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Introduction

IN 2003 in Seoul, I often encountered Chaoxianzu who were working in restaurants and bars, on construction sites, or as housekeepers for South Korean families. Chaoxianzu refers to the Koreans who migrated to China between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their descendants. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 as a nation of multiple nationalities, about two million Koreans were recognized as one of China's fifty-five ethnic minorities and given Chinese citizenship. The highest concentration of these Koreans has been in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, or simply Yanbian (Yŏnbyŏn in Korean), located in the northeastern part of Jilin Province; its cities of Hunchun, Tumen, and Helong border on Russia and North Korea. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and South Korea in 1992, many Chaoxianzu have visited or remigrated to South Korea, for the economic opportunities offered by their ancestral home, as spouses, or as returning expatriates wishing to resettle or revive family relationships in South Korea after the long break in Sino-South Korean relations due to the Cold War and its subsequent impact on the political milieu of North-east Asia during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Though some Chaoxianzu migrants to South Korea held college degrees earned in China and came with urban and professional backgrounds, many took the kind of low-wage jobs largely disdained by a majority of South Koreans with degrees and stable economic backgrounds. Their income as government employees in the 1990s in China—in professions such as teachers, musicians, or nurses—was far less than what they could earn in South Korea as restaurant or bar servers or as day workers. This, plus the discrepancies in currency values between different Asian countries in the late 1990s, incited more than a few migrants, including Chaoxianzu, to come to South Korea to serve as low-paid workers. There Chaoxianzu were treated similarly to other foreign

labor migrants despite their Korean ethnicity and language proficiency. Unlike the cases of North American or European expatriates whose English skills and Western education were privileged, a Chaoxianzu background was rarely viewed favorably in South Korea, especially in finding jobs where these Koreans could use their training in China or their professional aptitude. In South Korea, it is much easier for them to take unskilled low-wage jobs that still enable them to save some money to take back to China.

Amid the influx of Chaoxianzu migrants in and around Seoul, I met two musicians who were working toward their PhDs in Korean music at renowned South Korean universities. Prior to their move to South Korea, they taught Korean music at Yanbian Arts School (Yönbyön yesul hakkyo), the sole secondary and higher education institution for the music and arts of the Korean minority in China. These musicians proudly described the unique sound of the Korean music that had developed in China, compared with what they saw as the attributes of *kugak* (traditional Korean or national music), cultivated as South Korea's national heritage art. They stated that Korean music in China combined *chönt'ong* (old tradition) with *hyöndaesöng* (contemporary or modern characteristics). If South Korean *kugak* and North Korean *chuch'e ümak* (a post-1960s creation of North Korean national music based on *chuch'e sasang*—self-reliance—ideology) represent a contrast of maintained tradition versus progress, Chaoxianzu music fuses the merits of these two Korean musical streams, with the addition of Chinese influences. Having no previous experience of Chaoxianzu music—of which audiovisual recordings or literary documents were rarely available outside China at the time—I was not sure how to imagine the sound of the Korean music that these musicians were describing, nor was I fully convinced by their characterization of Chaoxianzu music as having more modern or contemporary components than *kugak*, some of which has also reflected a clear synthesis of traditional sounds with foreign, mostly Western, musical influences over the last two decades. Indeed, *kugak* musicians' keenness to contemporize the sound had noticeably increased, leading to a boom in *ch'angjak kugak* (creative *kugak*) or *p'yujön kugak* (fusion *kugak*) in South Korea. I started to ask myself a lot of questions. With the Chinese and North Korean socialist governments going in a similar direction with their communist spirit of cultural reformation, how did musical modernization in China differ from North Korea? And how, then, would Chaoxianzu music differ from the North Korean construction of national music? To what extent has Chaoxianzu music been able to maintain “Korean traditions” while at the same time modernizing them? Doesn't the idea of maintaining cultural traditions contradict the fundamental ideology of communist governments, which largely reject the legacy of feudalism and ethnocentrism that might lead to national factionalism, especially during the proletarian revolution? More fundamentally,

given the paradoxes of discursive modernity practiced in various parts of the world with a range of different interpretations, how do Chaoxianzu musicians make sense of the innate discrepancy between the modernity that they attribute to their music and the social reality that they experience as citizens of the PRC and as ethnic Koreans, shuttling back and forth between the economically reforming state in which they have long lived and their ancestral home, which since the 1990s has presented them with better financial opportunities? Inspired by these questions, I began my navigation of the Chaoxianzu community, its music, and its processes of identity construction.

In establishing a strong socialist state in 1949, the PRC instituted its minority nationality policy and assured all minorities within its borders of their right to perpetuate their own ethnic traditions and to have political autonomy under the jurisdiction of minority autonomous governments. The policy was never intended to offer independent empowerment separate from broader state directives. Minority cultural and political autonomy was only allowed within the frame of conforming to communist ideology and supporting the realization of a great socialist revolution in China. Therefore, in order to conform to the socialist cultural agenda, all minority nationalities had to reform their ethnic traditions and distinctive cultural practices. Symbolic and expressive cultures such as music and dance were no exception. In fact, they came in rather handy as mediums for spreading and reinforcing socialist didactics. Thus, Chinese minority nationality performing arts went through a series of reformations and constructions throughout the second half of the twentieth century, in conformance with the state's emphasis on social progress and proletarian identity.

As one of the PRC's minority nationalities, Koreans in China were thus required to be explicit about their cultural identity and construct ethnically distinctive music that would encapsulate their Korean and Chinese cultural backgrounds. Broadly speaking, Chaoxianzu music in China can be divided into three time periods: before and after the socialist revolution, and the post-Cultural Revolution reform era. If the Korean music prior to the revolution was largely a reflection of the folk and popular music brought from Korea as part of the cultural knowledge and memory of migrants, and later as musical recordings imported from the motherland, the Korean music since the revolution has largely been a product of diasporic construction aimed at expressing Korean (minority) identity and socialist citizenship. Traditional (Han) Chinese music and folk identity were dramatically reshaped over the twentieth century under such influences as nineteenth-century Western music idioms, early twentieth-century modernist ideology, and later the cultural progressiveness underpinning socialism, and Chaoxianzu music—as well as the musics of other ethnic minorities in China—followed a similar path. As described by the two Chaoxianzu musicians I encountered in Seoul, the creation and transformation of Korean music in the PRC is

characterized with its *hybridity*, combining ethnic cultural traditions with various foreign and Chinese cultural and ideological influences.

In the creation of Chaoxianzu music, Koreans in China not only relied on Korean music originally brought into China but also substantiated the content and practices of their traditional music cultures through active interaction with North Korea. Uniquely positioned between the PRC and North Korea, Chaoxianzu collaborated with and were assisted by North Korean artists to perpetuate and solidify a diasporic Korean identity. Later, when cultural interaction between the PRC and South Korea resumed along with the Open Door policy of Chinese reform government, Chaoxianzu realized that Korean performance cultures shaped under socialist governments were far different from what had been cultivated in the South. For that reason, since the 1990s, an increasing number of Chaoxianzu musicians have visited South Korea or have invited South Korean musicians to come to China to broaden and enrich the scope and practice of Chaoxianzu music. South Korean maintenance of older traditional Korean culture has thus become one of the strands feeding into Chaoxianzu's own musical creation.

As described above, not only has Chaoxianzu music been shaped by the context of migration and influenced by the cultural directives of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), it manifests how its musicians and community have been responsive to internal as well as broader social transformation in Northeast Asia. Chaoxianzu music thus cannot be comprehended without taking into account the multitudes of social powers and shifting national and diplomatic relations, and how they influenced and were negotiated by musical agency, especially against state power and the role played by state institutions in the creation and cultivation of ethnic minority music in China. Moreover, despite the apparent and strong state cultural backdrops, Chaoxianzu's own creativity and cultural interpretation should not be overlooked since they also have "helped to redefine, or even subvert, the boundary of state ideology to create the artistic expressions that reflect their hybrid culture and multiple identities" (Um 2004b, 55).

Despite my keen interest in learning about Chaoxianzu music, my participant-observation research in the field did not unfold as smoothly as I had hoped when I first visited Yanbian in 2003 and in the following two years when I spent a longer period there as a researcher. Yanbian in the mid-2000s was affected by a new and fervent interest in financial opportunity and the accumulation of monetary wealth. With the PRC's reform government's implementation of market capitalism and private ownership into its socialist economic system, the impact of capitalism across China was swift. Now economic progress was sought after more than any of the other social, cultural, and political imperatives previously emphasized in China for the realization of social revolution.

In contrast with the emphasis on building the economy at both the state and individual levels, investment in arts and culture had not grown at a similar pace, although government patronage and the state's cultivation of arts and culture did continue. Due to rising inflation over the last twenty-five years since the start of the Age of Reform (1978–), the salaries that government-employed musicians and artists received in China were never sufficient and viewed as providing only partial financial security. Overall it was difficult to find live-music stages for Chaoxianzu *art* music, especially those open to public audiences who could buy tickets out of their own interest in the arts. Most of the production of Chaoxianzu art music continued to be narrowly confined to state institutions. Even so, spending more than six consecutive months in Yanji City, I was only able to see the Yanbian Song and Dance Troupe perform twice. With help of Kim Sŏngjun, then a professor in Chinese music history at Yanbian Arts School, I acquired invitation-only tickets distributed to people who were on a VIP list or related to the troupe. According to Kim, large state ensembles like the Yanbian Song and Dance Troupe or Yanji Chaoxianzu Arts Troupe rarely offered or advertised regular concert series for local audiences. Instead they performed at state- or municipal-level celebrations such as the Chinese New Year Festival or the Founding Day of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. As in many other places in the world, the sustainability of arts and cultural troupes in China cannot depend on ticket sales, especially those large and small ensembles specializing in Chaoxianzu art music, for whose performances local audience attendance and patronage could hardly be expected. However, when rich patrons like local business organizations or companies were willing to sponsor performances by state ensembles, these were organized specifically for patrons and their guests on an invitation-only basis.

This situation of live-music production in Yanbian being so rare was very challenging for me, especially since, having a strong interest in Chaoxianzu instruments and instrumental pieces, my intention was to study a range of Chaoxianzu music. Chaoxianzu live performance opportunities for smaller-scale ensembles or individual recitals seemed to be slightly better than for the large ensembles, but event information was only shared among the circle of people who knew the musicians or sponsoring organizations. Thus all live-music performances that I was able to observe in Yanbian were presented by the Yanbian Song and Dance Troupe or by the Yanbian Arts School and produced by the Yanbian Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, where I was able to build some personal contacts and gain the privilege of attending studio recording sessions as their guest.

As the state institution dedicated to the teaching of Chaoxianzu music and arts, the Yanbian Arts School was the hub for the shaping of Chaoxianzu performing arts and its transmission to the next generation. By accessing the

school's teaching and learning resources, I collected both ethnographic and archival data on Chaoxianzu music. I spent a lot of time in the school's library, browsing and reading their collection on Chaoxianzu as well as North Korean music. I observed student music lessons, recitals, and seminars and interviewed and conversed with music staff and students. As part of my participant-observation research, I also took lessons in *so-haegŭm* (four-string spike fiddle invented in North Korea) with Pak Hakch'öl, who was then the sole instructor at the school for this instrument, which had been slowly gaining the musicians' favor over the *yŏnbyŏn'gŭm* (four-string spike fiddle invented in Yanbian; also called *illamgŭm*).

Overall, my research on Chaoxianzu music was inevitably confined to and shaped by the resources available through state and municipal institutions such as Chaoxianzu performance troupes, the music school, mass media, and musicians formerly and currently affiliated with those music-related government sectors.

In comparison with the art music scenes, Chaoxianzu popular music seems to be relatively more vibrant and widely consumed, with greater permeation into Chaoxianzu lives thanks to mass media and technology. Walking along Park Street (Kongwŏllo; Gongyuanlu) to People's Street (Inmillo; Renminlu) in a stretch from Yanbian University to the old market district in Yanji, I readily observed a proliferation of shops and street vendors carrying musical recordings produced by local, national, and foreign companies, which provided a good cross-section of local tastes. Amid Chaoxianzu, Chinese, and North and South Korean songs floating in the soundscape of Yanji's commercial hub, the current hits were K-pop songs from South Korea, like singer Chang Yunjŏng's 2004 hit "Ömöna!" [Oh Dear!]. In China Chaoxianzu have been inclined toward the latest South Korean popular songs and idols since the 1990s (Pease 2006, 141–143). However, against the influx of South Korean, Chinese, and Western popular songs into Yanbian, Chaoxianzu as well as North Korean songs were also in steady demand (see chapter 6). The Korean music collection at the Yanji store of Xinhua Shudian (Xinhua Bookstore, the PRC's largest bookstore chain) was composed almost entirely of vocal music. The Chaoxianzu music offered there—in the form of VCDs, CDs, and cassette tapes—was produced by a single company, the Jilin Nationality Audio-Visual Publishing Company (JNAPC), also owned by the government.

Mixed in with the Chaoxianzu music collection were North Korean audio-visual recordings imported via the JNAPC. While South Korean music commodities were prioritized in Yanji's newly opened department stores and by street vendors dedicated to selling music, films, and TV dramas, the mixed offerings of Chaoxianzu and North Korean music at Xinhua Shudian is an obvious sign of the historical and continuing relationship between the Chaoxianzu community and North Korea.



Figure 0.1 Korean music collection in Xinhua Bookstore, Yanji, China, 2005.
 Photo by author.

The state-run mass media organizations, such as the Yanbian Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, were surely essential in maintaining the vibrancy of Chaoxianzu music in terms of its production and dissemination. Chaoxianzu singers, whether specializing in traditional Korean genres such as *p'ansori* (traditional sung drama) or *minyo* (Korean folk songs) or in contemporary art songs or popular music, found more regular and frequent performance opportunities in the music programs featured on the television and radio stations, whereas Chaoxianzu instrumentalists were less frequently featured in the broadcast media, tending to appear as accompanists to Chaoxianzu singers wanting to feature traditional Korean or Chaoxianzu ethnic cultures. In general vocal music has been privileged in socialist states as a tool of political propaganda and still is today, albeit for differing reasons and with different effects (see chapter 6). As songs were commoditized and promoted through the government-sanctioned mass media and recording company, Chaoxianzu songs were disseminated to wide audiences in and outside of the Korean autonomous cities, counties, and towns.

Overall, researching Chaoxianzu music in China in the early twenty-first century was difficult and intensified by anxieties over lacking or discrepant data, which—even if available—were not easily accessed by a foreign scholar,

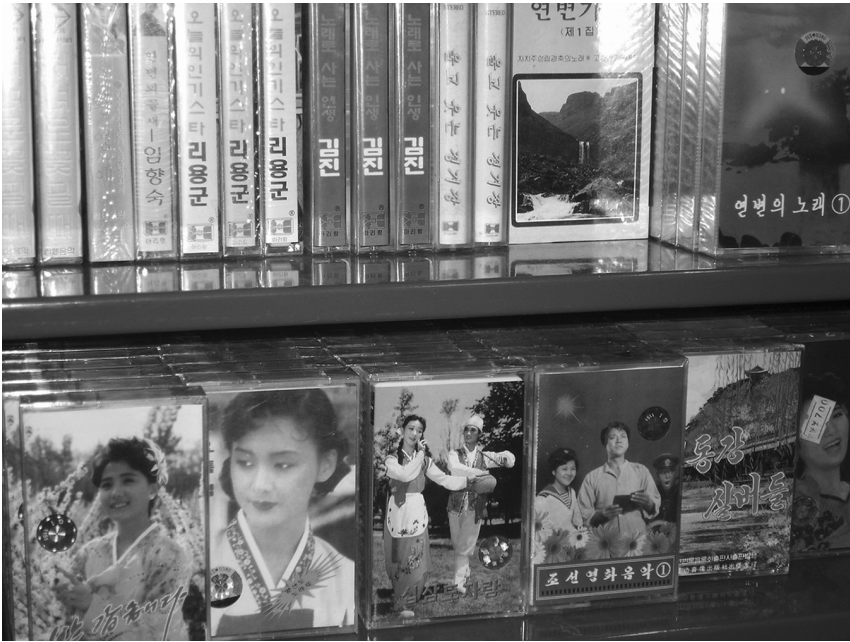


Figure 0.2 Chaoxianzu and North Korean cassette tapes displayed in Xinhua Bookstore, Yanji, China, 2005. Photo by author.

even a Korean one like me, due to a lack of social connections or simply the loss or poor status of music publications and archives. Nevertheless, I felt encouraged to persevere in my field research there by my encounters with people both in and outside the Chaoxianzu music scene. Whether these were brief meetings or relationships that extended over time, I learned much about Chaoxianzu music from the many people who shared their experience and viewpoint with me in affirming their distinctive cultural identity as diasporic Koreans, especially in terms of who they are and what they do as *Koreans in China*, individually and collectively, as distinct from other groups of Koreans and other Chinese nationalities.

Chaoxianzu, Migration, and Identity

As a native South Korean who has spent more than thirty years in the United States and New Zealand as an international student and then a transnational migrant who maintained close contact with the homeland, I have inevitably become conscious of and engaged with issues of identity, social categorization, and ethnic inequity. I became mesmerized by the complexity and politics of

identity of diasporic Koreans in China, who constantly have to physically, psychologically, and culturally configure themselves in their interactions with multiple states, including China, South Korea, and North Korea, where the lines between home, homeland, and host society can be very blurry indeed.

The term “diaspora” first appeared in the Greek translation of the Bible, from the root meaning to disperse, sow, or scatter. It was originally used in reference to the Greek colonization of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean in the Archaic period (800–600 BCE) and to the dispersal of the Jews and Armenians (Cohen 1997, 117). Its semantic terrain has greatly expanded over the last century to include a multitude of meanings covering a great variety of cases of dispersal observed at the global level, historically and in contemporary times. In her edited volume *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts* (2004), ethnomusicologist Haekyung Um (2004a, 2–4) summarizes various competing definitions of the term “diaspora” as suggested by a number of scholars including Tölölyan, Safran, Van Hear, Cohen, and Clifford, to name a few. Although not all definitions are a perfect fit for the case of Koreans in China, several of them confirm that the complexity that I observed with Chaoxianzu migrants prevails in many other diasporic groups. Chaoxianzu are a people resulting from historical movements of their ancestors, and many of them have continued to migrate within or beyond China. While Tölölyan’s expansive definition of diaspora suggests that the term embraces various categories of people such as “immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, [and] ethnic community” (Tölölyan 1991, 4–5), Van Hear (1998, 6) emphasizes the movement of people and their persistent sociocultural exchange between the homeland and the new host as the features of diaspora. Based on these definitions, Chaoxianzu ticks off several types of diasporic groups—immigrant, expatriate, guest worker, exile community—while maintaining a more or less consistent connection with the North or South Korean homeland, by exchanging labor as well as cultural resources. Safran, on the other hand, suggests that the definition of modern diaspora extends to embrace expatriate minority communities that have certain features:

- 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively,

be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (Safran 1991, 83–84)

The first three features as well as the last at least apply to the Chaoxianzu experience, their movement, memory, perception, and recognition of who they are. Interestingly, in contrast to increasingly expansive definitions of diaspora, Clifford in particular distinguishes diaspora from immigrants:

Diasporic populations do not come from elsewhere in the same way that “immigrants” do. In assimilationist national ideologies such as those of the United States, immigrants may experience loss and nostalgia, but only en route to a whole new home in a new place. Such ideologies are designed to integrate immigrants, not people in diasporas. Whether the national narrative is one of common origins or of gathered populations, it cannot assimilate groups that maintain important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland or a dispersed community located elsewhere. Peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be “cured” by merging into a new national community. (Clifford 1997, 250)

Here Clifford defines a diaspora as a group that maintains a strong connection with its own homeland or coethnic groups, and that shares collective histories of displacement and violent loss; immigrants, on the other hand, tend to merge into a new nation with some experience of loss and nostalgia. While Clifford distinguishes voluntary “immigrants” from diaspora by pointing out that the experiences of forced migration are essentially different from those of voluntary migration, he does not much address the fact that migration can never be complete but is always *in progress*. A diaspora can have roots in a community in forced exile while having become voluntary immigrants, subjectively shaping and reshaping their relationships with the homeland and/or host societies, which do not have to be a singular state (Reyes 2014). In the case of Chaoxianzu, the majority of early migrants may be seen as “diaspora” in Clifford’s sense. However, those who took the “return migration” route to South Korea later for various practical as well as psychological reasons (Tsuda 2019) describe their migration with numerous unhappy stories, social alienations, and subsequent disappointments that hinder their assimilation at both systematic and psychological levels despite the fact that they have moved to (so to speak) their ancestral homeland (see chapter 7).

Given the myriad of cases of diaspora and thus competing conceptualizations of dispersed people in late modernity, Stuart Hall (1994) turns our attention to the construction and expression of diasporic identity in the context of migration. He argues that the cultural site of diasporas should be viewed as creative spaces where diasporic lifeways are hybridized, intentionally or not (Hall 1994; Um 2004a, 1)—just as the diasporic identity of Koreans in China is constructed as a syncretizing of influences from China, prepartition Korea, and the two ideologically split Koreas.

Yanbian is located in China's Northeast region bordering on Russia and Korea. Like many other frontier areas such as the U.S.-Mexico border, the Irish border, and the borders of eastern European nation-states, Yanbian was historically a geopolitical and cultural border zone where Chinese, Russian, and Japanese imperial powers confronted one another from the early twentieth century. Even today, it continues to be a cultural contact zone in which China, North Korea, and South Korea encounter and intersect with one another, each carrying its own version of the histories, cultures, positions, and understandings of the others. While the study of borders has emerged as a new topic in the social sciences over the last three decades, many studies use terms such as border, borderland, or border zone loosely, and different branches of scholarship take different approaches in exploring the topic:

Over the last decade “borders” and “borderlands” have become increasingly ubiquitous terms in the work of a wide range of academics and intellectuals including journalists, poets, novelists, artists, educationalists, literary critics and social scientists. . . . But while this convergence of interest might indicate agreement about a topic of importance and significance, the terms are used in so many different ways as to suggest that it is not one topic but many. Social scientists occasionally claim precision, though even they employ a range of terms—border, borderland, border zone, boundary, frontier—which sometimes pass as synonyms and at other times identify quite different phenomena. (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 15)

Among many different ways to conceptualize and define it, border can at least mean a geopolitically drawn space where two or more different cultures, peoples, and ways of living make contact. Clifford (1997) describes this zone of contacts—“blocked and permitted, policed and transgressive”—as a “borderland” (8), while Renato Rosaldo states that a border or borderland is not necessarily a physically embodied line or space but can be socially and conceptually drawn, like those boundaries around sex, gender, class, race, nation, ethnicity, and age (Rosaldo 1993, 207). Donnan and Wilson argue, on the other hand,

that when borders are contacted, transcended, and challenged, they become creative spaces for making new definitions and identities:

State borders in the world today not only mirror the changes that are affecting the institutions and policies of their states, but also point to transformations in the definitions of citizenship, sovereignty and national identity. It is our contention, moreover, that borders are not just symbols and locations of these changes. . . . Borders are also meaning-making and meaning-carrying entities, parts of cultural landscapes which often transcend the physical limits of the state and defy the power of state institutions. (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 4)

Based on Donnan and Wilson, a border or borderland is more than a transitional space or interface of different cultures; more importantly, it is a productive and creative place for shaping new culture and meanings out of and through those contacts and interfaces. Yanbian's geopolitical particularity as a borderland can be viewed as a significant factor that makes this place extraordinary as a culturally creative space in addition to the fact that it, historically having been a thinly populated area until the mid-nineteenth century, became filled with the waves of migrants who moved from inland China as well as foreign countries such as Korea, Japan, and Russia (see chapter 1). Resonating with Hall's (1994) previous characterization of the site of diasporas with almost inevitable yet meaningful hybridization of diasporic lifeways, Yanbian articulates its conduciveness to cultural creativity both as a borderland and a site of diasporas. Indeed, Chaoxianzu have been displaced into a geographical, social, and cultural border zone, in which as a diasporic agent they have had greater opportunities to perform their creativity and productivity in terms of who they are, what they construct, and how they want to establish relations with their host country, their ancestral homeland, and other countries.

As I looked into this area over multiple trips to Yanbian, I noticed that an essentialist view of Chaoxianzu music, characterized as a combination of tradition and modernity, prevailed throughout Yanbian and was almost uniformly cited by Chaoxianzu musicians and cultural officials alike in China. While such a narrative was certainly contestable, it also served as intellectual inspiration, guiding me and shaping my research as I investigated how and to what degree tradition and modernity are mixed into the sound of Chaoxianzu music, and in what way cultural hybridity or syncretism has become the most obvious characteristic of this diaspora.

When music and other cultural traditions are displaced into different locales, they come to carry different meanings and values for creators, performers, advocates, and audiences. More specifically, being part of a Korean

diaspora takes on different meanings and values from being Korean at home. In the context of displacement, not only is ethnic culture used as a means of marking one's own or one's group identity, it also provides a significant context for negotiating and shaping new meaning, that is, a unique diasporic identity as a group or individuals who went through particular experiences of migration (Hall 1994). Like many other diasporic groups, Koreans in China have altered, negotiated, or newly created their cultural identity as they have settled down in China and shaped themselves as one of the state's ethnic minorities. Koreans in China were once voluntary migrants who left Korea attracted by the economic opportunities that empty land in Northeast China represented. Some of them became exiles or forced migrants when the possibility of returning to South Korea was later cut off with the outbreak of the Cold War and the subsequent partitioning of the Korean Peninsula.¹

Ethnomusicologist Adelaida Reyes (1999a) introduced the term “migrancy” to describe the phase of migration that engenders new cultural production. For her, migration is distinct from migrancy in that migration refers to “the movement of people, their goods and their ideas,” while migrancy refers to “a state that grows out of and develops both as consequence of and as part of that movement. . . . Migrancy directs the observer's attention not just to where migrants have gone and where migrants have been but, perhaps more importantly, to the emotional, psychological, and *creative behaviors* that are the products of those moves” (206; italics added).

Reyes' conceptualization of and emphasis on “migrancy” point up several important aspects of performance cultures such as music and dance that are pertinent for the study of migration. As a manifestation of *creative behaviors*, performance culture is a window to the minds, emotions, and behaviors of the migrants, and thus it reflects the significant meanings of migration and the values of migrant lives, explicitly or implicitly, as an expressive art resulting from the movement of people and their settlement in a specific context (Reyes 1999a). Moreover, in investigating music as a salient example of what migrants do along with and as part of their migration, the types of displacement and its journey and experience of movement cannot be overlooked since they affect the overall lives of migrants (Reyes 1986, 1989, 1999a, 1999b; Baily 2005) and the relationships they form with their homeland, and their host society and its cultures. Um (2004a, 6) points out how different cases and conditions of migration lead to different shapings and revisions of ideas of the homeland and its traditions.

Migration encourages people to think about their belonging and recognize their relationship to other members of their social group with whom they interact in the new context. Therefore, the issue of self and the construction of identity are particularly pertinent to the study of migration. The pairing of identity and migration has grown since the introduction of the concept of “identity

crisis” by the well-known psychologist Erik Erikson, who himself was a migrant from Europe to the United States (Reyes 2014). Erikson (1963, 1968) initially coined this phrase in the context of developmental psychology to describe the stage of identity confusion experienced by people who are in the process of “finding themselves” and who haven’t completed the job, ideally with confidence and certainty, before they enter adulthood. Later, historian Philip Gleason picked up Erikson’s idea of “identity crisis” and applied it to his study on American identity, describing “identity crisis” in its modern sense as a condition that “seemed to grow out of the experience” of migration (Gleason 1980, 31; quoted in Reyes 2014, 111). Since then, identity has gained increasing attention in scholarly research as a significant social process that most migrants experience one way or another.

Fredrik Barth (1969) states that identity ascription is founded upon the perception of difference, and Reyes echoes and extends Barth in her assertion that “the perception of difference sets off the interplay between human actors who enact their differences and, in so doing, create a boundary between Self and Other, between belonging and non-belonging. The *Self* is thus defined through differentiation from an *Other*, in an *environment* or a *context* in which their perception of each other as different is articulated, communicated and enacted” (Reyes 2014, 106; italics in original). Displacement certainly heightens people’s sense of the similarities and differences between “us” and “them.” In this regard, migration triggers “identity” and the “identity-making” process, through which the old and new experiences of the migrants are negotiated, reconciled, and hybridized.

Identities are expressed differently in different contexts, more as a process of negotiation than a form of inheritance (Clifford 1997). In the case of Chaoxianzu, the perception of difference and the articulation of ethnic selves have been affected by both place and time, and by their shifting inter- and intra-ethnic relationships. As mentioned earlier, Korean migration to China began during the second half of the nineteenth century, at a time when the Sino-Korean border was not as firmly delineated as today. At that time, any non-Manchurians, including Koreans and Han Chinese alike, were considered to be new settlers and foreign to China’s Northeast region. When the PRC was founded, Koreans were officially distinguished from the Han majority and other minority nationalities, and upon their acceptance of Chinese citizenship were recognized as a major demographic group in Yanbian. Chaoxianzu, as legal subjects of the PRC, have constructed themselves as both diasporic Koreans and a Chinese ethnic minority, distinct and distinguishing themselves from other ethnic groups in China and from Koreans in North and South Korea, as well as from other overseas Koreans. Given this complex registration of Chaoxianzu on both historical and contemporary sociocultural spectra, their “sense of self and belonging” has inevitably become plural, multiple, and

political, depending on each individual's imagination and reflection of their relationships to the state and the two ancestral nations.

Diasporic Agency

In general, music in twentieth-century China, especially work produced in the period between 1949 and 1980, has often been characterized as an art of collective production and as ideologically dictated rather than as an expression of individualism or creativity. However, as pointed out by Raymond Williams (1977), "hegemony" is not a static "structure" external to individuals but is rather "the whole lived social process" (109), and a "complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits. . . . It does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own" (112). The hegemonic arts, even when strongly oriented by a political entity for its own purposes, are not and should not be viewed as completely autonomous from the input of individuals, whether they represent an "articulate upper level of 'ideology'" or the "pressures and limits" of a "specific economic, political, and cultural system" (110) that they experience every day. The artistic or musical individuals shape the arts, a *social process*, though with different degrees of subjectivities, as producers, practitioners, and audiences. In Williams' sense, a hegemonic structure and the individuals operating within it are symbiotic rather than unilateral imposition characterized by domination and subjugation, although the power of individual agency might be different from that of social hegemony. Along the same lines, anthropologist Sherry Ortner (2006, 2) not only emphasizes the dialectics of social construction but also points out the permeable and flexible nature of social agents, describing ethnographic subjects as not "timeless and pristine objects, but . . . themselves products of the restless operation of both internal dynamics (mostly local power relations) and external forces (such as capitalism and colonialism) over time" (9). In both Williams' and Ortner's arguments, ethnographic subjects, including musicians, should be viewed as socially constructed and also actively constructing agents, especially those who occupy the social margins, such as immigrants and ethnic minorities.

To understand diasporic agency, Aihwa Ong's (1996) idea of "cultural citizenship" is also useful in the sense that citizenship is both a culturally shaping process and a process shaped by cultures, through which social agents make themselves over and are made "within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society" (738). Ong notes that becoming a citizen involves both state "governmentality" and individual subjectivity. Depending on who they are and how they are

constituted as cultural and social individuals, people, whether minorities or migrants, provide their own input into the process of transforming themselves or being transformed as citizens of a society. Informed by the aforementioned theories, this book illuminates Koreans in China as a group who were not merely responding to the PRC's cultural imperatives by reforming and reshaping their music and identity either as independent or institutional members; they were also actively engaging in the reformation process as they made themselves over culturally and were making themselves into subjects of the new Chinese nation-state.

About This Book

This book examines how political ideologies and music came together to produce and shape the distinctive social and cultural identity of diasporic Koreans in China, paying significant attention to the history of Korean migration to China, the formation of the Chaoxianzu community, and the diasporic agency—the individuality, creativity, and subjectivity—of Chaoxianzu musicians. In order to discuss this, I first delineate the history of Korean migration to China and how the Korean migrant community became a national minority upon the establishment of the PRC in 1949 (chapter 1). Historically, Yanbian was a politically and conceptually ambiguous region. The tension between the Qing (1644–1912) and Chosŏn (1392–1910) dynasties over territorial ownership provided considerable motivation for early Korean migration to that region; this tension continued through the twentieth century and persists even today, with the region politically and socially contingent as the PRC's northeastern border to the Russian Far East and Korea. Yanbian has continued to offer a unique environment in which Chinese, Chaoxianzu, North Koreans, and South Koreans can interact outside their nations' political divisions.

Chaoxianzu music, which I experienced in and outside of Yanbian, is distinctive not just as the sound of a diaspora but, perhaps more importantly, because it has been continuously situated within—yet simultaneously transcending—political and cultural boundaries in both historical and current times. Chapter 2 traces the history of Korean music in China, beginning with its initial introduction by migrants in the late nineteenth century and moving to the construction of Chaoxianzu music, a phenomenon that largely unfolded after the establishment of the PRC. This historical chapter aims to arm the reader with an understanding of the particular musical gestures and inclinations adopted by the Chaoxianzu musicians and cultural leaders who were actively engaged in the production of Korean minority music under the social and ideological milieu that emerged from the early 1950s. Chapters 3 to 7 present major ethnographic data, each chapter illuminating different phases and aspects of Chaoxianzu

music and the contributions made by Chaoxianzu musicians. The musicians featured are discussed in terms of how they have responded to national and local governments' cultural directives in generating their own creative input according to their own vision of what Chaoxianzu music is or should be. Chapter 3 examines the activities of Chaoxianzu intellectuals and musicians who were affiliated and worked with minority nationality performing arts organizations and educational institutions. Without strong or in-depth backgrounds in traditional Korean music, how did these Korean minority intellectuals and musicians engage with and create Chaoxianzu music as a demarcation of their community and ethnic identity, and why did they make these choices? This chapter presents a range of musical examples to analyze the ways in which Korean traditional music was combined with Han Chinese adaptations of Western and socialist practices while also promoting Korean folk cultures and worker identity. Chapter 4 focuses on Chaoxianzu *kayagŭm* (Korean zither with twelve to twenty-five strings) players affiliated with the Yanbian Arts School, the sole state school in the performing arts for Chaoxianzu youth, and how these musicians acted as important cultural agents in the development of Chaoxianzu *kayagŭm* music between the 1950s and 2000s. Chapter 5 introduces Chaoxianzu music troupes (i.e., the Yanbian Song and Dance Troupe and the Yanji Chaoxianzu Arts Troupe), some of their composers and musicians, and a range of their compositions and related philosophies. Analyzing these musicians' discourses about their music as well as about Chaoxianzu identity, I show how diasporic Korean musicians in China express their ethnic distinctiveness in their programming choices or in their projection of a particular musical language. Stylistic and compositional variables in Chaoxianzu music are closely related to individual musicians' own ideas about the Korean sounds and the underpinning ideologies of the different performing arts organizations with which Chaoxianzu composers are affiliated.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to Chaoxianzu singers whose songs were frequently broadcast by state media and produced into musical commodities by the Chaoxianzu recording company, JNAPC. Chaoxianzu songs have been widely circulated within and beyond the autonomous prefecture in mass media and micromedia formats, that is, television channels, radio stations, and cassettes, VCDs, and CDs. While pre-1980 Chaoxianzu songs were largely Korean folk songs and revolutionary propaganda songs, post-1980 Chaoxianzu songs have lyrics that convey daily lives, local places, romance, and nostalgia, topics the local audience can closely relate to. With a focus on Chaoxianzu songs composed for and consumed by locals, this chapter examines how Chaoxianzu identity is essentialized through sonic, lyrical, and visual representations.

The last chapter discusses how Chaoxianzu musicians move between China and Korea, transcending cultural borders by representing Chinese, North

Korean, and South Korean constructions of music. Since the early 1990s a massive return migration of Chaoxianzu to South Korea was primarily driven by economic and financial interest. However, more than a few Chaoxianzu music students and academics came to South Korea interested in learning Korean music cultivated in South Korea. These musicians not only reshape the musical landscape of both Chaoxianzu and South Koreans but also point to the irony of categorizing ethnic Koreans according to their different cultural and political backgrounds.

Finally, the book ends with reflections on Yanbian, at once having the largest concentration of Koreans in China and a geopolitical and symbolic borderland situated between China and the Koreas. Despite the ironies and disjunctures that Chaoxianzu have experienced both in Yanbian and Korea, this study shows how “diverse cultural repertoires” can be produced without “identity confusion” (Rosaldo 1993). Chaoxianzu musicians whom I met on this research journey were very clear about their distinct identity as Korean Chinese. At the same time, they acknowledged that they could flexibly shift between and beyond the state, national, and cultural borders. As noted by Rosaldo, “Creative processes of transculturation center themselves along literal and figurative borders where the ‘person’ is crisscrossed by multiple identities” (216). This study of diasporic Korean music in China illustrates how the cultural politics of diaspora suggests the possibility of diversification, reconfiguration, and the permeability of a nation and ethnicity as the people flexibly and pragmatically move across ideological and political boundaries. Using Chaoxianzu music as a case in point, I show that, against the institutional and hegemonic act of differentiating and categorizing national and ethnic members, human agents are never passive or uniform in constructing and expressing who they are and what they want to be. Rather, they creatively find ways to manifest their identity. This is exemplified in Chaoxianzu music in the form of hybrid cultural signs that Korean minority musicians in China have created, drawing from the cultural and social accessibility they enjoy across China and the two Koreas.