

THE SOUND OF ECSTASY AND NECTAR OF ENLIGHTENMENT BUDDHIST RITUAL SONG & DANCE FROM KOREA

Celebrated by Buddhist Monks from the Young San Preservation Group

*The Young San Ceremony is religious in nature.
Patrons are requested to hold their applause until the end of the program.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Kikyōng 기경 (3 minutes)	A cymbal dance to announce the beginning of the ceremony.
Onghoge 옹호계 (3 minutes)	A song to implore the Eight Vajra Guardians to protect the ceremony site:*
	“We implore the Eight Vajra Guardians to protect the ceremony site, and we implore the celestial gods to inform the Guardians of the Four Directions. May all celestial kings of the Three Realms and the Four Heavenly Kings come together, in the Buddha’s presence, and make this site auspicious.”
Myōngbal 명발 (7 minutes)	A cymbal dance accompanying a food offering to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas as a petition for their divine intervention.
Ilch’ekongkyōng 일체공경 (5 minutes)	An introductory chant that is played, as the title notes, to honor and glorify the Buddha.
Ch’ōnsubara 천수바라 (5 minutes)	A celebration of the Buddha’s endless generosity. A dance with chanting the Great Dharani, the mantra of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.
Tonyangke 도량계 (8 minutes)	A butterfly dance expressing the wish that the temple grounds be purified. It is performed prior to a ceremonial offering of food to Buddha and to all sentient beings. The butterfly dance <i>Nabich’um</i> (나비춤) is performed with slow, serene movements in butterfly-like costumes.
Pōbko 범고 (5 minutes)	A drum dance expressing the wish that all sentient beings will obtain wisdom and enlightenment in response to the beating of the drum.
Kachige 가지계 (10 minutes)	This chant is about the teaching of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas at Yōngch’wi Mountain (영취산) and a ceremonial food offering to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Yōngch’wi Mountain, located at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, has historically been associated with female mountain spirits.
Hwach’ōng 화칭 (10 minutes)	A supplication to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas in which the participants transfer all of the blessings obtained from the ceremony to the realization of national prosperity and world peace.

* The Eight Vajra Guardians
 The Green Vajra Who Banishes Disasters
 The Vajra Who Banishes Toxins
 The Yellow Vajra Who Grants Wishes
 The White Vajra Who Purifies Water
 The Red Vajra Whose Sound Brings Fire
 The Vajra Who Pacifies Disasters
 The Vajra Purple Worthy
 The Vajra Great Spirit

WHO'S WHO

The Young San Preservation Group

Ven. Dong Hee (Hee Ja Han)
Ven. Hye Tök (Tae Hwan Kang)
Ven. Chin Söng (Sun Hee Rhee)
Ven. Tök Nim (Byeong Jin Lee)
Ven. Sön Kaka (Ki Hong Park)
Ven. Pöp Mil (Hae Ran Jun)
Ven. Sang To (Mi Sun Jang)
Myungsuk Lee Director of Sutra Dance

Lighting Director

Jae Won Kim

Interpreter

Sangkwi Yoon

Artistic Director

Ven. Dong Hee

Production Manager

Kwang-Ryul Jang

The leader of the unique Young San Preservation Group is the Venerable Dong Hee, the first female to join the *pömp'ae* 범패 monks lineage. For nearly 40 years, beginning at age 13, she trained in the performance of the Young San Ceremony under the tutelage of the Venerable Song-am Park. During this time she also examined ancient records and documents in a dedicated effort to restore the original form and colors of the vestments worn by Buddhist monks. Venerable Dong Hee has personally prepared all the ritual objects used in the ceremony.

Under Venerable Dong Hee's direction, the members of the group have mastered the traditional *pömp'ae* chant, which traditionally was learned by ear and committed to memory. The group's virtuoso vocal techniques are marked by a special timbre, complex patterns and a pure, solemn tone color. These skills are used to enhance the simple melodies, which are sung without measured ("strict") rhythm and harmony. Linked intimately to the liturgy, like Gregorian chant, *pömp'ae* chant evokes a surreal, devout ethos intended to reveal the gifts of God and to favor spiritual growth. The ceremony includes ritual dancing by the monks who accompany themselves with drums, cymbals, gongs and other traditional Korean percussion instruments.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The Young San Ceremony

Normally performed as a three-day ritual, the Young San Ceremony is the most elaborate of the Korean Buddhist ceremonies. The ritual includes offerings of flowers, fragrances, music and sacred dance in honor of the Lord Buddha and the delivery of his discourse on the *Pōphwa* 법화 *Sutra*. In the past, this ceremony was performed for the well-being of the nation both on joyful occasions and in times of disaster. Over the centuries, however, many ceremonial rituals fell into disuse due to the policy of suppressing Buddhism during the Chosŏn kingdom (1392-1910) and the restrictions against the performance of elaborate Buddhist ceremonies during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). Fortunately, the complete ceremonial procedures were maintained and preserved by some Korean Buddhist monks, including the Venerable Song-am Park, who was designated as Korean Human Cultural Asset No. 50. The ceremonial chants and dances of the Young San Ceremony are traditional arts unique to Korea and were nominated in 1973 for preservation as a Korean Intangible Cultural Asset.

Korean Buddhist Dance

Chakpōp 작법, literally "Creating the Dharma," is the generic term for Buddhist ritual dance. The Young San Ceremony involves three dances: the "Butterfly Dance" with its butterfly-like costume; the "Cymbal Dance" or *parachum* 바라춤, which is danced with a small cymbal called a *para* 바라; and the "Buddhist Drum Dance" or *pōpkochum* 법고춤. According to older monks, *parachum* is performed to glorify and present offerings to the Buddha while *pōpkochum* is performed to instruct the evil-minded in the ways of heaven and to save creatures from suffering in hell. Monks who specialize in Buddhist ritual song and dance perform all three dances. Typically an enormous portrait of the Buddha is set up in the temple courtyard. A large altar laden with offerings of food and flowers is placed in front of the portrait. Nearby, a barrel drum is set on a stand. During the ceremony, several monks play large gongs and wooden clappers called *moktak* 목탁 to accompany their chant.

Korean Buddhist Music

The introduction of Buddhism to Korea in the fourth century AD inspired the creation of Buddhist ritual chants and dances. Monks specialized in several styles of ritual chant, which is just one of several great vocal traditions in Korea. There are two main styles; *pōmp'ae* and *yōmbul* 염불. *Yōmbul* is a simpler recitative style which involves texts generally of Chinese prose which are used as prayers on behalf of a deceased person. The texts are sung in a less melodic manner analogous to a recitative in Western opera.

Pōmp'ae, literally "sacred chanting," is a more complex type of chant that has two different performance styles: *chitsori* 짓소리 and *hotsori* 훗소리. *Hotsori* means "plain or simple" and is used generally for short ceremonies. *Hotsori* chants make up the majority of the repertoire. The texts involve four lines of Chinese verse in groups of five or seven syllables. Lines one and two make up an "inside half" while the remaining lines three and four are considered the "outside half." In performance, it is typical that one half is sung as a rapid short melodic phrase while the other half is sung slowly and more fully.

Chitsori means "elaborate" and features a more expressive vocal performance practice involving a wide range of tones from very soft to loud to falsetto. Also typical of *chitsori* chants are what in the West are called melisma (i.e., a group of notes sung to one syllable of text). In the Gregorian chant tradition, two styles of singing are used: syllabic and melismatic. Syllabic passages involve a different tone for each syllable, while the use of melisma can allow for a succession of tones for a single syllable. (The melisma style is also a particular feature of African-American church singing and blues music.) The use of melisma in the Korean Buddhist *pōmp'ae-chitsori* style is a common feature. However, to Western ears the tonal quality may be very different as the Korean aesthetic allows for a wider range of vocal tones that goes beyond the usual seven tones in Western chant (do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti). Another difference with Western chanting is found in the rhythm. Gregorian chants are usually done in a free rhythmic style. That is to say, without a fixed regular beat to the music. The Korean *chitsori* style is also free rhythmically, but much more so, and can be prolonged or abridged depending on the requirements of a particular ceremony. *Chitsori* chants are studied after a chanter has mastered the *hotsori* repertoire.

Another consideration while listening to Korean Buddhist chant is the functionalism of the music. Western audiences are used to music as entertainment or, in other words, a musical event. The audience goes to a specific event where the music is primary, like a symphony concert. In many other non-Western cultures, you will find both musical events and event music. Event music is music that is secondary to the event; the music has a specific function in the event and is secondary to the event itself. Such is the case in Korean Buddhist chant, where the music is secondary to the ceremony and is not intended to be a separate form of entertainment or a performance in itself. A wedding, where the music being performed is secondary in importance to the ceremony taking place, is an example

of event music in a Western context. Another obvious and more immediately parallel example would be the “event music” accompanying a traditional Catholic mass.

Although Korean Buddhist chant originated in China, some of the *pōmp’ae* style chants are most likely of Korean origin. An old story has it that in 487, a prince of Koryō invited some distinguished monks to his court to discuss Buddhism and compose new music for the chanting of sacred texts.

The language of the chants is based on Chinese texts, in which Sanskrit from India was modified to fit the tonal characteristics of the Chinese language. These Chinese texts have been translated into Korean, which retains many words of Chinese origin. The written text can be in Chinese, the native Korean alphabet (*han’gul*), or a combination of both scripts. *Han’gul* was invented by a team of scholars under the direction of King Sejong in 1446. This unique alphabet is composed of twenty-six phonetic letters that avoid the tonal and interpretive complications of Chinese ideographs.

However, it is difficult to write down all of the rhythmic, melodic, and textual nuances of these chants. Only the *chitsori* chants have a type of traditional notation system. In this system, there is no indication for rhythm and exact pitch, which is contrary to the convention of western written music. Instead, melodic units are specified in comparison to melodic units of other chants that make the entire system one of cross-references. This system relies on oral tradition, which requires a highly developed sense of memory to keep the tradition culturally alive.

KOREAN BUDDHIST CHANT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<i>Hotsori</i> 훗소리	<i>Chitsori</i> 짓소리
Vocal quality	gentle, compassionate sound	commanding, rough sound
Length	short, syllabic	long, melismatic
Melody	short	long
Total length	3-7 minutes	15-40 minutes
Melodic range	short, do-re-mi-fa-sol-la	long, do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do-re-mi-fa-sol-la
Singers	1-4	larger chorus
Volume	restricted	wider range

BACKGROUND ON BUDDHISM IN KOREA

Historians trace Korean Buddhism to the 4th century CE when Chinese monks introduced it into the Korean peninsula. Buddhism developed into a vital state institution during the Silla and Koryō periods. Temples became flourishing centers of learning and monks enjoyed privileged roles in Korean society.

To express the teachings of Buddhism, monks employed music, literature and dance. During the Koryō kingdom (935-1392), Korean Buddhists launched an ambitious campaign to publish a comprehensive volume on Buddhist sutras entitled *Tripitaka Koreana*. Comprised of 80,000 carved woodblocks, the *Tripitaka Koreana* is the holy treasure of Korean Buddhism and is housed in a unique storage facility at Haein Temple as a national treasure.

As the Koryō kingdom neared its end, Confucianism replaced Buddhism as the new religion of the state. Although Buddhism remained the religion of the ruling family, upon the establishment of the Chosōn kingdom, Confucianism was instituted as the official state cult. Buddhist monks were gradually banished to remote mountain areas where they preserved their faith and traditional rituals. Modern day monks consider it their duty to preserve the artistic, spiritual, and scholastic integrity of traditional Buddhist rites. The Young San Ceremony is a striking example of the preservation of this cultural treasure.