



Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research
(CALPER)

KOREAN CULTURE AND MEDIA

KOREAN FILM SERIES

UNIT 3

왕의 남자

THE KING AND THE CLOWN

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CULTURE AND MEDIA SERIES

FILMS AND KOREAN CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

This workbook series has been designed to complement existing pedagogical materials for intermediate, advanced, and heritage learners of Korean. Many of those materials are based on written text using specially selected samples of language for the purposes of teaching grammar, vocabulary, and particular elements of culture. Some include audio and video supplements to more fully represent the sounds, rhythms, and cadence of the language; such supplements, when provided, also well illustrate the social, interactional, and cultural aspects of the linguistic constructions and/or the thematic topics of the lessons at hand.

The workbooks in this series are intended to add to the existing range of instructional materials for Korean. They contain authentic media-based samples of actual language used in Korea by Koreans for specific interactional purposes. We draw from such sources as: television commercials, commercial motion pictures, public service announcements, various genres of television programs (e.g., news, talk shows, game shows, advice programs, interviews), films, music, print ads, and internet-based video. In addition to authentic language samples in multiple modalities, we provide vocabulary lists, visual illustrations, and explanatory supplements to facilitate and deepen comprehension of linguistic and cultural issues that emerge in the media-based samples.

The fundamental goal of this series is to present language and culture as an integral whole—to enhance students’ awareness of language *through* culture and to deepen students’ understanding of culture *through* language.

Through the materials presented in our Culture and Media Series workbooks, students will be able to acquire and exchange information about Korea and about Korean people. Because we use actual media-based materials designed in Korea for Koreans, students will have the opportunity to observe language and culture in action and to more deeply understand the values and viewpoints that underlie the socio-cultural practices of Korean people.

Our aim in this CULTURE and MEDIA series is for instructors to guide students to naturally and meaningfully integrate the goals of the 5 Cs:

- **Communication:** To enhance their communicative skills in Korean.
- **Culture:** To expand and deepen their understanding of Korean culture.
- **Connections:** To apply and connect concepts to other academic disciplines.
- **Comparisons:** To compare and contrast Korean and Korean culture with other languages and cultures that they know.
- **Communities:** To use the materials and content in real-world communicative activities beyond the classroom and outside of class-based assignments.

Units 3, 4, and 5 are each directly connected to a film, 왕의 남자 *The King and The Clown*, 식객 *Le Grand Chef*, and 라디오 스타 *Radio Star*, respectively.

We have designed the materials to be used EITHER:

- As independent materials, **not requiring the viewing of the film**

OR

- As a **supplement to the viewing of the film.**

While we refer to specific scenes, dialogue lines, plot-related events, and relationships between and among the protagonists, only a very narrow portion of the activities presupposes that the student might recall a scene from one of the films. Wherever possible, we provide background information so the materials can be used by virtually any high-intermediate, advanced, or heritage student of Korean. The ideal case is for students to work with these Units after having seen the films. However, as we note, viewing the film is not a pre-requisite for using these materials.

In Units 3, 4, and 5, we use the story lines and contexts of each film as departure points for a variety of communicative activities. Each unit contains illustrations, reading materials, vocabulary lists, questions to consider, comparisons that might be made, and suggestions for inquiry-based interactional tasks that lead to a deeper understanding of sociocultural and historical issues that emerge in each film. As always, in CALPER's Culture and Media series, we attempt to push students beyond the content material and ask them to inquire further, investigate more deeply, and consider more thoroughly the particular issues that are central to each lesson. We include comparison-based tasks in which students are asked to consider parallel instances of cultural products, with a view to better understand their own cultural practices and to more deeply understand other cultures.

The last section of Unit 5 ties the three films together from the point of view of shared thematic threads. The final activities are designed to stimulate students' thinking about some of the sociocultural values depicted in the films and to ask students to synthesize those values by locating commonalities and differences between and among them. We also ask students to establish comparisons and contrasts with values of other societies that they are familiar with.

- **Unit 3:** 왕의 남자 *The King and The Clown*. We discuss the 조선 Dynasty; the life of 연산군; the Korean caste system; traditional Korean music, dance, theatre, and acrobatic performances; and Korean theatre and film vis à vis theatre and film in other countries.
- **Unit 4:** 식객 *Le Grand Chef*. We explain the background of the film's origins, i.e., a comic strip, a book, and then a television program. We discuss traditional cooking practices, including the traditional kitchen, utensils, foods, and so forth. We also touch on the "language of food" in Korea and the United States, and examine the emergence of cooking competitions around the world. We also examine the genre of the "movie review" in Korea and the U.S.
- **Unit 5:** 라디오 스타 *Radio Star*. We discuss pop culture in Korea and the world from the point of view of *The Korean Wave*. We also examine the concept of the pop star in Korea and elsewhere. This unit also compares the Academy Awards with the Blue Dragon Awards in Korea.

We hope you find these materials useful. Please direct questions, comments, and other feedback to:

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NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: These are designed to stimulate students' thinking about the Korean language and Korean people and culture. Each Unit contains ideas for students to further develop topics related to the films in various formats: interviews, research, small group discussions, writing assignments, etc. Please feel free to supplement these assignments with your own goal-specific tasks so that they best fit the needs of your classes. We provide a blank box at the end of each segment for you to create your own assignments based on these or related issues.

KOREAN CULTURE AND MEDIA

Films and Korean Culture

UNIT 3: 왕의 남자 *The King and The Clown*

This unit centers on the film *왕의 남자* *The King and The Clown*. First, we introduce the characters and then we present a synopsis of the film, so that you'll be familiar with the plot and the significance of the personages within the film.

This is followed by a link to the movie trailer so that you'll have a sense of what the film was like—if you haven't already seen it. If you haven't viewed the film as yet, we hope that this unit inspires you to do so.

A variety of activities and thought-based questions follow the link to the trailer.

I. The Characters:



II. Synopsis: (from Wikipedia—*The King and the Clown*)

The film is set in the early 16th Century during the reign of 연산군. It opens with two male street clowns and tightrope walkers, 장생 and 공길, who are part of an entertainment troupe. 공길 has an effeminate look and style and he is ambiguously beautiful as a woman. Because of his appearance, the troupe manager solicits 공길 to rich male customers. This troubles 장생 deeply. In an act of self-defense and in defense of 장생, 공길 kills the manager and the two men flee to Hanyang, where they form a new group with three other street performers.

The group invents a skit that mocks the King and his concubine, and a complicated string of events ensues. The goal of this audacious performance is to make the King laugh, which would save all of the performers. The performance worked. The King did laugh, and he also began to exhibit an attraction for 공길.

The king's main concubine, 장녹수, becomes jealous of the attention the King has been paying to 공길. And again, a string of complicated events ensues.

Throughout the film, we see many instances of the tyranny of the King and corruption of his Courts. The film ends with a popular uprising that results in an attack on the King's palace. As people storm the court, 장생 and 공길 jump up from the tightrope together. 장생 tosses away his fan, which signifies the death of both men - through this is not shown in the film. In the final scene, 장생 and 공길 are reunited with their itinerant entertainment troupe. They are reunited – and sing and dance and walk away cheerfully into the distance.

Adapted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_king_and_the_clown

III. If you'd like to watch the movie trailer, here is the link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh_YVgnM9J0

IV. ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS TO DEEPEN YOUR THINKING ABOUT FILM AND CULTURE

왕의 남자 *The King and The Clown* is both a period piece and a biopic. It is a beautifully artistic film depicting Korean life in the early 16th Century. The film portrays the class system of the 조선 Dynasty, the early emergence of literacy, loyalty to the King, friendship, betrayal, and an array of traditional practices including theatrical performance, music, and dance. It also centers quite squarely on the life and personality of 연산군.

The following paragraphs provide a very brief history of the film, and more importantly, a general overview of the rich and historically significant 조선 Dynasty. We include a glossary at the end of this passage that lists the more difficult and specialized vocabulary terms. Also, an English translation of the passage appears in Appendix 1.

A. 조선왕조와 연산군 The 조선 Dynasty and King Yeonsan

Plus: Investigating other infamous despotic rulers in the world, and their portrayals in film

조선왕조와 연산군 The 조선 Dynasty and King Yeonsan

왕의 남자는 조선시대의 광대들과 연산군의 비극적인 운명을 그린 영화로 2005년 12월에 개봉했으며, 김태웅의 연극 《이(爾)》를 원작으로 하였다. 이(爾)는 조선시대 왕의 신하를 높여 부를 때 사용하던 호칭으로, 극중에 공길이란 천한 광대 출신에서 벼슬을 얻어 임금에게서 ‘이(爾)’라는 호칭을 듣게 된 것을 뜻한다. 이 영화는 개봉 당시 한국 영화 사상 최고 흥행 기록을 세웠고, 작품성에서도 인정받아 대중상 영화제, 청룡 영화제, 대한민국 영화 대상 등 여러 영화제에서 작품상, 감독상, 남우 주연상 등을 석권하였다.

이 영화의 핵심인물인 연산군(1494-1506)은 조선 10대 왕으로 조선 9대 왕 성종과 폐비 윤씨의 아들로 1476년에 태어났다. 폐비 윤씨는 성종의 두 번째 왕비로 성종의 첫 번째 왕비인 공혜왕후가 소생 없이 승하하자 2년 뒤에 중전으로 승격되었다. 기묘록(己卯錄)에 의하면 폐비 윤씨는 많은 후궁을 두었던 성종을 투기하여 1477년에는 왕의 후궁을 독살하고, 1479년에는 왕의 얼굴에 상처를 냈다고 한다. 이로 인해, 인수대비의 진노를 사 폐비되어 궁 밖에서 생활 하였다. 하지만 생모에 대해 알지 못하던 연산군이 장성함에 따라 폐비 윤씨의 처우문제가 쟁점화 되면서 관료들의 음모로 1482년 사약을 받았다.

연산군은 1483 년에 세자로 책봉되어 1494 년 즉위하였다. 생모에 대해 알지 못하던 즉위 초에는 빈민을 구제하고 국방을 튼튼히 하는 등의 업적을 세웠다. 하지만 당파싸움인 무오사화(戊午士禍, 1498 년)를 통해 훈구파가 정권을 잡게 되고 훈구파 안에서 소외 받던 대신들이 정권을 잡으려는 욕심에 생모 폐비 운씨의 일을 연산군에게 알렸다. 생모의 억울한 죽음을 알게 된 후 연산군은 나라를 돌보지 않고 어머니에게 사약을 내린 대신들을 향한 복수를 위해 폭정을 시작했다.

이 영화에 나오는 광대들은 남사당 (男寺黨)으로 조선시대의 남자로서만 구성된 유랑예인 집단이다. 주인공인 장생과 공길도 이런 남사당의 일원으로 함께 공연을 하며 떠돌아 다니는 광대들이다. 공길은 남자임에도 불구하고 여자 같은 외모로 공연 중 여자 역할을 주로 맡게 된다. 그로 인해 고위급 인사들에게 불려가 수치를 당하기도 한다. 이러한 공길의 상황을 장생이 안타깝게 여겨 시작된 두 광대의 우정을 영화는 그리고 있다. 역사기록에 연산군이 광대를 궁에 불러들여 연회를 즐겼다는 부분이 기록되어 있지만 공길과 장생은 허구의 인물이다. 당시 임금인 연산군이 살고 정사를 처리하던 조선 시대의 궁궐은 경복궁, 창덕궁, 덕수궁으로 아직도 서울 시내에 잘 보존 되어 있다.

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yeonsangun_of_Joseon
[http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/이\(연극\)](http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/이(연극))

Vocabulary

비극적이다	to be tragic
운명	destiny
개봉하다	to release
원작	the original work
흥행	proven box office power
인정받다	to be recognized
석권하다	to dominate; to sweep over
핵심	core
폐비	Deposed Queen
소생	one's children
승하하다	(a king's/queen's) demise
중전	the Queen
승격하다	to promote to a higher status (antiquated, honorific)
후궁	a royal concubine
투기하다	jealousy

할퀴다	to scratch
진노	wrath
장성하다	to grow into an adult
처우	treatment
쟁점화	becoming a point in a dispute
사약	(the king's) bestowal of poison as a death penalty
생모	one's biological mother
세자	the Crown Prince
책봉되다	to install (세자 책봉: the installation of the Crown Prince)
즉위하다	to ascend the throne
빈민	the poor
구제하다	to relieve
국방	national defense
업적	achievement
정권	political power
당파싸움	party dispute; factional wrangling
다스리다	to rule
복수	revenge
폭정	tyranny
유랑예인	wandering performers
주인공	main character
일원	a member
공연	performance
역할	role
고위급 인사	high-ranking officials
수치	shame
안타깝다	to pity; to have compassion
우정	friendship
전반	whole; overall
연회	banquet
허구	fiction; fictional
정사	governmental affairs
처리하다	to take care of
궁궐	palaces
보존되다	to be preserved

As we see from the above passage, 연산군 lived an exceptionally complex and complicated life. His biological mother, 폐비 윤씨 exhibited extreme personality traits. In 왕의 남자, we witness multiple types of extreme behaviors on the part of 연산군 in addition to many of his deeds (both kind and cruel). These (and more) are well recorded in the annals of history. 연산군 stands out as an eccentric and extraordinary figure of the 조선 Dynasty.

IDEAS

**TO THINK ABOUT
AND DEVELOP FURTHER**

1. Find out more about 연산군 through Korean websites. Investigate how he is represented in the various sites.

Try to obtain a copy of a middle school or high school Korean history textbook, and see how the historians writing for teens and young adults characterize this king.

As you collect materials on 연산군, analyze his positive traits and his negative traits. What acts and/or deeds does he seem to be the most renowned for?

Interview a key pal or pen pal in Korea (using as much Korean as possible). Or, interview your teacher as a class. Find out what s/he knows about 연산군's life and fill in the gaps based on your own research.

2. 연산군 is portrayed in this film and in historical records as a tyrant king. Can you think of any other kings or national leaders in the history of other countries that are also known for their tyrannical rule? (e.g., Uganda's Idi Amin). Try to investigate this issue as deeply and as thoroughly as possible. Then, establish features of each ruler's personality, their abuses of power, accomplishments of good deeds (if any). What do these rulers have in common? Does 연산군 stand out from the rest in any notable way(s)?

Is it possible to compare King Henry VIII (1491 – 1597) to 연산군? Both were known for their cruelty and despotism.

Write an essay in Korean in which you compare 연산군 to other leaders of the world. Be sure to include all necessary detail and try not to point out only superficial features to compare and contrast. That is, appeal to some of the more obscure, less obvious figures in the world and establish your points of comparison and contrast on well-founded, well-thought out premises. Also, be sure to properly cite all of your references.

B. 조선의 신분제도 The caste system of the 조선 Dynasty

Plus: Research on caste systems of the world, performance art in Korea, and Theatre in Europe and East Asia

The table below outlines the caste/class system that existed during the 조선 Dynasty. It is important to understand this hierarchy in order to fully understand the challenges and lifestyles of our two characters, 장생 and 공길. They belong to the class of 천인. A vocabulary list follows. In addition, an English translation of the information provided here can be found in Appendix II.

조선의 신분제도			
The class/caste system of the 조선 Dynasty			
지배 계급	양반(兩班)	문관 벼슬· 무관 벼슬	양인
피지배 계급	중인(中人)	하급관리· 지방행정실무자· 기술관	
	상인(常人)	농업· 상업· 공업	천인
	천인(賤人)	노비· 광대· 무당· 창기· 백정	

조선은 양반 중심의 사회였다. 양반이란, 원래 문관 벼슬과 무관 벼슬을 함께 부르던 말로, 관직에 있는 사람을 통틀어 부르는 말이었다. 그러나 이것이 조선에서는 벼슬이 있는 사람만이 아니라 벼슬을 할 수 있는 신분을 지칭하는 말로 그 뜻이 변하였다. 조선 초기에 세습신분으로는 양인(良人)과 천인(賤人)으로 나뉘었다. 양인은 직업의 종류에 따라 사(士)·농(農)·공(工)·상(商)의 구별이 있었으나 왕권이 확고해지면서 관료들은 지배층으로서의 신분을 확고히 하였다. 따라서, 하급관리·지방행정실무자·기술관 등은 별도로 중인(中人) 신분을 이루었고, 농업·상업·수공업에 종사하는 사람들은 이른바 상인(常人)이 되었다. 마지막으로, 그 밑에는 천민 신분으로 노비·광대·무당·창기·백정 등이 이에 속하였다. 특히 노비는 공공기관이나 개인에 속하여 매매·증여·상속이 되었다.

Source: [http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/조선의 사회제도](http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/조선의_사회제도)

Vocabulary

문관벼슬	a civil official
무관벼슬	a military officer
관직	government service
통틀어	in all (ex) 통틀어 열명이다 (there are ten people in all).
벼슬	a government official (old Korean)
신분	social position
지칭하다	to call
세습	hereditary
사(士)	a scholar
농(農)	a farmer
공(工)	a mechanic
상(商)	a merchant
구별	distinction
왕권	royal authority; regal power
확고하다	to be firm
관료	government officials
지배층	ruling class
하급관리	a low-ranking official
지방행정 실무자	a district administrative official
기술관	a technical expert
중인	middle-class people
농업	agriculture
상업	commerce
수공업	handicraft
종사하다	to be engaged in
이른바	so-called
상민 (常民)	common people
천민	low-class people
노비	a servant
광대	an entertainer; a clown
무당	a shaman
창기	a prostitute
백정	a butcher
속하다	to belong
공공기관	public organizations
개인	an individual
매매	selling and buying
증여	giving as a gift
상속	inheritance

In the film, we see the extraordinary talents of 장생 and 공길: tightrope walking and acrobatics, colorful collaborative story telling, and creative theatrical (often comedic) performances that make their audience laugh at times and cry at others. We witness the exceptional grace, balance, and imagination of 장생 and 공길 as individuals. We also witness the depth of their friendship, their unbending loyalty to each other, and we see how well matched they are as a team. We observe how they and other members of their social class live their lives, in sharp juxtaposition with the wealth and opulence of the King and his Palace.

The theatrical elements of their performances include social commentary that could never be expressed aloud by any member of their social class. However, the actors can “hide” behind their characters and their masks and can voice their opinions about social issues, even mocking the King and his Court. The identical dynamic of expressing poignant socio-political commentary through theatre is seen in the puppet play episodes—which appear to move the King deeply.

Below you’ll see some visual illustrations of 전통 민속놀이, traditional Korean folk play, labeled with the name of each category.



농악



줄타기



탈춤

IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT
AND DEVELOP FURTHER

1. Conduct an internet and library search in Korean on the Korean caste system. When and how did this caste system emerge? When and why was it abolished? Describe the structure of the system. Who was at the lowest level of this hierarchy? Why? Compare the Korean caste system with other caste systems in the world, both defunct and those still in existence. What commonalities do you find? What are the differences?

You might think about working in groups and having designated groups research caste systems of various countries—and then share your findings with your teacher and classmates.

How do the characters of 장생 and 공길 fit into the 16th Century class structure as you now understand it?

2. By searching Korean internet and library sources, construct an inventory of the types of traditional performance genres from 16th Century Korea. Include elements of theatre, acrobatics, dance, and music—including traditional instruments. What vestiges of these genres are still visible in Modern Korean performance art?

This would be an excellent topic for an oral presentation, complete with video clips and photos from the internet.

3. The fact that 장생 and 공길 were able to express their opinions, criticisms, commentaries, and caricatures of society through theatre and the mask is reminiscent of *theatre* in other countries. For example, in Molière's (1622 – 1672) comedies, e.g., *Tartuffe* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, we find outspoken and opinionated servants who basically speak their minds to their masters and to the audience (or reader). We find similar trends in the Commedia dell'arte, the 16th Century improvisational theatre of Italy.

Conduct a research project on 15th – 17th Century Theatre in Europe and a parallel investigation of Theatre in Korea, China, and Japan during the same period. What features and trends do you find in common between European Theatre and East Asian Theater? If you have viewed 왕의 남자, discuss the theatrical elements of the film within your larger treatment of East Asian Theatre and compare your findings with elements of European Theatre.

C. 조선왕조의 업적 Accomplishments during the 조선 Dynasty.

In the introductory section of this workbook, we referred to the 조선 Dynasty as a “rich and historically significant” era in Korean history. This characterization may well even be an understatement.

The following paragraph provides a short description of the types of advancements made during the 조선 Dynasty and a few of the major historical events. A glossary of terms can be found at the end of this paragraph. An English translation of the paragraph is in Appendix III.

조선왕조의 업적 Accomplishments during the 조선 Dynasty

조선은 고려의 뒤를 이어 1392년 태조(太祖) 이성계가 세운 나라로 1910년 마지막 임금인 순종(純宗)에 이르기까지 27명의 왕이 승계하면서 519년 동안 지속된 왕조이다. 조선시대의 역사적 사건을 살펴보면 먼저 조선의 4대 왕 세종대왕과 한글 창제가 있다. 한글은 1443년 훈민정음(訓民正音)이란 이름으로 세종대왕과 집현전(集賢殿) 학자들로 인해 처음 창제되고 사용되었다. 훈민정음은 가르칠 훈(訓), 백성 민(民), 바를 정(正), 소리 음(音)으로 백성을 가르치는 바른 소리라는 뜻이며, 이는 한글 창제의 목적을 잘 드러낸다. 집현전은 학자양성과 학문연구를 위한 기관으로 세종대왕시절 과학기술 발전에도 많은 기여를 하였다. 1442년에 측우기를 만들어 서울과 각 도(道)의 군현(郡縣)에 설치하였고 이는 세계 역사상 측우기가 가장 먼저 사용된 것이다.

고구려시대부터 무인들 사이에서 발전된 태권도는 조선시대에 일반화되어 대중의 수련과 겨루기 등 일반 백성들의 생활영역까지 크게 퍼졌다.

조선시대의 큰 전쟁으로는 임진왜란(1592-1598)이 있다. 임진왜란은 일본이 조선을 침략하여 발발한 전쟁으로 7년 만에 조선의 승리로 끝난 전쟁이다. 조선의 승리에 큰 공을 세운 인물로서는 이순신 장군과 거북선이 있다. 거북선은 이순신 장군의 고안으로 건조된 세계 최초의 돌격용 철갑전선이다. 임진왜란은 조선 시대의 중요한 사건이며, 이는 정치 문화 경제와 일반 백성들의 생활에 이르기까지 많은 영향을 끼쳤다.

Sources: <http://100.naver.com/조선>
<http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/조선>

Vocabulary

세우다	to found
성계하다	to succeed
지속되다	to last
창제	invention
과학기술	scientific technology
발전	development
기여	contribution
측우기	a udometer (rain gauge)
도	province
군현	towns (in Joseon Dynasty)
설치하다	to install
무인	soldier; warrior
대중	general public
수련	training
겨루기	[Taekwondo term] competition
백성	people (when a king rules, different from 국민)
퍼지다	to spread out
침략하다	to invade
발발하다	to break out (usually war)
승리	victory
공을 세우다	to distinguish oneself
인물	a (great) man
고안	design (n)
건조되다	to build (usually ship)
철갑전선	ironclad warship
영향	influence (n)

IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT
AND DEVELOP FURTHER

1. Read more about the 조선 Dynasty and fill in the gaps concerning the types of events that took place during that period in Korean history. When did the era begin, and what marked its beginning? When did the era end, and what marked its culmination? Who were the main figures during the period? What did they do? What other accomplishments can this era claim? Read as much as you can about this in Korean, but feel free to supplement your resources using English documents as well.

In small groups or as a class, compile your collective notes in Korean and try to paint as full a picture of this era as possible. Do this as an in-class activity using the blackboard or prepare powerpoint slides in advance. Be sure to ask your teacher for any vocabulary items that you will need for the presentation. You might also want to prepare a glossary for your classmates.

2. Issues of literacy were touched on in the film 왕의 남자. Some of the characters were able to read and write; others were completely illiterate. We know that *hangul* was commissioned and promoted by King Sejong. Investigate how *hangul* came about. That is, what social events or situations prompted King Sejong to be so committed to this system of writing? Whom did he contact and how was the system developed? What are the primary features? How does *hangul* differ from other writing systems of the world? What does it share in common?

And here is the crucial question: How did Korean society change as a result of the introduction of *hangul*?

Conduct your research in Korean to the extent that you can understand the content. If necessary, use sources also written in English.

Present your findings in groups to the class—in Korean. Use audio and visual aids to better illustrate your work.

ASSIGNMENT BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR

D. History of Korean cinema—10 best Korean films of recent years

In Section A, it was mentioned that *왕의 남자* broke the record as the most watched Korean film when it opened in theatres in December, 2005. The goal of this section is to find out more about Korean cinema in general, from its historical roots to modern day film. The table below shows the 10 top “box office hits” in Korea since 2001. These titles do not necessarily reflect the top ten Korean films, however.

1		괴물 (2006) 드라마 13,019,740 명	6		친구 (2001) 드라마 8,130,000 명
2		왕의 남자 (2005) 드라마 12,302,831 명	7		웰컴 투 동막골 (2005) 전쟁드라마 8,008,622 명
3		태극기 휘날리며 (2004) 전쟁드라마 11,746,135 명	8		화려한 휴가 (2007) 드라마 7,310,000 명
4		실미도 (2003) 드라마 11,081,000 명	9		과속 스캔들 (2008) 코미디 7,200,000 명
5		디워 (2007) SF/판타지 8,420,000 명	10		좋은놈 나쁜놈 이상한놈 (2008) 액션 7,038,529 명

Source: <http://www.kofic.or.kr/>

IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT
AND DEVELOP FURTHER

Conduct a research project on the history of Korean cinema. When did Korea begin to produce films? What types of films were made during the early years? What historical and/or international events influenced the development of Korean cinema?

What is the status of Korean cinema today? What are considered to be the 10 “best” films of Korea today? Why?

What are considered to be the 10 “best” films of the U.S. today? Why?

What features to U.S. films and Korean films have in common (that make them “the best”)? How do the 10 best U.S. films differ from those of Korea, in terms of: cinematography, plots, themes, dialogue? What do these findings reflect with regard to culture and cultural preferences vis à vis film popularity in the two countries?

Present your results to the class in groups – presentations should be in Korean and should include: Powerpoint slides that outline the chronology of the development of Korean cinema, photos of the most influential directors, clips from specific films that you’ll be talking about.

ASSIGNMENT BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR

RECAP

CLOSING QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AND DEVELOP

Throughout this unit, we have investigated a variety of Korean art forms through film:

- Cinema
- Musical instruments
- Dance
- Theatre
- Acrobatics
- Poetry

We also began with the premise that film is a *mirror of society*.

1. This film presented a number of sharp contrasts between personages, lifestyles, ethical practices, and personality traits. For example, we observed a sharp dichotomy between the wealthy and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, the masculine and the feminine, the physically strong and the physically weak.

What other types of contrasts do you note in this film? Why do you think such contrasts were so prevalent here? What was the director's purpose in reflecting these dichotomies?

2. Given the tasks that you have just completed for this unit and the research that you've done on the various socio-historical and cultural topics suggested here, do you agree with the metaphor of film *as mirror of society*? If so, explain (in full detail) why. If not, explain (in full detail) why not.

APPENDIX I
조선왕조와 연산군
[‘The 조선 Dynasty and King Yeonsan’]

The King and The Clown was released in December, 2005. The film depicts the tragic life of King Yeonsan. The original scenario was written by Taewung Kim for his play entitled ‘*Yi*.’ When *The King and The Clown* opened in theatres throughout Korea, it broke the record as the most watched Korean film. It also was highly acclaimed for its artfulness, having won many prestigious film awards in Korea, including the *Daejongasang*, *Chengryong*, and *Daehanminkuk* awards.

King Yeonsan, whose reign lasted from 1494-1506, is the central protagonist of the film. King Yeonsan was the 10th king of the Joseon Dynasty. He was born in 1475, the eldest son of King Seongjong (the 9th king of the Dynasty) and Lady Yun, a concubine of the King. Seongjong had taken Lady Yun as his concubine because his then wife, Queen Gonghye was unable to bear him a son—though Yeonsan was unaware of the identity of his real mother. Lady Yun became Queen after Gonghye’s death. Queen Yun suffered from fits of wrath and jealousy because of the multiple concubines living within Seongjong’s palace. It is said that Queen Yun went so far as to poison one of the concubines in 1477, and on one night in 1479 she actually struck the King so hard and so violently that the blow left the King’s face scratched and bruised. This account appears in the Gimyo record (기묘록, 己卯錄). Seongjong’s mother, the Grand Queen Insu, noticed the scratch marks on the King’s face, realized that it was Queen Yun who was responsible, and she sent Queen Yun into exile. The Deposed Queen Yun died of poisoning in 1482—an act orchestrated by government officials as both a death penalty and as a means of concealing the truth about the identity of Yeonsan’s biological mother.

In 1483, Yeonsan became the Crown Prince and succeeded King Seongjong in 1494. Yeonsan was still unaware of the death of Queen Yun, his biological mother. During the early years of his reign, King Yeonsan served the poor and worked to strengthen the defense of the kingdom. However, two major literati factions soon began to vie for political power. In 1498, Korea experienced the First Literati Purge (무오사화). As a result of this incident, the Hungu literati faction stepped into power and ruled the country together with King Yeonsan. As a strategy to gain more power within the kingdom, lower ranking officials in the Hungu literati faction revealed the truth to King Yeonsan about his biological mother. After learning of his mother’s death and in successive acts of revenge, King Yeonsan took to tyrannizing the entire country.

Jangsaeng and Gonggil are the two other central characters in the film. They are talented actors and acrobats and belonged to a group of wandering male performers. In the Joseon Dynasty this type of itinerant performing group was called Namsadang (남사당). No women belonged to such troupes and all female roles were played by the males. Gonggil had a rather effeminate appearance, and because of this, he usually played the women’s roles. Such characteristics seemingly attracted the high-ranking officials in exotic ways, and this was the case with Gonggil. Jangsaeng, a loyal friend, tried to protect Gonggil from the unwelcome sexual advances from the officials. The deep and unbending

friendship between these two friends, Jangsaeng and Gonggil is tightly woven throughout the entire plot. While the movie is set in a true historical background, these two characters are purely fictional. The palaces that appear in the movie are *Gyengbokgung*, *Deoksugung*, *Changdeokgung*. These were well-known and important palaces of Joseon Dynasty, and they are still well preserved in Seoul today.

APPENDIX II
조선의 신분제도
['The class/caste system of the Joseon Dynasty']

The ruling class	Yangban (noblemen)	Military officers and civil officials	Yangin
	Jungin (middle-class)	Low-ranking officials, district administrative officials and technical experts	
The ruled class	Sangin (common people)	People who were in agriculture, commerce, and handicraft	Cheonin
	Cheonin (low-class people)	Servants, entertainer, shamans, prostitutes and butchers	

The Joseon Dynasty was a society oriented around noblemen (Yangban). Originally, only government officials (military officers and civil officials) were called Yangban, but this changed in the Joseon Dynasty. That is, Yangban in the Joseon Dynasty referred to persons who were not only government officials, but also who were in proper social positions to be eligible for government official status. In the early years of the Joseon Dynasty, there were two hereditary social positions: Yangin and Cheonin . According to the occupations of the Yangin, there were distinctions among the Sa (scholar), Nong (farmer), Gong (mechanic), and Sang (merchant). As regal authority had been firmly established, however, government officials set their social position firmly as the ruling class. Low-ranking officials, district administrative officials, and technical experts were called Jungin (middle-class people). Sangin (common people) were people who were in agriculture, commerce, and handicraft. Lastly, Cheonmin (low-class people) were servants, entertainers, shamans, prostitutes, and butchers. In particular, servants who belonged to an individual or public organization could be sold, purchased, and inherited.

APPENDIX III
조선왕조의 업적
['Accomplishments of the 조선 Dynasty']

The Joseon Dynasty followed the Goryeo Dynasty. It was founded in 1392 by King Taejo Yi Seong-Gye. The Dynasty lasted for 529 years, and ended in 1910. A total of 27 kings reigned during the Joseon Dynasty, with the last king being King Sunjong. The following is a brief overview of the major historical events from the Joseon Dynasty: First of all, it is known for its fourth king, King Sejong, the king who commissioned the creation of Hangeul. In 1443, Hangeul, was first called *Hunminjeongeum* (훈민정음 訓民正音: teach (훈) people (민) right (정), sound (음)) which means to teach people the right word, and it demonstrates the purpose of the creation of *hangeul*. The writing system was created by King Sejong and scholars of *Jiphyenjeon*, the research center for scholars and studies in the Palace. With the help of scholars of *Jiphyenjeon*, King Sejong also contributed to the development of scientific technology. In 1442, he invented the odometer and had one installed in Seoul and in every city in the provinces. This use of the odometer was the first in the world.

Taekwondo was enjoyed usually among soldiers since the time of the Goguryeo period. However, Taekwondo was popularized during Joseon Dynasty. People began to enjoy this type of physical training and participation in martial arts competitions in everyday life.

An important war during the Joseon Dynasty was the Imjin Wae Ran (The Imjin Japanese Rebellion, 1592-1598). This war broke out because of the Japanese invasion of Joseon. It lasted for seven years. The war ended in victory for Joseon. The person who greatly contributed to Joseon's victory was Admiral Yi Sun-Sin and Kobukson, Admiral Yi's Turtle Ship. The Turtle Ship was the first ironclad warship in the world that was designed and built by Admiral Yi. Imjin Wae Ran (Imjin Japanese Rebellion) was the crucial historical events and it affected not only economy, politics and culture but also people's daily lives.

APPENDIX IV

Scripts of skits and puppet plays from 왕의 남자

1. 장님놀이 (Blind man skit)

((장생, 공길 둘 다 맹인 연기를 한다. 지팡이질을 하고 가다 서로 부딪친다))

((Jangsaeng and Gonggil play at being blind. Exaggeratedly, they walk with pretend canes and bump into each other as they speak.))

장생: 야 이놈아 눈 달아뒀다 뭐해

(Hey, watch where you're going.)

공길: 야 이놈아 눈 달아뒀다 뭐해. 눈이 삐었나

(Hey watch where you're going. Sprained your eyes, did you?)

장생: 눈은 안 삐고 저 산을 넘다가 다리를 삐긔했지 아니 근데 이 소리가 강 건너 강봉사

(Not my eyes, but my legs did coming over the hill. Hey you sound like Kang the Blind.)

공길: 아니 이 냄새 들건너 봉봉사

(And you stink like Bong the Blind.)

장생: 아이고 아이고 반갑구만

(Well, hi fellow, well met.)

((둘이 안으려다 엇갈린다))

((They try to hug each other but missed.))

장생: 아이고 이봐 나 여기 있고 너 거기 있어

(Let's see, am I over here, and you over there?)

공길: 아 나 여기 있고 너 거기 있지

(No, I'm over here and you over there.)

장생: 아 아이고 다리야

(oh my legs are tired.)

((둘이 안으려도 또 엇갈린다))

((They try to hug each other but missed again.))

장생: 아이고 나 여기 있고 너 거기 있어

(I am here and you are there.)

공길: 아 나 여기 있고 너 거기 있지

(No I am here and you are there.)

장생: 어디 어디 어디

(Where? Where? Where?)

공길: 여기 여기

(Here. Here.)

((둘이 안고 웃는다))

((Finally they hug and laugh.))

2. 그림자 놀이(Shadow play)

((연산군이 왕과 왕자 인형을 가지고 공길에게 보여준다.))

((King Yeonsan is performing a shadow show to Gonggil with two puppets: king and prince.))

- 왕자: 아바마마 어머니가 그림습니다
(Father, I long to see mother.)
- 왕: 네 어미에 대해서는 생각지도 말라고 하지 않았더냐
(Did I not tell thee to forget her?)
- 왕자: 아바마마 한번만이라도 어머니를
(Sir, I beg of thee, just this once.)
- 왕: 이 못난 놈 네가 그러고도 성군이 될 수 있겠느냐
(Weak in will. Thou art fit to become but a challenging.)
- 왕자: 아바마마 아바마마 아바마마
(Father, I beg thee.)

3. 인형 놀이 (Puppet show)

((공길이가 탈을 쓴 두 인형을 가지고 자기와 장생의 이야기를 왕에게 들려준다))

((Gonggil is performing a puppet show to King Yeonsan with two puppets wearing masks, and the puppets look like Jangsaeng and Gonggil in the play. Gonggil is telling his own story to the King.))

- 공길: 미안해
(I'm so sorry.)
- 장생: 뭐가
(For what?)
- 공길: 주인 마님 금불이 내가 훔쳐어
(I was the one who stole the ring.)
- 장생: 같이 도망가자
(Let's run away together.)
- (공길 손목을 긋는다)
- 장생: 아래를 보지마
(Don't look down.)
- 공길: 무서워
(I'm scared.)
- 장생: 줄 위는 반 허공이야 땅도 아니고 하늘도 아닌 반 허공. 내 평생 맹인 연기만 하고 살았는데 막상 맹인이 되고 나니 맹인 연기 한번 못해 보고 죽는 게 한이네 그려 내 이제 제대로 한번 놀 수 있는데 말이요
(All around the rope is an abyss. Neither land nor sky, but an abyss. All my life, I played at being blind. Now that I am really blind. It's a shame I'll never get to play one. And I was just getting good at it too.)