

The Confluence of the Israelite Girl in 2 Kings 5 and Baridegi in a Korean Myth: Toward *Hanpuri* Hermeneutics for Korean Women

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Introduction

In this paper, I argue that the wisdom and courage of two girls - one in the Hebrew Bible and the other in a Korean myth - enable them to become the subjects of Minjung-women-hermeneutical conversations within the confluence of two heritages of Korean women. The confluence of two stories has been a theme of biblical studies in Minjung theology over the past years. As *Imago Dei* appears in the creation event, Minjung's narratives are located in Minjungs' events. For Koreans, the events often occur in *han*¹⁾, which both girls have experienced.

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1) "*Han*" is the suffering of the innocent who are caught in the wicked situation of

The Israelite girl was captured by Aramean soldiers and exiled from her home, while Baridegi was abandoned by her royal parents. Each girl experienced “*han* as the convergence of all contradiction and enmity.”²⁾ However, the Israelite girl helped to heal the chief of the Aramean army, while Baridegi founds a divine medicine to revive her parents. In the two stories, the *han*-givers have problems of illness, and the *han*-takers function as the healers of illness. At the same time, these two girls achieved release from their *han* through reconciliation with their enemies by doing *hanpuri*.³⁾ If the Israelite girl still suffered from *han*, she would not have been able to help Naaman with her wisdom and courage. When Baridegi met her parents, she became released from her *han* and, later, became a goddess. The two girls do not take revenge on their enemies, but sought reconciliation with them in order to live a holistic life.⁴⁾ They reached the climax of *hanpuri* by restoring life to the *han*-givers.

I often see an old lady in a Korean traditional market nearby my house. She draws a cart filled with materials to be recycled. It seems that she supports herself by selling waste paper. In my eyes, she has been abandoned by her father, husband, or children. However, she keeps her eyes alive, and wants to meet others in order to release her *han*.

As Korean Minjung women live in multi-encounters based on both biblical and Korean traditions, *hanpuri* hermeneutics begins the confluence

helplessness... The experience of the powerless, the marginalized, and the voiceless in the world can be summed up as *han*.” (Andrew Sung Park, “The Bible and Han,” in *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned-Against*, eds., Andrew Sung Park and Susan Nelson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 47). For the feminist theological interpretation of Korean women’s *han* and culture, see Young-sil Choi, “Creating a Culture of Reconciliation and Life through *Hanpuri* and *Hanmaji* - A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the *Miyalhalmi* Dance in the *Bongsan Talchum* (Bongsan Mask Dance),” *Madang* 11.15 (June 2009): 117-146.

2) Kim Yongbok, “Suh Namdong-ui Han Damron-eh Kwanhayuh” [*Han* of Suh Namdong], in *Suh Namdong-kwa Oh Neul-ui Minjung Shin Hak* [Suh Namdong and Today’s Minjung Theology (Seoul: Tong Yon, 2009), 25.

3) *Hanpuri* is “to release from Han.” (<http://socialethics.org/wwwb/CrazyWWWBoard.cgi?db=article&mode=read&num=258&page=1&ftype=6&fval=&backdepth=1>, accessed Oct. 16, 2011).

4) Cf. Ibid.

of women-related narratives in the two traditions.

Yet, such a confluence of two stories cannot take place without some basic common ground in conversation. The shared common ground provides a space for people meeting in “mutual relationship.”⁵⁾ Facing the necessity of a common ground, I choose the Bible as a meeting place that can serve as a bridge, since the Bible is a “‘talking book,’ inviting dialogue and conversation.”⁶⁾ Their mutual platform is *han*. The Israelite girl was exiled, while Baridegi was abandoned. Thus, I argue that an application of new form criticism to a comparative study between the Israelite girl in 2 Kings 5 and Baridegi provides a common space, where two cultures can meet and dialogue in *hanpuri* hermeneutics. The confluence of the stories of these two women shows a dialogical hermeneutics of *han* for Minjung women in diverse cultures.

When compared, the stories reveal what roles the Israelite girl and Baridegi play within these bicultural accounts of religious healing. By conducting a mutual conversation before higher authority figures, the two women functioned as powerful mediators in each of the two cultures. For women who have less voice in churches, the Israelite girl is an example of one of the powerful females in the Bible. Baridegi's courage also has great impact on informing Korean women of their identity and thus enhances their abilities in the *hanpuri* situations. These narratives empower Korean women to live out their wisdom and courage. Thus, I am interested in the meeting of these girls through new form criticism⁷⁾ to excavate common languages for *hanpuri* hermeneutical conversation in the different cultures.

5) Cf. Martin Buber, *I and Thou: A New Translation with Prologue “I and You” and Notes* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 58.

6) Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Mayknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 42.

7) To understand new form criticism, see my dissertation in the following, “Although form criticism comes from the German scholars after Herman Gunkel's understanding of the Hebrew Bible in the early 20th century, this method has been developed and expanded by recent scholars, particularly Rolf P. Knierim and Marvin A. Sweeney. Their form criticism can be called ‘new form criticism’ compared with Gunkel's classic form criticism (Hye Kyung Park, “Why Not Her? Form Critical Interpretation of the Named and Unnamed Women in the Elijah and Elisha Traditions,” PhD diss. Claremont Graduate University (May, 2011), 14).

New form criticism is very helpful in fostering a space where two narratives can find common language through the unique linguistic and communicative forms of the given texts. New form criticism also shows a way of overcoming “anti-theology,”⁸⁾ which comes from disagreement between Minjung theology and dogmatic theologies.

This work will reveal how powerless women gain leadership in reconciliation with their contradictions in *hanpuri*.

Methodology

According to Noh Soon Kwak, “the Hebrew Bible is the fruit of the Jewish culture.”⁹⁾ In the Hebrew Bible, the Israelite culture and tradition importantly seep into the relationship between God and Israel. The Jewish people preserve their cultural heritages in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, it is important to understand the cultural discourse in order to interpret the biblical narratives in the Hebrew Bible. Like the Jewish heritages, the Korean cultures have formed various Korean traditions. When one conceptualizes Korean biblical studies in dialogue with the Hebrew biblical traditions, one needs to appreciate Korean culture, spirituality, sensibility and thoughts. *Han* represents a Korean culture because “*han* is a motive for Korean cultural atmosphere.”¹⁰⁾ *Han* is an important interjection, since it connects the women by a common atmosphere of experiencing oppression in all times and places. Women in both biblical narratives and Korean traditions share the common concern of suffering from patriarchal societies. *Han* summarizes the unfair experiences of women, the Minjung of Minjung. Women-related narratives in the Hebrew Bible and Korean myths show a cultural-biblical encounter between the Hebrew Bible and Korean traditions. This confluence leads Korean women to read the Hebrew Bible as the hopeful reference of keeping their Korean-Christian identity and in

8) Kwang Sun Suh, “*Suh Nam Dong-kwa 5.18, Kerigo Yuwoel-ui Chotbul*,” [Suh Ham Dong and 5.18, and the Candles of June] in *Suh Nam Dong-kwa Oh Neul-ui Minjung Shin Hak* [Suh Nam Dong and Today’s Minjung Theology (Seoul: Tong Yon, 2009), 78-82.

9) Noh Soon Kwak, “Han Kook Sung Suh-ui Min Jok Shin Hak-joeok Cho Myung” [New Perspective of Min Jok Theology in Korean Biblical Studies], ed. Sung Ro Cho (Seoul: Hyundai Shin Hak Institute, 1993), 120.

10) Ibid., 51.

assuaging their *han*-full¹¹⁾ experiences. This reading truly makes the Hebrew Bible come alive.

Shin Bae Park points out that form criticism is a methodology for developing Korean culture biblical criticism¹²⁾ and his suggestion results in the presentation of a creative interpretation for Koreans. It is necessary for Koreans to draw attention to Korean cultural traditions in order to create Korean biblical interpretations. Creative methodology requires a dialogue between Korean heritages and biblical traditions for Korean readers of the Hebrew Bible. Creative methodology occurs through the intersectional atmosphere between Korean identity and biblical reference. Korean identity appears in the traditional narratives. New form criticism is very helpful for initiating Korean women's hermeneutics. It focuses on finding the meanings of each text by analyzing the linguistic elements, which consist of structure, genre, setting, and intention within both written texts and oral texts, synchronically and diachronically. Thus, it invites Korean women to the meeting place of the biblical narratives in dialogue with the Bible by reclaiming their own identity.

Every human language, including the Hebrew texts of the Bible and Korean sacred literature, is based on a unique linguistic system. This fact allows all the text to be analyzed by new form criticism. The dialogue of two different texts requires common linguistic elements as their meeting place. New form criticism can offer this common ground in the study of different texts, since this methodology helps to find the meanings of a text whose goal is to achieve communication.¹³⁾ New form criticism first identifies the unique linguistic and communicative form of any given text. It then provides a basis for comparative study. Furthermore, this communication opens up a hermeneutical discourse between a text and its readers who attempt to dialogue in the different cultures that show women's *han* as a hermeneutical turning point.

11) Young-sil Choi, "Creating a Culture of Reconciliation and Life through *Hanpuri* and *Hanmaji* - A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the *Miyalhalmi* Dance in the *Bongsan Talchum* (*Bongsan* Mask Dance)," 117.

12) Shin Bae Park, "Han Kook Mun Hwa-jeok Sung Suh Hae Seok Bang Bub Ron [Korea Cultural Biblical Criticism]" in *Shin Hak Sah Sang* [Christian Thought] 140 (Spring 2008): 59.

13) Marvin A. Sweeney, "Form Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1999), 58.

Summary of the Two Stories

In 2 Kings 5, an unnamed Israelite girl was captured by Aramean soldiers from Israel and taken to Aram. She became a slave girl in the house of Naaman, chief of the Aramean army and who was also a leper. The unnamed girl told her mistress about Elisha, the prophet from Samaria, who she thought surely could heal her master. Ultimately Naaman was cured by following Elisha's directions.

Baridegi was a princess in the Korean oral tradition. King Okui in the Bulla nation had sought the help of prophecy in his pursuit to marry Queen Kildae. A prophet told the king he would beget three sons if he married the queen the following year. However, the king did not listen to the prophet's words and married the queen in that very same year. This marriage resulted in seven daughters. The king commanded his servant to throw the seventh baby into the sea. Her name was Baridegi, a name meaning "the abandoned one." She was discovered and raised by an old couple and in spite of her lack of formal education, she grew up to be very wise.

When she was fifteen years old, her biological parents became severely ill. In their dream, a divine child told them that their illness was due to abandoning their daughter Baridegi, and that the king and the queen could be healed if they received a divine medicine. The king's servant went out to seek Baridegi and asked her to find the medicine. After meeting with her father who had once abandoned her, Baridegi went on an adventure into a foreign nation to find this divine medicine for her parents. During this adventure, she married Mujangseung (a totem) and bore seven sons. On her way back from the adventure, she saw the funeral bier of her parents. She put the medicine into the mouths of her deceased parents and they were revived.

Form¹⁴⁾/ Structure

Form criticism first identifies the unique formulation of each narrative and that comparative study of the two unique forms then reveals a commonality:

14) The form of narratives refers to finding the unique formula within a text. Form is an important component in describing literary structure. Literary structure highlights the content of the narrative to show the meaning of a text.

each story tells of a lowly girl who becomes a powerful figure, capable of providing solutions to a problem faced by the royal protagonists.

In 2 Kings 5, after recovering from leprosy, Naaman confesses,¹⁵⁾ “there is no God in all the earth except in Israel” which is a formula of incomparability,¹⁶⁾ expressing the superiority of the God of Israel. After meeting the God of Israel in his religious experience of being healed, Naaman credits his recovery to YHWH, instead of Elisha. However, Naaman seems not to keep his credit to YHWH, because his incomparable confession to God is compromised by his request in verse 18 in which he asks pardon of YHWH when he bows down to the house of Rimmon, the Aramean storm-God. The formula of incomparability of Naaman shifts to his uncertainty of YHWH’s superiority. This is a reverse of the situation of the Israelite girl who lives in Aram, but who recognizes the Israelite God’s healing power.

The Israelite girl’s words are short in v. 3, but her function in the narrative is important: “She said to her mistress, אִי־לִי (‘*aḥale*, if only) my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then, he would cure him of his leprosy.” She says אִי־לִי (‘*aḥale*), the interjection form with the quality of the ancient meaning in order to express her compassion. The use of this word signals the elevation of the Israelite girl’s status: the word *aḥulap* is used by the deity and the king in cuneiform texts. For example, “Sorrowfully I will say *aḥulap!* for that young man.”¹⁷⁾ *Aḥulap*, the predecessor of the word of ‘*aḥale*, is used in the royal setting to express lamentation.

Her choice of a word highlighted the form of her speech as a

15) “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel.” (2 Kings 5:15a, NRSV).

16) Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, and Lamentations, Part 2* (FOTL 15; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 542.

17) *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, vol. 1 A, part I. Editorial Board: Ignace J. Gelb, Benno Landsberger, A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner (Chicago, IL: The Oriental Institute and Glückstadt, Germany: J. J. Augustin Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964), 214. This *aʾulap* occurs in the voice of an Assyrian mother-goddess of the texts, Sm 1366 and K 6849. She laments for her son’s leaving, and her lamentation is emphasized in the repetitions of *aʾulap* (Carl Frank, “Ein Klagelied der Muttergöttin aus Uruk,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 40, no. 1/2 [1931]: 81-94).

lamentation and elevated her status to one that is above a maid, at least so far as she knew the royal word for the expression of her sadness. In addition, this lamentation was changed to the happy moment of expecting the healing of Naaman's leprosy. וְשָׁמַח (v. 3a) and אָז (v. 3b) are a pair that indicate the completion of a wish. The Israelite girl's lamentation did not end in hopelessness, but it anticipated Naaman's recovery through the prophet of Israel.

In addition, the Israelite girl is the one who introduced the prophetic identity of Elisha in v. 3. No matter how prominent the prophet Elisha might have been in Samaria, no one would have recognized him as a prophet without her introduction. When she introduced Elisha to her mistress, she called Elisha, "the prophet who was in Samaria," which is similar to a recognition formula in the form of the prophetic proof saying. As Marvin A. Sweeney points out, the phrase, "and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel,"¹⁸⁾ in v. 8 is an early form of the prophetic proof saying, and the Israelite girl already attested to the prophet's existence and his ability to heal Naaman in this formula, which is used by a prophet in a prophetic speech.¹⁹⁾ The Israelite girl also recognized the prophetic ability of Elisha in using a similar recognition formula. The little girl's words are no longer insignificant in the DtrH's literature. Her wise and brave speech functions as a mediator between Aram and Israel, and as the Aramean leader comes to invoke the sovereignty of YHWH, his religious nature is touched by the healing.

In the Baridegi narrative, Baridegi used the self-revelation formula, "I"²⁰⁾ when she introduced herself to Mujangseung, saying "I am the seventh son of the king." Wise Baridegi not only chose to present herself as male to gain advantage in the long arduous search for the medicine, but also used a highly affirmative language in presenting herself. Just as God revealed Godself to Abram, saying "I am your shield (Gen 15:1)," so did she use language of self-revelation appropriate to the context of the other.

In response to Baridegi's request, Mujangseung asked for a payment.

18) Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 299.

19) Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (FOTL 19; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 353.

20) Rolf P. Knierim and George W. Coats, *Numbers* (FOTL 6; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 367.

Having no money, she negotiated with Mujangseung to do three jobs for nine years instead of paying the money. He demanded her to chop trees for three years, to make fire for three years, and to draw water for three years. When she heard his demands, she repeated three times “Yes, I will do,” a commitment formula.²¹⁾ This formula is a give and take formula such as “I give in to the order that you give to me.”²²⁾ In addition, repetition is a literary pattern to present “dramatic emphasis.”²³⁾ The repetitive use of commitment formula emphasizes Baridegi’s eagerness and commitment to bring the medicine to her parents. She was so determined to cure her parents that she was willing to endure harsh labor for nine years. Her resolution for her parents can be compared with the Israelite girl’s resolution to help Naaman. This formulaic analysis indicates the commonplace for dialogue, since the two girls’ hope for curing authority figures was formalized by their formulas, which appear in their linguistic descriptions.

Genre

The narrative of 2 Kings 5 represents various genres such as a prophetic narrative, judgmental prophecy or petition. Scholars have usually described 2 Kings 5 as prophetic legend, because one sees Elisha as a miracle worker. However, the Israelite girl played a role of “a prophetess by foretelling the cure of her master if he comes before the prophet in Samaria (2 Kings 5:3).”²⁴⁾ Her prophecy is fulfilled in Naaman’s healing.

In this respect, a similar prophetic voice can be heard in a current event. After his self-immolation in protest over the ill treatment of garment workers, his mother, So Sun Lee, interpreted the death of her son Tae Il Jeon, as his plea, “Please, I want you to complete the work that I could not do. After I die, you will cry with students and workers for the rights of laborers.” For 40 years she faithfully carried on the struggle, suffering imprisonment and winning awards for her efforts, and eventually

21) Gerstenberger, Psalms, and Lamentations, Part 2, 512.

22) This formula explains the intricate relationship between two parties. After she worked for *Mujangseung* for nine years, *Mujangseung* asked her to marry him, a transformation from the working relationship.

23) Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narratives: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 388.

24) Park, “Why Not Her?” 346.

succeeding in changing the treatment of workers. So Sun Lee followed the prophetic voices of her son through all her life until she passed away on September 3rd 2011. While the Israelite girl proclaimed her prophecy, So Sun Lee followed it through her life.

On the other hand, in v. 10, Elisha failed to play the role of a prophet when he gave the direction to Naaman. Elisha did not appear before Naaman, but gave the direction of washing in v. 10. This direction made Naaman angry and he initially refused to follow Elisha's direction. However, Naaman's servants suggested that he follow Elisha's direction (v. 13) in order to recover from leprosy. Without the advice of his servants, Naaman would not have followed Elisha's direction, and would have had no chance to be healed: "This would have resulted in no prophetic role for Elisha."²⁵⁾ Thus, Naaman did not initially realize the prophecy intended by Elisha. The girl's prophecy was readily fulfilled. As such, this narrative forms the confrontation story genre,²⁶⁾ weighing against each other these two prophets' prophetic failure and success.

The Baridegi narrative consists of various genres: myth, messenger speech, heroic saga, and prophetic narrative. It contains a prophetic narrative in the sense that the king sought a prophecy about his marital future. Prophets also appeared later in the king's dream to suggest he could be healed. At the same time, the Baridegi narrative is a myth, in which Baridegi became a goddess who guides the dead to the underworld. Baridegi functions as a pioneer in this myth. Thus, the examination of the genre of the two narratives discloses the identities of these two women as prophetic, courageous women who can serve as examples for Korean women. The genre of prophetic narrative in both stories presents a dialogical hermeneutics, presenting women's central roles in the stories: a prophetic role for the Israelite girl and a pioneer role for Baridegi. The generic study of the two women-related stories is an important witness to the confluence of two stories by Namdong Suh in Minjung Theology.

25) Ibid.

26) Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 518.

Setting

Both narratives share the sickness/healing concept of higher positions in a royal setting. In 2 Kings 5, the unnamed Israelite girl's role can be highlighted by comparison with its male-dominated settings. First, in an army setting, verse 2 tells us that a large brigade of soldiers captured only one Israelite girl as a prisoner of war, and forced her to serve the wife of Naaman. She was small, but knew how to cure Naaman of his leprosy, something his mighty soldiers could not do. Second, in this royal setting, the Israelite king misunderstood the letter from the Aramean king asking for a cure for Naaman's leprosy. The Israelite king's action and speech treated the letter as a declaration of war from the Aramean king. The kings of Aram and Israel wanted to place Naaman's leprosy in a political and war-like situation, which was not the problem at hand. It was only the girl who understood the real problem of Naaman's illness and who provided the solution to the problem by recommending the prophet in Samaria.

Similarly, in King Okui's court, no one was willing to find the medicine for the king and the queen. When the king commanded his servants to go find the medicine, they answered, "No living men can go to the undersea world to find the medicine, only the dead can go." What a miserable answer. Yet, Baridegi the daughter once abandoned by the king, followed the king's wishes. There was nothing that the royal court of King Okui could do for the king, just as the army and kings in the Naaman narrative were incompetent to heal him.

In addition to being the only one who knew how to heal Namaan, the Israelite girl also knew how to survive in the midst of disaster and to deal with the situation of a foreign nation. Likewise, Baridegi survived the adventure, even in the blood sea. Both girls were uprooted from their home nation and placed in a foreign nation. The unnamed Israelite girl was transferred by the army, while Baridegi was uprooted by her father's abandonment. Their situations provide a common place to dialogue, as their unfamiliar contexts forced them to change their social or cultural settings. However, they maintain their original cultures: for the Israelite girl, her knowledge of YHWH, and for Baridegi, her respect for her parents. While it is unfortunate that these women were transported by authority figures, they nonetheless became a bridge of connecting different cultures and survived their new *Sitz im Leben* as demonstrated by a comparative study of

the two settings. The women were transported by figures of great power. Korean women can meet the dialogical hermeneutics with these two foremothers, as they are situated in the tensions between two cultures, ready to be *hanpurists* in their own *Sitz im Leben*.

Intention and Conclusion:²⁷⁾ *Hanpuri Hermeneutics*

The illness of human beings appeals to the religious nature of the human mind. The Israelite girl in 2 Kings 5 and Baridegi in a Korean oral tale show the contexts of illness as their social or literary setting. In a compassionate response to the illness of higher authority figures, the two women figures, the Israelite girl and Baridegi, resolved the problems of the illness. Each higher power figure in the two women's narratives, namely Elisha and Naaman, and King *Okui* and his court, had his own power, although they could not cure their own illnesses. The takers of *han* became the subjects of *hanpuri*, while the givers of *han* could not remove their problems. The power and abilities that are acknowledged and practiced by the conventional authority figures of Elisha and Naaman, and King *Okui* and his court, became powerless in their inability to solve their own illnesses. It is the ordinary girls who applied their wisdom and courage to the given situations and provided the way to heal. It is not power, but wisdom and courage - characteristics the male power figures do not have - that empower these two women to play prophetic roles in their multicultural contexts. Therefore, the illnesses provoke knowledge of a religious nature, and the healing process confirms the female characters as the leaders of the narratives. Without the girls' knowledge, wisdom, and courage, the powerful men's illnesses would not be cured.

For Korean women, women-related narratives such as those of the unnamed girl in 2 Kings 5 and Baridegi, provide opportunities to participate in the conversation between two cultures. The two women demonstrate their interpretation of their lives and use their wisdom and courage to connect cultures and ponder how to be bridges between different cultures. Therefore, the Israelite girl and Baridegi, as the ancestresses of Korean women, participate in the hermeneutical conversation²⁸⁾ in the common

27) Form criticism intends to find the meaning of a text in a concluding stage of the analysis.

concern of women leadership in these healing narratives. *Hanpuri* hermeneutics involves a conversation between texts and readers who, even though they are innocent, have suffered from patriarchal traditions. Thus, this hermeneutics shows the powerful meaning of stories to release Korean women from *han*. Even though the two women lived in different times and places, form criticism's exploration and comparison of their stories opens a new ground for Korean women's *hanpuri*-hermeneutical conversation.

Abstract

Minjung theology has been interested in the confluence of biblical stories and Korean traditions. The mutual relationship between the two narratives (biblical and Korean) is a hermeneutical process of reading the Bible in Korean contexts. For Korean women, the hermeneutical confluence appears in the mutual meetings of women in the biblical narratives and Korean narratives. *Han* is a platform to encounter meeting between the two women: Baridegi and the Israelite girl (2 Kings 5). They suffer from *han* in their own contexts. The Israelite girl had been captured by Aramean soldiers and exiled to Aram, while Baridegi was abandoned by her royal parents. Even though these two girls innocently suffered from *han*, they showed their wisdom and courage through their narratives. Furthermore, they are available to become the subjects of women-hermeneutical conversations. To

28) A dialogical relationship between texts and readers is emphasized by Martin Buber and later Gadamer (Steven Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 19). In addition, Buber redefines a notion of interpretation as a dialogic relationship between the reader and the text. With this latter move Buber opened new ground for his hermeneutic theory and anticipated some of the hermeneutic developments usually associated with the contemporary philosopher of interpretation theory, Hans-Georg Gadamer. In this respect, the dialogic relationship between texts and readers expands to a conversational meeting between a text and another text, because a reader has already an influence on diverse texts. One of Gadamer's hermeneutical conversations refers to the involvement of readers during the process of conducting conversation (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, New York: Continuum 1988, 345). Thus, he emphasizes, "we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it." (Ibid.).

theorize *hanpuri* hermeneutics, new form criticism functions as a critical method of the interpretation of the two narratives. New form criticism focuses on finding the meanings of each text by analyzing the linguistic elements, which consist of structure, genre, setting, and intention synchronically and diachronically.

Both Baridegi and the Israelite girl function as the healers of their *han*-givers: Naaman and King Okui. How can the *han*-takers become the subjects of the healing process of their *han*-givers? An answer comes from the *hanpuri* of the two girls. Baridegi and the Israelite girl, the *han*-takers, achieve release from their *han* through reconciliation with their enemies by doing *hanpuri*. If the Israelite girl still suffered from *han* in her exiled situation in Aram, she would not be able to help Naaman with her wisdom. When Baridegi encounters her parents, she becomes released from her *han* and, later, becomes a goddess. The two girls' *hanpuri* does not lead them to revenge on their enemies, but helps them to seek genuine reconciliation with their high-authorities for a holistic life.

In particular, some scholars have interpreted Baridegi as a good daughter who respects her parents and takes care of them. However, her journey to the undersea world is a process of finding her identity. This journey results in her *hanpuri* and revives her parents. Their *hanpuri* does not simply ask the forgiveness of their *han*-givers, but it sincerely reveals the identity of the *han*-takers. The Israelite girl and Baridegi reach the climax of *hanpuri* by restoring life to the *han*-givers.

Hanpuri hermeneutics engages in dialogue with texts and the Korean women who are innocent, but who suffer from the patriarchal traditions. This hermeneutics shows the powerful meaning of stories to release Korean women from their *han*.

Key Words

Baridegi, 2 Kings 5, the Israelite girl, *Han*, *Hanpuri* Hermeneutics, Minjung, New Form Criticism.

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