

**Myung Suk Lee** is a distinguished Korean American artist, scholar, and founder of SUTRA DANCE, dedicated to preserving and sharing the sacred art of **Yeongsanjae**—a Korean Buddhist ritual dance and music tradition recognized as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 50. Her lifelong devotion to this cultural heritage has spanned over four decades, reaching audiences across the U.S., Moscow Russia.

Ms. Lee began dancing at the age of six in South Korea, without formal training or music, simply moving in front of a mirror—an intuitive beginning that would eventually lead to a lifetime of spiritual and artistic exploration. She has studied Korean Buddhist theory, liberal arts, chanting and drumming and **Yeongsanjae** since 1978, completing a decade of intensive study in Seoul. **Yeongsanjae**, which is similar to the type of opera, is a multidisciplinary ritual performed by monks and nuns combining chanting, music, dance, and visual art.

From 1987 to 2007, Lee performed on tour with her teacher and other top masters and their disciples, who is her teacher, **Ven Donghee Han**, a recognized Korean Intangible Cultural Treasure, and she became the first female best master in this field in Moscow and Korea. Another monk, the supreme master of **Yeongsanjae #50 Ven Guhae Kim** also is the only one whose name is registered with UNESCO. They performed and held workshops in over 20 U.S. cities and in Moscow, Russia, introducing this sacred tradition to international audiences. Notably, Lee received a certificate of appreciation from Ven Guhae Kim. She is the first and only artist for this genre in the U.S.

In 1991, she began performing, teaching, and choreographing in New York City. Since then, she has produced and directed more than 30 Buddhist performance works. While staying rooted in tradition, she has also reimagined **Yeongsanjae** for solo performance formats and adapted ancient temple folk paintings into folk dance.

A deeply personal moment marked her journey: on the day she performed in Manhattan in 2003, her mother passed away. As she stepped onto the stage, the lights went out and the audience paused in a spontaneous moment of silent condolence—a profound fusion of life, death, and art that reflects the spiritual depth of her work.

She has several glorious awards: Being featured on Westbeth's Exhibition and Artist pages 2025. INBI World received a diploma in Moscow Russia in 2008. She participated with the main members of **Yeongsanjae #50** and with the late **Ven Songam Park** who was in charge as leader of the highest position. Commemorative performance designated as a national treasure by the Ministry of Literature and Public Information of Korea in 1987. When performing as a group, the sponsor was Korea Society, and when performing as a solo, the sponsor by herself. She is retired from the USPS. Myung Suk Lee continues to teach and perform across temples, theaters, and cultural institutions, keeping alive and evolving the meditative beauty of Korean Buddhist dance.

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