

Production Korean traditional performing arts utilizing the locality of Osaka

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Abstract

In Korea, "GUT" serves as a medium between the living and the dead and as a community ceremony for the peace and wellness of the village. In addition, gut is a composite art which is based on traditional art composed of various elements such as music and dance.

When producing such performances using this traditional culture in overseas, it is always important to resolve cultural barriers and to understand the local culture of the country. It is because it is possible to enhance the public understanding by utilizing the locality of the country.

I paid attention to that point and planned the contents of the performance by applying Korean traditional art gut to the local characteristic of Osaka, Japan. The performances was based on the religious spirit of animism, in which all elements have spirits and cultural characteristics of Japanese people who are familiar with praying or making wishes in everyday life. In addition, the locality of Osaka where the largest number of Koreans in Japan was actively included in the performance. Based on such cases, expansion of the meeting and cultural exchange between the locality of Osaka, Japan and Korean traditional performing arts will be discussed in this paper.

Key words: Korean traditional performing arts, Osaka, locality, gut

1. Introduction

Language, values, and customs of other countries become cultural barriers when producing overseas performances using their own culture. Especially, when traditional culture is used as a material, barriers are higher than popular culture. 'Southern coastal Byeolsingut' is a village gut and traditional performing art in South coast of Korea. It is also designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property No. 82-4. I will pay attention to and analyze and discuss about 'Chung Moon' which is based on the theme of 'Southern coastal Byeolsingut'.

In Korea, 'GUT' serves as a medium between the living and the dead. Also, it serves as a community ceremony for the peace and wellness of the village. In addition, gut is a composite art which is based on traditional art composed of various elements such as music and dance. However, various village gut including 'Southern coastal Byeolsingut' is not properly evaluated at present. There are several reasons for this. One probable cause is the prejudice against gut and a shaman which is being produced in some cultural contents. When gut is used as a material of a drama or movie, it is expressed as a symbol that encourages fear. Therefore, it will be a challenge to create a gut with a strong negative image.

In this paper, the possibility of gut as a performance content will be discussed based on the analysis of overseas

performance cases based on gut.

Meanwhile, this paper will be focused on the application of Korean traditional culture gut to the locality of Osaka in Japan. Here, understanding of local culture is an important factor. By utilizing the locality of the country to enhance cultural accessibility, it will help the public understand.

This aspect is different from the previous studies in the following two respects. The first is that this paper is focused on the locality of Osaka in Japan applied to lower the cultural barriers during the performance. The second is the analysis of actual performances that applied such theoretical framework to performance cases. Based on such cases, expansion of the meeting and cultural exchange between the locality of Osaka, Japan and Korean traditional performing arts will be discussed in this paper.

2. Cultural Exchange and Locality

2.1. Diversity of Cultural Exchange

International cultural exchanges take place through various media. Many people have been engaged in various exchanges through music, language, and food for many years. In general, people have more access to popular culture than traditional culture. However, as people become accustomed to and understand foreign cultures, they tend to experience the country's unique culture. The encounter and experience with such a traditional culture is an encounter with the new world, and at the same time, it is a way to find the original form of culture.

In 'Promotion of Multicultural Contents in Association with Traditional Culture [1]' on the spread of traditional culture, the possibility of traditional culture as a key resource is emphasized. It can be inferred that the government and the experts appreciate the possibility of exchange of traditional culture.

However, according to the 'Survey on Traditional Performing Arts in 2016 [2]', 15.4% of the general public actually have paid to watch traditional performing arts in the past year. 44.2% of the rest of the general public have watched traditional performing arts as a free event and 30.8% of the general public have watched traditional performing arts with invitation tickets. More than 70% of people are watching traditional arts for free. This shows that the interest and evaluation of traditional Korean performing arts by the general public is low.

What is necessary to spread traditional performing art abroad even when it is difficult for the general public to access? I believes that understanding the mutual cultures through mutual relations and exchanging them through direct contact with each other can be achieved through interaction with other cultures based on the understanding of the local area, which is important.

2.2. Local Characteristics and Culture of Osaka

Locality is a unique identity held by members in the area. A region is a range that defines a region, but does not guarantee its permanence. It is because the division of administrative districts has changed as needed, and the identity of cities changes as many people migrate. However, it is also true that various efforts have been made, such as restricting the height when building buildings to maintain the identity of the area. This is the reality of the region and the locality. In 2.2, the locality of Osaka¹ will be briefly described.

The first is 'coexistence culture'. Coexistence means to live together, and it is the core concept of multicultural society in Japan. Currently, about 460 million Koreans in Japan are living in Japan. The largest number of Koreans in Japan live in Osaka in Japan. Especially, Ikunoku has Ikuno Korea Town, the area where Japanese and Koreans in Japan lived together for a long time. Now called 'Ikuno Korea Town', many people love Korea visit. Koreans in Japan have been continuously developing Korean culture in Japan, mainly in their residential areas. 'Ikuno Korea Town' is used as a place to learn Korean culture experience as a place for 'multi-ethnic symbiosis' and 'international understanding' in addition to popularization of Korean style.

The second is 'the culture of humor'. Located in the Kinki region of Japan, Osaka has a history called Kinki's economic and cultural center and commercial city. Osaka Sumo and Kamigata Kabuki flourished. In addition, the culture of laughter such as Kamigata Rakugo, Manzai, Yoshimoto Shinkigaki has developed as the entertainment of the common people. In Osaka, because of the culture of laughter, people think about Boke, Tsukkomi, and Ochi when people talk with each other. Boke continues to act stupid, and Tsukkomi rebukes Boke's foolish behavior. Ochi comes from 'Ochiru', which means to fall off or fall. Sometimes it makes one laugh at once, and sometimes it throws one into confusion by an entirely different reversal ending from the story which has been continued so far. When the Osaka people talk, it consists naturally of Boke, Tsukkomi, and Ochi that makes people laugh at the end of the story. Osaka has made such a unique culture.

The third is 'the culture of prayer'. In Japan, people believe in the religious spirit of animism, in which all elements have spirits, and have cultural characteristics familiar with praying or making wishes in everyday life. Praying includes a common praying done throughout the village to cope with the community crisis. Also, there are things individuals do to achieve individual's wishes. Walking through the Japanese town, one can often see shrines, temples, Buddhist bodhisattvas, and the like. In Japan, there are many people who basically believe that they do not have no religion. However, a lot of Japanese people seeking for 'Genseryaku (mortal profit)' from religion visit such places for health and children. 'Genseryaku' is the idea that the more people pray to many gods, the more proportionally good things happen. There are many people in Japan who do not have a specific religion, but the culture praying to various gods still remains deeply rooted.

1 Osaka means Osaka in the administrative area of Japan, and it includes Osaka City.

3. Case Study of Performance Production Using Locality

3.1. 'Southern Coastal Byeolsingut'

'Southern coastal Byeolsingut' is a village gut based on Tongyeong and Goyejedo in Gyeongsangnam-do, south coast of Korea designated in 1987 as Important Intangible Cultural Property No. 82-4. In Section 3.1, the basic principle of 'Southern coastal Byeolsingut' will be described. All gut is made up of the process of 'CHEONGSIN', 'OSHIN', 'SOUNGSING'. 'CHEONGSIN' means calling a god, and it is a part in gut where inviting a god. 'OSHIN' is a part in gut entertaining the god. People can encounter with the god through Sherman, and make wishes and play with the god. 'SOUNGSING' is an act of returning god to its original place in the sense of sending a god. Gut is composed of above-described three parts, 'CHEONGSIN', 'OSHIN', and 'SOUNGSING'. The newly created works by using these elements will be described in 3.2.

3.2. Case: Chung Moon

This chapter analyzes Korean traditional performing arts performances held in Osaka on December 25, 2017. 'Chung Moon' performance is sponsored by 'agency EN' made by the third and fourth generations of Koreans in Japan who lives in Korea as a center. 'agency EN' is a planning agency that has been established to spread Korean traditional performing arts performances in Japan.

This performance is performed by Korean national music group 'DaeHanSaRam²' which is a group of masters of 'Southern coastal Byeolsingut'. In this performance, it is characterized as 'resurrection' as modern creative art of gut. DaeHanSaRam condensed the traditional gut which requires a long time and many people, to a minimum time and minimum number of people, and made creative content making full use of the musical and philosophical character of gut.

[Figure 1]

Composition of Chung Moon in 2017

2 DaehanSaram is a traditional Korean music group founded in 1997 to popularize Korean traditional music. Since it was founded 20 years ago, DaehanSaram has performed over 50 shows in Korea as well as from abroad including Japan, US, France, Taiwan, Singapore, and China.

Introduction part								
Chapter 1								
Chuok			Sangyeo-sori			Salpuri-chum		
CHEONGSIN (calling a god)								
Chapter 2								
Cheongsinak				Magi-gut				
OSHIN (play with the god)								
Chapter 3				Chapter 4				
Jeseok-nore	Jeseok-nori	Haegum	Pansori	Sonwan-puri	Tonsal-puri	Gane-sori	Bepseong	chemangsu
SOUNGSING (act of returning god)								
Chapter 5								
Cheon-gun			Sam-hun			Soungsingnak		

[Figure 1] is a composition of ‘Chung Moon’ performed in 2017. As described above in 3.1, gut has the principle of "CHEONGSIN", "OSHIN", and "SOUNGSING". Based on this principle, ‘Figure 1’ represents the performance consisting in Chapter 5. The introduction part is a direction for making a situation before starting gut.

This performance content is not just made to deliver Korean traditional arts. Particularly in this performance, a glimpse of the efforts to strategically utilize the spirit of gut and the characteristics of the area called Osaka is shown. More details will be described below.

[Figure 2]
 the locality of Osaka used in the ‘Chung Moon’

introduction part	coexistence culture	photos and songs of memories
OSHIN	culture of humor	The characteristics of easy-going Osaka parson
	culture of prayer	Writing wishes on paper

[Figure 2] shows the locality of Osaka used in the ‘Chung Moon’. In the previous chapter, it is stated that there are locality of coexistence culture, the culture of humor, and praying culture in Osaka. Such locality is utilized in the introduction part of ‘Chung Moon’ and the part of ‘OSHIN’ playing with the god.

In the first locality ‘coexistence culture’, photos and songs of memories are used. The first and second generations of Koreans in Japan have a feeling for their hometown that they cannot return even if they want to go back. ‘Arirang’, which is a well-known song in Japan as well, to express this. The performers sang these kinds of songs and projected those memories on the screen. The photos selected from photos of memories recruited in advance through SNS were used. This is

intended to remind the audience of who they wanted to see by listening to songs of memories and seeing photos of memories. In this way, a pre-conditions is made to start gut.

In the second locality ‘the culture of humor’, the characteristics of easy-going Osaka person was used. In this part, two people from the audience were invited on the stage to experience fortunetelling. Fortunetelling showed good things that will happen next year, and the audience on the stage needed to earn it by playing short and well-known games. The audience is very happy to see someone try to challenge the game on the stage without knowing who will go onstage. This is possible because of the development of the culture of humor in Osaka.

The third locality is ‘the culture of prayer’. People in Japan are accustomed to praying culture. A space for writing wishes on paper is provided next to the reception area of the performance. Since ‘Chung Moon’ performance is performed at the end of the year, it includes the concept of amulet at the end of the year and the wish to pray for the coming year. This point can be said that it fits well with the character of gut.

These efforts can lead to a variety of facial expressions of the audience. Kim Hyunguen & Lee Hoonsang & Jin Sangwon stated that, “The main character of "Byeolsingut" is people. It is called consolation, a ritual ceremony for a god, but it is for people in the end. More importantly, it is the ritual of a community of 'village' rather than individual [3]”. From such a point of view, the ‘Chung Moon’ can be called as a ritual of the community gathered at the performance. This was possible because the planners and performers had a deep understanding of Korea-Japan culture.

4. Harmony of Korean Traditional Performing Arts and Localities

The flow of cultural content production is in the order of planning, production, distribution, and consumption. Generally, when planning an overseas performance, there are many cases where readymade contents are taken to perform. When overseas performances are decided, it is important to investigate the localities and cultures of the area. When the locality is applied to the content based on the survey, the performance will be more accessible to local people. In this respect, it can be said that true cultural exchange begins.

This case is different from other cultural exchanges in that it understood and utilized the locality of Osaka traditional arts of art. In my opinion, the cultural exchange is a combination of universality and individuality. That is to use the universal frame considered by the partner country, to cherish the individuality that your country's culture has. In this respect, the balance between universality and individuality is very important. Understanding the locality of Osaka in Japan and creating traditional performance art content in Korea means that the balance between universality and personality is maintained.

5. Conclusion

The popularity of pop culture, such as dramas and k-pops, has spread overseas. Based on this, Koreans are trying to spread Korean culture, which is a high-class culture, overseas.

It is very nice that many traditional performing arts in Korea are performed abroad. However, without understanding of the site and our efforts, it is hard to hope for authenticity from the exchange because it is only boasting of their own culture. Cultural exchanges are a mixture of ideas and cultures of each other.

I think Korean traditional performing arts should also be suitable for local areas. Sometimes it is necessary to create a tradition, which leads to new content creation. Tradition has been inherited from a long time ago, but it has existed through many changes. It has been adapted to the ideas and customs of the times and will change in the future. Therefore, tradition is a continuation of continuous transformation.

The most difficult thing about cultural exchange is cultural barriers and sustainability. Long time and a lot of effort are necessary for the partner country, the partner country region and the culture of your country to match. However, if you continue sustained efforts, I think that buds will come out and flowers will open someday. Of course, such exchanges will not solve the historical problems of Japan and Korea. But, many people will be interested in each other's culture through various contents. Through such exchanges, I believe that even if political problems between Japan and Korea occur, the thread of unrelenting relationship will become thicker.

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