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The Birth of “Rok”: Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964–1975

Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin

Intro: “The Lady in the Rain”

The song begins with a guitar playing a pentatonic melody line. Another guitar follows with a slight pitch bend, a brand new trick at the time of the recording. Then the lead singer steps in, crooning mellifluously as the background vocals repeat after him at each measure. During the bridge, the lead guitar slides into a surf rock–inspired solo to accentuate the gorgeous soundscape of “Pisogŭi yŏin” (“The Lady in the Rain”). The polished form belies the fact that this was the one of the very first rock ‘n’ roll songs written and recorded in Korean. The major credit is due to composer and guitarist Shin Joong Hyun (Sin Chung-hyŏn), better known as “Jacky” or “Hicky” Shin among the American GIs garrisoned in South Korea (henceforth Korea) during the 1950 and 1960s.
Born in 1938, Shin belongs to the generation of Koreans hard-bitten by the Korean War at a young age. His generation was also the first to experience American popular culture up close, mainly through the broadcasts of the American Forces Korea Network (AFKN). “The AFKN quenched my thirst for music,” Shin has recalled. “I was instantly fascinated by jazz and rock ‘n’ roll, which brought me to my true passion and inner self.”

Before long, he found himself performing in front of American servicemen the music he had learned from the AFKN. Like many of his contemporaries, Shin cut his teeth as a professional musician on the stages of the U.S. military clubs.

In 1964, when Shin’s new band, the Add Four (fig. 1), came out with “Pisogūi yōin,” the entertainment business for the U.S. military was at the height of its boom. However, the escalation of the Vietnam War and the subsequent shift of American military focus away from Korea portended a downhill road ahead. As if anticipating the eventual passing of the good times, “Pisogūi yōin” is steeped in a somewhat premature nostalgia. “The unforgettable lady in the rain,” whose exotic “yellow raincoat” and familiar “dark eyes” make an interesting visual contrast, creates a visual metaphor of Korean musicians yearning for “foreign” music.

**American Pop in Korea: Cultural Imperialism Deconstructed**

The young Shin Joong Hyun was the perfect poster child for the American cultural onslaught on not only Korea but the entire U.S. “zone of influence” in East Asia. Immediately after the end of the Pacific War, musicians in American-occupied Japan and Korea learned to make their living playing the music of the occupiers. During the early years of the Cold War, Korean and Taiwanese teenagers would gather around small transistor radios to listen to the music from the American Forces Network. Without question, the U.S. military presence was a catalyst for significant changes in local music culture.

At first, the concomitant military might and cultural influence would appear to support the charge of cultural imperialism coming from both the Left and the Right. Cultural imperialism draws a clear parallel between the political and economic domination of an imperial power over its colonies.
and the cultural dominance of one nation, ethnic group, or civilization over another. Early critics of cultural imperialism pointed fingers at the global media industries in particular for ideologically manipulating local popu-
laces and extracting profits from them. Thanks to the global reach of their
cultural and economic power, Disney and the Hollywood film industry in
general fit relatively well in the analysis of what is also known as media
imperialism.³

There is, however, considerable skepticism about cultural imperialism in
the popular music studies literature. When it comes to music and songs,
cultural interactions between metropole and colony are far from unilateral
or unidirectional. For one, the language barrier between Anglophone and
non-Anglophone worlds should be an impediment to whatever ideological
message Anglo-American pop songs supposedly deliver to local mass
audiences. For another, modern Western popular music owes a great deal
to the input from other musical cultures, particularly African and Afro-Caribbean. In short, the mass media–propaganda model of cultural imperialism is not wholly adequate to capture the great diversity and autonomy of local music cultures vis-à-vis global Anglo-American pop. The economic argument for the cultural imperialism thesis also does not hold up well against the evidence. Exploitation of local markets by the global music industry is by no means a fait accompli. Local industries and music communities have shown resiliency and tenacity in protecting their share of the market from the onslaught of Anglo-American pop imports.

These counterarguments against cultural imperialism do not necessarily deny the global dominance of American pop culture. Rather, they point to the difference between cultural dominance and political and economic domination. As far as pop music is concerned, American dominance hinges on “style over substance”; no matter how much its profit margin has shrunk in the world market, the U.S. music industry still maintains a privileged status as the originator of most, if not all, global pop styles and genres. Many national and local pop music outputs are recognized, classified, advertised and consumed in terms of American pop genres, such as jazz, rock, hip-hop, R & B, and so forth. In this regard, American pop remains the global reference point from which emanates enormous symbolic power. Since its impact on local culture is often complex, subtle, and politically ambiguous, American pop music’s symbolically imperial status prompts us to “deconstruct” the meaning of cultural imperialism in conjunction with the political dynamics of globalization and local agency.

Many observers of international popular music culture note that the characteristic rebelliousness of rock and hip-hop music has proven magnetic for youth around the world. Some go so far as to argue that this kind of local appropriation of Anglo-American pop creates points of cultural and political resistance, allowing the youth to distinguish themselves from the settled norms of national culture. “Between accusations of being a form of cultural imperialism and exaltation as a libertarian force, rock has become a global ‘mediascape,’ transmitting diverse meanings. In particular countries, it can appear either as an imitation of imported styles or as a stimulus to the creation of hybrid styles, in which musicians blend elements from local musical traditions and add native language lyrics.” The Korean adaptation
of rock fits the bill in all these respects. Moreover, the U.S. military’s dual role in political domination and cultural dominance makes rock music’s entry into Korea an intriguing test case for the deconstruction of cultural imperialism.

By nurturing numerous musicians who would later become major players in the domestic music industry, the U.S. military club scene left an indelible mark on Korean music culture. Most notably, Shin Joong Hyun and other like-minded musicians shared with the Korean youth the style and ethos of the 1960s psychedelic rock they had assimilated from the scene. Thus the U.S. military base, a powerful symbol of American hegemony, turned into an improbable incubator of a fledgling Korean counterculture movement. Despite the accusation of cultural imperialism from the established elite and repression by the Korean military regime, this counterculture movement boldly staked a claim in nationalism, challenging the authorities on their own ideological turf of national culture.

The pedestrian label of “Korean rock” does not do justice to the rich texture of irony and contradiction ingrained in the music. We propose a new word, “rok.” This double transcription—reromanization of the Korean rendering of the English word rock—is intended to underscore the hybrid nature of the musical culture, where the global encounters the local, power blends with resistance, and mimesis turns into creation. Tracing the birth of rok involves a historical unpacking of the global-local dynamics of pop music that takes us back to the U.S. military’s earliest days in Korea.

The Cradle of Rok: U.S. Military Camp Shows

The main source of American popular music in the years before the Korean War was the clubs of the U.S. Army Twenty-Fourth Division, which had entered the country soon after the Japanese surrender in August 1945. The music played at those clubs was called chyasū, which refers ostensibly to jazz, but actually encompasses all kinds of nonclassical Western music from swing jazz to French chanson to Argentine tango. The business really took off after the Korean War as the Twenty-Fourth Army Division expanded to the Eighth Army Corps. Although the United Service Organizations (USO) camp show tours brought in some of the best American entertainers, such
as Nat King Cole and Elvis Presley, they could not satisfy the huge demand coming from the more than 150 camps and bases around the country. The U.S. Army thus hired Korean musicians to fill the void, and, amid the destitution of postwar Korea, many hungry musicians flocked to bases for the precious jobs.\textsuperscript{10}

The growth of camp shows increased professionalism in business. The hiring procedure became formalized, with the U.S. military hiring show troupes organized and managed by entertainment agencies. Usually, it began with a preaudition at an agency. If musicians or bands were deemed worthy, they were allowed to join the show troupe, which then went on to the real audition in front of the U.S. military authorities, who would make the final decision as to whether the troupe was qualified. According to various witness accounts, music and entertainment industry experts dispatched by the Pentagon presided over the auditions. Each troupe that passed an audition was also given a grade of AA, A, B, or C, and assigned to a corresponding level of shows. The audition was repeated every three to six months to ensure quality. In order to maintain or advance its standing, each troupe had to work hard and continually to improve its act. The camp show act was not a simple music concert. It was an entertainment variety show performed by the entire show troupe, or \textit{ssyodan} in Korean (see fig. 2). A typical \textit{ssyodan} consisted of a big band orchestra, singers, comedians, dancers, and other performers. The band was the centerpiece of the \textit{ssyodan}, and the title of the show on the bill was usually accompanied by the bandmaster’s name. The \textit{ssyodan} bands catered to the diverse musical tastes of the American military personnel—“the Beatles or the Beach Boys for the white GIs, country music for the old white NCOs, and soul music of the Temptations or James Brown at the black clubs.”\textsuperscript{11} Consequently, musical versatility was crucial to the survival of a band playing U.S. military clubs. Rather than sticking to one style or genre, most musicians tried to master as many as they could.

A hierarchy took shape among the bands, based on the results of the audition. Those on top were called “floor bands,” which toured military bases around the country as a part of \textit{ssyodan}. “House bands” were in the middle, committed to a particular club. At the bottom were “open bands” playing at private clubs in surrounding base towns (\textit{kijich’on}).\textsuperscript{12} The level of competition
among the musicians to enter and stay on the camp show circuit was very high. This competitive pressure intensified musical training in general, and cramming to learn the latest hits on the U.S. pop chart in particular. Without sheet music available, the only way to do this was to record the AFKN broadcast on tape, transcribe each instrumental part, and then practice day and night in the management company warehouse. In this way, the U.S. military camp shows and clubs collectively known as migun mudaes (literally, “American military scene”) became a training ground for the Korean musicians playing American pop. By the late 1950s music from migun mudaes began spreading out and finding its way to the ilban mudaes (“general public scene”), various entertainment venues for the Korean audience. First, Tin Pan Alley–style pop singers crooned their way to stardom, and more beat-oriented music, including rock ’n’ roll, soon followed.
One memorable event in the early spillover from *migun mudae* to *ilban mudae* was a show at the Seoul Civic Center (*Simin Hoegwan*) in 1958, where many *ssyodan* troupes entertained Korean audiences with the repertoire normally reserved for the U.S. military. Among the songs performed at the show was Chubby Checker’s “Let’s Twist Again.” This was probably the first time rock ‘n’ roll was performed live in front of a Korean crowd. The typical *ssyodan* band at the time was made up of the “four rhythms” — guitar, bass, drums, and piano (or organ) — joined by string and brass sections, which was similar to the American big band, only slightly smaller in size. Sometimes a small show was also put on by a six- or seven-piece band of four rhythms plus one or two horns. Following the jazz tradition, musicians called it the “combo band.”

The combo band, while costing less to hire than an orchestra, could still provide a big sound thanks to a technological innovation that changed music: the electric amplifier. The electric guitar, better known as the “amp guitar” among Koreans at the time, became the lead instrument as more and more bands made the guitarist the bandmaster. Figures central to these guitar-led combo bands were Yi In-p’yo of the Apple Shower Show, Kim Hūi-gap of the A Show, and Yi In-sŏng of the Silver Star Show. Although not a bandmaster, Shin Joong Hyun first earned his fame as a guitarist for the Spring Variety Show. These guitarists brought new music into the already diverse repertoire of *ssyodan* bands. In particular, the surf music of the Ventures, Duane Eddy, and others paved the way for vocalized rock music. The standard Korean combo band was still purely instrumental, however; vocals were performed by a singer or singers from outside the band. The typical rock band formation, in the style of the Beatles or the Rolling Stones, was at first called the “vocal group” (*pok’öl kūrup*), since these band did their own singing.

### The Pioneers of Rok and “Fatherland Modernization”

Two distinguished vocal groups made an early transition from the combo band to the rock band format. One was the Add Four, led by Shin Joong Hyun, and the other was the Key Boys, featuring the guitarist Kim Hong-t’ak and the then-drummer Yun Hang-gi, who later became one of the
premier singers of his generation. The crucial moment in the birth of rok was the Add Four’s debut album, with the title track, “Pisogūi yōin.”

Coincidentally, the Key Boys’ debut record was released about the same time, making 1964 Year One of rok. It is still in dispute which record came out first. As true pioneers, both bands took a daring first step into the uncharted territory of the domestic market. Somewhat predictably, their ambitious recording projects turned out to be commercial busts. As Shin Joong Hyun recalls, record stores “were returning the unsold copies en masse no later than a week after release.”

The groups’ solid careers at the U.S. military camp shows did not do much to win Korean audiences. Although the music style was still a novelty among the Korean masses, the use of the traditional pentatonic minor scale must have made “Pisogūi yōin” sound less alien to them. In fact, only a few years later this song was made popular by other musicians. Why did Koreans turn their backs on the first output of rok?

One answer might be that the vocal group formation befuddled listeners accustomed to the separation of singer and band. The Add Four and the Key Boys broke this norm, singing many, if not all, of the songs by themselves while playing instruments. Despite the initially negative response from the public, the vocal group formation was an important vehicle in taking the new music out of the U.S. military base and breaking away from the ssyodan tradition. When the two groups began to play for the Korean masses, only a small public was receptive to their music. Time was on their side, however, as Korean society at large began opening up to American popular culture during the state-led “modernization” period of the 1960s and 1970s.

Since General Park Chung Hee’s military coup in 1961, the state’s policy of high-speed industrialization, “fatherland modernization” (choguk kündaehwa), had entailed rapid urbanization and harsh oppression of dissenting voices. We will return later to the militarist-nationalist ideology that underpinned the modernization campaign. For the moment we can note that modernization’s major socioeconomic impact on popular music culture was the mass consumption of Western-style pop music among ordinary Koreans. Perhaps it is necessary to remind readers that for the majority of Koreans, who had no ties with the U.S. military, migun mudae camp shows were a nonentity in their daily lives. Those shows that the ssyo-dan troupes put on for the domestic audience were too few and far between.
to make a lasting impression. In short, live performances were not a viable option to familiarize Koreans with Western pop. Until the mid-1960s, record players were rarely seen in Korean households, save in a handful of those who were relatively well off. Foreign pop records were hard to come by even if one could afford them. Prior to the economic takeoff of the 1960s, only two major sources of Western pop were available to the few people curious enough to reach for them. One was the AFKN that the young Shin Joong Hyun loved so much. The other was ūmak kamsangsil, a kind of music café in downtown Seoul that attracted Western music aficionados. Not only did these cafés have cool, exotic names as C’est si bon, Die Schöne, and the Renaissance, they were also equipped with high fidelity audio systems and a lot of Western classical and pop records. They also featured live disc jockeys, many of whom later took important gatekeeper positions in the music and entertainment industries.

The economically ascending 1960s saw new sources of Western culture channeled to a broader population. Between 1961 and 1964 three new private broadcasting companies joined the AFKN and the state-controlled Korean Broadcasting System (KBS). Competition among the broadcasters created more consumer choices, a greater demand for talent, and a shift of focus from live performances to recorded music. Meanwhile, the introduction of twelve-inch vinyl LPs in 1962 gave Korean recording companies an opportunity to break the mold of the cottage industry and tap into the emerging mass market. Also, the Korea Entertainment Association (Han’guk Yŏnye Hyŏphoe) was established in 1961 at the urging of Park’s military junta. Although it was clear that the association was intended as a government tool to control the media, it offered musicians an opportunity to jump easily back and forth between the two previously divided markets, domestic and the U.S. military, thereby facilitating the integration of ilban mudaes and migun mudaes.

**Bridge: “The Boy in the Yellow Shirt”**

Han Myōng-suk had been known among American GIs for her dead-on impression of Doris Day singing “Que Será Será,” yet it was a Korean song on a ten-inch vinyl LP that pushed her to national stardom. Once the vinyl
spins on a turntable, her slightly husky voice sings with gusto about a young man she has a crush on. Not a pretty boy but a manly “man of few words,” he makes her wonder if he feels the love as well—so go the lyrics of “Noran syassūi sanai” (“The Boy in the Yellow Shirt”).

The song was hailed by many as the opening tune of modern Korean pop, the music that the growing urban population would come to embrace. The acclaimed composer and bandleader Son Sŏk-u was at the top of his game when he wrote “Noran syassūi sanai.” Its bluegrass style arrangement with fiddle goes to show Son’s dexterity with a variety of genres other than big band jazz, his musical origin. Furthermore, by bending the quintessential genre of rural Americana just enough to concoct an urban hymn for modernizing Korea, he presaged the irony of cultural imperialism that would come full circle with the ascent of rok.

The record was released only months after Park’s military coup, and the initial public reception was tepid. Son Sŏk-u’s “boy” in the yellow shirt and Shin Joong Hyun’s “lady” in the rain share not only the color of their outfits but also the fate of being pulled from the record stores within weeks. The difference is that, unlike the lady, the boy caught a lucky break—thanks to none other than the military government. “Noran syassūi sanai” became a jingle for the “New Era” thanks to heavy airplay by the state-controlled KBS, which had been searching for upbeat songs to cheer up the public mood. This is probably why the eminent poet and dissident Ko Ŭn still sees the ghost of General Park Chung Hee in the taciturn reserve of the yellow-clad boy. Even in pop music, the modernization of Korea had a military flavor.

**Modernity Glocalized: Kayo Meets Pop**

“Modernity is inherently globalizing.” Such an authoritative statement can be both illuminating and misleading. At worst, it can be interpreted as a weak version of cultural imperialism; global modernization means cultural homogenization, or more specifically, Westernization of non-Western cultures. It is refuted by those who pay close attention to the regional, national, and local varieties of modernization. After all, Park Chung Hee’s “fatherland modernization” cannot be confused with wholesale West-
ernization, since the qualifier *fatherland* points to a nationalistic penchant bordering on naked chauvinism.

An alternative approach to global modernization is to focus on “the local” end of the process. The local is, as Arif Dirlik puts it, where “the global” is constructed and resisted simultaneously. In the same sense Roland Robertson picks up the term “glocalization” from Japanese business vocabulary (*dochakuka*), which has also existed in the Korean lexicon for quite some time (*t’och’akhwa*). Robertson argues for an “invention of consumer traditions” whenever local groups receive cultural messages transmitted from the global center. The messages are interpreted and recreated differently, contributing to the diversification of the local. When he emphasizes the role of the nation-state as an agency of glocalization, it is as if he had “fatherland modernization” specifically in mind: Park Chung Hee used to refer to his political vision as glocalized democracy (*t’och’akch’ok minjuju’ui*), which turned out to be an extreme deviation from the stated ideals of Western liberal democracy.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse goes a step further than Robertson by arguing that the end result of the global-local “hybridization” is not singular Western modernity, or even a plurality of national modernities, but a “global mélange” of national, subnational, and supranational cultures. The agency of hybridization is often located on the margin or cutting edge of the nation-state/international system: diaspora, migration, aliens, and cultural brokers. Son Sōk-u, whose career spanned Japanese colonial jazz, American military entertainment, and Korean mass media, was well qualified to be such a transnational agent. “Noran syassū sanai” traveled through Japan, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, and was recorded in various local languages. Even the French chanson singer Yvette Giraud got in on the act, showing off her command of the Korean lyrics while dressed in the traditional Korean *hanbok* (fig. 3). Thus the song developed into a global mélange in its own right.

“Noran syassū sanai” also ushered in the era of *kayo* versus pop, a long-standing opposition of musical preferences between traditional domestic styles and imported Western ones. The newly established broadcasting company orchestras absorbed a horde of instrumentalists retreating from the U.S. military camp shows (*migun mudae*). Some of the orchestra
conductors, like Son Sŏk-u, had a knack for writing Western pop–inspired songs. Seasoned vocalists like Han Myŏng-suk were ready to cross over from migun mudae and sing for the Korean audience. The music of these former migun mudae musicians spread fast through the mass media and created a new trend often referred to as pop, a distinction from the traditional style of Korean popular songs known as kayo.22 At the time, pop indicated the national origin of certain musical styles rather than the nationality of the composer or performer. Following the success of “Noran syassŭi sanai,” many original Korean pop songs and Western adaptations flooded the airwaves during the first half of the 1960s.

Overall, however, pop had not yet captured the rural folk, who still comprised a large majority of the population. The countryside was the bastion of kayo, more specifically its subgenre “trot” (t’urottŭ).23 Exuding nostalgia for the good old days in rural Korea, kayo had produced a superstar chanteuse in Yi Mi-ja, who went on to have a number of million-selling records over her long and prosperous career. There might have been competition in the media and the record market, but kayo and pop were not bitter rivals. Popular culture in general was seen as a vehicle for the mes-

Figure 3 Yvette Giraud wearing hanbok on the front cover of Jirōji Nooran Syassŭ (Venus: VL-18, ca. 1963)
sage of reconciliation that Korean people eagerly accepted after having gone through a traumatic war, revolution, and military coup. Reflecting these sentiments, both *kayo* and *pop* set a soft and mild-mannered tone in the mainstream media. They also shared the same kind of production system where a composer-cum-bandmaster was at the helm, selecting singers to perform his songs. Consequently, most of the songs played on the radio or live on stage were fully orchestrated. Son Sŏk-u and other star composers were savvy enough to alternate between *kayo* and *pop* to make hit records. With the aid of the mass media, *pop* was able to reach out to a larger and larger portion of the domestic audience.

When the Add Four and the Key Boys entered the domestic market, *pop* had already settled in as a musical style of glocalized modernity, probably much better than Park Chung Hee’s “glocalized democracy” ever had. The pioneers of *rok* just came out a little too early to take advantage of the opportunity of the emerging global trend, and the adjustment was already in the works. At the same time, mass protest broke out as the secret negotiations for the normalization treaty between Korea and Japan were leaked to the public, dealing a huge blow to the legitimacy and nationalist credentials of the Park regime.

**Soul Kayo and the Group Sound: Rok Goes Psychedelic**

More and more Korean vocal groups came into being in the wake of the Add Four and the Key Boys. According to a report, approximately thirty well-known bands and at least fifty or more lesser-known ones were active by 1969. Their renewed repertoire was filled with songs by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, in addition to those by the Ventures and the Beach Boys. By the late 1960s, the U.S. military club scene began to sag, and the *migun mudae* vocal groups had to find a way to make it into the domestic market. This proved to be an uphill battle. While it was relatively easy for a *ssyodan* big band to transform itself into a broadcast orchestra, neither major music venues nor broadcasters welcomed the vocal groups with open arms. The groups did find some business in the burgeoning recording industry by providing instrumental accompaniment for popular singers. A few of them even managed to record their own albums. However, the composer-
centered system of *kayo* production was still prevalent in the recording business. There was little room for a vocal group to make it on its own.

What these bands needed was the proverbial new bottle for new wine. They discovered it in small and midsized venues located in downtown Seoul. Music cafés (*ámak kamsangsil*) had been setting up small stages for Sunday live shows since the early 1960s. Soon thereafter, newer and bigger venues, called live music salons (*saengámak ssarong*), mushroomed in the same area, hosting live shows daily. Now some bands could do double shifts playing at salons in Myeongdong by day and at GI clubs in Itaewon by night. While *kayo* and pop were competing against each other for mass media spots and larger venues, *rok* was steadily gaining ground as an underground club culture. All the while, Shin Joong Hyun was preparing for another shot at the mainstream audience from a different angle.

In the waning month of 1969, a fresh-faced female duo stunned the nation by winning the prestigious Annual King of Singers award from one of the major television networks. The Pearl Sisters, Pae In-suk and In-sun, were the brainchild of Shin Joong Hyun, who took on the dual role of composer and music director. Having been active for barely a year, the Pearl Sisters quickly climbed to the top by making the most of their sex appeal. These two charming real-life sisters in their early twenties shook their bodies in such a way that shattered the Confucian ideal image of “wise mother, good wife.” The music that augmented their sex-kitten personae was dubbed “soul *kayo,*” a rather clumsy yet comprehensible name for its distinctive hybridity. On the one hand, the influence of contemporary American soul is palpable in terms of soul *kayo*’s sensuality, bouncy rhythm, and rich overtones. On the other, it liberally borrowed from *kayo* idioms to scrub off the “butter smell,” a homely metaphor for the foreignness of American culture. At last Shin Joong Hyun was able to master the formula of glocalization that had worked so well for Son Sŏk-u and other Korean pop composers before him. The Pearl Sisters’ biggest hit of the year, “Nima” (“Hey Dear”), struck a delicate balance between soul and *kayo,* bringing the *kayo* and the pop audiences together. Shin scored hit after hit with the Pearl Sisters and other charismatic female singers, such as Kim Ch’u-ja, Kim Chŏng-mi, and Yi Chŏng-hwa.

Shin Joong Hyun was not entirely satisfied with his newfound fame,
however, since his attraction to rock music remained strong despite the lack of success of the Add Four record. Even in the middle of the soul *kayo* boom, he continued to tinker with the rock band format. Since the Add Four, he had gone through at least three different bands—the Donkeys, the Questions, and the Men—and too many lineup changes to count. By this time, he immersed himself in Anglo-American psychedelic rock, shortened to “psyche” (*ssaik’i*) in colloquial Korean. With the bands, he routinely covered Jimi Hendrix or Iron Butterfly’s “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida” onstage, recorded his own “psyche” pieces, and occasionally provided instrumental backing for his popular protégées in the soul *kayo* recording sessions. Shin’s double-edged “soul and psyche” was a segue to the fully charged rok sound simming just below the surface.

Still, compared to his soul *kayo*, Shin’s psychedelic repertoire received little coverage in the mass media. The full eruption of soul and psyche took place in live venues, where musicians could unleash their passion and desire without many constraints. Fortunately, there is a bootlegged record that captured one of Shin’s legendary concert series at the Civic Center from October 1969 to July 1970. The cover of this historic live album carries the title of Shin’s seventeen-minute rendition of Iron Butterfly’s psychedelic anthem, with something of a Freudian slip of the press: “In-A-Kadda-Da-Vida” (fig. 4). The misspelling with the K—the letter has stood for “Korean” on numerous occasions, including the recent K-pop (Korean pop) phenomenon—might have betrayed an unconscious desire on his part to glocalize psychedelic rock.

With the new sound and repertoire came a new term for bands like Shin’s. What had been called vocal groups turned into “group sounds” as the electric guitar became as important as the human voice in their music. Whereas the vocal group was a transitional form between the jazz-style combo band and the rock band, the group sound was identical to the latter. The Korean group-sound era began with music festivals and contests that showcased both *migun mudae* veterans and up and coming bands. One of the most prominent festivals was the annual Playboy Cup Vocal Group Contest. The grand prize of the inaugural contest in 1969 went to Kim Hong-t’ak’s He Six, the band he formed after splitting with the Key Boys. As a male vocal group, He Six was best known for the luscious vocal harmonies in the *Ch’owôn (Prairie)* series, mid- or slow-tempo ballads about
romance on a prairie. As a group sound, on the other hand, He Six was playing psychedelic rock with an audacity and intensity that rivaled Shin Joong Hyun’s. He Six occasionally added a flute or an oboe to the psychedelic jam sessions, making an experimental sound comparable to the contemporary British band Jethro Tull. If Shin Joong Hyun’s sound evokes Jimi Hendrix, Kim Hong-t’ak’s nimble and sophisticated guitar work resembles Carlos Santana’s. Another rising star was Cho Yong Pil (Cho Yong-p’il), who won the best vocalist award at the final Playboy Cup in 1971. Nobody at the time, however, would have anticipated Cho’s megastardom a decade later.

The same year the Playboy Cup folded, an outdoor concert festival took place in a riverside resort area near Seoul. During a three-day period the Ch’ŏngp’yŏng Festival drew crowds of thousands, whose communal experiences were similar to Woodstock and the Summer of Love in the United States. The global youth counterculture had arrived in Korea: long hair, bell-bottoms, recreational drug use, and antiauthority attitudes. The liberal proponents called it the youth culture (ch’ŏngnyŏn munhwaw), whereas the conservative opponents had much more sinister names for it.
Crackdown on “Decadent Culture” and the Go-Go Midnight Revolt

Once the authoritarian Park regime decided to take action against the new culture it deemed “vulgar” (chŏsŏk) and “decadent” (t’œp’ye), the Korean Summer of Love was all but done for. In August 1970 the police began stopping young people on the street for a snap inspection known as changbal tansŏk (long-hair crackdown; fig. 5). Men got a free haircut on the spot if their hair was deemed too long. Women’s skirts had to be long enough to cover their knees. The streets of Seoul turned into a theater of the absurd, where police officers, armed with measuring sticks, imposed “the discipline of the body” on the hapless passersby.

Many group-sound musicians reluctantly had their long hair trimmed in order to avoid trouble, but the situation was bound to get uglier as the political climate continued to worsen. After barely beating his archrival Kim Dae Jung in the 1971 presidential election, Park was determined to tighten his grip on the populace and secure dictatorial power. The following October, Park declared martial law, dismissed the National Assembly, crushed the opposition, rounded up dissidents, and rewrote the constitution to make himself a de facto permanent president. So began the era of hard authoritarianism known as Yushin. In the meantime, the crackdown expanded its scope from fashion and hairstyle to “decadent culture” in general (t’œp’ye munhwa tansŏk). Any deviation from the “wholesome national culture” was not tolerated. The group-sound musicians feared that they had a bull’s-eye on their backs since their music was widely perceived as the centerpiece of the youth culture. Sadly, they were not mistaken.

In fact, government control over popular music had been in place since the inception of the Park regime. The Korean Arts and Culture Ethics Council (Han’guk Yesul Munhwa Yulli Wiwŏnhoe) was established and given the power to oversee a comprehensive censorship of broadcast, performance, and film and audio recording. The so-called popular music purge campaign (kayo chŏnghuwa undong), whose originally stated mission was to liquidate the legacy of Japanese colonialism by wiping out the corruptive waesae (Japanese influence) on Korean popular music, provided an ideological cover for censorship and propaganda. Over time, the target of the purge widened from the alleged waesae songs to anything
sounding “inappropriate” for whatever reason. The campaign also heavily
promoted \\textit{könjön kayo} (wholesome songs), most of which either
advanced an unabashedly progovernment agenda or drew rosy pictures of the society
and the nation. The crackdown put the existing apparatus of control and
censorship into a high gear. Concerts and festivals involving group sounds
were canceled due to pressure from the popular music purge campaign as
well as police harassment. By 1972 loud and noisy rok shows had all but
disappeared from the downtown live music salons where the Key Boys and
He Six had been kings until just a year earlier. However, the group sounds
were not so neatly “purged”; if anything, they were becoming “sleazier,”
retreating from daytime leisure to the hedonistic nightlife of go-go dance.

The go-go club (kogojang) was a nightclub that replaced live music salons
as the main venue for the group sounds. The biggest difference between the
salon and the go-go club was dance. People went to the club to dance, not
simply listen to the music. The first batch of go-go clubs was run as a part of hotel operations in downtown Seoul. Soon ordinary nightclubs jumped on the bandwagon by becoming go-go clubs. The go-go craze sprawled out from downtown Seoul to the suburban centers and other major cities. Group sounds flourished on the stage. Shin Joong Hyun showcased his new band, the Men; Yun Hang-gi, one of the original Key Boys, made a comeback with the Key Brothers. Tommy Shim (Sim Hyŏng-sŏp) came out of migun mudae and formed the legendary hard-rock band Phoenix. Tempest, Pioneers, the Last Chance, the Devils, and the Dragons were also big names on the go-go scene.

Even though the go-go scene helped the group-sound musicians keep on performing and earning their living, its contribution to the creative aesthetics of rok was limited at best. Except for the famous few who could afford to squeeze in their original work or experiment with new tunes from Anglo-American rock, the majority of the bands stuck to the standard go-go fare. The crowd pleaser was always something simple, familiar, and danceable. Over and over again through the night, such all-time go-go
favorites as CCR’s “Proud Mary” and Santana’s “Evil Ways” were played at a plain eight-beat rhythm known as the go-go beat. The lack of musical originality or creativity was beside the point, for the go-go culture was, first and foremost, about dance. All-night go-go parties were bonding rituals among young dance lovers. They were also an act of defiance, breaking the midnight curfew that had symbolized the culture of fear and restriction for several decades. In the aftermath of the aborted Korean Summer of Love, the midnight revolt at the go-go club created another kind of communal experience among regular participants. As Tommy Shim recalls: “Clubs were popular hangouts for young hipster boys and girls in Seoul. Every morning [at 4 a.m.] when the curfew was over and the club closed, the band members and the partygoers went out together to grab a bite or have a cup of coffee. We were like a family. It’aewón at that time was a paradise for hippies. I don’t know what it’s like now, but there used to be small clubs on both hillsides playing live music every night, competing with one another.” Therefore, “decadence” not only survived, it actually thrived under the radar of the authorities, who appeared hell-bent on clamping it down. In retrospect, the whole decadent culture propaganda created a self-fulfilling prophecy; it was, above all, the crackdown and the negative media campaign that drove the youth culture out of broad daylight into the dark of the night, where it grew even more audacious in undermining the traditional sexual mores and work ethic. In that sense, the go-go revolt was a warning sign that the heavy-handed cultural oppression would eventually backfire.

**Rolling Rok Gathers No Moss: The Rise and Fall of the Group Sound**

The go-go craze was greeted with sensationalist media coverage, which framed the phenomenon as something of a moral panic. There was also an air of condescension, especially from conservative elite commentators, who accused the young people of blindly following Western “lowbrow” culture. A neutral visitor to a go-go club, after watching the group sound onstage mindlessly repeating “Proud Mary” or “Beautiful Sunday” might concede that these critics had a point. The originality deficit was not confined to the go-go scene; it had been a chronic problem since the U.S. military camp show years.
What the detractors either did not see or chose to ignore was the intense efforts of leading group sounds to find their own voice and achieve authenticity, the elusive goal of all rock music. The group-sound musicians wanted to be original and creative, and they were keenly aware that as long as they simply covered Anglo-American rock, they would win little respect from avid fans of this genre who found the Korean group sound inauthentic and derivative.

It was about time for these group sounds to shoot for mainstream respectability. Their music had become better attuned to the Korean taste since the debut of the Add Four and the Key Boys nearly a decade earlier. Recordings, live performances in a variety of small and large venues, and occasional media exposure had made them better recognized by the public. Shin Joong Hyun, for example, was able to spearhead rok’s push to the national mainstream partly because of his fame as the creator of soul kayo. He was joined by others of the same mind. Old rivals from He Six and the Men—Shin’s former outfit—joined forces to form Kŏmŭn Nabi (Black Butterfly). Shin also organized a new band, Yŏptchŏndŭl, which released its eponymous debut album in 1974. When Yŏptchŏndŭl’s song “Miin” (“The Belle”) topped the chart the following spring, Kŏmŭn Nabi’s “Tangsinŭn mola” (“You Don’t Know”) was not far behind.

One of the many number one hits Shin had written thus far, “Miin” was the first rok song performed with a group sound. The Yŏptchŏndŭl’s debut album sold more than one hundred thousand copies, ten times more than the standard sales figure for a hit album in the mid-1970s. Kŏmŭn Nabi’s album also sold very well, more than fifty thousand copies. “Miin” had monumental cultural impact. Ordinary people, especially young schoolchildren on the streets, were humming along with the folksy melody and rhyme loosely based on changt’aryŏng, the traditional beggar’s chant for food. Shin blended this with an apparent homage to Jimi Hendrix, borrowing a motif from “Voodoo Chile” to create the famous guitar riff in “Miin.” In addition, Shin gave it a touch of vibrato akin to nonghyŏn, a technique widely used with traditional Korean stringed instruments. As a result, the lead guitar in “Miin” sounds like the kayagŭm (a twelve-stringed zither), generating a hybrid of Western rock and traditional Korean music. Even one of the most conservative mainstream newspapers praised Shin’s feat: “Shin Joong
Hyun’s ‘Miin’ is said to create the Yöptchŏndŭl style by adding the Western rock beat to our karak [traditional Korean melody]. . . . It is perceived as a desirable trend against the blind following of Western pop music.”

Riding high on the success of “Miin,” Shin held a big concert called “Shin Joong Hyun Jam in the Pacific” in October 1975. This event signaled that rok had finally reached the peak of mainstream popularity. The first act, Kŏmŭn Nabi, came out to show solidarity among the group sounds. The next part of the concert was a tribute to Shin the composer, featuring the soul kayo singers who had become major stars interpreting his songs. In the finale, Shin Joong Hyun and Yöptchŏndŭl performed a twenty-minute heavy jam that “literally shook the ground.”

“Miin” was not heard at the concert, having been banned from performance or broadcast and pulled from store shelves three months earlier. The government censorship finally zeroed in on Shin Joong Hyun and the rok group sounds. Between 1965 and 1975, a total of 223 Korean songs and 261 Western pop songs were blacklisted by the censors. Shin had nineteen songs on the list, the most among the living songwriters. The lyrics of Shin’s banned songs contained nothing really controversial: no political message, no social critique, and no sexually explicit language. In fact, only a handful of Korean songs were banned for such reasons. The censors gave only terse and vague explanations for their decisions, charging the songs with, for instance, vulgar lyrics (kasa chŏsŏk), immature singing style (ch’angbŏp misuk), or aggravating mistrust and cynicism (pulsin p’ungt’o chojang). Like the crackdown on “decadent” culture that set the stage for the proclamation of the Yushin dictatorship, the surge of cultural oppression was concomitant with a repressive political agenda. Between January 1974 and May 1975, President Park issued nine emergency decrees that criminalized any kind of “antigovernment activities,” including speeches and writings critical of the regime. Once again, the crackdown on political dissidence (puron) also criminalized cultural decadence (t’oep’ye). This time, the regime was determined to root out cultural decadence, even if this required extraordinary measures.

On December 4, 1975, newspaper headlines announced that Shin Joong Hyun and four other group-sound musicians were under arrest and being investigated for marijuana use. The “marijuana scandal” (taemach’o
p’adong) finally undid the counterculture movement of the 1960 and 1970s. Despite huge publicity, the investigation ended with just seven people in custody. According to some personal communications, however, the majority of group-sound musicians were investigated, and rumors circulated that they would be transferred to a psychiatric hospital to check their degree of “chemical dependency.” One newspaper went overboard, predicting that nearly eighty people would be indicted.40

The obviously trumped-up marijuana charge made a mockery of the rule of law, since there was no clear legal ground for the prosecution of marijuana use. The Law on Hemp Control was enacted nearly five months after the marijuana scandal had broken. Only then was marijuana possession made a felony, punishable by up to ten years in prison. As legal prohibition and punishment still remain in the books, it is hard to imagine today that once upon a time marijuana smoking was openly discussed in public. In a magazine article published well before the scandal, Shin Joong Hyun talked freely about “happy smoke”—a slang term for marijuana—and even alluded to LSD experiences.41 The criminalization of marijuana changed this atmosphere by attaching to offenders the strong social stigma against drug addicts. Shin and other arrested musicians were fortunate that the government did not punish them to the fullest extent of the law. However, another kind of punishment was awaiting them. Shin was released after four months in jail, only to find that he was banned from any kind of public performance. With its brightest star in eclipse, rok’s first moment of glory was quickly fading.

**Rok the Nation: Conflicting Visions of the Imagined Community**

Both rok and Shin Joong Hyun weathered the storm and outlasted the oppression that ended with Park Chung Hee’s assassination in 1979. By this time, rok had gained a new foothold on university campuses. This second wave of rok flourished under circumstances quite different from the first. The new regime of General Chun Doo Hwan responded no less brutally to political dissent than did its predecessor; however, it was willing to tolerate and even co-opt what had been condemned as decadent culture. The new elites, be they political, economic or cultural, were largely made up of the
generation raised under American hegemony, whereas the old guard of the Park regime had its roots in imperial Japan.42

The old elite that led the charge against rok as decadent Western culture was also responsible for the “revival of national culture” (minjok munhwa chunghıŋ). The national culture doctrine they conceived was a hybrid of the Confucianism of the Chosŏn dynasty and the militaristic ultranationalism of imperial Japan.43 Park Chung Hee considered himself the avatar of the national culture revival, and he proved it by penning two notorious kŏnjŏn kayo propaganda songs, “Saemaŭl norae” (“The New Village Song”) and “Naŭi choguk” (“My Fatherland”). “Saemaŭl norae” was the official theme song of saemaŭl undong (the new village movement), the popular mobilization campaign under the Park and the Chun regimes. “Naŭi choguk” was Park’s implicit homage to his imperial Kwantung Army origin, written in the style of Japanese gunka (war songs).44 These two songs—and many more like them—were taught and sung in the entire elementary and secondary educational system, just as gunka had been sung by the schoolchildren of Japan and its colonies during the Pacific War. Korean popular music historian Young Mee Lee explains that Park’s keen interest in popular music as a propaganda tool grew out of his experiences as a schoolteacher and later an army officer under Japanese rule.45 Considering his background, it should surprise no one that Park took a hands-on approach toward popular music censorship, which also beﬁtted his governing style in general. Shin Joong Hyun’s allegation that his ordeal really began when he rebuffed Park’s request to write a propaganda song honoring the presidency has therefore gained much credibility among the public.46

The early trials and tribulations of rok were a display of the power of the national culture doctrine to suppress or foreclose what it deﬁned as an alien culture. However, the line drawn between alien and national culture is blurry, even arbitrary, for national culture is itself a suspect notion. As John Tomlinson points out, culture is not particularly well contained within the political boundary of nation-state. What is an authentic national culture when some alien cultural practices are so quickly assimilated that after a short while they are no longer remembered as alien?47

The modern history of Korean popular music shows just how eclectic a national culture can be. The traditional kayo turns out to be an amalgam,
forged during the colonial period, of premodern folk songs (*minyo*), Japanese *enka*, and prewar jazz. When the Park regime’s culture police declared a purge of *waesaek kayo* (Japanese-influenced songs), this effort was doomed to failure since the transnational musical language had already been firmly entrenched in *kayo*. “Tongbaek Agassi” (“Camellia Girl”), by the supreme *kayo* singer Yi Mi-ja, was the most highly publicized *waesaek kayo* banned by the government censors. In an interview given long after the ban was lifted, Yi made the same point eloquently: “Music is a transnational language. Resemblance and mutual influence are common, especially between neighboring countries. If you have a problem with *waesaek*, what about the *yangsaek* [yank tinge] flooding the country nowadays?”

Apparently, not all “yank-tinged” songs were considered alien. Son Sŏk-u’s “Noran Syassŭi Sanai” and other Korean pop songs had had no problem gaining public acceptance and government approval. The same was true of Shin Joong Hyun’s soul *kayo* prior to his persecution. As the flops of the Add Four’s and Key Boys’ debuts indicate, rok may have been perceived as more alien than the other genres in the beginning. However, by the time the group sounds began adding a nationalist flavor to their music—Shin’s experiment with the traditional sound in “Miin,” for example—in the pursuit of authenticity, the line between alien and national had already been blurred.

The goal of Park Chung Hee’s national culture revival was ultimately political. The attempted purge of *waesaek kayo* was an opportunistic move to recover from the Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty debacle that had revealed the military regime’s dependency on its former colonial master. The animosity toward and persecution of rok went far beyond *waesaek kayo*, suggesting there was a deeper motive than immediate political gain. If “decadence” was the real concern, the culture police would have focused on the underground go-go clubs; instead, it was rok in the mainstream that bore the brunt of repression. Although rok offered neither social nor political critique, something was so unsettling about it that the regime treated it like a political threat.

We surmise that the real, if subconscious, concern was the implicit challenge rok posed to the very definition of national culture as sanctioned by the state. Let us take Shin Joong Hyun’s masterpiece “Arŭmdaun kangsan”
(“The Beautiful Land”) in order to illustrate this point. First recorded in 1972, the same year that “Naǔi choguk” came out, “Arūmdaun kangsan” was Shin’s answer to the national culture indoctrination. Not unlike “Naǔi choguk,” it starts out with an admiration of the beautiful landscapes of Korea. At the climax of the song, Shin exclaims, “Love is forever, forever. . . . we’re all together, together . . . always intimate!” as if he imagined a nation as a community of love, peace, and togetherness. Standing alone, this image of nation as an “imagined community” does not appear overly political, but its implications become clear when juxtaposed with the images that “Naǔi choguk” conjures up: the “glorious cultural patrimony” out of the “blood and sweat” of the ancestors, the martial virtues of the Huwarang youth in the ancient times, and other references to the imagined historical grandeur of the nation-state.50

The music reveals a starker contrast than the lyrical images. The blazing horns of the military marching band set the solemn tone of “Naǔi choguk,” followed by the mixed choir singing with a lockstep beat and machinelike discipline. Meanwhile, the 1980 version of “Arūmdaun kangsan” features a free-flowing, polyrhythmic performance of a new band, Shin Joong Hyun and the Music Power, that resembled the seminal American funk act Sly and the Family Stone. Ever a keen observer of global pop trends, Shin rearranged the song to imitate disco and funk, with horns, female backing vocals, and a synthesizer. Even as he sang about hills, rivers, and trees in the local landscapes, he never lost touch with the global soundscapes that attracted him. As a result, the nation in Shin’s imagination emerges as a diverse, colorful, and freewheeling counterculture utopia set in the native land. This was obviously anathema to the “fatherland” of Park Chung Hee’s imagination.

A heavy dose of militarism, antiliberalism, and suspicion of Western popular culture was injected into the official minjok munhwa (national culture) by an elite indoctrinated and trained in the colonial institutions, including the Imperial Army. For all the chest-thumping about Korea’s five-thousand-year history and cultural patrimony, Park Chung Hee’s imagined nation had its own alien — namely, Japanese — components that were poorly disguised yet hardly mentioned in public until the full democratization of Korea. The minjok munhwa thus borrowed heavily from the colonial cul-
ture, which had been forcefully imposed on Korean people by Japanese colonizers. On the other hand, rock music and other American cultural imports were not imposed but more or less spontaneously accepted and glocalized by the Koreans themselves. The *minjok munhwa* and rok represented two conflicting visions of the modern nation, one increasingly fascist and the other hopelessly utopian, in the middle of the hegemonic shift from Japanese colonial rule to American postcolonial patronage.

**Outro: “(Daylight Is) Too Short”**

In Korean popular music, the 1980s was the decade of Cho Yong Pil. Every TV network in the nation crowned him the perennial King of Singers. However, Cho’s most fervent teenage fans at the time knew little about his checkered past, including his tribute to the first-generation group sounds, “Nōmu tchalbayo” (“Too Short”). The eight-beat go-go rhythm is steady throughout the song, but Cho’s signature nasal voice drips with thinly veiled angst. The refrain “daylight is too short” proved prophetic: a few months after the song’s release, Cho became entangled in the marijuana probe and was banished from the music entertainment industry for the rest of the Park Chung Hee years. Cho was one of those group-sound musicians who enjoyed only a brief moment in the sun of the mainstream media before the political storm blew them away.

In spite of their effort to glocalize Anglo-American rock, the first generation of rok musicians was vulnerable to the accusation of peddling “decadent alien culture” because of their U.S. military camp show origin. The subsequent generations of rok musicians came from more innocuous places, such as colleges, high schools, and other amateur venues. College rok bands, known as the “campus group sounds,” of the late 1970s to mid-1980s certainly learned from the first generation’s saga. Whereas the professional musicians of the first generation were often called *ttanttara* (lowly entertainers), college students enjoyed a privileged status in the Confucian social hierarchy, giving their music an instant respectability. Quite a few of them sought to instill Korean-ness in their music. Some wrote their lyrics in an old Korean poetry format, while others sang about patriotic themes that would have made the national culture doctrinaires proud. Rok national-
ism was thus carried on to its goal of mainstream respectability by the new generation, albeit in a sanitized form.

Meanwhile, Cho Yong Pil was nothing short of a phenomenon when he returned from banishment. His genius was the ability to be everything to everyone: a kayo balladeer to the adults, a hot disco star to the teens, and, last but not least, the leader of a rok band. This all-around appeal made the honorific designation of “national singer” (kugmin kasu) especially appropriate for Cho. His spectacular rise was another vindication for the first-generation group sounds, who finally saw one of their own basking in the not “too short” light of the sun. The name of Cho’s band reads like a long overdue celebration of his generation’s prime musical achievement, rok—Widaehan T’ansaeng (Great Birth).

Notes

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6. We use the verb *deconstruct* here in a very broad sense to underscore the contradictions and ambiguities of cultural imperialism in theory as well as in practice. For a technical definition of deconstruction, see Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 86.


Genre terminology is always somewhat confusing in popular music, and the Korean case is no exception. When used in the literal sense of the term (not as the opposite of “pop”), kayo refers to a generic Korean popular song, regardless of any specific genre or style.

Also known as ppongchak, trot refers to a kayo style that typically adopts the so-called yonanuki pentatonic scale, duple time, and some characteristic vocal techniques. Because of its roots in yuhaengga during the colonial period, trot’s relationship with Japanese enka music has always been a contentious issue. See the chapters by Young Mee Lee and Gloria Lee Pak in Howard, Korean Pop Music.


It’ae-won is the famous nightlife quarter for the U.S. military personnel and other Western foreigners; Myongdong is the fashion district of downtown Seoul.

The modern folk movement was closely related with rok from the beginning, although it was generally based more on university crowds and thus had a sharper political edge. For a brief description, see Okon Hwang, “The Ascent and Politicization of Pop Music in Korea: From the 1960s to the 1980s,” in Howard, Korean Pop Music, 37–42.

A literal translation of waesaek, a derogatory expression for the Japanese people and culture, would be “Jap tinge” or “Jap-tinged.”

For an overview of censorship and kōnjōn kayo, see Roald Maliangkay, “Pop for Progress: Censorship and South Korea’s Propaganda Songs,” in Howard, Korean Pop Music, 51–54.

The curfew was first imposed by the U.S. Military Government in 1945. This Cold War relic was not lifted until 1982.

Tommy Shim, e-mail interview by Hyunjoon Shin, September 2, 2002.


Sin Chung-hyon-gwa Yŏptchŏndūl (Jigu: JLS-120891, 1974). A literal translation of Yŏpt-
chŏndŭl would be “Coins.” It was an old ethnic slur in the colonial period, later tuned into an expression of self-loathing among Koreans. Shin Joong Hyun used it as an ironic rhetorical device to express his national pride, not unlike the African American appropriation of the “n word.”

38. Ilgan Săp’och’ŭ, October 19, 1975.
43. The origin of Park’s militarist nationalism can be found in his Manchukuo experiences. See Suk-Jung Han, “Those Who Imitated the Colonizers: The Legacy of the Disciplining State from Manchukuo to South Korea,” in Crossed Histories: Manchuria in the Age of Empire, ed. Mariko Asano Tamanoi (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005).
47. Tomlinson, Cultural Imperialism, 68, 92–93.