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Chapter 5
Learning Samulnori

Systems of learning music are not static entities. They develop, change, and may be superseded by new systems. One system may dominate at any given time, or may increase in prominence as another declines. Several conflicting or complementary systems may operate simultaneously. Adherents of one system may jockey for position against defenders of another. Systems may reflect influence from external sources, notably where Western conservatoire teaching methods meet the oral traditions of Asia and Africa, although the binary opposition between orality and conservatoire teaching is challenged by the reality of today's world. In keeping with John Blacking's considerations of the functions of music (1973: 25, 28, 30, 49, 74), systems may reflect political, social, or cultural attitudes and practices. This chapter explores how SamulNori has developed a particular teaching system. The SamulNori system embeds an aesthetic that, together with sets of notation and other aspects that have exerted control, tightens the identity of the samulnori canon. Some consideration of SamulNori's training has been done by others (e.g., Shingil Park 2000; see also interviews with Nami Morris and Nathan Hesselink in Chapter 7 below). Here, I first delve into the background of the system and discuss rote learning, as I experienced it as a student of the semi-itinerant local band *changgo* hourglass drum player Kim Pyŏngsŏp, linking to the exploration of percussion grammar in Chapter 2. Then I explore major components of SamulNori's system and show how these have established authority over the genre, samulnori.

Rote Learning

Teaching by rote was once common for music across much of the world. Mantle Hood offers a useful characterisation:

> In most cultures of the non-western world, the style of music and dance depends on the processes of imitation and learning by rote ... The learning process does not include questions from the student to the teacher. It is not merely the connotation of disrespect, that the student is actually questioning the knowledge of the teacher, but also the fact that the tradition depends on non-verbal musical imitation – true music discourse (1971: 39).

Note that Hood refers to an aspect of rote learning that might worry many brought up in the Western tradition, namely, that questions are not part of the process. This can complicate the interviewing process that is so often integral to academic

research. But, indicating that Hood is not being idealistic, William Malm (1986) provides a similar account of music training in Japan. Both Hood and Malm mirror my experience learning the *changgo* drum in 1981 and 1982. I first wrote about this prior to my fieldwork in Chindo, and before I was able to get to know SamulNori at close quarters (Howard 1983a/b), but in revisiting my early writing I realise that it further illustrates the legacy of local band practice, and its evolution through semi-itinerant musicians to contemporary urban teaching and learning.

It is implicit in Hood's comment that language need not be a bar to successful learning. So, arriving in Korea in July 1981, and speaking no Korean, I took a taxi, having previously asked Robert Provine to write down Kim Pyŏngsŏp's studio address in Korean. The taxi delivered me to a door, and Kim greeted me. I signed that I wanted him to teach me the drum. We agreed a lesson fee: he wrote a figure on a board, and indicated by pointing at a calendar that this was for a month's lessons six days per week. He showed me on a clock what time each lesson would start. He wrote out the price of a drum, and showed me the instrument he proposed to sell me. Kim knew five English words – 'one', 'two', 'three', 'four', and 'OK' – but he often forgot 'four', a matter that often proved unsettling given that so many Korean rhythmic cycles follow a 12/8 metre.

Kim began to teach me his extended drum dance, *Kaein changgo nori*.[1] My first lesson started with Kim tying a drum to me with a sash. The sash passed over my right shoulder, around one of the cords running between the two drumheads, and around my waist. The sash was long, measured as three times the length of my outstretched arms, from fingertip to fingertip. Kim emphasised the importance of tying the sash correctly, and for two weeks supervised its tying. He showed me how to tighten the drumheads by moving leather thongs interlaced between the cords, how to hold the *yŏl ch'ae* whip-like stick in my right hand and the *kunggul ch'ae* or *kung ch'ae* mallet-like stick in my left. The stick holds proved awkward, even though I had once briefly worked as a professional percussionist. The *yŏl ch'ae* was held by the thumb at the back and the index finger at the front, the remaining fingers being flexed or tightened around it: flexed fingers allowed the stick to rebound while a tight fist produced sharp, damped strikes. The *kunggul ch'ae* was held in the angle between thumb and index finger, falling as a pendulum from the palm. The little finger was bent under so that the stick rested between its first and second knuckles. The ring and little fingers held it firmly, to avoid any unintended bounce against the drumhead. Initially, the soft skin of my little finger blistered, but this hold allowed the stick to strike both drumheads in their centres using a simple 90-degree rotation at the elbow, the stick shaft remaining perpendicular to the floor. Kim taught me simple exercises to increase my fluency, and much later told me how he had introduced exercises only when teaching foreigners.

[1] This title translates as 'individual drum play'. There are many variants on the name: the drum is often pronounced *changgu*, hence *Kaein changgu nori*, or '*kaein*' is replaced with '*sŏl*', hence *Sŏl changgo/changgu nori*, or a prefix is added, as in the SamulNori piece, '*Samdo sŏl changgo*'.

To explore Kim's teaching method, I will reference Alan Merriam's classic text, *The Anthropology of Music* (1964: 150ff). Merriam states that three elements are involved: teacher, agent, and content. While Kim might be assumed to be both teacher and agent, others who were training with him joined my lessons in a deliberate strategy to speed up my learning. When I returned the next year, 1982, to continue learning, I became one of those used to help juniors. This strategy allowed Kim to rest while providing students an inducement to practise together. Six lessons weekly required considerable commitment but was what Kim felt was required. The level of commitment, not unlike many rote learning methods, offers a clue as to why such methods are declining today, and Kim was clearly unhappy in 1982 when other work forced me to reduce my lessons to three times a week. Merriam considered three aspects of learning: motivation, guidance and reward. Most important for Kim was guidance, both directly from him and from other students. He allowed no discussion and offered no preamble: once I had the drum positioned and could hold the sticks, he went straight into the first pattern, getting me to repeat it until he was satisfied. He stood facing me, with drum. The first pattern was the model pattern for a rhythmic cycle, *hwimori*, and it spanned a single metric length. To this, he added five variant patterns each the same length, joining them in a sequence. Each pattern was repeated a set number of times. I now had a sequence of six patterns to practise. Next, Kim added dance steps. Initially, he adjusted my holds on the sticks, but otherwise he simply demonstrated, expecting me to copy him. Once I had about 25 model patterns and variant patterns and could string them together with reasonable accuracy, other students joined, sitting at the edge of the room until Kim told them to play. Only he introduced new material. My lessons were identical to those of Korean students.

In 1981, Kim's studio had a small second room where I could practise with others. Initially, Kim dictated what we should work on, but he gradually withdrew. In lessons, imitation extended beyond rhythm. I quickly learnt the calls '*ch'ŏŭmbut'ŏ*!' (from the beginning), and '*tashi*!' (again), which might mean the dance was wrong, I had the wrong facial expression, or I was looking straight ahead when I should be looking left or right. Kim was not the greatest dancer, but nor did he think he needed to be; in 1982, one fellow student remarked that Kim believed music must be learnt first, and dance would follow naturally. He was, though, insistent that I master arm movements from the very beginning. Unlike local percussion bands, he included a number of decorative movements into his *Kaein changgo nori*: the *kunggul ch'ae* would be thrown into the air, or stretched forward and out; the *yŏl ch'ae* would move in rotation around the skin, perpendicular to it, or coil outwards in an arc to a stretched point; the sticks would be passed behind the back from one hand to the other, or be clicked together above the head. This last has become commonplace among today's Korean drummers, but was reputedly introduced by one of Kim's foreign students.

Today, as I reflect back, motivation and reward merge into one. In 1981, after a dozen or so lessons, Kim expected me at the end of each lesson to play through a shortened three-minute piece on my own as his next student arrived. Praise was

a given, even if I played poorly. One morning, with my mastery still suspect, Kim received a telephone call. Looking at me and smiling, then speaking to the unseen person, he booked me to perform on national MBC television. Fortunately, so far as I am aware, no recording of that doubtless appalling performance survives. Then, as I ended my initial six weeks' study, the annual KBS TV music contest for foreigners was held. I performed, still certainly inadequately, and carried off the top award. Fortunately, again, no recording survives. Both performances were, of course, highly rewarding, and when I returned to Korea in 1982, Kim took me to many gigs in Seoul and North Chŏlla. By then, performing in public provided a clear sense of reward. At the same time, the promise of a performance proved a perfect motivator.

To summarise, using the vocabulary for grammar developed in Chapter 2, Kim Pyŏngsŏp stood facing me when teaching *Kaein changgo nori.* He first played a single model pattern of a rhythmic cycle. Then, he added variant patterns. Each was repeated any number of times. Each model and variant pattern spanned one length of the metre or was paired in a *yin/yang* relationship across two lengths. Patterns were joined end to end to build sets that constituted motifs. A model pattern, or a close variant of it, would be played at the beginning or within a motif, forming its core, giving a sense that motifs moved away from and back to model patterns or close variants. Motifs fused into longer episodes. Episodes were joined to create linear sets that constituted movements. Each pattern in the linear set of a motif and an episode shared a single underlying rhythmic cycle. Kim's full *Kaein changgo nori* was a 15-minute drum dance with around 240 model and variant patterns. In it, three movements were joined end to end, framed by a prelude and a coda: *tasŭrŭm* (a catch-all term for an introduction or prelude, the rhythmic cycle being *samch'ae*; 12/8), *hwimori* (sometimes referred to as *tumach'i*, 4/4), *kutkŏri* (6/8 + 6/8), *samch'ae* (12/8, but including other metric constructions such as a 6/4 *ŏtchungmori* rhythmic cycle sequence), and *yŏnp'ungdae* (a concluding section, a version of *samch'ae;* 12/8).

Two full notations of the piece already existed when I began to learn it, by Robert Provine and Chu Yŏngja.[2] Kim considered the single-line notation used by both almost magical, but never professed any wish to read it. In keeping with the rote learning method, he did not allow notation to be used in lessons. Both Provine and Chu divided the whole piece into five movements, but they disagreed slightly on where movements began or ended – some motifs functioned as transitions and might be built from a contrasting rhythmic cycle, such as those into and out of *kutkŏri.* Kim's piece also evolved over time, and the two notations dated from different periods. By the time I learnt the piece in 1981 and 1982, a good number of the variant patterns they had notated had changed, some only slightly and some more substantially, with deletions and additions.

[2] A third notation, of just the *kutkŏri* section, had also been published, by Chŏn Inp'yŏng (1979: 79–96).

Between December 1982 and February 1983, Kim added variant patterns as a completely new motif. This proved controversial with both his colleagues and senior students, because it intercut one rhythmic cycle unknown to local bands (*ŏnmori*; 5/8+5/8) against another (*ŏtchungmori*; 6/4) in a manner that moved away from and back to a different underlying cycle (*samch'ae*; 12/8). As I mused about how such a radical motif could be successfully incorporated, the great French improvising organists came to mind: Kim would make changes on the spur of the moment as he performed and would subsequently consider adding some of these to his piece. To cite one example, when we were performing to mark the opening of a building in a North Chŏlla village late in 1982, he played a phrase I had never heard. Smiling, he repeated it a number of times, nodding for me to copy, before returning to the piece as he had previously taught it to me.

In lessons, and then in performance, Kim gave a mirror image of what he expected me to play. This made use of a peculiarity of contemporary *changgo* performance, although it has sometimes been misunderstood as the difference between left-hand and right-hand dominance.[3] When using two sticks on the *changgo*, local band musicians, like Kim and, today, like SamulNori's Kim Duk Soo, would often play with the thin *yŏl ch'ae* whip-like stick in the left hand and the *kunggul ch'ae* mallet-like stick in the right. Most contemporary players invert this, holding the thin stick in the right hand and the mallet stick in the left. The 'old' way reflects how local band musicians matched the *changgo* mallet stick to single beaters used for the *puk* barrel drum and *ching* large gong. Both instruments were and still are held with the left hand (to the left of the body) and struck with sticks held in the right hand. The 'new' way, perhaps because of the development of institutional learning, matches how the *changgo* has for centuries been played as an accompanists' drum in court and literati genres using a thin stick in the right hand and the left hand palm (rather than a second stick).

As I continued studying with Kim Pyŏngsŏp, I began to hear other versions of the drum dance. One was given in Puan by Kim's former Chŏngŭp colleague, Yi Tongwŏn, together with Yi's student Kim Hyŏngsun; I was playing with Kim Pyŏngsŏp for Yi's sixtieth birthday celebrations. Yi and Kim Hyŏngsun offered far less linear development than did Kim Pyŏngsŏp, and were as much concerned with dance as with music. Much the same is true of the many short solo drum dances given by local 'right style' bands – the style adopted by SamulNori for a solo drum section in their canonic '*P'an'gut*'. In contrast, Kim Pyŏngsŏp's linear development finds its parallel in the SamulNori canonic piece for four hourglass drums, '*Samdo sŏl changgo*'.

[3] Left-handedness has, as with much of humankind, been routinely avoided in Korea until recently.

Teaching Samulnori

SamulNori gave workshops on Wando Island off Korea's southern coast in 1981, but their teaching activities mostly developed later when, in 1987, and again in 1988, they ran summer camps in Miasamura, Japan. Camps in Korea followed, culminating with the establishment of the SamulNori Hanullim Puyŏ Kyoyugwŏn in 1994. Puyŏ, some 150 km south of Seoul, was at one time the capital of an ancient kingdom, Paekche (traditional dates, 18 BCE–660 CE). Workshops in Korea came relatively late not least since although Kim Duk Soo talked about his mission to teach, the quartet faced a challenge because it was for many students and younger Koreans identified with itinerant troupes more than with local bands. This left the four musicians at a distance from their most obvious audience within Korea, because so many students held local bands dear to their perceptions of Korean tradition. The antipathy began to reduce in summer 1987, and for this one particular event was crucial, when the quartet performed at a student rally at Yonsei University in Seoul alongside the dancer Yi Aeju. The rally memorialised two students killed by the police as they stamped down on dissent, and Yi danced to pacify the souls of the dead.[4] Student rallies had increased in frequency during the previous months, calling for a shift from authoritarianism to democracy in government. By June, students succeeded in co-opting workers to their cause. Pressure mounted on the president and former general, Chun Doo Hwan, to abandon his plan to pass control to a fellow general, Roh Tae Woo. With the Seoul Olympics a year away, the world watched anxiously as myriad volleys of tear gas left Seoul's streets poisoned by an acrid mist. The situation was calmed when Roh went on television on 29 June 1987 to announce a guarantee of free presidential elections.

In an instant, with their appearance at Yonsei, SamulNori and the genre they had created was aligned to the culture of protest, to the student and worker spectacle of resistance. The quartet gained legitimacy, as a worthy successor to local bands. Demands for SamulNori to teach grew. They held classes at the Chungang Daily News Cultural Centre (Chungang Ilbo Munhwawŏn) and by 1990 moved across the city to a hall in Shinch'on located at the centre of a diamond formed by the campuses of four universities, Yonsei, Ewha, Sŏgang, and Hongik. SamulNori called this the Live House Nanjang, appropriating a term that had once referred to the place in rural markets where sideshows were put on. There, SamulNori began to cater not just for nationalist students, but to the urban clubs they spawned as demonstrations subsided, clubs devoted to learning and playing percussion music.

[4] A video, shot outside the campus at about this time and featuring a percussion band accompanying a funeral bier to a soundtrack featuring one of the best-known protest songs, is at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5ekfvAmP9I&feature=related (accessed 24 November 2014). Catherine Lee (2012) documents a later rally in August 1987 involving a percussion band that followed the death of a worker at Daewoo's shipyard on Korea's southern coast.

Shingil Park notes that 22 clubs were by 1997 registered with the Seoul Region P'ungmul Club Council (Sŏul Chiyŏk P'ungmul Tanch'e Hyŏbŭihoe). These, she argues, had within a decade of the quartet's Yonsei University appearance become more context dependent than the followers of other music genres, and comprised not just students but religious groups, as well as ordinary citizens such as housewives and office employees. She adds how, 'in clubs, members meet each other for an extended period of time and create among themselves a lasting feeling of devotion and membership ... The members do not pursue mercenary gain through their membership' (Park 2000: 3–4).[5] Nationalism and aestheticism are two key identities that Park isolates within clubs (2000: 8). She also lists two more, political resistance and life experience, the first linking to the use of percussion bands in student demonstrations and as part of the culture-of-the-masses experience, and the second to valued parts of Korean heritage rescued and reconstructed in the contemporary, urban world. Through the 1990s, the political resistance declined in importance, as the language of protest became routinised in a Weberian sense, and as samulnori began to replace local bands in people's consciousness.

Samulnori and Notation

Rote learning was fundamental to SamulNori's early workshops, but photocopied notations were introduced to classes at the Chungang Cultural Centre; the samulnori group at the National Gugak Centre similarly introduced simple notations in their teaching.[6] To develop notations, SamulNori worked with a graduate of Chungang University's Korean music programme, the composer and pianist Lim Dong Chang.[7] Their notations met nationalistic requirements as well as one key aspect of percussion band clubs, namely the need to fix Korean identity at the centre of practice. Notation, and SamulNori's teaching system, also accommodated an aesthetic based on breathing which, in turn, came from an aesthetic known to dancers (see below). A sense of Korean identity was imparted first and foremost by revisiting a type of court notation, *chŏngganbo*. This had been devised in the fifteenth century for ritual music and used vertical columns of square boxes, each column giving a single metric length of the underlying rhythmic cycle, and each column divided to show subdivisions. It had been adapted in the mid-twentieth century so that it could notate the broader repertory performed at the Centre and taught at the Centre's associated school, the Gugak High School.

The adapted form appropriated ornamentation and direction symbols from other notation systems, and was associated most closely with the composer and

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[5] Shingil Park provides details of a number of the Seoul-based clubs, notably Poch'ŏn Nori Madang, Salp'an and T'ŏullim (2000: 85–141).

[6] In July 1987, I attended a summer camp organised by the Centre on Korea's east coast, where Ch'oe Pyŏngsam wrote out single-line staff notations on flip boards as he taught.

[7] Note that the university and the newspaper cultural centre are two different entities.

educator Kim Kisu (1917–1986), who in later life directed the school as well as producing a series of instrument workbooks that continue to be used in teaching there. However, Kim's use of the modified court system actually began many years after he had begun to notate traditional music in Western staff notation. His first staff notations date to 1938, and in 1959 he worked on two folk music volumes published by the Korean Ministry of Education, *Minsok akpo* 1 and 2, while 1968 saw the Centre publish the first of what became an annual series of notation volumes, the *Anthology of Korean Music/Han'guk ŭmak*. To this point, all was in staff notation, but parallel notation volumes using the adapted *chŏngganbo* came in a second Centre series published from 1973 onwards, the *Collection of Traditional Music/Kugak chŏnjip*. The first *Collection of Traditional Music* volumes transnotated staff notations from the *Anthology of Korean Music*. This chronology, although rarely mentioned in Korean reports, maps onto the rise of Korean nationalism.[8]

SamulNori flipped the vertical columns of *chŏngganbo* to become horizontal systems. Just as *chŏngganbo* could, in its adapted form, distinguish left and right drumhead strikes of the hourglass drum by positioning them in a horizontal plane to left and right of the column's centre, so SamulNori divided each horizontal system into two, placing mallet-like stick strikes below and whip-like stick strikes above a central line. When notating the three instruments that use only a single stick, the *kkwaenggwari* and *ching* small and large gongs, and the *puk* barrel drum, only a single horizontal row was needed. I would argue that SamulNori notations absorb influence from earlier percussion notations that adopted staff notation conventions and single lines,[9] but, unlike earlier attempts to notate Korean rhythm, they use circles to replace Western note values – quarter tone/crotchet, eighth tone/quaver, and so on, and also for ornaments such as acciaccature. Small circles stand for acciaccature and larger circles for primary tones, spaced across the page reading from left to right to give a graphic sense of duration. A historical precedent can be claimed, since circles for strikes of the hourglass drum with the open hand had been used in the 1493 treatise *Akhak kweböm* (Guide to the Study of Music), and these equate in SamulNori notations to strikes of the mallet stick. For the drum,

[8] A discussion of Korean notation systems is beyond my scope here. Refer to Hwang Jun-yon, Kim Jin-Ah and Lee Yong-Shik (2010) for a comprehensive exploration.

[9] *Minsok akpo* (1959) is the first Korean notation source I am aware of that adopts a single line, using familiar Western note values with tails pointed downwards for mallet stick strikes and tails pointed upwards for whip-like stick strikes. The same system appears in composition scores from the early 1960s such as Hwang Pyŏnggi's '*Sŭp*/Forest' (1963) and Yi Sŏngch'ŏn's '*Norit'ŏ*/Playground' (1964), as well as in transcriptions of local band repertories by Chŏng Hoegap (1966, 1968a, 1968b) and musicological texts (e.g., Chang Sahun 1969; Chang Sahun and Han Manyŏng 1975). Robert Provine also used a version of this single line system in his transcription of Kim Pyŏngsŏp's drum piece in 1975, although he placed noteheads above and below the line whereas earlier notations had usually put all noteheads on the line.

SamulNori notate circles empty for mallet stick strikes, filled in for whip-like stick strikes, and half filled when the whip-like stick is left in contact with the skin to give a sharp crack. Their notations usefully distinguish auxiliary strikes from main strikes, and the different types of strikes, where single line notations with their familiar Western note symbols do not offer clarity in either aspect. Also, SamulNori notations prescribe accents with a dot rather than the more familiar Western arrowhead (similar uses of dots can be found in a number of analysis systems devised with Western art music in mind, such as the system used by Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff (1981, 1983, 1984)).

SamulNori's notations link to East Asian philosophy. The major way they do so is by replacing Western time signatures with a set of three intersecting circles. These define three temporal components within a single length of a rhythmic cycle. The first circle, at the bottom, gives the length of the model rhythmic cycle or variant rhythmic pattern, interpreted in terms of metric length; normally this will have the numerical value '1' where a single metric length equals the length of a rhythmic cycle. The second circle, top left, gives the number of binary or ternary cells in a single rhythmic cycle length or variant pattern length. The third, top right, gives the number of beats/counts within a single cycle/pattern length. So, the 12/8 cycle *chajinmori* becomes 1 (bottom circle), 4 (top left circle), 12 (top right circle). Or, in respect to Chindo, where the equivalent *samch'ae* ('three strikes') discussed above in Chapter 2 paired two metric lengths of the cycle together, it will be 2, 8, 24. The intersecting circles can accommodate how, say, ternary cells morph into binary cells (e.g., in the *tasŭrŭm* introduction to the canonic piece, '*Samdo sŏl changgo*'), or how two ternary are replaced by three binary (e.g., as commonly happens with variant patterns in *kutkŏri* episodes of canonic pieces). But, the circles do not always indicate the internal grammar of a given rhythmic cycle or variant pattern, based on points of stress and accent – the 'accentual matrix', as ethnomusicologists, and particularly those who work with Africa, might have it. Hence, SamulNori at times adjusts the top right circle down to the smallest unit present, which for the beginning of the cycle *kutkŏri* – like *chajinmori* a 12/8 (or 6/8+6/8) cycle – means to the semi-quaver level. So, what we would expect to be given as 1, 4, 12, as shown in Notation 5.1 below, becomes 1, 4, 24.

The intersecting circles assign a cosmological didacticism – a concept that has been explored by Hesselink (2012: chapter 4). Taoist thought, with its 'three great absolutes' of heaven, earth and mankind, provides the basis, positioned within the Korean concept of the *samt'aegŭk*: the familiar cosmological forces of *yin* and *yang*, as interlocking blue and red commas, gain a further, yellow, comma between them. With *samt'aegŭk* depictions familiar at Buddhist temples, the tripartite division is variously interpreted. Commonly, it is a circle (*wŏn*) + square (*pang*) + triangle (*kak*, as 'angle'), one positioned inside the next in a manner reminiscent of Da Vinci's depiction of the human form. Or, the three are the vowel symbol components of the Korean alphabet, *han'gŭl*: dot, horizontal line, vertical line. To SamulNori, the lower circle is *wŏn*, left upper *pang* and right upper *kak*. It may be pertinent to note that SamulNori were familiar with the philosophical

ideas of the late folklorist Zo Zayong. Hesselink reports an interview with Lim Dong Chang in 2006, where Lim claimed his own research sat behind linking rhythm with cosmology, and claimed to have introduced the idea to Kim Duk Soo. Hesselink states that Lim's claims were confirmed by Kim Duk Soo's disciple, Kim Dong-Won, in interview in 2008 (Hesselink 2012: 95). The tripartite division has, however, long been present in the vertical columns of *chŏngganbo*. A column typically comprises a single length of a rhythmic cycle, and is divided into boxes (*chŏnggan* rather than *kak*) each containing, in general terms, a single beat/count, with boxes grouped together as cells (*taegang* rather than *pang*).[10] In the early 1980s, when I first studied in Korea, and when Lim was still a university student, the senior musicologist Yi Hyegu (1908–2010) – the 'father' of Korean musicology – played with the same *wŏn-pang-kak* division in his teaching at Seoul National University.[11] Again, one of Lee's early students, Han Myŏnghŭi, has for many years run a private cultural institution, the Imishi Munhwa Sowŏn, where '*imishi*' is the Sino-Korean pronunciation of the Korean *wŏn+pang+kak*. Han has long been close to SamulNori, and he was a student of Yi Hyegu.

Some SamulNori notations include three additional elements. One, onomatopoeia, as verbal notation (*kuŭm*), has a long history. Onomatopoeia were used by many student percussion bands of the 1970s and 1980s, and, given the lack of literacy among agrarian Koreans prior to the twentieth century, would have been common among local percussion bands stretching back into history. In earlier publications, I have explored onomatopoeia systems – and some of the many local variations – for the lead instrument of Chindo bands, the *kkwaenggwari* small hand-held gong (Howard 1990: 40–52; 1991/92: 7–13, 38–52): '*kkaeng*' and '*kkwaeng*' for open tones, '*ma*', '*mae*', '*ttak*', '*chu*' for short tones played off the beat and damped with fingers, '*ku*', '*kae*', '*kkwae*' for short tones on the beat, '*mak*', '*kkaek*' for tones damped with the beater, and so on, or in combination, '*kkwaengmae kukkwaeng*' and so on. Moving to the *changgo* drum, for which three SamulNori workbooks have been written (1990 (1992 in English), 1993, 1995), onomatopoeia describe specific strikes. Actually, drum onomatopoeia are given in a surviving scorebook dating from 1561, *Kŭm hapchabo*, as well as in the early twentieth-century *Hakp'o kŭmbo*,[12] and in much between. Onomatopoeia were

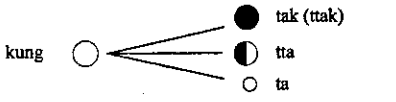
[10] The exact rhythmic construction of *chŏngganbo* remains a matter of considerable debate. For an English-language overview, see Hwang (2010: 77–100); for a more extensive Korean-language exploration, see Hwang (2009).

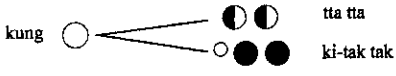
[11] Personal discussions with Seoul National University MA students, 1983–1984, and personal interview with Yi Hyegu (July 1983). Yi, who romanised his name as Lee Hye-Ku, used many images to conjure up his discussions of music – clouds floating over fields to illustrate slow tempi, the way a calligrapher draws their brush to illustrate the characteristics of pre-tone and post-tone ornaments, and so on.

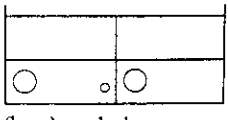
[12] Chang Sahun (1984: 802) illustrates the onomatopoeia in the last of these, commenting that he obtained a copy of this score in 1938. Elsewhere, he deduces that the score was written before 1915 (Chang 1966: 608).

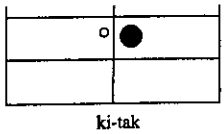
also widely used at the National Gugak Centre in the decades before SamulNori's notations, and I have listed those used to teach me in the early 1980s elsewhere (Howard 1988: 131). In SamulNori's workbooks, the drum onomatopoeia are '*kung*' for single strokes of the mallet-shaped stick, '*kugung*' (or '*ku kung*') for double strikes and '*kurururu*' for a trill; '*ttak*' or '*tak*' for a damped strike of the whip-like stick (damped by leaving the stick in contact with the head), '*tta*' for a strike where the stick rebounds, '*ta*' or '*ki*' for a light stroke played with the tip of the stick allowing a rebound, '*tŏk*' for a damped light stroke, '*kittak*' for a short grace note followed by a damped strike, '*tarururu*' for a trill; '*tong*' for a simultaneous (or virtually simultaneous) strike by both sticks. Some of these are illustrated in Table 5.1, reproduced from SamulNori's workbooks (Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts 1992: 196, 1993: 28).

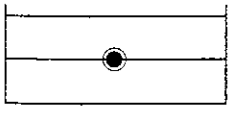
Table 5.1 Onomatopoeia, from SamulNori workbooks

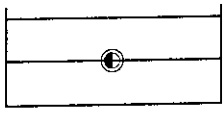


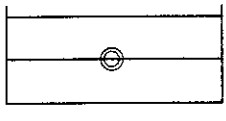




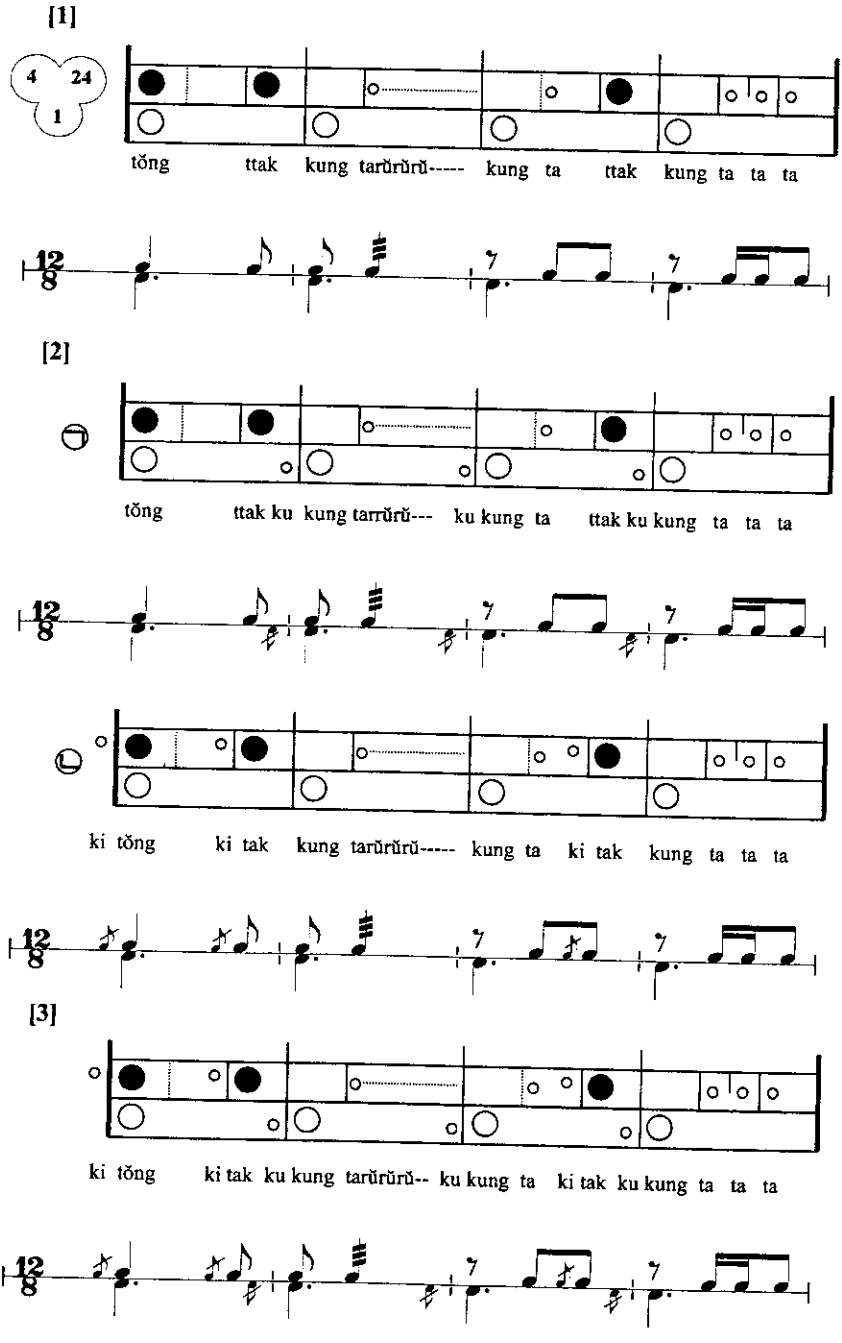








Notation 5.1 *Kutkŏri*, opening, from SamulNori workbook (Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts 1993: 38)



A second additional element in SamulNori's notations is used primarily for the drum and comprises a single line notation following staff notation conventions. As already noted, this has been commonplace in Korean publications for some decades. Variants on the single line have also been employed by other samulnori musicians and in school texts. For example, Ch'oe Pyŏngsam, a member of the samulnori team at the Centre since the mid-1980s, uses a single line per instrument grouped in systems of all four instruments in the Centre's first notation book for samulnori repertory (Ch'oe and Ch'oe Hŏn 1992). Ch'oe's second volume (2000) moves towards the conventions of SamulNori's workbooks, adopting and modifying the sets of circles but then substituting lines and dots for whip-like stick strikes in a manner that takes us back to the seminal 1493 treatise, *Akhak kweböm*.[13] Note that SamulNori and Ch'oe's notations are expansive:[14] the three SamulNori workbooks published through to 1995 deal with one piece, '*Samdo söl changgo*', and consist, respectively, of 199 pages of text and notated exercises (1990/1992), 185 pages of notation (1993), and 54 pages of adapted *chŏngganbo* followed by 36 pages of single line staff notation (1995). Ch'oe and Ch'oe's 1992 score of the equivalent piece runs to 52 pages. Notation 5.1 illustrates, taking the opening of the *kutkŏri* section, as notated by SamulNori (Korean Conservatorium of Performing Arts 1993: 38). Using onomatopoeia, graphics and the single line notation, the first *karak*, with minor acciaccature additions on each repeat, consumes a single page; compare with Notation 2.9 (B1; *karak* 1) above.

SamulNori's workbooks and notations indicate that students still need to commit a great amount of time to learning, rather as the rote methods of the past required. The notations and workbooks sit at some remove from, say, the notations of Western art music or the equivalent staff notations for many genres of Korean traditional music. Keeping in mind the conventions outlined in Chapter 2 that I employ, my two page skeleton score for the National Gugak Centre's '*Samdo söl changgo*', relating to Ch'oe Pyŏngsam and Ch'oe Hŏn's notation (1992) but based on how it was taught to my students and me in 1990, is given in Notation 5.2 (previously published in Howard 2006c). I use this when I teach the piece.

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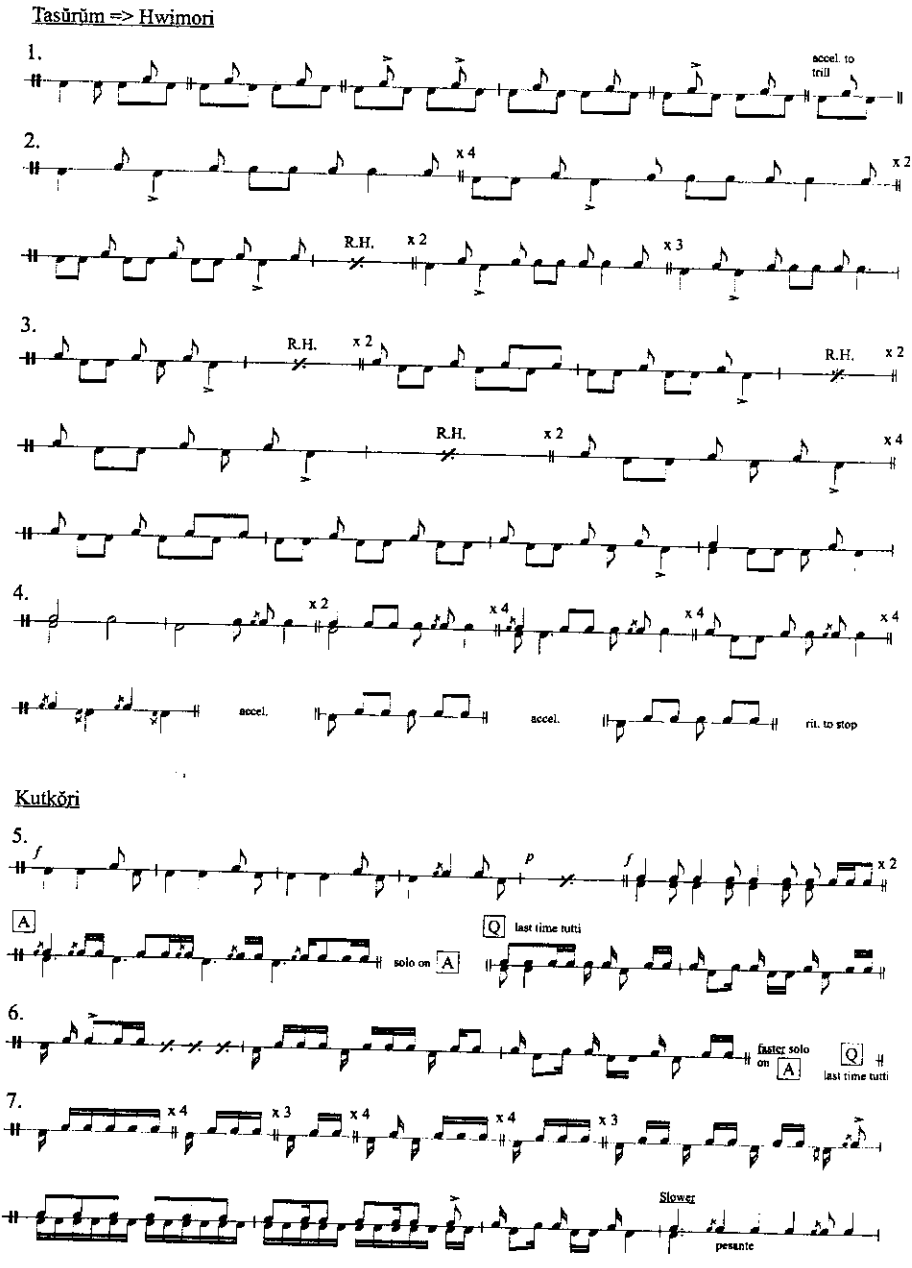
[13] The 1493 symbols, and those used in later historical scores, are illustrated in Howard (1988: 135).

[14] Consider this alongside the comments about Western staff notation by Agawu and Bent cited above.

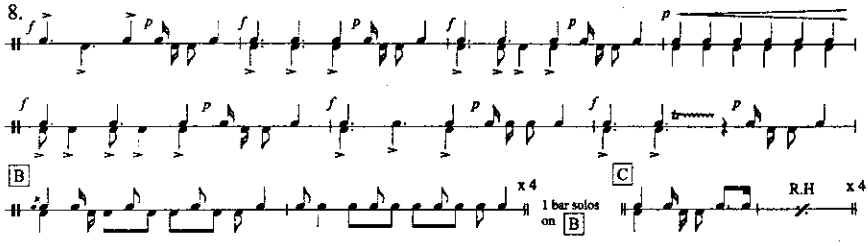
Notation 5.2 '*Samdo sŏl changgo*'. Schematic notation for teaching, based on National Gugak Centre Samulnori piece



Notation 5.2 *Concluded*

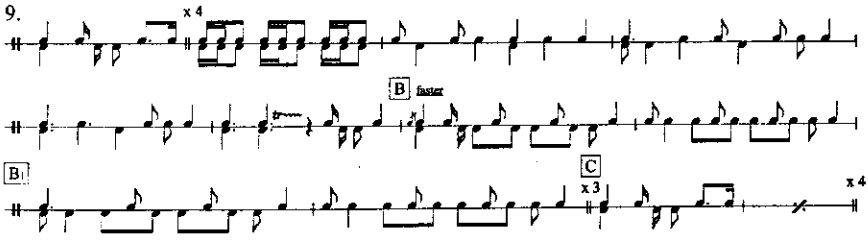
Töngdŏkkung

8.



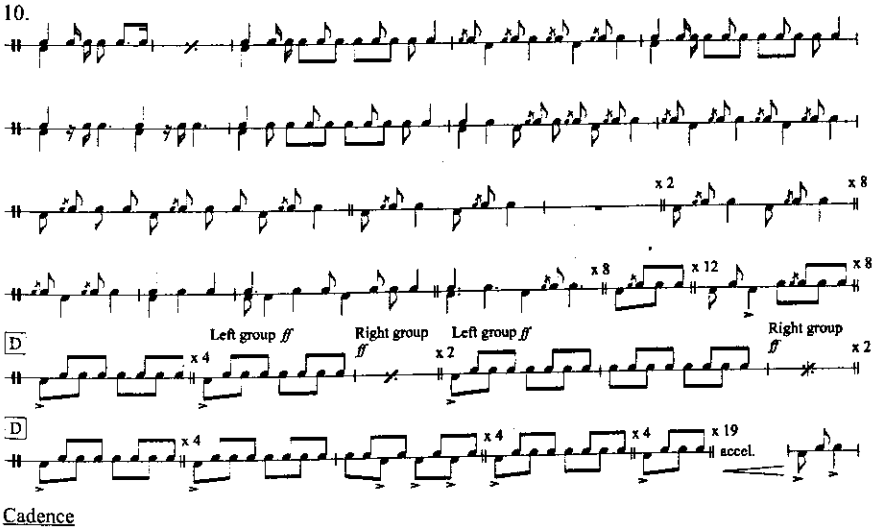
Short Yŏngsan

9.



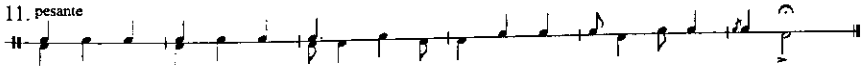
Yŏngsan Tadŭregi => Hwimori

10.



Cadence

11. pesante



The SamulNori Aesthetic, Hohŭp

Shingil Park observes that courses at the samulnori education centre include thorough training in what she calls the 'breathing method'. This gives the third additional notation element in SamulNori workbooks. As a graphic notation, it links body movement (*mom nŭllim*) to breathing (*hohŭp*). However, the notation is essentially redundant, since body movement and breathing work cyclically within the binary and ternary cell divisions. By including a notation, SamulNori signal that the aesthetic has become important in both teaching and performing. Now, ethnomusicologists have sometimes argued that aesthetic concepts are not common in cultures where music is part of a contextualised performance complex in which sound does not need to be distinguished from function (Merriam 1964: 259–73; Bohlman 1999: 30–31). What this indicates is only that few in such cultures articulate concepts verbally, because the more 'emic'[15] accounts of music by, for example, Hugo Zemp (1981), Steven Feld (1982) and Michelle Kisliuk (1998), challenge any notion that aesthetic concepts do not exist. In the case of SamulNori, the articulation of the breathing aesthetic became essential when they embarked on teaching activities, as their audiences (in the composer and pianist Percy Grainger's terms, the 'hearer host') shifted from passive listeners to active learners. Before then, though, it had been used as a way to create unity in staged performances.

The breathing aesthetic is rooted in a peculiarly Korean dance concept, 'motion in stillness' (*chŏngjungdong*). This positions each element of dance as part of a continuous flow, avoiding the pointing of ballet. It utilises cyclic movements – alternations of bending and extending to lower and lift the body, shoulder movements that rise with breath inhalation and a stretch of the back that releases as the shoulders and back relax, arms that extend outwards from the shoulders but gently curve with wrists turned so that the thumb surface of the hand is directed forward and the fingers curve down or up. The articulation of the concept in dance appears to have much to do with the early twentieth century, when dance was put on stage and as formalised teaching processes for it developed. But it has deeper roots, for the cyclic notion links to Taoist philosophy, rather than, to take Czikszentmihaly (1990) as but one Western alternative, finding in flow the management of optimal experience. Kim Duk Soo has written that 'motion in stillness' was one of the first things he learnt as a child (1992: 22), and it may be significant that both he and his SamulNori colleague Ch'oe Chongshil, like many others who as children joined itinerant troupes and semi-itinerant bands, began their professional careers as child dancers.

[15] Using the term as it has come to be adopted by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists seeking to distinguish insider from outsider perspectives – although such a distinction is inadequate, as has come to be understood by researchers who attempt to write reflexive ethnographies (Herndon 1983: 65; Kisliuk 1998: 23; Rice 1997: 106).

In early SamulNori performances, the quartet would take different instruments for different performances rather than keeping to one instrument and one role. Initially, then, the quartet lacked the discipline of all four performing in the same way. The breathing aesthetic can therefore be seen as a way to knit the four musicians together on stage that was only later built into the training system. SamulNori equate cyclic movement with unity through an interpretation of '*hana-a*', a term that at its most basic level derives from *han/hana*, 'one'. Taken back to dance, and articulating the down/up bending movement, *hana-a* consists of a bend of the knees (*ha*), a rise (*na*) and a rebound (*-a*). The shoulder movement, similarly, articulates a sequence of breathing in (*ha*), raising the shoulders (*na*) and relaxing (*-a*). However, a concept taken from dance requires transformation for a genre that is mostly performed seated. Hence, 'motion in stillness' is associated with single breath lengths, *hohŭp*. Seated with instruments, students practise from a relaxed posture with chin slightly downwards (*ha*), inhale while raising both head and torso (*na*), then keep raising the head up and back (*-a*), falling back to start again. The fall seamlessly joins the relaxed start, creating the circle, or a Taoist loop with continuity created by the interlocking commas. One *hana-a* is joined to the next, avoiding any sense of premature completion. All of this is possible because most samulnori rhythmic cycles are in compound metres. *Hohŭp*, then, allows what was a dance concept utility in the seated samulnori repertory. This is shown in Figure 5.1, where young children play samulnori *puk* united together through *hohŭp* head movements.

Hohŭp can also be seen in the teaching system, where exercises are introduced before moving to an instrument: students start standing; they count rhythmically, articulating *hana-a* as syllabary; body movement is added, as a swing from the pelvis that becomes a dance – the 'walking dance'; more movement is added, first the head, then the shoulders and chest, and finally the stomach and pelvis (Kim Duk Soo 1999: 6–11).

Kim Duk Soo tends, rather in the manner I learnt from Kim Pyŏngsŏp, to expect *changgo* drum students to dance with the instrument attached – supported by a long cloth looped over one shoulder and around the waist. Once the instrument is introduced, students learn points in the *hohŭp* sequence at which sticks can strike the drumskin or the gong surface. Sounds then reverberate, circulating and continuing the cycle. Each sound fits the Taoist conception, being considered *yin* (Korean: *ŭm*) or *yang*, the former dark, negative, the receptive female, and the latter light, positive, the penetrating male. *Yang* sounds, in keeping with local band practice, tend to be higher pitched than *yin/ŭm* sounds. On the drum, *yang* sounds are often damped, whereas *yin/ŭm* sounds will be left to reverberate, in an aesthetic known as *chungbae* (Kim Dong-Won 2001). Rhythmic detailing balances *yin* and *yang*, working from the smallest to the largest element. Binary and ternary cells (the *pang* in SamulNori's conceptualisation) have trochaic and iambic strong and weak feet: trochaic match *yin* (strong) to *yang* (weak), and iambic *yang* (weak) to *yin* (strong). Motifs often build larger structures by pairing variant patterns (each a *wŏn* to SamulNori), one *yin* to one *yang*, rather like a typical Saussurian linguistic

Figure 5.1 P'yŏngt'aek Elementary school children performing samulnori with *hohŭp* movement, September 2014. (Photo: Keith Howard)

question and answer. The *changgo* drum produces *yin* strikes on its lower-pitched head and *yang* on its higher-pitched head, further extending the notion of balance. Strikes of the lower-pitched head typically mark the beats, and therefore link in *hohŭp* to the inhaling phase, while patterning on the higher-pitched head marks the exhaling phase. Taken one stage further, the hourglass drum encapsulates the rhythms of the other three instruments, and it is therefore placed at the centre of the quartet. This partially, but only partially, accounts for why it is the instrument for which the first three SamulNori workbooks were written (1990/1992, 1993, 1995). Again, the hourglass drum is versatile and capable of virtuosic display, and hence is well suited to the staged performances of samulnori, even though the lead instrument of local bands and itinerant troupes was always the *kkwaenggwari* small gong.

The body of the hourglass drum is turned on a lathe from a single slab of paulownia wood, and has a narrow waist connecting its two bowls. From a Taoist perspective, the waist constitutes an intermediary between heaven and earth. The player, then, standing or seated behind the waist, mediates between heaven and earth, or between *pang* and *wŏn* in the SamulNori conceptualisation, taking responsibility for the smallest division within the cycle, the *kak*, as the third element in the trinity. Kim Duk Soo links this to shamanism: 'The *changgo* player's role is considered to be closer to that of the shaman, that is, as an intermediary between the spiritual world and man' (1992: 10). In saying this, Kim had in mind the

Sino-Korean character *mu* that today generally denotes anything shamanic. The character has horizontal lines symbolising heaven and earth joined by a vertical line, with the two-stroke character for 'man' (*in*) either side. Taken back to dance, the performer's head and chest are *wŏn*, heaven; the lower body is *pang*, earth; the torso is *kak*. This also ties in to Korean tradition: the torso is where the soul resides, as is encountered in the Buddhist notion of *pulshim* and in the concept of the body as the prison of the soul.[16]

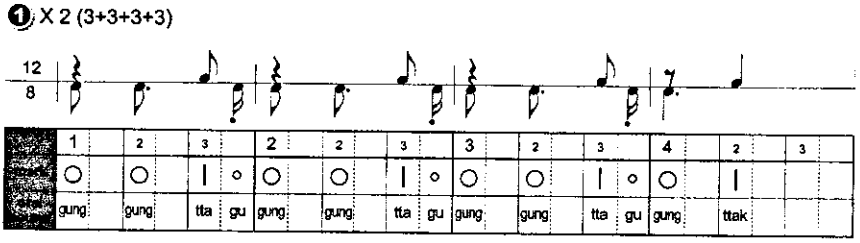
SamulNori's Influence

SamulNori's teaching system has had the effect of establishing a repertory in which every performance clones postures and body movements. Events such as the *kyŏrugi* festival make judicious choices of judges to measure appropriate performances of appropriate repertory reflecting appropriate aesthetics. And, beyond the workbooks and training camps, SamulNori's influence is today seen in many textbooks, in materials used in schools, as well as in local band revivals.

Textbooks include the 1999 *SamulNori Textbook* edited by Kim Duk Soo but written by Kim Dong-Won. Published by the Overseas Koreans Foundation, this was designed to make samulnori accessible to foreign musicians. Kim Duk Soo is today a professor at Korea National University of Arts, the state conservatoire, which is given co-publication credit on the front cover. The text is in Korean and English, with Shingil Park listed as translator. The volume opens with a brief background then, illustrating the importance of the aesthetic conception, it presents *hohŭp*, the notation system, and the *wŏn*, *pang* and *kak* idea. Detailed playing techniques for the four instruments follow before full notations are given for the canonic piece, '*Yŏngnam nongak*' – adapted *chŏngganbo* on left-hand pages and one-line staff notation on right-hand pages. A more recent textbook, *Samulnori Percussion Ensemble* (2009), published by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, builds from samulnori teaching and learning at the National Gugak Centre. The text is by Lee Young-Gwang. It dispenses with any discussion of *hohŭp*, the adapted *chŏngganbo* notation system, or the *wŏn*, *pang* and *kak* idea. Rather, after a brief overview, it moves to a detailed discussion of playing techniques, offers a set of exercises, and then presents a complete canonic piece, '*Utdari SamulNori* [*Uttari nongak*]'. Notations build from the previous Centre publications by Ch'oe Pyŏngsam and Ch'oe Hŏn (1992, 2000), retaining Western metric symbols but juxtaposing single-line notation with both onomatopoeia and a *chŏngganbo*-based graphic system that, by utilising lines and dots for the hourglass drum's whip-like stick, retains a faint echo of historical scores. Compare the first measure of *kutkŏri* in this 2009 text (Notation 5.3) with the notations from SamulNori and Ch'oe cited earlier:

[16] Some commentators, however, question whether Koreans actually embrace a concept of the soul: from a literature perspective, see Skillend (1988).

Notation 5.3 Opening of '*Utdari SamulNori*' ['*Uttari p'ungmul*'], *Samulnori Percussion Ensemble* (2009)



A third textbook, using the same notation conventions, is by Ch'oe Pyŏngsam's colleague at the Centre, Pak Ŭnha, moving us beyond samulnori to detail her teacher Yang Toil's solo drum dance (Pak 2011). A fourth, from the same year, is *Changgu: No Suhwan ŭi p'ungmul killajabi* (2011), which again celebrates hourglass drum practice. The author, No Suhwan, is a drummer from the local band tradition, and his volume divides into three sections. First is a discussion of the drum dance, *sŏl changgu*, second the dance with drum, referred to as the '*anjŭn pan*', and third a consideration of the drum in samulnori. Notation is given for the three core canonic pieces, '*Yŏngnam nongak*', '*Honam nongak*' and '*Uttari p'ungmul*', but as onomatopoeia written in rows of horizontal *chŏngganbo* boxes read left to right across the page and with no time signature indicators. In 2008, No had published a book on lead *kkwaenggwari* small gong technique that, although its subtitle again signalled it was about local percussion bands, similarly blended samulnori material. The samulnori connection is apparent in photographs taken from the new genre rather than from local band practice (2008: 25, 30, 74, 76–7, 93, 99, 109, 175, 182, 185 and 197). Finally, Kim Duk Soo, in his capacity as professor at the University of Arts, has in recent years edited volumes on local band repertories sitting behind the samulnori canon – '*Uttari p'ungmul*', '*Honam nongak*', and '*Yŏngnam nongak*' were published as volumes 4, 5 and 6 of a series in 2005 (Kim Tŏksu 2005a/b/c). Each gives detailed descriptions, illustrations of props and dances, and synchronic adapted *chŏngganbo*, onomatopoeia and single line notations.

Samulnori, then, has begun to be fused to local bands of the past in conception as well as in practice. More, it has begun to replace local bands and itinerant troupes in Korean musical imagery. One example is how the new is linked to old legends. In 1988, as SamulNori celebrated their tenth anniversary in a book of photographs, the four core instruments were allied to wind, lightning, clouds and rain, these four elements serving as titles for over-arching sections. In 1994, SamulNori were central to performances of '*Yŏnggo*/Sacred Drum' at the Opera House in Seoul Arts Centre, featuring goblins and lords of the underworld, and for which Kim Duk Soo was musical director (Howard 2006c: 1–4). At the start of the new millennium, children's books appeared, such as Kwak Young-kwon and Kim Dong-Won's *Samulnori iyagi/The Story of SamulNori* (in Korean, 2001;

in English, 2003). In this, the Ash Monster took over the pre-historic bright land, covering it with a layer of ash that blotted out the sun. He forced the king and his family to flee to Paektu Mountain, on the border between today's North Korea and China. The king prayed for deliverance and was granted four treasures: the four core samulnori instruments. Actually, that story had circulated for some years, heard in English, for instance, in the title track scat vocalisations on the Red Sun and SamulNori album *Then Comes the White Tiger* (ECM, ECM-1499, 1994). Now, in the children's story, the instruments are associated with four of the five directions and four of the five elements of East Asian philosophy,[17] to spiritual beasts, and to elements of the weather:

> The world is divided into four directions:
> The guardian of the south is the Red Bird
> The guardian of the north is the Black Turtle
> The guardian of the east is the Blue Dragon
> The guardian of the west is the White Tiger.
> Red bird plays the small gong, creating thunder and lightning
> Black Turtle plays the large gong, causing the wind to blow
> Blue Dragon plays the hourglass drum, making rain fall
> White Tiger plays the barrel drum, calling the clouds.
> Go and find these four guardians, and from them get the four treasures
> *kkwaenggwari, ching, changgo, puk.*
> Once you can create harmonious music
> Then you will save the people of your kingdom.

Following a 2007 curriculum review, government authorised school music textbooks introduced similar myths to illustrate how the samulnori instruments emerged. In so doing, any mention of local bands or itinerant troupes was dropped from the initial discussions, to be brought back only much later in the curriculum. The four instruments became part of the national second grade syllabus while their rhythmic cycles were part of the third grade. One fourth grade textbook features samulnori, and in particular the canonic piece from Korea's central regions, '*Uttari p'ungmul*', as well as local percussion bands, and the two, local and urban, continue through to the sixth grade. Figure 5.2 samples second grade materials.

Korean traditional music has been part of the school curriculum for many decades, and from 1997 onwards it was required to take 40 per cent of all music class time. Many discussions have explored what music should be introduced, but a recurring concern has been that most teachers train in Western art music rather than Korean traditions (Rockwell 1974: 15–20; Chang Sahun 1980: 39–45; Lee Yongil 1990: 260–66; Kwon Oh-hyang 1992: 3–6; Kwŏn Osŏng 1995; Ch'oe Chongmin 1995: 33; Sung 2001). To compensate, dedicated materials have been produced that notably include volumes of folksongs and children's songs. In

[17] The fifth direction (centre) is missing, but then there are only four instruments.

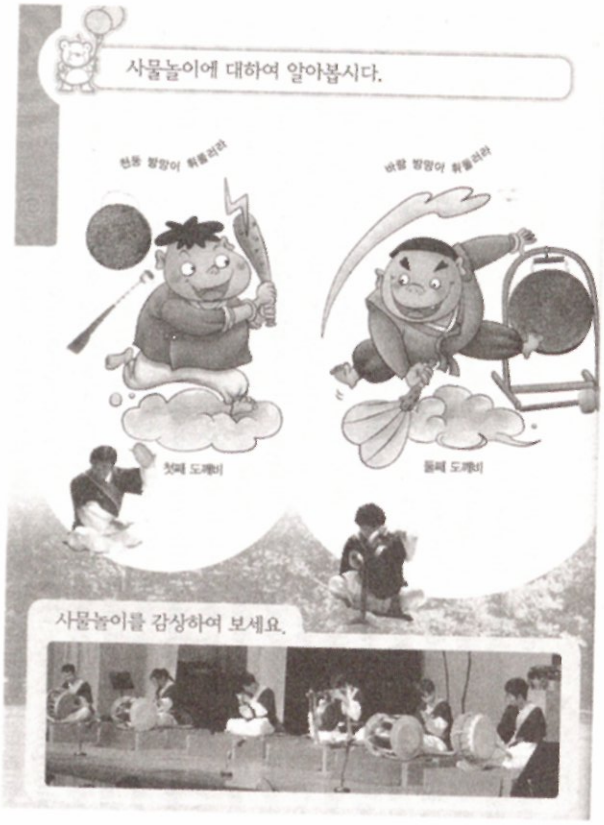


Figure 5.2 Samulnori, in a Korean second-grade school music textbook

one example, the late folklorist Im Sŏkchae's field recordings of folksongs were released on five CDs with notations and texts designed for middle and high school students (Ch'odŭng hakkyo-e ponaegi wiwŏnhoe 1995; Im 1997). In another, an annual publication, *Kugak kyoyuk*, in the 1990s commissioned new songs with traditional elements, releasing a set of recordings with notations.[18] And, in recent years, tradition bearers such as singers and instrumentalists have been invited to work alongside regular teachers in classrooms.[19] In attempts to reform the curriculum, the rhythmic cycles of traditional music have retained considerable importance, and it is here that samulnori neatly fits. Classroom lessons can be supplemented by extra-curricular practical classes, and where local band music and dance used to be a staple of extra-curricular activities, recent years have seen a shift to samulnori.

In recent research, the Korean educationist Kim In Suk has analysed 100 studies relating to school education that discussed samulnori and older percussion band forms (Kim 2012).[20] Most of the studies came from graduate schools within universities. Eleven were produced at Yongin University and ten at Chugye University, reflecting the ongoing interests of these institutions in traditional music. Three were completed at Keimyung University, and one or two each came from a smattering of other universities. Teacher training institutions were also responsible for some, with seven studies completed at Gyeongin National University of Education, six at Chuncheon National University of Education, and five at Jinju National University of Education. In the late 1990s, a small number of dissertations discussed how samulnori could be used in schools, and their findings filtered into education agendas at the beginning of the new millennium, with a rapid increase in the number of studies done, peaking with 16 papers in 2008 and 15 in 2009.

Indicating the dominant position samulnori now has, Kim found that 70 of the studies favoured 'samulnori' over terms for local bands and itinerant troupes. Eighty-six concerned elementary school teaching, and 12 middle or high school, confirming that greater attention is given to traditional music in the earlier years of education. Among the total, 49 focused on teaching methodologies, 28 on analysis and 23 on more general discussions of the genre. Within teaching methodologies, aesthetics, including movement and the samulnori breathing concept, featured in 10 studies. Kim's analysis reveals more samulnori materials exist in regions where local bands have significantly declined, but that where local bands remain

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[18] The recordings included *'95 Ch'angjak kugak tongyoje shilhwang ŭmban* (Jigu, KTCD-006, 1996), *'96 Kugak tongyoje shilhwang ŭmban* (Jigu, KTCD-007, 1996), *'97 Kugak tongyoje* (Samsung Music, SCO-148MUN, 1997) and *Kugak tongyo sŏnjip* 9 (Seoul Records, SRCD-1425, 1998).

[19] As explored by Hilary Finchum-Sung (2011).

[20] The 100 studies were tracked down using the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS) database at http://www.riss.kr, using the search words *samulnori*, *p'ungmul nori*, *nongak* and, but in Korean, 'primary school' and 'middle school'.

relatively strong, notably in the south-western Chŏlla provinces, less samulnori has penetrated into schools. Still, she concludes that samulnori has become the authorised form of percussion band music. However, it has failed to become a core part of the school curriculum, because it is loud and schools lack appropriate facilities. Noise needs to be minimised in classrooms, so emphasis is put on body movement, oral mnemonics and breathing, reinforcing aesthetic elements over the music itself. Practical samulnori classes largely remain extra-curricular activities, leaving the genre, in student's minds, as something other than the music they are taught in class.

It is not just in schools where samulnori has begun to replace local bands and itinerant troupes. A recent article by Simon Mills explores how samulnori has replaced lost local bands on the island of Ullŭngdo (Mills 2014). Mills starts with the understanding given to him in discussion with the folk music scholar Yi Pohyŏng: as local folk music declines so pockets remain; these remnants are rediscovered and revised as markers of identity by others – often, today, those formerly part of the culture-of-the-masses *minjung munhwa*; the revised appropriations then spread back out from the centre. Mills identifies this sequence, using a term from Agehananda Bharati (1970: 267–87), as the 'pizza effect'.[21] Utilising his own data and earlier research (Chu Kanghyŏn 2008; Song Pyŏnggi 2010), he relates how Ullŭngdo's local bands disappeared along with small farming communities in the 1960s and early 1970s. When a festival was established in the 1990s, the Usan Cultural Festival, its manager, Yi Ch'ungsŏng, could find no local percussion band. He travelled to the SamulNori training institute and a second similar institute, the Onnuri Kugak Yesuldan, bringing SamulNori's canonic piece, '*Yŏngnam nongak*' – originally from the neighbouring Kyŏngsang provinces on the mainland – back to the island. He taught it to a new group, Yongorŭm (Dragon Rising; the name was taken from a rare local tornado), which started with six fellow office workers but swelled as others joined, and the new group performed at island festivals until 2004. Their mission statement was printed on programmes and webpages: 'This group was founded to establish a musical tradition and create local culture'. As Yongorŭm declined, so a second group was formed to service another festival set up to mark the first full moon of the lunar calendar, Sadong Talmaji (Receiving the Moon). This second group abandoned samulnori in favour of a reintroduced local band tradition learnt from a mainland group in Ch'ŏngdo near Taegu. By 2010, however, '*Yŏngnam nongak*' reappeared, again taught by Yi Ch'ungsŏng, as the Sadong Talmaji festival tried to introduce an element of competition by asking different hamlets within the Sadong settlement to organise it each year. Mills notes the rivalry that emerged:

> In interview, members from the two groups were keen to highlight the qualities that put their group above their rivals … Okcheon [Okch'ŏn] Nongak members

[21] In which pizza was taken from Italy to America by Italian émigrés, developed into thick crust pizzas, then returned to Italy.

> explained: 'They were created by the authorities but we are a real community group: created by us for us'. On the other side, Jangheung [Changhŭng] Nongak members pointed out: 'They play *samul nori* [samulnori] but we play *pungmul* [*p'ungmul*]', going on to explain how *pungmul* is the 'real original' form of percussion-band music, better suited to community celebration (Mills 2014: 428).

Constructing Authority

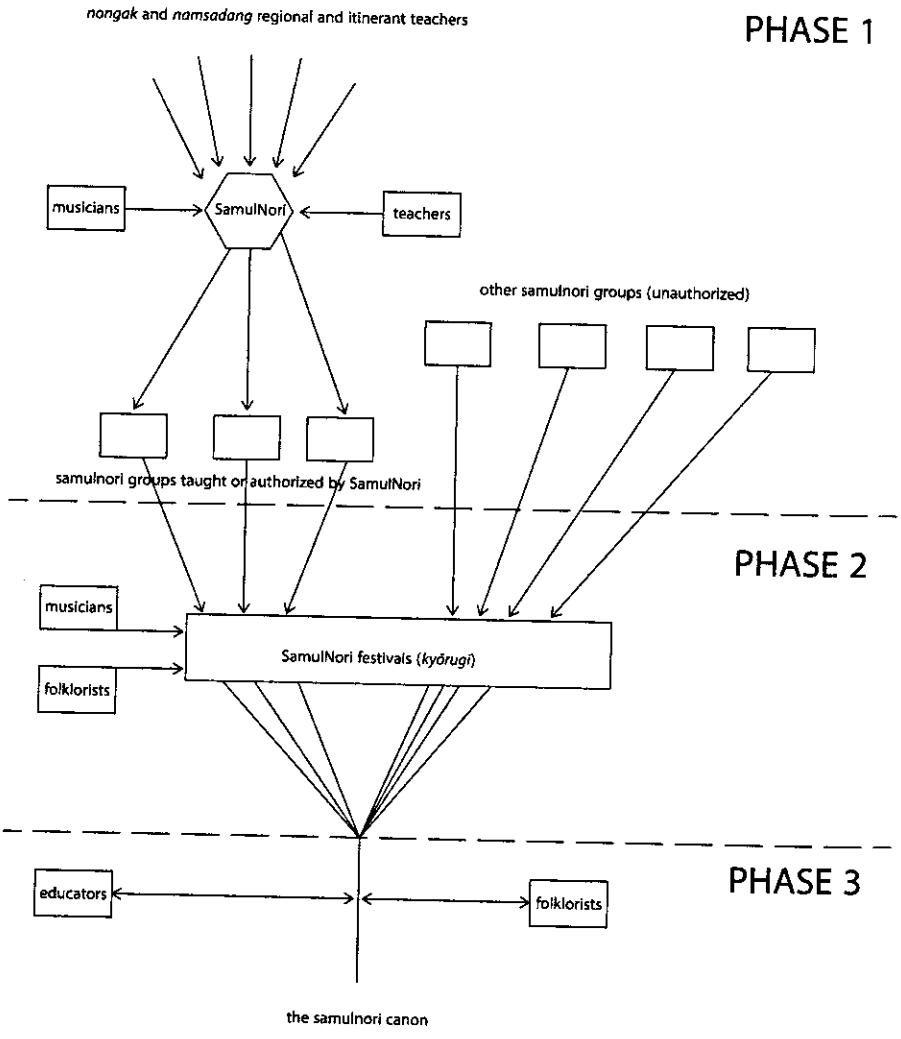
SamulNori constructed authority through its canon of pieces. In its first phase of development, SamulNori took inspiration from both local bands and itinerant troupes, and from many teachers and musicians. The quartet's members worked to construct a repertory with those they had grown up with, with band musicians from around the peninsula, and with those who held positions and influence at the Traditional Music Arts School and elsewhere. The quartet took to the stage at a time of considerable decline in both local bands and itinerant troupes. Just as selection established bands as Important Intangible Cultural Properties that would preserve the old, so SamulNori selected and arranged material to create new repertory. The new, fixed and established, and linked to an aesthetic of performance, was taken up by additional samulnori groups, some overseen by SamulNori and some operating outside their control. SamulNori further asserted ownership in a second phase, as they developed a teaching system. This incorporated the aesthetic of body movement and breathing. It was underpinned by workbooks, by a festival and contest, and by camps and training institutes. SamulNori evolved into SamulNori Hanullim and Nanjang Cultures, embracing more musicians and scholars. Scholars and musicians served as judges at the festivals and contests organised by SamulNori, and wrote accounts of the genre – such as this, by a distinguished scholar whose name has already been cited several times:

> Kim Duk Soo's SamulNori has been responsible for an epoch with an impact as significant as Copernicus' discoveries ... For those whose sensibilities have become somewhat jaded, SamulNori has provided a fresh and startling impulse ... For an older generation, the music created a most poignant nostalgia ... We are drawn slowly, bit by bit back to an original hometown that we all shared in our collective memories, the peaceful Peachflower Village that represents what is closest to our essence and our soul ... Within all this sound image, men, women, the old and young, our neighbors from far and near break into huge smiles and laughter and draw together to form a perfect, harmonious whole ... This is what [local percussion bands] meant long ago, our *p'ungmul*, our *maegu kut* [village ritual]. It is exactly these memories and the energy of our people which has been recreated to such perfection by SamulNori (Hahn Myung-hee 1992: 5–6).[22]

[22] See also Hahn 1993. Note that the quote comes from a book published by SamulNori. He did, however, repeat much the same in an article in a respectable musicology journal the

The third phase of development continues today. In it, samulnori has begun to replace local percussion bands in education, in textbooks, and in the minds and practices of many. The development is summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Three Phases in the Development of SamulNori



same year, characterising the samulnori canon as appropriate for contemporary life, not as something from the past, and suitable for contemporary youth rather than their elders (Han Myŏnghŭi 1992).

The progression is from a declining past to a vibrant present; the present requires updates of both local bands and itinerant troupes. This is the context in which to appreciate the remarks of Kim Duk Soo in the first workbook, which I cited at the end of Chapter 3 above. Kim states that SamulNori is something both contemporary and traditional. It is something born from an awakening, '[i]n the midst of this turmoil, with new questions being raised from near and far on what should be done to preserve our traditions'. Kim defines his own role in the genre, as 'a person ... engaged in traditional music, but very much living in the twentieth century' (Kim Duk Soo 1992: 7–10). SamulNori, and Kim Duk Soo's role in it, fits the contemporary, modern Korea. It allows the past to live, rather than to be simply celebrated through selected tangible heritage, objects that are displayed in museums, explained through books and catalogues, and preserved as historic sites. It allows the past to live through performances that are creative, rather than being recreations of inherited traditions. On a broad stage, UNESCO and UNESCO member states have promoted World Heritage Sites since the 1960s, as what Myriam Jansen-Verbeke considers to be the 'places to visit before you die' (2009: 58). But, in recent decades, UNESCO and some UNESCO member states have sought to conserve the intangible cultural heritage – performance arts and crafts. Life is breathed into the tangible through performance and creativity of the intangible; buildings and sites need the contextualisation that the intangible imparts. But, maintaining the intangible heritage challenges that famous line in L.P. Hartley's 1953 novel, *The Go-Between*: 'The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there'. It encourages arguments against preserving tradition, arguments eloquently made by a largely older generation of scholars in terms of the need for cultural production to change as society changes. SamulNori changes cultural production, reinterpreting the past in a new repertory. In *The Go-Between*, the author has found a diary, hidden within a cardboard collar-box full of relics from his early life, with which to remember his early years. But, in the case of SamulNori, it is not a diary of memories, nor the music of local bands and itinerant troupes, but – and here I return to the quote from Rustom Bharucha briefly cited in Chapter 1 above – the reframing of the past in the present that makes samulnori alive and venerated.

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