

Special Feature

*Gagok* (Lyric Songs)  
Performed and Enjoyed:  
A Synchronic View of Its Performance  
with a Focus on “Mandaeyeop,”  
“Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop”

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## Introduction

Korean people have always loved to sing. During the Joseon period (1392-1910), *gagok*, a genre of sung poetry written in the Korean alphabet, *hangeul*, flourished. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the literati chose to use the poetic genre *sijo* for song lyrics so that they might cultivate their minds (Gil 2002, 278). *Sijo* is a type of poetry written in verses of three lines. It is one of the most representative of Korean poetic genres and has been written by many scholars since the end of Goryeo period (918-1392).

The most well-known *gagok* sung with *sijo* lyrics are “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop.”<sup>1</sup> The prototype of these three songs is known to be “Jeonggwajeong,” a song from the Goryeo period. “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop,” which employ a slow, a moderate, and a fast tempo respectively, established the tripartite framework of the *gagok* repertoire. In general, these songs employ *sijo* poems by dividing the three lines into five sections for the song format.

Over time, as the taste for *gagok* changed, people’s interest shifted from “Mandaeyeop,” and “Jungdaeyeop,” to “Sakdaeyeop.” People composed derivative songs from all three. “Mandaeyeop” had been widely sung in the sixteenth century and then died out. The tradition of singing “Jungdaeyeop” remained until the early nineteenth century. Songs derived from “Sakdaeyeop” have come down to us from the early nineteenth century; they constitute the contemporary form of *gagok*. Today approximately twenty songs make up a full cycle of a *gagok* performance.

This paper offers a synchronic view of the way “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop” were performed and enjoyed up until the sixteenth century by comparing these practices with trends that started in the seventeenth century. In the transition from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, Joseon society observed a major change, which was the rise of the *jungin* class (middle-class people). The transition also ushered in an important musicological event—the emergence of professional singers from the *jungin* class. In this light, this paper looks at literati, professional singers, and *geomungo* (the six-stringed zither)

musicians as the main actors in singing *sijo* poems set in “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop” and aims to examine their roles in the evolving *gagok* performing culture.

## The Literati Tradition of Learning to Play the Geomungo and the Characteristics of Their Performing “Mandaeyeop” in the Sixteenth-century

This chapter investigates examples of literati playing the *geomungo* to accompany sung poems in the sixteenth century and their views on music. Then, in order to discuss the cultural characteristics of the *geomungo* performance in the sixteenth century, it will examine various scores used to notate “Mandaeyeop” which was sung at that time.

### *Literati’s View on Music and the Tradition of Learning to Play the Geomungo*

The literati had long held the notion that playing the *geomungo* was an ideal activity for them. In the early Joseon period, King Sejong (r. 1418-1450) himself enjoyed playing the instrument. In the fifteenth century, many renowned scholar officials such as Kim Suon (1410-1481), Kim Jago (1426-1490), Seong Gan (1427-1456), Kim Ilson (1464-1498), and Seong Hyeon (1439-1504) learned to play the *geomungo* (Yun 2015, 48-69). The Joseon literati also made *geomungo* with their own hands. For example, around 1490,

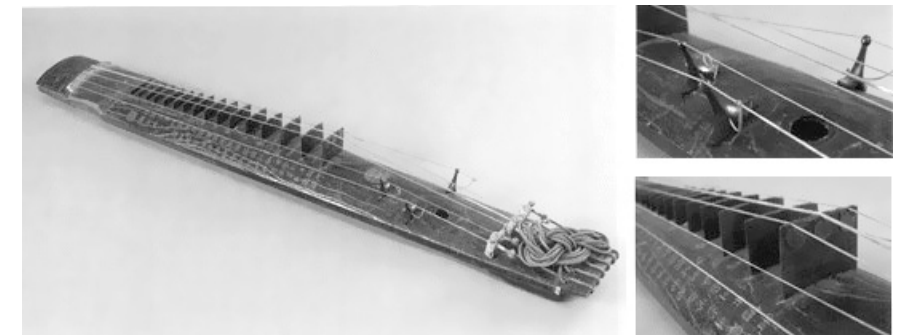


Figure 1. Kim Ilson’s *Geomungo*, Takyonggeum (Treasure No. 957)

1. *Sijo* poetry is usually referred to as *sijo*. But the term may be confusing as it can mean both a lyric to a song and a musical genre of singing a *sijo* poem. For this reason, this paper will use the term *sijo* poem to indicate the literary form of *sijo* as a song text set in five-section *gagok* format.

Kim Ilson (penname Takyong) made one for himself which he would play; it has been passed down in the family even up until today.

The anecdote of his making a *geomungo* is recorded in *Takyongjip* (*Collected Works of Kim Ilson*). According to it, Kim made great efforts to obtain quality wood for the sound board. Eventually, he secured wood from a tree approximately one hundred years old and used it to make the instrument. The description given in the book of his making the musical instrument shows his affection for it.

I wanted to make a *geomungo*, but finding good wood was difficult. One day, I obtained good material from an old woman who lived outside Donghwa Gate. It was one of a set of double doors. When I asked her if it were old, she said, “It is about one hundred years old. The other door had been used as firewood because of damage to the hinges.” After I made a *geomungo* out of the wood, I played it. It produced clear sounds. The wood had finally met the person who recognized its true value despite the three nail holes at the bottom that were made when it used to be a door. It is just like the case of the Burnt-Paulownia Zither.<sup>2</sup> I made an inscription on this *geomungo* to the right of those holes.<sup>3</sup>

In 1493, Seong Hyeon compiled *Akhak gwebeom* (*Primer for Music Studies* 樂學軌範) during the reign of King Seongjong (r. 1469-1494). He would also use *hapjabo* 合字譜, a tablature notation, to record the music he played on the *geomungo*. Furthermore, in *Yongjae chonghwa* (*Literary Miscellany of Seong Hyeon* 慵齋叢話), he described the music culture of the literati at that time, including *geomungo* playing, as follows:

A man with the family name of Gwon talked about the reason to learn music...[another] man pulled up a *geomungo* and started to play it. A woman asked him to play “Pungipsong” (Wind Blowing through Pines). He slowly plucked the strings and adjusted the bridge. The sound was indeed wonderous. The woman sang along softly. Her voice is like a string of pearls. My heart was stirred with a deep yearning.<sup>4</sup>

2. Burnt-Paulownia Zither refers to *jiaowei* qin 焦尾琴 made by Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132-192) from the Han dynasty

3. *Takyongjip* 潘纓集, “Seo yukhyeonbae” 書六絃背.

4. *Yongjae chonghwa* 慵齋叢話, *gwon* 10.

The aforementioned instances show that in the fifteenth century literati considered learning to play the *geomungo* important and had the tradition of singing “Pungipsong” with the *geomungo* as accompaniment. In the sixteenth century and afterwards, learning to play the *geomungo* became more important for scholar officials with a view to practicing a Confucianist theory of music, and it was thus established as a required skill for literati (Yun 2015, 78).

Hwang Junyeon (1998, 99-104) explained Joseon literati’s view on music in the following manner:

In Joseon society, Confucian scholars played immense political and social roles. They were leaders in creating and developing arts and culture, and they had an overall influence on many areas including philosophy, culture, calligraphy, painting, and music....Regarding their view on music, they envisioned their ideal music by referring to classics such as the “Book of Music” 樂記 in the *Classic of Rites* 禮記. As a result, they aimed to cultivate virtue through music....Confucian scholars’ purpose was to secure peace throughout the country by building each individual’s character. They viewed music as a symbol of virtue and sought good music as a way to realize the virtuous administration of a state. In practice, they favored the *geomungo* music in particular.

Literati, similar to the Confucian scholars in the quotation above, tried to cultivate virtue and build character through music. The literati view on music in the sixteenth century and the mood of their performance are well represented in Yi Gyeongyun’s (1545-1611) painting “Gwanwoldo” below.



Figure 2. “Gwanwoldo” (Painting on Moon Viewing 觀月圖), Painting by Yi Gyeongyun  
source: National Museum of Korea and National Gugak Center 2011, 127

In the sixteenth century, Joseon literati would play the *geomungo* solely without singing, but they often sang to *geomungo* accompaniment as described in the record quoted above from *Yongje chonghwa*. In the fifteenth century, literati sang vernacular poetry such as *Gyeonggi chega* or *Goryeo gayo*, but by the sixteenth century they had chosen the *sijo* genre for song texts in order to cultivate virtue (Gil 2002, 278). The vernacular songs favored by literati in the sixteenth century also included *onari* 오느리 songs which had a similar syllabic meter to that of *sijo* although the number of characters differed.

It was suggested that the *onari* songs could have been borrowed from folk songs (Gwon 1997, 9-32), or that they were the songs of eulogy which originated from shamanic songs such as “Shimbanggok” and were later merged into court music (Jo 1997, 3-35). *Onari* was employed as texts for literati in the sixteenth century to sing “Mandaeyeop” with *geomungo* accompaniment. The characteristics of this music can be found in the *geomungo* scores compiled by literati.

### Geomungo Scores and the Characteristics of “Mandaeyeop” as Performed by Literati in the Sixteenth Century

The music culture enjoyed by literati outside the royal court in the sixteenth century can be envisioned by studying *Hyeonggeom dongmun yugi* (Record of Geomungo Scores 玄琴東文類記) of 1620 and *Geumhapjabo* (Notation of Geomungo 琴合字譜) of 1572. Each of the two tablature books was compiled by a literatus whose family had a profound taste for music over generations. Both of literati studied *geomungo* with a scholarly interest. However, they collected different pieces of music and recorded them using different notation methods according to their own standards.

First, this chapter discusses the characteristics of the songs contained in *Hyeonggeom dongmun yugi*. The book was composed by Yi Deukyun (1553-1630), a descendant of Yi Jehyeon (1287-1367) who was a renowned scholar at the end of the Goryeo dynasty. Although this book was compiled in the early seventeenth century (1620), Yi collected *geomungo* music which had been played in the sixteenth century and recorded in tablature at that time. For example, the book contains “Pyeonggio mandaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” which were played by the *geomungo* maestro Bak Suro 朴壽老. The two works date from around

1545, when King Myeongjong (r. 1545-1567) ascended the throne, or even earlier. The book also contains “Jungyeop” as played by Bak Geun 朴根 which dates back to around 1561 (Kim 2015, 29-31). In addition, Yi also includes in the book scores for the melodies used by *geomungo* players such as Jo Seong 趙晟 (1492-1555), Ahn Sang 安瑤 (1511-1579), Bak Suro, and Heo Sajong 許嗣宗 (n.d.) from the sixteenth century. As shown in Figure 3, Yi Deukyun recorded the name of each player under the titles of the scores—“Pyeonggio mandaeyeop,” “Mandaeyeop pyeongjo,” and “Pyeonggio jangdaeyeop”—to identify who played a particular song.

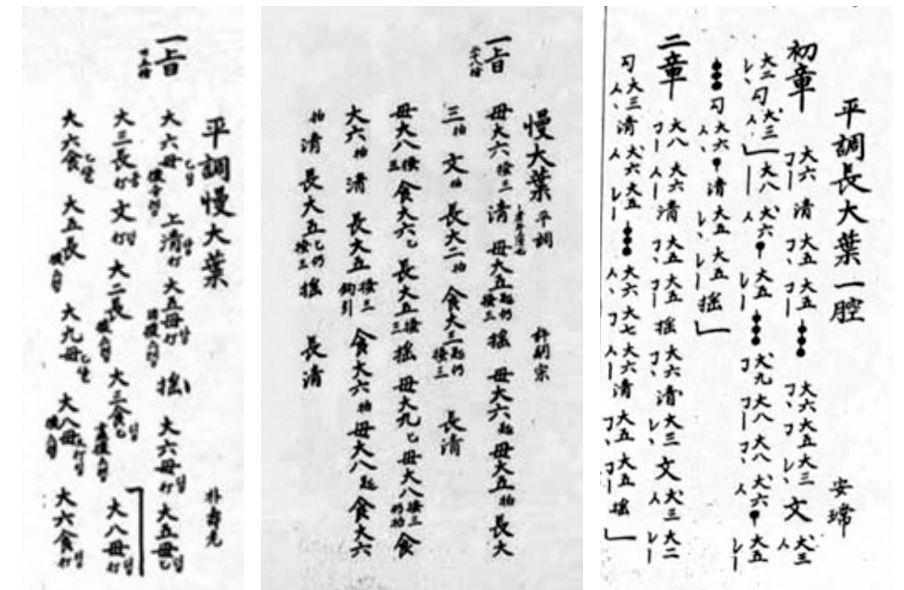


Figure 3. . “Pyeonggio mandaeyeop” (left), “Mandaeyeop pyeongjo” (middle), and “Pyeonggio jangdaeyeop” (right) from *Hyeonggeom dongmun yugi*

source: National Gugak Center 1984b, 97; 98; 118

Besides the three tablatures shown in Figure 3, *Hyeonggeom dongmun yugi* features eleven versions of “Mandaeyeop” (Sung 2021, 186). From that, we can evince that “Mandaeyeop” represented the main repertoire of songs with *geomungo* accompaniment performed by literati in the sixteenth century.

*Geumhapjabo* was compiled by Ahn Sang who served as *cheomjeong* (a minor fourth rank official 僉正) in the Royal Music Institute 掌樂院. Ahn’s family had produced eminent scholars such as Seong Hyeon and Jo Seong



who placed great value on playing the *geomungo*. Against this family backdrop, Ahn Sang most likely regarded music highly and in playing the *geomungo* in particular (Choe 2012). In 1572, to compile *Geumhapjabo*, Ahn ordered the musician Hong Seonjong to revise *hapjabo* for the *geomungo* music and then combined it with the scores for wind instruments notated by court musician Heo Eokbong and the scores for *janggu* (an hourglass-shaped double-headed drum) notated by court musician Yi Mugeum. Many parts of the book reveal the intention of the compiler which was to help people learn to play the *geomungo*. In the preface, Ahn stated that *Geumhapjabo* was designed to teach beginners how to play the *geomungo*. He also said that his goal was to improve the existing tablature by establishing the rules of notation for playing the *geomungo* and by providing explanatory notes of the rules.

When I was appointed cheomjeong in the Royal Music Institute in 1561, I looked at the compiled scores that was used as a reference to test court musicians. I found that *the book was difficult for beginners to understand because it provided only the order of the upper and lower frets, ignoring the old talature, and does not give any information for fingering or the use of a plectrum*. For this reason, I ordered musician Hong Seonjong to collect several popular songs with a view to revising *hapjabo* and commanded Heo Eokbong to make scores for a transverse flute (*daegum*), and Yi Mugeum to make scores for a *janggu* and a drum. In this book, these scores were recorded in parallel with song texts and *yukbo* (phonetic notation)...If instrumentalists understand the scores in this book, the concurrent sounds made by percussion and string instruments will not be confused and chaotic even when the sound of a wind instrument is added. They can notice where the order of the sounds is lost. However, if a player does not understand the rules of tablature, it is like a person facing a blank wall. Therefore, in the front of the book, I will provide annotations to the tablature. If one lives in a remote area and cannot find a *geomungo* teacher despite his wish to learn to play the instrument, that person may find this book useful because it is as easy to understand as if a *geomungo* master were right next to him teaching him in detail how to play. (emphasis mine)

As mentioned above, *Geumhapjabo* can be characterized by the detailed annotations given to the rules of tablature in the introduction. The neumes which are compounds of symbols—e.g., a character or a component of a character from each of the tablature terminologies concerning the use of strings,

frets, fingers, and plucking methods—are explained in this book for beginners. Furthermore, this book contains theoretical content on *geomungo* as well as illustrations of, for example, how to hold a plectrum in the right hand or the method of fretting with first and second fingers, as shown in Figure 4.

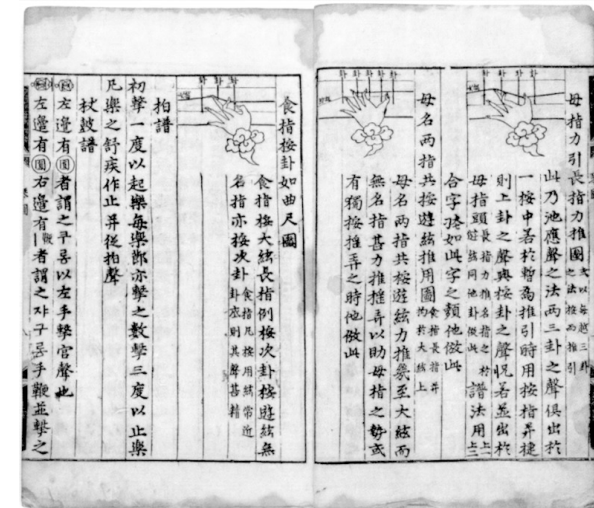


Figure 4. *Geumhapjabo*, Annotations on Holding Frets, the Notation of Bak 拍譜 and the Notation of Janggu 杖鼓譜

source: National Museum of Korea and National Gugak Center. 2011, 93

According to the preface quoted above, *Geumhapjabo* includes a collection of songs that were popular at that time. Ahn Sang singled out “Mandaeyeop,” among other pieces, as laying the groundwork for aspiring *geomungo*-playing literati to start with. He stated, “Once a beginner is used to the fingering techniques of “Mandaeyeop,” he can play other songs as well. *Geumhapjabo* testifies that literati perceived “Mandaeyeop” as a fundamental and important work in the sixteenth century.

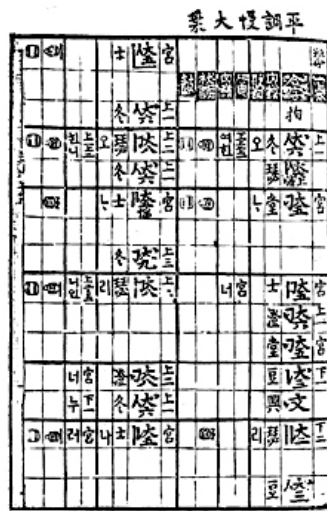


Figure 5. *Geumhapjabo*, “Pyeongjo mandaeyeop”

source: National Gugak Center 1987, 34

In Figure 5, the score of “Pyeongjo mandaeyeop” uses the full score format comprised of eight short lines. These eight lines are bound to make two lines. From right to left, the first short line shows *oem yakbo* (the simplified five-tone notation) for *geomungo*, the second line *hapjabo* for *geomungo*; the third line *yukbo* for *geomungo* in Chinese characters; the fourth line for song text; the fifth line *oem yakbo* for *daegum*; the sixth line *yukbo* for *daegum*; the seventh line notation for a *janggo*; and the eight-line notation for a drum.

As it was intended for beginners, *Geumhapjabo* provides not just one but three types of notation to record *geomungo* melodies. *Oem yakbo* would help students grasp a progression of melodies at once. *Hapjabo* offers the techniques of playing the *geomungo*. *Yukbo* lets a player understand sound intuitively. In addition, this book presents the notations for the wind instrument and the percussion alongside the *geomungo* notation so that “the concurrent sounds of percussion and string instruments will not be confused and chaotic even when the sound of the wind instrument is added.” This shows this book was carefully designed for amateur players, not just for career musicians, to learn to play the *geomungo*.

## Interactions between Literati, *Geomungo* Musicians, and Professional Singers along with a New Trend in the *Gagok* Landscape from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth centuries

In the seventeenth century, the *jungin* class (middle-class) emerged in Joseon society. Their great achievements in many areas brought along changes in art and culture, including paintings and literature. In the musical community, a large number of professional singers from the *jungin* class made their debuts. This brought multi-dimensional changes in the way that *gagok* was performed with *geomungo* accompaniment by literati in the sixteenth century. This chapter investigates the main performers of *gagok* from the seventeenth century up to the nineteenth century by dividing them into three groups, literati, *geomungo* musicians, and professional singers, thereby shedding light on how *gagok* was performed in the seventeenth in comparison with eighteenth and afterwards.

### *The Gagok Performance Landscape in the Seventeenth-century*

#### The Literati’s academic approach to learning and playing the *geomungo*

Following the sixteenth century, the literati’s fondness of and interest in *geomungo* remained unchanged in the seventeenth century. Kim Seongchoe (1645-1713) loved it so much that he owned a dozen premium *geomungo* (Shin et al. 2007, 45). Yi Manbu (1664-1732) possessed dozens of *geomungo* too. He learned to play from *geomungo* musician Han Rip who served as *jeonak* (the sixth rank official) at the Royal Music Institute (Song 2009, 237). In such an atmosphere, literati made more effort than ever before to learn to play the instrument and perform the *geomungo* repertoire, which led to the increase in performances of singing with *geomungo* accompaniment and compilations of *geomungo* scores.

*Yanggeum sinbo* (*Yang’s New Geomungo Scores* 梁琴新譜), published in a woodblock edition, is the most noteworthy compiled scores in the early seventeenth century. In 1610, Kim Dunam compiled this book by collecting the melodies performed by musician Yang Deoksu. It contains “Mandaeyeop,” which had changed into an instrumental music and apparently stopped being sung as a vocal music (Hwang 1982). The arrangement of songs and the explanatory notes of the songs in the book imply that “Jungdaeyeop” became

a major song to be learned, instead of “Mandaeyeop,” in the early seventeenth century.

The first evidence that the compiler of *Yanggeum sinbo* valued “Jungdaeyeop” is the statement he makes at the end of “Jungdaeyeop in Pyeongjo and Gyemyeonjo,” which read, “‘Yeominrak,’ ‘Boheoja,’ ‘Yeongsan hoesang’ as well as ‘Sakdaeyeop’ are played when dancing is performed. Since these songs should not be learned first, I excluded them from this book.” This indicates that among the three main songs, “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop,” the compiler intended to exclude “Sakdaeyeop” from the content of his book.

The second indication of the rising importance of “Jungdaeyeop” at the time of *Yanggeum sinbo*’s publication was the fact that the book contains five pieces of Jungdaeyeop songs. The book treats “Jungdaeyeop: *onari*” as an original work, also known as “Simbanggok” 心方曲, which was sung in *pyeongjo* with the song text of “Onari onari shoshe” 오느리 오느리쇼셔. Also included is “Jungdaeyeop, u 又: *imomi*,” a variation of the original “Jungdaeyeop: *onari*.” In addition to these two pieces, three more variations from “Jungdaeyeop: *onari*” are included, and they were performed with a change of mode—“Jungdaeyeop” in *pyeongjo*, *pyeongjo gyemyeonjo*, and *ujo gyemyeonjo* (Yi 1957).

[“Jungdaeyeop, u” in *Yanggeum sinbo*]

If I die, and die again; If I die one hundred deaths,  
My bones have become dust, my spirit gets obliterated,  
My loyal heart for you, will always be here.

Among the five pieces of Jungdaeyeop works compiled in *Yanggeum sinbo*, only “Jungdaeyeop: *onari*” and “Jungdaeyeop, u: *imomi*” included lyrics. “Jungdaeyeop, u: *imomi*” is the first song sung with a regular *sijo* poem (*pyeong sijo*), widely known as “Dansimga” (Song of a Loyal Heart) composed by Jeong Mongju in reply to Yi Bangwon. It begins with the phrase “If I die and die again” (*Imoi jugeo jugeo*). Another book of the compiled *geomungo* scores is *Jeungbo gogeumbo* (*Compiled Old Scores of Geomungo, Expanded Edition*). It contains scores for Jungdaeyeop and Sakdaeyeop works set with *sijo* poems: one piece of Sakdaeyeop song in *ujo*, two pieces in *pyeongjo*, and one piece in *gyemyeonjo pyeongjo* respectively.



Figure 6. “Sinjeung ujo sakdaeyeop” (left) and *Sijo* Poems “Twelve Peaks of Mount Cheongnyang” and “Building a Thatched Cottage” (right) in *Baekunam geombo*

source: National Gugak Center 1984c, 187; 189

In *Baekunam geombo*, another compilation of scores (Figure 6), the section “Sinjeung ujo sakdaeyeop” (New Sakdaeyeop Songs in *Ujo*) includes one *sijo* poem which starts with the phrase “*choelli oe*” (a thousand *ri* away) on the right side of the *geomungo* tablature as well as two more *sijo* poems which start with the phrases “Building a Thatched Cottage” and “Twelve Peaks of Mount Cheongnyang,” respectively; neither has a *geomungo* melody. The *sijo* poems by literati were set in various derivative songs of “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” in the seventeenth century, as can be seen in the compilations for *geomungo* scores such as *Yanggeum sinbo*, *Jeungbo gogeumbo*, and *Baekunam geombo* which include *sijo* along with *geomungo* melodies in the *geomungo* scores.

In 1728, Kim Cheontaek compiled a song anthology titled *Cheonggu yeongeon* (*Songs of Green Hills*) by collecting lyrics composed in hangeul, including many *sijo* poems. This can be interpreted as meaning that not only had many *sijo* poems been passed down, but that new ones were also created at that time.



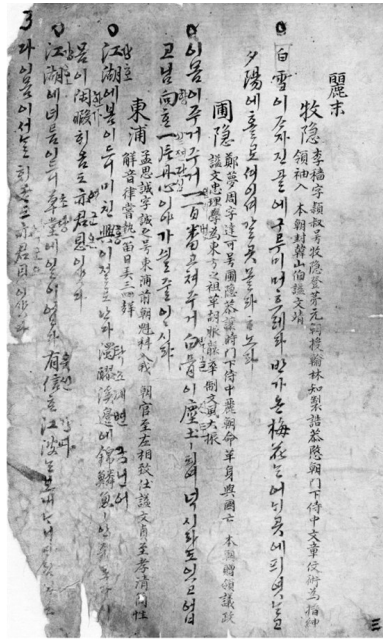


Figure 7. *Sijo* Poems Composed since the End of the Goryeo Dynasty Selected as Lyrics for “I-Sakdaeyeop,” *Cheonggu yeongeon* (1728)

source: National Hangeul Museum 2017, 11

It is notable that the poems include works by illustrious literati such as Yi Saek and Jeong Mongju, who lived at the end of the Goryeo dynasty and from Maeng Saseong who was from the early Joseon dynasty (Figure 7).

Out of all the *sijo* works written by literati since the end of the Goryeo dynasty, contemporaries chose poems such as “Dansimga” to sing to derivative melodies of “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” which were created from the beginning of seventeenth century. While *gagok* performance was developing with creations of these derivative melodies, literati continued to play an important role by composing new *sijo* poems in the seventeenth century and afterwards.

### Geomungo musicians’ composing new songs

The records about literati who enjoyed playing the *geomungo* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries mention the names of the *geomungo* musicians who instructed them. *Hyeonggeum donmun yugi* includes the melodies played by

musicians such as Jo Seong, Ahn Sang, Bak Geun, Bak Suro, Heo Sajong, Yi Sejun, Seong Hyeon, Mu Ansu, Kim Jongson, Yi Sejeong, and Yang Deoksu. This suggests that many *geomungo* musicians presented their music with their own distinct styles.

Among the *geomungo* musicians during the end of seventeenth century and afterwards, Kim Seonggi (1649-1724) is the most prominent figure known for his derivative songs. As a musician at the Royal Music Institute, he was a prolific composer and set a milestone in *gagok* performance during his lifetime according to the accounts found in the collected works of literati. However, one account describing how Kim Seonggi learned to play the *geomungo* from his master, Wang Segi, suggests that preceding *geomungo* musicians had already made various attempts and practiced writing new works starting from the early seventeenth century even before Kim.

*Geomungo* maestro Kim Seonggi 金聖基 learned to play the instrument from Wang Segi 王世基. Master Wang created new melodies but would never teach them to Kim. One day as Wang played a new melody, Kim sneaked into the yard of Wang’s house at night to hear the new melody coming out of the window. He was then able to perform it the next morning. One night, being suspicious of Kim, while playing a new melody Wang opened the window abruptly. This jolted Seonggi and made him fall down. Deeply impressed by Kim’s passion, Wang decided to pass down all of his works to Kim.<sup>5</sup>

This change reflects a growing demand for new melodies for new lyrics as many *sijo* works fed into the musical community along with the increasing popularity of “Jungdaeyeop” starting from the early seventeenth century. The creative activities came to fruition early in the seventeenth century as evidenced in the Jungdaeyeop works included in *Yanggeum sinbo* compiled at that time. As seen above, the compiler recorded “Jungdaeyeop: *onari*” and then “Jungdaeyeop, u: *imomi*” by marking a letter “u” 又 in the title. “Dansimga,” the lyric chosen for “Jungdaeyeop, u: *imomi*” introduced as a new version by flagging “u” in *Yanggeum sinbo*. It is also recorded as the lyric for “I-Jungdaeyeop” (Second Variation of Jungdaeyeop) in other song anthologies such as *Donggaseon* (*Selected*

5. *Chujae gii* 秋齋紀異, “Geomungo Master Kim Seonggi.”



songs of the Eastern Kingdom) and *Yeongeon ruecho* (Selection of Classified Songs) (Sung 2021, 188). This implies that the derivative song “I-Jungdaeyeop” singing “Danshimga” is the first derivative song of “I-Jungdaeyeop.”



Figure 8. “Jungdaeyeop, u 又” in *Yanggeum sinbo* (left) and “Sakdaeyeop pyeongjo u, 又” in *Jeungbo gogeumbo* (right)

source: National Gugak Center 1984a, 83

Derivative songs marked as *u* are also included in *Jeungbo gogeumbo* compiled in the middle of the seventeenth century. This book contains three works under “Ujo Jungdaeyeop” including two derivative songs marked by *u* in the titles. In the “Sakdaeyeop” category, “Pyeongjo sakdaeyeop” and “Ujo sakdaeyeop” each have a derivative song respectively. The book testifies that new songs derived from original pieces were more performed than the originals in the middle of seventeenth century.

As the creative fervor for derivative songs of “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” gradually increased, the first, second, and third derivative ones were added to the repertoires of the two titles from the end of seventeenth century. *Baekunam geumbo* (*The Compiled Geomungo Scores of Baekunam*) and *Geumbo sinjeong garyeon* (*The Newly Compiled Geomungo Scores Supplement*, 1680) were the first two books which adopted a new naming system to identify the order of creation of the derivative songs—e.g., the second variation and the third variation, instead of using the generic term *u*.

The anecdote which Kim Seonggi recounts in his collected works uses expressions such as “new sounds,” “new melodies,” and “new scores.” Indeed, the compilation books for *geomungo* scores contain many new derivative songs. The actual melodies of *gagok* were created by professional singers and *geomungo* musicians, not by literati who compiled *geomungo* scores. It can be surmised that singers were in charge of creating derivative songs by freely experimenting with new melodies for a variety of songs while *geomungo* musicians would refine those melodies. After they were created, these new *geomungo* pieces seem to have become established and then to have been circulated before being compiled into the books of *geomungo* scores. In other words, inclusion into those books in the end of seventeenth century meant that the songs were recognized and accepted by contemporary singers.

### Emergence of professional singers from the *jungin* class

The *jungin* class (middle-class) emerged in the seventeenth century after two invasions—the Japanese Invasion (1592-1598) and the Manchu Invasion (1636). The *jungin* consisted of low-class officials holding posts in central government offices, offspring of secondary wives, local functionaries, and school students in the provinces. Since the seventeenth century, the *jungin* class, also known as *yeohangin* (common people), gained prominence in both artistic and cultural scenes. They painted pictures, discussed poetry, and were engaged in various social gatherings. Among them, those who liked singing began to take great interest in *gagok* performance. Many professional singers active in the seventeenth century were from the *jungin* class, who played a leading role in transmitting *gagok*. The “List of Singers, Past and Present” (*Gogeuim changga jessi*), part of *Haedong gayo* (*Popular Songs of the East* 海東歌謠, 1767), describes professional singers from the early seventeenth century.

From a long time ago, singers were rare. Even if there were singers, the succeeding generations would not know them, their names, or the time when they lived. Once people are gone, they never come back, how sad it is.<sup>6</sup>

6. *Haedong gayo* (1767), Entry “List of Singers of the Past and Present,” National Library of Korea DB: “自古歌者不多而間或有之後世莫知其某某之能唱而未知其何姓名及何時代之人一歸必不復來豈不哀哉.”

“List of Singers, Past and Present” of *Haedong gayo* (1767) lists the names of fifty-six famous professional singers by age during the reigns of King Sukjong (r. 1674-1720) and King Yeongjo (r. 1724-1776). Among the singers listed is Heo Jeong (b. 1621) who was said to sing the song “Hujeonghwa” (Flowers in a Courtyard) wonderfully. The first singer recorded on the list is Heo Jeong who was from the *yangban* class (the hereditary elite class). He was appointed magistrate of Seongcheon and served as a royal secretary after passing the Special Civil Service Examination in 1651. However, other singers were mostly from the *jungin* class (Choe 1976, 2-26).

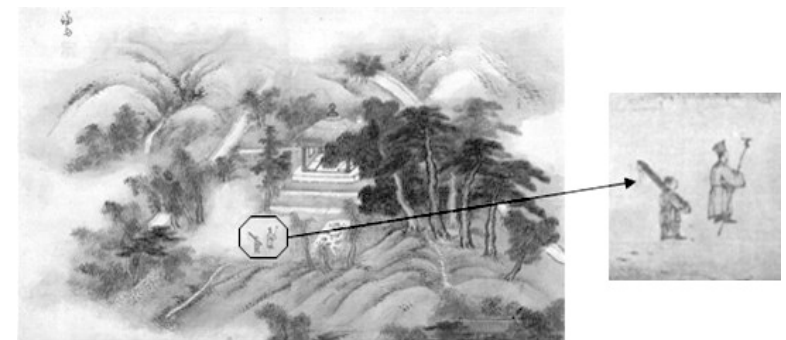
In comparison with the literati who sang songs to *geomungo* accompaniment in the sixteenth century, these professional singers from the *jungin* class shared the main repertoire with the literati as they also chose poetry written in *hangeul* to sing to “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop.” The two groups differ, however, in their reasons for singing. Literatus singers sang “Jungdaeyeop” to *geomungo* accompaniment in a quiet place mainly to learn to play the instrument and cultivate virtue whereas professional singers entertained themselves with elegance (*pungnyu*), and their purpose was solely enjoying music. The literatus singers took a scholarly interest in *geomungo* and sang with *geomungo* accompaniment as amateurs. But the singers from the *jungin* class were professional and conducted musical activities with their colleagues who shared the same interests and furthered their own musicality. In this sense, these singers who emerged in the seventeenth century could be called professional singers for their dedicated work to music.

In the previous section it was noted that among compilation books of *geomungo* scores which contain “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop,” books such as *Jeungbo gogeumbo* and *Baegunam geumbo* compiled in the mid- to late-seventeenth century included many *sijo* poems as lyrics. It also explained that the existence of lyrics would imply a thriving culture of singing *gagok* set to new melodies in the seventeenth century. This illustrates that many singers already attempted to write and sing new pieces of *gagok* to express their own musicality and promote *gagok* performance culture in the seventeenth century.

## *Trends in the Eighteenth century and Afterwards*

### **Literati’s lasting preference for Jungdaeyeop” and compilation of song anthologies to satisfy their taste**

The tradition of literati singing to the accompaniment of *geomungo* continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several paintings produced in the eighteenth century depict literati playing the *geomungo* without accompaniment of a wind instrument such as *daegeum* (transverse bamboo flute) and *piri* (cylindrical double-reed bamboo oboe) and a percussion instrument such as *janggu* (hourglass-shaped double-headed drum) in the eighteenth century. Figure 9 shows “Seowon sojeongdo” (A Little Pavilion in the West Garden) painted by Jeong Seon (1676-1759). It depicts a scholar wearing a hat and his servant carrying a *geomungo* as they walk across a courtyard in front of a pavilion located deep in the mountains. This painting presents a serene mood in which the literatus’s longing for a friend who can share *geomungo* music is felt.



**Figure 9.** “Seowon sojeongdo” by Jeong Seon, 1740 (left) and Detail of a Marked Area (right)

source: Yi 1995, 35

Now, let’s take examples and examine the space in which literati played “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” with a *geomungo* and their view on music. Gang Schwang (1717-1791), a literatus from the Joseon period, was widely known for his mastery of poetry, calligraphy, and painting, so-called “three perfections.” He also enjoyed playing the *geomungo* for himself. This chapter

looks at Gang Sehwang to grasp the trend of literati performing and enjoying the *geomungo* music.



Figure 10. Gang Sehwang, Self Portrait(1782)

source: National Museum of Korea 2013, 6

In 1747, Gang in his thirties hosted a meeting with eleven people including his brother-in-law Yu Gyeongjong at the height of summer in Cheongmundang house in Ansan, Gyeonggi province. To commemorate the gathering, the participants wrote and painted about the event on The painting by Gang Sehwang titled “Hyeongjeong seungjipdo” (Painting on an Elegant Gathering in a Mysterious Pavilion) and the writing of Yu Gyeongjong provide a vivid description. The following is a portion from what Yu wrote. Gwangji 光之 in the text below refers to Gang Sehwang.

At summer’s first height, on June 11, in the Jeongmyo year (1747), people gathered in Cheongmundang on a business occasion. As the party reached its peak, I asked Gwangji to draw a picture for me to appreciate later. A total of eleven people were gathered....As the heavy rain was letting up, the cicadas began making noise. *The sounds of geomungo and songs resonated alternately. While drinking and reciting poems, we didn’t feel tired at all. The mood was quite enjoyable.* When the painting was finished, Deokjo wrote an epigraph and each of the other guests composed a poem and wrote it down, one after another. (emphasis mine)

The painting “Hyeongjeong seungjipdo” does not depict anyone playing the *geomungo* but only the instrument itself without a player. However, the line quoted above “The sounds of *geomungo* and songs resonate alternately. While drinking and reciting poems, we didn’t feel tired at all. The mood was quite enjoyable” implies that the participants including Yu Gyeongjong composed poems in turn and sang them to *geomungo* accompaniment. If so, who played the *geomungo* and who was the singer? Later, Gang Sehwang wrote a poem and sent it to Yu to thank him for hosting the event. The poem partly reads, “With joy still in the air, old man Bak (Bak Domaeng) sang in a clear and graceful voice.”<sup>7</sup> This means that Bak Domaeng was the singer. As Gang Sehwang was already known as an excellent *geomungo* player, Gang would have played the instrument in the illustration. Based on Yu’s epigraph, the person sitting to the left of the *geomungo* is Gang and the person playing a game of go in the back is Bak Domaeng—in the picture, Bak Domaeng is marked by a circle, and Gang Sehwang by a square in Figure 11.

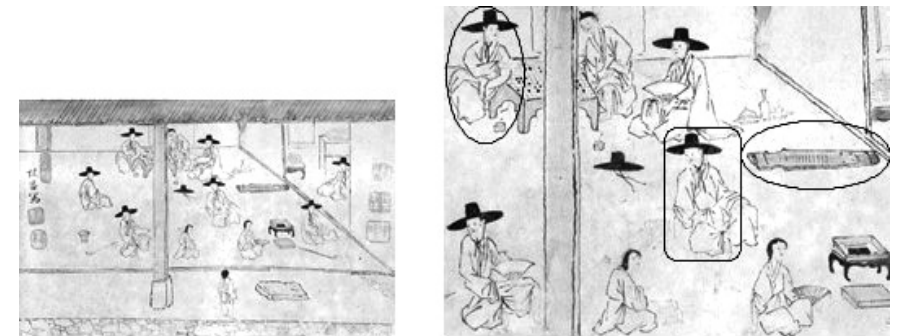


Figure 11. Gang Sehwang “Hyeongjeong seungjipdo” (left) and the Enlarged Image (right)

source: National Museum of Korea 2013, 47

Having been introduced to the renowned scholar-official Yi Ik (1681-1763) by Yu Gyeongjong, Gang Sehwang associated with Yi Ik. Yi wrote a scroll of poems reflecting on a spring outing to Tangchundae. In the preface, he stated that Gang played “Simbanggok” on a *geomungo*. Here, “Simbanggok” means “Jungdaeyeop.” The preface partly reads as follows:

7. Cf. *Pyoam mungo*, Chapter 1, Entry “Sending a poem to Haecam” 寄海巖.



I was possessed by concern about my sick child. As soon as Gwangji put his fingers on the *geomungo* and played “Simbanggok,” a worried person will become happy, and an ill person recover. As I reckon, Gwangji has just come back after spending time in beautiful places with streams and mountains. Is that the reason that his sound is so clear as to tug at people’s heartstrings?...If you further travel around mountains and rivers, find where you like, and play the musical instrument to express your feeling, you can restore the classical sound of the *geomungo* music.<sup>8</sup>

The painting of “Hyeongjeong seungjipdo” describes a light moment of scholar officials reading a book, playing *go*, reciting poems, and singing with *geomungo* accompaniment, which contrasts with the case of one or two people singing with *geomungo* accompaniment in a quiet room. The story that Gang played “Jungdaeyeop” to console the sorrowful heart of Yi Yik in a spring outing shows a typical example of a literatus’ singing with the *geomungo* accompaniment.

Since the middle of eighteenth century, a new trend emerged as literati, in particular, the members of the School of Northern Learning (Bukhak), formed a music club and staged ensemble performances. Based on “Record of Music Club of Spring Hill” 記留春塢樂會 in *Cheongseongjip* (Collected Works of Seong Daejung) by Seong Daejung (1732-1809), we know that Kim Yonggyeom (1702-1789) and Hong Daeyong (1731-1783) liked to play the *gayageum* (twelve-stringed plucked zither), Kim Eok, the *yanggeum* (dulcimer), Bak Boan, a court musician from the Royal Music Institute, the *saenghwang* (mouth organ with seventeen bamboo pipes), Yu Hakjung liked singing, and Yi Hanjin (1732-1815) enjoyed playing the *tungso* (large notched bamboo oboe) (Korea National University of Arts 2000, 63). In 1841, Yi Hanjin, a member of the Music Club of Spring Hill, compiled *Cheonggu yeongeon* (1841), a song anthology with the same title of Kim Cheontaek’s, which presents the landscape of literati vocal music performance with a focus on his teacher Kim Yeonggyeom and associated literati in the late eighteenth century. He did not record the names of songs in this book. However, it is notable that the book contains the lyrics set in songs such as “Jungdaeyeop,” “Sakdaeyeop,” “Nong,” “Nak,” and “Pyeon” which were

played in *gagok* performances in the late eighteenth century. The texts included the works of Jeong Cheol, Yi Hwang, and Kim Yonggyeom as well as a piece by Song Yongse (also known as Song Silsol), two pieces by Kim Hongdo, and seven pieces by Yi Hanjin, the compiler (Shin et al. 2012, 90-92).

Song anthologies compiled between the second half of eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century include a relatively larger portion of “Jungdaeyeop” works (Song 2014). This shows the literati led the trend of *gagok* performing based on their views on music in parallel with professional singers from the *jungin* class.

### **Geomungo musicians’ artistic activities and the composition of new songs**

The eighteenth century saw an increasing number of derivative works which were compiled in books of *geomungo* music and scores such as *Hangeum sinbo* (1724), a collection of *geomungo* scores for the melodies played by Han Rip (1674-1730), as well as *Nangong sinbo* (1728) and *Changnangbo* (1779) both of which contain the scores of *geomungo* music played by Kim Seonggi. The growth of derivative songs is also marked by the creation of the fourth version of “Sakdaeyeop,” in particular (Sung 2021, 195-98).

Besides Kim Seonggi, many other *geomungo* musicians were actively engaged in the musical community in the eighteenth century. Kim Cheontaek (1681-1757), author of *Cheonggu yeongeon* (1728), also participated in the musical activities by closely associating with Jeon Manje 全萬齊, known as master Jeon, a *geomungo* musician of the early eighteenth century, according to the preface of *Cheonggu yeongeon* (1728) written by Jeong Raegyo, which read:

Baekham<sup>9</sup> was a good singer and composer of new sounds. He and master Jeon relied on each other, forming a fraternity of great masters. When master Jeon played the *geomungo* and Kim sang the tune, the clear sounds touched spirits and induced a harmonious mood. The skills of the two were peerless at that time.

I suffered from depression for a long time. Nothing could console my heart. One day when Kim came with master Jeon and sang a lyrical song

8. Yi Yik, *Sheongho jeonjip*, Chapter 52: “余方有子疾涔涔·光之至·撫琴爲心方之操·憂者以悅病者欲蘇·意謂光之俄從溪山來·其得助而然歟·何其聲之瀏瀏若動人...子益遊名山川·其遇會心處·必按絃被之·一復于玄鶴舊譜。”

9. Baekham is the penname of Kim Cheontaek.



for me, I could ease off my frustration.

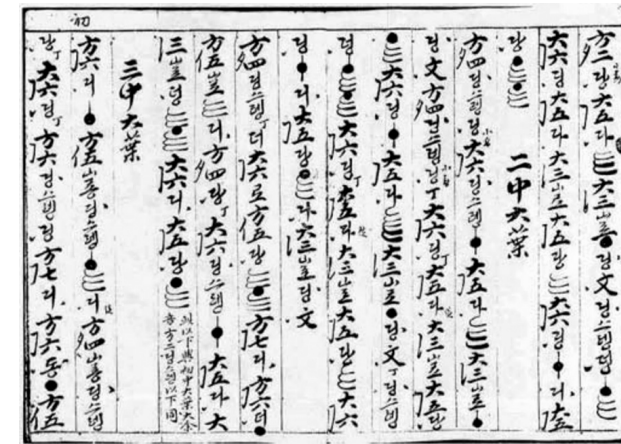
The expression “fraternity of the two masters” mentioned in this preface originates from an account of the Chinese *qin* master Bo Ya 伯牙 (BCE 387-BCE 299). It is said that when Bo Ya played the *qin*, Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 (n.d.) would always understand his music. Jeong’s choosing to use this story to describe the relationship between Kim Cheontaek and master Jeon suggests how closely professional singers worked with *geomungo* musicians as they sang “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” around the eighteenth century.

Following the seventeenth century, *gagok* lovers continued to enjoy playing “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” in the eighteenth century. The trend is vindicated in the books of compiled *geomungo* scores in the eighteenth century. One example, *Sinjak geumbo* (*New Edition of the Compiled Geomungo Scores*), compiled between 1724 and 1779 includes scores for derivative songs of “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” as well as scores only with tuning and left fingering techniques.

**Table 1.** List of Songs in *Sinjak geumbo*

[First part]	[Second part]
<i>Sinjak geumbo ujo hapbu</i>	“Work for Tuning in <i>ujo</i> ”
Method of tuning for <i>pyeongjo</i> and <i>ujo</i> ,	“Ujo Cho-Jungdaeyeop”
Left fingering techniques	“Ujo I-Jungdaeyeop”
“Pyeongjo Cho-Jungdaeyeop”	“Ujo Sam-Jungdaeyeop”
“Pyeongjo I-Jungdaeyeop”	“Ujo Cho-Sakdaeyeop”
“Pyeongjo Sam-Jungdaeyeop”	“Ujo I-Sakdaeyeop”
“Pyeongjo Cho-Sakdaeyeop”	“Ujo Sam-Sakdaeyeop”
“Pyeongjo I-Sakdaeyeop”	“Gyemyeonjo Cho-Sakdaeyeop”
“Pyeongjo Sam-Sakdaeyeop”	“Gyemyeonjo Cho-Sakyeop”
“Pyeongjo Gyemyeonjo”	“Gyemyeonjo I-Sakyeop”
“Pyeongjo Sam-Sakdaeyeop”	“Gyemyeonjo Sam-Sakyeop”

“Jungdaeyeop” had been performed with a *geomungo* only, not with wind instruments or percussions accompanied. Gradually, inter-tones (*ganeum*) were added and various ornamental techniques (*nonghyeon*) were deployed by players. *Sinjak geumbo* features seven ornamental techniques such as “thunder-striking technique” (Y. Heo 2016, 124-25).



**Figure 12.** “I-Jungdaeyeop” (Second Variation of Jungdaeyeop) and “Sam-Jungdaeyeop” (Third Variation of Jungdaeyeop)

source: National Gugak Center 1984c, 166

Not just *Sinjak geumbo*, other eighteenth-century compilation books of scores such as *Hangeum sinbo* and *Eoeunbo* featured new techniques of playing the instrument. It can be surmised that the new sounds mentioned in the account of Kim Seonggi from the collected works could mean a new piece of music played with a new plucking technique. This can also imply that in the eighteenth century *geomungo* musicians made continual efforts to use their creativity to express their own musicality by writing new pieces and developing new techniques in the evolving culture of *gagok* performance singing *sijo* pieces.

### Professional singers and their major roles in promoting *gagok* performances in professional singers’ clubs (*pungnyubang*)

Kim Cheontaek, the representative professional singer from the *jungin* class, compiled *Cheonggu yeongeon* (1728). This book is significant as it led to the compilation of other song anthologies by successors such as Kim Sujang, Bak Hyogwan, and Ahn Minyeong. This book contains an immense repository of 580 *sijo* poems which were sung to “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop,” testifying to the boom of *gagok* performance in the early eighteenth century.

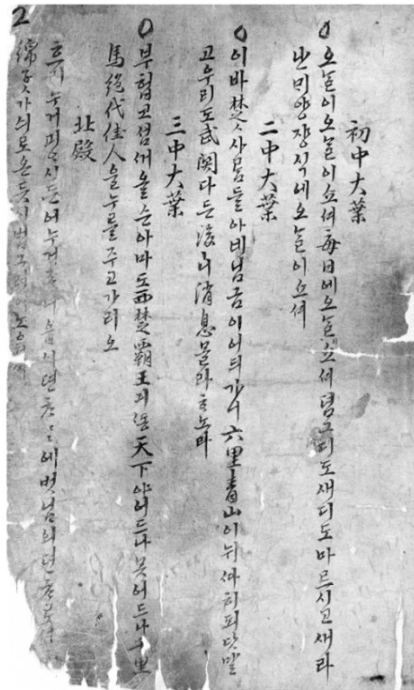


Figure 13. “Cho-Jungdaeyeop,” “I-Jungdaeyeop,” and “Bukjeon” in Cheonggu yeongeom

source: Natoinal Hangeul Museum 2017, 9

The poems in *Cheonggu yeongeom* (1728) compiled by Kim Cheontaek can be categorized as follows (Shin et al. 2012, 3).

- 1 *sijo* poem for “Cho-Jungdaeyeop”
- 2 *sijo* poems for “I- Jungdaeyeop”
- 1 *sijo* poem for “Sam-Jungdaeyeop”
- 1 *sijo* poem for “Bukjeon”
- 1 *sijo* poem for “I-Bukjeon”
- 1 *sijo* poem for “Cho-Sakdaeyeop”
- 391 *sijo* poems for “I-Sakdaeyeop”
- 56 *sijo* poems for “Sam-Sakdaeyeop”
- 10 *sijo* poems for “Naksijo”
- 1 *sijo* poem for “Jangjinjusa”
- 1 *sijo* poem for “Maengsanggunga”
- 116 *sijo* poems for “Manhoengcheong”

In the preface to *Cheonggu yeongeom* (1728), Jeong Raegyo writes that Kim Cheontaek’s purpose of publishing the song anthology by compiling hundreds of lyrics was as follows:

Kim Cheontaek gained renown in the country for his excellent singing. He had mastery of tonality and a cultivated literary taste. He composed new songs and shared them with people so they could practice the songs. Moreover, he selected hundreds of works that go well with tones among those written by well-known officials and scholars and the songs sung by common people. After correcting and refining these pieces, he compiled them into a book and asked me to write a preface with a goal to transmit the songs widely. The intention reflects his sincerity and faith. When I look at the book, the lyrics are all beautiful and enjoyable....The lyrics are not as refined as poetry but many works seem beneficial to edification about the Way. Why on earth would gentlemen in this world neglect those and not record them? Is it because there is only a small number of people who understand tonality? Kim Cheontaek had an insight for the future hundred years distant. So, he collected the songs that drifted into oblivion to let them be known to the world and transmitted to posterity.

Since the mid-eighteenth century, professional singers showed a strong tendency to take part in group activities, rather than performing solo. In 1760 (the thirty-sixth year of King Yeongjo’s reign), Kim Sujang, at age 71, built Nogajae (House of Kim Sujang) in Hwagae-dong,<sup>10</sup> Seoul. He spent the remainder of his life in this house and composed *sijo* poems and performed vocal music with friends and junior singers. Based on the “Record of Nogajae” 老歌齋記 written by Kim Simo and the poems related to the activities, it can be assumed that many professional singers, including Kim Ugyu, Bak Munuk, Kim Jungyeol, Jang Bokso, and Yi Deokham, participated in the gatherings as they had a deep friendship with Kim Sujang (Choe 1977, 36).

In addition, Jang Ubyeok (1735-1809) would climb up to a boulder on top of Mt. Inwang and look down on Seoul and sing *gagok*. Against the backdrop of mountain peaks, he built a pavilion named Seobyeokjeong in which he enjoyed singing and poetry (Song 2007, 393). Jang developed a method to

www.kci.go.kr  
 10. Hwagaedong is the name of a village, old name of which was Hwadong. It is located to the right side of Gyeongbokgung Palace.

notate rhythm with apricot-flower symbols (*maehwajeom jangdan* 梅花點長短) (Kim 2011, 45). Many professional singers learned singing techniques from him. Also, Bak Hyogwan and Ahn Minyeong performed music, under the auspices of Yi Haeung, the father of King Gojong, and his son Yi Jaemyeon, in Chilsongjeong of Mount Inwang, which was a popular gathering place for enjoying poetry (Jeong 2003, 127; G. Heo 2016, 164-70). The facts that Kim Sujang associated with professional singers in Nogajae, that Jang Ubyeok taught his protégés the singing skills in Seobyeokjeong, and that the stage of activities of Bak Hyogwan and Ahn Minyeong was mainly Chilsongjeong shows that in the late eighteenth century professional singers gathered in particular places to interact with like-minded people, rather than performed alone. Choe Dongwon (1977, 46) interpreted the professional singers’ activities based in Nogajae as follows: “Singers, either amateur or professional, crowded in Nogajae to perform. Nogajae served as a rallying point for those who wished to entertain themselves, vocal training center, and school for next generation singers.” Shin Eungyeong (1995, 173) further argued that this type of place was called a professional singers’ club (*pungnyubang*). In summary, the professional singers’ club was the space for audiences to enjoy music and for musicians to sing and play instruments during the late Joseon period.

As joint musical activities were performed by professional singers and the singing culture thrived in professional singers’ clubs, singers joined not just *geomungo* but other wind and string instrumentalists. The close interaction among them in the club led to the establishment of ensemble. Several *sijo* poems composed in the eighteenth century reflect the scene of a *gagok* performance in an ensemble format using wind and other string musical instruments in addition to *geomungo*. The following *sijo* poem by Kim Sujang compiled in *Haedong gayo* (1763) uses expressions such as “concerted musical instruments” and “set on the sounds of wind and string instruments.” These mean that *gagok* such as “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” were accompanied by various wind and string instruments including *gayageum*, *geomungo*, *haegeum* (two-stringed fiddle), and *daegeum*.

My friends, do you know the beauty of songs?

With spring willow, summer wind, autumn moon, and winter snow,  
at Pilundae, Sogyekdae, Tangchundae, and other places commanding  
a scenic view of Han River, extravagant parties are held with drink and

food. Here are good friends, various musical instruments, and the best, and beautiful, female singers singing in turn. “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” are sounds from the times of emperors— Yao and Shun, Wu and Tang, and Wen and Wu—“Hujeonghwa” and “Naksijo” are the sounds of the Han, Tang, and Song dynasties; “Soyong” and “Pyeonnak” are like the sounds of wielding swords from the Warring States period, set to the sound of wind and string instruments. Turn away from yearning for fame and wealth! I love the unrestrained spirit of a man!<sup>11</sup> (emphasis mine)

As singers took turns singing the *gagok* repertoire accompanied by wind and string instruments, unlike a single person singing to the accompaniment of only a *geomungo*, they might have felt a strong need to orchestrate the sounds to the rhythm, unlike the case in which a person sang with accompaniment of a single instrument, *geomungo*, and they thus arrived at the idea of using *janggu*. In conclusion, in the eighteenth century as a full cycle of *gagok* performance in a professional singers’ club was widely promoted, not only *geomungo* but other string and wind instrument players mingled, resulting in the arrangement of an ensemble. The following are the two paintings: “Sugap gyehoe” (1841) depicts male and female singers singing a cycle of *gagok*, and the other describes four female singers performing together, which is included in *Gyobang gayo* (*Song Repertoire of an Entertainment Club*). These two paintings illustrate playing wind and string instruments along with *janggu* as an accompaniment for a *gagok* performance.



Figure 14. Anonymous, a Detail from “Sugap gyehoe” (1814) and a Painting of Gagok Singers in *Gyobang gayo* (1872)

source: National Gugak Center 2003, 136 (left)  
National Museum of Korea 2008, 23 (right)

11. *Haedong gayo*, No. 548.



On the other hand, professional singers in the middle of eighteenth century preferred “Sakdaeyeop” to “Jungdaeyeop.” The reason is during the development of “Jungdaeyeop” between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many inter-tones were added, a variety of ornaments were used, and left fingering techniques increased dramatically (Y. Heo 2016, 124-25). Since the early seventeenth century, “Jungdaeyeop” was tuned to the *geomungo* melody only, without any rhythmical restrictions to the *janggo* accompaniment. Therefore, as in the case of *Sinjak geumbo*, the ornaments developed, those for left fingers in particular, and this resulted in the slowing of tempo and the departure from the existing rhythmic framework. Hence, it gradually became unfit to be played for ensemble music (Sung 2021, 202-04).

*Gagok wollyu* (*Source of Vocal Music*, 1872) was the first book to use *yeoneumpyo* (a notation for voice articulation) to indicate to the singer how to produce sounds to express the lyrics beautifully. But as shown in Figure 15, no *yeoneumpyo* are marked in the scores for the “Jungdaeyeop” category. Symbols such as “/” or “□” appear in red to the right of lyrics starting from “Ujo Cho-Sakdaeyeop,” a derivative song of “Sakdaeyeop.” This indicates professional singers from the *jungin* class in the late nineteenth century did sing not “Jungdaeyeop” but “Sakdaeyeop” and its derivative songs only.

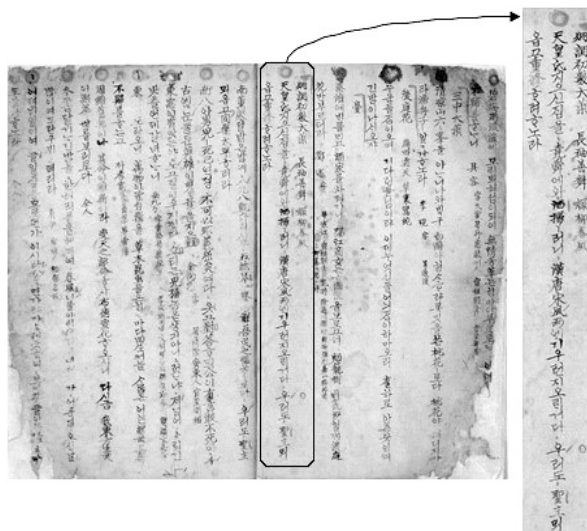


Figure 15. “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” (left) and “Ujo Cho-Sakdaeyeop” with a Notation with *Yeoumpyo* (right) in *Gagok wollyu*

source: National Museum of Korea 2008, 15

*Cheonggu yeongeon* contains “Jungdaeyeop” and derivative songs of “Sakdaeyeop” which employ regular *sijo* (*pyeong sijo*) as song texts, but it also includes many songs classified as Manhoecheong works which use “Naksijo” and *saseol sijo* (*long narrative sijo*) as song texts. These songs show that professional singers continually attempted to compose new songs. Since the early nineteenth century, professional singers did not sing “Jungdaeyeop” but only “Sakdaeyeop.” Derivative songs of “Sakdaeyeop” and variations such as *nong*, *nak*, and *pyeon* took the main stages. At the end of nineteenth century, a full cycle of *gagok* repertoire (*hanbatang*) with “Sakdaeyeop” at its core had been established, and this is the current form of *gagok* repertoire.

## Conclusion

This paper investigates how the primary *gagok* repertoire “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop” were performed and enjoyed up until the sixteenth century by comparing these practices with trends that started in the seventeenth century to present a synchronic view of the changes in the musicological context. First, literati’s view on music and their tradition of learning to play the *geomungo* and “Mandaeyeop” is explored. In the sixteenth century, they intended to cultivate virtue through music and build character by playing music. To put this view into practice, they chose to sing with *geomungo* accompaniment. The most favorite song among them was “Mandaeyeop,” which was a basic work to learn to play the *geomungo*. Since the early sixteenth century, the melodies of and scores for this song had been passed down to *geomungo* players and were compiled into *Hyeonggeum dongmun yugi* by Yi Deukyun. *Geumhapjabo* was compiled by literatus Ahn Sang. The book presents “Mandaeyeop” as the fundamental piece for aspiring *geomungo* players, and it contains three types of tablature to notate melodies. Next, the development of *gagok* performance through interactions between literati, *geomungo* musicians, and professional singers from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth centuries is reviewed. The literati took scholarly interest in *geomungo* play centering around playing of “Jungdaeyeop,” contributing to flourishing *gagok* performance culture. They composed *sijo* poems which were used as song texts and compiled scores for *geomungo* and song anthologies. *Geomungo* musicians created derivative songs primarily from “Jungdaeyeop”



and “Sakdaeyeop” and developed techniques of playing the instrument. They played a major role in circulating new songs and new sounds. The representative musicians include Kim Seonggi and Han Rip. In the eighteenth century, the melodies of Kim and Han were notated and preserved till now. Professional singers from the *jungin* class emerged in the early seventeenth century. They performed *gagok* professionally, created new melodies, and studied the technique of singing. In 1728, Kim Cheontaek compiled 580 *sijo* poems which were transmitted and sung at that time into the song anthology *Cheonggu yeongeon*. This review of the trend leads to the conclusion that literati had a tradition of singing with *geomungo* accompaniment and mainly played “Mandaeyeop.” In the seventeenth century and afterwards, literati, *geomungo* musicians, and professional singers from the *jungin* class enjoyed playing “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop,” leading the development of the *gagok* performing culture. The synchronic view of evolution of *gagok* performance shed light on the roles of literati, *geomungo* musicians, and professional singers and their contribution to the formation and transmission of a full cycle of *gagok* performance. The development of the culture of performing the *gagok* genre enriched the music culture of late Joseon society.

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## Abstract

This paper examines the trend of performing and enjoying the major pieces of *gagok*, a genre of *sijo* poems sung to the tunes of “Mandaeyeop,” “Jungdaeyeop,” and “Sakdaeyeop.” The three songs employ a slow, a moderate, and a fast tempo respectively. Together, the three established the tripartite framework of the *gagok* repertoire. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, people loved the various songs which had been passed along even up till now. In the sixteenth century, in the literati tradition of learning to play the *geomungo*, “Mandaeyeop” was performed with the *geomungo*. This can be evidenced in books of *geomungo* scores compiled by literati, such as *Hyeonggeum dongmun yugi* (1620) and *Geumhapjabo* (1572). The seventeenth century saw major social and economic changes with the emergence of the *jungin* class. The professional singers from this new class sang “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop” which led to the development of *gagok* performance culture. Since the seventeenth century, the literati, *geomungo* musicians, and professional singers have been the main players in performing the *gagok* genre. They took a scholarly interest in learning and playing the *geomungo*. They loved “Jungdaeyeop,” composed *sijo* poems, and compiled *geomungo* scores. *Geomungo* musicians composed new songs which were primarily derived from “Jungdaeyeop” and “Sakdaeyeop.” The major musicians were Kim Seonggi and Han Rip. Professional singers also composed new songs as they associated with *geomungo* musicians. Kim Cheontaek was a prominent singer and published *Cheonggu yeongeon* in 1728. The work is a compilation of 580 songs which were in circulation and sung at that time. Since the early eighteenth century, professional singers have created and sung many derivative songs of “Sakdaeyeop.” The form of the *gagok* ensemble was also established. The *gagok* was now sung accompanied by wind and string instruments in a professional singers’ club. Since the early nineteenth century, the present form of a full *gagok* cycle composed of derivative songs of “Sakdaeyeop” has been taken shape.

**Keywords:** *gagok*, Mandaeyeop, Jungdaeyeop, Sakdaeyeop, *pungnyubang*, literati, *geomungo*, musician, professional singers