

# SAMULNORI KOREAN DRUMMERS

## *SHOW TIME* for teachers

Welcome to *Show Time*, a performing arts resource guide published by the CSB/SJU Fine Arts Education Series. This edition of *Show Time* is designed to be used before or after a performance of *SamulNori, Korean Drummers*.

The suggested activities in this issue include guided lessons for several subject areas that may be adapted to fit your classroom time and needs.

Watch for pages marked *Show Time for Students*; one-page, student-ready activities designed for individuals or small groups.

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SamulNori players perform sangmo (ribbon dance).

Kim Duk Soo is master drummer, founder, and artistic director of SamulNori. He is shown here with the changgo, or hourglass drum, one of the four instruments used in SamulNori's performance.





# Welcome to KOREA

“Land of the Morning Calm”

**ahn-nyung-ha-seh-you (hello)**

## LOCATION

Korea is located on a peninsula in Southeast Asia. It is surrounded by water on three sides and bordered by China on the north. The 38th Parallel or “Truce Line” divides Korea into two countries, North Korea and South Korea.

## LAND

Eastern Korea is a mountainous region while plains areas are found in the southern and western parts of Korea. Crop land makes up only 20% of the land because forests cover almost 70% of Korea.

## CLIMATE

Korea enjoys all four seasons, with spring and fall being the most pleasant. Summers are hot and humid and monsoon rains fall during July and August. Average yearly temperature in Seoul, South Korea is about 50 degrees.

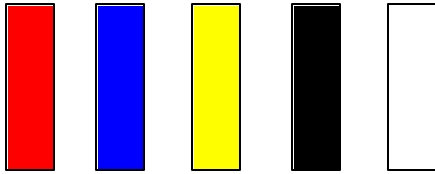
## PEOPLE

Korea is home to more than 46 million people, most of whom live in cities. Almost all of the people are ethnic Korean, and there is a small population of ethnic Chinese as well. People speak Korean throughout North and South Korea and use the Hangeul alphabet. The two main religions in Korea are Buddhism and Christianity.

## EDUCATION

Education is highly valued in Korea and the adult literacy rate is about 98%. Korean children begin primary school at age six. They are taught Korean, math, music, arts, science, physical education, and Korean citizenship. About 88% of primary students go on to middle and high school where they may study ethics, Korean language and history, and other electives. Some students may attend special-purpose high schools in science, arts, foreign language, sports, or technology. Higher education opportunities include technical training or universities. The Korean government pays most of Korea’s education expenses.

View *Hidden Korea*, a PBS video that highlights the Republic of South Korea’s traditions, rice farming, Chu’sok festival, and traditional celadon pottery-making available at: [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)



# KOREAN HISTORY

Modern Korea's ancestors were hunting and gathering people from North Asia. Some of them also lived in small villages and some were potters during prehistoric times.

Over the years, they began cultivating millet and beans. Eventually, rice growing was adopted from China as were bronze and iron making techniques. Good metal tools and developed agriculture helped increase food production and farming populations grew steadily.

Several rich kingdoms developed in Korea. In 668 A.D., three Shilla kings united their warring kingdoms to develop a rich Buddhist culture in Southeast Asia. Less than three hundred years later, a new Koryo kingdom became established on the peninsula. In 1392, the Koryo kingdom was conquered by the Choson Dynasty who ruled for over five hundred years.

The name ***Korea*** comes from the kingdom named Koryo, 935-1392 A.D.

Korea's strategic location has been the setting for several clashes between political, cultural, and military forces in Asia. At the beginning of the twentieth century, both China and Japan tried to take over Korea. Japan successfully annexed Korea in 1910 and imposed colonial rule in Korea until 1945.

After Japan's defeat in World War II, the Allied forces divided Korea into two countries along the 38th Parallel. North Korea became a Communist state under the influence of the Soviet Union while South Korea allied themselves with the United States and became a republic.

Military confrontations continued along the border and in 1950, North Korea attacked South Korea. The U.N. sent military support to South Korea while China did the same in North Korea. The conflict lasted for three years and ended in a stalemate. It destroyed millions of lives and devastated South Korea's agriculture and industry.

After several decades of government unrest, corruption, and a struggling economy, Kim Dae Jung was elected president of South Korea in 1998. Now operating under a western-style democratic government, the South Koreans have become a strong industrial state with a high standard of living. In 2000, President Kim Dae Jung won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in building peaceful relations with North Korea.

Traditional colors of Korea are associated with the five cardinal colors of life; red with fire, blue with wood, yellow with earth, black with water, and white with metal. These colors were widely used in homes, clothing, and art. It was believed that stitching stripes of these colors, especially on children's clothes, would protect them from evil spirits.

Located between China and Japan, Koreans played a significant role in passing Chinese culture on to the Japanese for many years. Korean architecture, political systems, religions, music, and writing systems all came from China. Koreans have typically adapted some of these foreign things to their own use. In the twelfth century, they advanced the Chinese wood block printing system to create the world's first moveable metal type. Pottery making, paper making, and the Japanese writing system were also passed from China to Japan through Korea.

## DEFINE

SamulNori  
k'kwaenggwari  
ching  
changgo  
buk  
farmers' band  
namsadang  
nong'ak  
dure  
shaman  
kut

## SAMULNORI

### “to play four things”

SamulNori is a combination of the Korean words *Samul* (to play) and *Nori* (four things). The four things are instruments including the **k'kwaenggwari**, **ching**, **changgo**, and **buk** style drums. SamulNori combines the tradition of **farmers' bands** with that of traveling entertainers called **Namsadang**.



A farmers' band is led through a village by the banner bearer whose sign proclaims the importance of farming.

# MUSIC and DANCE CONNECTIONS

## FARMERS' BANDS

Farmers' music and dance dates back to the third century in Korea when the bands were used to create a more pleasant working environment for village farmers. The bands were an essential part of the **dure**, (a farming collective), helping to increase the worker's productivity. The bands also provided entertainment during times of celebration. The band led farmers to their work day under a banner mounted on a long bamboo pole. The banner proclaimed, "*Farmers Are the Principals of the World*".

The farmers' dance, called **nong'ak**, is full of dynamic, exuberant music. The movements of the dancers are similar to the farming actions that center around rice production; plowing, transplanting the seedlings, sharpening the sickle, harvesting, and husking rice.

Although farmers' music developed with the purpose of stimulating farm work, it gradually became the traditional rural pastime that was handed down from generation to generation. It was a morale booster in times of hardship and national upheaval as well.

## NAMSADANG

From ancient days, wandering entertainers called **sadang** (nam-sadang referring to male and yo-sadang to female) roamed across Korea visiting rural villages. The entertainers would set up in the central village courtyard and stay for several days performing masked dramas, puppet plays, acrobatic acts, and **shamanistic** rites.

Some sadang practiced prostitution which led to government regulation of their activities. In turn, the sadang fled to the refuge of rural villages where their music and dance was absorbed into the music and dance of the farmers. Examples of namsadang influence on farmers' music and dance include spinning a plate on a stick and other acrobatic feats.

Shamanistic rituals called **kut** were performed by the namsadang and were part of ancient Korean farming practices. During the Japanese occupation, kut were banned as subversive. When Korea tried to build its international image after the Korean war, a movement to hide "back-woods magic" pushed kut into further obsolescence.

In the 1970's, Korean university students began searching for their cultural roots. Four university students led by Kim Duk Soo formed SamulNori in 1978 and developed a new kut to reflect the needs, hopes, and tastes of the Korean people. Television, concert halls, and shopping centers are the new "village courtyard" where kut is now performed.



A man performs a shaman ritual mask drama. The drama portrays commoners poking fun at the ruling class, who get rich at the expense of the villagers.

**The shaman ritual mask is designated Korean National Treasure Number 121.**

## MANY HANDS (and a few tunes) MAKE LIGHT WORK

**agrarian** - referring to agriculture or farming.

**dure** - an organized group of workers who share the workload and the profits.

Before becoming an industrialized nation, Korea was an **agrarian** society. The farmers there grew crops like millet, beans, and rice. They adapted some farming techniques and tools from China.

Korean farmers joined together in each village to form a **dure**, which was like a collective farming operation. In this way, the farmers worked together to improve their success.

Farming involved much hard work and long hours, especially during planting and harvesting. To ease their hardship, each village had their own “farmers’ band” that played while farmers worked. The music improved the farmer’s efficiency as well. Farmers’ bands also played to celebrate the completion of planting and harvesting. The music and dance helped to promote unity among the villagers as they celebrated their collective accomplishments.

Choose one of the topics below and discuss possible answers in your group. Imagine that you are living in rural Korea in the fourth century. Your village has not yet adopted the use of metal farming tools and does not have a dure or a farmer’s band.

**Create a poster that will promote one of these “new” ideas to your fellow villagers.**

### TOOLS

**Korean farmers became more productive when they began using iron and bronze tools.**

What were farming tools made of prior to the use of metal?

What might be some advantages of using metal farming tools?

What Asian country began making tools out of metal first?

### DURE

**Korean women formed dures for work like weaving and spinning.**

What might make a dure successful?

What are some advantages for members of a dure?

Can you think of any businesses that operate today on the same principle as a dure?

### MUSIC

**Evidence of farmers’ bands in Korea dates back to about 300 A.D.**

What other groups of people can you think of that used music to ease their work?

What kinds of music help you work better?

How is music used to unify a group of people?

**All village males between the ages of 15 - 56 were expected to be part of the farming dure.**



# MUSIC and DANCE CONNECTIONS

## THE INSTRUMENTS

SamulNori's music is based on four traditional Korean folk drums. Each of the instruments represents a different element in nature. The theory of *yin* and *yang* (in Korean *um* and *yang*) is illustrated throughout the music. It is seen in the balance of the two metal instruments with the two leather instruments. The steel represents *yang*, the heavens, male, and brightness while the leather instruments represent *um*, the earth, female, and darkness.

### LIGHTNING

**The K'waenggwari** is a small gong drum that is made of brass and makes a metallic sound. The player uses one hand to strike the drum with a bamboo mallet, while the other hand holds the drum to dampen the sound. This drum is often the lead instrument in farmers' bands, signaling transitions in the music. It represents the element of lightning.

### RAIN

**The Changgo** has an hourglass shape with animal skins stretched over each end. One end of the drum plays a high-pitched sound and the other side makes a deeper sound. The drum is hung over the shoulder and played with a padded stick or a bamboo reed. Changgo drums represent rain and play the lead in making delicate rhythm changes.

### WIND

**The Ching** is a large gong drum that is struck with a padded stick. It can be hung on a frame, hand-held, or played with two hands. The ching controls the tempo of the music. The "curved" sound it makes imitates the shape of the valleys of Korea. In ancient times it was used to call people together or to sound warnings. The ching drum represents wind.

### CLOUDS

**The Buk** is a barrel shaped drum. It is made out of a piece of hollowed-out wood and covered with leather skins that are tied to the wood on each end. The buk drum is struck with a wooden stick. It produces the bass sounds in farmers' music with its strong rhythms and loud volume. The buk drum is associated with clouds.

**A farmers' band is usually led by two standard bearers, one carries the flag of his troupe and the other holds aloft a banner with the inscription "Farmers are the Principals of the World." They are followed by a dancing boy and a hunter.**

**\*what is the importance of the farmer's banner?**

**\*why are a dancing boy and a hunter part of the procession?**



# MUSIC and DANCE CONNECTIONS

## PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS

### BINARI

Binari is a sweeping prayer song that was used to signal the beginning of a stay at a village. The shaman sings an extensive prayer that recounts the tale of creation and many other aspects of Korean beliefs. It calls on various spirits that live in the village and its homes, asking for a blessing upon the people, the players, and the ground they inhabit. Binari can now be heard at events such as the opening of a new building or business.

### SAMDO SUL CHANGGO KARAK

All four players are seated with the changgo (hourglass drum) and play an arrangement of rhythm (karak) patterns. The rhythms are representative of three different Korean provinces. Originally, one player would perform a solo piece flaunting his dance style and drum technique. Samul-Nori created a new piece in which the players are seated to shift the focus from showmanship to music.

***“Korean dance is more than entertainment. It is an expression of a metaphysical philosophy. Koreans have traditionally believed that the human body is a universe unto itself and that man’s ideal existence lies in harmony with heaven and earth.”***

**Yi Bo-hyung**

### SAMDO NONGAK KARAK

Nongak (farmers’ music) rhythms from three provinces are played on four different instruments. The connection to the land and agriculture may also be heard in the verses spoken during this piece:

*Look to the sky and gather stars.  
Look to the ground and till the earth.  
This year was so bountiful  
Next year let it also be so.  
Moon, moon, bright moon,  
As bright as day;  
In the darkness,  
Your light gives us illumination.*

### PANKUT

The drummers also become dancers in this modern version of the farmers’ festival dance. Farmers were often recruited as soldiers, so military influences are evident in the farmers’ dance choreography. The hats worn by the performers also have military connections. It has been said that the sangmo (ribboned hat) was originally used as a weapon with shards of glass and metal attached to its ribbons. The bubpo (feathered hat) resembles an ancient war helmet. Both hats move with the actions of the dancer’s bodies.

The goal of the four performers is to become one through **Ho-Hup**, a meditative technique that tames the mind, body, and spirit through breath control.

# Show Time for Students \_\_\_\_\_NAME

## CELEBRATION TIMELINE

Farmers' music and dance are important aspects of Korea's national recreation. Many of Korea's traditional holidays correspond with important farming events like harvest time.

Traditional farmers' music and dance bands perform in each of the months listed below. Think about a farmer's work year and match the statements below with the month in which you think they would occur.

January

May

June

July

August

October

\_\_\_\_\_ The time for transplanting rice seedlings. One of the busiest months for farmers. The performances are designed to help farmers work more efficiently.

\_\_\_\_\_ The 15th of this month is the celebration of the beginning of the new year. This performance helps farmers work more efficiently.

\_\_\_\_\_ The 15th of this month is the Moon Festival.

\_\_\_\_\_ The month for weeding the rice fields. This performance also helps farmers work more efficiently.

\_\_\_\_\_ This month allows some relaxation time for the farmers now that the weeding is completed. The performance celebrates Farmer's Day.

\_\_\_\_\_ This is harvest month. Farmers celebrate the completion of another year's harvest with music and dance.

Choose a job from those listed below. When would some of the busiest times be for this job and why? When would celebrations be held and why? Create a year-long celebration timeline to fit the job.

flower shop owner  
military general

orange grower  
teacher

hockey player  
photographer

retail store owner  
fish hatchery manager

What kind of music would you choose for the celebration? Why?

What kinds of instruments would be included in the celebration? Why?

## SIJO: POETRY of KOREA

**Sijo** (see-zhoo) is Korea's best loved form of poetry. It began as a song form during the Shilla kingdom (668-936). Singing the poems took place at a "poetry party" which was a popular social activity for the upper classes.

Traditional sijo consists of three lines of 14-16 syllables each with a total of 44-46 syllables per poem.

Western writers usually divide sijo poems into six lines.

**Line 1** ....presents a problem or theme

**Line 2**... "turns" or "twists" the thought

**Line 3**... resolves the problem or concludes the theme

**Sijo poems are rarely titled**

**Sijo poetry may be narrative or thematic, serious or humorous, and evokes human emotion.**

**Sijo poetry is haiku's cousin**

### DOING THE "SIJO TWIST"

Review the sijo poems on page 10 with your students. Read the poems aloud and listen for the song-like quality of the verse. Point out the structure for sijo poetry and the difference between traditional and Western style writing.

Which style seems more musical?

Which style is more visually pleasing?

Ask small groups of students to choose one poem and identify:

the theme or problem (line 1)

the "twist" of thought (line 2)

the resolution or conclusion (line 3)

Invite students to write their own sijo. To help them get started, some students may choose a theme from those provided on page 10. Others may have theme ideas of their own.

Post the completed poetry on your school's website or create a class book of poetry.

### POETRY PARTY

When students have completed their sijo, invite another class or parents to a "poetry party." Serve tea for refreshments.

Divide the class into two groups (traditionally groups were called "spring" and autumn") and have students from each group take turns reading their poetry aloud.

Ask the listeners to respond to the poems.

# Traditional Three-Line Sijo Poetry of Korea

*You, blue stream, flowing around mountains, do not be proud of moving so swiftly.  
Once you get to the open sea, you will never be able to return.  
Why not stop for a moment while the bright moon gleams down on the world?*

HWANG CHIN I

*Wind last night blew down a gardenful of peach blossoms.  
A boy with a broom is starting to sweep them up.  
Fallen flowers are flowers still, don't brush them away.*

ANONYMOUS

*Let me ask you, Mind, What is the secret of your eternal youth?  
My body is old but you have no trouble keeping up with it.  
If I acted as young as I feel, I'm afraid everyone would laugh at me.*

ANONYMOUS

## Six-Line Sijo Poetry

*A flock of sparrows, chattering  
In the after sunset dusk.  
Half a branch would do  
For birds as small as you.  
What is the good of squabbling  
Over such a big bush?*

ANONYMOUS

*I have lived up half my life already  
And I know I can't be young again.  
But I'd like to stop right here  
And not grow older.  
Try, white hair, to understand  
Slow down your pace at least.*

YI MYUNG-HAN

### "SIJO TWIST" POETRY THEMES

winter	icicle	turtle	spring
eagle	oak leaf	candle	ocean
brother	sister	hope	apple
moon	strength	farmer	wind
friend	peace	courage	drum
white cat	grandfather	rain	violin

# VISUAL ARTS CONNECTIONS

## CELADON POTTERY

Celadon pottery is considered one of Korea's most outstanding artistic achievements.

During the late ninth and early tenth centuries, Korean potters began experimenting with the reduction firing techniques of Southern China. The new kiln practices combined with a delicate green feldspar glaze produced Korea's most popular celadon porcelain. The soft color of the jade green pottery was admired internationally as well.

The decorative element of celadon pottery was based on natural themes which appeared in the form of lions, turtles, and other animals. Plant life often included peach and lotus flowers, bamboo, and melons.

The human body is also subtly reflected in the shape of the pottery. Long, slender bottles with a gentle slope at the bottom express the feminine form. The masculine form is evident in the stocky, wide shouldered vases.

**Korean potters,  
whose work was admired  
by the Japanese,  
were sometimes kidnapped  
and taken to Japan to work!!**

Read the 2002 Newberry Award winning book, *A Single Shard*, by Linda Sue Park.

Set in the potters' village of Ch'ulp'o, it is the story of Tree-ear, an orphan boy who is determined to become a great potter. The fulfillment of Tree-ear's dream is tied to a single shard of celadon pottery. The historical novel informs readers about traditional Korean pottery-making during the twelfth century.



Koroyo dynasty vase, 13th-14th century  
Celadon with inlaid crane and cloud design  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art







# THEATER ETIQUETTE

Each year, thousands of school staff, students, bus drivers, and parents take part in CSB/SJU's Fine Arts Education Series. To help make everyone's theater experience the best it can be, please review the **LOOKING & LISTENING** section below with your students.

## LOOKING & LISTENING

Attending SamulNori's live Korean drumming performance will be interesting and enjoyable for everyone if you remember to:

- \*pay careful attention to the instruments and the different sounds they make
- \*listen for changes in the rhythm and tempo of the drums
- \*look at the colors and styles of the costumes worn by the performers
- \*watch for the farming actions the dancers make
- \*watch for the sangmo and bubpo hats used in the farmer's dance

The performers in SamulNori will be affected by the audience's behavior as they are in the same room. The drummers and dancers must concentrate on their music and movements, so unexpected noise or activity may distract them. The performers rely on you to help them make a successful performance. Please be respectful as you enjoy their music and dance and applaud when it is appropriate.

**REMEMBER: LISTEN CAREFULLY AND WATCH CLOSELY!**

Please review the **PROCEDURES** section below to help your theater visit go smoothly.

## PROCEDURES

- \*Please bring a minimum of one adult chaperone for every fifteen students.
- \*Please prepare your group to enter the theater in single file in order of seating.
- \*Position your chaperones to maximize adult supervision of your group.
- \*Trips to the rest room must wait until your group has been seated in the theater. Then, students may go in small groups with the teacher's permission. Younger students will need to be chaperoned.
- \*The theater is a food, gum, drink, radio, camera, tape/video recorder free zone.
- \*If you carry a cell phone, please be sure it is turned off prior to the performance.

**REMEMBER: ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE!**

This study guide was written and designed by Janine Bunkowski.  
Parts of this resource were adapted from material provided by SamulNori.