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Feminism and Music Therapy in Korea

Seung-A Kim Ph.D., L.C.A.T., MT-BC
Molloy College, skim@molloy.edu

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Chapter Five

FEMINISM AND MUSIC THERAPY IN KOREA

Seung-A Kim

They have long been silenced by physical and psychological intimidation, and actual bodily violence by the oppressor. When there is no place where [Korean women] can express their true selves, their true feelings, the oppressed become “stuck” inside.

— Hyun Kyung Chung, 1990

HAN

A central theme in women’s lives in Korea is captured by the Korean word, “*han*” Symbolically, it represents the image of traditional Korean women’s suffering, pain, and crying, as well as their resilience throughout Korean history. A loose translation of the term would be, “the sorrow and anger that grows” (E. H. Kim, 1995, p.160). Due to many invasions by other countries, *han* is a quality that has become deeply embedded in Koreans from one generation to the next. In fact, *han* is a term that applies to both women and men. However, it has special application to women because of their oppressive life circumstances.

Therefore, *han* has emerged in various ways in the lives of Korean women. Historically, there have been few outlets for women to directly express their grief and sorrow over their personal life situation, or life in general. This has resulted in psychosomatic illness being common among Korean women: “Korean women’s life experience is *han* itself. The resentment, indignation, sense of defeat, resignation and nothingness in *han* make many Korean

women brokenhearted and physically sick” (H. K. Chung, 1990, p.66).

In addition to manifesting as a mental and emotional state, this idea of suffering has emerged in various forms of art. To express an intense emotion in a nonverbal form is considered socially acceptable in Korea. Accordingly, there is much traditional Korean music, dance, and rituals entitled, *Han*. This is also expressed indirectly, as many poems and songs incorporate the phrase, “women’s cries” or “women crying” (S. C. Choi *et al*, 2001; Ho. Kw. Chung, 1972; Noh, 2001).

On the other hand, Korean women have progressively chosen more active ways to express their “grief and sorrow,” by participating in the women’s movement or in social and political movements. This quality of bearing with almost unbearable inner anguish is something that has characterized the resilience of Korean women.

TRADITIONAL KOREAN WOMEN

Philosophy of Confucius—The Basis of Social Ideology in Korea

Since the Chosun dynasty (1393–1910), Koreans have been deeply governed by the ideology of Confucius. The principles of Confucius provided guidelines for the ways that people should interact in society. The proper relationship between husband and wife is well described in *Samkangoryoon*, which was written by Confucius to characterize the relative social positions of each: “the husband is the mainstay of the wife; between husband and wife, there is a distinction in position” (Ho. Kw., Chung, 1985, p.89). While the ideas of Confucius served to establish social stability, these ideas clearly regarded women as being unequal to men. Confucian philosophy supported the idea of a patriarchal society in which women were accorded a low status and a subservient role. According to Confucius, it was the natural order of things that males should lead and be in charge and that women should be silent and essentially limited in their functioning to the home.

Additionally, it was Confucius’s idea that a society should function according to high moral standards. Originally, Korea was an agricultural country and maintained a collective social philosophy, which is typical of Asian countries. Having the political and social power vested in males, and having the society stratified, supported Korean society as a whole. However, “proper conduct” within the societal structure was itself considered a moral value. Therefore, to act in any other way was considered a disruption of the natural order of things and a violation of correct moral standards. These standards of behavior were supported by those in authority, by those of the upper classes, and by males in general.

Traditionally, the Korean woman¹ has been viewed and treated as a subordinate in the various phases of her life. This is well described in the *Trilogy of Obedience*: “when she is a child, a woman must obey her parents; after marriage, she must submit to her husband; and in old age, she must yield to her son” (Ho. Kw. Chung, 1985, p.94).

From the moment that she was born, the Korean woman had to face gender discrimination due to the clear strong preference for sons within families. Simply because she was female, her status within her family was always lower than that of her brothers. During childhood, she was indoctrinated in the clear distinctions between the roles of women and men. According to traditional social standards, a Korean woman could not speak with a loud voice and could not be assertive. She could not study and receive the same education as boys. Further, it was not only what she was “taught,” it was what she experienced all around her—in her family, in her community, and in her society as a whole. These roles were explicitly and implicitly delineated in every aspect of her experience.

At a certain age, girls were expected to get married. If the woman did not get married at that point, this became a serious concern of the whole family. Once she got married, by virtue of her marriage the Korean woman became an “‘un-person’ until she produced a son” (Crane, 1967, p.95). In addition, she was no longer referred to by her own first name, but as the mother of her children—for example, “Emily’s Mother.” So, she lost her personal identity, and was affirmed only in having given birth to children. This is still common today.

A woman was in charge of matters inside the home, and that was regarded as a woman’s job. However, this refers to her husband’s home, and her husband’s family. It was often far from her family of origin. In practical reality, this was often not so clear and not so easy. Being in the family home of her husband meant living with her mother-in-law, who had been the female in charge until her son’s marriage. Often, the mother-in-law did not want to relinquish her authority or her position of importance when the daughter-in-law moved in.

Seven Evils for Exile is yet another example by which the Confucian view of women resulted in severe limitation, restriction, and unfair treatment: “if a woman failed to honor her husband’s parents, did not bear any children, committed adultery, expressed intense jealousy, became seriously ill, talked incessantly, or engaged in stealing, then she was immediately driven from her home” (Ho. Kw. Chung, 1985, p.94). The underlying idea was that any of these seven acts brought shame upon the family. Exiling her from the family not only embodied punishment, but also absolved the family of shame by disconnecting the family from the woman. Within this code of thought, women’s sexual fidelity was overly emphasized. A woman was not simply judged by the behavior that she initiated, but was judged responsible for anything that happened to her. For example, if a woman was raped, she was encouraged to commit suicide for the sake of preserving the family’s honor.

Therefore, traditional Korean women were expected to devote themselves to the good of the family. They were even forced to sacrifice themselves in the service of their husband and family. Within this social context, feminist ideas were met with a great deal of resistance. Social change that involved even modest recognition of women and their rights as human beings was not only regarded as socially disruptive and unacceptable, but it was considered morally wrong.

Even though the royal class no longer exists in modern Korean society, the influence of Confucius is still deeply embedded in Koreans. Moreover, because of the great respect for

Confucius, it has significantly hindered genuine fundamental social change, especially for women (H. K. Chung, 1990; S. H. Chung, 1986; Jung, 2003; Ro, 1998).

OVERVIEW OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN KOREA

The feminist movement in Korea needs to be examined within the historical context of Korean society (Edwards & Roces, 2000; Hampson, 2000; Jung, 2003; H. J. Lee, 1996). In most Asian countries, feminism has often been criticized as an aspect of Western thought, which is discordant with traditional Eastern thinking. However, it is important to note that Korea has developed its “own feminist practice, rooted in [its] specific socio-political and cultural context” (Jung, 2003, p.261). For example, as Hyo-Jae Lee (1996) has pointed out, when certain rights for women were initially enacted into constitutional law, this was not achieved by the efforts of social movements, but rather came about through particular political-social circumstances.

In addition, discussing the feminist movement in Korea is quite complicated, due to several factors that impact it. Issues of nationalism, capitalism, modernism, democracy, and social class structure, as well as the issue of the reunification of North and South Korea have all intertwined with the feminist movement to varying extents at certain points in time. This has hindered the development of feminism as its own independent movement in Korea (Hampson, 2000; H. J. Lee, 1996). Women’s issues have often been “hidden” behind other issues mentioned above, which were considered more “acceptable” at the time. This is another example of the uniqueness of the development of the feminist movement in Korea.

Historical Perspectives

The history of feminism in Korea is not extensive, yet it has developed actively. One can view women’s participation in Nationalism during the 1900s as the seed of the feminist movement in Korea. Additionally, the Women’s Labor Movement during the 1970s can be seen as the first step in that feminist movement.

Since 1975, which was proclaimed by the United Nations as International Women’s Year, the principles of feminism have grown in Korea. To develop this movement in a more organized way, the Korea Women’s Associations United (KWAU) was established in 1987. Since 1990, as the result of a more democratic social atmosphere, this organization has become more focused on gender-specific issues, such as sexuality and family law reform (Jung, 2003).

In the late 1970s, Western theories on women’s issues were formally introduced to the country, and colleges in Korea created departments of Women’s Studies. After that, the women’s movement in Korea actually branched into two different groups, each pursuing their own aims. One group was composed of educated and intellectual individuals, who pursued

women's studies, and developed their theories in support of family law reform, human rights and democratization. The other group was composed of individuals from the lower socio-economic classes, who focused on the real life situation of women in the labor force (Jung, 2003; Y. S. Kim & M. H. Han, 2000).

Korean Women and Patriotism (National Liberalism)

Traditionally, Korean women have taken the role of keeping their family together and helping the next generation to succeed, regardless of the personal sacrifice involved. Although women advocated ideas such as laws permitting women to remarry and equality of social classes, when Japan invaded and colonized Korea, the issue of immediate importance became the education of women in order to “properly raise their children.” Under the colonization by Japan in the 1900s, it was believed that the efforts toward independence and nationalism could best be promoted by educated women properly educating their children, and avoiding indoctrination by the occupying country. It is striking that the perception of the need for women's education came from nationalism, not the direct idea of women's rights or the furthering of the individual. In addition, it should be noted that there were also men who advocated the need of education for women. For instance, influenced by his studies in America, Pil Se Jae introduced and discussed the importance of women's education through the newspaper of which he was the editor, *Independence* (H. J. Lee, 1996).

Korean Women and Religion

Influenced by Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, Korean women have been religious and spiritual throughout history. Their faith in God also has a strong relationship to their endurance of the societal restrictions and attitudes concerning women. In 1885, ministers from the West arrived in Korea. At that time, the nation was going through the process of modernization, and the sociopolitical situation in Korea was unstable. At this point in history, women were desperately looking for something to give them hope (H. J. Lee, 1996). This is one of the reasons that Christianity was successful in Korea. Christianity, which taught the principle of equality under God, regardless of gender or class, was appealing in a country that was dominated by the idea of class structure. It was particularly appealing to women, who were oppressed as a group. This religion, which was new to Korea, brought them new hope. It presented “... an inclusive image of God ... which promotes equality and harmony between men and women: a partnership of equals” (H. K. Chung, 1990, p.48). On the other hand, introducing Western culture and capitalism to Korea contributed to the lessening of traditional Korean culture and an imitation of Western values.

Rapid Economic Growth and Political and Social Changes

The development of the women's movement in Korea has been shaped by Korea's economic, political and social situations. In 1948, the republic of Korea was established. As part of the new constitution, the basic rights of women were protected, such as equal opportunity in employment and education. During the 1960s and 1970s, Korea accomplished a "miracle of economic growth." Women's labor contributed greatly to this. Many young women left home and moved to urban areas to make money. However, their work situation was poor, receiving low wages and working in poor environments that were hazardous to their health. Additionally, when a woman worked, it was regarded as a temporary job. That is, once a woman got married, she left work. If a woman continued to work after marriage, it was seen as a sign of the family's financial need (Y. S. Kim & M. H. Han, 2000). This was considered shameful.

Along with this rapid economic development, there were also governmental policies that suppressed freedom of speech, and criticism of those in power. When they occurred, labor strikes by female factory workers were seen as challenges to governmental authority. Therefore, in reality, "it was an exercise of trying to break a rock with an egg" (Y. S. Kim & M. H. Han, 2000, p.504).

However, the political and social situation in Korea drastically changed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first civilian (non-military) president was elected in 1993. "Nationalism (*Minjok*), Democracy (*Minju*), and People (*Minjung*)" was the main slogan that focused the entire Korean society. Accordingly, it is only recently that gender-specific issues, such as sexuality and sexual violence, have been openly discussed in Korea.

Korean Women and Sex

In Korean society open talk about sex, especially by women, was regarded as improper. Within the traditional norms, women in Korea were not allowed to express their sexuality. If a Korean man was not satisfied in his marriage, he could look to a woman outside his marriage for companionship or sex, without much consequence. On the contrary, a woman would be judged by Confucius's *Seven Evils for Exile*.

A female's body was regarded as belonging to her husband, as a medium of the husband's pleasure and as the vehicle for bearing a son. Therefore, "women are not encouraged to have control over their bodies or their sexuality and many unmarried women are still ignorant about sex and contraception" (Hampson, 2000, p.174). Consequently, Korea has a high abortion rate (Korean Women's Development Institute, 2005). It is interesting to note that in the West abortion is considered a matter of a woman's choice. However, in Korea the high abortion rate is driven by the desire to have sons and avoid giving birth to daughters (Hampson, 2000).

A case of sexual assault by the police (Jung, 2003) dramatically brought to light the issue of women's rights. In 1986, Kwon In Sook, a student activist, was arrested by the police. She was brutally, sexually assaulted by the arresting officers. The officials dismissed it as false accusations by the young woman. Women's groups and the general public were so outraged that reform followed. As a result, many social movement organizations united through this incident,

regardless of sex. However, even then, the incident was seen as a political issue rather than a case of sexual assault against a woman, and a violation of fundamental human rights.

The women's Sexual Violence Relief Center (SVRC) and the Sexual Assault Center (SAC) were established in 1990s. They have provided education to the public, and have encouraged people to bring incidents of sexual violence to public attention. As a result, the seriousness of sexual assault issues in Korea has been discussed more in public.

Comfort Women

“Comfort women” is another example of an issue that helped the Korean people to unite by embedding the concern for women's abuse within the context of a broad social issue—in this case, nationalism (J. M. Kim & C. Y. Chung, 2005). During World War II, Japan collected young Korean girls and forced them into sexual slavery, for use by their military. These young women were referred to as “comfort women.” For many years, they were treated in Korea as social outcasts. Although they had been brutalized and repeatedly violated, these women were unable to talk openly about what had happened to them, because of the prevailing attitudes of the Korean people toward women. The events were treated as a source of “national shame” (Y. J. Choi, 2002). Therefore, the “comfort women” had to endure their physical and sexual trauma in silence.

The feelings in Korea toward Japan were that it had committed a political atrocity, not an atrocity against women and their rights as human beings. It was not until 1990 that these events were discussed openly. Public recognition and support for the “comfort women” led to the creation of *the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan* (Hankuk, 2001). Although the emphasis has still remained political, the Korean society as a whole has become more supportive to these women, and more open to viewing the events from a feminist perspective.

The Concept of Family in Korea

Within the Confucian system of thought, the family unit is the core of society. The family came to be regarded as almost a sacred element of Korean society. For Koreans, as with many Asian cultures, the idea of “family” is not the nuclear family that is the model in the West, and especially in America. It refers to an extended family system that includes husband and wife, their children, grandparents, and sometimes uncles and aunts. Further, it involves a hierarchical system of relationships, with males holding principle importance, and the elderly being accorded respect. Beyond this, the family even includes persons who are no longer living, as the family's ancestors are regarded as part of the family, and are revered and prayed to in worship ceremonies. In Korea, this is what is considered the “traditional family system.”

While Korea was under occupation by the Japanese in the 1900s, Japan reinforced the

“family headship” system (the *hoju* system), because they believed that centralizing family authority and responsibility in the male head of extended families made control of the society easier for them. This family headship system prescribed the structure of families and society as a whole. The aim was to support the Japanese military rule of Korea, and to promote an agricultural society (Oh, 2002).

Within this system, in the case of the death of the husband/father, the eldest son of the family inherited all the property, and any other assets of the father, as well as the father’s authority as head of the household, regardless of the son’s age or that of his female siblings. Anything having to do with the family was always referenced back to the father. Children of a widowed or divorced mother were still considered to belong to the father. This was true even when the children were being raised by a divorced mother, and had no contact with the father. This caused many practical social problems, such as not being able to receive social welfare, in the case of divorce or adoption (Oh, 2002). Prejudice against women, their low social status, and their limited legal rights, all resulted in a strong preference for sons in families, and a desire to avoid having daughters.

The constant efforts of feminist groups, as well as evolving social awareness, have combined to change the social system in Korea. It has been only recently in 2005 that the national assembly passed a bill that revised constitutional law and resulted in the abolition of the family headship system. This bill will take effect in 2008 (S. H. Lee & J. J. Choi, 2005). These new laws have been considered a significant victory for Korea’s feminist groups.

Are These Changes Real Feminist Changes?

One of the practical strategies that the women’s movement in Korea had to employ is to avoid pursuing feminist goals directly, and to attach their issues to other social movements. Nonetheless, these “back door efforts” have resulted in more opportunities for women to get higher education, and greater job opportunities for women. As part of this legal change that is still going on, Korea has enacted many laws. Among the most important of these is the Prohibitional Law Regarding Discrimination between Men and Women (1999), a law that clearly promotes feminist principles.

However, legal change does not necessarily bring about a corresponding change in thinking, or actual social change. Unfortunately, this process has led to the perpetuation of feminist issues being viewed as general social or political problems, instead of being seen as issues pertaining to women and their rights as human beings.

Modern Korean Women

On the other hand, these legal changes have been accompanied by changes in the thinking of many women. As women have progressively embraced feminist ideas, they have been socially

freed by no longer being “locked” into marriage. There has been a significant trend for women to choose not to live in male-dominated extended families. Living on their own, choosing not to get married, refusing to accept the traditional Korean family and social systems, have all embodied radical breaks with the cultural past.

As younger women have been exposed to ideas from outside their traditional culture, and as they have traveled to and lived in Western countries, they have come to embrace feminist ideas from these countries, and have become dissatisfied with the traditional Korean social values. As a result of exposure to new ideas, along with changing economic conditions, women engage in subservient family duties or domestic work less and less. Instead, they choose to pursue education and personal careers with increasing frequency. In addition, men and the society as a whole are more receptive to feminist ideas. Consequently, the family structure has changed, and “hierarchical family relations have changed into relatively equal ones” (H. J. Lee, 1989, p.85).

Social changes in attitudes and values have been rapid and recent. Accordingly, it is common to see differences in the views between generations. This was evident in the research of Gyesook Yoo (2004), who conducted research on the attachment between Korean mothers and their adult daughters. She found that mothers are “less concerned about reciprocation of attachment and interaction than their daughters are” (p.29).

For traditional mothers, the primary attachment is to their sons, especially the first son. The closeness between mother and son continues after the son’s marriage. As a result, conflict between the new wife and the mother-in-law is often the consequence. However, the modern Korean woman does not accept this situation, and this, in turn, can lead to marital discord. These generational differences are also evidenced in living situations. Modern women no longer accept the separation from their family of origin that was traditional for a young woman once she got married. Instead, they prefer to maintain a closer relationship with their own mothers.

In addition, those modern women who have accepted feminist principles are changing the traditional hierarchical family attitudes. These daughters no longer accept the roles that their mothers played in the family, which was submissive and sacrificing. They no longer accept the idea that marriage is an opportunity for upward social mobility. Moreover, the idea of living as a single woman living outside of the family home is a new social pattern for Korea, and has been occurring with increasing frequency.

Overall, Korea is in the process of revising the traditional structure of the family (Hampson, 2000; H. J. Lee, 1996; J. K. Lee, 1999). Outwardly, the family structure appears to be changed from the extended, male-dominated, hierarchical family system to the Western nuclear family. However, in practice, the parent-child relationship is still considered more important than the wife-husband relationship. Fundamental social change is still in progress. As with many fundamental social changes, these differences in women’s attitudes and behavior and lifestyle have met with conflicts within the family.

The Rapidly Rising Divorce Rate

In the past 20 years, the divorce rate in Korea has been continuously increasing. It is only in recent years that the divorce rate seems to have stabilized (*The Korea Times*, March 30, 2005). This is a major social issue for the country, because the permanency of the family has been the foundation of the Korean social system. Sung-Soo Bang & Bo-Im Jang (2003) identified the causes of the rising the divorce rate as the increase in the socio-economic status of females, changes in marriage ideology, increasing public acceptance of divorce, the revised family law, and fewer children being born into families.

Since laws and attitudes have been changing quite recently, it is not surprising that the divorce rate is especially high among elderly couples. Women who had been putting up with abusive or patriarchal husbands now refuse to accept the conditions anymore. Leaving the marriage is made even easier now that their children are grown.

Divorce is not only an issue for the married couple, but also for the children. In addition to the issues of physical and emotional dysfunction that occur when a family breaks up, there is the problem of child rearing, as well as the financial difficulties which usually accompany being a single parent. Therefore, there is a great need for social and psychological services, as well as social welfare support.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is also a serious feminist and social issue in Korea, as it is in many areas of the world (E. S. Choi, *et al.*, 1996). Many abused women hide the fact of their physical abuse, because of their feelings of shame. They suffer the physical injury, as well as the emotional trauma, and try not to let anyone know about it. This often becomes expressed through a somatization of their symptoms—the emergence of psychosomatic illness. The violence also affects children growing up in the family. They witness or hear the violence and rationalize it taking place. Unconsciously, it becomes the model for husband-wife behavior that the children learn (G. S. Kim, 2003).

In 1985, a *Women's Hotline* was created, and reportedly it has been effective in dealing with cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse. However, feminist groups are attempting to intervene before the incidents of abuse take place. Rather than trying to undo the effects of abuse, they are attempting to provide programs of education aimed at prevention, such as education about family life, and a couples-relationship program (E. S. Choi, *et at*, 1996).

FEMINIST THERAPY IN KOREA

With the growth of the women's movement in Korea since the 1980s, the field of counseling

and therapy has begun to pay attention to women's issues. The terminology "feminist psychotherapy" first appeared in Korea when the Korean Women's Development Institute published the book, *Theories and Practices for Counseling Women*, in the mid-1980s. It began with treatment for abused women (Chang, 2000).

Although there have been some psychological services available to women, such as feminist-oriented family therapy, group counseling, and anger management, there are some difficulties with women being able to utilize these services. Korean women have been culturally conditioned to blame themselves for anything that goes wrong. Additionally, in Korea, talking about problems outside of family is regarded as shameful behavior. Further, although the new generation of Korean women is learning to think in a new way, traditional women, who tend to be the most abused, are least able to take care of themselves financially. And, if she needs them, social welfare services are not sufficient for a woman to be able to sustain herself, especially if she has children.

It is yet another practical reality that there are few therapists in Korea who are adequately trained in feminist therapy and the issues which can arise in the therapy (K. Park, 2003). Women's issues have a close relationship with social and cultural issues. If therapy deals with a woman's thoughts and feelings, but the social environment and the "socio-cultural stress" remain unaltered, it will be difficult for the woman to effect enduring change in her personal life.

Psychological Disorders

There are certain psychological disorders that are commonly found in Korean women: depression, anger disorder, somatization, and anxiety disorder. This is the result of socio-cultural factors which exist in Korea (Spector, 2004; Yu, 2003).

Depression

Depression is the most common psychological disorder found in Korean women (E. J. Choi, 2003; H. E. Kim, 2003; K. S. Kim, et al., 1999). Depression is suffered by twice as many Korean women as Korean men (K. Park, 2002). This was shown in 1998 when Korea held the Nation-Wide Depression Screening Day to assess the extent of the national problem, and to provide diagnostic assistance to its citizens. However, despite its prevalence, less than one third of those diagnosed had been treated. Those who had not received treatment were either unaware of their psychological condition, or did not think that they needed clinical assistance. Also, many did not receive proper treatment to begin with (K. S. Kim, et al., 1999). The suppression of the expression of strong emotions may be the primary cause for the prevalence of depression. This has made it a feminist issue, as well as a general cultural issue.

Anger Syndrome

Anger Syndrome (Hwa-Byung) (Han, 2002) is one of several psychological disorders that have been identified as “culture-bound mental health syndromes.” It appears in both genders, but much more so in women. Seventy-seven percent of those diagnosed with the disorder were women, while 23% were men (K. Park, 2002). Women especially are expected to conduct themselves in a restrained and undemonstrative way. To do this, they repress strong feelings, including anger. This may give rise to hostile and aggressive attitudes, which are diagnosed as inappropriate behaviors. These intense emotions may come out as psychosomatic symptoms. These symptoms include shortness of breath, insomnia, fatigue, fear of impending death, indigestion, and anorexia (Spector, 2004, p.227).

Psychosomatic Symptoms

Much literature has reported that Korean women suffer from psychosomatic symptoms (Chang, 2000; H. K. Chung, 1990; J. S. Kim, 1994; K. Park, 2003). Additionally, since the etiology of these syndromes has been linked to repressive Korean attitudes toward women and the reactionary codes of behavior demanded of women, these disorders have become feminist issues. In addition to those symptoms already identified, the repression of women has led to the psychosomatic emergence of pain in the extremities, shortness of breath, amnesia, burning sensations, and painful menstruation. According to Jin-Sung Kim (1994), psychosomatic symptoms are found in Korean women to a greater extent than they are in Korean men or in Western individuals. In Eastern cultures, an individual’s suffering or psychological difficulties are often expressed as psychosomatic symptoms. It is primarily the result of trying to avoid blame. It is also the consequence of avoiding the shame that Koreans ascribe to having psychological problems. Furthermore, it is due to the social oppression imposed on women by the patriarchal family system.

Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety Disorder is another possible result of not being able to express or release strong emotions. Accordingly, women in this situation have developed anxiety, along with depression, anger, and psychosomatic illness (J. S. Kim, 1994).

Additional Psychological Causes

Kyung Park (2002) identified the following additional psychological causes of psychological difficulties in women: the passive-dependent socialization of women in their sex roles, the severe difference in the power positions of men and women within society, difficulties in women maintaining healthy husband-wife interpersonal relationships in married life, and the loss of supportive relationships that takes place in a women’s life once she gets married.

Treatment

According to K. Park (2002), the treatment goals of Feminist Therapy for Korean women are:

- to lessen their suffering
- to lessen their social-political oppression

In order to do this, women need to raise their awareness of the importance of their participation in the feminist social movement. As stated earlier, it is not enough for the client to experience emotional change. It needs to be accompanied by change in the social-political structure. Along with this, there needs to be fundamental change in women's thinking. Therefore, the traditional patriarchal viewpoint of therapy is not suitable for women. Rather, therapy for women needs to be based upon a feminist philosophy that understands and respects women as human beings, and acknowledges their value.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC THERAPY IN KOREA

Music and Healing

Throughout Korean history, music has played an important role as an instrument of therapy and healing. There were two types of music that existed in traditional Korean society: royal class music and folk music. Whereas royal class music served the function of maintaining the hierarchical social system, folk music was a means of public expression (E. H. Ihm, 1993). "Ordinary people," who did not have much control over their lives, expressed their emotions through folk music. The origin of Korean folk music derives from the same musical tradition as the music that is used in the shaman's rituals of Korea.

Kut Ceremony in Korean Shaman's Rituals

Many aspects of the *Kut* ceremony in shaman's rituals are relevant to music therapy (H. S. Kang, 2000). In fact, a shaman's ritual is a therapeutic process that has significant similarity to music therapy (Aigen, 1991; H. S. Kang, 2000; Moreno, 1997). For example, as Hyo Sun Kang points out (2000), it contains many elements of psychotherapy, including transference and counter-transference, empathy, compassion, projection, catharsis, and identification. In addition, the roles of shamans and therapists are similar—helping the patient/client to achieve relief from physical, mental, or emotional distress, from life difficulties, or from relationship problems. To this end, the therapeutic relationship with the client is important to both of them. In addition, both music therapy and shaman rituals use improvisation in their music, but the shaman's music has a heavy rhythmic component, and is much freer in structure than the improvisation used in Western music therapy.

Interestingly, many of the Korean shamans are female. Female shamans are regarded as

“wounded healers,” who have special insight into illness, injury, and disease, because of having been wounded, themselves. This actually entails a subtle recognition of the position of women in Korean society:

Korea also retains continuing and fascinating traditions of music as therapy in popular culture, in the practice of primarily women shamans, known as *mudangs*. *Mudangs* are called upon to carry out ritual healing ceremonies called *kuts*, which are most typically carried out for Korean women and their households. (Moreno, 1997, p.61)

When these shamans conduct their healing rituals, their insight into physical sickness and mental problems is believed to come from God’s rage. The shaman uses music and ritual to communicate with God. This is outwardly different from modern psychotherapy, which is built on a foundation of systematic, scientific methods. As opposed to music therapy sessions, which usually are conducted for extended periods of time, the shaman’s ritual is a ceremony that takes place only briefly. The ritual ceremony is performed at a gathering of the individual plus the family or community (H. S. Kang, 2000). While there is no specified time frame, these meetings typically take place from one to a few times.

In traditional Korean society, the extended elements of families lived close to one another. Therefore, the whole community, in effect, functioned very much like an “extended family.” Neither the shaman nor the community made any distinction between mental or emotional problems, and physical illness. In this regard, there is an old Korean saying, “Illness has to be outwardly spoken to be expelled.” They believed that it was necessary to talk about their physical illnesses in order to recover from them, even with the help of the shaman. This may be seen as the physical counterpart to psychological catharsis. In both cases the idea is that talking about the problem results in the patient purging herself of that problem. This traditional attitude has changed over time, due to the modernization of society.

Poongmulnori—Korean Folk Music of Healing

There is a type of music used in rituals called *Poongmulnori*, which is used in combination with dance and acrobatics. It also originated from shamans’ music. The composer or composers of the music are unknown. The music has never been written down. In effect, it is the musical aspect of the “oral tradition” that exists in so many cultures. However, instead of cultural myths and legends that are passed from one generation to the next by the retelling of stories and ancient histories, it is unique healing music that is passed on to the next generation through listening to it and playing it.

Ancient Korean society, an agricultural society, believed in the power of music and dance. This power was thought to be more than just ritual. It was thought to be much more than just some traditional procedure that the shaman performed to bring comfort to the suffering person. The ritual was thought to have healing power and spiritual power deriving from something inherent in the resonant sound of the music and from the physical movement of the dance. In

effect, it can be regarded as a spiritual foundation of music therapy.

Day and night, the music was played continuously. The purpose of the ritual could be for any reason that was considered to be important to the community. In addition to its use for the healing of the physical and mental/ emotional issues of individuals, the music and dance were used to repel evil spirits, to celebrate the planting of crops at the beginning of the growing season, and the harvesting of the mature crops.

As found in both the shaman's music and *Poongmulnori*, another aspect of the shamanistic ceremonies was the sense of unity and community that it generated—everyone united and focused on a common goal. While there was certain music that only the shaman could play and sing, everyone was a musician and dancer. Four different kinds of instruments were used in these ceremonies, which intentionally symbolized what were considered to be the 4 elements of nature: earth, wind, thunder, and rain. While these ceremonies may have been “primitive” by Western standards, they embody the power, the support, the intention and the therapeutic underpinning of modern music therapy.

As with most cultures, music and the arts have been used as a form of social expression in Korea. Hyun Mi Paek (1998) examined Korean popular music and drama of the 1930s, and found that they reflected the patriarchal nature of Korean family structure, and the image of modernized women in tragedy. As a result of the prevailing social values, a number of songs described women who gave “everything” because of loving a man. In these songs they were seen as immoral and were blamed for their loss of virginity.

There is another form of music that has been used to address social issues since the 1970s. It is referred to as a “song for the masses” (*Minjung Gayo*), and was begun by university students who believed that “the main purpose of music is the honest reflection of our lives, and should be a help to its listeners in overcoming their personal problems” (S. C. Choi *et al*, 2001, p.165). This can also be seen as a forerunner of music therapy.

In recent years, feminist values have begun to emerge in the popularity of female performers who are openly sexy and provocative, like Madonna. Accompanying this is a new generation of free-spirited teens, who have embraced feminist values, such as not being dependent on a man, and who do not believe in a “forever love.”

The Music Therapy Profession

Beginning in 1960, the concept of using music in therapy was introduced to Korea by other professionals, such as psychiatrists, special educators, and nurses (Y. J. Chung, 2001). At this early point, they used music in conjunction with other therapies, and conducted research on the therapeutic effect of music. It is only recently in 1997 that graduate programs of Music Therapy were established at universities in Korea. Since then, the field of music therapy has been developing rapidly.

Music Therapy educators and music therapists who have studied in the United States have

imported ideas mostly from America. There are now a few music therapy organizations that support research in the field and advocate for the profession of music therapy (H. K., Kwon & H. J. Chung, Personal Communication, 2005). They aim to educate other health-related professionals, as well as the public, about music therapy through the publication of articles and through programs broadcast on television and radio. However, acceptance of music therapy by the Korean government, by other therapy professionals, and by academia is still limited. Similarly, the range of problems treated in Korea through music therapy is limited.

At this point there are several needs among Korean music therapists: ongoing efforts in conducting systematic research, advocacy for music therapy and dissemination of information about the field of music therapy as an independent profession, as well as a unifying music therapy organization (Y. J. Chung, 2001).

There are some Korean music therapists who believe in the importance of “culturally-sensitive music therapy” (Y. J. Chung, 2001; H. S., Kang, 2001). They think that music therapy is a Western idea, based on Western thinking. Therefore, it needs to be modified in the way that it is practiced with Korean clients. As a reflection of this thinking, one of the universities in Korea has created a graduate program in *Healing Music Therapy*, based on religious music in Korea. Another effort to develop a music therapy program that is sensitive to Korean culture, is the attempt to combine the Korean tradition of acupuncture with music therapy, but at this writing it is at a preliminary stage.

Similarly, to properly conduct feminist music therapy, a variety of music therapy approaches may need to be explored. Even more specifically, it is important to find the Korean women’s voice in music therapy. There is much to learn from Western music therapy. However, since women’s issues in Korea cannot be separated from Korea’s social and cultural factors, the proper and effective treatment may need to be developed independently.

Feminism in Music Therapy

Since the field of music therapy in Korea is still developing, there has been very little research done in which clinical practice has focused on gender-specific issues (H. J. Chong, Personal Communication, 2005). One interesting research study was conducted by Eun Jin Choi (2003), who examined the prevalence of depression in Korean women living in the United States, who were accompanying their families for various reasons. From this study, she concluded that the major cause of their depression comes from their reason for living abroad: being in America is not for themselves, but for their families. As a result, the Korean women studied felt disconnected from home and from that which was familiar. This resulted in depression. This study shows that there is a significant need for proper treatment services for Koreans who live abroad.

Suitability of Music as a Form of Expression in Therapy for Korean Women

What can music therapy offer Korean women? Korean women are in crisis, and there is a great need for music therapy. By coincidence, Koreans have traditionally used music in a therapeutic way. Since music is used as nonverbal communication, I strongly believe that music therapy is ideally suited for Korean women. To openly express oneself and to reveal one's thoughts and feelings to another person is a violation of Korean cultural norms—especially for a Korean woman. Moreover, since they are governed by a strong superego, it is most difficult for them to express negative thoughts and feelings. The fact of being in a therapy situation does not make much difference to Koreans. This is Western thinking. Music can be less threatening for Korean people.

Following is a list of suggested feminist music therapy goals for Korean women:

- to promote the empowering of the client and to help her participate in social change
- to foster the development of the client as a human being, including the development of a healthy sex role
- to assist the client in overcoming the inequalities toward women in Korean society
- to overcome dependence, and the idea that a woman needs a man to survive in society

Orientation and Values of the Music Therapist

Many feminist therapists discuss the importance of the therapist's orientation and system of values (Hadley & Edwards, 2004; Chang, 1996; K. Park, 2003). As Susan Hadley and Jane Edwards (2004) have pointed out, a music therapist should be aware that “perhaps, given women's proportional dominance in music therapy, we have taken it for granted that many of the assumptions operating within the theoretical and practical spheres of music therapy have nothing to do with issues of male power and hegemony.” Particularly in Korea, it is necessary for the music therapist to have a feminist agenda in mind.

Therefore, the therapist should have an understanding of the social context of the client. For example, it is not genuinely therapeutic to help the client blindly fit in with an individual, with a family, or with a social system, if that person, family, or system is based on principles that are not in harmony with the client. This, of course, includes accommodating a patriarchal social system. Regardless of the music therapist's approach, she/he should respect women as they are and should understand clinical issues that are particular to women.

One way to view women (or any other group) is as a specific culture. With this in mind, we need to consider developing a *culture-centered music therapy* specific to Korean women. In discussing this therapeutic orientation, Julie Brown (2002) states that the music therapist needs to have cultural empathy, both idiographic and nomothetic. Idiographic events are individual events, which one understands in that way—unique, personal, individual. Nomothetic events are those that can be viewed as specific occurrences of general laws, patterns, and universals. She emphasizes that to truly understand a culture, a music therapist must understand both; only

then can she/he understand what a client is going through.

Community Music Therapy

Community Music Therapy is a recent development in the field. An example of community music therapy is the music therapy work that was done after the World Trade Center attack. As Gary Ansdell (2002) defines it:

Community Music Therapy is an approach to working musically with people in context: acknowledging the social and cultural factors of their health, illness, relationships and music. It reflects the essentially communal reality of “musicking,” and is a response both to overly individualized treatment models and to the isolation people often experience within society. (p.120)

Due to Korea’s cultural history, this may be an effective form of working with Korean people. Since the issues of feminism are so embedded in the societal structure, the community music therapy approach may be particularly effective in dealing with these issues.

The use of music in Korean shaman’s rituals and *Poongmulnori* involves similar concepts to community music therapy. In community music therapy, the whole community is involved. Within this setting, one person’s issue becomes the whole group’s concerns. In general, music therapists who do this work conduct therapy along a continuum from individual to communal therapy (Ansdell, 2002). This format offers women an opportunity to work on their issues within the context of the community. I believe that the Korean psychological makeup and cultural history, and the nature of feminist issues, give the music therapist the opportunity to work with the individual within the actual social context for the particular problem. Additionally, music therapy that deals with the social system and not just the individual makes it less likely that the individual client will undergo insight and inner change, but only succumb again to the pressures of the same unchanged social context.

Couples Music Therapy and Family Music Therapy

Treating couples and families in music therapy are two approaches that may be effective for working with a Korean population, considering the relational nature of the culture. In particular, attention must be given to the way in which the construction of gender roles in our society organizes women’s lives and men’s lives in many different ways. These roles are most often disadvantageous to women. Couples music therapy and family music therapy give the client(s) the opportunity to explore personal factors, as well as the interactions that take place within the respective system, the couple’s dyad or the family (Leigh & Clossick, 1992; Skerrett, 1996).

Feminist Narrative and Music Therapy

Deriving from the philosophy of social constructionism, the idea behind the therapeutic use of

narratives is that our lives are not made meaningful by the facts of the events that take place, but by the meaning that we ascribe to them. In fact, it is argued by social constructionists that it is this attributing of meaning to the events of our lives that creates our reality (Gottlieb & Gottlieb, 1996 & J. Lee, 1997).

This philosophy of narrative therapy can be used as a form of feminist therapy, including music therapy. It begins with the client's current narrative, a story, detailing her life and the meaning of the things that happened over her lifespan. Then, a process begins in which client and therapist work as co-collaborators to renarrate the client's life story progressively. The majority of the therapist's work is to help the client see new, alternate meanings in the same life events: "... new narratives provide alternative frames for attributing meaning to experiences that can help clients understand the gendered and politicized nature of their everyday lives" (Gottlieb & Gottlieb, 1996, p.6).

In so doing, the nature of the client's life is changed, through new insight and understanding, and ultimately by experiencing her life in a different, more constructive way. The use of improvisational exploration and Analytical Music Therapy would seem to be key here.

Analytical Music Therapy

The analytical approach to feminist therapy has been criticized by some feminist therapists (Chang, 2000; O. H. Ihm, 2003, K. Park, 2003). According to YeonJip Chang (2000), Freud's theory is a male-dominant theory, so for women it is not equal. She believes that it serves to maintain Korea's patriarchal social structure. She suggests that Karen Horney's psychoanalytic theory was a first step toward the development of a feminist theory of therapy. Many go even further, seeing Horney's break with Freud over his view of women as a true expression of feminist principles. In her psychoanalytic theory she attributed the differences between females and males not to biological factors, as Freud did, but instead to societal and cultural factors. It is important to note that while these ideas are considered fundamental to the feminist perspective today, at the time that Horney was writing about these issues, these ideas were not linked to the feminist movement.

I believe that Analytical Music Therapy (AMT) is an effective form of music therapy for both women and men, and can provide a great deal of benefit to Korean women and their families (Scheiby & S. A. Kim, 2006). It is a form of music therapy that seeks to understand the client's problems, her/his intrapsychic dynamics, as well as the client's social and environmental context.

I believe that analytical music therapy is especially suited to deal with the issues and intrapsychic dynamics that occur frequently within Korean families. Earlier, the Korean woman's relationship to her son was identified as the source of strife between the wife and her mother-in-law, as well as the source of marital conflict. In addition, there often develops a "triangular struggle" for affection and power within the family system between mother, new wife, and son. Analytical music therapy, with its foundation in psychoanalytic principles, lends itself to the identification and treatment of these issues.

For the Korean woman, there has been a dual sense of what she wants in the ideal, contrasted with what she experiences as the practical reality of her life. On the one hand, she may believe that she should be treated in a certain way as a human being. On the other hand, the elements of the traditional oppressive, patriarchal society are still strong in Korea. Therefore, her reality is radically different and even opposite to her ideal.

Many Korean women have been so oppressed for long that they might not see the true nature of their situation. They believe that they are to blame, or that they are thinking in a distorted way. Therefore, in general, a first step would be bringing the client's thoughts and feelings from the unconscious to the conscious, in order to help her see and identify the problem(s).

In Analytical Music Therapy, both the music therapist and the music are used in the therapy to facilitate the client's exploration of fundamental relationships, situations, and patterns in the client's life, as well as specific current problems that the client brings to therapy (Priestley, 1975; 1994). This is similar to the Korean tradition of healing through shamanistic ritual ceremonies, where both the shaman and the music are considered the medium of the healing. Also, while it is more apparent in the case of AMT, both the shaman and the analytical music therapist seek to bring unconscious material to the conscious level of awareness in order to work with it. The shaman seeks to uncover "diseased thoughts" within her client, to help the suffering individual talk about them, and to then expel them from the person who is suffering. In addition, there are certain similarities in the improvised music in analytical music therapy and the music that is improvised during the shamanistic rituals. Both can be chaotic at times, as music reflects the client's state of mind.

For the abused/oppressed woman, the analytical music therapist would strive to bring repressed thoughts and feelings to consciousness, along with the forgotten memories of events, as well as those blocked from consciousness because of denial. In this process, musical countertransference is often the key:

... we can actually listen to the unconscious—manifest in the form of music—[it] is a unique and fascinating phenomenon in the field of psychotherapy.... The client can directly hear the musical transference and be helped to draw important insights through these realizations. The music therapist can become aware of musical countertransference reactions and either correct these or use them as useful information as they relate to the client. (Scheiby, 2005, p.9–10)

Improvisational music can be used to stimulate the client's thoughts and feelings associated with her life events. Additionally, personal, individual issues will be explored and brought to consciousness by music. As the music therapy continues, repressed desires are identified, and unhealthy gender roles are analyzed. As the music therapy proceeds, Mary Priestley's interventions, aimed at identity integration, are often effective and helpful: somatic communication, dream work, exploring relationships, reality rehearsal, etc. (Priestley, 1994).

The collaborative and egalitarian relationship between therapist and client that is usually

the goal of early feminist music therapy might be hard for oppressed/abused women to accept at the beginning of therapy. In addition, the client may feel lost when she finds herself in the position of being encouraged to move from dependence to independence. Therefore, gradual independence might be more effective. They are so used to being in an oppressive, hierarchical relationship, that being on an equal footing with the therapist might cause many Korean women to leave therapy prematurely (Byon, Chan & Thomas, 1999; Wong & Tsang, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The feminist movement in Korea needs to be understood within the specific social, political, and cultural contexts of the country. In Korea, promoting feminist issues has intertwined with other social issues, such as nationalism and the transition to genuine democracy. It is only recently, in the 1990s, that gender-specific issues were brought to public attention on a broad scale. As Korean women have struggled against the culturally imposed limitations on their rights as human beings, more and more Korean men, especially the new generation, have also advocated feminist ideas. It is time that both men and women develop a “partnership” in society.

Korean society is in the progress of change, as a whole (*The Korea Times*, 2004, December 31). The rapid fluctuations that have transpired in the past have brought change to the family structure, and to the traditional roles of men and women. As a result, the old values and traditions are confronted by new values and traditions, and are often in conflict with them. While the status of women has been raised within Korean society, Confucius and his patriarchal ideas regarding the proper, moral functioning of families, still deeply influences Korean individuals and families. This has resulted in a variety of social issues, including a high divorce rate, and domestic violence. Health-related professionals have attempted to provide treatment for these needs.

Music therapy is a relatively new profession in Korea. However, in our spiritual tradition, Koreans have used music therapeutically. There is a great need for feminist music therapy services in Korea. At this point, it is necessary to develop clinical theories and music therapy practices for Korean women, taking into consideration their specific social and political situations. Additionally, more research is needed, focusing on the specific needs of women. Moreover, proper training for feminist music therapists is needed, to heal wounded minds and to raise women’s awareness of their fundamental human rights.

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¹ In this chapter, I refer to “the Korean woman” when giving examples of how the culture has socialized and oppressed women. However, I do not wish to indicate that we all experience oppression in the same ways or that there are no variations in our experiences as Korean women.