of the tree as a symbol of a connection between heaven and earth because a tree has its roots in the earth but it reaches up and its branches reach up to the heaven. So that's where we get the idea of the world tree, for example, in Norse mythology. But this idea of the tree being a connection between heaven and earth is common throughout the world and common in shamanic beliefs. And it's believed that this is perhaps one example of the influence of that. You see similar designs and motifs found in Siberian shamanic crowns, for example, and Scythian gold crowns as well.

When it comes to Gaya, which is the last of our kingdoms that we've discussed during the Three Kingdoms period, we don't have very many artifacts remaining, at least compared to the other three kingdoms. But this example of a piece of pottery here, a footed pot, known as a “굽다리 접시” (gupdari jeopsi). “Footed dish,” I guess, would be a more accurate way of saying it. This is a common artifact to be found throughout Gaya. It's a tradition that Gaya shared with Silla but the holes in the base are very characteristic and you can see here these holes are more square, in other instances the holes are circular or almost flame-shaped. This is characteristic of Gaya earthenware from this time.

So this last item that I want to look at. Unfortunately, as you can see, it's quite rusted because it is made of iron, so it has rusted over the years. It's actually a set of iron armour or at least part of a set of iron armour. And, like the bronze dagger that we've looked at before, it is a practical piece of equipment designed to protect the wearer in battle. But you can also see hints of the artistry that the artisan attempted to work into his armour here. Especially if you look at the helmet, you can see how instead of it just being a very plain helmet, there are some very graceful curving lines in it where pieces are brought together. There are other examples that you can find of Gaya armour that do show this artistry that go beyond simply being a functional piece of equipment.

## 4. The North and South Kingdoms

So if we move onto the North and South Kingdoms period... Silla, obviously, continues from the Three Kingdoms period before. Unfortunately, once again, we don't have any paintings remaining, but from the Unified Silla period, we do have some sculpture, we have some pottery and we have some metalwork as well. For example, here, you can see a fragment at least of an earthenware roof tile. So this would have been a tile that would have been placed at the end of a roof ridge, sort of to protect the end of the ridge. And it features what is known as a “도깨비” (dokkaebi), which sometimes in English is translated

as ogre, but it's a unique creature from Korean folklore and here it functions as what is known as an apotropaic charm, in other words it is intended to ward off evil spirits. And this is something that you can see throughout the world elsewhere where very scary faces are put into architectural designs in order to ward off evil spirits. Some people say, for example, that the gargoyles on European churches, one of their functions, the reason why they were made so scary, was that they would be able to ward off any evil spirits because they had such a scary appearance. We have a similar thing going on here. But even though this is only a fragment, you can see the very detailed artistry that goes into this roof tile and how much care was taken in sort of recreating this fearsome visage. The dokkaebi is actually a very common motif throughout traditional architecture and art, even all the way through the Joseon period.

Next, in terms of Silla pottery, probably the most characteristic and commonly cited items of Silla pottery were urns for storing the cremated remains of people. Literally, they were known as bone jars or “뼈항아리” (bbyeohangari). And they came in various different styles. So here, this is an example of an urn that has been stamped. So, patterns have been stamped into the clay before firing. They've taken, in this case it looks like a tiny circular stamp, and they've stamped repeated circles into the clay before firing. There's other versions of these urns. There are patternless versions where there's no pattern, necessarily, except maybe a line or so. There's other versions with a little pagoda on the top. But these are sort of the representative pottery that you'd find from the Unified Silla period.

Perhaps more famous though, and going back once again to something that we discussed in the architecture class when we talked about Bulguksa, the temple, and Seokguram, the grotto. If you look inside Seokguram, we didn't take a close look into it last time, but the carvings in that grotto, both on the wall, and the statue in the centre, are considered to be some of the finest Buddhist sculptures from that period. And the whole wall going all the way around the chamber, and in the little niches, you have carvings and little Buddhist images, but the central image, the central statue of course, is the most famous. This is the statue of the seated Shakyamuni Buddha. He sits in the centre of the round inner chamber and this statue here is considered to be a national treasure. And the gesture that he is making, the mudra that he is making, he has one hand sort of pointing to the ground and the other hand facing upward, this is known as the Bhumi-sparsha mudra, or the earth witness mudra, and this comes from a Buddhist legend about when the Buddha gained enlightenment. So when he was meditating and right before he gained enlightenment, the demon Mara came to demand that someone acted as his witness to attest to his worthiness to achieve enlightenment. So the Buddha touched the ground and he called on the earth goddess as his witness and she witnessed his worthiness and thus he became enlightened. Obviously, this is not part of the original Buddhist story, but this was a legend that sort of developed afterward.

Speaking of legends, another very famous artifact from the Unified Silla period is the Sacred Bell of the Great King Seongdeok, which was the temple bell of Bongdeoksa. This is considered to be the finest example of Silla temple bells, made in the late 7th century. It's very large, it weighs twenty-five tonnes. It stands almost four metres high, three point seven five metres high, and it was said that the sound of the bell when it was rung would carry forty kilometres, or 백리 (baengni), one hundred li, which is about forty kilometres. At the top of the bell, where it was hung, you can see it is cast in the shape of a dragon. And it's very common throughout Asia to actually have dragons on the tops of bells, but in Chinese and

Japanese bells, you usually see double dragons. So you see two dragons at the top. The single dragon is more characteristic of this bell in the Korean style. It's most famous, though, probably for the images of the heavenly beings that you can see on the sides of the bell. They are offering up incense amid the flames and the clouds that are flowing around them. These are also another unique characteristic. And I made reference to legend. There is a legend concerning this bell, but I'm going to save that and we're going to discuss that in the folklore and mythology class. It's actually a particularly horrifying legend, so we have that to look forward to.

But moving onto Balhae, to finish off the North and South Kingdoms, we unfortunately again have very little of Balhae artwork remaining. I'm only going to show you a single example here just to sort of contrast with the Silla style, but to show you that there was indeed an artistic tradition there as well. This is a fired brick and it has a lotus flower design on it. It's very simple yet elegant and even though there were similar bricks fired during the Silla period, there is a distinction. It has a sort of distinct flavour to it that's a little bit different from what you'd see in the Silla bricks.

## 5. Goryeo

So, after the North and South Kingdoms period, of course, we have the Goryeo period, which was, as we know, the golden age of Buddhism. And it was also considered to be the peak of the ceramic arts in Korea. And we'll start off with some Buddhist images. Here, we have a pair of Buddhist paintings. These were painted by a painter named No Yeong and they were designed as objects of worship, so they were not simply artistic works but they were also religious works. They were both religious and artistic. Being painted to be objects of worship, obviously the artist would want to put his best effort into it, put his best foot forward. So you can see that a lot of care was taken, a lot of detail was put into these works. The paintings themselves were done on wood panels that have been lacquered and then the painting was in gold on top of that and there were paintings on both sides of this panel. The front image, which we're looking at here, features the Amitabha Buddha at the top and eight bodhisattvas below. And once again the Amitabha is making a mudra, a gesture with his hands, and this is expressing a wish that the suffering of the beings on earth, that they would be able to achieve enlightenment and then there would be an end to their suffering and they would enter paradise. On the reverse side, there's actually two paintings. We'll look at the top one here because it shows, the big figure in the centre, is the Dharmodgata Bodhisattva, a bodhisattva, and this figure appears again at the top right. Dharmodgata appears again with eight bodhisattva to his left. But if you look down at the bottom left of the picture, you can see a very small figure who is worshipping the bodhisattva. That is actually a representation of the Goryeo king Taejo and Taejo is the name given to the first king of a dynasty, so this is the first king of the Goryeo Dynasty, who is worshipping before the bodhisattva. The location is the Diamond Mountains, which is a very famous range of mountains in Korea. And you can see those mountains being represented. If you look at the upper left, you can see the detail of the mountain being represented in the gold thread.

Also famous in terms of Buddhist paintings from this period were paintings such as these. This is an image of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, also sometimes known as the goddess of compassion. In Korean, 〈수월관음도〉 (Suwolgwaneumdo) is the name of this painting. And the name of the bodhisattva is Gwaneumbosal. In India, originally, this bodhisattva was male, but in East Asia this bodhisattva is almost always portrayed as female, especially in Korea and Japan.

So in addition to the pieces of Buddhist art that we've looked at, Goryeo's probably most famous for Goryeo celadon. And this is something if you've seen any examples of Korean pottery, you've probably seen one of these pieces. Goryeo celadon was first produced around the end of the 9th century or the early 10th century, we're not sure exactly when. But it reached its peak in the early 13th century, sometime before the Mongol invasions. And after the Mongol invasions, we did see sort of a decline in the craft. Celadon, which refers to the green glaze that is applied to the surface of the pottery and often has spiderweb cracks in it, this technique of applying the green glaze actually originated in China but it came over to Korea and the versions of celadon that were produced in Goryeo were recognized throughout the region both in China and elsewhere as the finest example of the craft. So you can see the delicate green colour for example here, in this vase which is in the shape of a melon, known as a “참외” (chamoe) in Korean. So you can see that sort of elongated melon shape in the body of the vessel and the top around the mouth of the vase sort of resembles flower petals. These shapes, shaping them as melons or flowers, etc., were one innovation of Goryeo celadon that distinguished it from Chinese celadon. This particular piece is a fine example of the delicate green colour that's associated with celadon. And perhaps for its colour and for the gracefulness of its shape, this again is a national treasure.

This next piece is an incense burner known as an openwork incense burner. “Openwork” refers to, if you look at the top piece where it has all the holes in it where the incense would come out of, that's known as openwork. And these large areas of openwork is another characteristic actually of Goryeo celadon that distinguishes it from other types of celadon. Also note the cute little bunny rabbits at the bottom holding up the burner. This is another national treasure and you can see the artistry and the craftsmanship that must have gone into this.

This next piece is a distinct shape known as “매병” (maebyeong) in Korean. It actually originated with the Chinese meiping, which means plum vase. But the Korean version sort of developed its own unique shape. If you compare the shapes of Chinese meiping and Goryeo maebyeong, you see that the curves are a little bit different, they developed along different lines. The decorations here in this jar of clouds and cranes were achieved through inlaying, which was one technique that was used to decorate celadon jars. Basically, what you would do is after the pot was made, you would carve the design into the clay and then you would fill that space with different materials to achieve the different colours, such as the white or the black, or maybe even a red etc., and then over that you would put the glaze and then you would fire it. And then you would end up with these beautiful designs on the surface.

In addition to the celadon, though, there were other works that have been very prized for their artistry throughout the years. This work here is known as a kundika. It's a sprinkler, basically. It's used to sprinkle water on the ground to purify the space before a Buddhist ceremony, so when you're holding a Buddhist ceremony and you want to purify the space where that ceremony is being held, you would sprinkle water on the ground as sort of a symbolic purification. It's made from cast bronze and it has

inlaid silver decorations, so the silver has tarnished and it's a little bit darker, but that's actually, it was carved into the bronze and then silver thread was laid into that to depict the decorations. It depicts willows, flying geese, hills, etc. Once again, another national treasure and an excellent example of Goryeo bronze work, showing that it wasn't just celadon that the artisans excelled at.

## 6. Joseon

So the last period that we're going to look at is of course the Joseon period. And this being the most recent period before the modern era in Korean history, obviously we have the most art remaining from this time. So, we'll focus mostly on the paintings because a painting from the Joseon period is probably the most famous example of artwork from this time. But we'll also take a look at some of the ceramics as well and see how things developed from Goryeo celadon. So the first painting I want to look at. This is a painting that was done by Gang Huian, who was a literati, a scholar official, also a diplomat. He visited China as part of the diplomatic embassy and likely he was influenced by some of the Ming paintings that he saw there. So this painting is known as *〈Scholar Contemplating Water〉* or *〈고사관수도〉* (Gosagwansudo). It's actually a representative example of his painting in terms of his following of the Chinese traditions. And it's very typical of literati painting from the early Joseon period. So you can see that there is a strong contrast between light and dark, it is monochromatic, it does not include colours. It's just the strong, dark lines and the light, negative space. The lines themselves are very thick and heavy but also at the same time quite nimble. So the scene itself is a very still scene, there's not much going on. The scholar's simply contemplating the water. Yet, the way that it is painted manages to convey a sense of liveliness.

Now, quite a different image. The next one here is an image that differs in many ways. This was actually painted by the mother of Yulgok, or Yi Yi, who was one of the philosophers that we mentioned when we were talking about Confucianism, as you may remember. This was painted by his mother, who's known as Sin Saimdang. And this is one of her *〈초충도〉* (Chochungdo), which essentially means a painting of flowers and insects. This particular version, there were eight paintings in total and this is only one of the frames, this one shows watermelon and butterflies and also you can see at the bottom two mice are nibbling on the watermelon. So the use of vibrant colours here, very bright colours, and the way that the objects are arranged, you'll notice that they're arranged in such a way that none of the main subjects overlap with each other. So they all have their own space. This is considered to be characteristic of amateur painters, as she was. But the skill that she showed in capturing the beauty of nature is something that was perhaps missed by other artists, sort of this simplicity and this straightforwardness, the directness of her approach to this has a beauty of its own. The sharp lines and the very realistic depictions, you can see the care that she took to depict the watermelons and the butterflies and the mice, etc., in a very realistic fashion. And if you're thinking, "Well, those don't look like real watermelons," well, if you look at old pictures of watermelons, they actually looked quite different from the way they

look today. So that was probably very realistic to what you might see from the time.

Our next painting is from the mid-Joseon period. This is a painting by Kim Si, this is one of his characteristic, representative works, and it's titled 〈Boy Pulling a Donkey〉, 〈동자견려도〉 (Dongjagyeollyeodo). You can see here his skillful arrangement of subjects and his use of negative space and the way that, in particular, he contrasts the vertical movement in the painting, so you have the rocks toward the bottom and then moving upward, the eye is drawn upward toward the faint mountains in the distance, so you have this sort of vertical development in the painting, this is contrasted with the horizontal struggle between the boy and the donkey. And then the pine tree, rising from the lower left to the upper right, sort of connects everything together and it brings it together into one piece.

Another painting from this period would be this painting from Yi Myeonguk and this is the 〈어초문답도〉 (Eochomundapdo). Essentially what this means is a conversation or question and answer between a fisherman and a woodcutter. So this painter learned his painting from a Qing Chinese teacher and you can see examples of, you can see the influence of that style here as well. But it depicts very vividly these human figures in a very dynamic pose walking along and talking to each other, and he pays very particular attention to their frames, their body shapes, and their musculature as well, so you can see particularly in the legs the way the muscles are quite defined. The folds of the clothes are also particularly well defined. And then if you look at the bases, you can see that the facial expressions are quite real. So he paid a lot of attention to the facial expressions as well. A very unique use of the brush in conveying these very strong lines but yet also being very subtle in the way that the expressions come across. It almost feels like these figures might come to life and walk right out of the painting and walk right by us.

So moving to the late Joseon period, one interesting painting that we can look at here is from Byeon Sangbyeok who actually specialized in cat paintings, probably would have made him very popular on the internet today given the internet's fascination with cats. This painting here is known as 〈묘작도〉 (Myojakdo), which means "Painting of Cats and Sparrows," and it has a detailed depiction of the animals, for example the cats are depicted very, on the one hand very realistically, but also a lot of expression in their faces and in their eyes, almost as if you could read their minds and feel what they're feeling. This shows the interest in the flora and the fauna of Korea at this time. Another interesting thing to note about this painting is that it may also have a symbolic meaning as well. And this is something not only in this painting, but in a lot of paintings from the Joseon period, if they featured animals such as cats or magpies or sparrows or fish, if they featured certain numbers in certain configurations, they often had a symbolic meaning based on the Chinese characters associated with those animals and with those particular numbers. So, for example, "cat" is very similar to "septuagenarian," or a seventy-year old person. And "sparrow" is pronounced in the same way as "magpie," and magpie is a very auspicious bird. So one way to possibly interpret this would be it could be a painting of congratulations to a seventy-year old couple with six children. The two cats, seventy-year old couple, and then the six sparrows represent the six children. Because if you look at the painting from a realistic perspective, the cats and the sparrows don't seem to be paying too much attention to each other, which is probably not true to life. So we might be able to read instead a symbolic meaning into this. So there can be more than meets the eye in these paintings.

But this painting, this next painting from Jeong Seon, a painting of the diamond mountains, the title

of the painting is 〈금강전도〉 (Geumgangjeondo), which means sort of like “the complete view of the Diamond Mountains.” This here was influenced by what is known in Korea as the southern school of Ming Chinese painting. And Jeong Seon shows influences of this southern school, but he also contributed to the development of landscape painting in Korea. In particular, if you look at paintings from previous eras and other forms of art as well, so if remember back to that incense burner that we looked at from Baekje that showed this mythical island home of the immortals. It was very common to actually paint the landscapes of imaginary or mythological locations. But one thing that Jeong Seon and other artists who were his contemporaries did was they painted actual locations in Korea. So here, the diamond mountains are an actual location. And even though it draws on some of the styles of the southern school of Ming Chinese painting, and you can see the use of, for example, the exaggerated angular shapes in the expressions of the mountains, it’s a significant development that artists are starting to paint actual Korean locations.

Perhaps one of the most interesting types of paintings, at least from the perspective of looking back at Korean life from the perspective of someone who’s learning about it, would be what are known as genre paintings. And here we have a painting from Kim Hongdo, who was without doubt the greatest genre painter of the Joseon period. Genre paintings in Korea are known as “풍속화” (pungsokhwa) and “풍속” (pungsok) sort of means the customs of the times, depictions of daily life, etc. And this particular painting that we’re looking at here is from his famous 〈Sketchbook of Daily Life〉, 〈풍속화첩〉 (Pungsokhwacheop). And this sketchbook contains a wide variety of scenes from life at that time. For example, you have scenes of farmers threshing grain, you have scenes of people at a well, you have a scene from the village school, etc. But the picture that I want, the painting that I want to look at in particular, is the painting of the wrestlers. So this depicts two men who are wrestling among a crowd of onlookers. And the wrestlers occupy the literal centre of attention. So, they’re in the centre of the painting. Obviously, your eye is drawn to them first of all. And they’re withing the centre of attention of all the onlookers who are arranged around the edge of the scene. So the wrestlers are depicted in very dynamic poses, they’re in the middle of a grapple, and you can sense that maybe one is about to throw the other in the ancient art of Korean wrestling known as “씨름” (ssireum). But Kim Hongdo also gives great care to the depiction of onlookers. So if you look around the edges of the painting, you can see all of the different poses and the attitudes that they have. Some of them are cheering aloud, you can see they have their mouths open, you have one guy who’s slapping the ground with excitement, perhaps, some are more relaxed, you have one guy who’s resting with his head in his hand, there’s even one who has the fan covering his mouth, perhaps he’s coughing or he’s just hiding his face for some reason. And then you have the only character in the painting who is not watching what’s going on and that is the man with the sort of the box in front of him. He’s actually a taffy seller. So he’s more interested in earning money from the audience than he is in the outcome of the wrestling match. He’s there to sell to the people that are gathered. And this is something you would have seen very commonly. If you had a wrestling match in and around a market place for example, there would be people who would come along to sell you snacks, just like you might find today. So Kim Hongdo has a very unique style, but it could almost be a snapshot of your daily life in Joseon as many of the other pictures in his sketchbook could also be.

Another genre painter who is quite famous, who was actually quite influenced by Kim Hongdo,

is Kim Deuksin. And this painting that I want to look at here is known as 〈파적도〉 (Pajeokdo), also known as 〈Cat Steals a Chick〉, which is exactly what's going on. “파적도” (Pajeokdo) refers to sort of like the breaking of the stillness, “적” (jeok) is like peacefulness, stillness, calmness, and “파” (pa) means “to break.” So you might imagine a very peaceful spring day that's suddenly broken by this event, this cat appears and steals a chick from the yard. And everyone is reacting to this. The cat is trying to get away with the chick. The husband, you can see him falling off the porch there, he's reaching out with his long pipe trying to catch the cat, the wife is behind him, she doesn't know what's going on, the mother hen is screeching in fear trying to get her chick back and the other chicks are scattered around. So there's so much movement, there's so much going on. And it's just great in how it captures that single moment that in real life would have just passed us by and then it would have been over, but by capturing that, by freezing that in this moment, we get to see everything that's going on. It's just a really great example of how these genre paintings come to life and how they really draw the viewer's eye to the centre of this commotion. So you can see that the lines here for example are a little more delicate than Kim Hongdo, but otherwise you can see some of the influences of the earlier painter.

So in addition to the paintings that we have looked at so far, which have all been by generally named artists, there's also a long tradition of folk painting in Korea. And here this is exemplified by this painting of a tiger and magpies. So folk painters were not highly skilled or trained. They were essentially amateurs, so they weren't academy painters or that sort of thing. So you can see here the depiction of the tiger is not anatomically correct, the perspective is not right as well. But there's something about this that gives it a very human feel. The tiger, for one, is much more comical perhaps and less threatening than it would be in real life. And indeed if you look at folk traditions, folktales in particular, tigers were often seen sometimes as protectors, so for example tigers would be companions of sansin, or mountain deities, as you can see in this mountain deity painting. But they were also portrayed sometimes as buffoons who were fooled by other characters. A lot of famous stories of tigers and rabbits. Rabbits fooling tigers, etc. So you can see sort of that comical nature of the tiger and, being comical, it thus becomes a little more approachable. So this particular painting of the tiger and the magpies, the significance of this, it does have a significance, as I mentioned before, magpies are auspicious creatures and tigers are also thought to be quite special. So these paintings were intended to ward off ill fortune. So on New Year's Day, you would hang a painting of tigers and magpies in your house to prevent bad luck from entering your house on this special day.

So in addition to paintings like the tiger and the magpies and the mountain deities in the folk tradition, you also had a tradition of royal or court paintings. And these were paintings that were done specifically for the royal court, for either the enjoyment of the royal court or to sort of be a representation of the royal court's authority. And this painting here, a portrait of King Taejo, in other words the first king of Joseon, this is a representative example of court paintings and is used to sort of signify the authority of the king. So it would have been hung in the palace, but it also would have been hung in various places around the country to sort of represent the king's authority. Even if the king himself couldn't be there, you would hang the portrait there and that would represent his authority. And this is something, I mean, you see this even today where people might hang pictures of paintings of important people in their houses to sort of remember them. A similar sort of idea. This is actually a

19th century reproduction of the original 17th century portrait, but it was done in a way that was very faithful to the original. So it retains all of the original characteristics. For example, the fact that his robe is blue instead of red. Later on in the Joseon period, Korean kings followed the Ming style and they wore red robes. If you've seen any Korean historical dramas, you might have seen a king wearing a red robe. But originally they wore blue robes and that is something that is reflected in this painting. But there's also great attention being paid to the detail, particularly obviously in the face, so the face is depicted as realistically as possible and given a very dignified expression that would be worthy of a king. But there's also a lot of care given to the various patterns in the throne, on the floor etc. So, a beautiful work of art.

Another royal painting that you would see a lot in a palace, for example, is this painting of the sun, the moon, and the five peaks, 〈일월오봉도〉 (Irworobongdo). This is a screen painting, so it's a painting that folds out and would have been stood up, it features obviously the sun and the moon in the upper right and the upper left, and the five mountains. But it also has pine trees, water and waterfalls. All of these things were symbols of longevity, things that were thought to last for a very long time. And it's painted in a simple, abstract style using very striking contrasting colours – reds, blues, greens, whites. This is thought perhaps to be an expression of the theory of eum and yang, or yin and yang, and the five elements, which is originally a Taoist theory but was adopted in the Confucian ideology. But, again, it also symbolized the royal authority and it was always present behind the king. So wherever the king would sit in the palace, there would be this painting. If he went outside and he was somewhere else, this painting would be displayed behind him. So it's sort of an embodiment of his authority, it was always present behind him. And if you go to Gyeongbokgung palace today in Seoul and you go to the throne room there, you can see this painting behind the throne. So it's still standing there to this day.

And this painting that I want to look at is another court painting and it's essentially a documentary painting. These documentary paintings provided visual records of events. So one of the unique, well one of the special things about, it's quite unique, but one of the really important things about the Joseon period was the amount of records that they kept. So the annals of the kings of Joseon are a great source of historical information and social and cultural information as well. But in addition to the written records, they also kept visual records in the form of these documentary paintings. This particular example here depicts a procession of King Jeongjo and his mother, Lady Hyegyeong, returning from a visit to Hwaseong. And Hwaseong, if you remember we talked about Hwaseong in the architecture class, which is where they built that fortress, that was also the location of the tomb of Jeongjo's father. It was moved there. So they often visited that, they often made processions to Hwaseong to visit his father's tomb. This particular painting, you see it's quite tall, quite long and quite narrow, it was originally part of an eightfold screen painting, so it's a screen with eight pieces. But this part shows the procession in detail and we can see how it uses a zigzagging road to fit in as many characters as possible. So all of the characters, all of the figures in the procession are depicted in great detail and the closer you look, the more detail you see. But also, because this is sort of that era's version of a photograph, the commoners who would have come out to watch the procession are also depicted in great detail and you can even see people who have, once again, come out to sell them taffy or other snacks. So this picture is, they say a picture is worth a thousand words, this picture is worth probably at least a thousand words, if not more. A great example of the documentary paintings of that time but also an important historical record.

So I want to move on and discuss briefly some of the ceramic arts of the Joseon period as well. And there were two main types of ceramics during this time. The first is known as “분청사기” (buncheong sagi), or buncheong stoneware. This type of ceramic art gradually replaced Goryeo celadon in the early Joseon period. “분청사기” (buncheong sagi) is actually short for “분장회청사기” (bunjang hoecheong sagi). “분장” (bunjang) meaning slip, and the slip is basically once the pot is made and dried but before you fire it, you cover it either by brushing it or dipping it in a very diluted mixture of clay and water and it forms a layer over the top of the clay, a very smooth layer. So that, the “분장” (bunjang) refers to that slip. “회청” (hoecheong) refers to sort of the grey-blue or grey-green colour. And “사기” (sagi) means earthenware or stoneware, stoneware in particular. So this slip, this white slip was applied to the original pot, was a rough grey, and then once the slip had dried you would apply patterns to it. You would either stamp it using a stamp, similar to what we saw on the stamped urn, you might apply designs through inlay, in other words you carve out a design and you put another material in there. Or you might just carve out the design and then leave it as is because carving the design into the slip would reveal the original pottery beneath it. And sometimes you would just paint over the slip itself. And then you had the grey-green or grey-blue glaze applied to the top of it and then it was fired. So this particular example here is a stoneware jar that was actually used to store the placenta of children after they were born. It was considered something that you wanted to protect. And it was decorated with a stamp design. So you can see how the design has been stamped on it and repeated. This type of ceramics, buncheong stoneware, was highly prized by the Japanese, and during the Japanese invasions at the end of the 16th century, they actually abducted many potters and took them back to Japan so they could carry on the tradition there.

This second piece is another example of buncheong stoneware. It's decorated with lotus flowers and fish designs and in this case the designs were made by scraping away the white slip. So, the negative space, after the white slip dries, is scraped away, leaving the design in white slip with the grey stoneware showing through. And then after that the glaze would be fired and the pot would be completed. So these two pieces that we've looked at, these are also national treasures.

So the second type of ceramics that were produced during the Joseon period were known as white porcelain, or “백자” (baekja) in Korean. These gradually replaced the buncheong stoneware, especially after a lot of the buncheong stoneware artisans were carried off to Japan. This white porcelain had actually been produced during the Goryeo period as well but it didn't become widespread until the beginning of the Joseon period, somewhere around the 15th century. So in this example here, you can see a very pure, undecorated white porcelain. And this type of porcelain, no decoration, just a pure white, was very highly prized in both Korea and Ming China. Korean envoys would offer it as gifts to the emperor and the Chinese emperors would request this as tribute, so they valued it very highly. They did obviously have white porcelain in China as well, but if you compare the two, Chinese white porcelain tends to have a cooler, sort of a blueish white colour, but Joseon porcelain has a warmer, more of a cream colour to it. And this colour and the purity of it was quite valued. So this particular piece here is known as a moon jar, for reasons that you can probably guess. It sort of looks like a full moon. And for its purity and for its gracefulness, it is considered to be a national treasure.

There were other types, though. There were decorated versions of white porcelain as well. And some of the decorations were done by what is known as underglazed blue, so you would paint it blue

underneath the glaze and you'd paint the glaze on top of it. These types of designs would often mimic Chinese designs. So if you're familiar with Chinese porcelain, you're probably familiar with the blue and white porcelain. This was also very much mimicked in the West as well, so in Europe they would make blue and white porcelain that mimicked the Chinese designs. You had similar versions of that in Korea as well, but you did see other types of materials being used that were a little more unique. So for example, you have iron used to decorate the pot and when you bake the iron, when you fry the iron, it turns into a very dark almost black colour, such as you can see here in the grapevine design on this piece.

So these are only a few samples of Korean art that has spanned thousands of years. But hopefully it's been enough to leave an impression of the development of Korean art over those thousands of years, starting with those scenes from the tombs in the Three Kingdoms, even going back farther than that, from prehistoric times you had the rock art as well. But you can see sort of... there was this, as everywhere, always this urge to express the experiences that people had, their hopes and their wishes and to put those into art that would last. And thankfully, fortunately, much of this has lasted to this day and we can appreciate it and I hope that you've appreciated it in our brief examination today.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. The rock carvings at Bangudae in Ulsan have depictions of various animals.  
(T/F)

Answer:  
T

2. The Golden Crown from the Great Tomb of Hwangnam was designed to look like a tree, something that symbolized the connection between heaven and earth. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

3. The fired brick with lotus flower design on it from Balhae is almost indistinguishable from other bricks fired during the same period. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

4. The Joseon painter Kim Deuksin had a unique style based on the southern school of Ming Chinese painting and painted *Geumgangjeondo*. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

5. *Irworobongdo* is a painting of the sun, the moon, and the five peaks, and symbolizes the royal authority of the king. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about art of the Three Kingdoms period?

- The Mural of the Dancers and the Hunting Mural at the Tomb of the Dancers depicts the dynamic movements of human subjects.
- The gilt bronze incense burner of Baekje depicts the mountain island home where immortals live.
- The Painting of Heavenly Horse is considered extremely important because it is one of the few paintings from Gaya that remain.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about art from the North and South Kingdoms period?

- In Unified Silla, roof tiles with faces of dokkaebi on them were made to ward off evil spirits.
- The various statues in Seokguram are considered some of the finest examples of Buddhist art from the Unified Silla period.
- The Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok is an example of the simple yet elegant aesthetic tastes of people from Balhae.

Answer: c

3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about art from the Goryeo period?

- In No Yeong's *King Taejo's Worship of the Dharmodgata Bodhisattva*, King Taejo is depicted bowing to Bodhisattva at the top of the Diamond Mountains.
- Goryeo celadon reached its peak after the Mongol invasions.
- Although maebyeong originated in China, the maebyeong Celadon Prunus Vase with Inlaid Cloud and Crane Design demonstrates a distinctive aesthetic form that is distinct from the Chinese meiping.

Answer: b

4. Which of the following is an accurate statement about paintings from the Joseon period?

- Sin Saimdang's *Paintings of Flowers and Insects* show her skill as a professionally trained painter.
- The late Joseon painter Byeon Sangbyeok was particularly famous for his ability to paint cats.
- Kim Deuksin's *Cat Steals a Chick* is a clear example of how Kim Deuksin was influenced by Gang Huian.

Answer: b

5. Which of the following is an accurate statement about Korean white porcelain?

- White porcelain was first produced in Korea during the early Joseon period.
- White porcelains without ornamental decorations were not preferred because they were considered to have less artistic value.

c. White porcelain from Joseon is a slightly warmer hue than white porcelain from China.

Answer: c

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was a master of genre paintings during the Joseon period. He included in his paintings diverse scenes from daily life during the late Joseon period, such as scenes of farmers threshing grain, scenes of people at a well, and scenes from a village school. In particular, his painting *Ssireum*, which depicts a dynamic scene of two men wrestling as people with various postures watch them, gives a vivid snapshot of life during the Joseon period.

Answer: Kim Hongdo

2. Paintings of \_\_\_\_\_ and tigers are some of the most famous forms of Korean folk painting and were hung in houses on New Year's Day to prevent bad luck from entering.

Answer: magpies

3. \_\_\_\_\_ was a type of ceramic pot that was made by taking a pot of grey-green clay, applying a layer of white clay, dipping it in enamel, and firing it. In the early Joseon period, it was slowly replaced by celadon. The most famous examples of this ceramic art are the Placenta Jars with Stamped Chrysanthemum Design and Flat Bottle with Sgraffito Lotus and Fish Design.

Answer: Buncheong stoneware

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Pick three painters from the Joseon period and briefly explain their style and the characteristics of one

of their most famous works.

\* Answer guide

Three painters from the Joseon period of various genders and classes are Gang Huian, Sin Saimdang, and Kim Hongdo. Gang Huian was literati painter of the early Joseon period. He was influenced by paintings of the Ming dynasty and create works that were typical of literati paintings from the early Joseon period. His most famous work *Scholar Contemplating Water* uses strong contrast between light and dark and uses heavy yet nimble lines. Sin Saimdang was a female painter of the middle Joseon period and was skilled in paintings of flowers and insects. Although her *Chochungdo* show some aspects of an amateur painter, they demonstrated skill in capturing the beauty of nature through simplicity and straightforwardness. Kim Hongdo was a professional painter of the late Joseon period and left behind exceptional genre paintings. His genre painting *Ssireum* with its dynamic images of various characters is like a snapshot of the Joseon dynasty. Aside from that, he included in his paintings diverse scenes from daily life during the late Joseon period, such as scenes of farmers threshing grain, scenes of people at a well, and scenes from a village school.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Using specific examples from each period, describe the changes in Korean ceramic culture from the Goryeo period to the Joseon period.

\* Answer guide

During the Goryeo period, between the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century, ceramics were first made in Korea when the technology was introduced from China. Goryeo celadon came into being at the beginning of the 13th century and was recognized as the best of celadon. Celadon Melon-shape Bottle and Celadon Prunus Vase with Inlaid Cloud and Crane Design show the beautiful green-blue of Goryeo celadon and show detailed inlay work. By the early Joseon period, buncheong stoneware slowly started to replace Goryeo celadon. Buncheong stoneware was a type of ceramic pot that was made by taking a pot of grey-green clay, applying a layer of white clay, dipping it in enamel, and firing it, and the most famous examples of this ceramic art are the Placenta Jars with Stamped Chrysanthemum Design and Flat Bottle with Sgraffito Lotus and Fish Design. Later, white porcelain took the supremacy of buncheong stoneware. Although white porcelain was produced as far back as the Goryeo period, it wasn't until the 15th century that it became widespread. Pieces of undecorated white porcelain like the moon jar were highly regarded in both Joseon and Ming China. And pieces of decorated porcelain like White Porcelain Jar with Grape Design in Underglaze Iron were also popular.

## 〈Lecture 7〉

# Korean Traditional Music

– Melodies from the Past Still Played Today

### Class Goals

1. Give an overview of the history of Korean music
2. Understand the characteristics of popular Korean traditional instruments
3. Appreciate representative examples of Korean traditional music performance

### Summary

In this class, we looked at the history and popular instruments of traditional Korean music. We also discussed representative genres of Korean traditional music.

Geomungo and gayageum were invented during the Three Kingdoms period. Starting from the North and South Kingdoms period, Chinese music, including Dangak and Aak was introduced to Korea. In late Joseon, new musical forms like pansori and sanjo were developed.

For stringed instruments, we have geomungo, gayageum, ajaeng, and haeguem. Daegeum, piri, and taepyeongso are some of the popular woodwind instruments. Pyeonjong, pyeongyeong, jing, janggu, and buk are some of the popular percussion instruments.

In terms of ritual and court music, we have Munmyo Jeryeak, Jongmyo Jeryeak, Sujecheon, and Beompae. Munmyo Jeryeak is performed in a ritual held at Munmyo to honor Confucius and other important figures related to Confucianism. Jongmyo Jeryeak is performed to honor kings and queens of Joseon at Jongmyo. Sujecheon is performed at royal events by wind ensemble. Beompae is a Buddhist chant, which is divided into hotsori and jitsori.

Gagok and folk songs (*minyo*) are famous forms of Korean traditional vocal music. Gagok is sung by

both men and women separately, and as duet. It is accompanied by at least five instruments. We have many different kinds of folk songs, among which “Arirang” is the most famous.

For instrumental music, we have sanjo and farmer’s music (*nongak*). Sanjo was originally developed for the gayageum in the 19th century as a solo performance. It later spread to other instruments, and the sanjo ensemble was developed later. Farmer’s music was originally played in rural villages to relieve fatigue of farming and bring community together.

## ❖ Script ❖

### 1. Introduction

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today we're going to be looking at traditional music. So, music is an important part of course of any culture, but it has long been associated with Korean culture as well. Ancient Chinese records, for example, record sayings that, for example, "Men and women, young and old, gathered together to dance and sing." This comes from the 〈Records of the Three Kingdoms〉, from the 〈Book of Wei〉. So, music is obviously still an important part of Korean culture today. And what we're going to do for today's class is look at a few, or listen to a few representative examples of traditional music stage performances, to hopefully give you some insight into the various types of traditional music. So we're going to begin with a brief history of music in Korea and then I'm going to introduce some of the commonly seen and heard instruments that you might find in this music, and then we're going to listen to some examples of court and ritual music followed by some samples of vocal music and finally some samples of instrumental music.

### 2. Brief History of Korean Music

So, for the history of Korean music, we can begin in the Three Kingdoms period and we can talk specifically about the invention of the geomungo and the gayageum, which are two very important innovations during that time. I'll tell you exactly what those instruments are in the next section. But Goguryeo music during the Three Kingdoms period was influenced by northern Chinese music, central Asian music and instruments, whereas Baekje music in the south was influenced by the southern Chinese instruments and the southern Chinese music.

And then as far as Silla goes, in terms of Silla going into the North and South Kingdoms period as well, we have music being imported from the Tang Dynasty in China in the 9th century, and this was performed alongside Korean music and this state of affairs continued until the Joseon period. So Chinese

music was known as “당악” (dangak), “당” (dang) literally meaning Tang China, and “악” (ak) meaning music. And Korean music was known as “향악” (hyangak), and “향” (hyang) is a character that means native or home, so, native music. So, this was the state of musical affairs through the North and South Kingdoms period.

Once we move into the Goryeo period, we see the introduction of aak, which means elegant music. And this was introduced from Song China in 1116. We know the exact date of introduction. And it was performed at Jongmyo, at the ancestral shrines for the royal family. This aak gradually became mixed with Korean music in general and the music of Song replaced the music of Tang. So you sort of saw a development in the influences from China and also the development of Korean music as well.

During the early Joseon period, prior to the Japanese invasions, once Confucianism became established as the ruling ideology, particularly during the reign of King Sejong, aak was restored to the original Chinese model. So, as I mentioned, over the years, it had sort of mixed with Korean music, but it was decided to restore it to the original form. And it was performed at rituals and this happened during the 15th century during the reign of King Sejong. So, Confucianism, being important at that time, held that music should benefit the mind as well as the ear. So it shouldn't just be nice to listen to, it should also be beneficial to the soul. It should edify a person. As a person, love songs were banished from use in court because they weren't thought worthy of being used in a court setting. And you had new songs being written for use in court, including a song that we're going to look at in our literature class, known as 〈용비어천가〉 (Yongbieocheonga), or 〈The Song of Flying Dragons〉. And we'll come back and look at the text of that in our literature class in more detail. The first text on music was also written during this time. It was written in 1493 and it includes music theory and practical arrangements, so musical arrangements, as well as illustrations of instruments from that time. And this was very important because it allowed for the reconstruction of court music after the Japanese invasions.

So in the later Joseon period after that, after those invasions, new musical forms began to emerge. So, for example, you had pansori, which we're going to discuss in our next class on performing arts. And you had sanjo. And we'll see an example of this a little bit later. Court music, if you think of the differences between the different types of music, court music was very dignified and stately. Aristocratic music was often slow and leisurely, while folk and other music was very fast-paced and emotional. And you may be able to see some of the examples of that in the different music pieces that we're going to be listening to a little bit later on.

### 3. Introduction to Popular Traditional Instruments

First though, I want to introduce you to some popular traditional instruments. Now there were many traditional instruments that were used in the past. Some are no longer used at all. Others are used only for ritual purposes. Here, I want to focus on twelve commonly used instruments to help you appreciate and understand them, especially when they appear in the music samples that we're going to be looking at

next. So we'll start with the stringed instruments. And before I go into this, I do want to clarify that this division into stringed and wind and percussion, this is according to more of a Western understanding of stringed instruments and wind instruments. So, the Korean classification would have been a little bit different and I'll talk about that in more detail later on. But for the time being, just to help you basically understand the nature of these instruments, we're going to start with instruments that have strings, instruments that are played by blowing into them, and then instruments that are played by being struck.

So, the stringed instruments begin with the geomungo and this is one of the native instruments that I mentioned before being invented during the Three Kingdoms period. This is a half-tube zither, a zither being a stringed instrument that is played against a board. Here, half-tube means that... well, it basically means looks like half of a tube, so it's sort of a semicircular shape. It's made from paulownia wood with a back piece of chestnut wood and it has six strings. Three of these strings are on movable bridges, so in other words you can move the bridges in order to tune the strings, and it is plucked with a bamboo rod. So, pay attention to this one when you watch the samples of music we're going to be looking at later, you'll see them plucking one of the instruments with a bamboo rod. That is a geomungo. So the instrument is supported on the right knee of the player, so the player sits cross-legged, and the instrument is supported on the right knee and it extends out to the left, as do all of the other zither types of instruments. So it was invented in Goguryeo sometime prior to the 5th century. Some of the old tomb murals that we have found show a four-string zither and this may have been the original form. So the original form of the instrument may have had four strings and it may have developed six strings later on. That would not be uncommon. The sound of this instrument, the sound of the geomungo, is said to be rich and dignified and more masculine than the gayageum.

So the gayageum. What is that? It's another half-tube zither originally called the gayago and later called the gayageum. Again, this is made from paulownia wood, has a separate back piece. However, it has twelve strings on movable bridges, again used for tuning the strings. Instead of being plucked with a bamboo rod, these strings are plucked or flicked by hand, by finger. And this instrument is supported on both knees, as the player sits cross-legged, and extends out to the left. It was said to have been invented in Gaya, which is why it's called the gayageum or the gayago, basically means the Gaya zither or the Gaya harp, inspired by the Chinese zither, and the twelve strings were supposed to represent the twelve months of the year. And King Gasil, having seen the Chinese zither, invented the Gaya version of it toward the end of the 6th century. So, as I mentioned before, the sound of the gayageum is thought to be more feminine than the geomungo. It's supposed to have a clear and a delicate sound. And maybe you can make that distinction later on.

So another half-tube zither that very commonly appears in the pieces that we're going to see is called the ajaeng. And this is actually an imported Chinese instrument. It means creaking zither. Again, it's made from paulownia wood, it has a back piece, it has seven strings on movable bridges. But instead of being plucked with a rod or by finger, it's bowed with a rosined wood stick, a forsythia stick. So if you see them using a bow to play the instrument, that's going to be the ajaeng. So there are records of this zither being used all the way back in the Goguryeo and Baekje period. But we're not sure if it's actually the same instrument that we know of today, it might have been a different instrument, but we do know for sure that it was definitely used at least from the Goryeo period. It's generally part of the court

orchestra and there are different versions of the instrument that have more strings. So, they add a number of strings depending on the desires of the musician or the person making the instrument. The sound of the ajaeng is said to be very full and majestic and it's because it's played with a bow, it has a little bit of a rasping sound to it that you get from bowed instruments, like violins or cellos or that sort of thing.

The fourth major stringed instrument is quite different from the three that we've looked at so far, which have all been half-tubed zithers. This is actually a spike lute, known as a haegeum. It has a bamboo tube, a bamboo sound box that is covered with paulownia. And there are only two strings. And in between these two strings, you place the horsehair of the bow and it's played in an upright fashion, so it's held upright and the bow is bowed left and right, horizontally. This is an imported Chinese instrument and it's very similar to instruments that are also popular in Mongolia. You can see very similar instruments all around the area of eastern and central Asia. The sound of the haegeum is very sharp, often described even as nasal, and very penetrating. And just about every instrument ensemble you will see, the haegeum will be a part of that.

So, as I mentioned before, my distinction here between string and wind instruments is more of a Western distinction. But of the instruments that we've just talked about, the geomungo, the gayageum, the ajaeng and the haegeum, only the geomungo and the gayageum are considered to be stringed instruments in the Korean classification system. The bowed instruments, the ajaeng and the haegeum, are actually grouped together with the wind instruments as part of the same group. Perhaps because the instrument is being bowed, these instruments have the ability to sustain tones like wind instruments do, whereas the gayageum and the geomungo are plucked and they have very sharp attacks and sharp decays for their notes.

But, at any rate, in the Western sense anyway, woodwind instruments are those instruments which are, again, made of wood, and they are blown in order to be played. So, of the common woodwind instruments that we find in Korea, you have the daegeum, which is a flute. "Dae" means large, so it's a large flute. It's a long transverse flute, which means that it's played to the side, made of bamboo with six finger holes. And there are other holes that are not actually played, they're non-stop. And there's a reed membrane inside the tube between the mouth hole where you blow and the finger holes. And this membrane gives the instrument quite a different sound from Western flutes. And its effect is very much pronounced in the upper registers, so the higher the note becomes, the more you hear the effect of that membrane. And you may be able to hear that in, again, in some of the samples that we're going to be listening to. It has a very stable pitch, so that pitch is often used as a tuning pitch, if there are no other tuning instruments available. And like the haegeum, it's used in pretty much every instrument ensemble.

The piri, basically a pipe. There are actually different varieties of the piri. It's similar to an oboe with a double bamboo reed. It has a bamboo cylinder and it's played in the same way as an oboe. All of them have eight finger holes, but the type of piri differs depending on perhaps the diameter of it or the specific shape of it. But they're all called various difference of piri. And despite the small size, it's actually quite loud. It has a very brash and bold sound. It's very common as a part of instrument ensembles in all types of music. And when you hear it, you'll be able to, well you'll probably be able to identify it.

Next, we have the taepyeongso, which looks a little bit like a horn, but it is also a type of oboe. So it has a metal mouth piece with a double reed and it has eight finger holes and at the end you can

see there's a bell that flares out and that bell is made of metal. Now, you'll definitely be able to hear the sound of the taepyeongso because it's very loud and very piercing and it's generally only played outdoors because of how loud and piercing it is. I sort of like to think of it as like the Korean bagpipes, not because it's played in the same way, but because it has a very very loud sound that is often too loud to be played indoors. The name "taepyeongso" literally means great peace flute, which might sound somewhat ironic. But it's commonly called the nallari and that is sort of a mimicking of its sound, the way it's played, "nallari nallari nallari." Interestingly enough, this is the origin of the modern term "nallari," which is used in Korean to sort of refer to young punks or delinquents. In the Korean context, this means students who don't study hard but spend their time partying, you call them nallari, perhaps because they bring to mind the taepyeongso, which is very loud and brash.

So, moving on, the last two, the percussion instruments, you have two instruments that are... they look very similar, but use different materials. The first one is the pyeonjong, which means assembled bells, and these are sixteen bells that are arranged in chromatic scale, and chromatic simply means they go up in semitones. So, they're arranged in a chromatic scale and hung in a wooden frame in two rows of eight. This instrument originated in China. It's thought to be one of the most ancient instruments originating from China. But it's only still part of living musical tradition in Korea. So it's been kept alive here. The bells are all of similar size. You might expect them to be different sizes, but they're all roughly the same size. Instead, the tone is determined by the thickness. So, the thickness changes the pitch of the bell. These bells are struck with a mallet made of bullhorn and wood, so the handle is wood and the head of the mallet itself is bullhorn. It's used primarily in ritual music and sometimes it's used in court music as well. You'll be able to see it in some of the videos we look at. The sound of the pyeonjong is characterized by the fact that there is a higher secondary or subsidiary pitch, along with the principal pitch. So you sort of hear two different pitches at once. You hear the main pitch and then you hear a higher pitch as well. So in that regard, it's very different from Western bells or chimes.

And the instrument that is related to this, that I mentioned before, is the pyeongyeong. And this means assembled stones. So it's very similar in construction to the pyeonjong. But instead of bells, it has L-shaped stones. Also an ancient Chinese instrument, even older than the bells. Once again the stones are all of similar size and the pitch is determined by the thickness. The overall pitch of the instrument as a whole is actually one octave above the bells. But like the bells, it has a higher secondary, subsidiary pitch in addition to the principal pitch. So you hear sort of the double pitch. That's something that you might be able to hear a little bit later on. It has a very clear and elegant sound. It's unaffected by changes in temperature or humidity because it's made of stone. So, it's often used to tune the orchestra. If the orchestra will contain a pyeongyeong, that is the instrument that will be used to tune the rest of the orchestra. It's always going to hold its pitch.

Moving onto some smaller instruments, we have the jing, which is a large gong that is held by hand. It's a gong that has a cord on the top, allows you to hold it. And it's struck with a soft-headed mallet. This is usually used to punctuate the beat in military processions. It's also used in farmers' music and in court and ritual music. Originally, it was supposed to have a military function. It was used in battle to signal retreat, whereas drums were used to signal attacks. And there's also a smaller gong known as a kkwaenggwari that's played at a much faster pace with a louder, higher pitch sound. And you'll hear this

in the farmers' music that we're going to listen to later. It's also part of shamanic rituals as well.

Perhaps one of the most iconic percussion instruments, though, in terms of its shape, is the janggu, which is the hourglass drum. It has a thicker, lower-pitched hide on the left and a thinner, higher-pitched hide on the right. So you hold it in front of you and you strike the left lower side with your palm and on the right you strike it with a bamboo stick and that provides even more of a distinction between the two pitches. Probably one of those widely used, again you can see it in a lot of different applications, often used to provide the beat, to provide the rhythm for the rest of the musicians. A very iconic instrument.

And lastly, we have the buk. And buk is just the general term for a barrel drum. And there are many different types of buk. They range in size from small drums that are used while seated, for example the types of drum that are used in pansori, which we'll see in our next class, to larger drums that are placed in wooden frames. And you even have very very large temple drums that are possibly as large or larger than a person. So very many different types of these buk or these drums.

So that's just a quick overview of some of the most common instruments that you will see and next we're going to go into some of the specific types of various music and then hopefully you'll be able to pick out some of these instruments when you see and hear them.

## 4. Ritual and Court Music

So I want to start off by listening to some ritual and court music. And the first type of music that we're going to listen to is known as Munmyo Jeryeak. And Munmyo is the shrine to honour Confucius, his disciples and some of the eminent Chinese and Confucian scholars. This shrine is located today at Sungkyunkwan University and a ritual is held there twice yearly in the spring and in the autumn to honour all of these important figures in Confucianism. This is the only version of the original Chinese aak, the original Chinese elegant ritual music that has been preserved, presumably unaltered since the 12th century, although we have no way of knowing that for sure. As I mentioned earlier, it was restored to its original form during the reign of King Sejong, based on Chinese texts.

So, the orchestra theoretically contains the eight sounds, which refers to the eight materials from which the instruments are made. So you have metal, stone, string, bamboo, gourd, clay, leather, and wood. And these eight materials are supposed to represent the entirety of all the possible sounds that can be created. Gourds aren't really used that much anymore, now they're made from wood. So it's really only a symbolic thing. And some of the instruments that you will see here are only used in ritual music. So, for example, there is the chuk which is a wooden box that is struck with a wooden stick at the beginning. You'll hear a "tak tak tak." That's only used in ritual music. The instrument known as an eo, which is the thing that looks like a white tiger. It's a scraper, where the back of the tiger is a series of raised pieces and you scrape a stick over it to make a scraping sound. These types of instruments can only be found in ritual music, so they're rather special.

As you listen to the music, you'll notice that it has an extremely slow tempo and the melody is characterized by the upward gliding sound of the wind instruments at the end of each note. So it'll go (mimics sound of instrument). And that's something that's very unique to this piece. There's a single dancer in this particular example that we're going to look at. A single dancer who's performing very slow and stately movements. In the actual ritual itself, you would have seen more dancers. But, take a listen.

The next type of music is a ritual that I did mention before, the ritual performed at Jongmyo, known as Jongmyo Jerye, and the music performed there is Jongmyo Jeryeak, Jongmyo ritual music. This is performed to honour the kings and queens of the Joseon Dynasty and it is held at Jongmyo, the royal ancestral shrine, which is located east of the royal palace, as we discussed in the architecture class. And this ceremony is held once a year every year in May. It's very different from the music for Munmyo Jeryeak.

You would think that ritual music would be similar, but it's actually quite different. Because this music includes Korean instruments that were eliminated from Munmyo Jeryeak, so the gayageum, the geomungo. And other commonly used instruments, like the piri, the taepyeongso, the daegeum, the haegeum, instruments that you would see in other pieces of music but not necessarily ritual music. So, even in terms of the composition of the orchestra, already it's quite different from the ritual music for the Confucian shrine. The piece that we're going to be looking at is from a suite known as 〈Jeongdaeup〉, which can be translated as achieving or establishing great works. And this suite of music is performed during the second and third offerings of alcohols to the ancestors. So you would offer up the rice wine to the ancestors and these songs would be performed. So it does include sung lyrics and it is accompanied by dancers. But once again, you would usually find in the actual ritual more dancers performing this. And if you do go to Jongmyo yourself and see the ritual in person, you'll see that it is a much more grand affair. This is actually just a stage performance. But give it a listen to see how it differs to the first ritual music we listened to.

So, moving onto court music, this next piece, known as 〈Sujecheon〉 was performed at royal events by what is called a wind ensemble. And again, this wind ensemble includes the ajaeng, the creaking zither, and the haegeum, the spike lute. And this represents fully Korean music. So we've been going from Munmyo Jeryeak, which is fully Chinese music, fully Chinese ritual music, through to Jongmyo Jeryeak, which sort of includes a lot of Korean elements as well, and now we've gone to a fully Korean type of music here. It is accompanied by percussion. There originally were lyrics that were sung, but now it's only instrumental. The lyrics are not sung anymore.

The title "Sujecheon" literally means lifespan, the lifespan of the king, is ordered or arranged as the heavens. So, it's a wish, basically, that the king's life would extend as long as the heavens would last. So, wishing the king long life and happiness. The music is said to be characterized by repeated cycles of tension and release. So you can hear in the way that the wind instruments are played, they build up tension and then release that tension and they cycle through that. Give that a listen and see what you think.

And then in terms of, going back to ritual music, we can look at something entirely different known as beompae. And this is a Buddhist chant. We could consider this a type of vocal music as well, but I decided to put it in with ritual music because it does have a ritual function. In its most basic form, in the

most basic form of Buddhist chanting, there is no musical accompaniment. But here, it is accompanied by a taepyeongso, so you'll get to hear that in all its glory, and a jing, one of those big gongs. And these, in terms of the entirety of beompae, these chants include those that are sung by all monks and those that are sung only by trained chanters. So some chants, you don't need any special training to sing, but some of them, they are reserved for those singers who have special training. And these latter chants, these chants that are sung by trained singers, are divided into two varieties once again. The first is hotsori, which is a short chant. It's melismatic, melismatic means that each syllable can be expressed, can express a number of notes, so you might sing one syllable and have a number of notes that go along with that. It's very gentle and it's often sung either solo or by very few singers. And then the other type of this trained chanter chant is jitsori, which is very long, both in terms of its length and in terms of its musical nature. It's less melismatic, so it doesn't quite have that same one single note, one single syllable being held over many notes. It's much stronger, has a much stronger feel to it, and it's usually sung by a large chorus.

So this particular piece that we're going to listen to is one of the former variety, hotsori, one of the shorter pieces sung solo, or gentle melismatic piece. It is known as 〈도량찬〉 (Doryangchan), and “도량” (doryang) refers to the temple or any place basically where monks are gathered. And 〈Doryangchan〉 is performed to purify the ritual space so that the Buddha can come down. The chant being sung here, and you'll see on the screen a Korean translation and explanation of this, the chant is a prayer for aid from the Buddha, saying that, “We have purified this space, so please come down and help us.” There's also a dance being performed. This dance is known as jakbeop. And it includes the very elegant nabichum, “nabi” meaning butterfly, and the very dynamic barachum, and “bara” refers to the cymbals, so toward the end you'll see spinning cymbals. It's a much more dynamic sort of dance. But take a listen to this.

## 5. Vocal Music

So moving onto vocal music, and obviously these are mostly going to be accompanied by instruments as well, but they're primarily vocal pieces. We'll start with what is known as gagok. And this is a song that is sung by both men and women separately and as a duet. It's accompanied by at least five instruments. In this piece that we're going to look at, there's actually seven instruments. From the left to the right, you have the gayageum on the very left, you have the haegeum next, you have the danso, which is another wind instrument that I didn't mention before, you have the daegeum, you have the piri, you have the janggu, which is the hourglass drum, and then you have the geomungo on the far right. So you'll see those instruments lined up and they will each play their part. The specific song that is being sung here is known as 〈Taepyeongga〉, which means literally song of great peace, and it's generally sung as the closing song of the gagok cycle. And as a result, some of the previous songs are sung by, some are sung by men, some are sung by women, this song is generally sung as a duet, as you see it being sung here. It has a very slow tempo, a very slow tempo. It is a part of the aristocratic style of music, so it's

very slow and stately. And you'll notice that the syllables are very drawn out, so a single syllable will be drawn out over a very long period of time. And it's also obviously very melismatic. You'll have a number of notes that are being expressed through a single syllable. So, listen to this very relaxing piece.

Now, on the other side of the social spectrum, you have folk songs. And folksongs are quite wide and diverse. There are a lot of different types of folksongs. For example, you have work songs, or labour songs. Songs that are sung during work, either to make the time go quicker, to make the work go faster. Sometimes, they might even be sung to make sure that everyone is working according to the same rhythm if it requires everyone to be coordinated in their movements. You even had woodcutters who would sing work songs as they went out into the mountains to keep themselves company and maybe to scare off wild animals. But you also had songs that were sung for pleasure and songs that were sung purely for artistic purposes. One of the most famous, not one of, the most famous folksong is known as 〈Arirang〉 and it exists in many different musical forms. So in terms of the melody, in terms of the rhythm, each region has its own version of Arirang. And it also has different lyrics. Some of the lyrics, again, they vary by region, but you also had some new lyrics being written during trying times. So, for example, during the Japanese colonial period, you had lyrics that expressed what people were going through at that time. The version that we're going to be looking at here is the most basic version and the most widely known version. And the song, the basic lyrics, go... so, the lyrics are basically, they're ostensibly a song of parting, so they sing "Arirang arirang arirario," and then it goes on and the lyrics say "My love, who has left me, he won't even be able to go simni(十里), about, let's say 4km, without his feet starting to hurt." So ostensibly, it's a song of parting and the singer is singing that her love has left her and he's going to suffer for it. But it's actually, it's a song of a strong emotional connection and that emotional connection to the song is something that has been very strong throughout history and even when Koreans have gone abroad, they've brought Arirang with them. In Korea today, the television station, the English language television station that broadcasts a lot about Korean culture is known as Arirang TV. So it's sort of become associated with just Korean culture in general. But, like I said, this version that we're going to listen to here, is the most basic and most widely known version. So take a listen.

## 6. Instrumental Music

And moving on lastly to instrumental music, instrumental music is a relatively new phenomenon in terms of some of the pieces that we're going to listen to in the beginning at least. Usually, as with the ritual or the court music, when you had an orchestra or something come together, you had a lot of instruments come together to play for a specific purpose. But the piece that I want to listen to first is known as sanjo and this was sort of a new type of music. "Sanjo" literally means something like scattered melodies or scattered tunes, and it was first developed for the gayageum in the 19th century as a solo performance. So it's solo, but it's accompanied by a janggu drummer. So the drummer provides the

rhythm, but he also provides what is known as chuimsae, which are words of encouragement. And you'll hear the drummer in the video give these words of encouragement. We'll come back and we'll talk about this also when we talk about pansori in the next class as well. So the original version was made for the gayageum, like we're going to see now, but it later spread to other instruments as well. And it developed as part of the folk tradition in southwest Korea, in the Jeolla province, that included pansori. It was originally a very improvisational type of music. So there was not necessarily a set piece that was performed, you sort of improvised as you went along, but now it's very much a set type of music. It's very demanding, technically, to learn. So it's learned quite accurately. The tempo starts out slow and then it progressively gets faster through five or six different tempos. They tend to be rather long, longer than unfortunately we have time to enjoy today. But I will show you some selections of the different tempos here, so you can get an idea of how the music progresses.

So the next piece I want to take a listen to is also a sanjo, as above, but it's called a sanjo hapju. It's an ensemble. So, in another words, it includes a number of instruments. Here we have the piri, the daegeum, the haegeum, the gayageum, the geomungo, the ajaeng, and the janggu. All of the instruments that we've already looked at before. And obviously, this was developed much later. Again, it varies in tempo, but what's interesting about this, because it's not a solo performance, along the way it includes parts that highlight each instrument. So it's sort of like each section has its own time to shine, to demonstrate what it can do. So, it's still considered the sanjo, but it's a little bit different from what we saw before. Not just in terms of the number of instruments, but in terms of the arrangement as well. So listen to this.

Now moving onto something a little bit different, we have nongak, which literally means farmers' music. This was originally played in rural villages in order to relieve the fatigue of farming and to bring the community together, etc. It's played primarily with percussion instruments, so you have the gong, you have the jing, the big gong, and you have the smaller gong, which is known as the kkwaenggwari, and you also have drums. You have the buk, you have the sogo, which basically means small drum, and you have the janggu, which is the hourglass drum. So, obviously very heavily percussion-based. Here, however, a solo taepyeongso provides the melody. So once again, you'll have the chance to listen to the taepyeongso, the nallari. This is the most lively of all the music that we've seen today and in addition to the music itself being lively and very loud, once again, this is the sort of music that you would only play, well, presumably, you would only play outdoors because of how loud it is, but it's designed to get everyone really excited and really enthusiastic and in that sense, beyond the music itself, it also contains important dance or acrobatic elements. And you'll see the musicians, as they're playing, they'll be running around with ribbons or tassles on their hats and they'll spin those around while they're dancing and sometimes they'll leap up in the air and spin around. It's really an exciting performance to watch if you're seeing it in person. It's often performed at festivals and cultural concerts today.

## 7. Closing

So, what we saw here today was only a small part of what Korean traditional music has to offer, but hopefully it did give you a taste at least of the various different types of music, ranging from ritual music to court music, to aristocratic vocal music, to folk music and then some of the newer instrumental types of music as well. Korean traditional music, known today as “국악” (gugak). “국” (gug) means Korean. It literally means country, but it’s used to refer to Korea. Korean music, or gugak is still very popular today, both in original and fusion forms. So you’ll often see modern musical pieces being performed using traditional instruments and that’s usually known as fusion gugak. It’s also an important inspiration for modern music, other forms of music in general. K-pop, for example, even though it has been heavily influenced by Western pop, probably the primary influence of K-pop was from the Western pop tradition of the 80s, perhaps, it also draws on traditional inspirations. So, you may be familiar with 〈Daechwita〉 from BTS, one of BTS’s members, but some groups, they will draw on their heritage and their traditions. And that includes some of the traditional types of music that we saw today. So I do hope that you enjoyed that.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. The word “hyangak” was used to refer to native Korean music. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

2. Both ajaeng and haegeum require tools to play and are played by drawing or pulling a bow across strings. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

3. Pyeonjong is a percussion instrument made of sixteen bells. The pitch of the instrument depends on its size and not its thickness. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

4. The hotsori and jitsori of beompae are sung by specially trained monks. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

5. “Taepyeongga” or “Song of Great Peace” is generally sung as the opening song of a traditional gagok cycle. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is an accurate statement about the history of Korean music?
  - Geomungo and gayageum were first made during the Goryeo period.
  - In the early Joseon period, songs about love between a man and a woman were actively used for entertainment in the royal court.
  - In the late Joseon period, pansori emerged as a new form of music and was widely performed.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about geomungo and gayageum?
  - Geomungo has six strings, and gayageum has twelve.
  - Geomungeo is plucked with a tool, and gayageum is played with the fingers.
  - The sound of a geomungo is said to be clear and delicate, whereas the sound of a gayageum is said to be deep and full.

Answer: c

3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Korean ritual music?
  - Munmyo Jeryeak was played by native Korean instruments such as gayageum and geomungo.
  - Jongmyo Jeryeak was used to perform rituals honoring the kings and queens of the Joseon dynasty.
  - Munmyo Jeryeak and jongmyo Jeryeak were both performed with dance.

Answer: a

4. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about Korean traditional song?
  - Beompae is a type of Buddhist chant and is sometimes accompanied by instrumental music.
  - Gagok is a traditional form of Korean vocal music that is performed without instrumental accompaniment.
  - Arirang is the quintessential Korean folk song and its lyrics and musical form vary with each region.

Answer: b

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate description of nongak (farmer's music)?
  - It is mainly performed with percussion instruments like jing, kkwaenggwari, buk, and janggu.
  - Daegeum is the only instrument in nongak that plays melodies.
  - Performers execute acrobatic moves like spinning ribbons or tassels on their heads.

Answer: b

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a native Korean woodwind instrument and is commonly called nallari. It is often played outside because of its high-pitched and loud sound.

Answer: Taepyeongso

2. \_\_\_\_\_ is a piece of traditional Korean music that was performed at royal events and wished for the king's life to be extended as long as the heavens would last. It originally had lyrics that were sung along with instruments, but now it is only instrumental.

Answer: Sujechoon

3. \_\_\_\_\_, which literally means "scattered melodies," is a traditional form of Korean music performed solo. It was first made in the 18th century to be performed solo on a gayageum. One of its characteristics is that it starts out with a slow tempo that progressively gets faster.

Answer: Sanjo

### B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Choose one instrument from each category of Korea's traditional instruments (stringed, wind, and percussion) and describe the material used to make them, their structure, playing method, and sound characteristics.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

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Give two or more examples of traditional Korean music being used in modern Korean pop music, and from these, pick one example to briefly write a review about how that traditional music was used.

## 〈Lecture 8〉

# Korean Traditional Performing Arts

– Bringing Excitement to the Stage

### Class Goals

1. Identify the characteristics of famous traditional genres of Korean traditional performing arts
2. Learn about some modern genres of Korean performing arts that rely on traditional forms
3. Understand how Korean performing arts bring narrative, music, and acting together

### Summary

In this class, we discussed some famous genres of Korean traditional performing arts and some modern genres that rely on traditional forms.

Pansori is performed by a singer and a drummer. It brings narrative, music, drama, dance, and even audience participation together. Pansori emerged from narrative shaman songs and enjoyed its golden age in the 19th century. The five remaining original works include *The Song of Chunhyang*, *The Song of Sim Cheong*, *The Song of the Sea Palace*, *The Song of Heungbu*, and *The Song of the Red Cliffs*.

Mask dance has a religious origin in agricultural rituals. In late Joseon, ritual mask dances gave rise to urban mask dances. Mask dances do not require a special stage or props for performance, with the exception of the masks. Social criticism in mask dances is quite open, as exemplified in Bongsan Mask Dance.

Developments in pansori in the latter half of the 19th century laid the foundation for changgeuk. Changgeuk features many more number of performers than pansori. However, its singing remained pansori style and a vast majority of changgeuk adapted traditional pansori works.

The madanggeuk movement was started in the 1960s to create a new dramatic form drawing

on traditional principles. It was a reaction against Japanese and Western influences on drama. In the 1980s, madanggeuk contained messages of social criticism. There is also a commercial version known as madangnori.

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Introduction to Traditional Performing Arts

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today, we're going to be looking at some traditional performing arts. Performing arts combine various techniques to produce works that connect with audiences and traditional Korean performing arts in particular were very often participatory in nature. We'll see that through some of the examples we're going to be looking at today. So, as usual, it would be quite futile to attempt to cover all performing arts, so instead we're going to focus on perhaps some of the most famous genres of traditional performing arts as well as some of the modern versions that rely on these traditional forms.

So although the court, the royal court and the upper class, had their own performing arts, those arts that had the closest connection with the people and that have remained the most popular in Korea and abroad are some of the ones that we're going to be looking at today. There are also circus type performances, such as tightrope walking that are also still quite popular. But I want to focus in particular on narrative forms, so forms that tell a story of some sort. So we'll begin with traditional forms of pansori, which I mentioned briefly in our last class on music. And we'll also talk a little bit about mask dance as well. And we'll continue with the modern forms of changgeuk and madanggeuk, or madangnori. So the goal of the class is really just to give you a taste of the performing arts here, showing how they bring together the various elements, such as the narrative, the story, the music, the acting, the dancing, etc. How they bring all of these together into one work of art. And as in the music class, we'll be looking at some videos of these performances to supplement the discussion.

# 2. Pansori

So what is pansori? Well, pansori, the term, comes from a combination of two words, "pan" and "sori."

And “pan” here refers to… Well, it could refer to a number of things. It could refer to a place or an activity where a number of people, a number of agents, undertake certain procedures in order to achieve a goal. So for example, one Korean word that involves pan that’s very common is noreumpan. That means sort of like a place where gambling or game playing is going on. The other meaning, though. It can also mean music that changes rhythm and in this case, it sort of has both of those meanings. The “sori” part literally means sound. So “sori” literally means sound in Korean. But figuratively speaking, it’s often used to refer to singing as well. So it’s primarily a type of singing, but it also takes place in an area, some area for that specific purpose.

So pansori is performed by a very small contingent, actually. It is just the singer and the drummer. And the singer is known variously as changja, which literally means person who sings, gwangdae, myeongchang. I’ll get into these a little later on and their significance. The drummer is called gosu. So you have these two performers. The singer and the drummer work together. The drummer provides the rhythm and the singer conveys the story through singing, known as chang, according to the various rhythms that the drummer will dictate, and also spoken narrative known as aniri. And chang and aniri are sometimes compared to aria and recitative in opera. So if you want to think of them in that way, you can think of them in a similar fashion.

So pansori brings together various types of art. As I mentioned before, there’s the narrative of course. The story can be very involved and complex and the narrative aspect of pansori was later inherited by pansori-based novels. And we’re going to talk about pansori-based novels more specifically in the literature class and today we’re going to focus more on the performance.

Another element of pansori that’s very important of course is the music. And when I say the music here, I’m specifically referring to the vocal music, the vocalization of the singer. This is very different from the Western opera style of singing known as bel canto. “Bel canto” literally means beautiful singing. According to tradition, a pansori singer would have to practice beneath a waterfall until their vocal chord started to bleed, in other words their throat would sort of burst open and they’d reach what they call “득 음” (deugeum), and “득 음” (deugeum) literally means the attaining of sound. So only by undergoing this very harsh training would you be able to achieve the proper sound necessary for singing pansori. Now I know that people who learn pansori today generally don’t go and sing beneath waterfalls, but it just goes to show you how much energy you need to put into the singing and how loud you have to be. Because traditionally, they didn’t have microphones. And if you’re singing in a great open space, you have to be able to project very well to make sure everyone can hear you. The various rhythms are obviously also important as part of the music and the drummer plays the key role here, of course.

So in addition to the narrative and the music, there’s also the dramatic elements and the dance or the movement elements. So the singer functions not only as the narrator of the story, but also as actor for all of the characters. So she will voice the dialogue for all of the characters and she will act out the characters’ actions and emotions. And there’s also dance-like movements that are performed during the singing parts. These are known as ballim or neoreumsae, and they’re an important part of the performance. That being said, the dance elements aren’t quite as important as you might find in mask dances, we’ll come back to that in a moment, but they’re still a very important part of it. The singer only has her fan. There’s only one tool or prop that she uses. She makes very good use of the fan, either

opening it or closing it very dramatically as part of the movements that she makes.

And then there is the important element of participation, which I mentioned in the introduction to today's class. So, for one, the singer and the drummer interact. The drummer shouts chuimsae, and I mentioned chuimsae in the music class as well. These are words of encouragement or exclamations that the drummer will shout out, “얼씨구” (eolssigu), “좋다” (jota), various sorts of exclamations that he will make in order to provide encouragement for the singer and create the proper mood. And this interaction actually extends to the audience as well. So it's not just the singer and the drummer interacting with each other, but the audience and the singer interacting. The singer may address the audience and the audience may shout out chuimsae themselves to contribute to the performance. There's no fourth wall, in other words. It's not like the singer's on stage and she exists in a separate world from the audience. They exist in the same world and the audience could even be considered a sort of third performer. There's even a term for skilled audience members. They're known as “귀명창” (gwimyeongchang). “명창” (Myeongchang) means famous singer, and “귀” (gwi) means ear. So, it refers to the ability to be a good listener of pansori and not just a listener, but also a good participant. And I've actually been at pansori performances where we have been castigated by the singer for not participating enough. So it's still very much a part of pansori the way it is performed today.

But to go back to the early days, where did pansori come from? How did it develop? The earliest record of pansori we have is from a hansi, a poem written in classical Chinese, from 1754. And this poem actually describes a pansori performance. So we know that by the time this poem was written in the mid-18th century, pansori had already been an established art form. It wasn't something new, it was something that everyone knew at the time, at least, in that area of Korea, southwestern Korea, the Joella province. And this was the same area, like I mentioned in the music class, where sanjo came from. Some scholars even place the emergence of pansori at the end of the 17th century, so we know that at least by the 18th century, pansori had been established.

And the most widely accepted theory for the origin of pansori is that it emerged from narrative shaman songs. So if you remember from when we discussed shamanism in the religion class, the shamanic rituals, they're sort of centred around this narrative song, the shamanic epic that was sung. And the theory is that pansori actually developed out of this tradition. They do have many similar characteristics. For one, they mix spoken narration and song. Two, they're both performed to the beat of a drum. And three, they also include dance-like movements. They also do have their differences though. The shaman songs were originally performed facing the altar. Obviously, they're being performed for ritual purposes and they're being performed for the sake of the deity who is present, so the shaman is not going to face the audience, but they're going to face the altar. And the shaman often played the drum and sang at the same time, so there was often a combination of this role of drummer and singer. However, you did see changes being developed, or changes being introduced to these narrative shaman songs, allowing pansori to develop. So, the shamans began to perform facing the audience and there was a separate drummer that was introduced. And from that point on, you had sort of a separate development. You had the narrative shaman songs developing along one line, and they continue to be performed today, and then you also had the pansori developing along these separate lines.

In addition to the narrative shaman songs, they were also influenced by existing tales and stories in

terms of the narrative. So, many of the pansori come from folktales or from novels or that sort of thing. In terms of their music and performance, they were also influenced by ballads and by what is known as jaedam, which refers to a type of storytelling. So there were a lot of influences that did go into making pansori what it was.

And in its original form, it was one of the many types of folk performances that was present at festivals. So I mentioned before that there were different circus type performances, like tightrope walking, or acrobatics, or jaedam storytelling, etc. And pansori was another one of those types of performances in that repertoire of folk performance. But it ended up rising in prominence above those other forms of performing arts due to the complexity and artistry that was required. And it saw its golden age basically in the 19th century, the 1800s was really the golden age of pansori.

So originally, as part of that repertoire of folk performances, it appealed to the lower classes alone. It reflected lower class values, it reflected lower class desires, etc. But as pansori gained in popularity and status, and it gained more upper class patrons, and yangban and aristocrats, they would often invite pansori singers to their homes to perform for them, etc. As they started performing for these more upper class audiences, they had to also reflect the tastes and sensibilities of those audiences. And as a result, pansori developed this dual nature, with Confucian values on the surface, in order to appeal to the upper class, and more subversive themes beneath the surface to appeal to the lower class. These different themes were emphasized to different levels depending on who the audience was. If you were performing in front of a lower class audience, you would emphasize those subversive themes. And if you were performing for yangban, you'd obviously emphasize the Confucian themes. But we'll go more into this idea of dual themes later on and in the literature class, we'll also give you an example of how those dual themes worked in practice.

So I said I was going to come back to the terms used for pansori singers. And I mentioned a few of them before. Pansori performers were originally known as gwangdae, which is sometimes translated as clown, but it really just means performer, but it is sort of indicative of a low status at any rate. And originally, pansori performers, they did occupy the lowest rung of the social order in Joseon. As pansori became more important and more prominent and higher in status, some of the pansori singers rose in status as well. Some of them became celebrities when they gained wealthy patrons. And in the mid-19th century, some pansori singers were even able to rise above their low social status and climb the social ladder. It was during this time that they became known as myeongchang in recognition of their artistic ability. "Myeongchang" means famous singer. And the third term that I used, changja, before is just more of a generic term that means singer. So the different terms used for the pansori performers reflect the different social status that they held at any given time.

So, a full pansori work was very long. It could be very long. Eight hours at the longest. So, a pansori performance could take the entire day. And as time went on, as a result, singers began to perform shorter passages from these works. These are known as “토막소리” (tomaksori). “토막소리” (tomaksori) literally means piece song. Important here is what is known as deoneum. And deoneum comes from “더 넣음” (deoneum), which means “add more to.” This refers to the singer's ability to put his or her unique twist on a passage. So if you're singing a short passage, you have to distinguish yourself in some way. And only those singers who excelled at this deoneum, at putting their own signature on a passage, were recognized

as myeongchang.

And the art form of pansori has continued to be popular in modern times. In the early modern times, it was the most successful dramatic form performed by the Hyeomnyulsa, which is the first modern dramatic troop in Korea. They did perform experiments in updating pansori, which resulted in changgeuk, and we'll come back and we'll talk about what changgeuk is a little bit later on. But, as I mentioned before, pansori also developed into pansori-based novels. So these are novels actually based on the stories of pansori. And these actually became some of the most popular novels in the 19th century and even into the late 19th century, early 20th century as well. And we'll come back to pansori-based novels in the literature class. So as I mentioned before, pansori also developed into pansori-based novels, which were basically novelized versions of the narratives of the pansori. And these ended up being some of the most novels of the 19th century into the late 19th century, even early 20th century. And we'll come back and we'll talk about the novels in particular more in the literature class. So this relationship, and again I will come back and I'll talk about literature more later. But I just want to mention that this relationship between pansori and narrative written literature wasn't necessarily a one-way street. So it's not like pansori came first and then they became pansori novels and then that was just sort of a one-way development. *⟨Jeokbyeokga⟩*, which I'll come back to in a moment, was based on an existing Chinese novel, for example. And other pansori such as *⟨Sugungga⟩*, which again I'll mention in a little more detail, was based on a folktale that actually was thought to have originated in India and then made its way over to Korea. So this relationship between narrative literature and the performance art known as pansori was very dynamic. It was a back-and-forth relationship.

So in terms of what sort of works there were. There were originally twelve pansori works, but only five of those remain today as complete pansori. And well I won't be able to show you videos for all of these, but we'll look at a couple, just to give you a taste of what pansori looks like, at least in the way that it's performed today. So, probably, the most famous of the pansori stories is *⟨Chunhyangga⟩*. And again, I'm going to come back and I'll look at this in greater detail in the literature class. But this is basically the story of the upper class, Mongryong, a young man from a yangban family, who falls in love with the lower class, Chunhyang, who is the daughter of a gisaeng, and they pledge to be married. But they're separated and then she undergoes trials. He comes back to save her, etc. I'll talk about the story and the dual themes in the story of Chunhyang in the literature class. We'll come back to that later on. But right now, I want to look at a video performance of one part of the story. And this is a stage performance of *⟨Sarangga⟩*. And "Sarangga" literally means love song. This depicts Mongryong and Chunhyang's courtship with one another. It's a song of young love and it's one of the most popular and oldest passages that we know of from *⟨Chunhyangga⟩*. It remains an iconic example of pansori today. If you hear something performed from *⟨Chunhyangga⟩*, it's generally going to be *⟨Sarangga⟩*. It's also a good example of some of the vocal techniques used by the myeongchang, so listen for the way that she sings. Also listen for the chuimsae, for those words of encouragement from the drummer, or the gosu. So, take a listen.

The second work of the five remaining pansori works that I want to look at is *⟨Simcheongga⟩*. And this is the story of Simcheong, the song of Simcheong. She sells herself as a human sacrifice in order to open the eyes of her blind father, because they require a donation to the temple and there's no way

that they can secure that donation themselves, so she sells herself as a sacrifice in order to secure that donation, in order to open her father's eyes. She's thrown into the sea. But instead of drowning, she's brought before the dragon king and she returns to land as the queen and is reunited with her father. And I mentioned before the dual themes. Obviously, the surface theme here is one of filial piety. She is devoted to her father and she would sacrifice even her own life to restore her father's sight. But some of the subversive themes are just the fact that this would be demanded of her and that she would have to throw herself or be thrown into the sea. That's something that would have touched the heartstrings of the people listening.

The third work that I want to look at is known as 〈Sugungga〉, which literally means "Song of the Sea Palace." And this story has more of a fable feel to it and as I mentioned before, it's based on a folktale that was said to have come all the way from India. In this, in the Korean version of the story, the dragon king, the king underneath the sea, falls ill and he is told to seek a rabbit's liver as his medicine. So the terrapin agrees to go to land to find the rabbit and bring him back. But the rabbit deceives the dragon king and he escapes back to land. And it's a very entertaining and amusing trickster tale. And again, it contrasts the loyalty to one's ruler with the sort of corruption of the medieval system, of the feudal system.

〈Heungbuga〉 is another famous work of the five pansori works. It deals with two brothers. You have the rich and evil Nolbu and the poor and kind Heungbu, who the pansori is named after. So, Heungbu, who is poor but kind, he saves a swallow and is rewarded with a gourd seed. And when he plants the gourds, they open up and they pour out all sorts of riches. And he becomes rich. Nolbu being a greedy miser sees this and he tries to imitate his success by breaking a swallow's leg and then binding it again. When he gets his gourd though, and his gourds grow to full size, awful things come out of them. So it's a folk story that is very much a morality tale.

And the last of the five works, and the second video that we're going to look at, is 〈Jeokbyeokga〉. It literally means "The Song of the Red Cliffs." And this is actually based on the Chinese novel, 〈Romance of the Three Kingdoms〉, specifically the battle of the red cliffs. And this novel was itself based on a historical naval battle. So it's sort of two levels removed from that original history. And it tells the story of how Liu Bei and Sun Quan ally against and defeat Cao Cao with the help of the famed military strategist Zhuge Liang. And I want to listen to a little bit of a stage performance of this. And this is one scene from the work where you have a character named Jo Jaryong, in the Korean, who is firing arrows. And I want to listen to this because it's a very different situation, for one. 〈Saranga〉 is a love story, this is sort of a battle scene. So it's a very different situation and also it's a very different atmosphere from 〈Saranga〉. It's expressed through much faster, urgent singing. The temple being used is known as jajimori, which is a very fast tempo, and it's considered to be a very difficult and highly technical passage because of the speed at which it needs to be sung and the articulation that needs to be performed. So, take a listen to this. It's quite interesting in a musical sense.

So, as far as pansori today, as I mentioned before, we have the pansori-based novels, which we're going to talk about in the literature class. We also have changgeuk, which is going to be discussed later. But pansori has also been a great inspiration for modern novels and films, etc. There's one novel that's based on the story of Simcheong, for example, by Hwang Sok-yong, that's a very moving story. And

Chunhyang, again, continues to be a very popular story. To date, there have been over twenty films based on the Chunhyang story, so retellings of the Chunhyang story in film. Sounds like a lot, but it's a very popular story. It's probably the representative story that you'll find in Korea. It's also been registered as a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This happened in 2003. And since then, it has gained popularity abroad. So, now it's not only enjoyed in other countries, but it's also being learned by people in other countries, particularly in Europe. And I've had the privilege to attend brief performances by some of these singers who, even though they're still learning Korean, they've become very talented pansori singers and sing very excellently in Korean. So the traditional works tend to remain the most popular. The five works that I just mentioned tend to remain the most popular. But there are also newly created works that are written and performed. So, there have been sort of modern stories that have been told through the pansori form. When the UNESCO application was submitted in 2003, pansori was sort of seen as a dying tradition. But now, almost twenty years later, it seems stronger than ever. And I have no doubt that it's going to continue to be a very strong performing art in the future.

### 3. Mask Dances

So the other more traditional performing art that I want to look at is mask dances, or known in Korean as either talchum or gamyeongeuk. And both of those translate as mask dances. So similarly to pansori, they likely had a religious origin in agricultural rituals. There would have been rituals that were performed to ensure a successful harvest. So the masks were used by the performers to symbolize the deities. And their interaction with each other would have represented the conflicts and the resolution of those conflicts between humanity and nature through shamanic means. So, mock fighting between the characters would have represented the conflict. Mock sexual intercourse would have represented the resolution and it would also have been a wish for fertility and prosperity. Both of these elements, both the flirting and the fighting etc., they've survived today and we'll see some of that in one of the videos that I have to show you in a moment. So, some of the mask dances, like the Gangneung Gwanno Gamyeongeuk, this is performed during the Gangneung Danoje, a yearly festival held on Dano, which is the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar year. These rituals still have clear signs of ritual symbolism. You can tell that they have this religious symbolism. So you can still see examples of that today.

But these ritual mask dances from the farming villages gave rise to what are known as urban mask dances in the late Joseon period. And these urban mask dances, as they came from the villages and they entered the cities and started being performed there, they in turn led to the development of mask dances by merchants. And these merchants developed mask dances in order to gather crowds together to sell them their goods. So if you remember in the art class, we looked at some of the pictures that showed people gathered and there's always someone there selling things. Well, mask dances were used to draw crowds and you had a ready audience or ready customer base for your products. And these

were performed in industrial centres where there would have been a lot of people gathered normally. So throughout this entire process, moving from the farming villages into the cities and then into the industrial centres, the mask dances became more and more removed from their ritual setting and they focused more and more on social satire.

In terms of the characteristics of the mask dance, what exactly did the mask dances consist of? So, you did still have the ritual mask dances, like I mentioned. The Gwanno Gamyeongeuk, for example, was associated with the Dano festival. And these ritual mask dances were associated with ritually important days. And they were designed to perform a specific ritual function, usually a wish for prosperity or that sort of thing. But as the urban mask dances developed, the performers became more professional and you started having troops that would perform mask dances as their occupation. Similarly to pansori, there was no special stage or background or props. You just performed it in a space, in a “pan.” The only props that were used were the masks, of course. The masks and any other prop that might have been specific to a character, like a hat or that sort of thing. But the masks were the primary props and they were painted with exaggerated expressions for the maximum effect. You wanted the expressions to be visible to people, for one, but for dramatic effect as well, you wanted to exaggerate these expressions.

So traditionally, they were performed at night along with the other performing arts, such as acrobatics, storytelling, puppet plays, even pansori originally, they would have been performed at the same time. And they also had no fourth wall. So the performers would have interacted with the audience members and vice versa. All of the sound and all of the music, there was usually music that was being played during the performances, all of this music was diegetic. And diegetic means that it's part of the world of the work. So there was no non-diegetic music. If you think about in modern film today, the characters in the film can't hear the soundtrack. But in mask dances, the soundtracks really, that's what the characters were hearing as well. So they would sometimes react to the music, they would talk to the musicians, they would talk to the audiences etc. So one difference between mask dances and pansori, or at least the way pansori developed later on, was that mask dances were aimed solely at the common people. So they weren't really designed for the upper classes. And as a result, social criticism was much more open and much more expressed than in pansori. They didn't have the need to cater to the upper class taste or sensibilities and they didn't have to worry about offending those upper class individuals. Even though sometimes they might have seen the mask dances, they weren't the primary target of them. Well, they were the target in terms of the target of satire. Usually, the mask dances satirize the yangban and they also often satirize monks, as we'll see in the clip we're going to look at in a moment. Both the yangban and the monks, the Buddhist monks, they represented established institutions. And again, remember that during the Joseon period, Buddhism was very much oppressed under the Confucian ruling order and the attitude towards Buddhism wasn't always positive, just as the attitude toward the yangban, toward the aristocrats wasn't always positive.

So, the example that I want to look at is from the Bongsan talchum. Bongsan is a place. It is in Hwanghae province, which is in the present-day North Korea. And it's one scene from the Bongsan talchum, the Bonsang mask dance, in which an old monk falls victim to the temptations of a young shamaness and he breaks his Buddhist precepts. So you'll see the monk come out with his robe and his hat, but then the character known as Chwibari, who is an old bachelor, he appears to try to steal away

the young shamaness. So you have this sort of triangular relationship, this love triangle between the old monk, the young shamaness and Chwibari. And Chwibari in particular, his humorous actions, his dialogue, are the highlight of the scene. And the satire of the Buddhist establishment is fairly obvious, as you'll see in the clip.

So, as I mentioned before, some of the mask dances are still performed as part of rituals and festivals. But there's also an annual mask dance festival held in Hahoe Village in Andong, in North Gyeongsang Province. And many different mask dances are performed there. A lot of the images that I've been showing you of mask dances, I actually took myself when I attended the mask dance festival there. And the interaction with the audience is still very much important. If you are right up there next to the stage, you may even get dragged onto the stage by one of the characters. Fortunately, I was able to avoid that fate. But it could be a lot of fun. So mask dances as cultural performances are still very popular today, although we don't really have a lot of new creation being done, not a lot of new mask dances being created. So it's very much a revival and keeping alive that old tradition.

## 4. Changgeuk

So now I want to talk a little bit about some of the modern variations on these traditional performance arts and I'll start with changgeuk, which I've mentioned before as sort of a modern variation of pansori. So, the process of getting from pansori to changgeuk began in the latter half of the 19th century, where scholars of pansori, people who would write treatises about pansori and contribute to its development, they started arguing that the movement, the neoreumsae, or the ballim, was just as important as the singing part and they put more emphasis on the dramatic elements. And this started to introduce a change into pansori. You also had the fact that during that time, we're talking the late 19th century, you had Chinese immigrants from Qing China who brought with them the Chinese opera. And the Chinese opera was very distinct from pansori in one major way in that, as with Western opera, there were separate parts for each character. So this was another influence that led to the development of changgeuk from pansori. So there were intermediate measures that were taken to make pansori a little more interesting. We didn't just jump straight from pansori to changgeuk. So for example, some pansori performances introduced dancers besides the singer, so there were other dancers who would take the stage in order to make it a little more interesting. And this laid the foundation for the ultimate development of changgeuk. So the first Western-style theatre was built in Korea in 1902 and this allowed for the development of performing arts such as changgeuk, which was performed here not long after the theatre was opened. You had a version of *Chunhyangga* performed in 1903 and then you had a changgeuk version of *Simcheongga* performed in 1904.

So what is changgeuk? Well, for one, it greatly expands the number of performers. You originally would just have the drummer and the singer, but in changgeuk, for starters, you would have a traditional orchestra in place of the drummer. And in place of the single singer, you would have an entire cast of

singers. So they adopted some of the elements of the operatic performance in terms of the way that different characters play different roles. However, the singing style itself remained very much pansori style. And these early changgeuk performances were obviously performed by pansori singers because nobody else could sing the performances. So the first changgeuk performers were also pansori performers, so that led to, you know, even though you had these developments in costumes and props and staging and the number of characters and the orchestra, etc., at its base, the musical element of it, the vocal musical element of it, was very much a continuation of the pansori tradition. One interesting change that resulted from this shift to changgeuk was the separation of character and narrator roles. So one thing you have to remember about pansori is that not only did the pansori singer play the role of all the different characters, she was also the narrator. So she was both narrator and character. She would go back and forth. And the audience was very much used to this way of doing things. So when you suddenly had separate characters and then a separate narrator chorus, audiences found this very difficult to adjust to at first. But as time went on, they did become more accustomed to it.

Most of the changgeuk that were produced in the beginning were adapted from traditional pansori works, like 〈Chunhyangga〉 and 〈Simcheongga〉. But you did have new changgeuk also created, very rarely. The single exception at that time, the beginning of the 20th century, was a changgeuk known as 〈Silver World〉 or 〈Eunsegae〉, which dramatized the true story of the heroic Choe Byeongdo. The pressure during the Japanese colonial period to produce propaganda works led to the stagnation of changgeuk. Drama was something, it was an art form that reached a lot more people than, say, literature did. So there was a lot more pressure for this drama, the same thing happened with film, there was a lot more pressure for these dramas to do the work of propaganda outlets. And as a result, changgeuk sort of stagnated throughout the Japanese colonial period.

So, we're going to take a look at selections from a contemporary performance of 〈Chunhyang〉. And this clip that we're going to look at, it's actually a selection of scenes from this changgeuk as a whole. It includes 〈Sarangga〉, which we looked at the pansori version of that before, but here you'll be able to see each character singing their own lines and then a chorus of other characters that sort of performs the role of the narrator. And you'll be able to see the difference between the pansori version and the changgeuk version. And the changgeuk version obviously expresses a much more modern, dramatic interaction between the two characters because you actually have two people on the stage who are interacting with each other. So in that regard, it's definitely distinct from the original pansori. Another thing to note as you watch and listen to this clip is that the music does include the traditional percussion, so you can hear the pansori drum, but it also actually includes other instruments, including Western instruments, so the piano, for example, is very prominent. And thus it musically, in terms of the instrumental music, it does feel very different from the traditional pansori. So, give it a listen and think about the pansori you listened to a short while ago and see how this compares to that.

So, as I mentioned before, changgeuk did sort of stagnate during the colonial period due to the pressure to become a sort of propaganda outlet. But in recent decades, we've actually seen a revival of the art form. And the National Changgeuk Company is a, it's a national troupe that performs changgeuk on a regular basis and they're still performing changgeuk today. Some of these are based on traditional pansori, for example that 〈Chunhyang〉 performance that you just watched is one of them. But they also

produce new works, so new works are being produced all the time. In fact, some of them that I've seen myself, I saw one very interesting adaptation of a modern sci-fi story called 〈Ujusori〉, which means Sound of the Universe, based on James Tiptree Jr.'s 〈The Only Neat Thing to Do〉, which was fantastic and just an example of how this form, which is an adaptation of the traditional form of pansori in a modern setting, can take very modern themes and subjects and express them using the traditional musical techniques. Very recently, the National Changgeuk Company also did a production of King Lear. So it's a very fascinating blend of Korean singing culture, or “소리문화” (sori munhwa), and these modern dramatic styles. And I think, yeah, changgeuk has a very bright future. If you have the chance to come and watch a performance, I don't think you'll regret it.

## 5. Madanggeuk

So the last performing art that I want to look at today, it's another modern version, it is the most modern version or modern art that we're going to look at, is known as madanggeuk. And madanggeuk is again a combination of two words. “Madang” means an open space, and “geuk” means drama. This was actually an artistic movement that developed starting in the 1960s and then it sort of reached its peak, it blossomed in the 1970s. It was a reaction against colonial Japanese and Western influences on drama. So throughout the early 20th century, throughout the Japanese colonial period, there were a lot of influences from colonial Japan, such as what is known as the shinpa movement, which I'll come back to in a moment. And there were also obviously influences from Western drama as well. So this movement was sort of an attempt to recreate the, well, it was an attempt to create a new dramatic form that was based on traditional principles. So the idea of simple staging, so not a lot of complexity in terms of backdrops or staging, the lack of a fourth wall, the communal nature, the participatory nature of the performance, and it was influenced by the traditional forms that we've looked at already: pansori and mask dances.

So these works, although there are madanggeuk works that are adaptations of traditional works, as we'll see in a moment, there were also new works that were performed, and these often cast light on the lives of the lowest rungs of society. It was adapted for use in university settings in the early 1980s, which led to more works being created, and from the late 1980s, most of the madanggeuk that were being made dealt with stories of the working class and as a result they contained heavy messages of social criticism. But also in the 1980s, you had another offshoot of this, where broadcasting stations in the National Theater, so in other words, institutional actors, institutional agents, developed commercial versions of the madanggeuk, which they called madangnori. And it has the same “madang” for yard or space. “Nori” in this case means pastime, amusement, or performance. And, like I said, these were commercial versions that were not as invested in social criticism.

So madanggeuk began to decline in the late 1990s. Today it's performed as part of festivals or other special performance occasions. It probably has the least lasting influence of all the forms that we've discussed today, but I think it's important as an attempt to draw on traditional Korean dramatic

principles in order to create that new art form. And as we'll see, you still do see performances being held and they're very much appreciated and they're quite interesting.

One of the examples that we're going to look at is one passage from the madangnori, so it's one of the commercial versions, and this is the version of 〈Nolbujeon〉. And if that sounds familiar, when I talked about 〈Heungbuga〉, this is, 〈Nolbujeon〉, is a modern retelling of 〈Heungbuga〉 from a sort of different perspective. And this scene here is where Heungbu goes to beg aid from his brother Nolbu but he is rejected. And as you can see, it's staged very simply. It's sort of staged in a modern setting, but there's no background, necessarily, there's no scenery. The characters are wearing costumes, but there's not a lot in the way of props. And it is accompanied by percussion and the drummer, you will hear the chuimsae, you will hear the words of encouragement, the participatory words that are being shouted. So in that regard, it more closely resembles pansori. And, of course, it is based on the original pansori as well. Other versions of madanggeuk or madangnori, they show quite a great variety in staging, performance, that sort of thing. Some of them have more characters, some of them are more influenced by mask dances and they'll include sort of dancing performances. This particular scene here is more of a dramatic performance, so take a look at this.

## 6. Closing

So that wraps up the examples that I wanted to show you today of the various performing arts. And in closing, I want to talk about one thread that sort of runs through all of these performing arts. And I'm drawing here on the work of Professor Cho Dong-il, who has written about Korean literature and Korean arts very extensively. And he identifies as sort of the guiding principle of Korean performing arts, something known as “신명풀이” (sinmyeongpuri). “신명” (sinmyeong) means excitement or enthusiasm, and “풀이” (puri) means to express or to perform. So we could think of this as the performance or expression of excitement or enthusiasm, etc. And this is in contrast with the shinpa that I mentioned before, this influence from Japan. So, during the colonial period, a lot of drama was influenced by this shinpa trend, and “shinpa” literally means new wave or new trend, but it's a very melodramatic style of drama and it had a big influence on Korean drama during the colonial period. So you saw drama starting to imitate some of the very melodramatic styles from Japan. But originally, if you go back to pansori and mask dance, etc., you see very lively and exciting performances, particularly in the folk forms of performing arts that we've looked at. So this expression of excitement, this Sinmyeongpuri has roots in the ritual performances and very close ties to the shamanic tradition. And if you look at shamanic rituals, you can see a very similar sort of principle in the way that shamans conduct the rituals as well. It's a very important principle that underlies these traditional forms of the performing arts and also the modern forms of Korean performing arts as well. And hopefully the examples that we've looked at and we've discussed today have shown you and maybe captured some of that spirit.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. *Sugungga* is a pansori based on a fable. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

2. *Simcheongga* ends tragically when Simcheong dies because she sells herself as a human sacrifice in order to open her blind father's eyes. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

3. Talchum, or mask dances, were traditionally performed at night. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

4. Changgeuk is only performed with traditional Korean instruments. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

5. Madanggeuk reached its peak in the 1980s and was usually performed in university settings. This form of theatre was less about social criticism and more about amusement. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about terminology in pansori?

- Ballim refers to physical movements of the body or hand by a pansori singer.
- Aniri refers to the singing part of a pansori.
- Chuimsae refers to the exclamations occasionally made by the drummer or the audience during a pansori performance.

Answer: b

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the similarities between pansori and narrative shaman songs?

- Spoken narration and song are mixed.
- They include dance-like movements.
- Both usually have the performer facing the audience.

Answer: c

3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement account the historical development of pansori?

- Pansori reached its peak during the 18th century.
- The themes of pansori slowly became more concerned with the values and desires of lower-class people.
- The singer in pansori traditionally belonged to someone of low social status.

Answer: b

4. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about talchum (mask dances)?

- They usually satirize the hypocrisy of yangban and Buddhist monks.
- The performer and audience interact with one another during performances.
- Talchum has a dual nature to it because it reflected the tastes of both the upper and lower classes.

Answer: c

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about changgeuk?

- Unlike pansori, changgeuk split parts between several singers.
- Although the vast majority of changgeuk are adaptions of traditional pansori, there are pieces that exist like *Eunsegae* that have no relation to pansori.
- Western opera was established in Korea because of the popularity of changgeuk.

Answer: c

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. The part in pansori that allows a singer to add their own unique twist on a passage is called \_\_\_\_.

Answer: deoneum

2. \_\_\_\_ is one of the five remaining pansori and is based on one section of the Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Answer: Jeokbyeokga or *The Song of the Red Cliffs*

3. \_\_\_\_ is one of the main characters in Bongsan Mask Dance. He is an old bachelor who appears to steal away the young shamaness who is seducing the old monk.

Answer: Chwibari (취발이)

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Compare and contrast pansori and changgeuk by looking at various aspects, such as singing method, accompaniment, and the performer.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Using specific examples from genres such as pansori, talchum, and madanggeuk, briefly describe the ways in which Korean traditional performing arts have engaged in social criticism.

〈Lecture 9〉

# Korean Folklore and Mythology

– A Wellspring of Culture

## Class Goals

1. Learn about the concepts of myth, legend, and folktales
2. Understand the meaning and significance of representative tales in Korea
3. Gain insight into how vernacular tradition is woven into Korean culture

## Summary

In this class, we learned about the concepts of myth, legend, and folktales. We also discussed the meaning and significance of representative tales in Korea.

Tales can be divided into three genres: myths, legends, and folktales. These three genres can be distinguished according to the attitude of the teller, the setting (space and time), evidence, the protagonist, and the range or spread of stories.

Korean myths are generally divided into foundation myths and shamanic myths. “The Dangun Myth” is a foundation myth showing the unification of a sky-diety-worshipping tribe with a bear-totem-worshipping tribe. “The Abandoned Princess” is a shamanic myth which criticizes the patriarchy.

Legends are generally tragic stories, so they often contain some elements of social criticism. “Emile Bell” and “Child General” are good examples. “Emile Bell” deals with the meaning of sacrifice. The death of the Child General shows the powerlessness of commoners and the violence inflicted on them by authority.

Folktales are associated with rural, peasant society and often express rebellious tendencies. “Clever Servant” and “Rabbit and Bear” (Tail Fisher) are interesting examples. “Clever Servant” is an obvious mockery of the yangban ruling class. “Rabbit and Bear” conveys the message of “the weak outwitting the strong.”

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Introduction to Korean Folklore and Mythology

Hello and welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today we're going to be talking about Korean folklore and mythology.

Now this is a very broad category. There's a lot of things that can be covered by folklore. But we're going to cover what are known as tales here. In Korean, these are called “설화” (seolhwa). And these tales include the three basic genres of myths, legends and folktales. And we'll go into each of those genres in some greater detail and we will give you some examples of those as well. We have actually covered other aspects of folklore and folk culture already in previous classes. For example, we talked a little bit about folk songs. We talked about pansori in the class on the performing arts. And when we discussed paintings, we did look at some folk paintings as well. So all of these things technically could be considered part of folk culture. But we're going to focus more today on, at least what in Korean is known as oral literature, or sort of the literary aspects of folklore.

So the goal of today's class is really just to give you some insight into these types of tales. And also I really want to give you some examples of these important vernacular narrative traditions so we can see how they weave into the fabric of Korean culture.

# 2. Myth, Legend, and Folktales: Defining Genres

So before we get into the individual genres, I think it's worth defining them. What exactly are myth, legend and folktale and how do they differ from each other? So as I mentioned just a moment ago, these are all subsumed under the greater genre known as tales, again in Korean “설화” (seolhwa), and then divided into these three subgenres, the first one being myth, in Korean known as “신화” (sinhwa), the second one being legend, “전설” (jeonseol), and the third one being folktale, or “민담” (mindam).

And we can distinguish these according to a number of characteristics. And each of the subgenres has a slightly different nature.

So, starting with the attitude of the teller, in other words, the person who is telling the story – what do they think about the story? So in the case of myth, the teller of the story believes that the myth is both true and sacred. I'll come back to that in a moment. For legends, the teller of the story believes that the story is true but not necessarily sacred. And then for folktales, the teller does not have to believe that it's true and does not have to believe that it's sacred either. So it's about the distinction between the truth value of the story and whether or not it's a sacred story or a mundane story. So what does "sacred" mean? We did talk about religion previously and we talked about what makes a religion and what does not make a religion and "sacred" is often associated with religious significance, but it does not necessarily have to be a religious concept. It can also refer to a phenomenon that elevated to a higher level of normative significance. So what this means is that if the story talks about something that is fundamentally important for a people, for example the foundation of a nation or of a clan, that could be considered sacred as well. So "sacred" could have a broad meaning, not necessarily something that is related to a religion, although it often is.

The second characteristic that we can look at is the setting – When does the story take place? Where does the story take place? So myths take place in a distant past, sometimes as far back as the beginning of the world, the beginning of the universe. And they take place in special or sacred places. So, places of sacred significance, places of great importance. Legends take place, obviously also in the past, they take place though at a specific time. So the time of myth is a little more general and vague. Legend, however, a very specific time. You might even have a very specific year when this legend takes place. It also takes place in a very specific place, a very specific location. You can often point to the area of the country, the county, even the city. So, very specific in terms of the time and place. Folktale, on the other hand, takes place somewhere that… it might be in a given area, but it could take place anywhere. And you often see folktales set in one area and then the same folktale told by another person will be set in another area. So, in other words, it generally doesn't depend on a particular place. It can take place anywhere. And the time also is not quite as specific as legend. It can take place in a certain vague, general period, like during the late Joseon period, for example. But the specific time doesn't matter. And often you see these motifs in folktales transcending time as well as place.

The next characteristic that we can look at is the evidence that is provided for the story. So in the case of myth, this evidence is comprehensive. So a creation myth, for example, the evidence of that creation myth might be the fact that we live in this world that has been created. In the case of a nation or a clan, a foundation myth, the existence of that nation or that people might be the evidence for the myth. For legends, you have very specific evidence. Natural features, for example, a rock – Why does a certain rock look this way? Why does a mountain have this feature? Why does the land look the way it does? But there's generally going to be something very specific that proves that this legend actually happened. With folktales though, as we mentioned before, you don't necessarily need to believe that they're true, so you don't really need any evidence. So folktales generally don't include evidence of their truth because that's not their concern.

Next we have the protagonist. So who is the protagonist? Who is the main character of this story?

In myth, the protagonist is a sacred being known as “신” (sin) in Korean. “신” (sin) is often translated as “god,” but it is a much broader category than that. It can refer to any sort of being that is beyond the normal human level, so I guess you could say supernatural or superhuman. That may include gods, it may include demigods, that sort of thing, what we might consider demigods in the west. But the important thing is that they rise above normal humans and their abilities. For legends, though, legends have as their protagonists human beings. Just normal human beings. Sometimes exceptional human beings who do great things, perhaps, but they are human and they often meet a tragic end, despite or sometimes because of their deeds or capabilities. That's an important point about legends, so we'll get into that a little more later. Finally, folktales, sort of on the flipside of legends, also humans, but they're generally successful in their endeavors, so they don't generally meet a tragic end. They usually have a happy ending.

So then we can talk about the range of these stories, how far do they spread, how broadly are they told, for example. In the case of myth, they're generally told among a given people group. A certain nation or tribe, etc. And myths, if you look at world mythology, you'll notice that there are a lot of similarities between world myths. For example, there are flood myths that are told around the world, etc. So you can see how myths deal with similar motifs and similar themes. But a specific myth is generally going to be told only by its own people group. It's only going to be considered a sacred story by the people who own the myth, I guess we could say. Legends are told in a specific region. So this is due to the fact that there is specific evidence for this legend, so generally that legend is going to exist in an area where people are able to see that evidence. Folktales on the other hand, again no evidence, no truth value, so they have a much broader reach. And you see folktales spreading across regional or national boundaries and I'll give you one example of that a little bit later on.

But one thing I should note here, now that we've made all these distinctions, is that these genres of myth, legend and folktale, are academic categories. So they're very useful when we study stories, to say that “Oh this is a myth, this is a legend, this is a folktale.” But when people tell stories, they just tell stories, right? They may have specific meanings, they may have a significance to those people, but they don't think of them necessarily as myth, legends or folktales, they just think of them as stories that they tell. So not all of the stories that you run across are necessarily going to fit neatly into one single category. Stories may span categories and we'll see examples of that. For example, when we talk about the 〈Child General〉 story, which is a legend, it's generally classified as a legend, but it also has some mythic characteristics as well. And there are some examples of stories that sort of blur the boundaries between folktale and myth and legend as well. So the above characteristics that I mentioned are meant as a general guide to help you sort of understand the basic differences between the genres. But don't think that every story has to be one hundred percent myth, or one hundred percent legend, one hundred percent folktale. You do often see blurred boundaries in real life as opposed to in academia.

### 3. Mythology: Foundation Myth and Shaman Songs

So we're going to start off with mythology. In Korea, mythology, or myths, are generally going to be divided into two types. Before I get into that though, I just want to talk a little bit about the term "myth" or what it is, what it signifies in Korean as opposed to what it signifies in English. So the term for myth in Korean is "신화" (sinhwa). The "신" (sin) character means, well it's what I mentioned before, it's often translated as god or spirit, or something that is higher than human beings. And then "화" (hwa) means story. So it's "stories about the gods," very simply. But interesting to note that sinhwa does not have the same negative connotations that myth has in English. So when people use "myth" in modern English today, sometimes they're talking about mythology, but oftentimes they're talking about a false story, like "Oh, have you heard the myth about this?" And they're talking about some story that's false or untrue. Sinhwa in Korean actually generally has a more positive meaning. It can mean a miraculous story or a tale of something that is just, "Wow, it's amazing!" So that's one interesting aspect of a slight difference in the perceptions of these tales and of these ideas. So, as I mentioned just a moment ago, Korean myths are generally divided into two very basic categories and the first of these categories are foundation myths, "건국신화" (geonguk sinhwa), "건국" (geonguk) meaning founding of a nation. But they also, geonguk sinhwa also include the myths that talk about the founding of a clan, for example, a clan that may eventually rise to power, become a royal line, that sort of thing. So, foundation of people groups, nations, clans, etc. The second category is the general category of shamanic myths, "무속신화" (musok sinhwa) is the academic term. "무속" (musok), as already we discussed, is a term used in academia for shamanism. So, both of these myths, they feature divine protagonists and they show the divine nature of these protagonists, but they have slightly different ways of approaching their protagonists and their stories.

So, we'll start with foundation myths. These national foundation myths and clan myths, they have actually elements of legend as well as myth, partly because of their strong connection to history. So when we talked about the setting of myth before, we said that myths are set in a "mythical past," the distant past, sometime that is a little bit vague, maybe at the beginning of the world, etc. However, foundation myths are not set in a vague past, they're set in a very specific past and they often have connections to specific histories. Now whether or not those histories are accurate is another story, but they do make a claim to be connected to history. So you can see that there's already a blurring of the boundaries between myth and legend. Most of the foundation myths that we have are found in ancient texts like 〈Samgukyusa〉, so they are folklore, they do fit into the folklore and mythology category, but they were recorded in texts as written literature, and by the time they were recorded, they would have ceased to function as religiously sacred. So presumably when they were first told, they had a religious meaning. So by the time they were recorded, they were not necessarily religious in their sacred nature, but they did continue to be very important in other ways, because these foundation myths were often used to legitimize existing kingdoms. So you would tell a foundation myth to show that the kingdoms that came

before you and the kingdoms that you are the successor to were founded by these great and mighty “신” (sin), these powerful beings. So you might want to use these for a more political reason. But it could still be considered sacred because of their normative significance.

So the second category being shamanic myths. These deal with a wide variety of myths. So, for example, you could have local deity myths. So you might have a myth about the shamanic deity of a certain shrine in a village. We call these “shrine myths.” But there’s also creation myths, so myths about the creation of the world, for example. You have other myths about great shamanic deities, like “How did the great shamanic deities come to be?” for example. So origin myths about certain deities. So a wide variety of these various types of shamanic myths. They are less historical in setting. So, the foundation myths, for example, like I said, they try to tie themselves to a specific point in history. The shamanic myths, on the other hand, do not tie themselves to a specific point in history. They do sort of exist, especially the world creation myths, exist back in that mythic past, some of them are later, but they’re not quite as specific as the foundation myths. As far as the text, the “texts” of these shamanic myths, unlike the foundation myths, these were handed down orally for most of history, so they would be handed down from one shaman to the next, generation after generation, and obviously they developed over that time by being told and retold. And it was only until modern times, the 20th century, that you started seeing these shamanic myths being recorded. They were first recorded in the early 20th century, during the Japanese colonial period, and since then scholars have continued to record the myths and see how they have changed even over this short period of time. Now one thing that is unique about these shamanic myths is that unlike the foundation myths, they still retain a religiously sacred nature, because, as we discussed in our class on religion, shamanism is still an active belief system today and these shamanic myths are sung as songs. They’re not just told as tales, they’re sung as songs, as epic narrative songs, during the shamanic rituals known as gut.

So I want to give you just two quick examples of myths, one very famous foundation myth, the most famous foundation myth, and then one famous shamanic myth as well, just so you could see some of the characteristics and maybe compare and contrast the differences between them. So the first myth, the foundation myth, that we’re going to talk about is one that we did mention previously when we talked about history. This is 〈The Myth of Dangun〉. So I already gave you a very brief sort of introduction to that early on, but just to refresh your memory and to go into greater detail, I mentioned that the foundation myths are connected to history and this myth begins with a very specific mention of an ancient Chinese text known as the 〈Book of Wei〉 and an ancient Korean text, which unfortunately no longer exists. It was known as 〈Ancient Records〉. We know that this text existed because we have other texts that refer to it, but we don’t actually have a copy of that text. So by tying the myth into these historical texts, the myth is going beyond just the religious nature of a myth to something that has a possibly historical significance as well.

So the first character that is mentioned in terms of the story is not actually the protagonist, Dangun Wanggeom, again who I mentioned before, but he was the son of the person who starts the story. So Hwanin is the god of heaven and his son Hwanung wishes to go down to earth to rule. So he sends his son down, he sends Hwanung down to earth with symbols of authority. And these are three heavenly seals that you would use as a king, you would use a seal to stamp documents, etc. So these are symbols

of his authority as a heavenly ruler. He brings with him three thousand followers, so he brings with him his people, and he also brings with him some individuals that are known as the masters of the wind, rain and cloud, and this gives a hint as to his nature, as to what sort of deity he is. So he descends to earth on what is known as Baekdusan, Mount Baekdusan, which is actually Mount Taebaek, and he founds a city on top of this known as the Sacred City, or Sinsi. He rules over humanity from this Sacred City on top of the mountain.

So when he is ruling there, a bear and a tiger come to him and they beg him to make them human. So he gives them mugwort, which is an herb, and garlic to eat. And he instructs them to go into a cave and he says, "You should go into this cave, eat only mugwort and garlic and don't see the sun for ten days." The tiger, being impetuous and impatient, fails. But the bear is successful. So the bear is transformed into a human being, a woman named Ungnyeo. And she marries Hwanung and then gives birth to her son and this son is Dangun Wanggeom. And he establishes his city at Pyeongyang, later moves it to Asadal, and he governs for 1500 years. And at almost the age of 2000, 1908 years of age, he enters the mountains and he becomes a sansin, he becomes a mountain deity. So here at the end, you can see the definite mythic character with how long he lived coming into the tale.

So what does this tale, what does this myth mean? What is its significance? Well, early on, and still today, you do see what is known as the euhemeristic approach, named after the Greek philosopher Euhemerus, and this is basically looking at myth as history. So some scholars have looked at this myth as the outline of the development of civilization, for example. You begin with the wandering tribe stage, so when Hwanung comes down from heaven with his followers, he represents a wandering tribe. And then he founds his city and that represents sort of the foundation of the first human settlements in village society. And the next stage would be these small settlements coming together and aggregating into larger groups and that would be symbolized by the bear and the tiger coming along. And then finally you get to state society, which is a much larger political entity, and this is represented by the unification of Hwanung's tribe and the bear. There's also the idea that this might be a hint as to how things developed in terms of which tribes aggregated with each other, which tribes were left out. So there's the idea that Hwanung represents a tribe that was patrilineal, descendants handed down from the male descendants, from one male to another. It's agricultural and we know that it is agriculture because things like wind, rain and clouds, those are very important if you're going to grow crops. You need to have mastery or at least knowledge of the weather. And this tribe might have also been a sky deity-worshipping tribe because Hwanung came down from heaven, so he's a sky deity. And then the idea is that this tribe merged with an existing tribe that was matrilineal, so descent handed down from woman to woman, a hunter-gatherer tribe, because bears are hunter-gatherers, and then the tribe might have worshipped the bear totem. And then the third tribe would have been the tiger tribe and that tribe would have been excluded from this aggregation. So it might have represented this formation of a new nation. That's one way of looking at the tribe, or looking at the myth, in a sort of historical fashion. And it's called... you might wonder because most of the myth talks about Hwanung and his coming down and interacting with the bear and the tiger, etc., but it's called "The Dangun Myth," it's not called "The myth of Hwanung." And it's called "The Dangun Myth" because it belongs to the descendants of Dangun who live in the country that was founded by him, not necessarily the country that was founded by Hwanung.

That's why it's called "The Dangun myth."

And this myth has remained extremely important throughout Korean history. And it first appears, as I mentioned, in the 〈Samgukyusa〉, 〈The Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms〉 as that book is often translated, and in that case he is considered to be the ancestor of Goryeo, the Goryeo kingdom. Then after Goryeo, during the Joseon period, King Sejong, who again we talked about, the inventor of Hangeul, he built a shrine to Dangun in order to perform ancestral rites. And we even had, in the 20th century, a religion that was founded called Daejonggyo. This was founded in 1909 to worship Dangun as the founding deity. This religion still exists today, although obviously it's a very small religion, much smaller than Buddhism, Catholicism, or Protestantism. But this idea of Dangun as the common ancestor remained important from Goryeo through Joseon and even throughout the colonial period, the idea was used to strengthen the Korean national identity. So this is something that... even today, Dangun is considered to be the common ancestor of all Koreans. So it remains an extremely important story and if you're going to know one foundation myth, this is the one that you want to know.

So, as far as example of musok sinhwa, of shamanic myths, I want to tell you the story of the Abandoned Princess, Baridegi, or Bari Gongju. There are many different versions of this myth. We don't have time to get into all the various details of the different versions, but I'll tell you the version that is told in and around Seoul where I am right now.

So, in brief, the story deals with a king who ascends the throne and he consults a fortune teller about when he should marry. And the fortune teller tells him, "If you marry this year, you'll have seven daughters, but if you marry next year, you'll have seven sons." And obviously, he's a king, he wants sons, so he should marry next year. But he ignores the fortune teller, marries immediately, and he gives birth to daughters, one, two, three, four, five, six. And then both he and his wife pray for the last child to be a son, they even have a dream about having an auspicious child, but the seventh child is also a daughter. So the king becomes very angry, he throws her in a jade box and throws her in a river. He abandons her, that's why she's called "The Abandoned Princess." So she ends up being raised by an old couple, who are actually mountain deities, sansin, who are under orders from the Buddha to take care of her.

And she's raised until the age of fifteen, when at that point the king, her father, takes ill and he's told in a dream that he's being punished for abandoning his daughter, so he must find her and he also must get a magical elixir, a medicinal water known as yaksu from the land of the immortals. So the Abandoned Princess hears the summons and she returns and when she returns, the king asks for someone to go on this mission to the land of the immortals, which is a separate plane of existence, to get this yaksu, and it's a very dangerous journey, so everyone refuses. All the other daughters refuse, all the other ministers refuse. But the Abandoned Princess, the last daughter, she agrees to go and travel to the land of the immortals to find this yaksu, this medicinal water, this elixir.

So, she arrives in the land of the immortals and she meets the guardian spirit who guards the yaksu. And this guardian spirit demands nine years of labor from her: three years of chopping wood, three years of drawing water, and three years of building fires. All of these things are sort of household chores that one might have to do around the household. He also demands that she marry him and bear him seven sons. So after she does all of this for him, she finally gets the yaksu. As you can imagine, it's taking quite some time. Time runs a little bit differently in the land of the immortals, but still, by the time she

returns, she's found the king has already died and he's being carried on his funeral bier to be buried. But she stops the funeral bier and she revives him with this medicinal water, with this elixir. And the king is obviously grateful and he offers her anything as a reward. But she doesn't ask for his kingdom, she doesn't ask for anything. What she asks for is to be made a shamanic deity and a guide for spirits going to the next world, going to that land of the immortals. So that's how this version of the story ends.

There are other versions of the story, but again, this will give you a basic idea of what this story is about. And it's a very touching story, but there is a lot of significance in here.

As we mentioned when we talked about shamanism, most shaman are women. And most of the people who would attend these shamanic rituals would be women as well. So you had women telling stories to other women. And if you look at it from that perspective, you can see how the story of the abandoned princess is sort of an expression of what these women might be thinking. It's very much an indictment of the patriarchy. So it's a criticism of the various evils of the patriarchy, the pressure on women to bear sons, for example. Sons are important as heirs, but they're also important because only sons are allowed to perform the Confucian ancestral rituals that we talked about previously. Yet in this story, the abandoned princess, a daughter, actually fulfills this role, because she is the one who brings her father back to life, she is the one who, because he doesn't have any sons, she fills that role instead. So, it sort of repudiates that focus on only having sons and it supports the idea of having respect for daughters and not just sons because she has done everything that a son would normally have done. The king, on the other hand, representing the patriarchy, he's consistently making the wrong decisions. He decides to ignore the fortune teller and marry early, he gets angry, he abandons his daughter. So every one of his decisions really only make life worse for his children rather than better. So, as a king, as a father, when we talked about Confucianism, remember that these relationships are two-way relationships and the person at the top of the relationship is supposed to take care of the people below him. But he doesn't do that, so it's very much an indictment of this Confucian hierarchy. On the other hand, Baridegi, the Abandoned Princess, she does not desire power. She only desires peace and harmony. She wants to be a healer and she wants to be a guide for spirits. So, a very nurturing sort of character. And the sacrifice that she made would have been very real to the women who were listening to that myth.

So this tale remains extremely important, culturally speaking, today. It has similarities with, for example, some pansori like *〈Simcheongga〉*, which we've already mentioned. You see some similarities between the story of "The Abandoned Princess" and *〈Simcheongga〉*. It's obviously also still performed as part of a shamanic ritual for the dead, so it still does have religious significance, but it also appears in literary works as an inspiration for stories and sometimes for retellings of this story.

## 4. Legends: Deeds Great and Tragic

So, moving onto legends, as we mentioned earlier, legends are generally tragic. And as a result, they often contain elements of social criticism. This tragedy is usually caused, not necessarily by the hubris of the

protagonist, but often by their surroundings. So legends can often be seen as a criticism of their society. And if you look at the theories of professor Cho Dong-il, who we're going to be talking about in a little more detail in the next class, these legends sort of represent the self being crushed by the tyranny of the world. So, I'm just going to dive right into some examples of some important legends, some famous legends that have been told throughout history.

The first one, and remember that these are a little bit tragic, or these are possibly very tragic. The first one is the *Emille Bell*. And this is a story about, once again legends are associated with a specific historical background, so this one is specifically concerned with a temple bell for the temple known as Bongdeoksa and this bell was cast in 770 during the Unified Silla period, during the North and South Kingdom. So, very specific place, very specific time. However, this story does not appear in historical records, it was only a legend that was told. It only first appears in the 19th century in missionary records, records that were recorded by missionaries. And it began to be recorded from people telling the legend during the colonial period. So it refers to a very specific historical time and place, but it was not actually part of the official history, it only started to be recorded later.

So the story is fairly straightforward. Like I said, they're trying to cast a temple bell. The problem is that they repeatedly fail in their attempts. Casting a temple... you have to sort of cast the bell in one piece if it's going to function properly. And every time they cast it, it would crack or there would be some flaw that would prevent the bell from ringing properly. So one of the monks is going around to receive offerings from the community of various goods or maybe even pieces of metal that they can melt down and that they can use in trying to cast a new bell. And he meets a woman with a child on her back and this woman is so poor that she jokes that, ah well, she has nothing to give, they may as well just take the child off her back. Obviously just joking about that. But the monk goes back, they try to cast the bell again and then they fail once again. So this monk receives a vision, he has a dream where, in this vision, if they sacrifice a child, the casting will succeed. So he goes back to this mother and he actually takes the child off her back and then when they melt down the metal, they throw the child into the molten metal. And then once they do that and they cast the bell from that, it succeeds and when the bell rings, it makes a sound like "emille," which is supposed to represent the cries of the child. Horrible story, right? Throwing a child into molten metal so you can cast a bell for a temple. It's a very difficult story to understand because this is ostensibly a Buddhist story, right? We're casting a bell for a Buddhist temple. And the function of a bell, which is not something we discussed when we talked about Buddhism, but the various items at the temple all have specific functions, and the bell is supposed to represent, when you ring the bell and it rings out in this peaceful sound that spreads out through the mountains, that's supposed to represent the word of the Buddha being propagated out into the world. So that's the function of the bell, to spread the word of Buddha to the rest of the world. And then you sacrifice a child in order to make that bell? How do we reconcile these seemingly very contradictory elements?

Well, there are different versions of this story, as there are with all of the stories that we're telling today. It depends on the nature of the sacrifice. In some versions of the story, the sacrifice is voluntary. The woman voluntarily gives up her child. In other versions of the story, the sacrifice is involuntary. The child is taken from her. So, depending on the nature of the sacrifice, that can reflect the message of the legend, or at least how the legend-teller feels about the story. So, for example, the case of an

involuntary sacrifice could represent the protest of the common people against the sacrifices that they are being forced to make and the suffering that is demanded from them by state construction projects. Now this temple, this Buddhist temple, is a religious project, but it's also a state project. And the other examples of state construction projects where the king decides to build something – who builds that? Well, it's the common people who have to suffer. It's the common people who have to sacrifice, give up their time, their labor, sometimes their lives, to build these great projects. And this could be a distillation of a common protest against that sort of sacrifice and suffering. Now if the sacrifice is voluntary, that could represent the necessity of a sacrifice in order to achieve great things. So at first glance, it's a very difficult story to understand and reconcile these different elements, but we can see how it has a deeper, very symbolic meaning. And these motifs, this motif of the sacrifice of an innocent to achieve something is something that appears throughout literature, it's inspired novels and stories, etc.

The second legend that I want to talk about is one that I mentioned in the beginning when I said that there were some fuzzy boundaries between legend and myth. And this is the legend of the Child General, or Agi Jangsu. We don't know the exact origins of this legend, so in that regard I guess it could also be a little bit similar to myth. But we do know that by the mid-Joseon period, by the middle of the Joseon period, it was in broad circulation, it was found around the nation. However, some of the motifs in this legend and similar stories can be found going back long before the mid-Joseon period. So the origins of this are a little bit more vague than in the story of the Emille Bell.

But this story, again a lot of different variations, but the basic story is that a son is born into a poor family in the provinces, so a family of low standing. The mother makes a living by milling grain for others, so she goes around and she operates the mill to mill grain, so she's away for the entire day. She comes back one day and she finds her baby on the ceiling, which is, one would assume, odd place to find one's child. So, the baby has actually sprouted wings and flown up to the ceiling, which is something that, you know, babies normally don't do. So her husband comes home that evening and she tells him about this, that their child has sprouted wings and is flying up to the ceiling, and her husband's reaction is if the local government office finds out about this, their family might be in danger. Because this child is obviously extraordinary, this child is obviously not your usual child, he might pose a danger later on. So, in some versions of this story, the parents themselves kill their child to prevent the family from falling into danger. In other versions of the story, sometimes he survives, but then he is later killed by government troops. Most of these variations though end with the child being killed. Some of them do end with him surviving, but he has his wings cut off, for example, or he has to live in secrecy and await his moment to enter the world's stage. But the ending is usually a tragic ending.

So the wings, this motif of a child being born and then, either with wings or sprouting wings, is one that indicates his extraordinary nature. So the idea is that an extraordinary child with superhuman or extraordinary abilities is being born into a very ordinary family. And this was generally seen among the people as a sign that he might be a rebel who would rebel against the nation.

So in those versions where the child is killed by his parents, these are especially tragic versions and they show just the powerlessness of the common people. No matter what their ability might be, they're being oppressed and suppressed by the system, and they feel that they have no choice but to kill anyone who might have an ability or a character that might challenge the ruling system. In the versions, for

example, where the child is killed by government troops, by authority, it shows how the ruling system eliminates even the slightest threat. But in both cases, no matter who kills the child, this is a hero who is sent by heaven to do great things, but he is killed by humanity and dashes the commoners' hopes for a new and better world. And this general idea of a great hero being sent down to earth but being seen as a threat and then being killed, you may think already of some very similar stories in other parts of the world. So we see that these are motifs that are common to all of humankind.

This story is also popular in literature. The motif of a character with wings, for example, will often indicate a tragic or misunderstood hero. So this story also remains a very important wellspring of narrative creativity.

## 5. Folktales: Talking Animals and Other Colorful Characters

So our last genre that we're going to talk about, and this is, honestly for me, this is my favorite, this is the genre of folktales, this is what I've spent a lot of time studying. So, yeah, I have a great interest in this. And hopefully, you'll have an interest in it as well after I've finished talking about them. Folktales are seen as an expression of the folk. So the word "folktale" is comprised of two terms, "folk" and "tale." It's the same in Korean. The Korean term for folktale is "민담" (mindam) and "민" (min) refers to a similar concept as the "folk" and "담" (dam) means "tale." So it's almost a direct translation. But it's worth asking, "Well, what does that mean exactly? Who are the folk?" And this is something that's been asked by folklorists throughout the history of folklore studies in modern times, at least. In Europe, the "folk" is often associated with rural society, with peasant society, and it is contrasted against institutions of power. So you have the ruling system and then you have the folk, who exist beneath them. And a similar, I think, perception of the folk has existed in Korea. When you talk about folktales, they are thought of as being tales told by the common people, not necessarily tales told by people who are in power. Although, logically speaking, even people who are in power could tell folktales in certain settings. But they're very much associated with the lower end of that spectrum in terms of social position and social power. As a result, folktales will often express rebellious tendencies. Not always, but they will often express tendencies that go against the ruling order or go against these ruling ideas about hierarchy etc. And one of the best examples of this, not just in Korean folklore but in folklore around the world, is what we call trickster tales. And the trickster is a figure, as you might be able to tell, if you haven't heard of this figure before, just from the name, he plays tricks. But he's a very complex figure. He exists sort of on the boundaries, or in a liminal space in society, in between the cracks of the social structure. And that liminal existence, that liminal location allows him to do things that normal people might not be able to do. He himself may be a normal person, especially in folktales. Folktale tricksters are very normal, often lowly people. There are trickster myths as well, which is somewhat of a different story. But these

characters, despite seeming very lowly in nature, they often end up doing very extraordinary things, often very humorous things.

One example of a trickster tale, or we might even call it a trickster cycle, and a cycle refers to a series of tales or anecdotes that are told in sequence with each other, is the tale, or the cycle, of the Clever Servant, “꾀쟁이 하인” (ggoejaengi hain). This is a collection of motifs that pits a servant against his master. So the master is going to be a yangban, as we've mentioned before, one of the aristocratic ruling class, and he has a servant who follows him around and presumably does things for him. So this clever servant cycle consists of a number of different stories that are strung together in a narrative. And depending on who is telling the story, different people have different ways of telling the story. Some people might include certain motifs or certain anecdotes, and other people might leave those out and they might introduce changes or variations to the various anecdotes or motifs. And if you leave with one thing from this class, which, I hope you leave with more than that, but an important thing to remember about folklore is, unlike the written literature that we're going to be talking about next time, this is something that is sort of created by the people, but it is created through a process that's not the product of one specific author and, as a result, everyone who tells one of these tales is essentially a creator in and of themselves and they will put their own stamp on the story. So that's why you have so many different variations of these myths, legends, and folktales. But I won't, especially here, I won't get into all the various differences and the differences between the various versions of the Clever Servant tale. I'll just give you sort of my understanding of the basic storyline. Some of these motifs, they did appear in recorded literature long before these tales ended up being recorded in the 20th century, so the stories were around. And you can also see some variations of these stories in other places around the world, places that are so far away that we can't really imagine that they might have influenced each other, but these are just common stories that people may have come up with on their own. And that's a difference between what we call in folklore the idea of polygenesis or monogenesis, whether it had more than one origin or whether it had a single origin and then spread out. Obviously, we can only theorize about that, but when we look at where some of these stories are being found, there's a pretty strong argument to be made that just different people have come up with similar tales over time. So, all of these versions of the tales were recorded, the ones that we have today at any rate, were recorded beginning in the 20th century, but they were set during the Joseon period. So they're already set, when they're recorded, they're already set in a period that's in the past at least maybe a hundred years in the past, roughly speaking, and then as time goes on, that period remains the same.

So, we have a servant and he is accompanying his master on a trip to Seoul. So they live out somewhere out in the provinces, which is very common. And Seoul, being the center of the nation during the Joseon period, if you have any sort of business to conduct, important business to conduct, you're probably going to have to go to Seoul to do that. So the servant is accompanying his master on a trip to Seoul. And on the way, the master gets hungry, or he gets thirsty, so he asks the servant to go and buy a bowl of porridge or go and buy a big bowl of makgeolli, and makgeolli is an unfiltered rice beer of sorts that one might drink. And the servant goes off with the master's money and he buys a bowl of porridge or a bowl of makgeolli or whatever, and as he's bringing it back, he's sort of fishing around in it with his finger. And the master says, “What are you doing?” and the servant says, “Oh, I accidentally

had a runny nose and a little bit of snot dripped into the bowl so I'm trying to fish it out." The master is infuriated and he says, "You eat it instead." So in this way, he tricks his master out of his food and his drink. And then when they get to Seoul, the master gives the servant his horse and he says, "Watch this horse for me because I have to go to the government office and conduct my business," and he says, "Be careful because this isn't the provinces, this is Seoul. And if you're not careful, people will steal the nose right off your face." So he goes off to conduct his business. As soon as he's out of sight, the servant goes off, sells the horse. He keeps the reigns and the bridle, but he sells the horse and he keeps the money. And he's holding onto the bridle and the reigns when the master comes back. And he's closing his eyes and he's got his hands over his face. And the master says, "What happened, where did the horse go?" And the servant says, "Oh I was afraid that someone was going to steal the nose off my face, so I was covering my face and someone must have stolen the horse while I wasn't looking." So this infuriates the master and he writes a letter on his back, he takes out his brush and his ink and he writes a letter on the servant's back saying, "When this servant gets home, you are to have him killed." And he sends the servant home.

Of course, the servant is suspicious and along the way he has someone read the letter to him. And there are other anecdotes and other motifs that are involved like, how does he get someone to read the letter and how does he get someone to fix it for him, he usually finds like a passing monk, or someone who's going to be literate, someone who'll be able to write, and he asks them to fix the letter for him. And there are a number of different tales that unfortunately I don't have time to share with you today, but he uses some very humorous techniques to bribe these people into fixing this letter for him. But he finds a passing monk who fixes the letter and it says, instead of having the servant killed, it says, "When the servant arrives home, you are to have him marry our youngest daughter." So he returns home and he ends up marrying the youngest daughter. And then obviously eventually the master's going to return and he finds that the servant has married his youngest daughter, which is horrible, you can't have that, so he orders the servant thrown into a sack and then thrown into a river. But the servant, again, he uses his tricky and his wily nature into deceiving a passerby into taking his place. And this particular story about how he tricks someone to take his place in the bag and be thrown into the river in his stead, this story can actually be found around the world. I've seen versions in Canada, I've seen versions in the Philippines, I've seen versions all over the place. So this is actually a very common motif that you can see throughout the world. But here, it's used in this particular instance for the servant to get out of that tight spot. And he returns home. Instead of running away, he returns home to his master. And he tells his master that he has visited the palace of the dragon king because the dragon king lives in the sea. So when he went into the river, he went down to the sea and he visited the dragon king's palace and saw all these beautiful things and ate this rich food and had this wonderful time, and now he's come back and he's going to take his master and his family with him back to the dragon king's palace. So they go to the river and he has each of them carry a big stone and one by one they go into the river and they drown. All of them except the youngest daughter, who is now his wife, and then they live happily ever after.

So this is a much longer cycle of various tales and anecdotes. But obviously you can tell, without thinking too hard about it, that this is very obvious mockery of the yangban, the ruling class. The servant is at the very bottom of the social ladder, the yangban is supposedly at the very top, but the servant sort

of flips things on its head and he comes out on top and he deceives his master. He essentially, if you look at the process by which he takes things away from his master, he's basically step by step breaking down the yangban, who is a symbol of the ruling system. He starts by stealing his food and his drink, so he steals his means of sustaining himself physically, then he steals his horse, which is his means of mobility, his means of getting around. And then he steals his youngest daughter, who is another means of mobility, but in this case it's social mobility, because often a daughter was married off to another wealthy family in order to form an important political connection. And last but not least, he steals the yangban's life by drowning him in the river. So, it's a very methodical breaking down of the ruling system represented in this yangban master. And there are various theories about the function of this sort of tale in society. Some folklorists refer to something known as the safety valve theory. In other words, this sort of story allows the common people to express their frustration and to get the better of the ruling class without actually having to rebel or that sort of thing. Personally, I'm not a huge fan of the safety valve theory because that would imply that the ruling class was sort of the people who were in control of, controlling the folktales, which is not true because these tales were told by the people themselves. So I'm more of the opinion that they just represent the hopes and dreams of the people within a reality that might not be ideal. Folktales can still contain the seeds of sociocultural change. A narrative can still contain the seeds that may later blossom into real and actual change.

And in terms of, I mentioned before that, tales, or folktales in particular, often cross national and regional boundaries. There is one other folktale, which is another trickster tale, of the Rabbit and the Bear.

And this is a tale that is actually found in many places around the world. It's known by a specific name, it's called the 〈Tail Fisher〉. And this folktale is one of many folktales in Korea that features an animal, there are a lot of animal tales. These animal folktales often have the very timeless feel of fables. Fables often exist in that very vague time that's not a specific place in history. It's a similar thing with animal folktales in Korea. They're not necessarily tied to a specific time or place, they feel very universal. A lot of these animal trickster tales feature the rabbit as the protagonist. So, for example, when we talked about pansori and we talked about 〈The Song of the Sea Palace〉, or 〈Sugungga〉, that was one example of the rabbit as a trickster in a different form of literature. In the folktales, the rabbit is often pitted against the tiger because the tiger symbolizes the strong, ruling members of society and the rabbit symbolizes the weaker members of society. However, the rabbit is clever and the tiger is often depicted as being very foolish.

But in this story of the Tail Fisher, the rabbit is matched up against a bear instead of a tiger. So the rabbit is catching fish by a river and the bear sees him and he asks him to teach him how to catch fish. So the rabbit tells him, "Well, you just dip your tail in the water and you wait for the fish to bite. And once the fish bite, you yank your tail out of the water and boom you have fish." So the bear sits with his tail in the river, but he doesn't catch any fish, he doesn't feel any bites. And the rabbit tells him, "Oh, you just have to wait. The longer you wait, the better your chances will be." So the bear stays there overnight and overnight the river freezes. And in the morning the rabbit comes back and says, "Oh the fish are biting!" So the bear tries to rip his tail out of the water, but because the water's frozen, he actually rips his tail off instead. And this is where you get a little bit of a legend coming in. This is

supposed to explain why the bear has a short tail and not a long tail, because he ripped it off in the river.

So what's interesting about this story is that rivers don't usually freeze overnight in Korea. It takes a much longer time for rivers to freeze. So for that reason, the tale is thought to have come down from a much more northern region maybe up in Siberia. But it does fit in with this theme of the weak outwitting the strong, the clever outwitting the foolish. And it's a tale that has sort of a universal appeal and that's why even though it doesn't necessarily logically fit the Korean environment, it fits the expectations for tricksters and weaker characters fooling stronger characters, in this case the rabbit fooling the bear.

## 6. Closing: The Importance of Korean Folklore

So as I mentioned at the beginning of today's class, folklore is generally thought of as vernacular literature, which means that it exists in opposition to institutions. So we saw this in folktales in particular, how they are of the folk and they sort of maybe criticize the ruling class, the ruling system, etc. But myths, foundation myths, for example, those were told, originally told for religious purposes, but later they were adopted to political purposes, sort of establishing the legitimacy of a kingdom or a people or a nation. So you can see that this idea of folklore being entirely vernacular and then the institution being something else, it's not quite true. And in reality, folklore exists in a hybrid relationship with the institution. And this is seen in a similar relationship between folklore and written literature. So, as I mentioned before, the foundation myths, for example, they are now part of written literature. These are part of texts that were written down during medieval times and they have been preserved in that form to this day. And the folktales, for example, some of those motifs can be found in written stories. The legends as well can also, similar motifs can be found in written stories from before that time. And this interaction between the two, it's not just necessarily a one-way process where you have a folktale or you have a legend and then it gets written down and then it sort of becomes fossilized in stone and then it doesn't change. Actually, it goes back and forth. And I remember times when I myself went down into provinces and talked to people and heard them tell folktales and stories. Sometimes you get people say, "Oh I read this in a book when I was young. I remember this from a book when I was young" because they would have read a book of folktales or something, or just a book of stories. And then they retained that memory and then they became tellers of that story. And you can see this process happening throughout history where, wherever the story started, and all stories are going to start with folklore because stories existed before we had written language, so they start as folklore but then they make their way into literature and then literature can make its way back into folklore and it sort of goes back and forth and they are intertwined with each other in a way that you really can't separate them. You can't say that one is completely separate from the other or that one is in opposition to the other. Next time, we're going to be talking about written literature. But folklore has had influence on written literature and written literature has had influence on folklore. The two exist in a, one could even say, a symbiotic relationship.

And these tales, these myths, these legends and these folktales that I've shared with you today, remain an important source of creativity for literature, for art in Korean society to this day. You may be familiar with K-pop. If you're a fan of K-pop, you know that BTS has drawn on Korean folk culture in some of their songs and some of their music videos. So you can see how these continue to be, up until the present day, a very living and important source of creativity. And I hope that today's examination will give you some insight, even though there's a lot that we didn't get to cover, that it will give you some insight into how Korean society and culture have developed into what we see today.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. In folktales, the protagonist usually meets a tragic end. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

2. The Korean foundation myth was recorded and preserved in old texts. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

3. The Abandoned Princess (Princess Bari) demands the throne in return for saving her father. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

4. In “Child General,” the child’s wings indicate his extraordinary nature. (T/F)

Answer:  
T

5. In “Clever Servant,” the master and all the members of his family drown in the river because of the servant’s tricks. (T/F)

Answer:  
F

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the characteristics and concepts of tales?

- a. The teller of a myth believes that the story is true and sacred.
- b. Legends have a specific time and place setting.
- c. Folktales are usually told in specific places related to evidence.

Answer: c

2. Which of the following is an accurate statement about Korean myth?

- a. The Korean foundation myth lost most of its significance after it lost its religiously sacred nature.
- b. In terms of setting, foundation myths have connections with history.
- c. You can see early texts of Korean shamanic myths in *Samgukyusa* (*The Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*).

Answer: b

3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about “The Dangun Myth”?

- a. Hwanung disobeys Hwanin’s wishes and descends from the heavens and goes down to earth.
- b. Hwanung’s son Dangun founds Joseon.
- c. After a long life, Dangun becomes a mountain deity.

Answer: a

4. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about “Emille Bell”?

- a. It is a legend set in Unified Silla and was recorded in texts from the Goryeo period.
- b. The bell is said to have rung with a sound reminiscent of a baby’s cry.
- c. There are versions of the story where the child is voluntarily sacrificed, and some versions where the child isn’t.

Answer: a

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about “Clever Servant”?

- a. The servant sells his master’s horse at the market and lies to his master, saying he lost the horse.
- b. Because of the servant’s clever tricks, the master promises to take the servant as his son-in-law.
- c. This story mocks the yangban ruling class.

Answer: b

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. Shamanic myths sung during shamanic rituals are called \_\_\_\_\_ in Korean.

Answer: muga

2. In “The Abandoned Princess,” Abandoned Princess (Princess Bari) travels to the land of the immortals to find \_\_\_\_\_ for her father who abandoned her.

Answer: yaksu (medicinal water, magical elixir)

3. In “Tail Fisher,” the animal that tells the tiger (or bear) that they can fish by dipping their tail in the river is a \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer: rabbit

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Describe the differences between myths, legends, and folktales in terms of the following: attitude of the teller, time and place setting, evidence, protagonist behavior, and range. Then, using specific examples, show how Korean folklore has blurred genre distinctions.

\* Answer guide

In myths, the teller of the story believes that the myth is both true and sacred; in legends, the teller of the story believes that the story is true but not necessarily sacred. And then for folktales, the teller does not have to believe that it's true and does not have to believe that it's sacred either. In general, myths are set in a the distant past and in sacred places; legends are set in a specific time and place; and folktales have no specific time or place setting. Myths have comprehensive evidence; legends have specific evidence; and folktales don't need evidence. In myths, the protagonist is a god with supernatural powers; in legends, the protagonist usually meets a tragic end; and in folktales, the protagonist usually meets a happy end. Myths are told in an area with sacred significance to its people;

legends are told in a regional area depending on the nature of its evidence; and the range of a folktale is not limited by region or the group. In Korean folklore, “Child General” straddles the line between legend and myth. And “Sister Sun and Brother Moon” straddles the line between myth and folktale.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Give a brief summary of “The Dangun Myth” as it is recounted in *Samgukyusa*, and briefly describe the attitude toward the figure Dangun in Korean society from the Goryeo period to modern Korea.

\* Answer guide

The summary of “The Dangun Myth” recorded in *Samgukyusa* is as follows: With the help and approval of his father Hwanin, Hwanung descends from the heavens with three thousand followers onto Mount Taebaek to rule over humankind. A bear and a tiger want to become human, but only the bear follows the instructions given by Hwanung to become a woman. And it is this woman who marries Hwanung and gives birth to Dangun. Dangun founds the country, places its capital in Pyeongyang, later moves the capital to Asadal, and rules for 1500 years before going into the mountains at the age of 1908 and becoming a mountain deity.

The reason that “The Dangun Myth” was recorded in *Samgukyusa* was because Dangun was regarded as the ancestor of Goryeo. Dangun was also seen as the ancestor of the Joseon dynasty, and King Sejong built a shrine to Dangun in order to perform ancestral rites. In the early 20th century, a religion was founded called Daejonggyo which worshiped Dangun as the founding deity, and “The Dangun Myth” was used during the Japanese colonial period to strengthen the Korean identity. Even now, Dangun is considered the common ancestor of all Koreans.

〈Lecture 10〉

# Korean Classical Literature

– A Long Tradition of Letters

## Class goals

1. Understand the concept of “literary branches” in Korean literature
2. Appreciatesome famous works of Korean classical poetry and fiction

## Summary

In this class, we discussed the concept of Korean literature and the theory of literary branches. We also looked through the history of Korean literature by focusing on some representative works of Korean classical poetry and fiction.

In addition to literature written in hangeul, Korean literature includes literature written in classical Chinese and literature written in Japanese during the colonial period. The theory of literary branches presents the quadripartite division of lyric, didactic, narrative, and dramatic. These four branches are defined by the relationship between the self and the world.

Korean classical poetry starts from ancient songs including “The Song of Guji Peak.” Hyangga are early Korean lyric songs and poems written in hyangchal. “The Song of Cheoyong” and “Requiem for a Deceased Sister” are representative examples. Sijo are three-line lyric vernacular poems originally sung to fixed melody. Jeong Cheol, Hwang Jini, and Yun Seondo are famous sijo writers. Gasa are didactic poetry often used to express specific messages. “Married Sorrow” is a unique example of gasa. “Song of Flying Dragons” is an akjang created to establish the legitimacy of Joseon Dynasty.

*The Tale of Chunhyang*, *The Tale of Hong Gildong*, *The Nine Cloud Dream*, and hanmun short stories by Bak Jiwon are representative examples of Korean classical fiction. *The Tale of Chunhyang* is a pansori-

based novel based on *The Song of Chunhyang*. *The Tale of Hong Gildong* is a prototypical hero novel. *The Nine Cloud Dream* is a work that follows the tradition of dream stories. Hanmun short stories by Bak Jiwon including “The Tale of the Yangban” and “The Tale of Master Yedeok” represent rebellion against late Joseon society by a yangban writer.

## ❖ Script ❖

# 1. Overview of Korean Classical Literature

Welcome back to The Roots of Korean Culture. Today, in our final class, we're going to talk a little bit about Korean literature, specifically classical literature. So, as with every other topic we've discussed over the course of this class, Korean literature really is too broad to cover completely. So we'll be focusing on a much narrower subset of what could be considered literature. So for starters, we're going to be focusing on written literature. So in contrast to the folklore that we discussed last time, we're focusing on the written aspect, generally by a single author. What we normally understand when we say "literature." Among this large canon of written literature, we're going to be focusing specifically on classical literature. Modern literature is an entirely different topic. Not entirely different, obviously, there's a thread that runs through them. But it's a little bit too broad for us to discuss modern literature as well as classical literature in a single class. And then among the classical literature that we're going to discuss, we're going to be looking at specifically classical poetry and then classical fiction. So dramatic works and that sort of thing. We already discussed some of those in performing arts, etc. So we'll be focusing specifically on poetry and fiction. So rather than trying to cover everything, I figured it would be better to focus on a few well-known examples. Sort of hit the highlights or maybe, you know, the greatest hits of classical Korean literature, we might say. And the goal really today is just to introduce you to some famous works that are very deserving of their fame and give you a starting point for hopefully a more in-depth journey that you might want to take in the future into Korean literature.

# 2. Theoretical Introduction to Korean Literature

So before we jump in with some of these examples of literature, I want to give you at least a very brief sort of theoretical introduction to Korean literature. As I mentioned before, we are going to be discussing

written literature specifically, but literature is more than just things that are associated with the written word. To be more precise, what is literature? Literature is art that uses the medium of language. So, folklore, that we discussed last time, for example, is a type of literature. Myth, legends and folktales are called oral literature. “구비문학” (gubimunhak) or “구전문학” (gujeonmunhak) in Korean. So this hybrid relationship that I mentioned at the end of our last class exists between folklore and written literature as sort of siblings in a larger family. But, as I said, we are going to be focusing specifically on written literature today.

Now, we've asked the question, “What is literature?” But it's also worth asking, “What is Korean literature?” Particularly when it comes to classical literature. Because much of classical literature was written in classical Chinese. And this is the hanmun that I mentioned when we talked about language. Prior to the invention of hangeul, the writing system was classical Chinese, or hanmun. So, if the written language is not Korea, per say, but it is Chinese, can you call literature that has been written in Chinese “Korean literature”? So, in order to answer that question, it's important to understand the nature of hanmun at the time, the nature of classical Chinese at the time. It was a common written language that was used throughout East Asia, similarly to the way that Sanskrit was a common written language used in South Asia and the way that Latin, for example, was used in Europe. Thus, any literature during that time that was written using the common written language could be considered a common literature. Now, one difference between Sanskrit and Latin and hanmun is that unlike Sanskrit and Latin, hanmun, or classical Chinese, is a logographic writing system, not an alphabetic writing system. So, as you've seen throughout this class, the Chinese characters are symbols that represent an idea and they have a pronunciation, but this pronunciation changed throughout East Asia, and this is something that when we talked about hyangchal, which we're going to talk a little bit more about today, hyangchal took advantage of the fact that this pronunciation and the meaning of the character were not necessarily connected with each other. So as a result, like I said, different from Sanskrit and Latin, hanmun is pronounced differently. Even though it's read the same way, it's understood the same way, it's pronounced differently in each of the countries that used it. And as a result, hanmun literature tended to have more regional characteristics than you might see in Sanskrit or Latin literature. So, at the time, up through the medieval era, when you had this common written literature, the idea of the modern nation state did not exist, so you didn't really have people making such distinctions that we have today. But according to our modern understanding of natural literature, hanmun, yes, it can be defined as Korean literature. It was written by Koreans using the common written language. Sometimes it dealt with themes that were common to Korea and China, but it was very much part of the Korean intellectual and literary landscape. Now, in addition to that, of course, once you have the invention of hangeul, and you do see some works starting to be written in hangeul, that of course is also Korean literature, literature written in the vernacular script.

But there is another type of literature that is not often discussed in Korea, especially in the past, it wasn't. It was sort of ignored entirely. It's only in recent times that you start to see people talking about it. But this was literature that was written during the Japanese colonial period that was written in Japanese. So during the Japanese colonial period, you definitely had people writing in Korean using hangeul, but you also did have writers who decided to write in Japanese instead. So can a literature

written in the language of the colonizers be considered the literature of the colonized? So, like I said, in the past much of this literature was ignored by Korean scholars sort of as an uncomfortable truth and this is due to an understandable desire to try to move beyond Japanese colonial and sort of erase the imprint of Japanese colonialism on Korean history. Unfortunately, this is something that really cannot be achieved. The colonial period is something that happened and even though it was a very unpleasant period, it's something that had an effect on the way that Korea developed and you can't really ignore that or deny that. So you do see attitudes changing but they are changing very slowly. And you will find these days, especially in English language anthologies, you will see examples of some works that are translated alongside the works that were in Korean, you'll see works translated from Japanese that are considered as part of the same oeuvre of a given writer. But if you think about other examples elsewhere, take the example of African literature. Much of African literature is written in the language of the former colonizers, whether that be English or French or whatever. Would we say that this is not African literature? No, I don't think anyone would say that. So in the same way, I think that we can say that literature written by colonized Koreans in the language of the colonizers is often Korean literature. Now, we won't be discussing any of that today for the simple fact that that literature is not as well known as hasn't been as popularized. But it does exist and I think if you do dive deeper into Korean literature, I would encourage you to look at that as well.

So theories of Korean literature, as opposed to, say, theories of literature in the West do exist. And I'm going to draw here specifically on the theories of Professor Cho Dong-il, who I mentioned last time. He wrote a very comprehensive history of Korean literature. And he has come up with some ways of looking at Korean literature that are sort of a development of theories that have been imported from the West. So he came up with what he called "branch theory," in Korean, "갈래론" (gallaeron), that there are literary branches. And this is sort of a development from genre theory. And in the West, we have sort of a tripart division, a three part division, between the lyric, the narrative and the dramatic. But he adds to that the didactic. So we have a four part division of lyric, didactic, narrative and dramatic. And the relationship between branches and genres is... there is a relationship there, but it isn't necessarily a one-to-one correspondence. So a literary branch can cross various genres. And a literary branch will be more defined by the principles by which a particular work is composed. So if you look at genre, genre in literature is a category that's defined by the form, whether it's poetry etc., the content, it could be defined by technique, tone... So genre is a very broad concept to begin with and there's actually a lot of discussion about what is genre.

But in contrast to that, branches can be understood more as tendencies or inclinations. So for example in the West, we have a distinction between narrative poetry and lyric poetry. In that case, that would be a distinction that would be a distinction between the narrative branch and the lyric branch. And these four branches that I mentioned are defined by the relationship between the self and the world. So the self is the individual and then the world is everything outside of that individual. And the way that the self and the world interact in a particular work, that determines the branch that we might associate with that work.

So for example, the lyric branch. In a lyric work, the world is internalized by the self without the intervention of the world outside the work. So a lyric work takes the world and the self, in this case

the author, would interpret the world, but he interprets it, he or she interprets it according to their own philosophies, their own thoughts. It's a very personal thing. The world outside the work does not necessarily intervene in that internalization process. The didactic is the opposite side of that. The self, the author's thoughts, feelings, experiences, opinions, etc., are all externalized into the world. The author puts his thoughts out into the world through the intervention of the world outside the work. So basically, he or she is putting, it was often he, he or she is putting his or her thoughts into the world and those thoughts are very much interacting with the world. So a didactic work for example might be an author talking about the way that he believes people should behave in society. That would be an example of that. So lyric and didactic are sort of two sides of a coin.

And then the other two, narrative and dramatic, are also two sides of a different coin. So the narrative branch centres around the conflict between the self and the world. So the self conflicts with the world and this conflict happens through the intervention of the self outside the work. In other words, narrative works have narrators. And a narrator, you can have a first person narrator, but the idea of a narrative or authorial voice is something that exists outside the work and it's presenting this conflict between the self and the world. The dramatic also deals with the conflict between the self and the world but this conflict happens without the intervention of the self outside the work. So in other words, there's no outside narrator. All of that conflict is portrayed by the characters on the stage without a narrator to exist outside of that. Now, again, these are tendencies. And, for example, in Greek drama you have the chorus, which does function as a narrator. But in Korean drama, this is just a more suitable characterization.

And finally, just very briefly, we will talk about the development of Korean literature throughout history. And this is something that, already when we went through history, when we talked about the development of language, etc., we've already touched on these things. But we'll look at them again from the perspective of literature. How does the development of history affect the development of literature?

So as we've mentioned before, on a number of occasions, prior to the introduction of written language, which originally would have been hanmun, we only had folklore, we only had oral literature. Once you had hanmun adopted as the writing system, you got hanmun literature.

And this represents a move from the ancient period to the medieval era. And during the medieval era, you had this literature that was written in the common written language and all of the literature of this hanmun, classical Chinese, civilization sphere, was thought of as being a common literature. You also saw a strict class hierarchy, not just in other areas of society but also in language use, as we've mentioned. So hanmun, classical Chinese, was monopolized by upper class men, although sometimes used by some upper class women, and the lower classes used only the vernacular spoken language. So at this time, vernacular language did co-exist with hanmun literature. In terms of written literature, this vernacular literature was first expressed through hyangchal, as we've mentioned before, the special language system that expresses the sounds of the Korean language using hanmun. And then later, once you have the invention of hangeul, that provided a much easier way for vernacular literature to be expressed. So hangeul literature and hanmun literature existed together at the same time. As we've discussed before, hangeul was originally adopted by upper class women and only later was it adopted by the other classes of society.

During the medieval period, lyric poetry dominated, during the early medieval period. And in the

late medieval period, you started to see the introduction of didactic poetry. So lyric and didactic poetry sort of co-existed together just like hangeul and hanmun literature co-existed.

During the transition from the medieval to the modern era, this is when you saw hangeul starting to spread to the lower classes of society and you saw the production of literature by men who were maybe not yangban, they were not part of the ruling class, using the vernacular script, hangeul. As time went on, as we move closer and closer to the modern era, men from the upper class started to join them in writing hangeul literature. And it was during this time, this transition from the medieval to the modern era, that you saw the development of the novel. And you saw this development of narrative literature because the novel is the quintessential form of narrative literature, but you saw this development in narrative literature influencing poetry as well as prose. You see things like verbose sijo, which I'll talk about in a moment when we talk about sijo.

And then we finally get to the modern era and the modern era, starting from the late 19th century/early 20th century, this is when hanmun, classical Chinese, was finally overtaken by hangeul. Also, the didactic branch collapsed so didactic poetry etc. disappeared. And the only sort of remnant of didactic literature in modern literature is the essay. That's sort of the final survivor.

### 3. Classical Poetry

So we're going to start off with classical poetry first and then move into classical fiction. And I want to share with you a number of examples of these various types of poems and talk a little bit about their significance, how they developed, etc. So when we talk about classical poetry, generally the first thing that is mentioned are ancient songs. They're called ancient songs because they come from a time before when they were written down, but they were written down later during the medieval time in texts like 〈Samgukyusa〉, the 〈Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms〉, which is the same place where we found the foundation myths etc. So these once again are written literature, but presumably they come from a much earlier time prior to the widespread use of hanmun and written literature. So one of these ancient songs, and there's three that we know of that are quite famous examples, but the one that I'm going to share with you today is known as 〈구지가〉 (Gujiga). It is found in the 〈Samgukyusa〉 and it is found actually as part of a foundation myth. It is part of the foundation myth of the kingdom of Gaya. It is known as the myth of Kim Suro. Kim Suro is another heavenly being who comes down from heaven. And I mentioned this earlier on in our classes when I talked about the various foundation myths of the kingdom and I talked about how Kim Suro united six different tribes to form the Gaya confederation. So that's the same myth I mentioned then. So when Kim Suro is coming down from heaven, the tribal elders of Garak, which is actually what the tribe was called, they sang a song to welcome him down from heaven as king. You can see the original here, the original was written in hanmun because, again, it was from the 〈Samgukyusa〉.

And if we were to translate it into English, we might translate it as something like, "Oh turtle, Oh

turtle, show us your head. If you don't show us, we'll roast and eat you." Something along those lines. Very simple song, very simple idea. But there's a lot that's hidden in here. So despite the very short length of it, there's a lot of meaning. And you have to consider of course the context. So I think the second line here, "首其現也," that first character "首" (su) means head. And that's why we might translate it as "show us your head." But it's also the first character in "Suro" of Kim Suro, so we can also interpret this, this particular line, as meaning, "Give us Suro." And that would make sense because they're singing this song to welcome down Kim Suro from heaven. So it sort of has this double meaning. It makes sense for, you know, you say to a turtle, "Oh stick out your head." But then the double meaning of that, "Give us Suro." So it's sort of an incantation as well. And then the second, or the third and the fourth line, 'if you don't do this, we're going to do bad things to you', is the use of a ritual threat to achieve the desired outcome. And this is a very common magical religious practice. It's something you see a lot in primitive magic. Primitive magic operates on very fundamental and straightforward principles. And one of those principles is that if you want something to happen, you can threaten people and they'll make that happen. And the same thing is sort of applied when you're dealing with supernatural deities. You would threaten the supernatural deity to get something that you want. Obviously another method would be to try to placate or to please the deity, but in this case a threat is being used. Another thing that we can note is that the turtle is an animal of the water and it has long been considered very important in Korea, being associated with water. And the opposite of water is the use of fire. If you're going to roast a turtle, you're going to use fire. So it would make sense that you would threaten a water being with fire. So you see another very symbolic element here. And one interesting thing that we might also connect with this is the fact that turtles were used for divination purposes in ancient times. So what they would do is they would take a turtle shell and they would write various characters on it, characters that were going to be used during the divination. And then they would take a poker, a long metal rod, and they would heat it up in the fire until it was red hot and then they would pierce the shell with the hot poker and when you pierced the shell, you would get cracks running out from the hole that was pierced and those cracks would run through the different characters. And depending on which characters were indicated by the cracks, you could use that to divine your fortune. So in addition to whatever other significance the turtle might have had, there's also the idea that turtles were in fact used in these magical religious rituals, divination rituals. So there's a lot. Even though it's a very simple song, it sounds almost like a child's nursery rhyme, right? There's a much deeper meaning that we can find in there. And especially within the context of the foundation myth, we can see that it has even a sacred significance. Now those are some of the earliest examples of poetry that we have.

But moving on into some more commonly known examples of early Korean lyric songs, we have hyangga. And these are the poems that I mentioned before that use hyangchal. When we discussed hyangchal back in the language class, the example that I gave you is actually from the hyangga known as 〈처용가〉 (Cheoyongga), which we're going to look at. Only twenty-five of these hyangga poems remain. Fourteen of them are found in the 〈Samgukyusa〉 and then eleven are found in a different work. But there's only twenty-five known examples of these. And they used this system that we've discussed before that relies on the dual nature of hanmun, that the characters can be read for their meaning, they can also be read for their sound. They rely on this dual nature to express the sounds of the Korean language.

And as a result, as we've mentioned before, you can come up with slightly different interpretations of these poems. But I want to look at two of these today. The first is 〈Cheoyongga〉 and that was the poem that… I gave you sort of the first few characters to give you an example of hyangchal. And then the second one we're going to look at is 〈제망매가〉 (Jemangmaega).

And “Cheoyongga” literally means “the song of Cheoyong.” Cheoyong is the name of a character. So this character, once again it is part of a story that is told in the 〈Samgukyusa〉. He was awarded a beautiful woman for his wife. So the king gave him a beautiful woman to marry as his wife in order to sort of win his loyalty. But the problem was his wife was so beautiful that the god of smallpox, known as “역신” (yeoksin), and “역” (yeok) is sort of like a… well, it's a pandemic, I guess, it's a disease that spreads around very rapidly. But this particular god was the god of smallpox. He so coveted Cheoyong's wife that he transformed into a human being and he slept with her. And then Cheoyong returned home one night to find that this man, this god who had become a man, was in his wife's bed. So what did he do? He sang a song, as one might do. He sang this song known as 〈Cheoyongga〉, or 〈The Song of Cheoyong〉. And the god of smallpox was so moved by Cheoyong's mercy, because he didn't get angry, he didn't try to kill him, as you might expect he would do, he was so moved by Cheoyong's mercy that he vowed he would never again enter a household that displayed a likeness of Cheoyong. If it displayed a picture of Cheoyong, then that house would be safe from smallpox entering that house.

So if we look, the original text, you can see that it is entirely written in hanmun, or at least Chinese characters, but again they are used in the system known as hyangchal. And the translation that I will give here is actually done by Professor David McCann, who is a professor of Korean literature, and he's also a poet himself. He's written poems both in English and Korean, a very prolific translator of poetry. He's got some very good translations. So most of the translations I'm going to share with you today are going to be from him if they're not my own translations. So this is how David McCann translated this poem: “In the bright moon of the capital, I enjoyed the night until late. When I came back and looked in my bed, there were four legs in it. Two are mine, but the other two — whose are they? Once upon a time that was mine; what shall be done, now these are taken?” So this is a very unusual reaction to the situation. It doesn't make a lot of sense that, you know, you come home, you find someone in bed with your wife and that you would sing a song and maybe do a dance. It's very odd unless you consider, again, the context and the special ritual meaning as with the song of the turtle. So it's very likely that this song was sung during shamanic rituals in order to drive away or protect people from the god of smallpox. And this ritual was later preserved and sort of reimagined as literature. So it has a very close connection with shamanic practices, even though if you took it outside of that context, it wouldn't make a lot of sense.

So another example of hyangga is 〈제망매가〉 (Jemangmaega) and this is sometimes translated as “Requiem for a Deceased Sister.” It's a song that was composed by the Silla monk Wolmyeong. And you know hyangga, all of these were from this period. It was composed by a monk named Wolmyeong during the Silla period and it was sung during the funeral rites for his sister after she died. And according to the story, when he sang this song, a sudden wind blew up and it blew the paper money off the altar, paper money that was used as part of a ritual for the dead, it blew the paper money off the altar and carried it off to the west, as if she had taken the money to use for her journey to the Pure Land, which is located, it's thought of being as located in the west. So it's a very touching story. And the poem itself, honestly

this is one of my personal favourites. I find it a very moving work in the expression.

So you can see here, again, the original using the Chinese characters. But the translation, and this is my own translation, again, I really love this poem, but we might translate it like this: "You linger, on the road of life and death; Will you leave like this, with no word of farewell? Like two leaves from a single tree, we are torn apart by an early autumn wind. Ah, I will follow the Way until we meet in the Pure Land." So it's a poem that, it comes from such a long time ago, it comes from such a different culture, such a different context, but I think everyone can understand that human emotion that's being expressed here. If you've ever lost a loved one or a friend, you know what it feels like, what this pain of parting feels like. And this is a poem that is a song that has been written and is being sung by a monk, someone who is very steeped in Buddhism, presumably someone who is very skilled in Buddhist practice and has achieved wisdom, etc. But he still feels this pain of being separated from his sister, whom he loved so much. So you have sort of this juxtaposition of on the one hand the Buddhist belief that we are all connected and that death is not something necessarily to be feared, but just sort of a return of everyone to that undistinguished selfness, the selflessness that exists. So there's this philosophical idea of death. But at the same time, he's still a person. So he feels that very human pain and sorrow. But what makes this poem so beautiful is the leap in sentiment from the fourth line to the final line, where he talks about being separated by an early autumn wind, and then the last line says, "Ah, I will follow the Way until we meet in the Pure Land." So there's this... you go from this sadness and this sorrow, from a song of parting to a song of reunion. And it sort of elevates that sorrow into an expression of faith, yes, we will meet again in the Pure Land, that place that we've discussed before if you recite the name of the Amitabha Buddha. So, it's just a beautiful expression and something that I think really transcends time, language, culture, space. And it's something that I think can speak to just about anyone. That's one of the beauties of poetry, I think. So those are two examples of hyangga.

Another very famous genre of poetry is sijo. These are lyric poems, just like hyangga, hyangga are also lyric poems. Sijo are three-line poems generally written in the vernacular, they were written in hangeul. They were originally songs. So they were sung to a particular melody known as sijochang. But overtime, the words became separated from the melody. Sometimes, you still see people who sing them, but as time went on they became poems as opposed to just songs. Sometimes they're compared to Japanese haiku, I think because haiku also have three lines, but haiku has a very specific syllabic structure. So you can't have so many syllables in the first line, so many syllables in the second line, etc. Sijo's a little bit different from that because there's some room for variation. There is a structure, but it's not strictly enforced. So you can exercise a little bit of judgement. You do have a little bit of leeway in the number of syllables that you can use. And as I mentioned before, sijo originally started out as these three-line lyric poems, but as time went on and as narrative literature started to exert more and more of an influence, you did see some of this influence of the narrative branch in sijo as well with things known as linked sijo. Linked sijo are the same three-line poems, but you have a number of them linked together to form a longer narrative, really. And you also had what are known as verbose sijo and these are, they maintain the same tripartite structure of the three lines, so to speak, but each line has been greatly expanded, so it's a much longer poem. So you can see, as time goes on, you can see how the narrative sort of influenced sijo. Even though it did remain a lyric poem, it did start to take on some characteristics of the narrative branch as

well. So I'll just give you a few examples of some well-known poems, well-known sijo.

For example, the first one that I'm going to share with you is by the author Jeong Cheol, who's actually known for gasa, but he also wrote sijo as well. We'll talk about gasa in a moment. And here is the original. Once again, I'm going to give you a translation by David McCann: "Snow has fallen in the pine woods, every branch blooming. I shall break off one bough and send it to the place where my love stays. If he just sees it once, what matter if it all melts away?" So this is one poem that is in a long tradition of poems of longing for what is translated here as "my love." In Korean it's "님" (nim), you have a longing for "님". And it means "my love," sometimes it's translated as "my lord." And it's not uncommon to write from the perspective of a woman longing for her lover and that's what we see here.

But you also had sijo that were written by women. For example, Hwang Jini was a very famous gisaeng. And I'll talk about what a gisaeng is in a little while when we talk about classical fiction. But sometimes this is translated as courtesan, but she was a very famous gisaeng of the Joseon period. And one of her most famous sijo is called *⟨Jade Green Stream⟩*, but that comes from the first line. So you can see the original here and then once again a translation from David McCann runs like this: "Jade Green Stream, don't boast so proud of your easy passing through these blue hills. Once you have reached the broad sea, to return again will be hard. While the Bright Moon fills these empty hills, why not pause? Then go on, if you will." So it seems like a very simple, straightforward poem, right? You have a natural scene. So you have a jade green stream, you have blue hills, you have the stream going through the hills heading toward the sea. But then you have a bright moon, presumably a full moon, filling the empty hills, and a call to the stream to maybe stop its course, "don't be in such a rush to get down to the sea." But there is a meaning underneath the surface, underneath this natural scene. And this was, or is considered to be a song written to convince a man named "벽계수" (Byeokgyesu), whose name translates to jade green stream, so "jade green stream" refers to this man. And it is a song to sort of convince him to stay with her, Hwang Jini, because here "Bright Moon," and you can see here that "Bright Moon" is capitalized, that's because "명월" (Myeongwol) refers to Hwang Jini. So the dual meaning, the meaning below the surface is it's a song of sort of trying to convince a man to stay and spend the night with her.

So the last sijo that I want to share with you is by Yun Seondo, who is a very famous poet from the later Joseon period for a lot of sijo. In particular, he's famous for his linked sijo, which, as I mentioned before, is the same three lines poems but there's many of them linked together to form a longer narrative. And this one is actually the first, you could say poem, or first stanza of a longer linked sijo. Again, you can see the original here and the translation, once again, by David McCann runs, "Just how many friends have I? Water, stone, pine, and bamboo. And the moon rising on East Mountain: I am even more grateful for you. Oh enough! What point could there be in claiming more friends than these?" So this was a poem, and again, like I said, this was the first poem in a series of poems, written while the poet was living in seclusion. He enjoyed using natural imagery and metaphors, but he used this natural imagery to praise admirable qualities in people. So by talking about the admirable qualities of water, stone, pine, bamboo and the moon, he's using these as sort of metaphors for the types of qualities that he admires in people. And this is part of a series of poems known as the *⟨Song of Five Friends⟩* because he talks about the five friends that he has.

So just a moment ago, I mentioned gasa. I mentioned that Jeong Cheol is very famous for his gasa.

And gasa was another type of poetry, but unlike hyangga and sijo, gasa was a didactic poetry. That means it was generally used to express a specific message. So many gasa were used, for example, to promote ideal behaviour. You had what are known as “규방가사” (gyubang gasa). “규방” (Gyubang) means the women's quarters. So there's gasa for the women's quarters. These were often written by men to be sort of behaviour guides for women, often young women. Maybe they would write them for their daughters when they were going off to live with their husband's family, they would write gasa to tell them how to behave, how they should behave towards their parents-in-law etc. But some of the most fascinating examples are gasa that were used for doctrinal or religious purposes. I personally find it fascinating that when Catholicism was first introduced to Korea, one of the first methods they used to spread their doctrines was by writing Catholic gasa. So I personally find that very interesting. They are generally longer than hyangga and sijo, hyangga and sijo being lyric poems. Lyric poems generally express their sentiment in a more concise fashion. Gasa tend to be quite longer.

And I'm going to share with you one, or part of one gasa today. And unlike the gyubang gasa which were generally written by men for women, this was written by a woman and it's called 〈규원가〉 (Gyuwonga) and “규” (gyu) refers to the women's quarters and “원” (won) is sort of a bitterness or, you know, it's a very negative feeling, and “가” (ga) is song. And it's translated here, again by David McCann, as “Married Sorrow,” but literally it could be thought of as 〈The Song of the Bitterness of the Women's Quarters〉. I'm only going to give you the first few lines here. But it was written by a woman called Heo Nanseolheon, or Heo Chohui was her actual name and Nanseolheon was what she was called. She was actually the elder sister of the very famous author Heo Gyun, who we're going to talk about a little more in a moment. But she herself was also a poet along with her younger brother in the 16th century in Joseon. She was one of the few well-known women poets from the Joseon period. So, unlike the gasa written by men for women, trying to tell them how to behave, this gasa expresses a woman's life from the perspective of a woman.

And again, I'll give you here you can see the first few lines, it comes from a much longer poem, and the translation by David McCann runs, “Just yesterday, it seemed I was young. How did it happen? Am I suddenly old? The joys of youth! Even to think of recalling them is useless. I am so old. To try just to speak the words makes my throat grow tight. My mother and father together took such pains to raise me, thinking at least to find a good man if not some grand official for my spouse. Destined to be married, through the go-between's advising I met the merry man of the capital. It all seems now like a dream. I was oh, so very careful then, as if stepping on thin ice.” So this is not something that's like, “Oh, this is how you should act as a woman.” She's looking back on her own life and talking about… it says that to even speak the words, her throat grows tight, but you can see how even though she says she's “so old now,” she remembers everything so vividly, and this is just the beginning. In these lines, she's recalling how she met the “merry man of the capital,” but she was so careful about her behaviour, which is how you had to act as a newly married woman, you basically walked around on thin ice. But you can see here this very real and heartfelt expression of a woman's experience. And if you're interested, I would encourage you to seek out the rest of the poem. It's quite an interesting look into the experience that she had and it offers a nice contrast with gasa that might have been a little bit more well-known at the time.

So the last poem that I want to share with you before we move onto fiction is one that I've

mentioned before. It is a genre known as akjang and the poem itself is 〈용비어천가〉 (Yongbieocheongga), 〈The Song of Flying Dragons〉. And we mentioned this before because it is the first literary text that was written using hangeul and it was written for a number of purposes. For one, it was written to show that you could write literature in hangeul. But it also seeks to establish the legitimacy of the Joseon Dynasty. It praises the deeds of the founder of the dynasty and more specifically the ancestors of the founders, going back four generations. The idea is that by making them equal, by comparing them using similar terms, with great Chinese rulers of the past, you place them, and thus the Joseon Dynasty, in an important place on the world's stage. It's a very long narrative poem and it consists of 125 stanzas in total, but we're only going to look at one stanza today. And this is probably the most famous stanza, very well-known, very significant stanza in Korea.

The original here, you can see, is entirely in hangeul. And I'm showing you the original version of that. This is... one of the reasons that it's important is because the first stanza does contain Chinese characters in addition to the hangeul, but this is entirely hangeul, there's no Chinese characters being used here. So it's significant for that and also for the imagery of it as well. And the translation, this is my translation: "The deep-rooted tree is not moved by the wind; its flowers are good and its fruit abounds. Waters from deep springs do not cease in drought but gush forth, flowing in a river to the sea." So once again you have the use of natural imagery. You have a tree and you have waters coming from deep springs. But like I said, this is famous because it's written entirely in hangeul, but also because of the imagery and the metaphors that are used. It's so famous in fact that if you look at a ten thousand won bill and you look in the background, you actually can see that this verse is printed on the ten thousand won bill, so you even have literature on the money here. But it has a very symbolic meaning because the idea is that, to put it simply, a nation that is founded on sure foundations will not fall. And those sure foundations are the illustrious ancestors. Those ancestors form the foundation upon which the nation is built and if those nations, or if those ancestors are noble and if they have achieved great things, then they are like a deep-rooted tree. The nation will be that tree and the ancestors will be the roots. The nation will be the river and the ancestors will be the spring. And this has sort of come to symbolize Korea as a whole, so the idea of a deep-rooted tree, "뿌리깊은 나무" (ppurigipeun namu), it's even the name of a historical drama. This is... it basically reflects the fundamental idea about how the nation will stand and how the nation will last.

## 4. Classical Fiction

So we're going to move onto classical fiction now, particularly novels. And I'm only going to be able to give you a few examples of well-known works here because poetry is shorter so I was able to focus on the specific lines, etc., but here, novels and works of fiction, of prose, tend to be a lot longer, so I'm not going to be able to go into as much detail, but I'll talk about the plot and there will be spoilers if you're concerned about that. I will be talking about the plot of some of these stories and their significance in

the history of Korean literature and their significance for Korean culture today. These works are all quite famous works, very well-known. You may have even heard of some of them before. But they are all definitely worth reading in full and they have all been translated into English so they are available and I would encourage you to read them in full and enjoy them fully once you've finished this class. So I want to start off with something that we have discussed before. We've discussed pansori and we talked about the story of Chunhyang. And I mentioned that pansori also developed from this performing art, from this artistic endeavour on stage, to a written literature as well. And that is the pansori-based novel. Novels that are based on the pansori stories. So 〈춘향가〉 (Chunhyangga) is probably one of the most famous pansori and 〈춘향전〉 (Chunhyangjeon) is probably the most famous pansori-based novel. “가” (ga) of course, you've heard “가” (ga) when we talked about the poetry. “가” (ga) means song and “전” (jeon) means tale. So it goes from being 〈The Song of Chunhyang〉 to maybe we could say 〈The Tale of Chunhyang〉. It's a good example of the interrelationship of the oral literature and written literature that I was talking about, between folklore and written literature, as you can see that they've influenced each other throughout history. So like pansori, there are many different versions of this novel. There's not one 〈Chunhyangjeon〉. There were authors that approached this story from their own different perspectives and they had different ideas about who the characters should be, how they should act, depending on their own personal views and what they wanted to achieve through writing these works.

But the story in brief, and again you may have heard of this because it's possibly the most famous Korean story, but it starts with the meeting of a young couple. You have the male protagonist, Yi Mongryong, who is the son of a yangban family, so very high status, and he sees Chunhyang, who is the daughter of a gisaeng. I said before that I'm going to explain in a little bit more detail what a gisaeng is, I think it is important that we know what a gisaeng is before we move on with this. So I said before that sometimes gisaeng is translated as courtesan and there were certainly different classes or levels of gisaeng, and at the highest level gisaeng were entertainers. They would often be called into gatherings where there was a party going on and they would be there to entertain the men. They were generally going to be very skilled in music, in song, and, as we know, the gisaeng Hwang Jini was also a poet who was able to write very skilled poetry. So these are the sort of the highest level of gisaeng. But on the lowest level, the lowest class of gisaeng, were essentially prostitutes. So you had a number of different levels, you can't say that gisaeng were any one thing, but it's important to know that because that explains a little bit about the character of Chunhyang and the way that she's perceived by other characters. So she's the daughter of a gisaeng. Her mother is a gisaeng and her father is a nobleman, an aristocrat, a yangban, who slept with her mother and then she became pregnant and had Chunhyang as her daughter. So Chunhyang is on a swing on the day of the Dano Festival, which is the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar year, it's a very big festival in Korea, down in the provincial city of Namwon. And Yi Mongryong sees her and falls in love and they have a scene where he's trying to meet her and she's being coy and you can already see that she doesn't consider herself a gisaeng, even though she's the daughter of a gisaeng. But they do eventually fall in love and they spend the night together and Yi Mongryong, he pledges himself to Chunhyang. So he's not treating her as just someone he might have a one-night stand with but they've genuinely fallen in love and he pledges himself to her and that they are going to be married. Unfortunately, he is called away to the capital. He must go away to the capital. His father is going away

to the capital and he must go with his family. So once he leaves, a new magistrate, a local magistrate, comes in. And one of the first things he does, one of the many things that he does as a new magistrate, you know, he meets his staff etc. And one of the things she does is he calls all of the local gisaeng together and he inspects them. And Chunhyang is called as well even though, again, she doesn't consider herself a gisaeng. She's famed for her beauty so she's brought before the magistrate and he expresses interest in her and he wants her to come to his bedchambers, but she refuses him because she's being faithful to Yi Mongryong. So as a result, he has her whipped and thrown into prison.

And Yi Mongryong in the capital, meanwhile, he has passed the civil service examination that all yangban want to pass if they want to hold a government position, and he gets such a high score on the examination that he is named the secret royal inspector, “암행어사” (amhaeng eosa), and this is an inspector that's given to the top score in the examination, this is an inspector that goes around in the name of the king, but he's a secret inspector so he doesn't announce himself and he goes around and he makes sure that the nation is functioning properly and all the magistrates are doing what they're supposed to be doing. So he returns to Namwon in secret, but then he eventually punishes the magistrate and frees Chunhyang from prison and the two are reunited and they're happily married and they live happily ever after. So, a beautiful love story.

Now as far as the significance of this story goes, the character of Chunhyang here is the key. So as I mentioned, she is the daughter of a gisaeng and then she's treated like a gisaeng by others. For example, the magistrate, he doesn't care whether she's a gisaeng or she's just the daughter of a gisaeng. When he's inspecting the gisaeng, he wants her to be there. And he sees her and he believes that he has the right to just take her and do what he wants with her. So he sees her as just this one thing, but she herself does not see her as a gisaeng. Her father is an aristocrat, he's a yangban. And even though her mother is a gisaeng, she believes that she has noble blood within her. So she does not believe that she has the obligation to do what the magistrate wants. Instead, she believes herself to be betrothed to Yi Mongryong and that she's waiting for him. She's doing what any good woman would do, wait for the man that she's been promised to in marriage. So in Confucian terms, the surface-level Confucian moral here is her fidelity, her faithfulness. But underneath that there's, again, another level, there's dual meaning. Because she's rebelling against the social hierarchy, right? Ultimately, this hierarchy falls when she and Yi Mongryong are united with each other. They overcome that social disparity in their classes. And the hopes of the people and the people are being oppressed under this strict social hierarchy that vicariously they can achieve their hopes and dreams through the story of Chunhyang. So you see this sort of dual nature that appeals in part to the Confucians, the yangban, and it also appeals to the common people as well. So that's something that is carried over from pansori into the pansori-based novel.

This work is sometimes called the Romeo and Juliet of Korea, but it... it has similarities. So it's similar in the fact that they're from different classes and they come together. But most importantly, they're not star-crossed lovers. *⟨Romeo and Juliet⟩* is a tragedy, it ends with them dying. Yi Mongryong and Chunhyang live happily ever after. So it is a quintessential Korean romance and it is an inspiration for many writers and artists and especially filmmakers. There have been about twenty films, I think more than twenty films now, that have been made based on the story of Chunhyang. So it's a very important story. If you read one Korean novel, I would say probably read *⟨Chunhyangjeon⟩*.

But another important novel is 〈홍길동전〉 (Honggildongjeon), the tale or the story of Hong Gildong. It's the name of the character. And you may notice that if it's got “전” (jeon), “tale of,” at the end of it, the title is often the name of the main character. It's the same thing here. Hong Gildong is the name of the protagonist. This is the prototypical hero novel. And it follows the pattern of the hero, which we'll see in the story. Traditionally, it is attributed to Heo Gyun, and as I mentioned before when we talked about the *gasa* from Heo Nanseolheon, Heo Gyun is her younger brother and he was a very famous writer of the Joseon period. It's considered to be the first *hangeul* novel. But some scholars, especially in recent years, have argued that this attribution is not reliable and that the novel bears the characteristics of a later work, maybe more like in the 19th century. And some scholars argue that it was probably written by a *jungin* or even a commoner author. So we don't have time to get into those controversies today, but just be aware that there are different scholarly opinions. The more traditional attribution is that it was written by Heo Gyun at an earlier time and the sort of counterpart to that is that it's probably a later work written by an author of lower social status. But the work itself, though, we can still see that as, whatever period it might come from, we can see that as being a very important work.

So in this story, Hong Gildong is born as the son of a concubine, but he's born with extraordinary abilities. So as a result, the senior concubine, so the concubine that he's born to isn't even the senior concubine, it's a lower concubine, so the senior concubine becomes jealous and she's afraid that because this lower concubine has had this son with extraordinary abilities that this might hurt her later on. So she conspires to kill him, she hires an assassin to kill Hong Gildong. But even as a child, Hong Gildong thwarts this assassin, he ends up killing him, he flees home and he falls in with a group of bandits. But rather than being captured by the bandits, he eventually rises to become their leader and he names this group of bandits the *Hwalgbindang*, and this refers to a group of people that helps the poor, essentially. So these bandits, they go around and they steal riches from the aristocrats and the *yangban*. Basically, they're stealing from people who have gained their wealth by oppressing the poor.

And the second crisis after the first crisis of the assassin comes when the royal court puts a price on his head, demands that he be captured. But his extraordinary abilities, he's not just a talented leader, he has magical abilities as well. He has the ability to transform himself, he has the ability to duplicate himself. So he can basically take straw men and make them appear to be duplicates of himself so he appears in different places around the nation at the same time. He can fly, etc. So he has all these amazing abilities. And because of these abilities, he is able to constantly avoid capture. And eventually, when the king fails to capture him, he praises him and rewards him. And his father, perhaps more importantly, finally recognizes him as a proper son, as a legitimate son, not just as a son of a lower concubine. So in the latter part of the work, he travels to distant lands, he defeats monsters and he sets up his own kingdom and that's how the work ends.

So the most important theme here in this work is the discrimination against secondary sons, what are known as secondary sons. In Korean, “서자” (seoja). And *seoja* are not the sons of wives but the sons of concubines. So even though he was born into a *yangban* family, because he was the son of a concubine, he was discriminated against. And we've talked about this before about how secondary sons were discriminated against and not able to do certain things. A similar sort of thing is going on here. You also actually hear echoes of 〈Agi Jangsu〉, 〈The Child General〉, here as well right? An extraordinary person

being born into low circumstances that is killed. But in this case, he's not killed because this is a hero novel and he succeeds and goes on the hero's journey. So you can see some similarities with some other works. And even with *Chunhangjeon*, you have the similarity in the social message about overcoming one's status.

And just as *Chunhangjeon* is thought of as being the *Romeo and Juliet* of Korea, *Honggildongjeon* is often thought of as being the *Robin Hood* of Korea. But despite the name of the outlaw band, even though the outlaw band is called Hwalbindang, the group of people who help the poor, Hong Gildong doesn't actually give his money to the poor. They definitely, they punish the rich, they punish the yangban who have been stealing from the poor. But he doesn't steal from the rich and give to the poor. Although it's important to note that Robin Hood in his original incarnation didn't steal from the rich and give to the poor either. That's something that happened later. But I think it's important, no matter what you call him, that you understand that Hong Gildong is sort of, he's in a long tradition of noble outlaws, but he's very much different from what you might think of as Robin Hood. So calling him the Robin Hood of Korea might be doing a little bit of a disservice to him.

It's also worth noting – some other things that we can note about the work is that the kingdom that he founds in the last part of the work is not the ideal utopian society that some people might think. You might think that he rose from these circumstances, his lowly circumstances, and then he founded the ideal kingdom. It's actually modelled very much on Joseon society, it has the same sort of social hierarchy. So despite the fact that the work criticizes the social order, it doesn't completely do away with it. I think that's important to note as well. And this work, again, just like *Chunhyangjeon*, it remains a very important and strong cultural influence today. It's influenced films, it's influenced literature. There's a very famous cartoon, a comic book that features Hong Gildong. And it's such a famous story that the name Hong Gildong is used as, if you have a form that needs to be filled out and they need to put in a sample name, that sample name will be Hong Gildong. There's orthographic reasons for that, partly because “홍길동” (Hong Gildong) the characters, all contain batchim, so they're full characters. But it just goes to show you how famous the story is that the name Hong Gildong has sort of become the standard sample name that is used on whatever form you might have.

So another work that I want to look at, another very famous novel, is *구운몽* (Guunmong), which is… it's been translated a number of times into English. At least three times that I know of. And the title is translated differently. Sometimes it's translated as “A Dream of Nine Clouds.” Sometimes it's translated as “The Nine Cloud Dream.” “구” (gu) means nine, “운” (un) means cloud, and “몽” (mong) means dream, so literally it would be “Nine Cloud Dream,” but nine, clouds and dreams, those are sort of the key elements and when I tell you about the story, you'll see why. So this story is traditionally attributed to Kim Manjung. It's said to have been written at the end of the 17th century, written while he was in exile. And the story goes that he wrote it in hangeul for his mother to read. However, like *Honggildongjeon*, there are scholars who argue against this. They argue that the original version was actually in hanmun and that it was translated into hangeul later to be more accessible to people. So there's still some difference of opinion about the origin. Once again though the story does stand on itself and it remains a very important story. It follows a very long tradition of what are known as dream stories, so it deals with dreams and the significance of them and dream lives, etc.

So the story itself is quite complicated. I'll just give a very condensed version of it. And it deals with—the main character is called Seongjin. And I'm going to use the Korean pronunciations here but the novel is actually set in China, so even though it's a Korean novel, it's set in China, so we could use the Chinese pronunciations for these characters, but I'm just going to use the Korean pronunciations as it is a Korean novel. So Seongjin is a disciple of a famous monk. And he is sent away to a mountain by his master and he falls asleep after meeting eight seonyeo, or fairies. And he falls asleep yearning for a worldly life. So after he falls asleep, he dreams that he is reborn as a man named Yang Soyu. So in his dream, he meets eight beautiful women, who correspond to the eight seonyeo, the eight fairies. Two of them he marries as wives and the other six he takes as concubines and he achieves all of his dreams and desires in the secular world. But then he wakes up to realize that it was all a dream. That's the basic structure of it. Like I said, it follows the dream story structure and you can see other examples of that throughout Korean literary history. But this is probably one of the most famous.

So this work combines elements of Buddhism, obviously, but also Confucianism and Taoism. Buddhism here is probably the most prominent. When Seongjin awakens from his dream, this is an example of what we discussed before when we were talking about Buddhism, the idea of the interpenetration of things. So this is the idea that everything is contained in everything else. All things interpenetrate each other. The idea that the entire world might be reflected in a mote of dust. And this idea of interpenetration is expressed in the fact that he wakes up from his dream but then he is unable to distinguish the dream world from the real world. 'I've woken up, but am I awake now or am I still dreaming? Is this a dream? Is this any different from when I was dreaming?' And that's something that's a very Buddhist idea. But you also see the number eight in the eight beautiful women. It's a reflection of Taoist symbology and numerology. There are the eight trigrams in the *Book of Changes*, for example. It also may refer to the eightfold path of Buddhism. And you do see reflections of Confucianism in the dream life that is lived by Seongjin, because he sort of lives the life that one might live if one were, like, a yangban and you wanted to be successful etc. So you see sort of a combination of all these different philosophical traditions in this work.

So as with the other works that I mentioned above, this continues to inspire artists and authors in Korea. And it's probably most interesting because it reflects themes that remain popular both in Korea and around the world today. When I was talking about the dream world and the real world, maybe that made you think of the film, the Christopher Nolan film, *Inception*, or *The Matrix*? So these ideas are still very popular with people today. We're still fascinated with these themes. And as a result, I think *Guunmong* is something that still holds a very important place in the Korean imagination.

So, lastly, I want to talk about some works that might not be quite as famous as the three works I've just talked about. But I want to talk about the “한문단편” (hanmun danpyeon), meaning hanmun short stories, by the author Bak Jiwon. And Bak Jiwon was a yangban author. He was a very prolific author, wrote a lot of different works. And these short stories actually appear within his larger works. And they're quite interesting, I think, because they represent a rebellion against late Joseon society by an author who was part of, ostensibly, part of the ruling class, the ruling system.

So Bak Jiwon himself was born into a distinguished family, a distinguished yangban family, but he rejected the traditional path. So normally, you would study hard as a young man, you would go off take

the civil service examination like Lee Mongryong did. And you'd want to pass, do really well and get a good government position. He rejected this path and he also rejected the traditional norms of hanmun literature. So the norms of hanmun literature were such that you followed this specific path. You relied on the classics and you wrote in these similar styles. He rejected that as well. He was very much an iconoclast and he wanted to pioneer his own new style. Yet in fact this new style was so upsetting to the existing order that King Jeongjo actually stepped in, the king at the time stepped in, to institute literary reforms in order to return hanmun literature to the traditional styles. So in addition to being short stories that have these social messages, the very writing itself was also sort of a rebellion against the existing norms.

So we'll look very quickly at two stories, two stories that I happened to enjoy. One of them I enjoyed so much that I translated it. But the first story is called 〈양반전〉 (Yangbanjeon) and again “전” (jeon) means tale and you know “양반” (yangban) so it's 〈The Tale of the Yangban〉. So the story goes that there is a poor yangban in the provinces. And this is something that would have been not unusual at the time during the late Joseon period. There were many provincial yangban who had fallen on hard times. Even though they had their high status, they were economically speaking suffering quite a bit. So this yangban borrows a very large amount of grain. And he's scolded by the governor and also by his wife, which has to be embarrassing because it goes against the Confucian idea that the husband and wife relationship should be a certain way. But he is threatened with imprisonment unless he's able to repay this loan of grain. But of course he can't do this because he doesn't have the money. So a rich man comes along, and the important thing is that he's a rich man but he's of lowly status, so he's not a yangban, he comes along and he offers to buy the yangban's status and repay the debt. So he becomes the yangban and he repays the yangban's debt. So he'd buy his family register, that sort of thing.

So the magistrate prepares a contract, he prepares a document for the sale of the yangban status. And the first document that he prepares lists all of the behaviour of the yangban, very ostentatious. All the thing he does to show off his status, etc. But the rich man rejects this, says that it's unprofitable, so try again. So the magistrate draws up another document. But this document lists all of the tyranny of the yangban, all of the things he does to oppress the poor. Definitely profitable, but not moral or ethic in any way. And the rich man hears this and cries out and says to the magistrate, “Are you trying to make me a thief?” And then he gives up his plans to become a yangban and he goes away.

So this story is probably, of the hanmun short stories that Bak Jiwon wrote, it's probably the one that most resembles what we consider to be a modern short story with more of a modern style of narrative. But it does reflect the reality of the collapse of the yangban class in the late Joseon period, where you saw the yangban, especially in the provinces, falling on hard times. And the jungin and other wealthy individuals who were not yangban rising to the fore and actually becoming bourgeoisie. So there's obvious criticism of the of the excess of the yangban classes, the various excesses, and it ends when the rich man, who is a member of this rising bourgeoisie, he realizes the emptiness of what it means to be a yangban. So prior to this, despite his wealth, he's still lacking that status, and that's why he wants to buy the yangban's status. But once he sees how empty this all is, he no longer feels the need for this status. And this actually foretells the complete collapse of the class system because the yangban no longer has any meaning. So it's a very insightful and very interesting and very blatant critique of the social order at

the time.

And the second story is called 〈예덕선생전〉 (Yedeokseonsaengjeon), once again “전” (jeon) meaning tale. “예덕” (Yedeok) is a title, “선생” (seonsaeng) means, it can mean teacher, here we've translated it as master, I've translated it as master. So I've translated it as 〈The Tale of Master Yedeok〉. And the character for “예” (ye) is actually, you may recognize it as being similar to the character for propriety when we talked about Confucianism. It's not the same character. It's a different character. It's actually the character for manure or filth. So literally this means “Tale of Master Virtue of Filth,” would be the literal translation of that. And it's played out as a dialogue between a teacher named Seongyulja, a Confucian teacher, and his disciple Jamok. And Jamok asks his master Seongyulja why he befriended this man named Eom Haengsu. And Eom Haengsu is what used to be called a gong farmer. And a gong farmer is someone who goes around and empties out latrines and manure pits and then sells this as fertilizer to farmers. But a very lowly occupation, right? Someone who goes around collecting human waste. But Seongyulja calls this man “Master Yedeok,” “Virtue of Filth,” and he considers him his friend. Jamok says this is disgraceful and he doesn't want to study beneath his master anymore. So Seongyulja teaches him about the true meaning of friend. What does it mean to be a friend? And he shows his disciple that looking down on Eom Haengsu because of his work is very much a mistaken approach. For one, the manure that Eom Haengsu provides to the farmers around Seoul helps them to thrive so in practical terms, his work is actually very important even though it's dirty. Also, he earns a lot of money, he makes a lot of money from his work. But he's still content to live a humble life. So he's a very humble person. And the whole story is basically Seongyulja criticizing Jamok's sort of mistaken idea about nobility and who we should be friends with, etc.

So once again, this is a very obvious criticism of the hypocrisy of Confucian scholars who sit around arguing over pointless theories and don't really make any meaningful contributions to society. So in that regard, it sort of feels very modern in its argument, right? We can sort of see this same sort of argument being made today, where people look down on others because they consider them lowly but in fact they're very important members of society and we should value them for their contributions and not consider ourselves to be better than. It's something that I think, you know, it's a work that was written several hundred years ago, but it's still relevant today.

## 5. Closing

So with that we will draw this class to a close and today really we looked at some of the highlights of Korean literature. Hopefully that will be enough at least to give you a taste of what traditional literature is like in Korea. And this also happens to be our last class for the entire course. And as with all of the other classes, really what this has been, you can think of it as a buffet of sorts. When you go to a buffet, I don't know about you, but I go up and I pick and choose what I think might be tasty and I bring it back. And the things that I like, then I'll go up and get more of. And hopefully what you've seen

and heard and experienced in this course will have wet your appetite and maybe you've seen or heard something that fascinates you in particular. And I would hope that you would go into the buffet and that you would look more deeply into perhaps you're interested in folklore or you're interested in music, or your interested in architecture. I hope at the very least that I've been able to inspire you to dig deeper and to learn more about the roots of Korean culture.

## ❖ Activities ❖

(108 min.)

### A. Quiz (18 minutes)

#### T/F Quiz (5 minutes)

1. The literature Koreans wrote in Chinese characters after the invention of hangeul cannot be included in Korean literature. (T/F)

Answer:

F

2. “The Song of Guji Peak” is an ancient song that asks for Kim Suro to come down from heaven. It shows an attitude of making threats to get what you want. (T/F)

Answer:

T

3. “Song of Five Friends” is a linked sijo that admires the qualities of five natural elements. (T/F)

Answer:

T

4. The late-Joseon novel *The Tale of Chunhyang* is a love story about an upper-class woman and a lower-class man who overcome their class differences. (T/F)

Answer:

F

5. In “The Tale of the Yangban,” the short story of hanmun written in the late Joseon period, a rich person eventually gains the social status of yangban through a trade with a poor yangban. (T/F)

Answer:

F

**Multiple choice (5 minutes)**

1. Which of the following is an accurate statement about the breadth and history of Korean literature?

- a. The breadth of Korean literature is limited to recorded literature by Koreans.
- b. Once lower-class men started writing literature in hangeul, upper-class men also slowly began using hangeul.
- c. Literature written in Japanese by Koreans during the Japanese occupation cannot be considered Korean literature.

Answer: b

2. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the hyangga “The Song of Cheoyong”?

- a. The king gave Cheoyong a beautiful woman to marry as his wife.
- b. It’s likely that this song was sung during shamanic rituals in order to drive away the god of smallpox.
- c. In the story, Cheoyong curses the god of smallpox for stealing his wife.

Answer: c

3. Which of the following is an accurate statement about gasa?

- a. In general, they are shorter than hyangga or sijo.
- b. Catholicism in Korea used gasa to evangelize.
- c. “Married Sorrow” by Heo Nanseolheon talks about rules that women should follow.

Answer: b

4. Which of the following is an accurate description of *The Tale of Hong Gildong*?

- a. It is a hero novel based on a pansori story.
- b. By rejecting the authority of the king and his father, Hong Gildong challenges Confucian hierarchy.
- c. Hong Gildong eventually leaves Joseon and founds a new country on an island.

Answer: c

5. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about *The Nine Cloud Dream*?

- a. Seongjin, who yearns for worldly life, is reborn as a man named Yang Soyu in his dream and lives out his worldly desires.
- b. In Seongjin’s dream, he takes on two wives and six concubines as Yang Soyu.
- c. When Seongjin wakes up from his dream, he feels even more disdain for the austerity of Buddhism when compared to the riches of worldly life.

Answer: c

### Short response (8 minutes)

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word.

1. Professor Cho Dong-il established “branch theory” which divides literature into a four-part division of the lyric, the \_\_\_\_\_, the narrative, and the dramatic, and this theory is based on a relationship between the self and the world.

Answer: didactic

2. “\_\_\_\_\_” was composed by a monk named Wolmyeong during the Silla period for his dead sister. The poem elevates the very human sorrow over a sister’s death into an expression of religious faith.

Answer: Requiem for a Deceased Sister, 제망매가, Jemangmaega

3. \_\_\_\_\_ was an author who rejected the traditional rules of hanmun literature and created his own style. Through works like “The Tale of the Yangban” and “Tale of Master Yedeok” he criticizes the tyranny of the yangban and the hypocrisy of Confucian scholars.

Answer: Bak Jiwon

## B. Discussion (30 minutes)

Describe the personality of the characters that appear in the short piece of hanmun “The Tale of the Yangban” and explain the societal changes during the late Joseon period that this novel depicts.

## C. Assignment (60 minutes)

Describe the depiction of Chunhyang in the classic novel *The Tale of Chunhyang* and briefly explain the theme of the novel and how it relates to her dual-sided personality.

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