

Article

Intertwining Influences on the Musical Achievements of 15th Century Korea

BYEON Gyewon



The Review of Korean Studies Volume 25 Number 2 (December 2022): 215-242

doi: 10.25024/review.2022.25.2.215

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Introduction

King Sejong's reign is considered to be the most splendid period in the five hundred year history of the Joseon Dynasty. During the rule of the benevolent and wise King Sejong, this epoch is known as an era of peace and prosperity. In this period, remarkable growth in almost all areas, including politics, the military, and science, is accomplished. In the field of music, there are also a number of great accomplishments. The two most important musical accomplishments in this period are: the reestablishment of the *aak* 雅樂¹ and the creation of new pieces of music 新樂.²

Aak literally means "elegant music" and it reflects the court music that was initiated in the Zhōu dynasty (1046-256 B.C.). In the Confucian world view, people believed that music and human virtue worked much like gears turning in a finely tuned mechanism. Human virtue could not make advances without music, and music could not move forward without the virtues of Confucianism. To a Confucian, human virtue was the compulsory governance rule and this should be embodied throughout the field of music. Therefore, music was an extremely important part of Confucius' learning and teaching.

Since its principles and systematic order were established in the period of the Zhōu Dynasty and recorded in the *Zhōulǐ* (*Rites of the Zhōu* 周禮), this music came to be perceived as the reflection of a Golden Age and so was handed down as the ideal music for the Confucian state. According to the *Zhōulǐ*, music was very particular method to regulate society in peace, harmony, and security,

and this philosophical belief was known as the Yeak 禮樂 Principle.³ Based on this Principle, music and rites are considered to be the most important factors for moral enlightenment. Thus, music has performed an important role in the rituals, ceremonies, and state receptions of the different Confucian states.

Joseon was a new dynasty built upon the basis of Neo-Confucian Thought. Therefore, it was important for the Confucian scholars of the time to fulfill the Yeak Principle and to quickly establish the rule of such *aak* in this new dynasty. However, since at the end of the previous Goryeo Dynasty there had been numerous interior and exterior difficulties, almost all of the *aak* musical instruments of that time disappeared. Therefore, the tradition of the *aak* was not properly handed down to the new Joseon Dynasty. In this situation, it was felt to be one of the major ideological tasks in the early Joseon Dynasty to quickly reestablish the *aak*.

Thus, Sejong accomplished the reestablishment of the *aak* by reflecting upon musical theories from the *Lǜlǚ xīnshū* (*The New Volume of Standard Musical Sounds* 律呂新書),⁴ and he and his scholars tried to reestablish the authentic *aak* in the Korean court as close as possible to the orthodoxy of the Zhōu Dynasty.⁵ This work was later linked to the other musical achievements of King Sejong, and soon after this, new pieces of music were composed to try to express the greatness, virtue, and authenticity of the dynasty and the monarch's ancestors and to describe the hardships and difficulties that the dynasty had during the process of its establishment. In order to correctly notate the newly created music, a new musical notation system, called the *jeongganbo*, was devised at this time.

Various records related to the process of the reestablishment of *aak* and the creation of new music can be found in numerous places in the *Sejong jangheon*

* This paper was presented at the international conference, "Switching Code in Korean Culture," organized by the Department of Korean Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum on 17 and 18 June 2016 in Bochum.

1. The *aak* was brought to the Korean court in 1116 during the reign of King Yejong in the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) by means of a large gift of 428 musical instruments as well as 572 costumes and ritual dance objects from Emperor Huizōng 徽宗 (1082-1135) of the Sòng Dynasty. In the performance of *aak*, musical instruments made from the eight different materials (eight timbres 八音) and twelve different pitches 律呂 are used. This ceremonial music utilizes two ensemble orchestras, one on a slightly higher platform 登歌 and one on the ground 幹架. It also includes not only orchestra music, but also songs based on the poetry in Chinese characters with a fixed form and dances in a fixed procession.

2. Four musical suites, *jeongdaeop*, *botaepyeong*, *balsang* and *bongnaeui* were newly composed in this period.

3. This literally means the rites and music. This principle was believed to be the most effective means to regulate society in the Confucian world.

4. It is a musical theory book written by Chá Yuándìng 蔡元定 (1135-1198) in the Sòng Dynasty, China. This work is principally about the musical tone system. This book includes the ways in which one can produce the standard tone (the beginning tone of the scale 黃鐘) and how to produce the remaining eleven pitches in an octave based on this standard tone.

5. Until the reign of the third king, the father of King Sejong, Joseon went through a time of troubles. His father finally established a centralized administration based on the double victories in the blood rebellions between the royal princes. Through his father's efforts, Joseon under King Sejong could enjoy notable political benefits and economic stability and realize a great blossoming in the cultural sphere. In this situation, he could make great efforts to establish the *Aak* in his court.

daewang sillok (*The Annals of King Sejong the Great* 世宗莊憲大王實錄).⁶ In addition, the complete musical scores of the newly arranged *aak* and the newly created music are all recorded in the *Sejong jangheon daewang sillok akbo* (*The Musical Scores of the Annals of King Sejong the Great* 世宗莊憲大王實錄樂譜)⁷ and they are transmitted to this day.

In this paper, I will examine how the *aak* that originated from China was interpreted and practiced in the different cultural context of the newly established Joseon Dynasty. To do this, I will investigate and interpret in detail the historical and cultural processes related to the newly arranged *aak* and the creation of new music based upon the musical scores and literary descriptions in the *Sejong sillok* and the *Sejong akbo*. I will also examine the process of how the *aak* from China was hybridized and syncretized with indigenous Korean music. I think that the reestablishment of the *aak* was deeply linked to the creation of his new music.

The *jeongganbo*, which is known to be the first mensural notation system in the East Asia, was devised to notate new music.⁸ The creation of this new musical notation system is definitely inseparable from Sejong's other great achievement of the creation of the Korean phonetic alphabet. Hangeul was invented in 1443 and the *jeongganbo* was devised soon after, between 1445 and 1447. Since the new music with Korean texts could not be notated with the previous notation systems which were not able to indicate the length of different rhythms, a new musical notation system, the *jeongganbo* was eventually created to solve this problem. Therefore, in this paper I will also explain the influence of Hangeul on the creation of new musical notation system, *jeongganbo*. This observation will definitely help us to comprehend more deeply the various layers of King Sejong's musical and cultural policies, as well as his fierce determination as a ruler in the newly established Confucian dynasty.

The Reestablishment of the Aak during the Reign of King Sejong

According to the *Sejong sillok*, King Sejong and his court scholars researched the musical theory of *aak* to produce a number of instruments for the performance of *aak* during five years from 1425 to 1430 (Song 2017, 4). Before this, the musical instruments that remained in the court were very few; the *pyeonjong* (a set of chime bells) that was given by the Emperor Huizōng of the Sòng Dynasty to King Yejong (1079-1122, r. 1105-1122) in the Goryeo Dynasty, a few of the *jong* (iron bells) and the *gyeong* (stone bells) that were given by the Emperor Hóngwǔ (1328-1398, r. 1368-1398) of the Míng Dynasty to King Gongmin (1330-1374, r. 1351-1374) in the Goryeo Dynasty and a few of the *jong* and the *gyeong* that were given by the Emperor Yǒnglè (1360-1424, r. 1402-1424) of the Míng Dynasty during the early Joseon Dynasty.⁹ However, they were already too worn out or rusted, and the musical pitches of the instruments were mostly not accurate. Therefore, it was the first step to produce and maintain all the instruments for the *aak* orchestra. The making of the *pyeonggyeong* (a set of chime stones) was possible because chime stones of good quality were discovered in 1425 in the Namyang area of Gyeonggi Province.¹⁰

In the meantime, the making of pitch pipes to establish the standard pitch for the *aak* performances was also controlled by Sejong and his scholars at the court. There were various methods to fabricate pitch pipes mentioned in different Chinese literary sources, but the right method was lost. In addition, the pitches of the extant instruments were all different. Therefore, a considerable amount of labor and efforts were involved in establishing the accuracy of the pitch pipes. Fortunately, in 1425, black broomcorn millets were found in the Ongjin area of Hwanghae Province,¹¹ and it was possible to make the pitch pipe since the length, circumference and volume of pipes could be measured by the amount of millets. After failing two times, the pitch pipe for the main tone,

6. The shortened name, the *Sejong sillok* will be used in the rest of this paper.

7. The shortened name, the *Sejong akbo* will be used in the rest of this paper. The *Sejong akbo* is included in the *Sejong sillok* from Volume 136 to Volume 147. These volumes begin with the preface written by Jeong Inji (1396-1478). The content of *Sejong akbo* is excellent and the quantity of the recorded music in these volumes is enormous. This is the oldest musical score from the Joseon Dynasty that has been handed down until today. As the oldest piece of extant written music in Korea, it is an extremely valuable record in the academic field for the history of Korean music.

8. In the era of King Sejong, standard measurements were fixed. This achievement is related to the invention of the *jeongganbo* which can then contain precise differences in rhythms.

9. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 50, the 12th year of King Sejong's reign (1430), the 1st of intercalary December: “臣等竊觀今之奉常寺所存樂器者，在高麗 睿宗時，宋 徽宗所賜編鍾；恭愍王時，高皇帝賜與鍾磬，共數十枚；及我朝，又有太宗文皇帝賜與鍾磬數十枚而已。”

10. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 29, the 7th year of King Sejong's reign (1425), August 26: “...今京畿 南陽所產石有聲，請遣玉人採來，依古體制造作試之。”

11. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 59, the 15th year of King Sejong's reign (1433), the 1st of January: “...乙巳秋，稻黍生於海州。”

hwangjong was finally produced in 1430.¹² Subsequently, all of the twelve pitch pipes were produced based on the *hwangjong* pitch pipe. Therefore, correct pitches for the *aak* music were all set.

In the court, King Sejong wanted to use the *aak* not only when ritual formalities were performed, but also in the meeting ceremonies between the king and officials, and in the celebration ceremonies.¹³ However, no *aak* music scores were left, and the song texts that remained in the court were not reliable, since it was not clear where these texts originated from and it sometimes occurred that musicians and singers arbitrarily added some texts by themselves.¹⁴

Thus, King Sejong and his scholars borrowed several musical pieces from two Chinese musical score books. One was from the musical scores of the *Dàchéng lèpǔ* (*A Musical Score of the Dàchéng* 大成樂譜) written by Lín Yǔ 林宇 (960-1279)¹⁵ and the other was the *Yǐlǐ jīngchuán tōngjiě* (*The Classic of the Interpretation of Confucian Rites and Ceremonies* 儀禮經傳通解).¹⁶ The *Dàchéng lèpǔ* is known to contain musical pieces for the monthly ritual ceremony to honor Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and his followers. In *Sejong akbo*, twelve

pieces from the *Dàchéng lèpǔ* were selected and they were transposed based on each main tone of twelve different pitches. Therefore, a total of 144 pieces were generated from it for the category of ritual 祭祀 music in the *Sejong akbo*. In the *Yǐlǐ jīngchuán tōngjiě*, twelve pieces are contained, based upon 26 different scales. In *Sejong akbo*, these 26 pieces were all transposed based on each main tone of twelve different pitches. Therefore, a total 312 pieces were generated and were notated in the category of the formal meetings and receptions 朝會.

This process was carefully conducted based on the musical theory regulated in the *Lǜlǚ xīnshū*. The original version of the Chinese musical score was also included in the *Sejong akbo* for reference.

The musical score on the left is the first piece of the *aak* music in the category of formal meetings and receptions 朝會 of the *Sejong akbo*. This title, “Hwangjonggung” 黃鐘宮, indicates which note is the first note (tonic) of a scale for this piece. In this case, *hwangjong* is the principal note. The big Chinese characters in each box indicate the function of each note like tonic, supertonic,

subdominant, dominant, and so on in Western musical scales. The small Chinese characters below the big

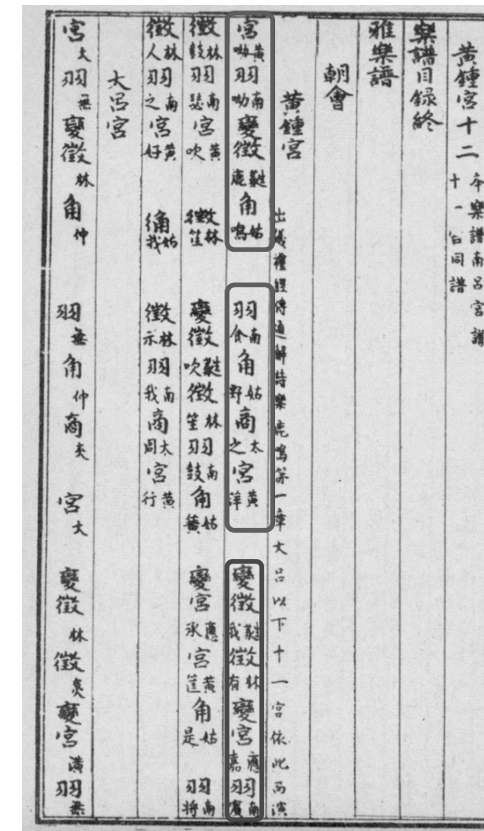


Figure 1.

Chinese characters on the right side are the names of the pitch. The small Chinese characters below the big Chinese characters on the left are the lyrics of the song.

The lyrics of the song are completely written only at the first of each piece. To save space, in the transposed music, the lyrics are not written again, as can be

12. According to the *Sejong sillok*, the experiment in 1426 to get the perfect pitch tuning pipe failed. This was due to the fact that the pitch was a bit higher than it should be. In 1427, it failed because several scholars argued that the number of millets used was not correct. In 1429, the pitch pipe was too big to be used. In this year the experimental bronze pipe was cast—most Korean scholars do not consider this third experiment in 1429 to have been a failure. Finally in 1430, a pitch pipe that satisfied Sejong and his scholars was produced. Quotations below are examples to observe it.

Sejong sillok, vol. 36, the 9th year of King Sejong’s reign (1427), May 15: “樂學別坐奉常判官朴堧,...初以中朝黃鐘之磬爲主, 三分損益, 作十二律管, 兼以益津所產秬黍校正之, ...”

Sejong sillok, vol. 37, the 9th year of King Sejong’s reign (1427), September 4: “上曰:...‘以秬黍改造律管, 雖朴堧不能矣。以中國黃鐘, 準而作之, 則雖非秬黍可矣。以中國黃鐘與朴堧所造律管, 審其音, 則其譜與不譜, 可知矣。’”

Sejong sillok, vol. 47, the 12th year of King Sejong’s reign (1430), December 19: “今也天降秬黍, 以示至和之應; 地產石磬, 以兆克諧之端。然今日所當先正者, 律管也....今若不制律管, 則五音清濁, 未免失真。”

13. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 49, the 12th year of King Sejong’s reign (1430), September 11: “...故予欲於朝會及賀禮, 皆奏雅樂, 而恐未得製作之中也。”

14. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 50, the 12th year of King Sejong’s reign (1430), the 1st of intercalary December: “...又今奉常之樂章, 不知何自而傳, 間有出於一時樂工之增益, 未足爲信。”

15. This was written by Lín Yǔ in 1349. It is known to contain the musical scores that are performed in the ritual ceremony for Confucius and his followers. *Dàchéng* is the name of a newly established musical field during the reign of the Emperor Huǐzōng in the Sòng Dynasty (960-1279). This is the generic term for the *aak* in the Sòng Dynasty (Provine 1988, 2002).

16. This book was written by Zhū Xī 朱熹 (1130-1200), also known as Master Zhu. He was a Sòng dynasty Confucian writer and propagandist. He was one of founders of Neo-Confucianism.

witnessed in the next piece, *daeryeogung* 大呂宮. Since the length of each tone in this music is always exactly the same, this musical score indicates only the pitch for the melody.¹⁷

When I transnotate the beginning part of this “Hwangjonggung” piece into the staff notation for contemporary readers, it is as follows:

黃鐘宮

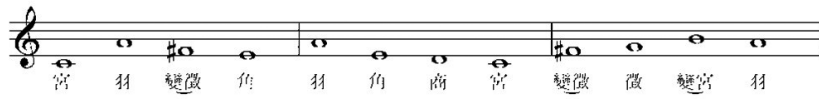
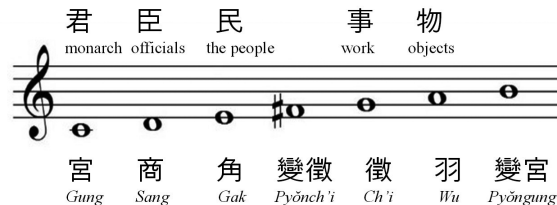


Figure 2.

According to the *Sejongillok*, King Sejong and his officials read the *Lüli xīnshū* and formally discussed this topic in order to develop the process for the reestablishment of the *aak*. This book, *Lüli xīnshū*, was brought to Korea by Prince Gyeongnyeong¹⁸ (1395-1458) who was the son of the first concubine of King Taejong (King Sejong’s father, 1367-1422, r. 1400-1418). Prince Gyeongnyeong received the *Xīnglǐ dàquán* (*A Comprehensive Collection of Neo-Confucianism* 性理大全)¹⁹ in 1419 as a gift from Emperor Chéngzǔ 成祖 (r.

17. This is the heptatonic scale of the *aak* in the *Sejongillok*. This can be transposed based on each of the twelve notes as below. In the *aak*, no pitches lower than the tonic 宮 should be used since nothing should threaten the king’s dignity. If it appears while the music is being transposed, it should be replaced with a pitch which is an octave higher. This is one of regulations in the *aak* written in the *Lüli xīnshū*.



18. He was one of the half-brothers of King Sejong.

19. *Xīnglǐ dàquán* was compiled in 1415 by the order of Emperor Chéngzǔ (Yǒnglè) 成祖: 永樂帝 (1360-1424, r. 1402-1424) during the Míng Dynasty. 42 scholars, including Hú Guǎng 胡廣 (1369-1418) collected the Neo-Confucian Rationalistic theories in various fields from the Sòng 宋 (960-

1402-1424) in the Míng Dynasty when he was sent by his father to the Míng court to solve the border conflict problems between the Míng and Joseon Dynasties. *Xīnglǐ dàquán* is known to have been compiled in 1415 by order of the Emperor Chéngzǔ.²⁰ The *Lüli xīnshū* is contained in the *Xīnglǐ dàquán* (Kim 2012, 14).

According to the *Sejongillok*, “while King Sejong was studying the *Lüli xīnshū*, he was highly impressed because the rules of how to obtain the musical scales and modes were extremely precise and that there was a constant order between higher and lower pitches in this book. Based on this knowledge, he decided to establish the tunes of the era.”²¹ On the other hand, according to the *Sejongillok* on 7th December 1430, a different point of view regarding Sejong’s impressions can be observed as follows: “Bak Yeon is now trying to adjust the music of the *aak* performance in an authentic way, but it is not easy to establish the *aak* music in the correct way. Even the *Lüli xīnshū* is only the theoretical written form. We cannot say that all of our music is completely well-established, but we don’t have to be ashamed when this is compared to the Chinese. How can we say that all Chinese music is made in the correct manner?”²² Based on his recorded words, we can assume that King Sejong understood the strengths and weaknesses of the *Lüli xīnshū*, and he proceeded in his development of the field based on his awareness of the possibilities and limitations of the *aak* influence from China.

According to the records of the Joseon Dynasty and later historians, Sejong is known as the king who enjoyed music and had excellent musical abilities. According to the *Taejongillok*, on December 30, 1413, Prince Chungnyeong²³ “extensively studied various subjects that are related to Neo-Confucian rational learning, including paintings and calligraphy, marbles, and the *qín* and *sè*, two string instruments that play in perfect harmony. Chungnyeong devoted much

1279) and the Yuán 元 (1279-1368) Dynasties and compiled this as the seventy volumes of collected works.

20. *Sejongillok*, vol. 6, the first year of King Sejong’s reign (1419), December 7: “敬寧君, 贊成鄭易, 刑曹參判洪汝方等回自北京. 皇帝就賜麒麟 [...] 特賜御製序新修《性理大全》, [...] 羊五百頭以寵異之.”

21. *Sejongillok*, vol. 50, the 12th year of King Sejong’s reign (1430), the 1st of intercalary December: “... 恭惟我主上殿下, 特留宸念, 宣德庚戌秋, 御經筵講蔡氏《律呂新書》, 歎其法度甚精, 尊卑有序, 思欲製律...”

22. *Sejongillok*, vol. 50, the 12th year of King Sejong’s reign (1430), December 7: “上諭樂曰: ‘今朴堧欲正朝會樂, 然得正爲難, 《律呂新書》, 亦文具而已. 我朝之樂, 雖未盡善, 必無愧於中原之樂, 亦豈得其正乎?’”

23. Prince Chungnyeong is the formal appellation of King Sejong before he rose to the throne.

on his artistic talent. The Crown Prince²⁴ learned the two string instruments, *qín* and *sè*, from Chungnyeong, and they got along amicably. The King was very happy to see this harmonious situation.²⁵ Based on this record, Sejong seemed to have accumulated a considerable amount of musical talent in his growth process.

The image of Sejong as a person who understood the different tones of music comes from the anecdote where he is said to have pointed out the slight differences in the sounds of the *pyeongyeong*. In the 15th year of Sejong's reign, when the *pyeongyeong* was newly produced and demonstrated, Sejong pointed out that one of the chime stone's sounds, *ichik* 夷則, was not correct, and as a result of rechecking, it was recognized that the lines marked by black ink were not precisely cut. After it was retrimmed, all of the pitches were perfect.²⁶

Besides this, there are many examples in *Sejong sillok* that we can observe King Sejong's great musical talents and good inspiration in music, as Song Hye-jin (2012, 194) also has pointed out in her paper: "Sejong often stated that 'I also know the sounds of music,'²⁷ or to be polite, 'I understand the sounds of music a little,'²⁸ especially when he was discussing the use of music in ceremonies and rituals with his officials." When he pointed out the problems of musical dissonance, he often commenced with such sentences. He frequently insisted that "music should be constantly relearned, even if somebody already understands it, otherwise it can easily disappear." When he produced new music, he had worries about it and often posed the question, "What if it does not fit the right tune of music?"²⁹ Not only Sejong but also a number of his

officials left similar estimations about his musical talent in the existing historical records. In the December record of the 31th year of King Sejong's reign, "the king was deeply aware of the sounds of music."³⁰ In the obituary that was written to request a posthumous appellation for the late King Sejong, it was written that he was "well versed in every subject, not only in the field of the sounds of music but also in astronomy."³¹ Also, in the annals of this later period, King Sejong is mentioned as follows: "King Sejong pays attention to everything but he makes more efforts in the field of music."³² Thus, it is certain that King Sejong was able to lead the direction of the musical policy based on abundant knowledge about music.

According to the *Sejong sillok*, Sejong discussed with his officials such as Maeng Saseong, Bak Yeon, and Jeong Inji about the adequateness and inadequateness of the contents of the *Lǜlǚ xīnshū* on September 11, 1430 (the 12th year of Sejong's reign).³³ The discussions are as follows:

The King said unto the officials of the right and the left, "The *aak* is originally not our music. It is originally from China. The Chinese people hear this music in their everyday lives, so it is taken for granted that they perform this music in their ritual ceremonies. However, Koreans listen to original Korean music (*hyangak*) in their everyday lives, but listen to *aak* only when they die. I have thought about whether this is all right or not. Furthermore, the *aak* has varied according to the different times in China. The pitch of the *hwangjong* is sometimes higher and sometimes lower than the standard. Therefore, it seems that the principle of the *aak* is not yet confirmed even in current China. I now want to use the *aak* in both the meeting ceremony between the king and officials, and to celebrate ceremonies."

This part of the historical records, sometimes without the last sentence, is

24. King Sejong's eldest brother.

25. *Taejong sillok*, vol.26, the 13th year of King Taejong's reign (1413), December 30: "忠寧大君... 書畫花石琴瑟凡戲玩之物, 無不具, 故大君於藝無不精. 世子因學琴瑟於大君, 怡然無間, 上深喜其和也."

26. *Sejong sillok*, vol.59, the 15th year of King Sejong's reign (1433), January 1: "上曰: '...但夷則一枚, 其聲差高, 何哉?' 塤即審視而啓曰: '限墨尚在. 未盡磨也.' 退而磨之, 墨盡而聲乃正."

This anecdote is described again in the *Sejong sillok* in 1449 as below: "Bak Yeon produced the *pyeongyeong* and demonstrated its use. While King Sejong was listening to the sound of it, he stated that 'The sound of the *ichik* pitch's chime stone is actually somewhat higher than it should be. Therefore, it should be cut a bit more precisely.' Bak Yeon checked this out and realized that what King Sejong had said was exactly right" 初命朴塤定鍾律, 塤嘗進玉磬, 上擊聽之曰: "夷則磬聲差高, 減幾分可調." 塤取視之, 磬工忘之, 不琢者數分, 皆如上言 (*Sejong sillok*, vol. 126, the 31st year of King Sejong's reign [1449], December 11).

27. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 100, the 25th year of King Sejong's reign (1443), April 17: "...然予頗知音律,..."

28. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 108, the 27th year of King Sejong's reign (1445), June 19: "予稍解音律..."

29. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 53, the 13th year of King Sejong's reign (1431), August 2: "若不合音律, 則奈何?"

30. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 126, the 31st year of King Sejong's reign (1449), December 11: "...上遼曉音律..."

31. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 127, the 32nd year of King Sejong's reign (1450), February 22: "...至於音律天文, 皆所洞曉..."

32. *Seongjong sillok*, vol. 98, the 9th year of King Seongjong's reign (1478), November 7: "...世宗每事無不致意. 而於音樂尤用意焉,..."

33. The original text is as follows: "己酉/受常參, 視事. 上謂左右曰: '雅樂, 本非我國之聲, 實中國之音也. 中國之人平日聞之熟矣, 奏之祭祀宜矣, 我國之人, 則生而聞鄉樂, 歿而奏雅樂, 何如? 況雅樂, 中國歷代所製不同, 而黃鍾之聲, 且有高下. 是知雅樂之制, 中國亦未定也, 故予欲於朝會及賀禮, 皆奏雅樂, 而恐未得製作之中也.'"

a statement that has been extensively used in the local academic field of Korean music to emphasize King Sejong's independence from foreign influence. Based upon this passage, the majority of current Korean musicologists believe that King Sejong did not want Chinese music to dominate the Korean court. They insist that Sejong attempted to establish the Joseon Dynasty independently of Chinese influence. They see Sejong's musical achievements as evidence that he had a sort of ethnocentric spirit based upon nationalism and that he tried to build the ideal Neo-Confucian state on the basis of the Koreans' unique cultural traditions. The section from the *Sejong sillok* that "even the *Lǐlǚ xīnshū* is only a theoretical written form" has been also extensively used to "confirm" this academic point of view.

It is true that Sejong recognized the problems of China's *aak* performance of his time and he also realized that the natural characteristics and customs of the Korean peninsula are quite different from those outside. Therefore, music and musical instruments cannot be exactly the same as those of China. However, this does not mean that he was tending towards ethnocentric nationalism. What he was implying in his statement was that more people should listen to *aak* (as opposed to common music) as much as possible in their everyday lives. That's why he wanted to perform the *aak* not only in the ritual ceremonies, but also in other court festivities. In my interpretation, he did not complain about the situation that Koreans have to listen (in a spiritual sense) to the *aak* when they die, but he rather felt pity that Koreans only can listen to the *aak* when they are dead. In addition, if his musical achievements are interpreted as a reflection of his ethnocentric nationalism, then how can we explain all of his efforts to read the Chinese classical sources to follow the authentic regulation from the orthodox *aak*? Also the concept of ethnocentric nationalism in the period of Sejong was lacking. Therefore, this may be an anachronistic approach that should be avoided in the current academic field of Korean Studies. I think King Sejong's goal was to build a true Neo-Confucian state with peace, harmony, and prosperity for his people. In order to do this, he wanted to reestablish the true *aak* in his court that was as close as possible to that of the Zhōu Dynasty. The next example in *Sejong sillok* also supports my point: "On the first day of January, 1431, the *aak* performance was finally premiered in front of King Sejong and his officials during the celebrating ceremony of the New Year's Bow to the king." The *Sejong sillok* has delivered us the scene as the following: "the appearance, regulation, and the vocal sounds and texts are all

very clear and it looks very splendid."³⁴ Another record in the *Sejong sillok* also recorded this moment as follows: "the face of the king was reverent, valiant, delighted, and happy. The eight timbres³⁵ are harmonized and seven different pitches also become harmonies. The Shield Dance and the Feather Dance give us the impression that we are at the court of King Shùn³⁶ 舜 (c. 22nd century B.C.) of the Yú 虞 Dynasty."³⁷

The first comment informs us that the initial *aak* performance was a success and that it more than satisfied the king and his officials. King Shùn and the Yú Dynasty in the second comment are actually an apocryphal person who was generally claimed to be the most perfect king of all times and the ruler of an ideal world in the beliefs of East Asia. Although it now belongs to one of the legends of Chinese culture, this kind of the legendary story used to be widely shared among all people in East Asia. If King Sejong was a supporter of ethnocentric nationalism, this comparison with an important person and dynasty in Chinese legends might have been a big humiliation and disgrace to him. However, this comment was written in the atmosphere that the performance was perceived to be a success, and therefore this comparison was meant to be a big compliment about the *aak* performance. Based on such records, we can assume this was what King Sejong wanted to obtain in the process of the reestablishment of the *aak*. I think as such, his musical policy rather reflects that he really wanted to establish the accurate doctrine of Neo-Confucianism for his people. The following records give us a more clear idea of what King Sejong had looked for here.

A Chinese envoy who came to Joseon in 1435 left a statement when he watched this performance in the court and his statement is recorded in *Sejong sillok* as follows: "Joseon is the original land of courtesy and now I see the culture of Lǐyuè, it is just as if in the original Learning of Jǐzǐ."³⁸ An envoy from

34. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 51, the 13th year of King Sejong's reign (1431), January 1: "始用新制雅樂, 儀章聲樂, 粲然可觀."

35. The instruments were made of eight different materials; silk, bamboo, wood, leather, stone, gourds, clay, and metal.

36. He was a mythical sage and leader. Likewise, the Yú Dynasty is also apocryphal.

37. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 62, the 15th year of King Sejong's reign (1433), November 27: "天顏肅穆, 載欣載悅, 八音之諧, 七聲之和, 干羽之舞, 宛然若虞庭之日."

38. A legendary sage from end of Shang Dynasty (c. 1100 BC).

39. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 68, the 17th year of King Sejong's reign (1435), April 3: "使臣謂引孫曰:...'朝鮮本是禮義之邦, 今觀禮樂文物, 無異中華, 專是箕子之遺風.' 嗟嘆不已."

Japan said, “I am sixty years old and have been staying at the border, therefore, previously I was not able to realize the magnificent ceremony in the court with the king and officials, but now I am fortunate enough to see this magnificent ceremony. Can the Land of Ultimate Bliss be even better than this?”⁴⁰ According to the preface written by Jeong Inji in *Sejong akbo*, “Music is the method for the current reigning king (or emperor) to promote good character, to harmonize between the gods and human beings, to make the connections between heaven and earth natural and to harmonize *yīn* 陰 and *yáng* 陽.”⁴¹

What ideal did King Sejong look for in his process of the reestablishment of the *aak* in his court? This is definitely quite far from ethnocentric nationalism. His goal was to govern his people in peace and prosperity like in the idealized Zhōu Dynasty. What he wanted in this process was to make the Yeak 禮樂 Principle real in his court through the reestablishment of the *aak*, since he wanted to provide his people with a world where everything was harmonized and placed in the right hierarchical position, and he had the fixed idea that correct music was vital to fulfill this dream.

The Creation of New Pieces of Music

From Volume 138 to Volume 145 of the *Sejong sillok*, four newly composed musical suites are contained: *The Musical Score of the Jeongdaeop Dance* (*Jeongdaeopjimu akbo*) in Vol. 138, *The Musical Score of the Botaepyeong Dance* (*Botaepyeongjimu akbo*) in Vol. 138, *The Musical Score of the Balsang Dance* (*Balsangjimu akbo*) in Vol. 139 and *The Bongnaeui* in Vols. 140-145. These pieces are all suites and thus include a number of different pieces of music in them. Of special importance, there are the five long pieces, “The Yeomillak,” “The Chihwapyeong I, II, III” and “The Chwipunghyeong” in the *Bongnaeui* and they are all based on the newly written long poem, “The Yongbieocheonga.”⁴²

40. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 71, the 18th year of King Sejong's reign (1436), January 1: “倭人 宗石見守, 見禮樂文物之盛, 與通事尹仁甫言曰: ‘予年六十餘歲, 生長邊土, 未知君臣慶會之盛禮, 今幸獲親盛事, 雖極樂淨土, 何以加此?’”

41. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 50, the 12th year of King Sejong's reign (1430), the first of intercalary December: “雅樂譜成. 鄭麟趾奉教序曰: 樂者, 聖人所以養性情、和神人, 順天地, 調陰陽之道也.”

42. This is an epic written by Gwon Je, Jeong Inji, and An Ji in 1445 by orders of King Sejong. This was a typical encomium song created to induce the obedience of the people by strengthening the

These are also combined performance of dance, song, and orchestra music. All of the new pieces were completed by 1447.

According to the *Sejong sillok*, when the text of “The Yongbieocheonga” was completed, melodies were added to it. This was the first step for later orchestra music. In the *Sejong sillok*, King Sejong said “Now I want to dress up the orchestra music based on the epic of ‘Yongbieocheonga.’ I allow the female slave singers 唱歌婢 to assist this with the musical style of the *Dangak*.⁴³ Some tunes may have been forgotten and some may have not. These are not suitable to my country's music, but the appearance of the dances is good. Now I am sick therefore I cannot enjoy listening to the music now. However, if we harmonize our music and dances with the *Dangak* and we practice the appropriate appearances and sounds, then the people in the next generation will be able to watch and listen to them. This would also be good.”⁴⁴

There is another story related to the new music in the *Sejong sillok* as follows: “The King was in the Gangnyeongjeon⁴⁵ and he let the musicians perform ‘The Yongbieocheonga’ together with orchestra music based on the melodies of the *hyangak*⁴⁶ and *Dangak*, but without any singing parts.”⁴⁷

Based on the records above we can comprehend that King Sejong tried out various experiments to express “The Yongbieocheonga” with orchestra music, dance, and song. This started at the latest in 1445. He finally stipulated rhythms and melodies for its text and let his son to work on it as follows:

The king deeply understood the music. All the rhythms and tempo were decided by the king, while he was striking the floor with a stick.⁴⁸ Prince

legitimacy of the power of the dynasty. This contains the propaganda that the founding of Joseon was the aim of Heaven. This describes the achievements of King Sejong's ancestors and includes lessons to the following kings.

43. This refers to the music which originated in the Táng Dynasty (618-907) but later was widened in a general sense to indicate music which came from China.

44. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 109, the 27th year of King Sejong's reign (1445), September 13: “今者以《龍飛詩》, 欲被管絃, 使唱歌婢協之唐樂, 或有忘其音律者, 或有不忘者. 然絃歌之聲, 不合於本國之樂, 但舞蹈之容, 爲可觀也. 且予有疾, 深居宮中, 不喜聽樂, 然本國之音, 合之唐律, 習其容聲, 以爲後人之觀聽可矣.”

45. This was where the Joseon Dynasty's kings slept. It was also a place where important events took place.

46. It is an indigenous and local Korean music style.

47. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 116, the 29th year of King Sejong's reign (1447), May 5: “上御康寧殿, 令娼妓工人奏《龍飛御天歌》, 只以鄉唐樂, 被之管絃而已, 不令唱歌.”

48. An important foreign scholar such as Keith Howards has suggested doubts about the credibility of the annals based on this passage. They question how King Sejong alone can compose the music of

Suyang, Yi Yu⁴⁹ was also known to be good in vocal music, therefore he was ordered to take over this work. He practiced this with a number of female slave musicians in the court.⁵⁰ When “Chwipunghyeong,” “Yeomillak,” and “Chihwapyeong” were performed, King Sejong said to his government officials, “I now present to you some newly created pieces of music. Please enjoy them.”⁵¹

These pieces were finally completed as a performance of not only the orchestra music but also the dances and songs. Each song had a story related to the founding of the dynasty, the greatness, virtue, and authenticity of the dynasty and the genealogy of the monarch’s ancestors and to describe the hardships and difficulties that the dynasty had during the process of its establishment. King Sejong examined as if under a microscope the costumes, dance props, and items for these new pieces of music to express the meanings of the epic (Song 2017, 19). For the importance of this had already been regulated in the *Liji* (*Classic of Rites* 禮記), written by Confucius and his followers. This goes as follows:

such a long poem within one night. In the dynasty, all achievements tended to be recorded as the king’s personal endeavor.

Therefore, such suggestion can be reasonable. However, if we read the whole context of the annals, it is certain that Sejong made a number of efforts to develop the new music and conducted various experiments over three years to create new music. Then, according to the annals, King Sejong made a final decision on rhythms and melodies for the new music over one night.

In addition, when we analyze the five pieces based on the poem “Yongbiocheonga,” we can realize that the flow of rhythms and melodies in each movement are more or less similar except for the first and the last movements. This is similar to the situation where the melody of the first verse is repeated in the second verse in most western songs. For the musical structure of the pieces, refer to Byeon 1994.

Sejong had studied the principles of the *aak* for many years, and the experiments on the new music that has been recorded in the *Sejong sillok* were at least for three years. Also, he had a certain direction in this massive project. Therefore, this passage should not particularly be considered as the proof of the invalidity of the annals. This misunderstanding comes out since a few Korean musicologists emphasize the achievements of kings without a sufficient explanation of the whole context of the annals. They sometimes only selectively point out certain parts of it to support their opinions.

49. The second son of King Sejong became King Sejo 李瑄 (1417-1468, r. 1455-1468). He had his nephew and many scholars murdered in order to take the throne.

50. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 126, the 31st year of King Sejong’s reign (1449), December 11: “上遽曉音律，新樂節奏，皆上所制，以杖杖擊地爲節，一夕乃定。首陽大君 瑄亦通聲樂，命掌其事，以妓數十人，時於禁中習之。”

51. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 126, the 31st year of King Sejong’s reign (1449) December 10: “出內宴歌妓樂工，令奏《醉豐亨》，《與民樂》，《致和平》等樂，仍謂曰：‘今賜爾等新樂，須當盡權。’”

when listening to the sound of the song, the determination is strengthened, and when learning the dances while holding props such as ceremonial shields and the lowering and raising of the head and the bending and stretching of the knees, the appearance must remain dignified. When the lines and queues of dance processions are correct, the movements forwards and backwards will be orderly.

Related to this, King Sejong tried to refine and elaborate the costumes and props of each performer. This is why he wanted a synthesis of a complex performance which would not only deliver the innate meaning of the text but would also represent the dynastic pride and glory as a perfect production of the Joseon Dynasty, based upon the original Yeak Principle.

In the conversation between King Sejong and one of his higher officials, Maeng Saseong, we can find King Sejong’s deep thoughts about the use of music styles as follows:

King Sejong said that “in the Sòng Dynasty, the musician, Huáng Zhí, came to the court to hear the music of the *aak*. It was performed on the higher stage but the sound of the *chángdí* (long bamboo flute 長笛), the *pípá* (Chinese lute 琵琶), the *chánggǔ* (hourglass-shaped drum 長鼓), and so on are also inserted between others. According to this, I am sure that the local Chinese music 鄉樂 was also used in the performance of the *aak* during the Sòng Dynasty.” Then, Maeng replies that “According to the old Classics, ‘music starts with the striking the *zhu* 柷 and finishes with the striking the *yu* 敔, but between these, the sound of the *shēng* 笙 and the *yōng* 鏞 were also performed.’ Therefore, the insertion of unsophisticated folk music 俗樂⁵² between these probably even existed before the beginning of the three earliest dynasties (Xià, Shāng, and Zhōu).”⁵³

Therefore, King Sejong knew that the use of music with other origins such as the *hyangak* or *Dangak* in the performance of the present day *aak* does

52. This concept is the opposite of the *aak*. While the *aak* is known to be the correct music, the *sogak* 俗樂 refers to a kind of vulgar music. It generally indicates the local or unsophisticated indigenous music.

53. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 49, the 12th year of King Sejong’s reign (1430), September 11: “宋朝之樂，亦未正也。令伶人黃植入朝，聞奏《雅樂》，長笛，琵琶，長鼓相間而奏於堂上，中國亦雜用鄉樂也。’右議政孟思誠對曰：‘古云：合止柷敔，(生)[笙]鏞以間。’則間奏《俗樂》，自三代之前，當已有之。”

not stray from the Yeak Principle of Confucianism. He double checked this with the opinion of a great Confucian scholar Maeng Saseong in his court. Therefore, his new music absorbed various musical elements from the *hyangak* as a result of his judgement that the musical elements of the *hyangak* were more effective in identifying and communicating with the people, as he perceived that languages and sounds were different according to different peoples, geography, temperaments, and climate (Lee 2002a). The way of playing instruments and the constitution of the orchestra followed the manner of the *aak* and *Dangak* (Mun 2013), as is emphasized in the Yeak Principle.

Below is the score of the second verse⁵⁴ of “The Chihwapyeong I,” as based on the newly created Hangeul text of “The Yongbieocheonga.”

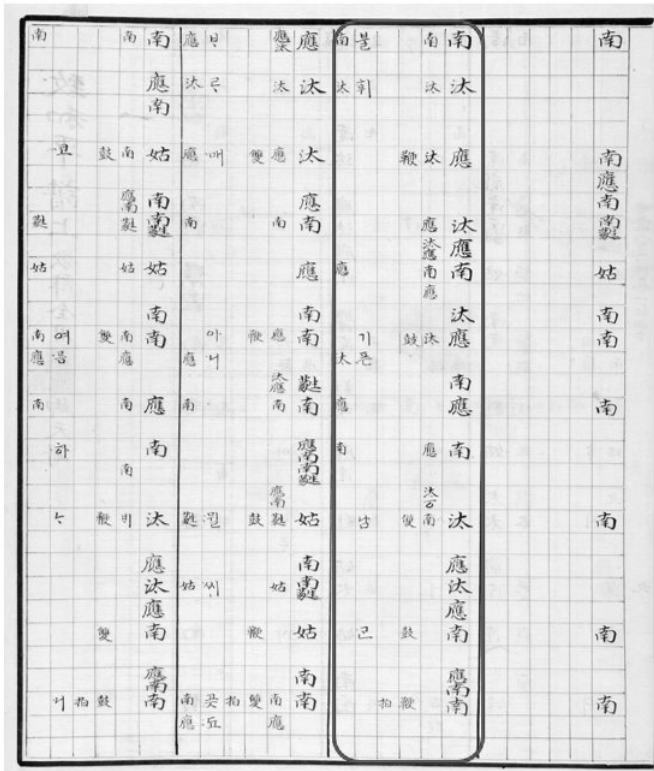


Figure 3.

This is written in the newly created notation system, the *jeongganbo*, which consists of a lattice of horizontal and vertical lines that create columns of boxes to indicate the length of different rhythms, since each box is taken to be a time unit. It should read from top to bottom and from right to left. These small cells resemble the Chinese character 井, meaning well (of water), so it was named *jeongganbo* 井間譜.⁵⁵ This is a segment of the orchestra music and song. Unfortunately, all this music is now lost and there is no proper indication of which line is for which instruments. Therefore, it can only be presumed that the first column is for the melody for the string instruments, the second for the winds, the third for the drum beats of the *janggo*, the fourth is for the articulating strokes on the clapper percussion instrument, the *bak*, the fifth for the text of the song, and the sixth for the song melody or for the special instruments, such as the *pyeongyeong* or *pyeongjong* (Lee 2002b).

When I transnotate the beginning part of the music left into the staff notation for contemporary readers, it is as follows:

致和平上



Figure 4.

54. In the version written in Classical Chinese characters, “根深之木 風亦不扞 有灼基華 有實基實 源遠之水 旱亦不竭 流斯爲川 于海必遠,” while in the version written in Korean, “불휘 기픈 남곤 부루매 아니 뭇시 곳 도코 여름 하느니 쉬미 기픈 므른 구무래 아니 그출시 내히 이러 바루래 가느니.”

55. “Jeong” 井 means well, “gan” 間 space, and “bo” 譜 notation.

Below is the score of “The Yeomillak,” which was based on the Chinese text of “The Yongbieocheonga.” Whereas “The Chihwapyeong I, II, III” and “The Chwipunghyeong” are all based upon the entire verses (125 movements) of the newly created Korean version of “The Yongbieocheonga,” this piece is based on the first, second, third, fourth, and last verses of “The Yongbieocheonga” in the Chinese character version.

In this piece of music, the first column is for the melody of the music, the second for the percussion instrument, the *janggo*, and the third for the text

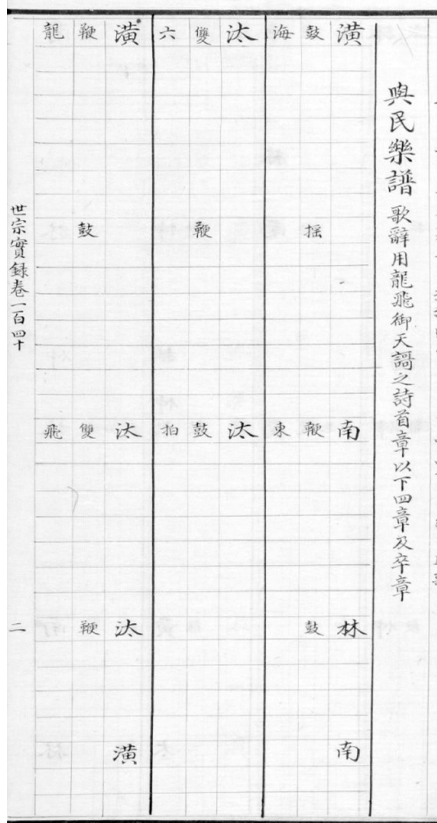


Figure 5.

of the song. As in the picture, each Chinese ideogram has almost the same rhythm length, like in the *aak*. When the Korean writing system is used as in the previous picture, the flow of music is more fluent and it is quite different from when the Chinese characters are used. When I transnotate the beginning part of the music above into the five staff notation for contemporary readers, it is as

與民樂



Figure 6.

follows:

Now we have a question as to why this new notation system was devised in the era of King Sejong. If his music was the same as that of the *aak* style, then probably he would not have needed to create this new system. It is known that he absorbed the musical style not only of the *aak* but also of the *hyangak* and the *Dangak* into his music. Since there is no written evidence about these two important musical genres in that era, it is not certain how much his new music, which was based upon the Korean alphabet, has any affinity to the style of the *hyangak* or the *Dangak*. His music may have been quite different from the style of these two works or even has its own specific individual style. In any case, it is quite clear that his music, which is based on manuscripts in the new Korean alphabet, Hangeul (which reflects the everyday spoken language, as opposed to the written Chinese used by the elite), shows a much different musical style than the *aak*.

With the invention of the new phonetic Korean alphabet, music based on the Hangeul could be written, and thus he needed a new musical notation system which could contain the different lengths of rhythms in the new

music created based on Hangeul texts. Therefore, the creation of the Hangeul definitely had a big influence on the invention of this new musical notation system. Different layers of cultural aspects give and take influences from each other.

According to the discussion between King Danjong (1441-1457, r. 1452-1455) and the old official, Jeong Inji in the *Danjong sillok*, such an innovative achievement for the dynasty, the creation of new pieces of music, was planned by King Sejong right from the beginning to replace the *aak* in the ritual ceremonies for the royal ancestors 宗廟 by his new music. In the *Danjong sillok*, “[King Sejong] has supervised the music of the *jeongdaeop* to express the achievements by King Taejo (1335-1408, r. 1392-1398) and King Taejong (1367-1422, r. 1400-1418) and he reestablished the *aak* based on his scholars’ and his historical research through reading and discussion of the *Lùlǔ xīnshū* in the court. He ordered several court musicians to demonstrate such music and finally finished it. He wanted to use those pieces of music in the ritual ceremonies for the royal ancestors 宗廟. However, he passed away before he carried out his last wishes. Therefore, King Munjong (1414-1452, r. 1450-1452) followed his last desires and ordered Prince Suyang⁵⁶ to continue this.”⁵⁷ During the reign of King Sejo, the king finally declared the *jeongdaeop* and *botaepyeong* to be the formal music for the rituals of the royal ancestors as he followed his father’s wishes. According to another record in the *Sejong sillok* (in the 29th year of the reign), the king said “‘The Yongbieocheonga’ should not only be performed in the ritual music for the royal ancestors but also the pieces, [...] ‘The Yeomillak,’ ‘The Chihwapyeong,’ and ‘The Chwipunghyeong’ should be performed at various festivities and ceremonies in the court.”⁵⁸ Based on such records, we can assume that the new pieces of music in this period were created as new *aak*. Even though the *jeongdaeop* and *botaepyeong* were designated as ritual music for the royal ancestors by King Sejo, it was King Sejong’s desire

from the beginning and he intended to create new *aak* for his people. His new music in this era was the “real *aak*” that he was looking for during the entire period of his reign in his hopes to harmoniously govern his people with peace and prosperity for all. This is why he learned and practiced these regulations from the classical Chinese sources. Furthermore, King Sejong and his officials left wishes in *Sejong sillok* as follows, “Producing poems and songs is to praise the flourishing virtues and sacred charity of the previous kings and the present king. This new music should be performed among people at all levels of society. When all the people sing, recite, shout, and memorize these new pieces of music, they will have strong desire for their king and will be longing for their previous kings.”⁵⁹ To get an idea of King Sejong’s way of thinking, this is a very important message. In the end, he wanted that all the people in his dynasty could enjoy this new music. He did not want to limit the *aak*, including his music, only within the court. He wanted all people in his dynasty to enjoy his new music without any consideration of social status. I believe that the pieces that he and his officials created were a reflection upon a more ethical new music for the people under his dynasty that they developed during the process of the rediscovery of the *aak*. The creation of his new music was certainly not a side effect to what he tried to look for in the process of the reestablishment of the *aak*. Actually, the reestablishment of the *aak* was preparatory stage to create his own music. To demonstrate his loyalty to his beliefs, he created new music which was a further development upon the *aak* for him and his people. To notate this, he created the new musical notation system, *jeongganbo*. As such, Sejong’s actions and achievements can be interpreted as a multiplication of different layers and they are examples which witness that King Sejong intuitively had a good grasp of the cultural productivity and all his related policies were deeply connected and prudently planned and organized during his reign.

Conclusion

King Sejong accomplished the reestablishment of the *aak* by reflecting upon musical theories from the *Lùlǔ Xīnshū*, and he and his scholars tried to

56. King Sejo.

57. *Danjong sillok*, vol. 7, the first year of King Danjong’s reign (1453), July 9: “又欲象太祖，太宗治功，制爲《定大業》之樂。謂臣雖不解音律，以其粗識古今，故命臣爲提調，俾掌其事。至於經筵進講《律呂新書》，親算考證，以定其樂。姑令宮人與二妓習之宮中，蓋將用之於宗廟，朝廷也。撰定樂譜，使舞童習焉，以爲：‘舞童年長易老，不可復用。更謀救弊之策。事垂成而世宗晏駕。文宗嗣位，欲成世宗之志，以首陽大君解音律爲都提調，仍命臣參定...’”

58. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 116, the 29th year of King Sejong’s reign (1447), June 4: “今降《龍飛御天謠》(歌)，乃爲歌詠祖宗盛德神功而作，所宜上下通用，以極稱揚之意，不可止爲宗廟之用。《與民樂》，《致和平》，《醉豐亨》等樂，於公私燕享，并許通用。”

59. *Sejong sillok*, vol. 116, the 29th year of King Sejong’s reign (1447), June 4: “詩謠之作，皆所以稱贊先王盛德神功，要必協之聲律，用之上下，使鄉黨邦國謠吟諷誦，興起其念慕之心。”

reestablish the authentic *aak* in the Korean court as closely as possible to the orthodoxy of the Zhōu Dynasty. To Confucians, this was a very important task in the early stage of the establishment of a new dynasty.

However, King Sejong had more plans than only the reestablishment of the *aak*. By means of his own music, he tried to create “the real *aak*” of his era. The essence of the *aak* is reflected in his new music and is culturally and diachronically absorbed in it. He did not intend to limit his new music to the court. He wanted to provide this to all his people. For he wanted all his people, not only the nobles, but also subjects of any social status to gain human virtue in an attempt to resemble the situation in the most ideal dynasty as in the era of the legendary kings Yáo and Shùn. Therefore, his new music is a further innovative development of the *aak* of the times, since it possesses a more widespread idea of the propagation of human virtue by music. In this sense, this cannot be interpreted as ethnocentric nationalism, since what he was looking for during his reign was the culmination of the perfect Confucian world. The reestablishment of the *aak* and the creation of new musical pieces and the influences of Hangeul on the creation of new music and the invention of a new notation system were all linked as an intertwined form in the achievements of King Sejong, although each were respectively born as an individual cultural production.

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BYEON Gyewon (gyewonbyeon@hotmail.com) is not only active in the academia of musicology but is also deeply involved in the composition and performance of traditional Korean music. She finished her BA and MA at Seoul National University. Since she got her PhD at University of London in 2002, she has published a number of academic articles and books in English and Korean. Her compositions include pieces using different traditional music instruments performed not only in Korea but also in Japan, the USA, Austria, and Great Britain. About thirteen CDs with her music are available in Korea today. Since 2016, she is teaching and working in the Department of Korean Studies at the Ruhr University Bochum in Germany.

Abstract

Not only King Sejong accomplished the reestablishment of the authentic *aak* in the Joseon Dynasty court, but he also tried to create “the real *aak*” of his era. The essence of the *aak* is reflected in his new music. The *jeongdaeop* and *botaepyeong* were designated as ritual music for the royal ancestors by King Sejo, but it was King Sejong’s desire from the beginning and he intended to create new *aak* for his people. Therefore, it possesses a more widespread idea of the propagation of human virtue by music. In this sense, this cannot be interpreted as ethnocentric nationalism, since what he was looking for during his reign was the culmination of the perfect Confucian world. The reestablishment of the *aak* and the creation of new musical pieces and the influences of Hangeul on the creation of new music and the invention of a new notation system, *jeongganbo*, were all linked as an intertwined form in the achievements of King Sejong, and each were also respectively born as an individual cultural production.

Keywords: *jeongganbo*, King Sejong, *aak*, “Yeomillak,” “Chihwapyeong,” “Chwipunghyeong,” “Yongbieocheonga”

