

Toward a comparative study on Japanese *Enka* and Korean *Trot*

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1. Significance of a comparative study on Japanese *Enka* and Korean *Trot*

Firstly, *Enka* is one of the genre names of Japanese popular music, and *Trot* is one of the genre names of Korean popular music.

Enka and *Trot* were created based on modern western music and their traditional music in the 1920s/the 30s, and have changed in various ways in the past 100 years.

Although they have some different aspects due to distinctions in ethnic, cultural, and verbal backgrounds, they have many similarities because they share western popular music and social backgrounds of the times commonly.

By the way, the 1920s/the 30s, when *Trot* was established, was a period when Japan ruled Korea as a colony, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that it was performed under the Japanese record company. Before World War 2, there was a close relationship between *Enka* and *Trot*, but after the War, *Enka* was considered a target of denial in South Korea.

There were some debates on Japanese *Enka* and Korean *Trot*, but I think that none of them succeeded, because popular music study was not conducted sufficiently, then. Besides, the knowledge of *Trot* in Japan and *Enka* in South Korea was lacking like a missing link.

There are still no clear definitions to which everyone consents in the first place.

As studies on *Enka* in Japan and *Trot* in South Korea are progressing, we'll be able to compare *Enka* and *Trot* objectively now.

This is why I compare Japanese *Enka* and Korean *Trot* here.

Through this comparative study, it will be possible to clarify the missing link so far, and proceed with both *Enka's* study and *Trot's* study. Furthermore, it is expected that it will deepen the exchange between *Enka* and *Trot*, and promote cross-cultural understandings in Japan and Korea.

2. Toward a comparative study

As a method of comparative study between *Enka* and *Trot*, I will clarify similarities and differences in genre names, transition processes, tunes, and lyrics of *Enka* and *Trot*.

2-1) *Enka* and *Trot* as genre name

It should be noted that although the music genre names such as 唱歌 school songs, and 軍歌 military songs in *Kanji* were the same, *Enka* and *Trot* were different genre names in Japan and Korea.

At first, the names of *Enka* and *Trot* did not exist before.

Both *Enka* and *Trot* were made as genre names of popular music in the 1960s/the 70s, and those genre names were applied retroactively to the 流行歌 *Ryūkō-ka* (popular song) before World War 2.

The etymology of *Enka* name came from the Meiji-*Enka* in the latter half of the 19th century in Japan. Generally, *Enka* is written 演歌 *Enka* in *Kanji*.

In the case of South Korea, *Trot* is an abbreviation for Foxtrot. The etymology of *Trot* name came from the dance music Foxtrot, which was popular in the United States in the early 20th century.

And, *Trot* is sometimes called 뽕짝 *ppon-jjak* also.

2-2) Transition stages of *Enka* and *Trot*

(1) The 1920s/the 30s: *Old Enka* in Japan, and *Old Trot* in Korea appeared.

They were new and fashionable songs, and were accepted mainly by young people in the big cities. The backgrounds to the formation of *Old Enka* and *Old Trot* are 1) the fluctuation of traditional society and the emergence

of early mass society, 2) the emergence of mass media such as records, movies, and radio, and 3) the influence of Western music and American popular music.

(2) The 1960s/the 70s: *Middle Enka* in Japan, and *Middle Trot* in South Korea appeared.

Japan and South Korea reached a turning point in popular music. The genre names *Enka* and *Trot* were proposed for the first time, and the typical *Enka* and typical *Trot* styles were established.

During this period, Japan and South Korea began high economic growth and entered full-fledged mass societies.

(3) Immediately after that: *New Enka* in Japan, and *New Trot* in South Korea appeared.

Both are influenced by new pop music, and the typical *Enka* and typical *Trot* have changed.

(4) The 2000s: *New generation Trot* appeared only in South Korea.

New generation Trot was a fusion of K-pop and was accepted by young people in Korea.

In this way, until the 2000s, there are relatively similar changes in both Japan and South Korea, but after the 2000s, *New generation Trot* that was strongly influenced by K-pop appeared only in South Korea.

2-3) Tunes

As for the scale, the so-called *Yonanuki* scale, which is a pentatonic scale without the 4th and 7th notes, was often preferred for *Old and Middle Enka* and *Old and Middle Trot*. It can be said that the *Yonanuki* scale was common to *Enka* and *Trot*, but there was criticism in South Korea as the <Japanese colored song>.

2-4) Lyrics

Japanese *Enka* lyrics themes are various ones such as 艶歌 *Enka* (song of a love affair), 怨歌 *Enka* (song of a grudge), 応援歌 *Enka* (song of support and cheer), 宴会歌 *Enka* (song of the party)

On the other hand, there are two types of Korean *Trot* lyrics themes. They are 恨 *Han*(grudge), and 興 *Heung*(excitement).

Han had been seen a lot in Korean *Old and Middle Trot* and had been maximized on Lee Mi-Ja. *Heung* was characteristic of *New Trot* like Joo Hyun-Mi.

As common lyrics, there are subjects such as thinking about his/hers hometowns and family, and lovers. There is no difference between Japanese *Enka* and Korean *Trot*.

By the way, Ruth benedict pointed out 義理 *GIRI* (moral obligation) as a characteristic of Japanese culture and behavior, and this *GIRI* is also reflected in *Enka*'s lyrics. Also, *Enka*'s lyrics include 人情 *NIN'Jō* (human feeling), which resembles 情 *Jeong*(affection) in Korea. I think that Korean *Jeong*'s feelings are bigger and deeper than Japan's.

In this way, the expression of lyrics has different social, cultural, and historical backgrounds in each country.

2-5) singing style

The typical singing style of *Enka* and *Trot* are characterized by special singing styles drawn from their traditional music.

3. Today's *Enka* in Japan and *Trot* in South Korea

Recently, J-pop and K-pop are expanding in the music market in both Japan and South Korea, while *Enka* and *Trot* are reducing.

In addition, karaoke machines were invented, and nostalgic melodies were newly revived among middle and aged people.

Now, in South Korea, *Trot* is accepted not only by middle and aged people, but also by young people. And especially the *Trot* boom has happened.

In Japan, on the other hand, the *Enka* boom has not happened.

4. Results

Western music had been modified to become familiar to the Japanese and Korean peoples. It can be said that they have acquired vernacular because both *Enka* and *Trot* have become unique genres in those countries.

Especially in South Korea, there has been some opposition to *Trot* from the standpoint of ethnicity as 倭色歌謡 (Japanese colored song), but with the emergence of *New generation Trot* and the *Trot* boom in recent years, many people regard *Trot* as unique Korean music.

It can be said that Korean *Trot* has acquired a clear vernacular, so there is a big difference between Japanese *Enka* and South Korean *Trot*.

By the way, the overall music situation is changing worldwide, commercialism is expanding, music genres are becoming borderless, and various fusion music is appearing nowadays.

Enka and *Trot* are not only diversifying, but also are becoming borderless.

Therefore, compared to *Enka*, *Trot* has a particularly large change, so it can be said that what is *Trot* is being questioned again.

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