

# The Sound of Ecstasy and the Nectar of Enlightenment

## Buddhist Ritual Song & Dance from Korea

Celebrated by Buddhist Monks from the Young San Preservation Group



**Sunday, October 21, 2007, 2:00 pm**  
**Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum**

This program is part of a national tour organized by The Korea Society. The Korea Society is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated solely to the promotion of greater awareness, understanding and cooperation between the people of the United States and Korea.

Support also provided by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in San Francisco and the Korean Art and Culture Committee of the Asian Art Museum.

## PROGRAM NOTES

*The Young San Ceremony is religious in nature.*

*Patrons are requested to hold their applause until the end of the program.*

<b>Toryangsök</b> 도량석 (10 minutes)	A chant accompanying a procession around the temple grounds at the beginning of the pre-dawn ceremony to awaken all the forces of the natural world.
<b>Insöng</b> 인성 (10 minutes)	A chant to request that the great Bodhisattva Inrowang guide all other Bodhisattvas and living creatures to attend the ceremony.*
<b>Kikyöng</b> 기경 (3 minutes)	A cymbal dance to announce the beginning of the ceremony.
<b>Onghoge</b> 옹호계 (7 minutes)	A song to implore the Eight Vajra Guardians to protect the ceremony site:** “We implore the Eight Vajra Guardians to protect the ceremony site, and we implore the celestial gods to inform the Guardians of the Four Directions. May all celestial kings of the Three Realms and the Four Heavenly Kings come together, in the Buddha’s presence, and make this site auspicious.”
<b>Kayöng</b> 가영 (3 minutes)	A song to petition the Deva Guardians to lend their protection to the temple: “May all the guardians of the universe come together and protect the great light emanating from the Buddha. May they always follow the truth of the Buddha’s teachings and both protect and carry that truth throughout the universe eternally. We now take refuge in the Buddha.”
<b>Myöngbal</b> 명발 (7 minutes)	A cymbal dance accompanying a food offering to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas as a petition for their divine intervention.
<b>Pokch’öngge</b> 복청계 (5 minutes)	A plain style ( <i>hotsori</i> ) chant performed prior to <i>Ch’önsuvara</i> .
<b>Ch’önsuvara</b> 천수바라 (5 minutes)	A celebration of the Buddha’s endless generosity. A dance with chanting the Great Dharani, the mantra of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.
<b>Intermission</b> (15 minutes)	
<b>Hyanghwage</b> 향화계 (15 minutes)	A butterfly dance accompanied by the offering of flowers to the Triple Gem (i.e., Buddha, Buddhist Law and the Monastic Order): “May the fragrance of these flowers spread throughout the universe and become a source of great light for all. May all the heavenly fragrances and all the wondrous heavenly sounds of Dharma give birth to Buddhas and the Dharma from each and every atom, then pervade and adorn the universe, making all a single Buddhaland. May all beings cleanse themselves as an offering, and may each become a Buddhafield, pure and unobstructed, and achieve immortality. May this fragrance reach all sentient beings so that they aspire to Buddhahood and attain the wisdom of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. To this end, we make offerings and take refuge in the Triple Gem.”
<b>Hyangsunayöl</b> 향수나열 (5 minutes)	Sutra chanting accompanied by an offering of food to the Triple Gem.
<b>Sadarani</b> 사다라니 (3 minutes)	A dance accompanied by cymbals in a ceremonial offering of food to all sentient beings.
<b>Pöbko</b> 범고 (5 minutes)	A drum dance expressing the wish that all sentient beings will obtain wisdom and enlightenment in response to the beating of the drum.
<b>Kachige</b> 가지계 (10 minutes)	This chant is about the teaching of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas at Yöngch’wi Mountain (영취산) and a ceremonial food offering to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Yöngch’wi Mountain, located at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, has historically been associated with female mountain spirits.
<b>Hwach’öng</b> 화청 (15 minutes)	A supplication to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in which the participants transfer all of the blessings obtained from the ceremony to the realization of national prosperity and world peace.

\* The Four Bodhisattvas  
The Bodhisattva Vajra Company  
The Bodhisattva Vajra Rope  
The Bodhisattva Vajra Affection  
The Bodhisattva Vajra Speech  
The Green Vajra Who Banishes Disasters

\*\* The Eight Vajra Guardians  
The Vajra Who Banishes Toxins  
The Yellow Vajra Who Grant Wishes  
The White Vajra Who Purifies Water  
The Red Vajra Whose Sound Brings Fire  
The Vajra Who Pacifies Disasters  
The Vajra Purple Worthy  
The Vajra Great Spirit

## WHO'S WHO

### The Young San Preservation Group

Ven. Dong Hee (Hee Ja Han)  
Ven. Hye Tök (Tae Hwan Kang )  
Ven. Chin Söng (Sun Hee Rhee)  
Ven. Tök Nim (Byeong Jin Lee)  
Ven. Sön Kaka (Ki Hong Park)  
Ven. Pöp Mil (Hae Ran Jun)  
Ven. Sang To (Mi Sun Jang)  
Myungsuk Lee, Director of Sutra Dance

### Lighting Director

Jae Won Kim

### Interpreter

Sangkwi Yoon

### Artistic Director

Ven. Dong Hee

### Production Manager

Kwang-Ryul Jang

The leader of the unique Young San Preservation Group is the Venerable Dong Hee, the first female to join the *pömp'ae* 범패 monks lineage. For nearly 40 years, beginning at age 13, she trained in the performance of the Young San Ceremony under the tutelage of the Venerable Song-am Park. During this time she also examined ancient records and documents in a dedicated effort to restore the original form and colors of the vestments worn by Buddhist monks. Venerable Dong Hee has personally prepared all the ritual objects used in the ceremony.

Under Venerable Dong Hee's direction, the members of the group have mastered the traditional *pömp'ae* chant, which traditionally was learned by ear and committed to memory. The group's virtuoso vocal techniques are marked by a special timbre, complex patterns and a pure, solemn tone color. These skills are used to enhance the simple melodies, which are sung without measured ("strict") rhythm and harmony. Linked intimately to the liturgy, like Gregorian chant, *pömp'ae* chant evokes a surreal, devout ethos intended to reveal the gifts of God and to favor spiritual growth. The ceremony includes ritual dancing by the monks who accompany themselves with drums, cymbals, gongs and other traditional Korean percussion instruments.

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

### **The Young San Ceremony**

Normally performed as a three-day ritual, the Young San Ceremony is the most elaborate of the Korean Buddhist ceremonies. The ritual includes offerings of flowers, fragrances, music and sacred dance in honor of the Lord Buddha and the delivery of his discourse on the *Pōphwa* 법화 *Sutra*. In the past, this ceremony was performed for the well-being of the nation both on joyful occasions and in times of disaster. Over the centuries, however, many ceremonial rituals fell into disuse due to the policy of suppressing Buddhism during the Chosŏn kingdom (1392-1910) and the restrictions against the performance of elaborate Buddhist ceremonies during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). Fortunately, the complete ceremonial procedures were maintained and preserved by some Korean Buddhist monks, including the Venerable Song-am Park, who was designated as Korean Human Cultural Asset No. 50. The ceremonial chants and dances of the Young San Ceremony are traditional arts unique to Korea and were nominated in 1973 for preservation as a Korean Intangible Cultural Asset.

### **Korean Buddhist Dance**

*Chakpōp* 작법, literally "Creating the Dharma," is the generic term for Buddhist ritual dance. The Young San Ceremony involves three dances: the "Butterfly Dance" with its butterfly-like costume; the "Cymbal Dance" or *parachum* 바라춤, which is danced with a small cymbal called a *para* 바라; and the "Buddhist Drum Dance" or *pōpkochum* 법고춤. According to older monks, *parachum* is performed to glorify and present offerings to the Buddha while *pōpkochum* is performed to instruct the evil-minded in the ways of heaven and to save creatures from suffering in hell. Monks who specialize in Buddhist ritual song and dance perform all three dances. Typically an enormous portrait of the Buddha is set up in the temple courtyard. A large altar laden with offerings of food and flowers is placed in front of the portrait. Nearby, a barrel drum is set on a stand. During the ceremony, several monks play large gongs and wooden clappers called *moktak* 목탁 to accompany their chant.

### **Korean Buddhist Music**

The introduction of Buddhism to Korea in the fourth century AD inspired the creation of Buddhist ritual chants and dances. Monks specialized in several styles of ritual chant, which is just one of several great vocal traditions in Korea. There are two main styles; *pōmp'ae* and *yōmbul* 염불. *Yōmbul* is a simpler recitative style which involves texts generally of Chinese prose which are used as prayers on behalf of a deceased person. The texts are sung in a less melodic manner analogous to a recitative in Western opera.

*Pōmp'ae*, literally "sacred chanting," is a more complex type of chant that has two different performance styles: *chitsori* 짓소리 and *hotsori* 훗소리. *Hotsori* means "plain or simple" and is used generally for short ceremonies. *Hotsori* chants make up the majority of the repertoire. The texts involve four lines of Chinese verse in groups of five or seven syllables. Lines one and two make up an "inside half" while the remaining lines three and four are considered the "outside half." In performance, it is typical that one half is sung as a rapid short melodic phrase while the other half is sung slowly and more fully.

*Chitsori* means "elaborate" and features a more expressive vocal performance practice involving a wide range of tones from very soft to loud to falsetto. Also typical of *chitsori* chants are what in the West are called melisma (i.e., a group of notes sung to one syllable of text). In the Gregorian chant tradition, two styles of singing are used: syllabic and melismatic. Syllabic passages involve a different tone for each syllable, while the use of melisma can allow for a succession of tones for a single syllable. (The melisma style is also a particular feature of African-American church singing and blues music.) The use of melisma in the Korean Buddhist *pōmp'ae-chitsori* style is a common feature. However, to Western ears the tonal quality may be very different as the Korean aesthetic allows for a wider range of vocal tones that goes beyond the usual seven tones in Western chant (do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti). Another difference with Western chanting is found in the rhythm. Gregorian chants are usually done in a free rhythmic style. That is to say, without a fixed regular beat to the music. The Korean *chitsori* style is also free rhythmically, but much more so, and can be prolonged or abridged depending on the requirements of a particular ceremony. *Chitsori* chants are studied after a chanter has mastered the *hotsori* repertoire.

Another consideration while listening to Korean Buddhist chant is the functionalism of the music. Western audiences are used to music as entertainment or, in other words, a musical event. The audience goes to a specific event where the music is primary, like a symphony concert. In many other non-Western cultures, you will find both musical events and event music. Event music is music that is secondary to the event; the music has a specific function in the event and is secondary to the event itself. Such is the case in Korean Buddhist chant, where the music is secondary to the ceremony and is not intended to be a separate form of entertainment or a performance in itself. A wedding, where the music being performed is secondary in importance to the ceremony taking place, is an example

of event music in a Western context. Another obvious and more immediately parallel example would be the “event music” accompanying a traditional Catholic mass.

Although Korean Buddhist chant originated in China, some of the *pŏmp’ae* style chants are most likely of Korean origin. An old story has it that in 487, a prince of Koryŏ invited some distinguished monks to his court to discuss Buddhism and compose new music for the chanting of sacred texts.

The language of the chants is based on Chinese texts, in which Sanskrit from India was modified to fit the tonal characteristics of the Chinese language. These Chinese texts have been translated into Korean, which retains many words of Chinese origin. The written text can be in Chinese, the native Korean alphabet (*han’gul*), or a combination of both scripts. *Han’gul* was invented by a team of scholars under the direction of King Sejong in 1446. This unique alphabet is composed of twenty-six phonetic letters that avoid the tonal and interpretive complications of Chinese ideographs.

However, it is difficult to write down all of the rhythmic, melodic, and textual nuances of these chants. Only the *chitsori* chants have a type of traditional notation system. In this system, there is no indication for rhythm and exact pitch, which is contrary to the convention of western written music. Instead, melodic units are specified in comparison to melodic units of other chants that make the entire system one of cross-references. This system relies on oral tradition, which requires a highly developed sense of memory to keep the tradition culturally alive.

### KOREAN BUDDHIST CHANT: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

	<i>Hotsori</i> 훗소리	<i>Chitsori</i> 짓소리
<b>Vocal quality</b>	gentle, compassionate sound	commanding, rough sound
<b>Length</b>	short, syllabic	long, melismatic
<b>Melody</b>	short	long
<b>Total length</b>	3-7 minutes	15-40 minutes
<b>Melodic range</b>	short, do-re-mi-fa-sol-la	long, do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do-re-mi-fa-sol-la
<b>Singers</b>	1-4	larger chorus
<b>Volume</b>	restricted	wider range

### BACKGROUND ON BUDDHISM IN KOREA

Historians trace Korean Buddhism to the 4th century CE when Chinese monks introduced it into the Korean peninsula. Buddhism developed into a vital state institution during the Silla and Koryŏ periods. Temples became flourishing centers of learning and monks enjoyed privileged roles in Korean society.

To express the teachings of Buddhism, monks employed music, literature and dance. During the Koryŏ kingdom (935-1392), Korean Buddhists launched an ambitious campaign to publish a comprehensive volume on Buddhist sutras entitled *Tripitaka Koreana*. Comprised of 80,000 carved woodblocks, the *Tripitaka Koreana* is the holy treasure of Korean Buddhism and is housed in a unique storage facility at Haein Temple as a national treasure.

As the Koryŏ kingdom neared its end, Confucianism replaced Buddhism as the new religion of the state. Although Buddhism remained the religion of the ruling family, upon the establishment of the Chosŏn kingdom, Confucianism was instituted as the official state cult. Buddhist monks were gradually banished to remote mountain areas where they preserved their faith and traditional rituals. Modern day monks consider it their duty to preserve the artistic, spiritual, and scholastic integrity of traditional Buddhist rites. The Young San Ceremony is a striking example of the preservation of this cultural treasure.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM

### Fall Family Festival—Art You Can Wear

Sunday, November 4, 11:00am–4:00 pm  
Museum-wide

Everyone is invited to celebrate the clothing and textile traditions of Asia at our stylish Fall Family Festival, a fun-filled day of engaging and exciting programs for all ages. Presented in conjunction with the museum's special exhibition *Stylized Sculpture: Contemporary Japanese Fashion from the Kyoto Costume Institute*, children and parents can dress up in traditional Asian garments, sit in on a talk about Japanese fashion, participate in a kinetic gym class with a former member of the Peking Acrobatic Gymnastics Team, get their faces painted like actors in a kabuki play, embroider a shawl or make a *hanbok* (Korean dress), and much, much more. There's something for everyone.

*Family Programs are supported by a generous grant from the San Francisco Foundation.*

### AsiaAlive: Tuvan Stone Carving & Linoleum Printing Demo

Friday, December 7–Sunday, December 9  
12 noon–4:00 pm, North Court

Leonid Urjuk works in many different media—stone carving, painting, and printing. He was born into a family of nomads in the Republic of Tyva, (the former Soviet Republic of Tuva in southern Siberia, near the Mongolian border). He studied art at the local college and then continued on his own in Moscow to complete his education there. He is a graduate of the Moscow Surikov Art Academy. Urjuk's art presents a fascinating amalgam of his native culture and modern artistic techniques and styles.

### ToiZounZ' & RiddimZ': A Performance Reading of *The Eighth Promise: An American Son Pays Tribute to his Toisanese Mother*

Saturday, December 8, 2:00 pm, Samsung Hall

William Poy Lee presents a reading performance from his critically acclaimed book *The Eighth Promise*. Join us in a delightful afternoon featuring a trio voice chorale, including the author, William Poy Lee, author and poet Nellie Wong, and Carmen Lea Pearson, reading his mother's descriptions of her childhood in the 1000-year-old village of Suey Wan in the Pearl River Delta. This will be followed by Clan Sister songs that have all but disappeared. Percussionist Layton Doung of Yellow River Drummers performs the author's four-part Toisan word score, teasing out the musicality and rhythms of this still vital country variant of Cantonese using traditional Chinese skinhead drums, bamboo clackers, brass cymbals, and his own body. Lee's book is available for sale in the museum store, and a book signing follows the program. The author's mother and co-narrator of the book, Mrs. Poy Jen Lee, will be present.

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### AsiaAlive: Korean Buddhist Art

Thursday–Sunday  
December 27, 2007–January 12, 2008  
12 noon–4:00 pm, North Court

Inspired by the hugely successful series on traditional Korean Buddhist arts in 2003, the museum is thrilled to present another artist residency by three gifted Korean monk/artists: Seol Min-seunim (a female monk and master painter formerly called Jae-U-seunim), Myung Chun-seunim (also a renowned artist), and Sung Ryun-seunim. The program will consist of painting demonstrations and hands-on activities for the public. Visitors may create their own woodblock prints of a Buddhist sutra, the "Heart Sutra" (Banya Simgyeong in Korean) as well as create rubbings of the Buddha and a stone pagoda. The program will culminate on January 13 with a sacred eye-opening ceremony of two hanging scrolls that the monks are donating to the museum. In 2003, Seol Min-seunim completed a new painting of the Guardian King of the West, which she then donated to the Asian Art Museum.

(Note: "seunim" is a gender-neutral Korean term that means monk, priest, or nun.)

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*Programs are free with admission unless indicated otherwise. Please check the museum's website for updates as programs are subject to change.*

Asian Art Museum

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