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**In Korean Vernacular Poetry of Late Chosŏn**

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**Allusions and Citations in the Context of New Tendencies  
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Allusions and citations belong to the most common elements in Korean vernacular poetry. The specifics of perception of a ‘borrowed word’ in the Far Eastern tradition determined the specifics of such phenomenon as an ‘allusion’, which is often concealed from an ignorant reader. Allusions/citations address the readers who are able to tell these elements apart and interpret as a sign of a certain situation, a trait or a relation. One of the purposes of allusions/citations is to bring up a number of associations that serve for the expression of the main idea of the text or for creating its atmosphere. They often relate to the Chinese literary tradition. Chinese imagery, Chinese personal and geographical names usage is one of characteristic traits of Korean poetry. It uses a borrowed element as a decoration tool, as a figure of speech, or a literary mode etc. The same functions may be traced for allusions and citations.

Analysis of various poetical texts shows that a borrowed element usage is different in different periods (see, for example, Nikitina 1962: 8-9). This is true for citations and allusions, as well. This paper aims at analyzing several cases of the allusions and citations usage in the period of Late Chosŏn<sup>1</sup>. One of the main specifics of the period is forming new types of texts in the traditional genres framework (Trotsevich 2004), and the specifics of the new forms affect the borrowed element, too. This phenomenon relates to the tendency of the readers’ audience widening. This is also the period of anonymous poetry flourishing, and the authors of the majority of the texts considered in the paper are unknown. In the considered poems, the allusions and citations served to construct the core idea of the text, and may serve a key for understanding the text and its specifics in general. Such choice of the texts demonstrates some of the tendencies characterizing the new types of texts in vernacular poetry of the period, and the way they influenced the allusions usage.

1. A short poem in sijo genre by an unknown author:

서새산전 백노비하고 도화뉴슈 췌어비라  
소상동정 어디 두고 녀관한등에 잠든 나를 깨우느냐.  
밤중만에 우름 소래 잠 못 드러  
*At the Mount Sisaishan a white heron is flying,*

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<sup>1</sup> The variants used in the paper are from the poetical anthology “Songs of the Great Peace at South Wind”.  
南薰太平歌 *Namhun t’aepyŏng-ga* (1863).

*In the waters with floating peach blossoms a perch is gaining weight  
Wearing a hat made of emerald-colored bamboo and a grass-coat  
I cannot go back because of the встречного ветра and drizzling rain.  
Zhang Zhi-he is not here now,  
And it makes me said.*

The phrase «*In the waters with floating peach-blossoms a perch is gaining weight*» is commonly used in the text of the 18-19 centuries as a symbol of a certain situation in nature. As a rule, it is found in the context of an ideal landscape picture representing the careless abiding of the narrator, far from social life. This phrase traces its roots to the Tang poetry as it is a citation of the poem “The Fisherman” 漁父詞 by Zhang Zhi-he 張志和 (730?-810?), - the poet mentioned in the last part of this sijo. Noteworthy, the phrase itself is an allusion to the Tao Yuan-ming’s 陶淵明 (365-427) writing “Peach Blossom Spring” 桃源 that speaks of the quest of an ideal space. Floating peach-blossoms give a hint that Peach Blossom Spring is close from the place described.

The line «*I can’t go back because of the cross wind ветра and drizzling rain*» contains another allusion to Tao Yuan-ming’s writing – the poem «Return to the Field 歸園田». Both poets alluded in this sijo: Tao Yuan-ming and Zhang Zhi-he are famous for their hermit way of life. Zhang Zhi-he once served, but gave up his career. Thus, an unknown author expresses his will to follow the example of the ancient ‘recluse’ poets, and the allusion usage supports this idea, one of the allusions being ‘double-layered’. An eagerness to leave the career and live at the Nature’s bosom pervades a wide group of vernacular texts of Late Chosŏn as a reaction to the social instability of the period<sup>2</sup>. Allusion usage is a literary mode used for this idea expression.

## 2. A long-sijo by Kim Su-jang 金壽長 (1690-?):

창 빗게 가사 솟막이 장사야 니별 나는 궁도 네 잘 막일소나  
그 장새 대답허되 초한쩍 향우라도 녀발산하고 괴개세로되 심으로 능이 못 막였고  
삼국쩍 제갈량도 상통천문에 하달지리로되 재쥬로 능이 못 막여꺼든  
허물며 날거튼 소장부야 일너 무삼<sup>3</sup>.

*Hey, tinker who patches pots in front of my window!*

*Could you patch the hole the separation is penetrating?*

*The tinker answered:*

*If even Xiang Yu of Chu who had a power to fold up mountains*

*And a spirit to turn over the world could not patch it,*

*And Zhuge Liang of Three Kingdoms who perfectly knew astronomy and geomancy*

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Korean scholars find this tendency one of the specific traits of the poetical anthology *Namhun t'aepyŏng-ga* (Park I-jŏng, 2000 and Choe Kyu-su 2005).

<sup>3</sup> The examined texts in the paper are written in *Hangŭl* as they are in the original version of the chosen variants from the *Namhun t'aepyŏng-ga* anthology.

*Was not able to patch it,  
What can I say about such a humble person as me?*

One of the main traits of this text is its stylistic inhomogeneity. The narrator requesting the tinker to solve his problems with separation uses the conversational mode of speech specific for people of humble origins. The reply of the tinker is contrasting with the stylistics of the request, as his utterance resemble exquisite literary mode, his phrase is abundant with expressions in *hanmun*:

*... Xiang Yu of Chu who had a power to fold up mountains  
And a spirit to turn over the world could not patch it,  
and*

*And Zhuge Liang of Three Kingdoms who perfectly knew astronomy and geomancy*

These fixed Chinese expressions demonstrate the scale of the persons named in the text. Both – Xiang Yu 項羽 (232-202 BC) and Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (184-234) - are famous warriors of the ancient times, mostly referred in literature in relation with their heroic deeds at war. They occur as ‘model persons’ symbolizing a certain trait. Disregarding this tradition, this text introduces their names in a different context – a poem about love and separation, which the mighty heroes could not conquer despite the epithets. Both generals made an outstanding military career, but Xiang Yu committed suicide after a defeat, and Zhuge Liang died of an illness in the height of the confrontation with the enemy. Xiang Yu is famous for his romance with a concubine 虞美人, who chose death after he died. In this case, the generals occur in the text in relation with this background stories. Let us compare the considered sijo with another relating sijo of an unknown author:

항우 작한 천하장사라마는 우미인 니별에 한숨 석꺼 눈물 지고  
명황이 작한 제세영주라마는 양귀비 니별에 마외역에 울엇거든  
허물며 녀남문 장부야 일너 무삼

*Xiang Yu is an outstanding general of the Heavenly empire,  
But after parting with the beauty Yu he made sighs and shed tears,  
And Ming Huang is a talented ruler,  
But after parting with Yang Guifei,  
At the Mawei station he cried  
Then what to say  
About other men!*

In both texts, there is a juxtaposing between the narrator as an ordinary man and a ‘model person’ of the past as an outstanding person. Here the romance of Xian Yu is paralleled with the famous love story of Ming Huang 明皇(712-755) and Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 (719-756). This

forms a mode of emphasizing the scale of the separation and love longing. In the examples set, a ‘double-level’ use of the Chinese name may be traced. On the one hand, the Chinese figure is introduced in the text as a traditional symbol of might and power, and at the same time, the text accentuates his weakness when facing the separation with his beloved.

This may be defined as a special mode: a traditional image is used in the text with regard to his/her main trait but this trait being limited in the situation described in the text. This mode is new for *sijo* poetry. The widening of the readers’ audience caused a new representation of Chinese legendary figures. The texts of the new type depict them as ordinary people who have their weaknesses and limitations, and may face ordinary problems.

In the analyzed *sijo* by Kim Su-jang the phrase commonly used to describe the prominent warriors has several functions. First, this is a sign of this person being a symbol, in this case, a symbol of might. The contrast is set between the phrase in *hanmun* and the mundane character of the context rendering the situation the narrator is placed in. The author draws attention to the scale of the legendary figure that loses his might in the face of separation, thereby emphasizing the scale of the separation itself. The second function relates to another mode used by the author – describing a commoner as a well-grounded person. This is the tinker, who utters the flamboyant phrase, which itself demands literacy in Chinese language and knowledge in Chinese history and culture.

This tendency of depicting common professions representatives as highly educated and grounded in lofty matters may be traced in vernacular poetry of 18-19 centuries. Thus, woodcutters, shepherds and representatives of other professions, which traditionally were perceived as profane, exercise the literacy in Chinese classics and demonstrate sacred knowledge. The tinker who is familiar with the circumstances of the private life the Chinese generals had, and who cites *hanmun* texts – is another illustration to this tendency. The prerequisites for this phenomenon may be found in the afore-mentioned tendency of the reading audience’s widening. The texts that disseminated among wide readers’ circles used new objects of depiction: commoners, everyday life scenes, fragments of city life etc.

### 3). A long-*sijo* by an unknown author:

물업슨 강산에 올라 나무도 스격거 다리도 노코  
 돌도 밭노 특 차 데글데글 궁굴녀라 슈령도 메고 만첩청산 내리고 나린 물결 휘여  
 자바 타고 예룽랭 팔팔 더지 둥덩실 임 차자 가니  
 석양에 물찬 제비는 오락가락  
*Climbing up the mountains and rivers without waters,*

*I will break a tree and make a bridge,  
 Then I will lay down the stones and roll the cart [with the noisy sound]– tegül-tegül ,  
 Then will fill up the marshes, ground the green mountains in 10 000 layers,  
 The waves that come down I will curve,  
 then I will catch them and I will ride them– erungreng- kkwal-kkwal -  
 And – tungdöngsil – will go look for my beloved.  
 The water at the sunset is cold,  
 And the swallows are whisking back-and-forth.*

This sijo poem is composed in the voice of a female in colloquial speech-style forming an impression of a sincere and inartificial emotion of the narrator. Such a ‘mind-flow’ mode is characteristic for other texts of the period that are concerned with love. The use of onomatopoeic expressions (bang-bang, clip-clop, Kor. *tegül-tegül*, *tungdongsil* etc.) serves to create a light tone, and the unreal character of the described scene – to create a humoristic atmosphere in the text. At the same time, the last line of the poem falls out of the context:

*The water at the sunset is cold,  
 And the swallows are whisking back-and-forth.*

This phrase is a citation from the poem of the 15<sup>th</sup> century poet Cho Kwang-jo 趙光祖 (1482-1519):

쳐 건너 일편석이 강태공의 도대로다  
 문왕은 어디 가고 빈 디 홀노 매엇는고  
 석양에 물찬 제비는 오락가락  
*There is a stone in one pyōn –  
 It is a terrace Jiang Taigong had been fishing at.  
 Wen Wang went somewhere,  
 So the terrace is left lonely.  
 The water at the sunset is cold,  
 And the swallows are whisking back-and-forth.*

In a view of its relation to the examined sijo it is important to view its contents. The central figure of the poem – Jiang Taigong is a popular figure found in a wide range of Korean texts: poetry, prose, proverbs as a “concealed wise-man”. It is only a wise ruler, who could esteem the scale of his potentials. Waiting for the ruler who would call him to serve until Wen Wang made him his advisor, Jiang Taigong spent many long years fishing. In this poem, the narrator metaphorically laments the absence of a wise-ruler: the text contains a hint of the narrator's eagerness to serve while there is no ruler who would be able to appreciate his talents

properly, so it makes his zeal in vain. This metaphor relates to the life story of the author: Cho Kwang-jo's abilities and his will to carry out some reforms caused tragic final of his life, and he was slandered and then sentenced to death (Chŏn Pyŏn-uk 1972: 713).

The citation of the poem by Cho Kwang-jo used in the *sijo* about a female trying to overcome separation with her beloved turns the tone of the *sijo* to the opposite. The merry mood interchanges with a sharp feeling of separation, which, at a first glance, may not even seem to be the main theme of the text. The imagery means of the poem applies to emphasize the scale of the narrator's emotions. Love longing is concentrated in the large-scaled images of breaking mountains and ruining trees. This thematic line is developed through the contrast of the limited abilities of a human-being and the emotional strength giving the female-narrator the unreal might enabling her to carry out actions on a universal scale. Trees and mountains form a vertical in the depicted space, the marshes being its horizontal, together they constitute the basic model of the universe (as it is often represented in traditional poetry in vernacular). Thus, the narrator is determined to change the basis of the space and nature.

This mode of love hyperbole represented through operations with space-related images is new for the *sijo* of the examined period. It is the citation from an earlier poem given in the last line, which makes such interpretation of the text possible. The scale of inner emotion of a narrator and the impossibility to carry it out are the base, which both texts share. With this regard, it is important to mention that in classical *sijo* the last line was attributed a special importance as it expressed the particular idea of the text (Nikitina 1985: 24-25).

4). A *kasa*-poem "Spring Sleep" 春眠曲 *Ch'unmyŏn-gok* (an unknown author).

This text belongs to a new type of *kasa*-poems, so-called "musical *kasa*" composed on a certain melody, or "Twelve *kasa*" according to the number of the texts belonging to the kind (for more detail see Kim Ŭn-hŭi). The poem is composed in the voice of a male who awakens from his sleep in spring morning, meets a beauty, falls in love, spends some time with her, but after they separate, he chooses to forget her for the sake of studying. Longing in separation is in focus of the author's attention, the text depicts it with the means of fixed poetical expressions and images borrowed from the Chinese literary tradition. Among them, there are three allusions, which serve important elements in a view of understanding the poem contents.

a) The scene of the lovers' union has a metaphorical expression:

운우 양대산에 초몽이 다정하다.  
사랑도 괴지럽고 연분도 괴지럽다.

*Like the dream in Chu at the Mount Yantai*



*Under the rain from the cloud is full of emotions.  
Love is endless, and the union is endless.*

The “dream in Chu at the Mount Yantai” is an allusion to the legend rendering a romance story of the Duke of Chu (Zhou, 1122-247 BC) and the Fairy of the Mount Wushan, when they met at the Mount Yangtai. After they parted, she promised to visit him in his dreams as a rain from clouds. This story made the paired image of “rain+clouds” a symbol of love union.

The examined text introduces this image through the “Dream of Chu”, the word “dream” playing a specific importance in the context of the poem. The contents of the kasa base on the idea of the narrator being in between sleep and reality. The title of the poem contains the word “sleep”, as well. The first part of the text is in line with this idea as it contains vague images creating the atmosphere on the edge of the sleep. With this regard, the focus of the text – the romance with the beauty – is also developed through the sleep and dream related images.

Noteworthy, later in the text, after the lovers parted, the pair of “rain+cloud” is deprived of its traditional symbolic meaning. The separation of a male and a female brings them out of the coordinated of love union. This is another tendency that may be traced in love poetry of Late Chosŏn - the emphasizing of the separation as a phenomenon that breaks the common associations and changes the useful order of things.

- b) In the middle part of the poem rendering the male narrator’s love longing, there is the following phrase:

공산 야월의 두견이 슬니 울 제  
슬푸다 저 새소래 내 말갓치 불여귀라  
*When at night moon in deserted mountains  
A cuckoo is crying,  
The cry of this bird is sad,  
Just as what I am saying, “You’d better return”.*

This phrase is an allusion to the legend of a Prince of kingdom Shu. According to the legend, the Prince’s soul turned into a cuckoo bird after his death. The sound of the cuckoo’s cry in association with the story is spelled in Chinese as 不如歸 (Kor. *pul yŏ gwi*) and therefore interpreted as “you’d better return [but it is not possible]”. This phrase is common for Korean literature, as well. In most of the cases, it emphasizes the emotional strain of the text. In the kasa “Spring sleep” it adds to the general mood of the longing-related part.

At the same time, this element is in line with some other images depicting the nature as feeling for the narrator – it shares emotions with him. The cuckoo is crying together with flowers that shed tears. In vernacular poetry of Late Chosŏn, the following trait may be found: in the poems composed in the voice of a male Nature mostly is compassioned to the narrator, while in those composed in the voice of a female Nature tends to be indifferent to her longing and even hostile (Guryeva 2012: 137). Cf. with the text from the poem of the famous 16<sup>th</sup> century female poet Hŏ Nansŏrhŏn<sup>4</sup> 許蘭雪軒 (1563-1589) “Grief at the female part of the house” 閨怨歌 *Kyuwŏn-ga*:

찰하리 잠을 드러 꿈의나 보려 하니  
바람의 다난 닢과 풀 속의 우닌 즘생  
므슴 일 원슈로서 잠조차 깨오난다 (*Kasa munhak chŏnjip* 1997: 142)  
*I thought I'd better fall asleep  
And see my beloved in my dream,  
But why the leaves whirled up by the wind  
And the beasts roaring in the grass,  
Like enemies,  
Keep me awaken?*

All of the above shows the Chinese phrase as used here in accordance with literary tradition, as well as in the framework of the tendencies of the period. In the context of the particular situation represented in the poem, this phrase may be attributed a special meaning as a hint to the final decision of the narrator – he will not return to his beloved.

c) The passage containing another allusion follows the phrase above:

삼경에 못든 잠를 사경 말의 비러 드니  
상사하든 우리 님을 스굽 가운데 잠간 보고  
천슈만한 못다 일너 일장호접 흐터지니  
아릿다운 옥빈홍안 곁헤 얼푼 안젓는 듯  
*After I could not fall asleep at the third watch,  
At the forth watch I hardly steep in slumber,  
And in my dream  
I shortly say me beloved I have been longing for.  
I cannott express all my sadness,  
The dream of a butterfly scatters away,  
So I feel as if the beauty with pretty jade hair and rosy face  
Sat by me for a moment.*

<sup>4</sup> The poet's real name was Hŏ Ch'o-hŭi.

The dream of a butterfly mentioned here is an allusion to the story of a Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi 莊子 (around 369 -286 BC), which depicts him after he saw a dream that he was a butterfly, and awaked trying to understand whether he is Zhuangzi who dreamt he was a butterfly, or he is a butterfly that is dreaming it was Zhuangzi.

As mentioned before, the atmosphere of “sleep/dream” creates the main setting in the text. This allusion to the Zhuangzi’s story logically draws the conclusion of the romance – its “dream-like” character makes its continuation impossible in reality. After referring to this story, the narrator finally makes his decision to forget the beauty return to his studies.

The three allusions used in this kasa lead a reader through the poem contents and serve a key to understanding the text. In this kasa-poem, the allusions play their classical function being a symbol of a certain situation. At the same time, the new tendencies of the period specify their usage and put them in a certain context.

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The analyzed examples of the allusions and citations are traditional means of the decoration of a text that add to the poetical expression and the detailed depiction in it. At the same time, they serve to artistically convey the author’s idea and uncover the different levels of the texts.

The specifics of the period when the examined texts were circulating influences the usage of allusions and citations. It demonstrates the new tendencies in the texts of the new type formed in the vernacular poetical tradition. The allusions and citations become a part of new modes characteristic for the period. They include a special new emphasis on certain ideas expressed as an attribute of the period (e.g. a quest of free life to retreat from social activity), new modes of expression (e.g. hyperbole of love), new representations of symbolic figures, new functions of a certain image (e.g. losing its meaning in the circumstances described) etc. The modes tend to relate to the social background, such as instability in the country, or the readers’ audience widening, which brought up interest to the new topics and changed the usual patterns.

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