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THE STRUCTURE OF THE KOREAN *SIJO*

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KOREAN verse is most often described as syllabic, largely, it seems, because of the influence of Chinese and Japanese verse analysis. But although it has long lived in the shadows of its two better-known neighbors, Korean verse is quite unlike that of either Japan or China.

One of the most characteristic Korean verse forms, the *sijo*, is still practiced today, to the accompaniment of a musical setting which actually constitutes a detailed analysis of the form, the terms of which are readily translatable to those of literary prosody. Using an analysis of this musical setting as a keystone, this study of the *sijo* has five main divisions:

- (1) a critical examination of the traditional description of the *sijo* form;
- (2) an analysis of the four-part syntactic structure immediately apparent in any *sijo* text;
- (3) analysis of the musical setting of the *sijo*;
- (4) translation of the terms of the musical setting to those of prosodic analysis as presented in the articles “Prosodic Notation” and “Prosody” in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965);
- (5) in the light of the preceding analysis, an examination of the pattern of syllabic distribution within the four-part *sijo* line.

The conclusion of this study is that the *sijo* must be seen as an accentual verse form, not syllabic.

This analysis of the *sijo* form is based on the twenty-nine texts by *kisaeng* 妓生, professional women entertainers, that are collected in the *Sijo munhak sajŏn* (hereafter *SMS*) 時調文學事典 (*Dictionary of Sijo Literature*), compiled and edited by Chŏng Pyŏng-uk 鄭炳旻

(Seoul, 1966). There are several reasons for choosing this particular group of texts. The selection arises naturally from within the *sijo* tradition as it operates, rather than by the imposition of some external criteria of selection. The number of texts is of a manageable size; at the same time, these twenty-nine texts represent fifteen different authors, a sampling diverse enough to remove the individualistic aspects of *sijo* style that appear in other samples of comparable size, such as the forty verses of the "Fisherman's Calendar" ("Öbusashisa" 漁夫四時詞) by Yun Sön-do 尹善道. Finally, I assume that the *kisaeng*, as professional entertainers, would have composed *sijo* as they would have performed them, in accordance with the expectations of their patrons. It seems reasonable to expect that their approach, with respect to the literary form, would have been conservative rather than innovative, and that their *sijo* works, therefore, will adequately represent the structural principles of the *sijo* as a received form.

Although the *sijo* was traditionally written for sung performance to a musical accompaniment, descriptions of its structure have in general treated it either as a musical or as a literary piece. We shall follow this example for a time, distinguishing the "work of literary art . . . from its production or reciting" in reviewing the major features of typical descriptions of the *sijo* as a literary form.¹ We shall then turn to its performance as a song, however, to consider aspects of its dynamic structure which may be used for a more phonologically oriented description of the *sijo* as a verse form.

1. *Traditional Descriptions of the Sijo*

There are three verse forms called *sijo*: the standard, three-line *p'yöng sijo* 平時調; the slightly expanded variant *össijsjo* 兂時調; and the greatly expanded narrative *sasöl sijo* 辭說時調. All of the *sijo* by *kisaeng* are standard; for contrast we shall consider one *össijsjo* by a "palace woman."

The standard form has generally been described as a three-line verse form, each line being composed of four "groups" of from three to five syllables each. These "groups"—the nature of which we shall consider later—are in pairs, two in each hemistich, with intervening

¹ A. W. De Groot, "Phonetics in its Relation to Aesthetics," B. Malmberg, ed., *Manual of Phonetics* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1968), p. 533.

caesura. The usual pattern of syllabic distribution among the groups is generally presented as follows:²

	“Group”	I	II	III	IV
No. of syllables:	line 1	3	4	3 or 4	4
	line 2	3	4	3 or 4	4
	line 3	3	5	4	3

This kind of description suggests that each line is composed of fourteen or fifteen syllables; much analysis of the *sijo* form proceeds as if this were indeed the case—as if syllable counting were the primary structural feature of the *sijo*. But variation in syllable count is the rule, not the exception, in *sijo* verse. Various accounts give somewhat different ranges to the variations within the groups; for the twenty-nine texts which form the basis of this analysis, the following variations are found:

“Group”	I	II	III	IV
line 1	2-4	4-5	2-4	4-5
line 2	2-5	3-4	3-6	3-4
line 3	2-3	4-7	3-4	3-5

To assert that so diverse a series of numbers is the basis for constructing a verse system has led, in general, either to hedging about the description, or to variously disguised apologies for the Korean versifier's inability to keep to the pattern. We shall find, however, that the syllabic configuration can be analyzed only within another, overriding structural design.

The rhetorical form of the *sijo* is said to follow that of the Chinese quatrain: statement and elaboration in the first two lines, a “twist” in the first part of line three, and resolution in the remainder of the third line. For an illustration of this rhetorical structure, and as the basis from which to begin our analysis of the *sijo* form, we shall consider a well-known text by the *kisaeng* Hwang Chin-i 黃眞伊 (*SMS*, p. 482):

² Summarized in Richard Rutt, “An Introduction to the *Sijo*,” *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 34 (Seoul, 1958), 7-11; Yi T'ae-gük 李泰極, *Sijo kaeron* 時調概論 (Seoul, 1974), pp. 79-110.

“Group” I	II	III	IV
ch’ōngsan. ri (within green hills)	pyōkkyesu. ya (jade blue stream O)	su.i kamūl (easy going)	charang mara (don’t boast)
ilto (once reach)	ch’anghae hamyōn (wide sea, when you do)	tora.ogi (to return)	ōryōwōra (is hard)
myōngwōl.i (bright moon)	man-kongsan hani (fills empty hills, since it does)	suyō kandūl (pausing, then going on)	ōttōri (how about?)

The first line makes a statement, and the second line elaborates on the circumstances of that statement. The first part of the third line introduces a new element, the moon, for the “twist,” while the remainder of the third line resolves the poem. These sections are more conveniently discernible in translation:

Deep blue stream, don’t boast so loud
of your passing through these green hills.
Though your way runs swiftly down to the sea
there is no such easy return.
While the bright moon floods these lonely hills
why not pause? Then go on, if you will.

The syllabic distribution among the “groups” of this *sijo* is in the following pattern:

3 4 4 4
2 4 4 4
3 5 4 3

Traditional analysis will note that the only variation from the “basic” pattern of syllabic distribution is in the first “group” of line two, where there are two syllables rather than three. But what does this reveal about this particular text? The question needs to be raised: just what are these “groups”? They have been described in quasi-prosodic terms as “breath groups” and “feet” (*ūmbo* 音歩) in several accounts; another refers to them in more grammatical

terms variously as “phrases,” “subsections,” “sections,” and “parts.”³ The terms for these units aside, what is their relation to units of the natural language? Are they metrical feet, having no direct correspondence to syntactic or phonological units, or are they something else entirely?

2. *Syntactic Structure of the Sijo*

For those who read the texts in the original, the problem of defining their constituent “groups” has most likely seemed inconsequential: each line is simply divided into four syntactic units. The syntactic divisions in the text by Hwang Chin-i are as follows:

	I	II	III	IV
line 1	ch'ōngsan.ri prep. phrase	pyōkkyesu.ya noun + interject.	su.i kamūl vbl. noun	charang mara verb
line 2	ilto verb	ch'anghae hamyōn verb	tora.ogi vbl. noun	ōryōwōra verb
line 3	myōngwōl.i noun	man-kongsan hani verb	suyō kandūl vbl. noun	ōttōri verb

This pattern of syntactic division might be described as a series of four “slots” in each line. The specific type of syntactic form which fills a slot within a given text is not predetermined; it is to be defined, rather, by internal contrast. That is, in each line there will be four syntactic units distinguishable by mutual contrast. In one line, for example, the four slots might be composed of two modifier plus noun pairs, as in the first line of a *sijo* by the *kisaeng* Maehwa 梅花 (*SMS*, p. 256):

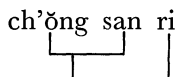
saldūrhōn (affectionate)	nae ma.ūm kwa (my heart and)	aldūrhōn (fond)	nim.ūi chōngūl (love's feelings)
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Another text by Maehwa has a line composed of four verb forms (*SMS*, p. 444):

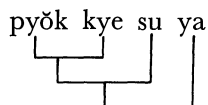
chugō (dying)	nijōya harya (must I forget)	sara (living)	kuryōya harya (must I yearn)
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³ Chōng Pyōng-uk 鄭炳昱, *Kungmunhak san'go* 國文學散藁 (Seoul: Shin'gu Munhwa Sa, 1959), p. 163; Kim Sōg-yōn 金昔妍 “Sijo unyul ūi kwahak-chōk yōn'gu” 時調韻律의

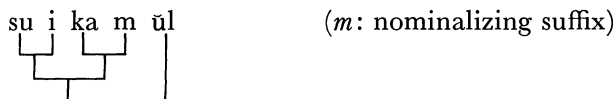
ch'öngsan.ri: a phrase composed of a bipartite noun phrase, *ch'öng* (“blue”) + *san* (“mountain”) followed by the preposition *ri*, graphically represented as



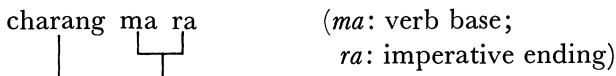
pyökkyesu.ya: a phrase composed of a three-part “proper noun,” *pyökkyesu* (“jade blue stream”) followed by the interjection *ya*:



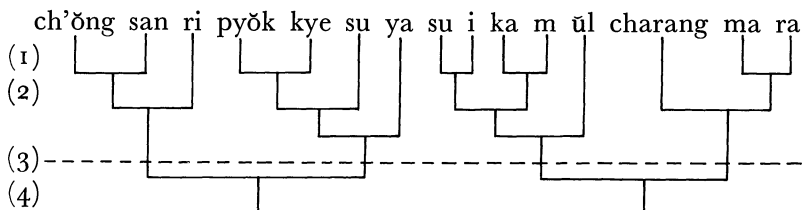
su.i kamül: a phrase composed of the adverbial *su.i* modifying the verbal noun *kam* with the object particle *ül* appended:



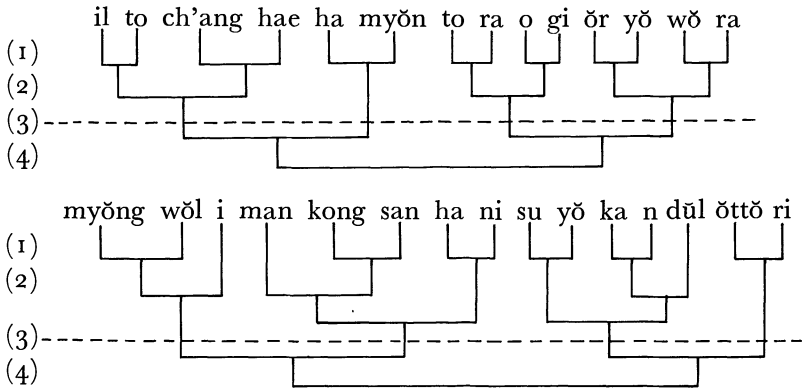
charang mara: a verbal phrase composed of the substantive *charang* (“pride”) + the auxiliary verb form *mara* (“do not”):



This analysis for the complete line is diagrammed as follows:



Following the same procedure for the second and third lines:



While the diagrams are schematic representations of a grammatical analysis of these lines, the dotted line cutting across at the “3” level intersects the four syntactic slots which form the basic pattern of the *sijo* line. This four-part division of the line is a basic pattern, immediately noticeable in any text, but we must also be aware of the great variety of composite syntactic structures which underlie the basic pattern. We find that syntactic units of such disparate size and complexity as *ch'ŏngsan.ri* and *man-kongsan hani* are identical, nevertheless, with respect to their relevance as constituent units in the structure of the line.

As for the rhythmical implications of this pattern, the first IC cut in a line (level “4”) corresponds to the line-medial caesura mentioned in most descriptions of the *sijo* form. For the most part this correspondence between syntactic and rhythmic units prevails in each hemistich as well, so that syntactic and rhythmic juncture are superimposed.

This is not invariably the case, however. In the first hemistich of line two, for example, both syntactic and semantic segmentation would divide the hemistich at a point between the Chinese phrase “once reach (the) wide sea” 一到滄海 and the auxiliary verb *hamyŏn*, “when (you) do.” In performance of this line, however, two factors lead to placement of the juncture in the middle of the phrase, after “once reach.” The first factor is a dominant tendency in the Korean language to form verbs by combining a bisyllabic Sino-Korean term with the auxiliary verb *hada*. Thus *kaga* 可嘉 “praiseworthy” with *hada* becomes *kaga hada*, “to be praiseworthy.” In

general practice, then, two syllables, rather than four, would be anticipated before *hamyŏn*, producing *ch'anghae hamyŏn* as a rhythmic unit, even though it makes no sense out of context. The second factor is a general tendency in *sijo* verse to have, within a hemistich, a longer group follow a shorter one. General rhythmic patterns, then, of both the language and the verse form, take precedence in a case like *ilto ch'anghae hamyŏn* over syntactic and semantic segmentation in determining the rhythmic grouping of the line.

The text by the “palace woman” provides confirmation of the primary importance of the four-part syntactic and rhythmic structure of the line. The syllable count of this text is quite different from the one by Hwang Chin-i, although it does return to the “normal” pattern in the final line (*SMS*, p. 320):

ap mos.e tūn kogidūl.a ne wa tūnda	<i>syllables</i>			
nui nŏrūl morŏdaga yŏgi nal tūnda	8	4	7	5
pukhae ch'ŏngsorūl ŏdi tugo i mos.e wa tūnda	5	4	3	3
tūlgodo mot-nanūn chŏngūn ne.o nae.o				
tarūrya	3	5	4	3

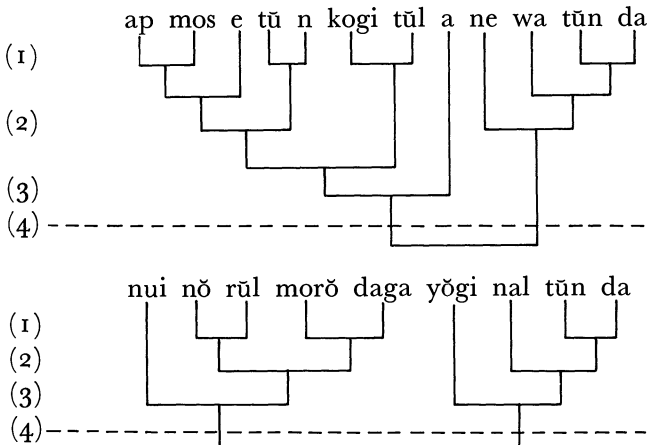
O fish placed in the pond before me, why have you come?

Did someone gather and put you here?

What clear pool have you left somewhere on the Northern Sea
to enter this pond?

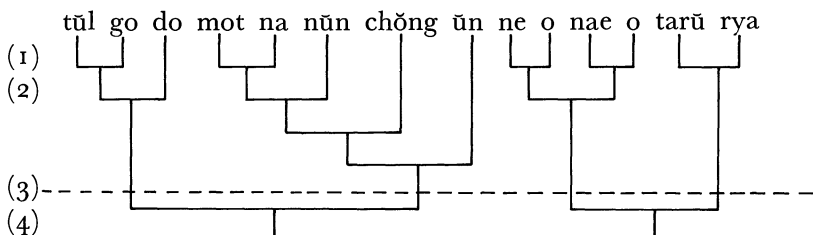
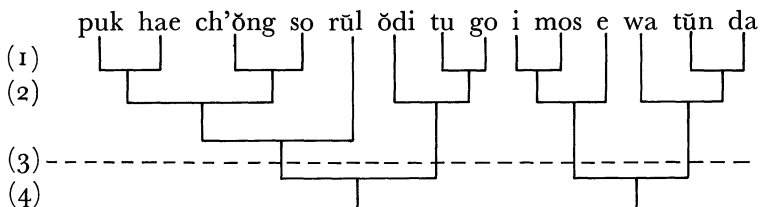
Once in, is the feeling of no escape
any different for you or me?

The first line is composed of two sentences:



The four units which compose this line are clearly of a different order from those in the text by Hwang Chin-i. Two potentially distinct units, *ap mos.e tūn* ("placed into the pond in front") and *kogidūl.a* ("O fish"), which are syntactically analogous to the two units of Hwang Chin-i's text, *ch'ōngsan.ri* and *pyōkkyesu.ya*, function in the palace woman's text as a single, composite unit, bound together by intonation, at the sentence ("4") level, rather than word accent at the "3" level. The primary importance of the four-part structure of the line is made all the more apparent by the differences in syntactic and syllabic form.

The second and third lines of the palace woman's text are more regular in syntactic pattern, being single sentences, and in syllabic distribution, particularly in the final line:



The notion of four syntactic slots in each line is helpful in analyzing the syntactic structure of the *sijo* form, and particularly in comparing the structure of various texts. But it should not be viewed alone as the primary structural principle of *sijo* verse. Syntax is to be seen more generally as the framework for any given verse system; whatever schematization it appears subject to usually reflects the organization of prosodic features.⁵ There may be a high degree of

⁵ Cf. William Skillend, "Words from the Heart," *Tonga Munhwa* 東亞文化 No. 5 (June 1966), pp. 157-87; John Lotz, "Elements of Versification," W. K. Wimsatt, ed., *Versification: Major Language Types* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1972), p. 10.

correlation between syntactic and rhythmic units in a text (or none, as in English metrical verse), but where this correlation is relaxed, as in *ilto ch'anghae hamyön*, or where greatly disparate syntactic units function as corresponding composite units in the line, as in *ap mos.e tün kogidül.a* and *ne wa tūnda*, the predominance of rhythmic grouping as the relevant structural criterion is clear.

3. *The Musical Setting of Sijo*

In preparation for a more detailed examination of the dynamic, rhythmic structure of the *sijo*, let us recall that all of these texts were written with known melodies in mind that would have imposed a rhythmic pattern of their own on the linguistic material. From syntactic analysis, then, we turn now to a consideration of the musical performance in order to develop a model of the rhythmic structure of *sijo* song which may be used, with some terminological translation, for prosodic description.

However many *sijo* melodies there may have been in the past, at present there is but one. This standard *sijo* setting treats the text in three major sections, corresponding to the lines of the literary text, with instrumental transition between sections. Each section is in turn treated in subsections, lines one and two with five, and line three, with three. These subsections correspond to the four line-constituent units we have found in the literary text, with the following exceptions: the final (fifth) subsection in lines one and two is used for the last syllable of the line, which is detached and sung as a separate, somewhat shortened musical unit; in line three, the final (group IV) unit is omitted in performance. Numbering the musical subsections sequentially and arranging them in the four line-constituent slots, we have the following pattern:

	I	II	III	IV
line 1:	1	2	3	4 5
line 2:	6	7	8	9 10
line 3:	11	12	13	(omitted)

The musical subsection is a dynamic unit sung as a single phrase. It is characterized by a singer's strong initial attack, reinforced by combined hand and stick beat on the accompanying drum, and extended to the close of the singer's breath contour. The focus of the

performance is on this unit as “. . . a single continuum of sound—as a chain or a stream” rather than as a “succession of separate sounds”:⁶

. . . the singer uses two or three syllables to set up a pitch upon which he elaborates with the singularly Korean vocal techniques. This is by no means a recitation tone, since it is sung on a single syllable. The listener’s attention and the singer’s concentration are centered upon the treatment of that single tone, the technical term being ‘Yō-ūm’ (sic) (餘音) or ‘Aftertone.’ Especial interest centers upon the wide vibrato and the microtonal inflections obtained with the ‘last gasp’ of the singer’s breath for each sung component.⁷

Just as traditional description of the literary form of the *sijo* employs a somewhat misleading syllable count, the terminology of a beat or metrical measure has been transferred to analysis of the dynamic units of the musical performance, commonly in the form below:⁸

	I	II	III	IV
No. of beats:	5	5	8	5+3
	5	8	8	5+3
	5	8	8	(omitted)

But in actual performance it is the singer’s sense of the breath “contour,” a combination of physical capacity and aesthetic taste, rather than a set of equidistant, regular beats, that determines the lengths of the dynamic units. The accompanying drummer depends entirely upon his rapport with the singer for the placement of his “beats” and the success of the performance. The drum beats merely divide a given unit into segments; they do not determine the unit’s duration.

The dynamic structure of the *sijo* performance is fully analyzed in the traditional transcription system, an example of which is shown below. Breath pauses are marked in this transcription with the inverted caret. The temporal segments of the performance—“beats”—are marked off as a sequence of rectangular sections, akin

⁶ Charles Seeger, “Prescriptive and Descriptive Music Writing,” David McAllester, ed., *Readings in Ethnomusicology* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), p. 24.

⁷ Robert Provine, “The Si-jo as a Musical Form,” unpublished study paper, Harvard University, 1971, p. 13.

⁸ Cf. Richard Rutt, “An Introduction to the Sijo,” p. 88; Yi Hye-gu 李惠求, *Han’guk ūmak yōn’gu* 韓國音樂研究 (Seoul: Kungmin Ūmak Yon’gu Hoe, 1957), p. 153.

to, and sharing the term for, the sections of a bamboo stalk: *chöl* 節. In thirteen sections (5+8) located at the top of the transcription (labelled “Drum” to the left of the transcription) of Hwang Chin-i’s *Ch’öngsan.ri*, the drum accompaniment is notated with the following set of symbols for performance on the double-ended Korean *changgo* 長鼓:

- : a beat on the low end of the drum, called *kung*.
- | : a beat on the high end of the drum, called *ttak*.
- ⌋ : stacatto, called *ttadak*.
- ⊙ : the two ends struck together.
- ⦿ : a muted or silenced beat, called *tta.ak*.

Beneath the transcription of the drum accompaniment, which repeats in units of five or eight “beats” during the performance, the three lines of the text are transcribed in a corresponding series of temporal sections. The melody is represented graphically as a line, the relative height of which indicates pitch, and the wavy portions, vibrato.⁹

The dynamic elements of this transcription are abstracted below. The inverted caret is retained to mark the position of breath pauses, but I have squared off the melodic lines, eliminating the vibrato, in order to show clearly the location of pitch change with respect to the dynamic units.

ch'öng san ri |_v pyö[^]k | kye su ya |_v su i | kam |_v ü[^]l cha | rang ma |_v ra
 il |_v to |_v ch'ang |_v hae hamyö[^]n |_v tasi |_v o |_v gi |_v öryö[^] |_v wöra |_v
 myö[^]ng |_v wöl i |_v man kongsan |_v ha |_v ni |_v su |_v yö[^] |_v kami |

The transcription shows an analysis of the text into what have been termed dynamic units. The two important characteristics of these units are, first, that they include at least one shift of pitch, up, down, or both; second, they are bounded by breath pause.

In the *sijo* repertoire today, the same musical setting is used for any text, including the much longer *sasöl sijo*, so we cannot say that

⁹ Transcription from Chöng Kyöng-t'ae 鄭炯兌, ed., *Sijo po* 時調譜 (Chönju: Chönju Kugak Hagwöⁿ, 1955), p. 7.

× 次聲... 一 起音 4° 口一 律呂 4. 以 聲... 一 黃鐘 1. 口一 六呂 11. 一 清黃鐘 1. 口一 清六呂 11

聲斗音의 強弱研究
有一律 (畧字)

青山裡 碧溪水 이 수이강물 푸른물이라
一到 滄海하면 다시오기 어찌쉬랴
明月이 滿空山처럼 푸르함이 어찌리

7

黃真伊 詞

平時調

(어이리)

唱呂 平時調 陰陽配合 然後 夫婦之樂 和平矣

- DRUM
- ch'ongsanri
pyökkyesuya
- su i kamül
- charang mara
- ilto ch'anghae
hamyön
- tasi ogi
- öryö wöra
- myöngwöli
mankongsan
hani
- suyö kami

the connection between a particular text and the dynamics of its musical phrasing represents an analysis of distinctive aspects of that particular text. Accordingly, this analysis of the musical setting indicates that in principle the basic constituent elements of the rhythmic structure of the *sijo* are dynamic units of one or more syllables, segmented by breath pause, with a pitch change analogous to that which marks accent in the Korean language.¹⁰ Groups of syllables, in other words, rather than syllables as such, comprise the building blocks in the rhythmic structure of the *sijo*.

4. *The Prosodic Structure of the Sijo*

For purposes of prosodic analysis of the *sijo*, the proper term for the basic rhythmic entity equivalent to the musical dynamic unit is the "rhythmic group," which the article on "Prosody" in the *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (hereafter *EPP*) defines as "... a sound cluster spoken with a single phonologically conventionalized pattern or 'contour' of accentuation and intonation, the nuclear center or peak of which in the free or full form is a phonologically maximal or 'primary' accent" (*EPP*, p. 674).

As suggested in the discussion of the syntactic structure of the *sijo*, there tends to be a general correspondence between syntactic units and rhythmic grouping, but not an absolute one. The rhythmic groups are not simply the phonetic "realization" of syntactic units, the "phonetic [or phonemic] word," but are "essentially phonetic entities whose correspondence with syntactic units is not fixed" (*EPP*, p. 676). The boundaries of the rhythmic group, unlike the divisions between syntactic elements, occur as relative diminutions, or even silences, in the continuum of the sound flow. "In the group unit it is the nuclear center that is most distinctive; the limits of the group may be marked by any degree of openness in juncture, and they are often, as in the syllable, obscure" (*EPP*, p. 674).

In linguistic studies of prosodic features the practice is generally to present a phonetic transcription of the text, accompanied by symbols representing the prosodic elements and values. For the presentation of prosodic features in a literary text, however, the

¹⁰ Cf. Samuel Robert Ramsey, "Accent and Morphology in Korean Dialects: A Descriptive and Historical Study" (unpubl. Ph.D. diss. Yale Univ. 1975), pp. 4-34; 280-81.

qualitative contrasts represented by phonetic transcription are superfluous, since qualitative contrasts are not rhythmically relevant. For literary purposes, again, it is relative prominence, rather than the type of quantitative relation which may signal it—pitch, intensity, or duration—that is relevant.

We shall use the system of prosodic analysis and notation outlined in the *EPP* to make prosodic abstracts of the two *sijo* we have examined. In this notational system, a single *o* represents the syllable or “minimal aggregatory unit.” Four levels of prominence are notated: *o* for weak or unemphatic stress; *ó* for primary; *ò* for secondary; *ó* for tertiary. Where the stress may be either primary or secondary, the symbol *õ* is used. Additional marks are *,* the straight comma for “open juncture or break between stress groups,” the caret *^* for “longer pause at more open juncture,” a caret with a dot beneath it *^* to indicate protraction of pause, and the dot *.* for the location of potential juncture (*EPP*, p. 668).

Before proceeding to the analysis of the texts, let us first illustrate the use of this system of notation by contrasting it with a phonetic transcription. A recent article on “Suprasegmental Morphemes in Korean”¹¹ contained the following example:

2 +3> +4>3 +4> +3 +2 +2 1
 /ulika hayəya hallilɨl ma ni chaca poaya haciankhesɨmnikka \\
 (“Shall we not have to seek out the many things we must do?”)

The symbols used in this transcription are *+* for juncture, *>* for stress, 1, 2, 3, 4 for the four pitch levels, and ** for sentence-final intonation contour. The information presented in this phonetic transcription would be abstracted in *EPP* notation as:

ó o o, ó o, ó ò o, ó o, ó o, ó o o o o o ò ^

The *EPP* system notes the occurrence of syllables, the location of prominence, and the boundaries of the group of syllables that are aggregated around a prominent, nuclear syllable. Omitted as irrelevant to rhythm are the phonetic quality of the syllable, and the identity of the quantitative feature—stress or pitch—associated with syllabic prominence. Using this system to make an abstract of the

¹¹ Pak Ch'ang-hae 박창해, “Kugõ ūi ònjch'im ūmun e kwanhan yõn'gu” 국어의인척 음운에 관한연구, *Tongbang hakji* 東方學志, 6 (1963), 29.

text by Hwang Chin-i:¹²

ó o ò, o ó o ò _Λ ó o ò o, / ó o ò o _Λ	(ch'ongsan.ri pyökkyesu.ya su.i kamül charang mara)
o ó, / ó o ò o _Λ o ó o ò, / ó o ò o _Λ	(ilto ch'anghae hamyön tora.ogi öryöwöra)
o ó o, / ó ó o ò o _Λ ó o ò o, / ó o o _Λ	(myöngwöl.i man-kongsan hani suyö kandül öttöri)

With the exception of the first hemistich of line two, as we have noted, juncture and pause coincide with the syntactic divisions. Although these points of division may for the most part be inferred from the syntactic analysis, such analysis does not reveal the shifting rhythmic pattern with its changes from groups with accents on the final syllables (óoò and oóoò), to groups with unaccented final syllables (óoòo). These modulations, in conjunction with variation in the span of the groups—their lengths in terms of syllable count—contribute to the slightly syncopated rhythmic effect of this piece.

The text by the “palace woman” has similar rhythmic modulations within the basic four-part line pattern:¹³

ó o o ó. ò o o ò_Λ ò o ó o_Λ ó ò o. ó o o ò_Λ o ó o ò o_Λ
 o ó ò o ó, / ó o ò o_Λ o ó o, ò ó o_Λ
 ó o ò, / o ó o ò o_Λ ó o ò o, / ó o ò_Λ

The four rhythmic groups of line one in this case are marked as being divided by pause ^, rather than juncture . The line is actually composed of six potentially independent rhythmic groups, and in another phonological environment the first and third groups might have functioned rhythmically as hemistichs themselves—that is, as two independent groups each—but in this text they are bound under intonation curves into the “composite groups” (*EPP*, p. 675) *ap mos.e tün kogidül.a* ó o o ó. ò o o ò and *nui ndrül morödaga* ó ò o. ó o o ò.

The evidence of syntactic analysis, of investigation of the dynamic structure of the musical performance of the *siĵo*, and prosodic analysis of the *siĵo* as a literary text, all indicate the importance of the four-

¹² Rhythmic abstracts prepared in consultation with Professor Sin Tong-uk 申東旭, Department of Korean Literature, Korea University.

¹³ *Ibid.*

part division of the line as the primary structural principle of the *sijo*. What of syllables, though? The identification of the four-part line structure of the *sijo* as its fundamental structural feature permits us to ask, not whether there is variation in syllable count, for all accounts do agree that there is, but whether this variation is in any way patterned within the sequence of four line-constituent rhythmic units.

5. *Syllabic Distribution in the Sijo*

We have noted that most descriptions of the *sijo* give a range of variation in the number of syllables occurring in the line-constituent groups. For the twenty-nine *p'yŏng sijo* texts by *kisaeng* the ranges are:

	I	II	III	IV
Line 1	2-4	4-5	2-4	4-5
Line 2	2-5	3-4	3-6	3-4
Line 3	2-3	4-7	3-4	(0); 3-5

The most frequently occurring syllable count (modal) for each of the groups is:

3	4	4	4
3	4	4	4
3	6	4	3

The modal figures correspond fairly closely to those in the basic pattern given in most accounts, but none of these descriptions shows which of the groups might have more and which less variation in syllable number. To represent the pattern of variation, first we show the range of variation and number of occurrences by position (I, II, III, IV) in the three lines.

Syllabic Distribution and Frequency in Kisaeng Sijo

		I	II	III	IV
Line 1	No. of syll.:	2 3 4	4 5	2 3 4	4 5
	Frequency:	12 16 1	20 9	2 12 15	27 2
Line 2	No. of syll.:	2 3 4 5	3 4	3 4 5 6	3 4
	Frequency:	8 16 4 1	11 18	7 20 1 1	1 28
Line 3	No. of syll.:	2 3	4 5 6 7	3 4	0 3 4 5
	Frequency:	1 28	2 10 11 6	1 28	4 20 4 1

From the table it appears that the relative amount of variation alternates through the lines, with increased variation in the odd-numbered groups of lines one and two, and the reverse in line three. Counting the number of variants for each group, we have the following pattern:

<i>Total Number of Variants</i>			
I	II	III	IV
3	2	3	2
4	2	4	2
2	4	2	4

This measure is somewhat crude, however. The value of “2” for the number of variants in the second group of line one, for example, represents twenty occurrences of a four-syllable group in that position, and nine of a five-syllable group, whereas the “2” in the fourth group of line two stands for twenty-eight four-syllable groups and only one other variant. This incompatibility can be corrected by weighting, by excluding the modal figure for each group position—“16” in line one, group I, for example—and recording the remaining number of variants—thirteen, for the same example. In tabular form:

<i>Total Number of Variants from Modal</i>				
	I	II	III	IV
Line 1	13	9	14	2
Line 2	13	11	9	1
Line 3	1	18	1	9

The most striking features of this table are the low numbers for the final groups of lines one and two, and groups I and III of line three (2, 1, 1, 1, respectively), and the high number of variants in group II, line three (18). The low number of variants—or, conversely, the greater regularity—at the ends of lines one and two conforms to the general principle that, in a verse line, the “terminal sections are their most determinate parts; freedom of variation is more often permitted in the earlier part than at the end” (*EPP*, p. 677). Metaphorically, the greater regularity at the line ends cor-

responds to the tightening of the reins as the farmer/poet prepares the ox/reader for the re-verse at the end of the furrow.¹⁴

The syllabic regularity in groups I and III of line three is directly related to the great degree of variation found in group II of that line. Regularity in group I prepares for the variation to follow; it establishes the principle of regularity so the rhythm does not become lost in group II. Regularity in group III once again establishes the principle. In more general terms, "it almost goes without saying that expressive metrical variations are possible only in verse conceived in a tradition of more or less regular base rhythm: we can have no variations in entirely 'free' or 'cadenced' verse."¹⁵

The fairly large amount of variation (g) in the final group of line three where we should, on the contrary, expect greater regularity, suggests that in some way the third group of line three is to be considered "final" for the literary form as well as in the musical performance. The fourth group of line three is, in fact, rhetorically conventionalized: fifteen of the twenty-five texts that have a fourth group in line three end with some form of the verb *hada*, "so be it" or "that's how it is." Of the other ten, all are verbs either in the imperative or the interrogative. This type of conventionalized ending makes the actual meaning of the final group of little importance in the development of the *sijo*'s point. Such rhetorical detachment of the final group accounts for its syllabic irregularity.

6. *Conclusions*

The standard *p'yŏng sijo* may be summarized as a verse form of three lines, having general correspondence between line boundaries and syntactic units, and consequent tendency to end-stopped lines. Each line is composed of four rhythmic groups which correspond, in the main, to the four grammatical immediate constituents of the line as a syntactic unit. Exceptions to this correspondence occur in association with certain types of diction, notably the use of a four-syllable phrase in Chinese. The syllable count of the line-constituent groups is more regular at the ends of lines one and two, and both

¹⁴ Cf. John Thompson, *The Founding of English Metre* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 4.

¹⁵ Paul Fussell, Jr., *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 39.

before and after the syllabically irregular second group of line three. That the degree of variation in syllable count depends upon group position (I, II, III, IV) indicates the primary importance of the rhythmic group as the fundamental constituent unit in the rhythmic structure of the *sjō*. Syllable count may be optionally more or less varied as a secondary rhythmic element, but as a verse system, Korean is accentual, not syllabic.