

Chǒngak: The Rise of Music for the Middle Classes

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1. Introduction

Korean music culture of the 18th century is distinguished from the previous era by the rise of *Chǒngak* for the middle class, *Chung'in* (中人) and *P'ansori* for the low class *Sangmin* (常民). They are very important musical genres in the history of Korean music for their tradition is still alive in the present.

Traditional music of Korea is presently classified into three major genres: Court music, *Chǒngak* and Folk music. This classification is derived from the musical tradition of the 18th century.

This paper aims to shed light into on the music culture of the 18th century by describing (a) the historical background of *Chǒngak*, (b) the development of music forms in the 18th century, and (c) the musical characteristics of *Chǒngak*.

2. Historical background

Every music culture frames a story about countless partnerships forged between musicians and their society. *Chǒngak*(正樂), thus, is the product of 18th century partnerships and, particularly, a reflection of the middle class. Prior to the Japanese invasion at the end of the 16th century, the Chosǒn(朝鮮, 1392~1910) music culture favoured the arts of the ascendant aristocratic (*yangban* 兩班) bureaucracy. Aristocrats held power, and musical life centred on the court. At the court, Confucian ideals reigned, and these ensured that music should express peace and symmetry. The Chinese classical text, *Akki*(樂記), states:

Music stems from the centre of the emotions while behaviour comes from outside the heart. When music comes from the centre, it is serene. Behaviour from

outside is variable and unreliable. Great music should therefore be simple; great ceremony should be simple. If music reaches this height, men's hearts can foster no resentment. And, when ceremony reaches its extremity, righteousness is bound to prevail. Ruling with humility is surely reflected in such music and its associated behaviour⁽¹⁾

Clearly, music is important to the king. In terms of emotion, joy, anger and sorrow are less suitable than pleasure; slow tempo rather than fast speeds are essential. The integral simplicity coupled to peaceful emotion and symmetrical forms lies beneath the term *aak*(雅樂), "graceful music". *Aak*, in its broadest usage, describes all music of the court. Yet *aak* also has a more narrow meaning, to describe ceremonial music of Chinese origin, which contrasts *tangak*(唐樂, popular music of China) and *hyangak*(鄉樂, native Korean music). All three together were used for court rituals, processions of royalty audiences, and royal banquets.⁽²⁾

To neo-Confucianists in the 15th century, music had to reflect a moral rather than artistic principle. The text of a poem was more important than the melody, and music served simply to convey the poem's meaning. Music from the previous dynasty, Koryŏ, was consequently labelled crude and earthy. It was related too closely to emotions such as love. Texts needed to be changed into more noble, Chinese-inspired poetry, and music must become slower so it could follow more closely poetic syllables. Melismas were subjugated to this syllabic setting, regular rhythms were favoured over uneven and irregular, and symmetrical phrasing over ambiguous or asymmetrical.⁽³⁾ And so, Koryŏ pieces were changed: *Sŏgyŏngpyŏlgok*(西京別曲) became *Yŏnggwan*(永觀), *Manjŏnch'un*(滿殿春) became *Hyŏkchŏng*(赫靖), *Ssanghwajŏm*(雙花店) became *Ssanghwagok*(雙花曲), *Tongdong*(動動) became *Shindoga*(新都歌), *Chŏngŭp*(井邑) became *Ogwansan*(五冠山), and *Yŏngsan-hoesang*(靈山會上) became *Sumannyŏnsa*(壽萬年詞). Significantly, most of the revised pieces fell into disuse in the 17th century and today the old titles are often

(1) 樂記：樂由中出，禮自外作。樂由中出，故靜，禮自外作 故文。故大樂必易，大禮必簡。樂至則無怨，禮至則不爭。揖讓而治天下者 禮樂之謂也。

(2) Hahn Man-young: "Religious Origin of Korean Music", KOREA JOURNAL (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, July 1975) pp.20.

(3) 李惠求：「中國禮樂思想」韓國音樂에 寸 影響」韓國音樂論叢(秀文堂，1978) pp.234-54.

preferred.

Following the two Imjin wars against the Japanese(壬辰倭亂, 1592~1598) and the so-called *Pyōngja horan*(丙子胡亂, 1637~1638), party strife led to the formation of the *Sarimpa*(士林派), a group to rival the leading aristocratic *yangban*. This intellectual group was destined to influence later Chosŏn culture. Indeed, during the 18th century, the *Shilhakpa*(實學派) who developed and pursued a pragmatic method which required corroborative evidence(實事求是) and thus criticized the historo-centr neo-Confucian ideals, stemmed from them. Some *Sarimpa* were interested in music and described its forms and exponents in their writing. Amongst them, Sō Yu-gu(徐有榘, 1764~1845) transcribed *kagok* (see below) and *Yōngsanhoesang* (a chamber piece whose name derives from a Buddhist sutra which accompanies its first transcription, "Mass to the Great Buddha in the Spiritual Mountain"). In his *Yuyeji*(游藝志) (Chapter on Artistic Amusement, written sometime after 1788), he also describes the tuning system of the six-string half-tube zither, *kōmun'go*.

Lyric songs (*kagok*) themselves developed with the writings of Kim Ch'ŏn-t'aek, Kim Su-jang and others. Literature written by groups in the middle class, the *sōl* 庶孽(children of second wives), *chungin*(中人), and *sōri*(胥吏) (provincial officials) replaced much of that written by the aristocracy which was stylistically closer to the Chinese tradition. Relationships between social class and music thus gradually began to emerge. *Aak*, *tangak* and *hyangak* became associated with the *yangban* aristocrats, *kagok* and *p'ungnyu*(風流) as *chōngak* for the middle class, and *p'ansori* and so forth as the folk music of the lower classes. The *chugnin* themselves specifically comprised provincial school masters, officials, secondary sons, and officials with certain technical skills such as translators(譯官), law experts(律官), doctors(醫員), calligraphers(書官), astronomers(曆官), and statisticians(算數者.)⁽⁴⁾

Chōngak flourished both amongst *chungin* and with the *shilhak* scholars, and was likely indebted to the latter for its development. Indeed, one of the latter wrote:

A misty moon shone dimly. I knocked at the door of Ch'agam 窄岩(柳連玉), who lives to the north of the village. We drank wine together. Snow was falling outside,

(4) 韓永愚：「朝鮮時代 中人の身分階級の性格」韓國文化 9(서울大 韓國文化研究所 1988.11) pp. 179-210.

piling up on the ground, as he played the two-string fiddle *haegŭm*(奚琴) to me. We composed some short poems... then went out to visit Yi Tŏg-Moo(李德懋)". (from Pak Che-ga's *Yabang yuyŏnok*, in his *Chŏngnyujip*).⁽⁵⁾

And another:

On the 22nd of the month I visited Tamhŏn/湛軒(洪大容) with Kogong(龜翁), at nightfall, P'ung mu/風舞(金穩) joined us to make a (music) ensemble. Tamhŏn played the 12-string zither (*kayagŭm*), and P'ungmu harmonized with him on the 6-string zither (*kŏmun'go*). Kogong threw his hat down and began to sing a lyric song. Deep in the night, when the moon shines through a break in the clouds, and when the hot air of mid-summer has gone, the sound of string instruments is loud and clear (Pak Chi-wŏn's *Haya yŏn'gi*/夏夜譚記, from his *Yŏnamjip*/燕巖集 Vol. 3).⁽⁶⁾

And again:

Tamhŏn put his *kayagŭm* on his knee, Hong Sŏng-hak took his *kŏmun'go*, Yi Kyŏng-san took out a vertical flute (*t'ungso*), Kim Ŏk a stick with which to strike the

(5) 朴濟家：「貞菴集」‘夜訪柳連玉 六首 并小序’

微月濛然，此時不見友，友向爲，及攬十錢，
抱離騷，扣窄菴之門於古塔之北，買濁酒喫，
連玉，方隱几，觀二幼女，戲於燈下，見我而起。
彈嵇琴焉，俄而雪下滿庭，各賦小詩，
縱橫書之小幅，命曰嵇琴之雅，將去，
驚懣官睡也，余奚作歌曰，來時月陰
醉中雪深 不有友生 將向以堪
我有離騷 子挾嵇琴 夜半出門
于李子尋 是庭暫交睫于青莊之館
貞菴詩集 卷一

(6) 朴趾源：「燕巖集」卷三 ‘夏夜譚記’

二十二日 與龜翁步至 湛軒風舞夜至
湛軒爲瑟風舞琴而和之 龜翁不冠
而歌夜深流雲四綴暑氣乍退絃聲
益清左右 靜默如丹家之內 觀臟
神定僧之頓悟前生夫 自及而直
三軍必往龜翁當其歌時解衣磅
礴旁若無人者 梅岩嘗見蒼間老蛛
布網喜而謂余曰妙哉 有時遲疑
若有思也 有時揮霍若有得也
如蔣麥之躡如按琴之指今湛軒
喫風舞相和也 吾得老蛛之解矣
去今夏余嘗至湛軒湛軒方與師
延論琴時天欲雨東方天際雲色
如墨一雷則可以龍矣 既而長雷
去天湛軒謂延曰此屬何聲遂
援琴而諧之余遂作天雷操。

dulcimer (*yanggŭm*), and a professional musician from the Court institute, Poan, blew the mouth organ (*saenghwang*). Yu Sōng-sōp sang to the accompaniment of the instruments. We were pleasantly drunk; our music filled Yuch'uno pavillion(留春塢)⁽⁷⁾ (Sōng Tae-jung's *Kiyu ch'uno akhoe*, *Ch'ōngsōngjip* Vol. 6)

Amongst the above, Kim Ōk was a member of the *chunging* class and Poan came from the lower classes (*sangmin*). The *Shilhakpa* recognized the importance of the new *chōngak* (正樂) music and compared it with the retrospective aristocratic philosophy which had since the early days of the dynasty argued for the restoration of the old.

3. Vocal music

Three genres of *chōngak* concern us here, *kagok*(歌曲), *kasa*(歌詞) and *shijo*(時調). The first translates as lyric song and is the basis of chapters 4 and 5 below. *Kagok* have five sections and are sung to the accompaniment of a large ensemble; *kōmun'go*, *kayagŭm*, *changgo* (hourglass drum), *taegŭm* (horizontal flute), *haegŭm* (2-string fiddle), and

(7) 成大中：「青城集」卷六「記留春塢樂會」

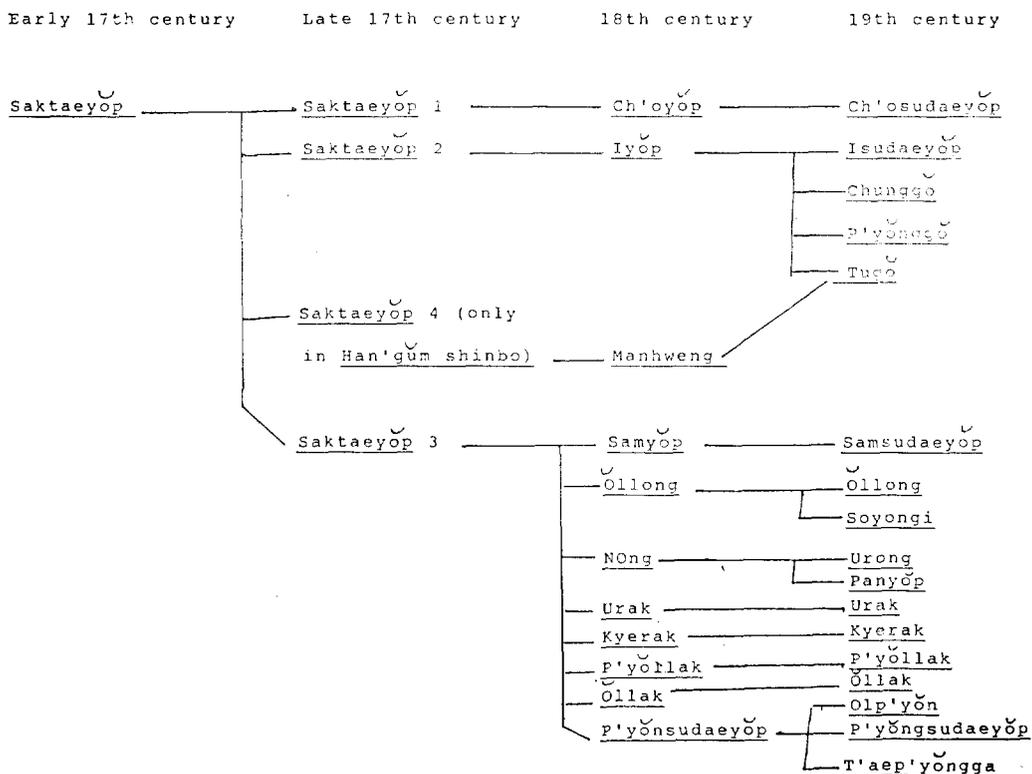
記留春塢樂會

洪湛軒大容置伽倻琴洪聖景景性操玄琴李京山
 漢鎮袖洞簫金椅擊西洋琴樂院工普安亦國手也
 奏笙簧會于湛軒之留春塢俞聖習學甲侑之以歌
 粵粵金公用謙以年德臨高坐芳酒微醺衆樂交作
 園深晝靜落花盈階官羽進進調入幽眇金公忽下
 席而拜衆皆驚起避之公曰諸君勿怪禹拜昌言此
 句天廣樂也老夫何惜一拜洪太和元癸亦與其會
 爲余道之如此湛軒捨世之翌年記

yanggŭm (dulcimer). Only the first two of these instruments are essential to the ensemble, and this in part indicates why early music manuscripts are written for the zither, *kŏmun'go*. In the following chapters I consider the development of the basic music used in *kagok*, *Mandaeyŏp* (慢大葉), *Chungdaeyŏp* (中大葉) and *Saktaeyŏp* (數大葉). Here, I should note that the 18th century saw the blossoming of the genre, with manuscripts such as the *Han'gŭm shinbo* (韓琴新譜; 1724), *Ch'ŏnggu yŏngŏn* (靑丘永言; 1728) and *Shinjak* (新作琴譜; around 1728). In these, several versions are listed of the basic melodies, including *Nong* (弄), *Nak* (樂) and *P'yŏn* (編). In the 19th century, other variations such as *Tugŏ* (頭擧), *Chunggŏ* (中擧) and *P'yŏnggŏ* (平擧) were added to *Isudaeyŏp*. Today's repertory remains much the same as in the 19th century.

Note that the musical style of 18th century variations use faster tempo, higher registers, and clearer articulation than the comparable *Saktaeyŏp*, features which suggest the world

Table I. The Development of Kagok (Lyric Songs)⁽⁸⁾



(8) 宋芳松：韓國音樂通史（一潮閣，1984），p. 424.

of folk music more than the court. The development can be summarized as follows:

A second type of lyric song, *kasa*, uses longer texts than *kagok*. In *kasa*, phrase lengths are irregular, hence the formal structure is less clear. The present repertory of twelve songs stems from the 18th century, and the development of each song can be traced back to scores of that period:

Table II. The Appearances of Kasa (Lyric Songs) in Historical Scores

Contemporary titles:												
	<u>Paekkuga</u>	<u>Hwangnyeoa</u>	<u>Chukchiga</u>	<u>Ch'urmyonggok</u>	<u>Kil-kunak</u>	<u>Obusa</u>	<u>Sangsabyolgok</u>	<u>Kwonjuga</u>	<u>Suyangsan'ga</u>	<u>Yangyangsa</u>	<u>Ch'osaga</u>	<u>Maehwa t'aryong</u>
<u>Akchang kasa</u> (16c)						o						
<u>Ch'onggu yongon</u> 1728	o	o		o	o	o	o	o		o	o	o
<u>Koqum kagok</u> (late 18c)			o	o		o				o		
<u>Namhon t'aep'yongga</u> (early 19c)				o			o				o	o
<u>Kagok willyu</u> 1827						o						

A third type of vocal music, *shijo*, took the texts of *kagok* but eliminated much of the long melismatic style. Consequent to their comparative simplicity, *shijo* were adopted by many literati outside of the court and, indeed, they are still sung in village meeting houses throughout the Korean countryside. Yi Se-ch'un(李世春), a singer who is remembered from the time of Yŏngjo's reign (1725~1776), is believed to have composed the basic music for *shijo*, though the term itself, used also to describe short poems, began to be used only much more recently.⁽⁹⁾ The earliest records of *shijo* songs are included in Sŏ Yu-gu's *Yuyeji* and Yi Kyu-gyŏng's *Kurach'olsa kumjabo*(歐邏鐵絲琴字譜). The latter is a score specifically for the dulcimer, known in Korea as the *yanggum* (*yang*=

(9) 申光洙：「石北集」‘關西樂府’ 其十五

初唱聞皆說太眞
至今如恨馬嵬塵
一般時調排長短
來自長安李世春。

West; *-gŭm/kŭm*=zither) because it was brought to the East by Western missionaries, but the notation in the *Yuyeji* is also for this instrument. The two scores preserve the music of *P'yŏng shijo* in the *Kyŏngjo* form; this music survives to today.⁽¹⁰⁾

The 19th century saw several different types of *shijo* develop from the *P'yŏng shijo* root. Amongst these are *Chirŭm shijo* (literally, “yelling” *shijo*), *Chunggŏ shijo* (suggesting the use of the middle voice register) and *Sasŏl shijo* (suggesting that more emphasis was placed on the text itself). The *shijo* form is probably a remodelling of *kagok*, and so today several publications include transcriptions of the *shijo* repertory under the general title of *kagok* or *kasa*.

4. Instrumental music

Two instrumental works mark the rise of middle class *chŏngak*: *Yŏngsan hoesand* and *Pohŏja*. Today there are three versions of the first: *Yŏngsan hoesang* for wind instruments, often called *Tae p'ungnyu*, *Yŏngsan hoesang* for strings, also known as *Chul p'ungnyu* or simply *P'ungnyu*, and a transposed versic *P'yŏngjo hoesang* or *Yuch'oshin chigok*. Broadly, all three can lay claim to the generic title, but in a narrow sense, only the string version should be called *Yŏngsan hoesang*. The string version was developed and played by the rich and educated *chungin* middle class; today it is in effect preserved as an Intangible Cultural Asset (*Muhyŏng munhwajae*, No. 83). Since it was played by the literate, a number of old scores record the music, particularly those for the six-string zither, *kŏmun'go*. The wind and transcribed versions, incidentally, were used for the accompaniments to dances given at the court.

The 1759 manuscript known as *Taeak hubo*, a score whose name is often glossed as the “Later Music Manuscript”, records *Yŏngsan hoesang*. This score is believed to record music used during King Sejo's reign (1455~1468), and alongside the music it gives a seven-syllable text of Buddhist origin: *Yŏngsan hoesan pulbosal* (“Mass to the Buddha on the Spiritual Mountain”). The text is given while circling a pagoda on Buddha's birthday. However, the earlier *Kŭmbo shinjŭng karyŏng* (琴譜新證假令), a zither manuscript dated

(10) 張師助：「歐羅織絲琴字譜의 解讀과 現行 平時調와의 關係」國樂論攷 (서울大出版部, 1965).

1680, gives the same melody as that transcribed in *Taeak hubo* (大樂後譜). We can assume from this that *Yongsan hoesang* was originally vocal music but was transformed into an instrumental piece towards the end of the 17th century. Then, early 18th century manuscripts such as the *Han'gum shinbo* (Han's New Zither Score; 1724), and the *Oumbo* (漁隱譜/a score using the five-tone notation), give enlarged versions of the basic melody. By the time of Sō Yu-gu's *Yuyeji*, the piece had many additions, to the extent that it closely resemble what is performed by ensembles today. The expansion of the piece is illustrated in Table III.⁽¹¹⁾

Table III. The Evolution of Yongsan Hoesang

Late 17th century	Early 18th century	Late 18th century	Present day
<u>Yongsan hoesang</u>	———— <u>Yongsan hoesang</u>	———— <u>Yongsan hoesang</u>	———— <u>Samgyongsan</u>
	<u>YH Kapt'an</u>	———— <u>Seryongsan</u>	———— <u>Chungyongsan</u>
	<u>YH Hwanip</u> (?)	————	———— <u>Seryongsan</u>
	<u>YH Cheji</u> (?)	————	———— <u>Karaktori</u>
		<u>Samhyon hoeip</u>	———— <u>Samhyon hwanip</u>
		<u>Samhyon</u>	———— <u>Hahyon hwanip</u>
		<u>Yombul t'aryong</u>	———— <u>Yombul</u>
		<u>Yukcha yombul</u>	———— <u>Yombul</u>
		<u>T'aryong</u>	———— <u>T'aryong</u>
		<u>Kunak yuip t'aryong</u>	———— <u>Kunak</u>
		<u>Kunak t'aryong</u>	———— <u>Kunak</u>

5. The musical characteristics of chonggak

As I stated earlier, *chonggak* literally translates as “correct” or “graceful” music. The word originated with the *Choson chonggak chonsupso* (朝鮮正樂傳習所/Choson (Korean) Institute for Court Music), an institute founded in 1911. There, *kagok*, *kasa*, *shijo*, *Yongsan hoesang* and *Pohoja* (步虛子) were taught along with music theory. The music of the aristocracy was slow, strict in terms of rhythm, and syllabic in terms of poetic setting. *Chonggak*, in contrast, was more melismatic, gradually moved from slow to fast,

(11) 宋芳松：上同 p.435.

and allowed for rich, highly ornamented melodies. Still, *chǒngak* is more restrained than folk music, with narrower vibrato and less use of portamento. We can, therefore, see distinct characteristics in the *chǒngak* which developed during the 18th century.

Firstly, there was a tendency to transform vocal music into purely instrumental pieces. This was particularly true of *Yǒngsan hoesang*. Several attendant changes are notable: musical phrases increase in length due to typical instrumental cadential patterns, variations are added to an original melody, elaboration of melody occurs that reflect typical instrumental ornamentation patterns, and higher registers are favoured, reflecting the different tessituras of instruments and the voice.

The lyric songs of *kagok* demonstrate the emergence of variants. To the original *Saktaeyōp*(數大葉) were added *Isudaeyōp*(二數大葉) (*i*=two) and *Samsudaeyōp*(三數大葉) (*sam*=three). Then, *Nong*, *Nak*, and *P'yōn* were added to *Samsudaeyōp*. *Isudaeyōp* evolved four additional pieces, *Tugō*, *P'yōnggo*, *Chunggō*, and *T'aep'yōngga*(太平歌). In a similar fashion, *shijo* gained three new singing styles. In the case of instrumental music, the variants of *Yǒngsan hoesang* expanded as popular dance music was added—*Samhyōn hwanip*(三絃還入), *Hahyōn hwanip*(下絃還入), *Yōmbul*(念佛), *T'aryōng*(打命), and *Kunak*(軍樂)— so that the piece gradually evolved into an extended suite. *Pohōja*, incidentally, evolved into four additional pieces: *Mihwanip*, *Sehwanip*, *Ujogkarak hwanip* and *Yangch'ōng hwanip*.

Typically, where variants were added to an original piece, they gradually increased the pace from slow to fast. This characteristic, ably demonstrated by any contemporary *Yǒngsan hoesang* performance, is equally true in other genres. *Sanjo*, the instrumental form developed at the end of the 19th century which remains probably the most popular folk music today, thus moves from a slow triplet-subdivided 6-beat pattern(*chinyangjo*), through moderate 12-beat patterns (*chungmori* and so on), to fast movements with four triplet-subdivided beats (*chajinmori*) or four duplet subdivided beats (*hwimori/tanmori*).

The third characteristic that I should remember is the tendency to move towards higher registers. When this occurs during a piece, *chǒngak* can be said to begin with dignity and end with humour.

6. Conclusion

The main genres of music that Koreans associate with the 18th century are clearly distinguishable from those of earlier times. The reason is simple, for this is the time when the *chungin* middle class began to assert itself in a society for several centuries dominated by a backward-looking aristocratic elite. Music at the time paralleled the tripartite social division, but in the middle *chǒngak* appealed both to the *chungin* and to the literati outside the court, particularly to those associated with the *Shilhak* movement.

In terms of style, *chǒngak* lies between the music of the aristocracy—*aak*, *hyangak*, and *tangak*—and the low class folk. Two genres may be considered most representative, *Yǒngsan hoesang* and *kagok*. *Yǒngsan hoesang* illustrates the balance between high and low culture in that it begins with slow and dignified restraint but ends with the light humour of folk music. Yet, while *chǒngak* may be seen as a bridge between the two extremes, it is never vulgar and is always dignified. Thus, it always remains “correct” and “graceful”. Looking beyond the 18th century, aristocratic music floundered and declined. *Chǒngak* continued a limited development during the 19th century, but it was folk music, particularly the genres of *p’ansori* and *sanjo* that were able to transcend social boundaries and move into urban and predominantly middle-class settings, that flourished. Hence, the following chapters move from historical considerations of *kagok* to folk music proper.