

Special Feature

The Court Music, Private Music, and
Notation System of the Joseon Dynasty
during 15th-19th centuries Explored
through the Korean *Goakbo*
(Old Music Score)

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Introduction

The relics of the past reflect the system or ideology of the time they were produced. Time to time, it is difficult to accurately evaluate the value of relics in the viewpoint of the present time, because they might have been made in different cultural context and purpose. In order to understand the relics better, it is prerequisite to understand the system, ideology, and the purpose operated in the previous time.

The *goakbo*, literally “old” music score, refers to the music notations made by Korean people within the Korean peninsula in the past (Lee 2009, 11). However, the term can also include music score inserted in *Sejongjangheondaewangsillok* (hereafter, *Sejongsillokakbo*), the annal documenting history of the early 15th century during the reign of King Sejong (1418-1450), or the music manuscripts with traditional notations printed during the Japanese annexation (1910-1945).

Although not titled “*goakbo*,” the music scores of today are linked to the old notations in terms of their musical contents and notational system. Currently, Western staff notation and *jeongganbo* are generally used to print Korean traditional music. *Jeongganbo* provides time value (rhythm) of each note, one box a beat, by using lines looking similar to the Chinese character 井. The pitch is encrypted with notational systems of *yuljabo*, *oemyakbo*, *hapjabo*, and *yukbo*. *Yuljabo* uses the first Chinese character of the tone name as the pitch indicator and has been most popularly used for *jeongganbo*.

However, the *jeongganbo* system in the present time was standardized in the early twentieth century after having been influenced by the Western notational system. Therefore, the “old” score implies manuscripts in traditional system without any adaptation of staff notation as well as Western music in the notation, limiting the range of old scores to the publications printed up until the Japanese colonial period.

Inferring from the fifteenth century to twentieth century historical materials reflecting the background of musical publications, most of the scores were privately written by upper class elite and middle class literati. There were government-compiled scores published in the state office by the royal command to document court music performed for banquets and sacrificial rites, whereas private scores were made by literati for their own needs to recall the melody. There is another superior type of score which can be classified into

semi-governmental publication, when it was written by musicians affiliated in royal music institution, such as Jangakwon (Lee 2009, 11). The contents and application of the scores are different according to by whom and where they were made. In terms of instruments, most of the scores are notating the melodies of *geomungo* and *yanggeum*. Excepting for a few scores only with string part, such as the *gayageum* and *chilhyeongeum* melody, scores concomitantly notate percussion and wind parts.

This paper analyzes representative old Korean scores published during the fifteenth to nineteenth century in the royal court and by private musicians and examines the characteristics of court and private music as well as their notational system shown. The discussion focuses on the scores, including *Sejongsillokakbo*, the official one, *Changrangbo* (1779), also called *Eoeumbo*, *Dongdaegayageumbo* (ca 1813), *Ayanggeumbo* (1880), and *Yeokyangaun* (ca 1886-1893).

Music in the Government-compiled Scores *Scores Depicting the Practice of Royal Court Rites*

Sejongsillokakbo is the oldest extant music score compiling the musical manuscripts being used for royal ceremonies and rites. It was published after King Sejong died in 1454 (2nd year of King Danjong's reign) by several court officials, including Jeong Inji 鄭麟趾 (1396-1478).

Most of the music in the score was composed during the King Sejong's reign. It seems that the table of contents is designed focusing on the practical use of the score, sorting rite by rite. *Sinje aak* (newly revised sacrificial rite music) is printed in the fore part followed by *sinak* (newly composed indigenous music) and *sogak* with revised texts version for the banquets. The arrangement is similar to the sequence in the annals that list “Orye” (the guideline of five royal rites) first, and then put “Akbo” (the score of the music accompanying the rites) later.

Sejongsillokakbo obviously proved that Joseon's newly arranged *aak* still transmitted the authenticity because the score included the manuscript of original music “Pungasibisibo” 風雅十二詩譜 in *Uiryegyongjeontonghae* 儀禮經傳通解, and *Daeseongakbo* 大成樂譜 published in Yuan China. Those old manuscripts were the reference and source materials. *Aak* means the court ritual music in ancient Chinese classical format based on *yeak* (order and harmony of the cosmos and universe) ideology, and *hyangak*, the indigenous music

occasionally called *sogak*, is to be used as a symmetrical concept to the foreign music. The tradition of indigenous music in the Joseon dynasty's own style was titled *sinak*, meaning new music (Song 2017, 24).

The music arrangement in *Sejongsillokakbo*'s table of contents brings up a question because the music for *johoe* (royal meeting ceremony) was listed prior to the one for *gibrye* (sacrificial rite) which had been considered the top priority among Five Rites. Even though the sacrificial rite in *jongmyo* (the royal ancestral shrine) had been considered the most important largest scale rite of the nation, so as its texts were written on establishing the new dynasty, it was not documented on top.

Johoe during the reign of King Sejong were divided into three events: *joha*, *jocham*, and *sangcham*. *Joha* was a ritual when servants or government officials meet and bow to the royal family on *jeongji* (lunar New Year's Day, winter solstice), *tanil* (king's birthday), and *sakmang* (the first and fifteenth day each month). *Jocham* was performed every five days, while *sangcham* was performed every day. *Johoeak* refers to the music performed in *joha* and *jocham* ceremonies.

Music for *johoe* (*johoeak*) was the most frequently performed one in the royal court because formal music had been considered adequate to establish Confucian hierarchy between the ruler and the ruled, and to discuss political affairs seriously. Only *sogak* was used for *johoe* before the thirteenth year of King Sejong's reign (1431), but *aak* was used for *joha*, and *sogak* was used for *jocham* thereafter (Kim 2004; Jeong 2003). It can be inferred that *johoe* music was put on the first section for the easy access to and convenient use of the score, because it had always been considered important to actualize harmonious politics, which was to strengthen sovereign power while at the same time the king and his men uniting.

"Orye" in *Sejongjangheondaewangsillok* shows the arrangement of *johoe* [*jorye*] *heonga* orchestra and *gochw*i, the royal courtyard ensemble with percussion and wind instruments. According to the instrumentation shown in Figure 1, it seems that *heonga* performed *aak* in *joha*, while *gochw*i performed *sogak* in *jocham*. *Aak* had been used in *joha* only until the King Sejo period, and *sogak* replaced *aak* thereafter. Although *Sejongsillokakbo* vividly records the actual scenes of court *johoe* music, however, in the music historical point of view it merely records the melody of *johoe aak*, a certain type of court music used for *johoe* in a comparatively limited period of time.



Figure 1. *Jorye heonga* and *gochw*i in "Orye," *Sejongjangheondaewangsillok* *The Annal of Joseon Dynasty*¹

Total 312 music pieces of *johoe aak* are notated in *Sejongsillokakbo*, including twenty-six different melodies under the same title "Hwangjonggung" and the rest of pieces made by transposing the "Hwangjonggung" in another keynotes. The 26 melodies of "Hwangjonggung" were taken from the "Soa" (Chinese melody 小雅) of "Nokmyeong" 鹿鳴, "Samo" 四牡, "Hwanghwangjahwa" 皇皇者華, "Eoryeo" 魚麗, "Namyugaeo" 南有嘉魚, and "Namsanyudae" 南山有臺 notated in "Pungasibisibo" in *Uiryegyongjeontonghae* written by Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200) during Song China.

"Soa" is the title of a poem narrating minor political affairs written in *Sigyeong* 詩經, a compiling book of odes from early the Zhou dynasty to the Spring and Autumn period compiling included in *Five Classics of China* 五經. Therefore, it was very reasonable for the king and his vassals to listen to the music piece derived from "Soa" when discussing the political matter of the state together. It seems that the music only played with wind and percussive instruments since there is no vocal or string parts in the arrangement shown in Figure 1.

According to the statement written on December 23, 1430 (the 12th year of King Sejong's reign) lunar calendar, "Yunganjiak" was performed when the

1. *The Annals of Joseon Dynasty* is accessible at <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

king came in and went out, while “Seoanjiak” was performed when the crown prince or vassal bow down and got up.² These repertoire were used for *hoerye aak* in *hoeryeyeon* (court banquet).

On January 1, 1433 (15th year of King Sejong’s reign) *aak* was used in banquet for the first time.³ The music presented on September 19, 1432 was “Yunganjiak,” “Seoanjiak,” “Hyuanjiak,” “Suborokjiak,” “Munmyeongjigok,” “Geuncheonjeongjiak,” “Hahwangeunjigok,” “Sumyeongmyeongjiak,” and “Muyeoljigok.” They were being played from the king’s entrance until he received the fifth wine offering. *Dangak* and *hyangak* were played for the following process.⁴ The melodies were all partially taken from the six pieces in “Pungasibisibo” and repeated (Jeong 2005, 385). The lyrics of “Suborokjiak,” “Geuncheonjeongjiak,” “Hahwangeunjigok,” and “Sumyeongmyeongjiak” were written by Jeong Dojeon 鄭道傳 (1342-1398), Ha Ryun 河崙 (1347-1416), and Byeon Gyeryang 卞季良 (1369-1430), the Confucian scholars who played a key role in building Joseon. The texts praise the contribution and authenticity of the earlier kings: the founder Taejo, the second King Taejong, and the fourth King Sejong.

Hoeryeyeon was held every lunar New Year and winter solstice for the king, crown prince, and the vassals, gathering together. Some were hosted by the queen. “Orye” in *Sejongjangheondaewangsillok*, writes about the music of *hoerye* referring its two different orchestras (*deungga* and *heonga*) and the line dances (*munmu* and *mumu*). *Hoerye aak*, originating from music melody in “Pungasibisibo,” seems to be different from *johoe aak*, because the former accompanies song and dance while the latter does not.

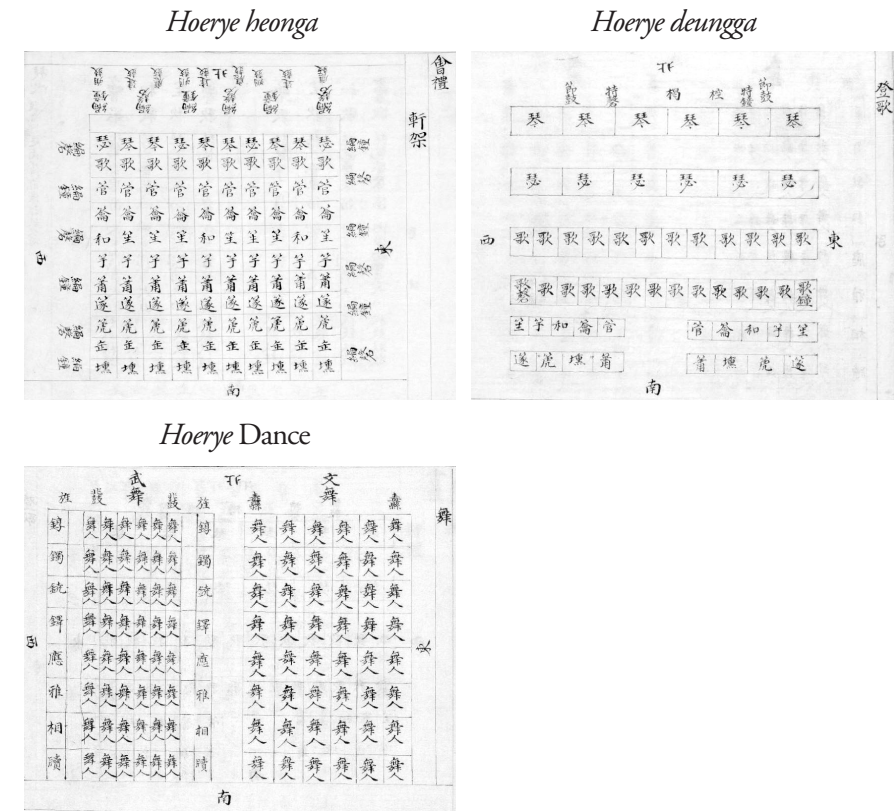


Figure 2. Orchestration and Dance Arrangement of *Hoerye* Documented in “Orye,” *Sejongjangheondaewangsillok*⁵

Meanwhile, there is no record about *Dangak* and *hyangak* used along with *aak*, and instead, most of the writing is about *sinak*, the new music.

The notation and documentation regarding *sinak* in *Sejongsillokakbo* are much more than *aak*, in terms of the quality of detailed description and the quantity. Since the new music was composed for efficient use to various court rites, it was printed without any specific categorization, contrary to *aak* distinguished by its ceremonial use or sacrificial application.

Sejongsillokakbo states that King Sejong composed new music on the basis of *gochwiaek* (royal ensemble of wind and percussion or military music)

2. *The Annal of King Sejong*, 12th year (1430), lunar calendar December 23: “Ministry of Rites informed the king about *joha* ceremony to be offered by the crown prince for the coming new year.”
 3. *The Annal of King Sejong*, 15th year (1433), January 1: “King held a banquet in Geunjeongjeon with *aak* music.”
 4. *The Annal of King Sejong*, 14th year (1432), September 19: “The royal presentation office informed about the music of *hoerye*.”

5. This source is accessible at <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

and *hyangak* because the existing music was insufficient to spread the great virtue and hardship the king had through in establishing the nation. The music made previously before King Sejong, such as “Monggeumcheok,” “Suborok,” “Geuncheonjeong,” and “Sumyeongmyeong,” simply narrates one contribution of earlier kings. It can be inferred that “Suborok,” “Geuncheonjeong,” and “Sumyeongmyeong” were originally *gochwiaak* but used for *hoeryeaak* by combining some melodies excerpted from *aak*. However, King Sejong wrote new music due to the inadequate texts for *hoerye* music. “Suborokjiak,” a kind of *hoerye aak* might not have been included in this regard, and a *gochwiaak* ensemble in charge of *sogak* might have played new music which had been a deviation of *gochwiaak*. The orchestration described in “Orye” also supports this assumption. *Janggu*, the hourglass drum, was used for all new music pieces, and only *gochwi* band included a *janggu* musician, whereas neither *heonga* nor *deungga* has one. Later, the upgrade orchestra equipped with more instruments and formality, called *jeonjeongheonga*, took the charge of playing new music as it became popular accompanying a variety of court events and ceremonies (Im 1997, 72).

“Jeongdaeop” and “Botaepyeong,” the new music for dance expressing academic virtue and military achievements, were composed to play for royal sacrificial rite and johoe.⁶ On the other hand, “Balsang,” the music narrating an auspicious heavenly mandate, was used for both official and private banquets.

The music “Bongnaeu” 鳳來儀 was played for *jongmyo* sacrificial rite and various banquets and ceremonies held officially and privately. Its texts narrate “Yongbiocheonga” (Songs of Dragons Flying in Heaven), a poem which eulogizes the origin of founding the Joseon dynasty and the contribution of six earlier kings, comparing them with the ancient Chinese event. Gwon Je 權蹏, Jeong Inji 鄭麟趾, and An ji 安止 composed the texts both in classical Chinese and Korean alphabets in the 27th year of King Sejong’s reign (1445) by the royal command.⁷ “Bongnaeu” consists of five pieces that are “Jeoninja,” “Yeomillak,” “Chihwapyeong,” “Chwipunghyeong,” and “Huinja.” It is a festive multi-artistic genre that “Jeoninja” and “Huinja,” the orchestral music used for female singers

and dancers entering in and out to the stage.

Among many *sogak* repertoire of the time, *Sejongillokakbo* only includes “Bonghwangeum” and “Manjeonchun” selectively. “Bonghwangeum” took the melody of “Cheoyongga,” but Yun Hoe 尹淮 revised its texts in the Sejong period. *Bonghwang*, the phoenix, symbolized an auspicious sign as it was known to come only when a great king ascended the throne since the Emperor Yao and Shun period. Thus, the song narrates the wish of expecting peace and prosperity of Joseon with the coming of a great king. It was also sung in the banquets for foreign envoys, ceremonies, and exorcising rite held on New Year’s Eve, especially with “Cheoyongga.” The texts of “Manjeonchun” had sung love story of man and woman, but Yun Hoe revised the texts into the phrases praising the nation building and peaceful ruling.

Sejongillokakbo also includes the texts sung in sacrificial rites offered in or to *sajik* (land and grain), *jongmyo* (royal ancestral shrine), *pungunnoeusancheonseonghwang* (spirit of nature and weather), *seonnong* (god of agriculture), *seonjam* (god of silkworm), *usa* (rain calling), *munseonwangseokjeon* (Confucian shrine), *dukje* (military spirit), and Munsojeon (King Taejo and his queen shrine). The texts were taken from some writings in Goryeo and Joseon. All of the music for those rites was *aak* that had been rearranged and revised on the basis of the Yuan dynasty *Daeseongakbo* (score of ancient Chinese Confucian music written by Im U), because the ruling ideology of Joseon was Confucianism.

On the other hand, “Napssiga” and “Jeongdongbanggok” were played for *dukje*, the rite serving military flags, and for Munsojeon rite for King Taejo and his wife. The lyrics of the song were written by Jeong Dojeon to eulogize King Taejo’s military achievement and nation building. Meanwhile, the melodies were taken from the native music of Goryeo.

Sejongillokakbo selectively documented the music and songs often performed in important official meetings, sacrificial rites, and banquets. The *yeak* politics of Confucianism was the ruling ideology that the nation had pursuit, and thus *aak* was used in all of those important ritual events in royal court. At the same time, *Sejongillokakbo* showed the sincere effort in composing songs and texts accompanying native melodies and dances, so the royal authenticity as well as the authority of king could be strengthened. For the successful performance in dignity, well trained royal court musicians were prerequisite.

6. *The Annal of King Danjong*, 1st year (1453), July 9: “Have the State of Council discuss about training music and assigning jobs to the court musicians.”

7. *The Annal of King Sejong*, 29th year (1447), June 5: “Have ‘Yongbiocheonga,’ ‘Yeomillak,’ ‘Chihwapyeong,’ and ‘Chwipunghyeong’ be used for all the banquets, whether official or private.”

Prescriptive Notation System for Sophisticated Court Music, Jeongganbo

Aak vocal was monophony that one text is sung in one pitch in one beat all the time, and thus no complicated system has been needed to notate its rhythmic pattern. On the other hand, *sogak* is melodic as one text is sung in many beats in different tones and thus requires an adequate system of notation. King Sejong invented *jeongganbo* which could mark the time value, and used it in *Sejongsillokakbo*. The notation is obviously different in terms of details for multiple melodic lines.

Johoeak “Hwangjonggung”

Sinak “Chihwapyeong 1”

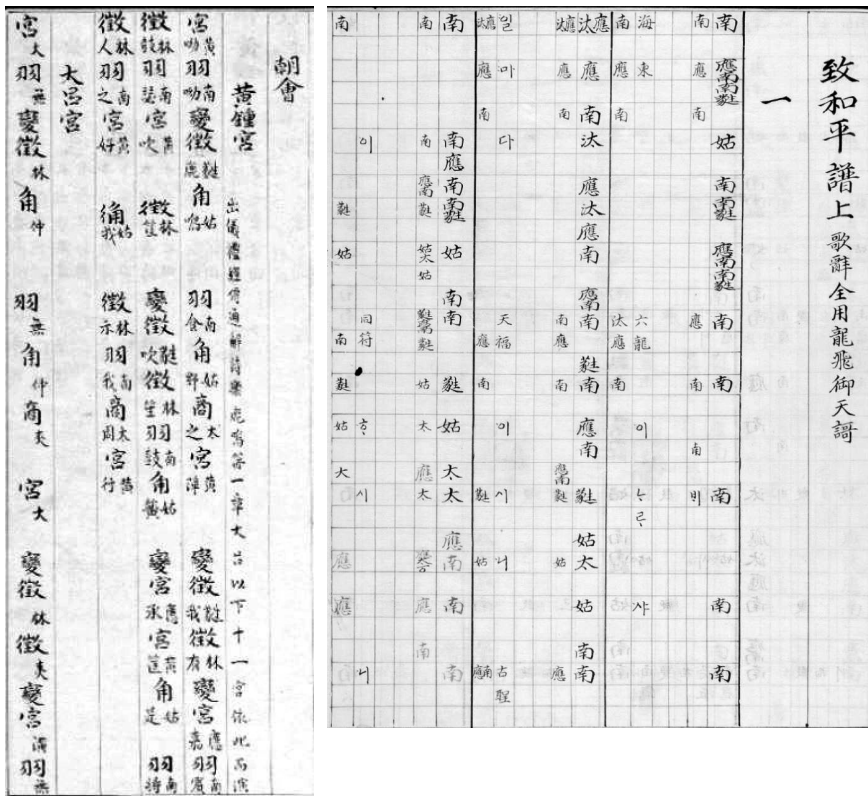


Figure 3. Royal Meeting Music “Hwangjonggung” and New Music “Chihwapyeong 1” in *Sejongsillokakbo*⁸

As shown in Figure 3, the new music is notated in full score with several melodic lines (wind part and vocal part for “Chihwapyeong 1”) in accompany with percussion part, as well as the section for lyrics. A section for *janggu* rhythms might have been required for the music and dance, but the section of *bak* (clapper), very simple and regular beat, tells how elaborate the score was in documenting the music. Even without any music listening, the readers might be able to recognize the splendid beauty and unique creativity of the new music and native music of the early Joseon dynasty only by looking at the score in new notational system.

Sejongsillokakbo includes only new music composed during the King Sejong period, such as newly revised *aak*, *sinak*, and *sogak* with new-text. Even *aak* in the score did not quote ancient Chinese music but chose new melodies meeting the need and interpretation of Joseon (Gwon 2020, 80). In this regard, *Sejongsillokakbo* should be understood not as a transcription of performance, but a prescriptive guide for the musicians to learn and to play the new music. Obviously, the detailed description of melody was required, so that the musicians practice and master the new music. The types of music comprising most of the score tell us what King Sejong emphasized and aimed in writing.

Other scores compiled by the royal court afterward, including *Sejosillokakbo* (*Music Score in the Annals of King Sejo*, music of 1455-1468) and *Sogakwonbo* (published after King Jeongjo period 1776-1800, re-edited in 1892), all contain important court music of the time. Even *Daekhubo* (1759), which was printed to compile the music of the King Sejo period, documented the court music contemporarily used at that time. Therefore, the scores officially compiled by the royal court are not merely the sheets of written melody, but a true historical record showing the reality of the court during the certain period of time. They provide reference point for other scores with unidentifiable publishing date and function as an axis of assuming or determining the time for music.

**Literati Music in Private Scores
Scores of Pungnyu Music for Self-Disciplining**

A personal note book-like music score, made by literati, first appeared in around 16th century. In the initial stage, some block books were printed by the support

8. This source is accessible at <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

of the court musicians affiliated in the royal music institute and government office, but gradually literati people hand print the scores for their own musical sake.

For an example, *Changrangbo*⁹ is a *geomungo* score published in the 18th century by Ryu Hongwon 柳弘源 (1716-1781), a man born in the well-known Jeonju Ryu noble family in Andong, North Gyeongsang province. The author hand printed music repertoire popular at that time and some earlier time, especially the *geomungo* pieces he loved to play with his own instrument, named “Yangyanggeum.”¹⁰

In the score, literati music, such as “Yeongsanhoesang,” “Boheoja,” and “Yeomillak” is printed, following the *gagok* accompaniment melody. This score is actually a hand-copied edition of *Eoeunbo* which documents the music of Kim Seonggi 金聖基 (1649-1724), a very famous *geomungo* master during the late 17th century. *Nangongsinbo* 浪翁新譜 was also published based on Kim’s melody in 1728 (the 11th year of King Jeongjo’s reign), and draw people’s attention as a “newly” printed score, and its title “*sinbo*” means “new score” (Kim 1985). *Sijo* (the popular vocal tune of the time, not the vocal genre) listed in the fore page was also originated from Kim’s *geomungo* melody (Choi 2021, 176). By clarifying the source, the author made sure that his music came from renowned musicians.

Since the beginners start learning with *geomungo* part for vocal accompaniment most of the time (Choi 2009, 436), the author might put *sijo*, the new repertory instead of familiar old one, on top of the list for his own convenience and for an easy access to the page. It seems that the vocal music was printed before the instrumental music because the musicians had to frequently look at them. This type of documenting had continued to the early 19th century until *Samjukgeumbo* 三竹琴譜 (ca 1841) was published. After *Samjukgeumbo*, vocal music was mostly documented at the back following instrumental music, because the musicians became more interested in instrumental music as new repertoire had continuously increased with variations.

9. The title “Changrangbo,” printed on the cover page, was chosen to refer Ryu’s score in this paper, because the title “Eoeunbo” might be able to cause confusion with another score recording Kim Seonggi’s music inserted in *Changrangbo*.

10. Yangyanggeum is designated to North Gyeongsang Province Tangible Property No. 314, and now kept in Confucian Culture Museum, Andong.

Korean musicologists paid attention to *Changrangbo* because it showed how the literati music like “Yeongsanhoesang,” “Boheoja,” and “Yeomillak” had changed over time generating new variations in the suite. Especially, the second piece in the suite “Yeongsanhoesang” first appeared under the title “Yeongsanhoesang gaptan,” now named “Jungnyeongsan,” and disclosed how *gyemyeonjo* mode had changed.

Yeomillak,” “Yeongsanhoesang,” and “Boheoja” were known to be the music of Confucianism, Zen, and Buddhism, whereas *gagok* was accepted to be indigenous tune.¹¹ It is strange that a Confucian scholar in profound knowledge played not only Korean tune but also music deeply related to other religious doctrine.

The Neo-Confucianism which had been the ground of nation’s ruling ideology faced a sudden change in between 16th-17th centuries undergoing the Japanese invasion in 1592 and China’s transition from the Ming to Ching dynasty. The new flow in the Confucian ideology seems to let the scholars have naturally accepted Buddhism, Zen, and Yangmingism (Kim 2011, 14), and they surely influenced the musical ideology that the literati had internalized and practiced personally. However, various music scores and anthology show that the classical vocal music narrating the fixed form indigenous poetry was in the center of literati music in the 18th century.

Other than the music transcriptions, private scores include poetries and *myeong* (inscription on *geomungo*) which sing about the *geomungo*. *Changrangbo* includes “Jeunggeumong” 贈琴翁 and “Jegeumbok” 題琴腹, the poems inspired by Yang Saeon’s 楊士彦 (1517-1584) writing about the true friendship shared with *geomungo* music originated from the episode of Baek-a and Jongjagi in the old Chinese wisdom. It was popular trend carving Yang’s poetry in the *geomungo* at that time.

[Example 1] The Poetry of Yang Saeon “Jeunggeumong”

The heart of Baek-a was melted down in the sound of his beautiful *geomungo*,
Only Jongjagi understood the feelings.

11. “於是，編帙舊聞，譜閱數千言分爲兩篇，以儒仙釋三家之樂爲上爲體，平羽界三韓之操爲下爲用，弁之以凡例規式停礙之標，尾之以歌謠節奏緩促之度，以至數息盡聲之類，近取遠模務歸精潔焚膏研硃，忘味遺形者經月乃成” (The National Gugak Center 2004, 130-31).

As quietly reciting a poem and playing the geomungo,
The fresh breeze blows up in the mountain top,
The shining moonlight is beautiful and the river is deep.
녹기금 綠綺琴 소리에 담았던 백아의 마음,
종자기만 그 음을 알았지.
한 곡 타고서 한 수 읊조리니,
맑고 맑은 바람이 먼 봉우리에서 일어나고,
강에 비친 달은 곱고 강물은 깊구나.

[Example 2] The Poetry of Yang Saeon “Jegeumbok”

Narrating poems along with my *geomungo*, which was made with paulownia wood grown in the crack of rocks, thirty years have passed so soon.

My dearest Jongjagi died and no one could understand my music.

My precious *geomungo* has no reason to make sounds.

I play “Yangchungok,” “Baekseolgok,” and “Gwangreungsan,”

By any chance the spirit in Bongnae Mountain can hear.

바위틈에서 자란 오동나무 거문고로 연주하고 시 읊다보니 어느덧 삼십
년이 지났네.

당시의 종자기는 나를 버리고 떠나가고

귀하고 귀한 거문고에는 먼지만 이네

<양춘곡>, <백설곡>, <광릉산>을 타

우연히 봉래산의 신선에게 부치나이다.

“*Myeong*” is to bestow a name to an object and to justify its valuable internal virtue to the meaning of the name through a short writing, so that they match together (Gang 2009, 132). *Changrangbo* includes two names *Jayang* and *Mongjae*, each of which was given to the *geomungo* owned by Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and his mentor Yu Beyongsan. The literati carved in literary lines with metaphor and symbols to devote oneself to the inner cultivation and attention, and intended to unify oneself with the *geomungo*'s moral virtue. In the long run the utmost gaining for the literati to obtain from playing the *geomungo* was to keep the rightness and moderation in his mind.

[Example 3] The Poetry of Ju Hui “Jayanggeum *myeong*” in *Changrangbo*

Oh, *Jayang*, you should obtain modest temperament of being peaceful.

Oh, *Jayang*, you should remove your wicked mind full of greed and anger,
The heaven and earth assigned all the things their own nature.

I hope to learn the truth of the world by myself alone, and you are my one
and only companion.

자양이여, 중화(中和)의 올바른 성품을 기르고,

자양이여, 분내고 탐욕에 젖은 사특한 마음을 없애라.

천지(天地)는 말이 없건만 사물에는 법칙이 있으니

나는 홀로 자양 그대와 더불어 그 깊은 도리를 닦고자 한다네.

Ryu Hongwon borrowed *myeong* of Zhu Xi's *geomungo*. By quoting the words of Zhu who established Neo-Confucianism and by reminding the episode of saints who communicated with their instruments, Ryu tried to transmit saints' musical ideology and to seek not only the reason and authenticity but also his deep affection to the *geomungo*. The pursuit of saints' music was commonly found in ideas among the literati who played *geomungo* and wrote a score at that time.

Generative Notation System of Amateur Music Lovers, Hapjabo

Geumhapjabo is the oldest extant music manuscript published privately by a music manager called *ansang* 安瑞, an officer affiliated in Jangakwon, and it records the *geomungo* melody with *hapjabo* system (1511-1579). Seong Hyeon 成愼 (1439-1504), who was the director of Jangakwon, invented *hapjabo* along with the music master Bak Gon and Kim Bokgeun by referring to Chinese books *Sarimwanggi* and *Daeseongakbo*. Although published by an officer personally, the score is closely related to the court music tradition since the royal court musicians assisted its publication. Thus, it was often separately classified as semi-governmental publication.

The score provides an explanation of notational structure and how to read the symbols.¹² The name *hapja* literally means “to combine the letters.” The name of string to pluck or strike is marked on the upper right corner, and the location of fret to press with left finger is marked underneath. The letter pointing out a left finger to be used pressing the fret is marked left side of the

12. “琴譜合字解, 右邊上書絃名 下書卦次 左邊書用指法 左右外面書用匙法 合四法爲一字 故謂之合字” (The National Gugak Center 1987b, 30).

string indicator. The technique for the plectrum is marked at the right or left margin.

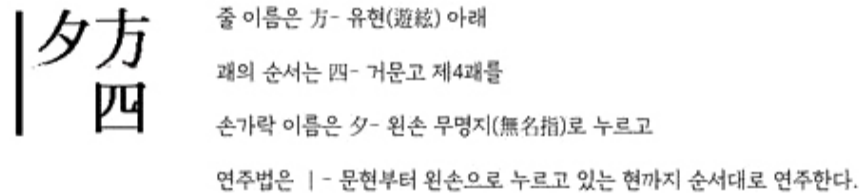


Figure 4. An Example of Reading Hapjabo Indication¹³

As shown in the figure above, the notation system is a combination of one up to five different letters or symbols indicating the string, fret, finger, and left or right hand technique. In some cases, two different symbols indicate one same technique, as in ㄴ or 文.¹⁴

The annotation of left hand technique documented in *Changrangbo* explains almost all the symbols and letters described in *Geumhapjabo*. Comparing to the notation in the court music-based score, the private scores of literati music apply more diverse hand movements, and therefore additional figures appears in the score to indicate new techniques.

Hapja system was designed as a self-teaching manual, and thus the scores most of the time include detailed guideline or annotation about the symbols for the readers. Literati who love music should learn how to read the combined letters by themselves and played the music without musical demonstration by a teacher or friends.¹⁵

However, in order to understand the melodic flow, some scores write orally imitated sounds, *yukbo*, side by side either in Chinese character or in Korean alphabet. The literati should be able to create actual sound not only by

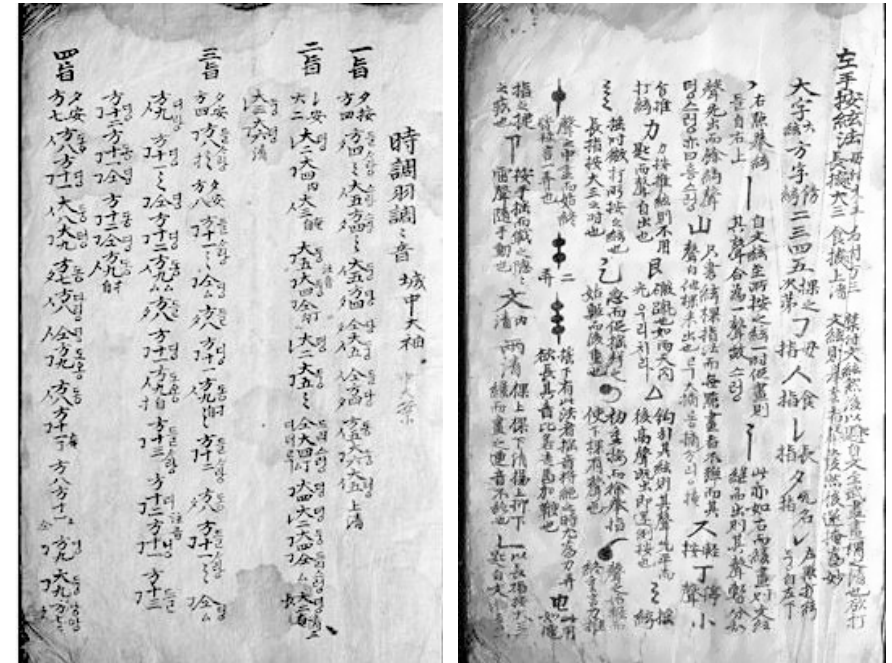


Figure 5. Manuscript in *Changrangbo* (left), Annotation of Left Hand Technique (right)¹⁴

recognizing the written symbols, but also by bringing up their musicality and ability of imagining the sound. If they failed, the musicians might be puzzled, or feel “stuffy as if facing a high wall,”¹⁶ as *ansang* mentioned.

The music of amateur literati, no matter how he was good at *geomungo*, must have been shorter than the music of professional musicians, since the sound was not produced from the auditive memory, but with visual indication. Thus, the literati put more emphasis on the inner meditation or cultivation of virtue, rather than making correct melody. In reality, the literati could surely not be able to repeat the same melody only by reading the combined letters on the paper, and thus they might partially modify the melodies or attempt other musical techniques.

13. The translation of the contents in Figure 4 is as follows: “The Name of String—Yuhyeon/ The Number of Fret—the forth fret/ The Name of Finger—the left ring finger/ Playing Technique— Strike the strings one by one from the first string toward the one pressed with the left finger.”

14. Possessed in Jeonju Ryu family Hambyeokdang head house.

15. “[琴譜序] 僻在遐方有志學琴而未得師友者 得此而觀之 則有如明師在傍 指示一二無有難處矣. 隆慶 壬申 竹溪 安瑞 書” (The National Gugak Center 1987b, 25).

16. “[琴譜序] 知此譜 則雖使鼓絃鏗鏘 歌管迭作而聞之不亂 其於辨別奪倫 明若觀火矣. 然雖有此譜 而未知合字之規 則亦若面牆. 茲著合字注解以附卷上” (ibid.).

Commoner's Music Accommodated in Private Scores Folk Vocal Music in Private Music Clubs

In 19th century, *japga* (professional folk vocal songs) and *minyo* (commoner's folksongs) began to appear in private scores, in addition to literati music, *gagok* and "Yeongsanhoesang" that had long been generally included in the scores. *Dongdaegayageumbo* is a *gayageum* score documenting "Heungtaryeong," which was also called "Cheonansamgeori," and classified as a *japga* or folksong repertory in the early 20th century (The National Gugak Center 1987a, 152). The lyrics are written along with the oral sound imitating *gayageum* melody in a Korean language. It seems that the music is related to "Heungtaryeong" which is nowadays sung in *gayageum byeongchang* (singing while playing an instrument). Afterwards, "Heungtaryeong" became popular as not only printed in folksong booklet like *Mussangsingujapga*, but also often heard via radio broadcasting or recorded in gramophone in the 20th century. "Heungtaryeong" was usually performed accompanied by only a *janggu*, but a version accompanied by *gayageum* was found in several recordings, for the first time in *Ilchukjoseonsoriban K562*¹⁷ (Vocal Gwon Geumju; *Gayageum* Sin Geumhong; and *Janggo* Han Seongjun) released in 1927.

Some commoner's folk songs, such as "Dalgeori," "Banga taryeong," "Gilgunak," "Odokgi," "Cheonggangnoksu," "Gyeongju taryeong," "Sadangnolang," "Galga," and "Moehwaga" are listed in *Ayanggeumbo*, which is known for manuscript of classical vocal genres and "Yeongsanhoesang." Lyrics are written along with oral sound of *yanggeum* melody in a Korean language. On the other hand, melodies in *Yeokyanggaun* are half transcribed in *yanggeum* and *geomungo* notation. For example, "Singa" and "Saarangga" are printed in *geomungo* oral sound without lyrics, while "Gyeongbokga" is written in *yanggeum* sound using Chinese characters.

Songs mentioned above, such as "Heungtaryeong," "Sadangnolang," "Bangha taryeong," and "Odokgi, were common repertoire sung by wandering troupes (*sadangpae*) performing vulgar vocal genres. However, some indigenous folksongs were polished in popular style in sedentary singing and consequently became preferred in private music clubs (*pungnyubang*), due to the trendy



Figure 6. "Heungtaryeong" in *Dongdaegayageumbo*¹⁸

performance of professional folk vocalists (*sagyechuk*) (Gwon 2002, 316-18). "Singa," a shaman song known to be the root of female shaman tune "Noraetgarak" (Hwang 1989), and "Gyeongbokga" (probably related to "Gyeongbokgung taryeong"), "Galga" (a folk vocal music in *pansori* lineage) (Gwon 2002, 323), and "Saarangga" were also sung in private music clubs. However, only few scores were chosen to record these folk style tunes, and most of the private scores documented literati music.

17. This is accessible at Korea Record Archive (<http://sparchive.co.kr>).

18. Possessed in Dongguk University Library.

Intuitive Notation System of Skillful Musicians, Yukbo

All the folk vocal repertoire in private scores are notated in *yukbo*, the oral sound notation. Usually, *geomungo* has been taught with its sound mimicking. When taking *geomungo* lesson, the learners should familiarize themselves with the oral sound their teacher sing. In order to remember the technique each sound actually signifies, the learners wrote memos down. As proved with the scores printed in 19th century, the use of *yukbo* system increased and more examples and descriptions were found. Lee Seungmu, the author of *Samjukgeumbo* (ca 1841) published in early 19th century, also learnt *geomungo* from master Hong Gihu with his oral sound, and wrote the score based on the melody heard. The oral sound at that time was a kind of intuitive method for transcribing and performing, so the musicians could play the instrument while at the same time humming the sound.

Private scores of *gayageum* and *yanggeum* music are mostly written in *yukbo*. The oral sound for *yanggeum*, which was imported from Ching China to Korea during the late Joseon period, originated from that of the *gayageum*. Even though *yanggeum* was popularly used in literati music, it could not share the symbolism and virtuousness, as an instrument to “prevent the mind from the vice (impure thoughts)” like the *geomungo*. In fact, a *gagok* accompanying ensemble without *geomungo* was considered insufficient until 1970, while *gayageum* could be arranged optionally (Choi 2018, 182). It seems that *yanggeum* and *gayageum* were freely used for playing commoner’s music, different from the *geomungo* only used for limited repertoire in the early 19th century.

Conclusion

This paper analyzed the representative score of royal court music, *Sejongsillokakbo*, and some private scores such as *Changrangbo*, *Dongdaegayageumbo*, *Ayanggeumbo*, and *Yeokyangaun*, and discussed the characteristics of court and private music during the fifteenth to nineteenth century, along with the notational system used.

Sejongsillokakbo is the oldest extant score compiled by the royal court and includes music mostly made during the reign of King Sejong period. Considering the practical use, the newly revised sacrificial rite music was printed

in the fore part followed by newly composed indigenous music and revised *sogak*, which were used for the banquets. *Sejongsillokakbo* selectively documented the music and songs often performed in important official meetings, sacrificial rites, and banquets, so that court could fulfill the *yeak* politics of Confucianism, the ruling ideology of the nation. Also, *Sejongsillokakbo* showed the sincere effort in composing new song text so that the royal authenticity as well as the authority of king could be strengthened.

Sejongsillokakbo includes only new music, and thus the score should be prescriptive for the musicians to learn and to play the new music. Obviously, the description of melody should be in detail, and King Sejong invented *jeongganbo* being able to document the splendid beauty and sophisticated melody in newly created indigenous music.

Since around the 16th century, upper class literati and middle class men who enjoyed *pungnyu* music, such as *gagok* and “Yeongsanhoesang,” started to made scores privately for their own needs. Mainly documenting *geomungo* and *yanggeum* melody, they added melodies of *gayageum*, *chilhyeongeum*, wind instruments, and percussion beats in the score. As a way of self-disciplining, amateur music lovers played *geomungo*, and a 18th century Confucian scholar Ryu Hongwon wrote poems with *myeong* (inscription on *geomungo*) quoting the words of Zhu Xi who established Neo-Confucianism. Also, Ryu pursued saints’ musical ideology and seek the authenticity and deep affection to the *geomungo*. The pursuit of saints’ practice was commonly found in ideas among the literati who played *geomungo* and wrote a score.

Pungnyu music began to be notated in *hapjabo*, and thus the literati should learn how to read the combined letters and study the techniques by themselves. Also, they should be able to create actual sound not only by recognizing the written symbols but also by bringing up their musicality and ability of imagining the sound. However, no matter how amateur literati were good at music, their music must have been shorter than the music of professional musicians since the sound was produced with visual indication. In reality, the literati might partially modify the melodies or attempt other musical techniques.

In 19th century, folk vocal music and commoner’s songs began to appear in private scores, in addition to literati music, *gagok* and “Yeongsanhoesang” that had long been generally included in the scores. All of those folk vocal repertoire were notated in oral sound notation. When learning instruments from the teacher, the learners should familiarize themselves with the oral sound their

teacher sing. The oral sound at that time was a kind of intuitive method for transcribing and performing, so the skillful musicians could play the instrument while at the same time humming the sound.

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Abstract

This paper discusses the characteristics of court and private music as well as their notational systems shown in Korea's old music scores written during the fifteenth to nineteenth century. Most of the music printed in *Sejongillokakbo*, where the oldest extant Korean music score was preserved, was newly composed during the time of King Sejong's reign. Thus, the score documents the reality of court rites at the time of the publication and reveals the authority of royal descendants and the rightness of nation building. Detailed prescription was required for the musicians affiliated in the Royal Music Institution, Jangakwon, so that they could make the song and music precisely. King Sejong let the splendid beauty and creativity of new style indigenous music be informed well by inventing new notational system appropriate for court music. In about the sixteenth century, upper class elite and middle class literati who experienced *pungnyu* music outside the court, such as *gagok* and “Yeongsanhoesang,” published scores for their own sake. The literati trained geomungo by themselves for self-disciplining and tried to affirm their love and legitimacy of music by pursuing saints' ideology and practice. The music began to be notated in *hapja*, and thus the literati should be able to identify the written letters while at the same time making the music in reliance on the musical imagination (musicality). However, no matter how the amateur musician was capable, their performance could not help but being insufficient comparing to those of professional musicians. Other than *pungnyu* music, some folk vocal genres like *jangga* and *minyo*, were printed in *yukbo* (oral sound notation) in a few private scores published in the nineteenth century. At the time of publication, *yukbo* was not only a notational system understood intuitively but also technical instruction, so the skillful musicians could play the instrument on singing the melody.

Keywords: Korean old music score, official score of royal court, private music score, court music, *pungnyu* music, commoner's music, *jeongganbo*, *hapjabo*

