Sinographic script borrowing in East Asia

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2022 年 7 月 14 日

Handout

This handout contains background information related to the talk. You should read pages 1-3 before the talk. Pages 4-7 are for the reference of interested students following the talk. It is not necessary to have the handout during the talk, because I will provide relevant information on the Powerpoint presentation.

I. Brief Introduction to Hyangka and Hyangchal 鄕歌、鄕札簡介

Hyangka 향가 鄕歌 is a Korean vernacular verse form of Unified Silla 통일신라 統一新羅 (668–935), written entirely in Chinese characters (漢字). There are about 25 extant *hyangka*. The earliest of them date to the Old Korean period, but their exact time of composition is uncertain. Fourteen of them are preserved in *Samkwuk yusa* 삼국유사 三國遺事 [*Memorabilia of the three kingdoms*] compiled in the 13th century, but they are believed to have been composed much earlier, in the 6th through 9th centuries.

The way that Chinese characters were used to write these poems—a method now called *hyangchal* 향찰 鄕札—is reminiscent of Japanese writing in the poetry collection *Man'yōshū* 万葉集. Unlike in Japan, however, no continuous tradition of reading and interpreting *hyangka* survived in Korea. The reconstruction of the language of the poems and their interpretation is entirely a modern scholarly endeavor, and a very difficult one.

The Old Korean language of the time of composition is poorly understood. Interpretation of the *hyangka* is approached through the lens of 15th-century Middle Korean. The first step of interpretation is to project the grammatical structure of Middle Korean backward and to project the Middle Korean *hwun* 훈 訓 and *um* 음 音 readings of the characters backward. (These readings are found in Middle Korean sources, recorded in the Korean alphabet Hankul.) This technique is highly approximative, as there is a gap of over half a century during which the language must have changed considerably.

Fortunately, one of the *hyangka*, the "Song of Cheyong" 처용가 處容歌, possibly composed in the 9th century, also exists in a 15th-century version written in the Korean alphabet, which is preserved in the text *Akhak kweypem* 악학궤범 樂學軌範. This parallel version of the text provided a key to help scholars decipher the method of writing and to make progress on reconstruction and interpretation.

Even so, scholars differ considerably in their transcription of the poem and their understanding of its grammatical structure. The general meaning of the lines, however, is quite clear.

II. Content and Context of "Song of Cheyong" 《處容歌》內容與上下文

In *Samkwuk yusa* 삼국유사 三國遺事, the "Song of Cheyong" 처용가 處容歌 is embedded in a story written in Literary Chinese 文言文.

The story relates that during the 9th-century reign of King Hen'gang 헌강왕 憲康王 of Silla, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea 東海龍王 sent one of his sons to serve in the king's court. That son's name was Cheyong 처용 處容. The king gave Cheyong a beautiful woman to be his wife.

Her extraordinary beauty attracted the attention of the Smallpox Demon 疫神. The demon assumed human form, went into Cheyong's house at night while he was away, and slept with Cheyong's wife.

When Cheyong returned late at night and saw two people asleep in his bed, he sang a song, did a dance, and then quietly left.

Afterward, the Smallpox Demon appeared to Cheyong in his regular form. Thanking Cheyong for being restrained despite the demon's insulting behavior, he promised that he would never enter any gate bearing Cheyong's likeness. From then on the people were able to use the image of Cheyong to protect themselves from the terrible smallpox disease.

The song that Cheyong sang upon encountering the demon in bed with his wife is the "Song of Cheyong".

(For more information on the interpretation of this story, see McCann 1997.)

This summary in Chinese is from Wikipedia: https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/處容:

處容是新羅東海龍王之子，傳說他輔佐新羅憲康王，被賜美女為妻。疫神嫉妒化作人形在無人夜裡占有處容之妻。回到家裡的處容見寢有二人，乃唱歌跳舞而退。疫神見狀現出原形，跪在處容面前說：「誓今以後，見畫公之形容，不入其門矣。」從此後，處容成為人們貼在門前驅趕瘟疫的門神。

The original text from *Samkwuk yusa* 삼국유사 三國遺事 can be read here: https://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/번역:삼국유사/권제 2#처용랑_망해사

III. Text, Transcription, and Translation 原文、轉寫、翻譯

	Sinographic text	Old Korean reconstruction[a]	Old Korean reconstruction[b]
1)	東京明期月良	twong-kyeng polki to.l ala	donggyeong bạlgi dạla
2)	夜入伊遊行如可	pam tuli nwolnitaka	bam deuli nolnidaga
3)	入良沙寢矣見昆	tulesa caloy pwokwon	deuleosa jalạy bogon
4)	踟烏伊四是良羅	katoli ney.h ilela	gadạli neoyh ileola
5)	二肹隱吾下於叱古	twu Wulun nay.h ayeskwo	du veuleun nayh ayeosgo
6)	二肹隱誰支下焉古	twu Wulun nwuy hayenkwo	du veuleun nuy hayeongo
7)	本矣吾下是如馬於隱	mituy nay.h ay tamalon	mideuy nayh ay damalạn
8)	奪叱良乙何如爲理古	asal esti holikwo	asal eosdi hạligo

[a] From Lee & Ramsey (2011:57-58), using a modified Yale transcription.

wo represents /o/; *o* represents /ʌ/; *wu* represents /u/; *u* represents /ɯ/; *e* represents /ə/; *W* represents /β/

[b] I have converted the Lee & Ramsey reconstruction into a modified Revised Romanization.

ạ represents /ʌ/; *v* represents /β/

English Translation (based on Kim 2010:83 and Lee & Ramsey 2011:58, with my modifications)

On a bright moonlit night in the capital
I returned home late from carousing
When I entered and looked in my bed
There were four legs in it.
Two belong to me,[1]
But the other two—whose are they?
What once was mine
Having been stolen, what can be done?

Chinese Translation 中文翻譯[2]

东京月色美好，
赏玩夜深始归，
举目望探卧榻，
四足亲亲相偎。
二足属于吾妻，
另二属于哪个?
妻室今已被掠，
如之奈何奈何!

[1] That is: they are the legs of a person who belongs to me. This is made explicit in the Chinese translation: "吾妻".

[2] From https://baike.baidu.com/item/处容歌/22901999, which in turn is based on 崔成德主编·《朝鲜文学艺术大辞典》：吉林教育出版社，1992 年 7 月：第 72 页.

IV. The Mechanics of Korean Vernacular Writing

Korean vernacular writing depended on knowledge of Chinese writing. Literate Koreans were literate in written Chinese. One component of achieving literacy was learning to associate each Chinese character with a Chinese pronunciation (accommodated to Korean phonology, the "Sino-Korean reading" 韓國漢字音) and a Korean gloss explaining the meaning.

These features of Chinese characters are called *um* 음 音 and *hwun* 훈 訓 respectively. (They are parallel to Japanese 音読み and 訓読み.) The *um* readings were employed when reciting Chinese texts aloud. The *hwun* readings were used to understand the meaning of the text.

Written representation of spoken Korean ("vernacular writing") was achieved by discarding one feature and making use of the other to represent Korean linguistic units.

Ignoring the pronunciation, the character could be used for its meaning to represent a synonymous Korean word or morpheme: *semantic adaptation*.

Ignoring the meaning, the character could be used for its pronunciation to represent a Korean syllable or single phoneme: *phonetic adaptation*.

There is a strong tendency to employ semantic adaptation for the representation of noun and verb roots.

There is a strong tendency to employ phonetic adaptation for the representation of affixes, particles, and other "non-lexical" elements.

These tendencies are probably universal. The parallels with various stages in the development of vernacular Japanese writing are obvious.

The method was intuitive enough that readers who natively spoke Korean and were trained in Literary Chinese could read texts without needing specific instruction in how to do so. They could "puzzle out" the intended representation by matching each graphs' *um* and *hwun* glosses against their native-language grammatical competency. **So in its early stages, Korean vernacular writing was dependent on Chinese literacy.**

This is illustrated in the next two sections, which provide a close analysis of the text of "Song of Cheyong".

V. "Song of Cheyong" with *Eum* and *Hwun* Glosses 《處容歌》中漢字的音讀與訓讀

(a) Sinograms

(b) Middle Korean *um* (Sino-Korean) readings in blue (Kwen 2009)

(c) Yale system transcription of (b)

(d) Middle Korean *hwun* readings in red (Kwen 2009) for presumed Korean logograms only

(e) Yale system transcription of (d) [with adnominal *-l* suffix in parentheses after verb stems]

1 a)	東	京	明	期	月	良		
b)	동	경	명	긔	월	량		
c)	*twong*	*kyeng*	*myeng*	*kuy*	*wel*	*lyang*		
d)			붉글		돌			
e)			*polk(ol)*		*tol*			
2 a)	夜	入	伊	遊	行	如	可	
b)	야	십	이	유	힝	셔	가	
c)	*ya*	*zip*	*i*	*yu*	*hoyng*	*zye*	*ka*	
d)	밤	들		노닐	녈			
e)	*pam*	*tul*		*nwoni(l)*	*nye(l)*			
3 a)	入	良	沙	寢	矣	見	昆	
b)	십	량	사	침	의	견	곤	
c)	*zip*	*lyang*	*sa*	*chim*	*uy*	*kyen*	*kwon*	
d)	들			잘		볼		
e)	*tul*			*ca(l)*		*pwo(l)*		
4 a)	脚	烏	伊	四	是	良	羅	
b)	각	오	이	ᄉᆞ	시	량	라	
c)	*kak*	*wo*	*i*	*so*	*si*	*lyang*	*la*	
d)	발			넉	이			
e)	*pal*			*nek*	*i*			
5 a)	二	肹	隱	吾	下	於	叱	古
b)	ㅅ시	힐	은	오	하	어	즐	고
c)	*zi*	*hil*	*un*	*wo*	*ha*	*e*	*jul*	*kwo*
d)	두			나				
e)	*twu*			*na*				

6 a)	二	肹	隱	誰	支	下	焉	古	
b)	ㅅ시	힐	은	슈	지	하	언	고	
c)	*zi*	*hil*	*un*	*syu*	*ci*	*ha*	*en*	*go*	
d)	두			뉘/누구					
e)	*twu*			*nwi/nwukwu*					

7 a)	本	矣	吾	下	是	如	馬	於	隱
b)	본	의	오	하	시	ㅕ여	마	어	은
c)	*pwon*	*uy*	*wo*	*ha*	*si*	*zye*	*ma*	*e*	*un*
d)	믿		나		이				
e)	*mit*		*na*		*i*				

8 a)	奪	叱	良	乙	何	如	爲	理	古
b)	탈	즐	량	을	하	ㅕ여	위	리	고
c)	*thal*	*cul*	*lyang*	*ul*	*ha*	*zye*	*wi*	*li*	*kwo*
d)	아ᄉᆞᆯ				엇디		ᄒᆞ		
e)	*azo(l)*				*esti*		*ho*		

VI. Selected Middle Korean Nouns, Verbs, and Grammatical Elements 《處容歌》中的某些中世韓文的名詞、動詞、語法成分

Derived Modern Korean forms are given after ">". All forms are in Yale Romanization.*

Nouns

esti > *ecci* 'how? what?' 何

esti ho- > *ecci ha-* 'not know what to do'

kalol 'leg' 腳、腿

mit > *mith* 'base' 基

na > *na* 'I' 我

nek ~ *ney* > *neys* 'four' 四

nwi ~ *nwukwu* > *nwukwu* 'who?' 誰

pam > *pam* 'night' 夜

tol > *tal* 'moon' 月

twu ~ *twul* > *twu* ~ *twul* 'two' 二

Verbs and Adjectives

azo- 'rob, seize' 奪

ca- > *ca-* 'sleep' 睡

ho- > *ha-* 'do' 作

i- > *i-* [copula] 係動詞

nwoni- > *nonil-* 'wander about' 遊

nye- 'go (and return)' 跑一趟

polk- > *palk-* 'bright' 明

pwo- > *po-* 'see' 見

tul- > *tul-* 'enter' 入

Post-nominal particles

-i > *-i* [nominative] 主格

-oy ~ *-uy* > *-uy* [genitive] 屬格

-s [genitive] 領屬標記

-ay ~ *-ey* > *-ey* [locative] 方位格

-ol ~ *-ul* > *-(l)eul* [accusative] 賓格

-(n)on ~ *-(n)un* > *-(n)un* [topic] 話題格

Post-verbal suffixes

-kwo > *-ko* [conjunctive] 'and' 和

-a [conjunctive] 'and' 和

-ta > *-ta* [assertive/declarative] 陳述

-taka [declarative + change of state] 'do and then' 陳述+狀態變化

* Middle Korean *wo* = Modern Korean *o* = /o/

* Middle Korean *o* = ㆍ/ʌ/ (아래아)

Works Cited 参考文献

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