

“ARIRANG”, Korean Folk Song

“Arirang” registered in the list of the world intangible cultural heritage is a typical folk song which has been popular among the Korean people long before.

Arirang, Arirang arariyo
I go over Arirang ridge
He who forsakes me
Will soon get a footsore.



This folk song sings about the legendary love of a maiden called Song Bu and a boy called Ri Rang. It has a gentle melody and lyrical rhythm.

The lyrics tell the sorrow and lamentation of the working people against the exploitative society and their desire for happiness through the depiction of such tender feelings between both lovers as the sorrow at having to part with a lover, yearning for him and hope of meeting him.

“Arirang” is a popular song easy to learn and sing. It is sung not only throughout the Korean peninsula, but also in all regions of the world where Koreans live.

The fact that our nation is called “Arirang nation” alone manifests that “Arirang” serves as a folk song peculiar to the Korean nation and as national common heritage which characterize the Korean nation.

In our country it was created or adapted in such various forms of theatrical art as orchestral music, songs, symphony and dances in the national and local art troupes and also introduced as a prelude to the multi-part feature film "Nation and Destiny" as well.

“Arirang”, the grand mass gymnastics and art performance was created as a world-level masterpiece and put on stage in April 2002 and thereafter the performance was staged annually with great success and registered on the Guinness Records in August 2007.

The folk song received international acclaim for its beautiful melody and was performed by many symphony orchestras and bands of various countries.

At the times of the national sufferings under the Japanese occupation (1905-1945) our people regarded the song as a symbol of the nation and singing the song as a demonstration of their will to adhere to the national character.

A Korean film created in 1926 was named after the title of the song and the song itself was taken as the theme song of the film.

When Son Ki Jong won the first place in the marathon race in the Summer Olympics held in 1936 in Germany, Koreans sang this song to display their national character to the world.

The men of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army during the anti-Japanese armed struggle braced their patriotic and fighting spirits for annihilating the enemy by singing this song.

As seen above, “Arirang” serves as a symbol of Korean folk song loved by all the Koreans whoever they are and wherever they live.

