

# The Sopo-ri Mother's Singing Room and the Resurrection of Local Folk Song Tradition\* †

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## 〈차 례〉

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## 【ABSTRACT】

For many scholars of Korean music, the southwestern province of the Korean peninsula remains a bright spot for folk performance activity. Residents of Jindo are widely acknowledged to be among the most proficient performers of Korean folk traditions. Thanks to the efforts of some key individuals, a few local genres underwent a period of refinement during the latter half of the 20th century which

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led to these genres' designations as intangible cultural heritage. The island of Jindo, alone, hosts four performance traditions designated as national intangible heritage with many others designated regional and/or local intangible heritage. Many residents of the island, while depending on agricultural activities to earn a livelihood, began focusing energies on learning local music traditions both as a way to cushion their incomes and vie for coveted designation as human cultural treasure.

This paper focuses on the efforts of the Sopo Village *eomeoni noraebang* (mother's singing room) in resurrecting and promoting folk song heritage. Instituted and curated by Han Namrye with the help of local government funding, the Sopo-ri *eomeoni noraebang* became both creative and social outlet for women of the village. Preceding the village's current *jeonsugwan*, the *noraebang* served as a crucial vehicle for maintaining and teaching local folk songs as well as provided a space for the learning of professionalized genres such as *pansori*. The paper examines both the primary performance repertory of members as well as the tension between perceived local standards and those promulgated by the official intangible heritage system. Balanced between need to preserve a local identity and promotion of the village within a contemporary tourism-based economic climate, the *noraebang* vitalizes local performance tradition as it reinvents and personalizes it. The paper argues for a consideration of grassroots efforts in cultural reconstruction and preservation in addition to the political and economic incentives driving cultural production in this southwestern corner of the peninsula.

【Keywords】 traditional music revival, transmission, preservation, intangible cultural heritage, Korean folk song, Jeolla nam-do, Sopo-ri

## 1. Introduction

For many scholars of Korean music, the southwestern province of the Korean peninsula remains a bright spot for folk performance activity. The island of Jindo, alone, hosts four performance traditions designated as national intangible heritage with many others designated regional and/or local intangible heritage. Some residents of the island, while depending on agricultural activities to earn a livelihood, focus energies on learning local music traditions both as a way to cushion their incomes and vie for coveted designation as human cultural treasure. Others find participation in folk music learning and performance to be an accessible way to maintain connections with the local community. Whatever the motivations, the residents of Jindo are widely acknowledged to be among the most proficient performers of Korean folk song traditions, with distinct styles that have inspired local forms of professional performance genres such as *pansori*.<sup>1)</sup>

While government support has served as a catalyst to interest in and support of local arts, personal investment in learning and performing folk arts has remained a crucial factor in the development of local traditions. In Shin Eunju's account of Dojang, a "folk song village" (*batnoraē maeul*) in southern Jeolla province, she asserts both a local flexibility in adjusting to changing times and understanding of the village's cultural capital has made it a model for folk song preservation and education. The success or failure of preservation largely depends on villagers' abilities and willingness to make it work. Similar to Dojang, the local government in Jindo designated the northwestern coastal village of Sopo-ri (hereafter, "sopori") as a traditional

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1) 김혜정 refers to this as "Jindo-style *pansori*" in her article 「진도 민속음악의 역사와 계승, 발전 방향」, 『남도민속연구』 vol. 6 (2000), p. 42.

arts village (*jeontong yesul ma-eul*) based on its artistic heritage and the positioning of the village in the contemporary preservation movement. The village hosts five community preservation associations, and the most prominent of these is the Sopori *eomeoni noraebang* (Sopo Village mother's singing room). This paper examines the role of the *eomeoni noraebang* in transmitting and promoting local folk song heritage.

Through an examination of the primary performance repertory as well as the narratives of members regarding their connection to it, the paper uncovers tension between perceived local standards of authenticity and those promulgated by the official intangible heritage system. Balanced between the need to preserve a local identity and promote the village, the *noraebang* vitalizes local performance tradition as it reinvents and personalizes it. The paper makes a case for considering grassroots efforts – including the personal political and economic incentives therein – as vital to the cultural preservation and reconstruction driving cultural production in this southwestern corner of the peninsula.

A concept central to this article is localization. A key method for examining localization is through a detailing of the performers' narratives regarding the centrality of the music to their lives and the meaning the performance genres hold for the local community. In performance, localization is enforced through the underscoring of a “supracultural aesthetic,” one on the margins and perennially on the brink of discovery.<sup>2)</sup> As an historically marginal community within a region relatively marginal to contemporary Korean society, the women and their village have come to represent many things in

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2) Paul Sant Cassia, “Exoticizing Discoveries and Extraordinary Experiences: ‘Traditional’ Music, Modernity, and Nostalgia in Malta and Other Mediterranean Societies,” *Ethnomusicology* vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring–Summer 2000), p. 297.

contemporary Korean life. While nostalgia fuels the curiosity that brings visitors to the village as well as support from the local government, the women represent a purity and authenticity sought in an increasingly blended, global contemporary culture. De Certeau contends society has become a recited society,<sup>3)</sup> and in this regard, recitation, or narration, are key to defining the significance of performance in the community. The performance space redefines intangible heritage in the context of the local community while, in turn, validating the community's claims in authentically representing local tradition.

## 2. Resurrecting the Past Through the Present

Cultural preservation and cultural promotion—two concepts key to contemporary cultural politics remain seemingly at odds, overlapping yet ostensibly clashing in their ultimate aim.<sup>4)</sup> Yet, are they truly at odds? The intangible cultural heritage system in the Republic of Korea began in 1962 with the designation of the first intangible cultural properties. Two years later, the government selected the first human cultural properties (or human cultural treasures/*in-gan munhwajae*) as holders of official intangible heritage. The premise was simple. Korea was rapidly modernizing and, therefore, aspects of Korea's traditional heritage needed safeguarding lest they disappear. In addition, the ROK's early development entailed the formation of a national identity. Like many developing nations at that time, this burgeoning identity

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3) Certeau, Michel de, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 186.

4) Keith Howard, *Bands, Songs, and Shamanistic Rituals: Folk Music in Korean Society* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1989), p. 16.

drew on notions of a national essence or core identity, which, according to many, rested in pre-modern or pre-nationhood cultural practices. The search for antiquity and its bedfellow, authenticity, was on.<sup>5)</sup> Since the beginnings of the heritage system, cultural preservation and promotion have been entwined in an intricate dance of national and local, public and personal interests.

As part of the southwestern Jeolla province, residents of Jindo vied early on for recognition within this government system. Historically a socially maligned area due to its distance from the capital, Jindo's potential as a hotbed of intangible heritage equaled its potential for upward mobility.<sup>6)</sup> Recognition of local heritage and the residents who perform it would mean a rise in local status, something which was difficult to achieve and greatly desired. Through the efforts of key individuals – including shaman performer Bak Byeongcheon, recognized as having worked with writers and artists to arrange performances for the stage – local genres underwent a period of refinement which led to designations as intangible cultural heritage beginning in the mid-1960s.<sup>7)</sup> Jindo-based folk songs, games, and instrumental performance such as *Ganggang sullae* (women's circle dance, national designation 1966), *Namdo deulnora* (southern cultivation songs, 1973), Jindo *ssikkim gut* (shaman ritual for the dead, 1980) and Jindo *dashiraegi* (funeral play, 1985) have been designated as national intangible heritage. Popular folk songs such as *Jindo arirang* have received national as well as international

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5) Keith Howard, *Preserving Korean Music: Intangible Cultural Properties as Icons of Identity* (Perspectives on Korean Music Volume 1)(Hants, England: Ashgate, SOAS Musicology Series, 2006).

6) 송기태, 『풍물굿 예능의 소통과 원형 창출: 진도 소포리 풍물굿을 대상으로』, 『남도민속연구』 vol. 23 (2011), p. 212; 이윤선, 『소포만의 간척기 민속음악 변화연구: 남도들노래, 진도만가, 진도북놀이를 중심으로』, 『도서문화』 vol. 27 (2006), p. 45.

7) 이윤선, for example, notes Bak Byeongcheon and scholar Ji Junsang teamed up and “exhumed” (발굴 하게 되고) “Jindo *deulnora*” for the 1971 national folk performance competition in *Ibid.*, p. 39.

recognition as a UNESCO Intangible World Heritage (under *Arirang* designation in 2012). In addition, Jindo *buk nori* (1987), Jindo *man-ga* (1987), *Namdo japga* (2001), *Sopo geolgun nongak* (2006), *Jodo datbae norae* (2006) and the making of Jindo *hongju* (1994) carry regional heritage designations. The designations helped to boost Jindo's visibility, marking it as an important center for artistic heritage.

One of the dangers of the system has been the potential for branding designated performances as the *authentic* versions, forcing alternative voices out. Keith Howard, for example, contends the system changed the structure of music performance and education pedagogy, and Lee Yunseon asserts designation was merely luck of the draw.<sup>8)</sup> The by-product of the rush to win designation has meant the exclusion of diverse voices in the official accounts of designated genres. Folk song collections and accounts attest to the great lyric and structural diversity within just one folk song, demonstrating the prime roles of locality and individuality in folk song expression.<sup>9)</sup> While contemporary folksong studies recognize such diversity, the dangers of thrusting all worthy examples into the regional and national spotlight remain palpable. As, according to Yi Bohyeong, “[T]he more local folksongs are sung in the national arena, the more they lose their local identity. It is not desirable to go on making more and more nominations.”<sup>10)</sup>

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8) Howard, *Preserving Korean Music*; 이윤선, *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

9) Admittedly, musical diversity is not as strongly marked as lyric and thematic diversity. Songs can be categorized into slow songs employing *yukjabaegi tori* (tritone e-a-b with c' and d' appearing as ornaments and the breaking tone from c' to b) with moderate *jungmori* or *jungjungmori* rhythmic cycle and faster, upbeat songs featuring duple rhythms (subdivided by rhythms of three) and a blend of *yukjabaegi* and Gyeonggi regional style (the latter an influence of itinerant performers and mass media). See 문화방송, 『MBC 한국민요대전 2: 전라남도민요 해설집』(문화방송, 1992); 임동권 *et al.*, 『한국민요논고』(민속원, 2006); 한국정신문화연구원, 『한국의 민속음악: 전라남도민요편』(성남: 한국정신문화연구원, 1993).

10) Personal interview quoted in Howard, *Bands, Songs, and Shamanistic Rituals*, p. 16.

The cultural weight of official recognition cannot be understated, and, despite an understanding of the diversity of folk song, song traditions remain heavily influenced by the preservation system. Yet, tensions resulting from an understanding of the constructed nature of traditions designated as “cultural property” teamed with a desire for recognition within that very system has granted vitality to musical performance in the region. Debates regarding authentic form and rightful heirs to musical transmission ironically contribute to the vitalization of the tradition. A similar phenomenon can be seen in Ireland wherein the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, the official government organization for music preservation in Ireland, finds itself at odds with individual performers. According to Rachel Fleming:

Here we encounter the paradox of most cultural forms, including traditional music: they must constrain, or base themselves upon a set of rules, in order to allow for communication and creativity. [ . . . ] the tensions between different groups struggling with this paradox appear to have aided the survival and vitality of the music itself.<sup>11)</sup>

Diverse perspectives power the production of a musical identity within this type of cultural context, carving a space for relevancy of tradition as it embraces the “aesthetics of everyday life.”<sup>12)</sup> In Jindo’s Sopo Village, I contend this is accomplished through a process of reterritorialization of musical practice. While villages within the Sopo Bay area of Jindo historically exhibited no marked cultural distinctions, competition between villages came

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11) Rachel C. Fleming, “Resisting Cultural Standardization: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the Revitalization of Traditional Music in Ireland,” *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol. 41, No. 2/3, Special Double Issue: Advocacy Issues in Folklore (May–Dec 2004), p. 227.

12) Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Aesthetics of Everyday Life,” in *Conversations Before the End of Time*, ed. Suzi Gablik (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), p. 410.



to the fore with the advent of the intangible heritage system and the New Village Movement.<sup>13)</sup> The case for a clear village identity, expressed musically, becomes realized in the recounting of Sopo's artistic history and through the act of performance. Performance itself becomes an act of cultural democracy, through which participation imbues authenticity.<sup>14)</sup>

### 3. Sopo's Artistic Heritage

Sopo is a village on the western side of Jindo Island (Jindo-gun). Residents have historically made their living through salt harvesting, fishing and farming. As noted by Lee Yunseon, the village's artistic heritage and influence is closely tied to the development and evolution of sea-trade.<sup>15)</sup> Sopo Village once served as the primary gateway to Jindo via a ferry running between Jindo and Mokpo on the mainland. Historically one of the largest villages on Jindo, its residents collaborated with *sadangpae* (itinerant performers) to perform *pungmulpae* in villages around the island as a way to promote their industry. The local *pungmul* performers networked regularly with various entertainment groups, a historically-based practice that has influenced Sopo residents' relationship with the performing arts to this day.

Land reclamation and cultural preservation ushered in changes that affect Soporri villagers to this day. In 1968, the village was comprised of nine

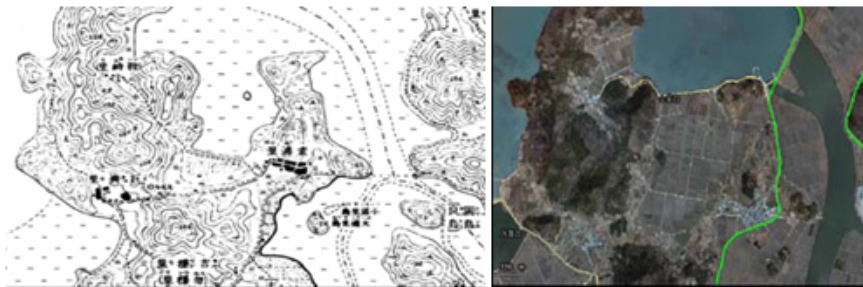
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13) 이윤선, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31.

14) The concept of cultural democracy offers an alternative to the construct of "official culture." Cultural democracy requires active participation in cultural life over passive consumption. See Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, *Crossroads: Reflections on the Politics of Culture* (Talmage, Calif.: DNA Press, 1990).

15) 이윤선, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

divisions with a population of 1,770 (898 males and 872 females) in 330 farm households. Beginning in 1973 and in conjunction with the New Village Movement, the government began a tide water control and land reclamation project which filled in the salt fields of Sopo Bay and blocked boat paths to and from the village (see Figure 1). Direct water routes to the village were permanently blocked in 1986. When the Jindo Bridge was constructed in 1984, it signified a new era for Jindo, one of urban flight and an increasingly aging population. Currently, the village consists of approximately five divisions with a population of approximately 250. Sopori has recently been designated a “green village” and is known for the production of black rice. A relatively isolated community, the village has had to re-shape its identity in order to survive.



〈Figure 1〉 Sopo Bay in 1918, left, and now, right

Topographic developments combined with the intangible property system and the growing importance of the tourist industry has encouraged a harnessing of local performing arts as a viable option for economic and political competitiveness.<sup>16)</sup> The viability of village performing arts

16) 송기태, *op. cit.*

transmission and performance appears to be a combined product of modernization (*hyeondaehwa*), government policies, and a refurbished contemporary identity augmented by demographic shifts and incentive-based nostalgia. Significant local developments follow the advent of the intangible heritage system in 1962.<sup>17)</sup> On March 3, 1960, the Sopori *ganggangsullae* team won first place in the first annual *ganggangsullae* regional competition.<sup>18)</sup> A 1960 memorial photograph features all female performers in matching *hanbok*, symbolic of a contemporary construction of *ganggangsullae* in the popular imagination. In 1975, the local government lent support for the establishment of the Sopori Mother's Singing Room (*Sopori eomeoni noraebang*) as a site of musical transmission and preservation. In 1980, the regional government honored Sopori with the designation "Nongak Preservation Village" (*nongak bojon ma-eul*) for its continued performance of Sopori *geolgun nongak* with a 38-member troupe. In February 2003, local government granted Sopori official designation as a Traditional Arts Village (*jeontong yesul ma-eul*), and the village saw the completion of the Sopo Traditional Folk Transmission Center.

Concern with performance activities or promoting cultural heritage of the village appears to be a regularly new phenomenon. In interviews, villagers consistently contend they recall little to no music-making in the village prior to the late 1960s. Gwak Sun-gyeong, a woman who married into the village in her early twenties, remembers kind in-laws but hours and hours of back-breaking work. She states affirmatively, "No. There was just no

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17) *Ibid.*

18) This historical fact is a source of bitterness for Sopori residents who believed villagers were overlooked in the consideration of *ganggangsullae* as national intangible cultural property in 1966. A general consensus among residents contends Sopori's to be the original *ganggangsullae*. See 소포리 마을지편찬위원회, 『소포마을: 협동으로 내일을 여는 마을 공동체』(2012), p. 80.

consideration of singing or music performance then. We just worked.”<sup>19)</sup>

Gwak asserts Han Namrye introduced her to folk song performance. Han, who had also married into the village in 1953, married into a family steeped in *nongak* performance tradition. Her husband, Gim Yangsik, participated in the community’s *geolgun nongak* and her brother-in-law, Gim Naesik, is a practitioner of *buk chum* (*buk* dance performer), also a part of *geolgun nongak*. Yet, even before Han set foot in Sopo village, she had already had years of exposure via her mother and close family members. She recalls evenings on special occasions when the entire village – women, men, children all together – spent hours in *ganggangsullae* play. Han has vivid memories of her mother leading the calls to which the group responded. Her memories of these improvisatory, collaborative performances influenced her desire to engage in music performance as an adult. I believe, as well, potential opportunities through the intangible heritage system offered incentive to devote a good portion of her life as an adult to folk music learning, transmission and performance.

#### 4. Sopo Mother’s Singing Room

##### 1) History and Development

The mother’s singing room (*eomeoni noraebang*) began in November 1973 as a collective of women seeking camaraderie and as a venue for musical transmission. Han Namrye served as the catalyst to the *noraebang*’s

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19) 박순경, personal interview (진도군 지산면 소포리, 17 July 2014).

institution, inspired by the designation of neighboring villagers as *in-gan munhwajae* (human cultural treasures) and her long standing love for and connections with singing traditions. Han and the other women in the village learned older, local folk songs such as “Dungdangae taryeong” (full moon song, also known as “rat-a-tat song”) and “Dalgeori” (song of time) from two elderly members (Gim Makgeum and Jeong Taesim) of the original 40-member *noraebang* and this is when, according to Han, her “hobby life began”<sup>20)</sup> (see Figure 2).



<Figure 2> Han Namrye at the gate of the *eomeoni noraebang* (left), and inside the old singing room, April 2014 (photos by author)

In addition to a desire to bond collectively over song, the *noraebang's* beginnings are undoubtedly a product of the time and of local competition over artistic resources. The designation of *Namdo deulnora* (southern cultivation songs) in 1973 sparked much controversy as local villagers believe the right to the designation had been taken from them by neighboring villagers. Sopori villagers had had a long history of social and cultural

20) [http://cafe.daum.net/\\_c21/\\_bbs\\_search\\_read?grpId=1TZ6T&fldid=kB&datanum=29](http://cafe.daum.net/_c21/_bbs_search_read?grpId=1TZ6T&fldid=kB&datanum=29); 한남례, personal interview (소포리, 10 February 2015).

exchange with their Inji neighbors, mostly due to the fact that the well-known hereditary shaman Bak family acted as the local spiritual practitioners. Members of the Bak family, including Bak Byeongcheon and his first wife (the mother of current Jindo *ssitkingut isuja* Bak Mi-ok), had a history of teaching dance, vocal, and instrumental performance to people across the island.<sup>21)</sup> While in Sopo, the story goes, Bak picked up the *deulnora* of local villagers, refined and combined it with Inji songs, and submitted the reworked *deulnora* with Inji Villagers for consideration as national cultural heritage. Although both villages had been a part of the Sopo Bay cultural area, proactive work on the part of Bak (a native of Inji) meant the neighboring village was the first to submit a bid for designation. Inji's successful designation, as well as a local designation for Inji residents as holders of Jindo *man-ga* (also known as *sangyeosori*) resulted in resentment and ongoing competition between the two villages.<sup>22)</sup> *Deulnora*'s designation in 1973 inspired action on the part of Han who was determined to ensure the local repertoire's identification with Sopo Village alone.

In 1978, the *noraebang* received a request from the local government to designate a representative. Senior members voted Han Namrye as the head of the singing association and, once officially registered with the government, the singing collective began receiving 1 million won a year (approx. 1,000 US dollars) for training and performance expenses. With this recognition, the *noraebang* became an official cultural heritage association within the village. After a while, Han became the primary instructor at the *noraebang*. According to many women I have interviewed for this project, song had not been a regular part of their lives until involvement with the *noraebang*. Now

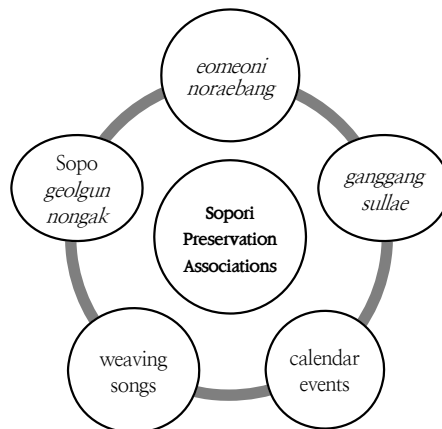
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21) 한남례, personal interview (소포리, 30 August 2014 and 10 February 2015).

22) 콕순경, personal interview (소포리, 17 July 2014).

these songs have come to define them and their connection with the past.

An official village heritage association (see Figure 3), the collective began to enlist the mentorship of seasoned performance specialists. Han called in Sopo native and amateur *pansori* singer Bak Byeongim to teach the professional song repertoire, including *pansori*, and to hone the women's skills in genres such as *sangyeosori* (funeral procession songs). Born in 1920, Bak served in the military during the Japanese occupation. Upon his return to Sopo in the 1940s, he took up farming. He traveled to nearby villages to work in the fields and through this experience he was exposed to cultivation songs. As he participated in the call and response work songs, he discovered his natural proclivity towards singing and sought, soon after, to learn from local *pansori* master Yi Byeonggi (1891–1968), who was married to renowned *pansori* specialist Yi Imrye.<sup>23)</sup> Bak taught the women popular songs and *dan-ga* he learned from Yi Byeonggi such as “Heungtaryeong,” “Yukjabaegi” and “Binjiregi taryeong,” songs which have become a representative part of their repertoire.<sup>24)</sup>



〈Figure 3〉 Sopo Village Preservation Associations

23) 이윤선, 『구술 진도민속음악사』(이소북, 2004), pp. 20–26.

24) *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

In 2003, the *comeoni noraebang* relocated to the Sopo Traditional Folk Transmission Center after receiving funding to erect the building and the adjacent building serving as a bed and breakfast for village guests. The management responsibilities shifted to Han's nephew, Gim Byeongcheol, and community members of all preservation associations use the space for educational and performance activities, performances referred to as "traditional culture experience" (*jeontong yesul cheheom*). The singing association has moved from an intimate, female-dominated space, to one involving the entire community. The move to the new Center coincided with the village's designation as a traditional folk culture village and placed it officially on the tourist map of Jindo. For a brief period, Center members traveled throughout the peninsula to perform at music festivals, but dwindling funds and aging performers have meant the performances take place primarily at the *jeonsugwan*. Depending on the presence of guests at the village (typically either students or vacationing groups), performances will occur once or twice a month, sometimes with more frequency depending on the season. Over the past year, *nongak* team practice and village children's classes has made the Center a busy place and the women prefer to assemble at the home of a *noraebang* member.

## 2) Repertoire and Performance

Performances are aimed at solidifying the repertoire as an authentic representative of the community. One way in which this is done is by labeling the songs as belonging to Sopori. For example, performances will be introduced as "Sopori beteulnora" or "Sopori ganggangsullae." Another and the least common way of authenticating the repertoire in transmission center performances is through physical action.<sup>25)</sup> "Beteulnora" (weaving song) has been performed while some of the women simulate weaving; heads covered



〈Figure 4〉 Sopo *eomeoni noraebang* performance repertoire

Representative Performance Repertoire - <i>eomeoni noraebang</i>	
Local Work/Folk Songs	Professional/Popular
베틀노래/weaving song	빈지레기/sealife play ( <i>dan-ga</i> )
물레타령/water mill song	진도아리랑(popular)
꿩타령/pheasant song	흥타령/ <i>Heungtaryeong</i>
노루타령/roe deer song	육자배기/ <i>Yukjabaegi</i>
흥그레타령/song of loneliness	
둥당에타령/rat-a-tat song	
소포 강강술래/Sopo <i>ganggangsullae</i>	
자장가/lullaby	

in scarves and seated on the ground, their hands slowly weaving the threads through the wheel and turning the crank. The remaining women stand in a semi-circle and lead refrains to which all the women respond. In this context, more than a mere call-and-response, the melody employs deeply the *yukjabaegi* melodic contours and performance style. As the song progresses to the *jajinmori* section, the call-and-response becomes more pronounced and the melodic contours less complex. “Beteulnoraе,” more typically, is presented as part of a set beginning with “Mulletaryeong” and blending into “Beteulnoraе.” Likewise, a procession of “Dungdangae taryeong,” “Norutaryeong,” “Kkweongtaryeong,” “Daktaryeong” is both common and easily achievable due to the almost identical melodic lines of the songs.

A focus on female perspectives and the role of music in expressing these remains a key aesthetic to the *noraebang* members’ performances. Overcoming

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25) Such performance practice used to be typical, but performance fatigue and age of performers has led to simpler performance formats at the transmission center. For performances at the Hyangto munhwawon (the local culture center) in Jindo Township, more elaborate settings are common.

crises, reaching a turning point, holding onto life despite hardships are key points of focus in the framing of song performance.<sup>26)</sup> Performances of songs are typically preceded with a lengthy introduction by Gim Byeongcheol who acts as the emcee, and women are given the opportunity to offer their own perspective on the songs. For example, in a performance of “Jajinmori Dungdangae taryeong,” the lyrics would be put forth as an allegorical representative of female hardship in the rural southwest.<sup>27)</sup> In the lyrics below the age difference between a bride and her new husband offer an example of limited choice and freedom in the past.

입의 방에 불 밝혀라 입의 방으로 잠들러 가자  
 입의 나이는 신의 여덟 내 나이는 열에 여덟.

Han Namrye typically performs “Heunggeurae taryeong” (song of loneliness/lament) while seated. Prior to singing, she details her hardships under the strict control of her mother-in-law, beginning with the story of how she, at the age of 19 in 1953, boarded a boat for Sopori, where she would begin her new life as a married woman. Han’s treatment at the hands of her mother-in-law was particularly harsh and she details how she turned to song to express her sadness and resentment at the harsh life fate handed her.

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26) The potential for romanticizing is strong. In 김미숙·오수성, 『생애사 연구를 통해서 본 진도 여성의 삶과 예술』, 『남도민속연구』 vol. 15 (2007), pp. 9, 15–17, the authors underscore a natural proclivity for older rural women to express themselves via folksong as akin to therapy; the strong sense of cultural identity aiding in attending to social ills.

27) Scholars of folk song typically classify “Dungdangae taryeong” as representative of women’s song culture, with many of the varied lyrics overlapping with those of *sijipsari norae* (songs of married life). See 이옥희, 『동당에타령의 존재양상과 문화적 위상』, 『한국민요학』 vol. 15 (2004), pp. 303–32.

엄매 엄매 우리 엄매  
 뭣 할라고 나를 낳았어  
 글 공부나 시켜 주제  
 일 공부를 시켰든가.

Han notes, “When I perform this, the younger people don’t truly understand, but amongst the older women in the audience there is not a dry eye.” In this context, the past becomes experienced vicariously through performance. The rural female experience in the past is, itself, an exotic other rendered personal by close contact with the performer.<sup>28)</sup> More importantly, a song that is not particularly about Han becomes a song about her experiences, representing her life from her perspective to the audience.

The personalization of the songs in performance is a crucial strategy in the authentication of the music as local and belonging to the Sopo community of women. Even songs from the popular realm, such as “Heungtaryeong” become expressive of the lives of the women singing them at that moment. Prior to a performance of “Heungtaryeong” Gim Byeongcheol wistfully recites the lyrics and adds the commentary, “You see, this is their life; a life full of unimaginable hardship encapsulated through these lyrics.” The atmosphere becomes solemn, and the audience is prepared to fully take a song about heartbreak and broken dreams.

꿈이로다 꿈이로다 모두가 다 꿈이로다  
 너도 나도 꿈속이요 이것 저것이 꿈이로다  
 꿈 깨이니 또 꿈이고 깨인 꿈도 꿈이로다

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28) 한남례, personal interview (소포리, 9 April 2014).

꿈에 나서 꿈에 살고 꿈에 죽어 가는 인생  
 부질없다 깨려는 꿈, 꿈은 꾸어서 무엇을 할거나  
 아이고 테고 어허 흥 성화가 났네 해.

Melodramatic as this moment might be, the framing by Gim lends a crucial ingredient to the personalization of the repertoire. Performance of the local female identity bridges the gap to cultural identity, representing a metaphorical healing of contemporary society.<sup>29)</sup> This characterizes the appeal of such traditional cultural experiences for the audiences. For the women of the *noraebang*, the act of performance deepens the local connection with the repertoire.



〈Figure 5〉 Han Namrye performs “Heunggeurae taryeong” (left) and women perform “Heungtaryeong” in the Sopo Traditional Folk Transmission Center, April 2014. (photos by author)

Voices of concern might pinpoint the inorganic quality of presenting local folk songs within a transmission center. The meaning shifts from that of

29) An idea put forth by 김미숙 · 오수성, *op. cit.*, p. 23: “자신도 모르게 자기 안의 멋을 느끼며 자발적이고 능동적으로 자기표현이 가능하게 되었고 새롭게 찾아나는 자기의 감정을 춤과 노래로 풀어가게 되었다. 점차 남이 보는 나로부터 내가 보는 나로 자기중심이 옮겨가게 되는 경험이었다.”

functional social bonding to that of entertainment value, encouraging cries of foul play in the authenticity department. Gim Hyejeong, for example, notes the change in the culture of *ganggangsullae*. Once an activity that involved the entire community, embodying the communal spirit of rural Jindo, *ganggangsullae* has now become a spectacle brought out for displays of cultural heritage. “다만 문화재라는 이름으로 남들에게 보여주기 위한 강강술래만이 있을 뿐이다. 완전한 공연물로 변화해 버린 것이다.”<sup>30)</sup> At the same time, and to be fair, society and labor have changed and, therefore, have social interactions while mass media has come to dominate social down time. The presence and function of such performing arts should naturally change as society changes. The outward appearance of cultural display might have deeper meaning if we look beyond an understanding of *ganggangsullae*, for example, as a monolithic genre to a consideration of diversity in local performance.



〈Figure 6〉 Performing *ganggangsullae* in the transmission center, April 2014 (photos by author)

Fantasies of the communal, non-competitive folk aside,<sup>31)</sup> local performances enact local conflicts regarding ownership and authenticity. Despite cultural

30) 김혜정, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

31) 김미숙·오수정, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

display-based motivations for performance of genres such as *ganggangsullae*, a new meaning is created in the process of local performance. Considering Sopo's history of *ganggangsullae* performance and rivalries regarding the authentic performance form, *noraebang* members' performances of "Sopori *ganggangsullae*" can be seen as a subtle act of defiance. While drawing on much of the "official" repertoire of the regional style, the localized, personalized renderings by the women reterritorialize the songs to be those of Sopori. The re-interpretation of cultural practices serves to persuade both the audience and the women of their rights to this performance genre and, in the process, a retrieval of the old is equally unfolding the new.<sup>32)</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

One of the goals of this paper has been to demonstrate the necessity of local action in cultural preservation and performance. Local, grassroots efforts in both transmitting and rebuilding local repertoire, connected with local identities and history, should be the most important consideration of intangible heritage research. While the intangible cultural properties system has proven functionally effective, it has also been criticized for limiting creativity and denying diversity of local forms. The women of the *comeoni noaraebang* have re-invigorated and expanded on local repertoire through decades of musical transmission and performance. As a community, they have actively participated in a process of revising and reclaiming performance genres, such as *ganggangsullae* and *sangyeosori*, as theirs alone. Local acts of

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32) Walter Jost and Michael Hyde, *Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 16.

authentification, seemingly at odds with “official culture,” have leant vibrancy to traditional performing arts in Jindo.

The localization of performance genres is accomplished through a personalization of the lyrical content and social function of folk songs. The women realize a supracultural aesthetic of locality, historical marginalization and uniqueness through recounting. In the narrating the past through such performances, the performers and their performance genres find new relevance in the presence. Visitors to the village experience this marginal, exotic, female experience through participating, albeit passively, in performance. The truth of “Sopo ganggangsullae” remaining noticeably indistinct from other versions, and the reality that “Heungtaryeong,” among popular folk songs, is not technically a local folk song but a relatively new and popular songs are insignificant to the role their performance plays in the formation of the local narrative.

Harkening back to de Certeau’s “recited society,” the narratives framing the performance event create a sense of a lived experience with music at its core. According to Han Namrye, “Singing is my medicine.”<sup>33)</sup> For Han, the cathartic release through artistic expression is real. The singing also serves a vital function in staking Han’s claim, and that of the Sopo Village community, as a contributor to the folk song heritage of Jindo. Both of these narrated experiences – personal transformation and artistic authentification – become a real marginal space of nostalgia and community for the audience. The expression “For song to be a part of life, it must sing of life, work and love” rings true here in this space for the mothers of Soporì.

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33) 한남례, personal interview (소포리, 10 February 2015).

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## 【국문초록】

## 소포어머니노래방과 지역 민요 전통의 부활

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한국음악을 연구하는 많은 학자들에게 한반도의 남서부 지방은 민속 활동을 연구할 수 있는 중요한 장소로 남아 있다. 진도의 주민들은 한국 민속 전통에서 가장 숙련된 연주자로 인정받고 있고, 일부 진도의 문화유산은 주요한 몇몇 개인의 노력으로 20세기 후반에 들어 세련되게 정제되는 과정을 거쳐 무형문화유산으로 지정되었다. 진도에서만 네 가지 전통문화가 국가무형유산으로 지정되었고, 그 외 많은 것들이 지역무형유산으로 지정되었다. 진도의 많은 주민들이 농사를 생업으로 삼고 있지만, 소득에 대한 대비책 또는 인간문화재를 얻기 위한 방법으로 전통음악을 익히는데 집중하기 시작했다.

이 논문은 민요 유산의 부활과 활성화를 위한 소포어머니노래방의 노력에 초점을 맞추었다. 소포어머니노래방은 지방정부 자금을 받아 한남례가 설립하여 관장하였고, 이곳은 곧 마을 여성들을 위한 창조적이고 사회적인 공간으로 발전하였다. 현재 마을에서 운영되고 있는 전수관의 전신으로서 노래방은 민요를 유지하고 가르치는 중요한 장소로 제공되었을 뿐만 아니라 판소리와 같이 전문적인 장르를 배울 수 있는 기회를 제공하는 장소로도 역할을 하였다. 지역 문화를 보존하고 마을의 경제적 활성화를 이루어 내기 위해 소포어머니노래방은 전통을 재창조하고 이를 특성화시킴으로써 지역 문화에 활력을 불어넣었다. 본 연구는 한반도 남서부 구석에서 이루어지고 있는 문화 재건과 보존을 위한 민초(grassroots) 노력과 더불어 문화 생산을 위한 정치적·경제적 장려책 고려에 대한 주장을 담았다.

【주제어】 한국전통음악의 부활, 전승, 보존, 무형문화재, 민요, 전라남도, 소포리