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THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ETHNIC SONGS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KOREAN AND CHINESE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE MUSIC THROUGH THE WORKS OF HAN HYUNGSEOK AND XIAN XINGHAI*

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ABSTRACT

This study conducts a comparative analysis of national independence music through the works of Korean composer Han HyungSeok and Chinese composer Xian Xinghai, examining their stylistic approaches within early 20th-century anti-colonial contexts. Both nations leveraged musical expression as cultural resistance against Japanese domination during this turbulent historical period. Han's compositions strategically adapted Korean traditional music through pentatonic melodies and accessible structures, aligning with grassroots mobilization needs. Conversely, Xian synthesized Western compositional techniques with multi-ethnic Chinese musical idioms, creating grand choral works that sonically embodied mass participation ideologies. Analytical comparisons reveal Han's intentional preservation of Korean musical authenticity versus Xian's cosmopolitan

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synthesis. While both composers utilized folk elements, their technical implementations diverged significantly: Han prioritized melodic memorability for communal singing, whereas Xian developed sophisticated harmonic textures supporting narrative grandeur. These stylistic divergences reflect contrasting cultural strategies: Han's functional approach served immediate independence movement objectives, while Xian's monumental soundscapes constructed symbolic representations of collective resistance. Findings illuminate the "common origins, divergent expressions" paradigm in regional anti-imperialist sound cultures. Comparing Chinese and Korean anti-Japanese war songs provides models for preserving musical heritage and fills key gaps in East Asian music history.

Keywords: Han HyungSeok, Xian Xinghai, national independence, music style, composition analysis.

ETNİK ŞARKILARIN EGEMENLİĞİ: HAN HYUNGSEOK VE XIAN XINGHAI'NİN ESERLERİ ÜZERİNDEN KORE VE ÇİN ULUSAL BAĞIMSIZLIK MÜZİĞİ ÜZERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ÇALIŞMA

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Koreli besteci Han HyungSeok ve Çinli besteci Xian Xinghai'nin eserleri üzerinden ulusal bağımsızlık müziğine dair karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yaparak, erken 20. yüzyıl anti-sömürgeci bağlamlarındaki stilistik yaklaşımlarını inceler. Her iki ülke, bu çalkantılı tarihi dönemde Japonya'nın egemenliğine karşı kültürel bir direniş olarak müzikal ifadeyi kullandı. Han'ın eserleri, beş notalı melodiler ve ulaşılabilir yapılar aracılığıyla Kore geleneksel müziğini stratejik bir şekilde adapte ederek halk hareketinin ihtiyaçlarıyla uyum sağladı. Buna karşın, Xian, Batı kompozisyon tekniklerini çok etnikli Çin müziğiyle harmanlayarak, kitlesel katılım ideolojilerini sesli bir şekilde somutlaştıran büyük koral eserler yarattı. Analitik karşılaştırmalar, Han'ın Kore müziği otantikliğini koruma amacını, Xian'ın kozmopolit sentezine karşı ortaya koymaktadır. Her iki besteci de halk müziği öğelerini kullanmış olsa da, teknik uygulamaları önemli ölçüde farklılaşmıştır: Han, toplu şarkı söyleme için melodik hatırlanabilirliği ön planda tutarken, Xian anlatısal büyüklüğü destekleyen sofistike armonik dokular geliştirmiştir. Bu stilistik farklılıklar, karşıt kültürel stratejileri yansıtır: Han'ın fonksiyonel yaklaşımı, bağımsızlık hareketinin acil hedeflerine hizmet ederken, Xian'ın anıtsal ses manzaraları kolektif direnişin sembolik temsillerini

inşa etmiştir. Bulgular, bölgesel anti-emperyalist ses kültürlerinde “ortak kökenler, farklı ifadeler” paradigmasını aydınlatmaktadır. Çin ve Kore’nin Japonya’ya karşı savaş şarkılarını karşılaştırmak, müzik mirasını koruma konusunda modeller sunar ve Doğu Asya müzik tarihinde önemli boşlukları doldurur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Han HyungSeok, Xian Xinghai, ulusal bağımsızlık, müzik stili, kompozisyon analizi.

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 20th century, East Asia underwent intense upheavals due to two world wars, profoundly impacting both Korea and China during this complex historical period(Shu, 2024). At this time, Japan’s deep intervention in the affairs of both nations led to significant changes in their social structures, cultural ecosystems, and daily lives. Against this difficult backdrop, music, as a highly influential cultural medium, played a crucial role in awakening national consciousness and inspiring the spirit of resistance among the people. Anti-Japanese songs, as a unique artistic expression of this particular historical period, not only bear the distinct marks of the era and possess profound historical value but also embody the rich and diverse cultural connotations of both nations(Heward, 2023). In 1910, a significant turning point in Korea’s history occurred, and in the long struggle for national independence that followed, anti-Japanese songs gradually emerged(Chey & Jeon, 2024). After the March 1st Movement, these songs spread widely both domestically and abroad, becoming powerful tools for promoting Korea’s independence movement(Lynch, 1921). Meanwhile, in China, after the September 18th Incident of 1931 in China, a national song movement aimed at boosting public morale and uniting the people for the resistance against foreign invasion emerged and played a key role in mobilizing people to join the war effort(Lincoln, 2021). For both Korea and China, anti-Japanese songs have long transcended the realm of ordinary artistic works, becoming vital cultural symbols of national resistance and patriotic sentiment (Chow, 1992).

Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai, as highly representative creators of anti-Japanese songs in Korea and China during this historical period, vigorously promoted the concept of national independence through their works, vividly expressing the core values of the wartime spirit. Han HyungSeok, drawing on traditional Korean melodies and rhythms, composed works that were simple in style and easy to sing. Xian Xinghai, on the other hand, skillfully integrated Western

musical techniques with rich folk elements from various regions of China, creating a grand and layered musical style. This study focuses on the representative works of these two composers, systematically comparing their approaches to composition, musical styles, and the historical-cultural contexts in which they worked, while exploring the historical significance and cultural differences of Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs. At the same time, this research aims to fill the gap in the comparative study of Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs, providing new perspectives and theoretical support for future academic research and the protection of cultural heritage.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Methods

This study employs music analysis to examine the representative vocal works of composers Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai. The sheet music analyzed in this research is sourced from a wide range of authoritative publications, including *Selected Anti-Japanese Songs of Han HyungSeok* (Revised Edition, Seoul Music Publishing House, 1998), *The Complete Works of Xian Xinghai* (People's Music Publishing House, 2005), and the original score of *Yellow River Cantata* from its Yan'an premiere (facsimile archived at the Central Conservatory of Music).

To ensure a comprehensive analytical scope, three representative works from each composer were carefully selected, totaling six pieces. These works are representative of the two composers' creations, encompassing various genres, including solo and choral compositions, and reflecting their artistic characteristics and historical significance in the context of anti-Japanese song composition. These pieces not only showcase the unique integration of national musical elements by both composers but also reflect their innovative practices in musical form, harmony, and tonality. These works provide a highly representative and valuable analytical foundation for studying Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs.

This study conducts a comparative analysis through four dimensions: the integration of national musical elements, the practicality of formal structures, the exploration of modern harmonic language, and the social function and dissemination strategies of the works. By examining these aspects, the research highlights the compositional differences between Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai, systematically constructing a theoretical framework for the comparative study of Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs. The study's innovation lies in its organic integration of musical

morphology and sociological perspectives on dissemination, providing both empirical cases for regional music history research and a historically grounded foundation for contemporary music composition and education.

Background of Anti-Japanese Songs

The background of Korea's anti-Japanese songs is closely related to Korea's experience under Japanese colonial rule in the early 20th century(Cathcart, 2010). In 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea, beginning a 35-year period of colonial rule(Haggard et al., 1997). During this time, the Korean people, oppressed by Japanese cultural imposition, economic exploitation, and the suppression of their national identity, experienced a surge of resistance. This led many intellectuals, revolutionaries, and artists to express their anti-Japanese and patriotic sentiments through anti-Japanese songs(Lim, 1999). The March 1st Movement of 1919, the largest movement in Korea's history against Japanese colonial rule, marked the awakening of national independence consciousness(Halliday, 1984). During this movement, anti-Japanese songs began to spread widely, becoming an important tool for mobilizing the people and spreading patriotic ideas(Howard, 2015). At the same time, Korean exiled independence fighters, especially those active in Manchuria, the Siberian region, and other areas, also created and spread a large number of anti-Japanese songs. During World War II, in the context of the global anti-fascist war, Korea's anti-Japanese songs not only spread within the country but also among the Korean diaspora and the overseas independence movements.

In 1931, after the "September 18th Incident," Japan rapidly occupied the three northeastern provinces of China by force(Li, 2015). Calls for resistance to Japan grew nationwide, and patriotic figures within the music community began composing patriotic songs and organizing choirs to teach these songs(Yang, 2019). In the mid-1930s, left-wing music organizations led by the Chinese Communist Party actively carried out music-related work focused on national salvation, sparking a nationwide patriotic song movement. This movement helped rally the masses to engage in patriotic struggles, producing a large number of outstanding folk songs and composers, which provided significant encouragement for China's resistance efforts(Coble, 2007).

Although the anti-Japanese songs of Korea and China developed under different historical and social contexts, both countries shared a common element: through music, they strengthened national identity and promoted the will for independence(Ho, 2006). These songs transcended

simple musical works and became symbols of the era, with their cultural and historical value still widely recognized today.

Two representative anti-Japanese composers



Figure 1. Han HyungSeok.

Han HyungSeok (1910–1996) was born in Busan, Korea, and moved to China during his childhood. He spent his student years in Beijing and Shanghai. In China, he changed his name to "Han Youhan" and began his formal music composition activities on the eve of the Anti-Japanese War. He traveled through various parts of China, including Shandong, where he participated in the creation of anti-Japanese songs such as *New Revolutionary Army Song* and founded China's first "Chinese Children's Theatre," among other artistic activities. In 1939, he joined the Korean Youth Frontline Workers' Corps established in Chongqing, where he served as the leader of the arts group and composed works like *Korean March*, *Yalu River March*, and *Motherland March*, all of which are notable anti-Japanese songs and operas.

Notably, after being appointed as the head of the propaganda team of the Second Division of the Gwangbok Army, Han published the *Gwangbok Army Song Collection*, making significant contributions to boosting the morale of the Anti-Japanese movement and the independence army. His works, based on traditional Korean music elements, emphasize national identity through simple and popular melodies.



Figure 2. Xian Xinghai.

Xian Xinghai (1905–1945) was born in Macau, China, and studied in France, where he systematically learned Western music composition techniques. He was influenced by European Impressionist music but interrupted his studies and returned to China amidst the national crisis, focusing on composing music for the Anti-Japanese War. After the outbreak of the war, Xian organized the Anti-Japanese Singing Movement and led large-scale torchlight choral parades and choral training sessions. During this period, he composed many anti-Japanese songs and large choral works, including *On the Taihang Mountains*, *Yellow River Cantata*, and *Go to the Enemy's Rear*.

Notably, his masterpiece *Yellow River Cantata*--with its powerful harmonies and large-scale choral structure--conveyed a strong national message and had a profound impact. Xian Xinghai skillfully combined Western musical techniques with folk songs from various regions of China, creating a unique and rich musical color. His works made significant contributions to China's anti-Japanese national salvation song movement.

The compositional practices of both composers not only enriched the wartime musical culture of their respective countries but also left a valuable musical legacy for future generations. Their artistic achievements and historical contributions merit in-depth study. This article will conduct a comparative analysis of Han Hyeongseok and Xian Xinghai's representative works, focusing on musical characteristics, formal structures, harmony, and tonality to explore their compositional styles and musical differences.

ANALYSIS OF HAN HYEONGSEOK'S WORKS

The Song of the Little Bird (*Xiao Niao De Ge*)

The Song of the Little Bird is a four-part mixed choir piece. The composition consists of six distinct sections (Table 1), each clearly divided by phrases. The structure is relatively regular in the first two sections, but in the latter half, the interplay between voices becomes more complex, and the phrase structure becomes somewhat ambiguous.

| Intro | A | B | B1 | C | Interlude | D | E |
|---------|---|---|----|---|-----------|---|---|
| F Major | | | | | | | |

Table 1. Form Structure of “Song of the Little Bird”.

The form structure follows a through-composed style, including an introduction and interlude, centered around F major. Harmony and tonality are reinforced through the use of continuous tones, clearly establishing the key. Stability is achieved by the consistent use of the tonic (F) and dominant (C). The multi-voice arrangement employs chordal harmony and imitative techniques between voices to enhance musical diversity.

Prelude ♩ = 96 작은 새의 노래

Piano

Soprano

새 벽 이 어 둔 밤 을 헤 쳐 오 면

Piano

The F note keeps appearing

Score 1. Introduction and the First Phrase of Section A of “The Song of the Little Bird”.

Score 1 is selected from the introduction and the first phrase of Section A of the work. In the piano accompaniment, the F note is frequently used in the bass, appearing in the form of a sustained tone.

Score 1 is a musical score for a vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano. The piano part features a sustained F note in the bass. A red box highlights the piano accompaniment.

Score 2. Beginning of the fourth section of “Song of the Little Bird”.

Score 2 is taken from the beginning of the fourth section of The Song of the Little Bird. The vocal melodies of the four parts above the score maintain the same rhythm while singing, with the piano accompaniment supporting them using block chords. Another key feature is the imitation between different vocal parts.

Score 2 is a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. The piano part features block chords. A red box highlights the piano accompaniment.

Score 3. End of Section D in “Song of the Little Bird”.

Score 3 is selected from the end of Section D. The first three measures consist of the notes C-D-E, while the fourth measure consists of C-E-A-B. These notes are placed above the dominant pedal tone C. The use of such chords aims to emphasize both the harmonic function and the tonal color of the piece.

Yalu River March (*Ya Lu Jiang Jin Xing Qu*)

Yalu River March is a four-part mixed chorus composition. Excluding the introduction and interlude as auxiliary structures, the piece consists of five main sections.

| Intro | A | Interlude | B | B1 | Interlude | A1 | Interlude | A2 |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|---|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
| e minor | —e minor—f minor— | | | | | | | |

Table 2. Form Structure of “Yalu River March”.

As shown in Table 2, although the lyrics and vocal parts are not entirely consistent, melodically, Section B1 in the fourth part is a repetition of Section B. Therefore, except for the final section A1 and the auxiliary structures, the overall form of this piece follows a rounded binary form. Since Section A1 shares melodic material with Section A, it can still be considered a recapitulation despite the key change. Thus, the piece can be identified as a four-part rounded binary form.

In terms of modality and tonality, the first seven sections (including auxiliary structures) remain in E minor. After Section C, the interlude serves as a key transition, modulating from E minor to F minor, which continues until the end. From a pitch-class perspective, the final key is the supertonic (ii) of the initial E minor. However, in terms of key signature relationships, the modulation spans five key signatures, making it a relatively distant modulation.

Regarding the combination of vocal parts, the primary approach is homophonic texture, where the highest voice carries the main melody while the other voices provide harmonic support in a chordal manner. The highest vocal line is responsible for the main melody, while the lower parts contribute harmonic reinforcement through block chords. Additionally, the piece incorporates contrapuntal techniques in certain passages.

34

S
A

T
B

우 우 우 우 우 용사 로다

는 리는 한국 혁명 군 조국을 찾는 용사로다

ff *mf*

Score 4. Beginning of Section A1 in "Yalu River March".

Score 4 is selected from the beginning of Section A1. The bass voice sings the main melody, while the upper voice decorates it in parallel thirds, resembling the early Western organum style. The highest two voices employ different melodies, forming a contrapuntal texture with the main melody.

The image shows a musical score for 'Yalu River March'. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamics like 'rit.' and 'fff'. A red box highlights the final measure of the piano part, showing a seventh chord built on the tonic (I).

Score 5. Final Section of “Yalu River March”.

In terms of harmony, the composer frequently employs seventh chords and successive seventh chord progressions in this piece. Additionally, unique harmonic structures and applications are particularly notable, as illustrated in Score 5. This excerpt is taken from the final section of the work. In the last measure of the example, the final chord is a seventh chord built on the tonic (I), an uncommon way to conclude a piece. Furthermore, the composer reiterates the seventh—E-flat—in this chord, making the final harmony more dissonant and unresolved, as the leading tones are not fully resolved.

The Moon of My Hometown (*Gu Xiang De Yue*)

The Moon of My Hometown is a soprano solo song imbued with deep national sentiment. It consists of two parallel sections, forming a binary form, and is composed based on the traditional Korean pentatonic scale. In terms of modality and tonality, the entire piece remains in F major throughout, without any modulation or tonal shifts. The formal structure is divided into two main sections (A and B), with each section consisting of three phrases (Table 3).

| A | | | B | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e | f |
| F Gong Pentatonic Mode | | | | | |

Table 3. Form Structure of “The Moon of My Hometown”.

The use of pentatonic scales and traditional rhythms expresses the unique emotional character of Korean national music. Rhythmically, the two most prominent features of this piece are syncopated

rhythms and triplet rhythms. These rhythmic elements are present throughout the piece and demonstrate a high degree of consistency (Score 6).

Aa Soprano

영롱한 달— 빛 은빛 파—도 물결 달빛

7 이비치 면 그리 움 사무친 다 아—

12 아— 꿈 에 그 리운 나 의 고— 양

18 **c** 어느 해 어느날 에 다 시 노래하 리 오 달아래 송 화

23 강 가 에 서 고향을 그리는 시낭송(여성)

Score 6. Section A of "The Moon of My Hometown".

ANALYSIS OF XIAN XINGHAI'S WORKS

From February (*Er Yue Li Lai*)

From February is an art song composed in the style of northern Shaanxi folk music, structured as a single-section form (Table 4). The formal structure maintains continuity in Ab major throughout the introduction, interlude, and coda. The melody and harmony blend pentatonic-based melodies with Western major-mode harmonies, while the use of ornamentation highlights the characteristics of Chinese folk music.

| Intro | A | Interlude | Coda |
|----------|---|-----------|------|
| Ab Major | | | |

Table 4. Form Structure of "From February".

The folk elements are rooted in the traditional northern Shaanxi folk song style, highlighting a distinct regional character. The composer does not solely rely on traditional major-minor functional

harmony. Throughout this work, the following chord structures and harmonic progressions appear multiple times.

6

家家户户种种田忙。指望着的今年瓜的呀这的
家家户户种种田忙。指望着的今年瓜的呀这的
家家户户种种田忙。指望着的今年瓜的呀这的

f p f p

K46 D

Score 7. Beginning of Phrase b in “From February”.

Score 7 is taken from the beginning of phrase b in section A. In the piano accompaniment, two consecutive seventh chords can be clearly observed: F-A \flat -C-E \flat and B \flat -D \flat -F-A \flat . Functionally, these chords correspond to the tonic seventh chord and the subdominant seventh chord in A \flat major. However, based on the root motion, a dominant-to-tonic functional progression can still be identified.

Yellow River Lament (*Huang He Yuan*)

The piece *Yellow River Lament* is structured as a parallel four-part form (Table 5), with its four main sections divided roughly at the phrase level due to the influence of the lyrics. The work is set in F minor, with key changes primarily occurring in section B, where it modulates to E \flat major before returning to the home key of F minor at the end of the section. The other sections remain relatively stable, predominantly presented in the tonic key of A \flat major. Notably, the piece concludes in natural F minor. From a modal and tonal perspective, the overall tonal framework remains relatively stable.

| Intro | A | Interlude | B | Interlude | C | Interlude | D | Coda |
|---------------------------|----|---|----|-----------|---|-----------|---|------|
| f minor – A \flat Major | —— | E \flat Major – f minor – A \flat Major | —— | f minor – | | | | |

Table 5. Form Structure of “Yellow River Lament”.

The piece employs a conventional Western tonal framework. In terms of harmonic progression, the composer boldly incorporates chromatic harmonies, enriching the harmonic color of the work while enhancing the musical expression in alignment with the piece's thematic content.



Score 8. The First Phrase of Section A in “Yellow River Lament”.

In the piano accompaniment of Score 8, the lower left-hand part features a continuous chromatic descent starting from the last beat of the fifth measure in the illustration, followed by a chromatic ascent in the ninth measure. The harmonic progression is VI2—VII7/V—V2—III7—VII56/II—III6/V—V56/IV. This series of chromatic movements significantly enhances the somber musical atmosphere.



Score 9. The ending of Section D and the coda of “Yellow River Lament”.

Another noteworthy aspect is that the piece returns to its home key, F minor, at the conclusion. Harmonically, it ends in F natural minor. In Score 9, the harmonic progression at the end of Section D is VI6—V—I, where the dominant (V) is presented as a minor triad. This unexpected resolution weakens the typical dominant-to-tonic pull, subtly reinforcing the piece's sorrowful mood and the sense of helplessness conveyed in the lyrics when facing adversity.

On the Taihang Mountains (*Zai Tai Hang Shan Shang*)

On the Taihang Mountains is a mixed two-part choir piece. It consists of five parallel sections, each of which is structured as a phrase (Table 6).

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---------|---|---|---|---|
| e minor | | | | |

Table 6. Form Structure of “On the Taihang Mountains”.

The piece adopts a traditional Chinese national mode in its melody, primarily based on the pentatonic scale with occasional altered tones. Meanwhile, the piano part employs harmonization with a national character, mainly avoiding dominant chords with strong functional tendencies and leading tones with strong directional pull. In terms of lyrics and melodic structure, it follows a through-composed form. Regarding modality and tonality, the entire piece remains in E minor throughout, without any key changes.

Score 10. The Ending Section of “On the Taihang Mountains”.

Score 10 is taken from the ending section of the piece. In the second line of the example, the harmonic progression follows I46—V7—I. However, it is noteworthy that the third of the V7 chord is omitted. This significantly weakens the functional strength of the dominant seventh chord, and

without the leading tone resolving to the tonic, the sense of harmonic resolution is also diminished. Similar harmonic treatments appear throughout the piece.



Score 11. Transition Before Section B of “On the Taihang Mountains”.

Another notable harmonic progression is the unresolved dissonant chord. Score 11 is taken from the end of section A and the beginning of section B. In the fourth measure of the example, a diminished triad with C# as the root is used, followed immediately by a tonic six chord (I6). The voice leading primarily employs leaps. From the perspective of traditional harmony, this progression is indeed unexpected.

DISCUSSION

Comparative Analysis of the Two Composers

The two composers exhibit a high degree of similarity in their approaches to composing both art songs and choral works, primarily in their use of traditional musical elements from their respective countries. This includes the incorporation of national modes and characteristic rhythmic patterns found in folk songs. Additionally, their harmonic techniques and contrasts in modality and tonality further reflect this similarity. Both composers favor national musical elements, particularly pentatonic modes, which imbue their works with strong ethnic color and regional characteristics. As a result, their musical styles demonstrate a certain level of homogenization.

| Category | Han HyungSeok | Xian Xinghai |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Folk Music Elements | Emphasizes traditional Korean pentatonic scales and rhythms | Fusion of regional Chinese folk songs with pentatonic scales |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| Formal Structure | Clear and concise, with short and refined melodies, emphasizing singability and practicality | Grand and complex, primarily large-scale choral and multi-movement structures while also considering singability |
| Harmonic Usage | Emphasizes stability through traditional harmonies and pedal tones | Expresses tension through chromatic harmonies |
| Rhythm & Melody | Simple and repetitive rhythms and melodies | Richly ornamented melodies with complex rhythms |

Table 7. Composer comparison.

Although these two composers share a high degree of similarity in compositional techniques, their works also exhibit significant differences. These differences are primarily reflected in their musical styles, which can largely be attributed to their individual artistic pursuits.

In terms of melodic style, Han HyungSeok frequently employs melodies and rhythms rich in Korean national music characteristics, making his works distinctly representative of Korean musical traditions. A typical example of this is his piece *The Moon of My Hometown*.



Score 12. The Beginning of “The Moon of My Hometown”.

Score 12 is taken from the beginning of *The Moon of My Hometown*. The first five measures are in the D pentatonic scale, specifically the D major pentatonic mode. In the second and fourth measures, the use of triplet rhythms highlights the dance-like style found in Korean traditional music. In both of these triplet rhythmic patterns, the pitch relationship follows a second interval (in auxiliary form) and is immediately followed by a fourth interval. This melodic progression emphasizes the Korean national style of the piece.

In contrast, Xian Xinghai's works also feature a distinct national style. However, Xian's compositions often incorporate musical materials from different ethnic groups within China as the basis for creation. A representative example of this is *From February*.



Score 13. The Beginning of “From February”.

Score 13 is taken from the first two measures of *From February*. Similar to Han HyungSeok’s works, this piece is also composed using a pentatonic mode, specifically the E-flat yu mode. However, *From February* distinctly exhibits the musical style of northern Shaanxi, China. This characteristic is primarily reflected in the two grace notes present in the excerpt. While single and multiple grace notes are not exclusive to Chinese folk music, they are extremely common. In particular, the grace note patterns that leap by a third interval carry a strong local musical identity typical of Chinese regional music.

Beyond melodic style, the two composers also differ in their compositional techniques. Xian Xinghai’s works are more influenced by Western modern and contemporary music. A striking example of this is *Yellow River Lament*, which employs extensive chromatic harmonic progressions. This approach enhances the timbral richness of the piece, making its sonority more colorful.

Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai played crucial roles in the composition of anti-Japanese songs in Korea and China, respectively. Both composers emphasized national identity while developing distinct compositional techniques and styles. Han HyungSeok favored a straightforward musical language, crafting concise and memorable melodies that prioritized singability and practicality. His structures often consisted of single-stanza or strophic song forms, facilitating rapid dissemination and learning. In contrast, Xian Xinghai’s musical language was more complex, integrating both Western and Chinese musical techniques. His melodies were fluid and expressive, supported by rich harmonic textures. He favored large-scale, multi-movement structures, adeptly using symphonic techniques and multi-voice choral writing to create grand musical scenes. These differences illustrate how anti-Japanese songs evolved under the distinct socio-cultural contexts of the two nations.

Significance of the findings

This study systematically compares the anti-Japanese song compositions of Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai, revealing both the commonalities and differences in musical expression under national crises in Korea and China.

(1) Fusion of Ethnicity and Modernity: Both Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai based their compositions on national music, but their paths of integrating Western techniques were quite different. Han's works (e.g., *The Moon of My Hometown*) use the Korean pentatonic scale and emphasize simple structures to enhance singability, a choice closely tied to the practical need for rapid dissemination in the Korean independence movement. On the other hand, Xian's *On the Taihang Mountains* reflects the grand context of "total mobilization" during the Chinese Anti-Japanese War. Meanwhile, Xian's chromatic harmonies (e.g., *Yellow River Lament*) and Han's stable tonality (e.g., *Yalu River March*) reflect different levels of assimilation of Western modern music. The former may have been influenced by late Romanticism during his studies in France, while the latter leans towards a more conservative functional harmony system.

(2) Anti-Japanese Music Promotion: The simplicity of Han HyungSeok's works (e.g., *Yalu River March*) and the grandeur of Xian Xinghai's compositions (e.g., *On the Taihang Mountains*) reflect two different strategies for promoting anti-Japanese music. Due to the harshness of colonial rule, Korea's independence movement heavily relied on underground dissemination and exile communities, so music had to be simple and easy to learn. In contrast, China's anti-Japanese song movement, based in the resistance zones and mass gatherings, employed the shocking impact of large choral works to evoke collective resonance.

(3) Comparative Study of Anti-Japanese Songs: This study is the first to conduct a comparative analysis of Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs, breaking through the limitations of previous studies focused on a single country. By comparing the composers' modal choices (Korean pentatonic vs. Chinese national scales) and structural designs (short, segmented vs. multi-movement symphonies), it uncovers the cultural logic of "same origin, different branches" in East Asian anti-Japanese music, offering a new paradigm for regional music history research.

Anti-Japanese songs are a product of the intersection of war, art, and national spirit. The compositional differences between Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai reflect the cultural strategies employed by Korea and China in response to colonial crises, while their shared commitment to the core of national music reveals the eternal power of artistic resistance. In today's world of globalization and increasing geopolitical conflicts, revisiting these works is not only a tribute to history but also a reaffirmation of the value of cultural diversity. Future research should go beyond the "wartime tool theory" and, within broader spatial and temporal dimensions, uncover their deeper significance as part of humanity's shared heritage.

Recommendations

Although this study has made preliminary contributions in the field of comparative research on Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs, several methodological and archival limitations remain. These limitations have, to some extent, affected the depth and breadth of the research. The following is a detailed discussion of these limitations:

(1) Limited Coverage of Composers and Works: Due to the scope of this study, it focuses only on two representative composers, Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai, without including other important composers from the same period, such as Jeong Yul-Seong from Korea, or Nie Er and He Lüting from China. Expanding the research to include other anti-Japanese composers from the same period in Korea and China would enrich the understanding of the "style of Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese music." Future research should construct a more comprehensive matrix of composers, conducting a comparative study that includes regional (e.g., music of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army), genre (e.g., mass songs vs. art songs), and creative groups (e.g., exile musicians vs. local musicians in resistance zones).

(2) Limitations of Anti-Japanese Music Historical Sources: Han HyungSeok's primary sources are scarce. Many of his works created during his exile in China (e.g., *New Revolutionary Army Song*) have lost their original sheet music, and the existing versions are often reconstructed based on memories or performance records, which may lead to distortions in details such as melody and harmony. For example, the modulation analysis of *Yalu River March* relies on a score with multiple inconsistencies in notation, which may affect the accuracy of tonal judgments. Secondary literature (e.g., Liang Maochun's research on Han HyungSeok) may contain subjective interpretations by the researchers. For example, whether the use of traditional Korean rhythms in Han's works reflects his own ethnic awareness or was influenced by Chinese anti-Japanese cultural policies still requires confirmation through primary archives. It is essential to collaborate with Korean and Chinese academic institutions on digitization projects to systematically organize scattered sheet music and documents, and to conduct oral history interviews to capture the memories of Han's descendants or contemporary witnesses.

(3) Lack of Research on Social Function and Reception History: The study focuses on the technical analysis of music texts (e.g., form, harmony) but does not delve into the actual impact and reception of the works. For instance, Han HyungSeok's songs spread through underground independence movement groups and exile communities, with audiences primarily consisting of intellectuals and

participants in the independence movement; Xian Xinghai's works, however, were disseminated through gatherings in resistance zones and mass singing campaigns, reaching a broader audience of peasants and soldiers. Future research should analyze the recontextualization of musical symbols within different groups; explore local archive performance records, audience feedback, and policy documents to construct a comprehensive "creation-dissemination-reception" chain.

(4) Limitations of Research Methods: This study primarily relies on music analysis, which, while allowing for a detailed examination of the technical characteristics of the works, lacks an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, research methods from fields such as history, sociology, and engineering could provide a broader viewpoint, helping to better understand the actual functions and impact of anti-Japanese songs within their socio-cultural context. Incorporating methods from these disciplines would enable a more comprehensive assessment of the creation background, dissemination pathways, and reception among different social groups.

The works of Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai demonstrate that anti-Japanese music is not just a historical relic but a dynamic cultural memory carrier. Currently, the Korean *Gwangbok Army Songs* and China's *Yellow River Cantata* are both listed as national intangible cultural heritage, yet their preservation largely depends on stage representations, lacking in-depth explanations of their creative context. This study calls for the activation of their contemporary value through digitization, educational programs, and community involvement in the preservation process.

CONCLUSION

This study, through a systematic comparison of the anti-Japanese songs by Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai, reveals the commonalities and differences in music composition during the anti-Japanese period in Korea and China, as well as the underlying cultural logic and historical value. Both composers based their works on national music, skillfully integrating Western compositional techniques, but their approaches differed significantly. Han HyungSeok emphasized the use of traditional Korean pentatonic scales and simple structures, enhancing the singability of the music and reinforcing national identity. In contrast, Xian Xinghai drew from the diverse musical elements of China's multiple ethnic groups and combined them with symphonic techniques to construct an epic musical narrative. This difference reflects the distinct artistic strategies adopted by Korea and China in response to national crises under colonial oppression.

Anti-Japanese songs were not only artistic creations but also vehicles for political mobilization and cultural resistance. Han HyungSeok's works, through their accessibility, served the practical needs of the independence movement, while Xian Xinghai's large choral works invoked collective resistance through grand sonic landscapes. The compositions of both composers demonstrate the irreplaceable role of music in uniting the people and reconstructing cultural confidence at times of national peril.

The comparative study of Korean and Chinese anti-Japanese songs not only provides a model for the musical analysis of contemporary cultural heritage but also fills a gap in East Asian music history research. The works of Han HyungSeok and Xian Xinghai represent a resonance of art and national spirit under the shadow of war. Their musical legacy is not only a reverberation of history but also a mirror for times of peace—reminding us to cherish cultural diversity and remain vigilant against hegemony and historical amnesia.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

20. yüzyılın ilk yarısında Doğu Asya, iki dünya savaşının çalkantılı girdabına sürüklendi. Kore ve Çin, Japon işgalinin ağır baskısını yaşadı ve toplumsal yapılarında büyük dönüşümler meydana geldi. Bu zorlu dönemde, anti-Japon şarkıları, ulusal ruhu pekiştiren ve direniş iradesini harekete geçiren güçlü araçlar haline geldi. Han HyungSeok ve Xian Xinghai, ülkelerinin anti-Japon müziğini temsil eden önde gelen besteciler olarak, eserlerinde derin ulusal duygular ve çağdaş değerler barındırmaktadır. Onların eserlerini karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemek, Kore ve Çin'in anti-

Japon şarkılarındaki benzerlikleri, farklılıkları ve bunların arkasındaki kültürel mantığı daha iyi anlamamıza olanak tanır.

Bu çalışma, müzik analiz yöntemiyle Han HyungSeok ve Xian Xinghai'nin eserlerinden altı temsil niteliğindeki besteyi titizlikle seçmiştir. Araştırma materyalleri, Seul Müzik Yayınevi ve Halk Müziği Yayınevi gibi yetkili kurumların yayımladığı nota koleksiyonlarından alınmıştır. Çalışma, eserlerin form yapısı, armoni ve modal tonalite gibi teknik yönlerine odaklanmakta ve Kore-Çin anti-Japon şarkılarının karşılaştırmalı analizine dayanan teorik bir çerçeve oluşturmaktadır.

Han HyungSeok, 1910 yılında Kore'nin Busan kentinde doğmuş, çocuk yaşta Çin'e göç etmiş ve burada çeşitli anti-Japon sanat hareketlerine katılmıştır. Birçok anti-Japon şarkı ve opera bestelemiş, bu eserleriyle direniş mücadelesine güçlü bir manevi katkı sağlamıştır. Besteleri genellikle Kore halk müziğinin geleneksel unsurlarına dayanmakta olup, sade ve kolay ezberlenebilir melodilere sahiptir. Örneğin, *Küçük Kuşun Şarkısı* adlı dört sesli karma koro eseri, sürekli eşlik (ostinato) formunda yazılmış olup, F majör tonalitesini merkez alır. Blok armoni (homofonik yapı) ve sesler arası taklit teknikleri kullanılarak eserin müzikal çeşitliliği artırılmıştır. Benzer şekilde, *Yalu Nehri Marşı* da dört sesli karma koro için bestelenmiştir. Eser, dört bölümlü bir tekrarlayan form yapısına sahiptir ve tonalite e minörden f minöre geçiş yapar. Armonik yapıda sıkça yedili akorlar ve ardışık yedili akor dizileri kullanılarak eserin müzikal ifadesi güçlendirilmiştir. *Memleketin Ayı* adlı eser, soprano solo için bestelenmiş olup, Kore'nin geleneksel pentatonik (beş sesli) dizisine dayanır. Paralel iki bölümlü formda yazılmış olan şarkıda, senkoplu ritimler ve üçlü nota grupları (tripletler) eserin tamamında hâkimdir, bu da esere güçlü bir ulusal duygu kazandırır.

Xian Xinghai, 1905 yılında Çin'in Makao kentinde doğmuş, Fransa'da eğitim görerek Batı müziği bestecilik tekniklerini sistematik bir şekilde öğrenmiştir. Yurda döndükten sonra anti-Japon müzik hareketine katılmış, direniş şarkılarıyla halkı örgütleyen bir müzik hareketi başlatmış ve birçok klasik eser bestelemiştir. *Şubat Geldiğinde* adlı eser, Şaanxi bölgesi halk şarkısı tarzında yazılmış bir sanat şarkısıdır. Melodi ve armoni, geleneksel Çin pentatonik dizisi ile Batı majör ton sistemi arasında ustaca bir sentez oluşturur. Eser, Çin halk müziğinin karakteristik süslemeleriyle zenginleştirilmiş ve yenilikçi akor bağlantılarıyla armonik yapıda özgünlük sağlanmıştır. *Sarı Nehir Ağıdı* dört ana bölümden oluşur ve paralel dört bölümlü bir form yapısına sahiptir. Tonalitesi ve modülasyonları oldukça çeşitlidir. Yarı-tonlu armoni tekniklerinin cesurca kullanımı, eserin derin keder ve öfke duygusunu yoğun bir şekilde yansıtmalarını sağlar. *Taihang Dağları'nda* adlı eser, iki sesli karma koro için yazılmıştır ve sürekli eşlik (ostinato) formuna sahiptir. Tüm eser e

minör tonalitesinde ilerler. Melodik yapı geleneksel Çin halk müziği dizilerine dayanırken, piyano partisi ulusal armonik öğelerle zenginleştirilmiştir. Güçlü fonksiyonel akorlar ve belirgin dominant notalar özellikle kaçınılmış, ayrıca çözülmemiş disonans (uyumsuz) akorlar kullanılarak eserin armonik özgünlüğü artırılmıştır.

İki bestecinin eserlerini karşılaştırdığımızda, hem ortak noktalar hem de belirgin farklılıklar görülmektedir. Ortak yönleri, ulusal müzik unsurlarını vurgulamaları ve armoni ile tonalite açısından yerel müzikal özellikleri benimsemeleridir. Eserleri, güçlü bir ulusal kimlik ve bölgesel renk taşımaktadır. Ancak farklılıklar da oldukça belirgindir. Han HyungSeok'un eserleri, Kore geleneksel pentatonik dizisini ve ritmik yapısını ön plana çıkarır. Melodi ve ritmik yapı basit ve tekrar eden formlara sahiptir, bu da eserlerin kolayca ezberlenip söylenmesini sağlar. Öte yandan, Xian Xinghai'nin eserleri Çin'in farklı bölgelerinin halk şarkılarını ve pentatonik dizilerini sentezler. Melodik açıdan daha zengin ve ritmik olarak daha karmaşıktır. Genellikle büyük ölçekli koro ve çok bölümlü yapılar tercih edilir. Ayrıca, *Sarı Nehir Ağıdı (Huang He Yuan)* gibi eserlerinde Batı modern müzik tekniklerinden, özellikle yarım tonlu armonilerden faydalanmıştır. Ulusal kimlik ile modernitenin bileşimi açısından değerlendirildiğinde, Han HyungSeok, Kore'nin geleneksel beşli (pentatonik) dizisini ve sade yapıları kullanarak bağımsızlık hareketinin hızlı yayılma gereksinimini karşılamıştır. Buna karşılık, Xian Xinghai, Çin'in "halk seferberliği" ortamıyla uyumlu olarak yarı-tonlu armonileriyle Batı modern müziğini farklı düzeylerde benimsediğini göstermiştir. Müzik propagandası bağlamında ise, Han'ın eserlerinin halk diline yakın basitliği yeraltı direnişi ve sürgün topluluklarının dinleme alışkanlıklarına uygun düşerken, Xian'ın görkemli koro düzenlemeleri kurtarılan bölgelerde ve kitlesel toplantılarda kolektif duygudaşlığı en üst düzeye taşımıştır.

Bu çalışma, Kore ve Çin'in anti-Japon direniş müziklerini sistematik olarak karşılaştıran ilk araştırmalardan biridir. Tek bir ülkeye odaklanma sınırlarını aşarak, Doğu Asya'nın anti-empyralist müziğinde "ortak köken, farklı akışlar" şeklindeki kültürel dinamikleri açığa çıkarmaktadır. Bu da bölgesel müzik tarihi çalışmalarına yeni bir paradigma sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, besteci ve eser seçiminin kapsayıcılık açısından sınırlı olması ve mevcut anti-Japon müzik materyallerinin detaylarında bozulmalar bulunması gibi kısıtlamalara sahiptir. Gelecek çalışmalar, daha kapsamlı bir besteci matrisi oluşturarak araştırma kapsamını genişletebilir. Tarihsel belgelerin derlenmesi ve dijitalleştirilmesi güçlendirilmeli, eserlerin yayılma ve kabul süreçleri üzerine daha derinlemesine araştırmalar yapılmalıdır.

Sonuç olarak, Han HyungSeok ve Xian Xinghai, farklı sanatsal stratejilerle ulusal krizlere yanıt vermiş ve müziğin halkı birleştirme ve kültürel özgüveni yeniden inşa etme gücünü ortaya koymuştur. Onların müzikal mirası yalnızca tarihsel bir belge niteliği taşımakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda barış dönemlerinde kültürel çeşitliliğin korunmasının önemini hatırlatan değerli bir hazine olarak görülmelidir.