Roald Maliangkay, *Broken Voices: Postcolonial Entanglements and the Preservation of Korea's Central Folksong Traditions*

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. 247 pages. Hardcover, $64.00. ISBN: 9780824866655.

Broken Voices represents the first solo book-length publication by Australia National University scholar Roald Maliangkay. Nurtured through his enduring interest in Korean folksong and the intangible heritage system, the book takes readers through a decades-long journey to understand and interpret the ways by which Korea's intangible heritage system preserves, shapes, distorts, and recreates Korea's cultural heritage. The book strikes a careful balance between exploration and critique of cultural policy, with a consideration of the people entangled in this system. A carefully researched and thorough ethnography of mid- and northwestern *minyo* (folksong) included in Korea's intangible heritage system, it represents a much-needed addition to contemporary scholarship on Korea and Korean music.

The book's six chapters, including an introduction and conclusion, explore deeply Maliangkay's central contention that the Korean heritage system is a derivative of the Japanese colonial system, an assertion both evident to scholars of Korea yet controversial within the Korean context. His primary argument centers on the "strategies and notions developed by the Japanese during the colonial period [as they] have impacted Korea's folksong traditions" (3). The introductory chapter covers the roots of such notions through a look at the development of the heritage system and its imbedded self-orientalization. He argues that, as the system took hold, it influenced specific choices to adapt folksongs to ideals of the system. Through a survey of repertoire, music, representation, and performance styles, Maliangkay explores the impact of the preservation system on constructs of authenticity. In his "attempt to show how Korean folksong traditions have evolved and what factors have caused them to change" (15), Maliangkay artfully weaves together the many strands of intangible heritage, national culture, and paradigms of authentic tradition.

Chapter 1, "Colonial Foundations of Korean Cultural Policy," dives into the many complexities of the heritage system in Korea and introduces the three genres of focus—*Kyŏnggi minyo*, *Sŏnsori san t'aryŏng*, and *Sŏdo sori*. The chapter also covers the history of and parallels between Japanese and Korean systems of cultural legislation. In his discussion of authenticity, Maliangkay explores the complexities of recording (45) in "Western" notation, integrating the ongoing debate in the Korean music world regarding its ineffectuality at capturing the nuances of Korean sound. Although he does not mention that this system remains the primary form for recording and analysis, such details regarding the complexities of determining "authenticity" are central to the discussion of intangible heritage in Korea.

Chapter 2, "Defining Folksongs: Characteristics and Terminology," offers a thorough look into the ways by which "folksong" has been defined and the ways it fits into the Korean context. Here, Maliangkay discusses the constructs of regional distinctions and related categories, which frame all contemporary discussions of Korean folk music, but which remain quite opaque and difficult to pin down. Chapter 3, "Masculinity in Demise: *Sŏnsori san t'aryŏng* and *Kyŏnggi minyo*," uncovers both historic reasons for and the purposeful gendering of performance genres. The issue of gender imbalance in *Kyŏnggi minyo* is particularly pertinent to contemporary Korean folksong studies. Chapter 4, "Embodying Nostalgia: *Sŏdo sori*," explores the regional origins of *sŏdo sori* and the related northwestern oral narrative *Paebaengi kut*. In this chapter, Maliangkay demonstrates the ways historical circumstances have granted flexibility in contemporary performances of these genres: "I contend that the genre will not be broken by the impending loss of native representatives and place, but sustained instead by its ability to invoke nostalgia" (115). Maliangkay's choice to include a discussion and detailed transcription of *Paepaengi kut* represents a unique contribution to studies of Korean folksong. Although often disdained in *kugak* circles as a "gag" or comedy show and not "real" *kugak*, Maliangkay deftly demonstrates the significance of the genre within *Sŏdo sori* as well as the influence of one performer, Yi Ŭn'gwan, on the development of the genre.

Maliangkay's writing is balanced and nuanced, yet there are some inconsistencies in this presentation that merit mention. While undoubtedly an essential contribution to research on Korean folksong and intangible heritage, there are slight oversights that might distract the focus of Korea-specialist readers, such as an editing error indicating the end date of the *Imjin waeran* to be 1958 (29) and the identification of *sangyŏ sori* as a song title when, in fact, it is a genre of funerary dirges (122). Scattered throughout the book are assumptions regarding Christianity as an arch nemesis to Korean folksong traditions. While in some realms of conservative Christianity this may be true, he overlooks the branches of Christianity in which this is not the case. In some spots, references are cited without question, such as Timothy Tangherlini's argument that, "because shamans were predominantly female, their publicly taking center stage symbolized a rejection of the traditional Confucian social order" (8). It's a bit tired to see the old reliable "embrace or rejection of Confucianism" explain this phenomenon when people familiar with life in Korea would assert this to be the case because societally women have little to lose. Another would be the faulty implication (10) that the "masses" in North Korea were at the core of musical developments, in contrast to South Korea's government-centered initiatives. Perhaps irony was intended here, but it is difficult to discern. These are, however, relatively minor issues when considered as a part of the background informing the main thrust of the book.

I take more serious issue with Maliangkay's rather light coverage of Korean aesthetics. While not the focus of the book, more accuracy is needed in discussing aspects of melody and rhythm inherent to the genres. In covering individual genres, he does tend to go into more detail, yet he unfortunately collapses all Korean folksong into one blended style in his section on general aesthetics. While Maliangkay rightfully contends in his introduction that regional distinctions remain fuzzy, differences in timbre and vocal methods remain a very real part of Korean folksong aesthetic paradigms.

Maliangkay blurs all folksong vocal timbre as "husky," intense, and "seemingly unpolished," with use of falsetto registers (58). Here, he appears to describe the

prototypical southwestern (husky timbre) character with a nod to *Sŏdo* style (dominance of falsetto). In a discussion of pitch, Maliangkay writes, "As with most Korean traditional music, a pitch-perfect tone is not the ideal: sliding from one pitch to another is a fairly common ornament" (58). Pitch shadings and variability of pitch are indeed common, but the construct of a solidly set pitch is one rooted in European classical musical standards and has little to do with Korean music models. In fact, pitch is conceived quite differently in Korean traditional music and there are very specific ideas regarding melodic production and pitch movement therein. Therefore, his assertion of the undesirability of "perfect tone" is not quite accurate. "Perfect" according to whom? The discussion of aesthetics should have been more nuanced and much less "West-centric."

Despite the above-described shortcomings, Maliangkays's work demonstrates an exhaustive search for the meanings of authenticity and the underpinnings of change in Korean folksong performance. The title, *Broken Voices*, serves as a fitting analogy for Korean folksong and the people who perform it. While it literally refers to the training priority of ripening or "breaking" the voice to achieve a desired aesthetic, Maliangkay uses "broken" to refer to a disconnect between folksong's historically rooted meanings and its contemporary use as a harbinger of nostalgia. His use of interview narratives captured in conversations with his interlocuters is particularly effective in underscoring the human side of cultural policy. The stories of performers such as Yi Ŭn'gwan demonstrate the power of human autonomy in shaping performance genre. Yet, other stories, such as that of the official rejection of gifted artist Kim Okshim, reveal the tragedies of entanglement in a heritage system that privileges a chosen few. Such narratives provide detailed examples of the controversies regarding selection criteria and open up Maliangkay's well-placed examples to a broader discussion of calculated construction of national heritage.

Maliangkay's essential contribution to scholarship on Korea and Korean music is quite accessible thanks to his clear writing style. He does not burden his reader with jargon, and he explains Korea-specific concepts quite clearly. *Broken Voices* should be essential reading for graduate students and advanced undergraduates studying Korea as well as all scholars of Korea. In addition, its accessibility makes the book a perfect read for all interested in national cultural policy and the impact of such policy on performers and genres.

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