

# Hong Dae-yong's Beijing Travels and His Changing Perception of the West-Focusing on *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* and *Uisan mundap*

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This paper details Hong Dae-yong's changing perception of the West. Contemporary research on Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West has caused a certain amount of confusion through indiscriminate use of the texts. After reviewing the order of his texts can it be confirmed that Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West changed objectively and scientifically only in his later days.

Around the time of *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West assumed a considerable degree of duality. His negative perception of Catholic catechism and his positive perception of the astronomical calendar crossed and his like of Western art techniques collided with his dislike of the content of religious art. His beliefs were based on Sino-centric theory and *dogiron*. It was not until *Uisanmundap* that his perception incorporated his new knowledge of natural science. Using the theory that on the spherical Earth an observer can be the center wherever he is, Hong Dae-yong came to recognize the West as equal to myself and described that a combination of Occidental and Oriental elements could secure the prospect for an advanced pursuit of civilization in our daily lives.

Keywords: *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, *Uisanmundap*, perception of the West, Sino-centric thought

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## Introduction

The experiences of Hong Dae-yong (1731-83) with and his changing perception of the West will be reviewed through his works. Contemporary studies on Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West have centered on *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*

(A Record of Eulbyeong Travels to Beijing), which recorded his experiences with Western civilization when traveling to Beijing. This text was deemed a completely appropriate choice because its stylistic characteristics were perceived as a realistic description of what was seen and heard and it presented a variety of examples of contact with Western civilization. However, it seems that more discretion should be used in understanding these characters and interpreting the data.

In most travel books, comprehension of facts is perceived through the senses of the observer, and knowledge is limited to the scope of the writer's experiences. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect a complete perception of the target world through such books. Contemporary research has shown that *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* contains contradictory perceptions of the West within its text. There exists a gap between his perceptions and actual facts. It is not desirable to include this gap in perception as part of the total concept called the West, ignore it, or expand fragmentary case-by-case perception into the whole phase of culture or civilization. Accordingly, this paper will categorize Hong Dae-yong's experiences with Western civilization into various types and reveal his different perceptions. At the same time, this paper will build a common basis for the different perceptions and reveal their relatedness.

There is a limit to what can be revealed about Hong Dae-yong's perceptions of the West through examination of *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*. This book only records six months of his travels and, moreover, his experiences with Western civilization are limited to a small portion of the book. On the whole, an individual's perceptions of the world are a dynamic process that is constantly changing throughout one's life, so it is incomplete to base a person's perception of the West on a momentary world experience. Accordingly, this paper will review Hong Dae-yong's reflective perception of the world and also review *Uisanmundap* (Dialogue on Mount Iwulu) which was written in his later days and so seems to complete his thoughts about the West. When this text is juxtaposed against *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* and passage of time is taken into consideration, the changing perceptions of Hong Dae-yong about the West will be revealed.

### **Pre-Historic Understanding: A Record of Travel in Beijing and Contact with the West during the First Half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

Korean envoys' perceptions of the West were gained mainly through visits to Beijing's Catholic churches in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In Beijing, there were four

Catholic churches: the South Catholic Church built to the southwest of the Forbidden City by Matteo Ricci in 1605 and later enlarged by Adam Schall; the East Catholic Church; the North Catholic Church; and the West Catholic Church. Korean envoys primarily visited the South Catholic Church (Won Jae-yeon 2003). Thus, the Catholic churches in Beijing played a prominent role in Korean intellectuals' (who had been to Beijing as envoys) experiences with Western civilization. In a record dated February 1, 1713 from *Nogajae yeonhaeng ilgi* (Diary of Nogajae Travels to Beijing) by Kim Chang-eop (1658-1721), he described the visage of a Catholic church he visited. With a very dry touch, Kim Chang-eop concisely described the visage of the statue of Jesus Christ, an armillary sphere, a pipe organ, and an alarm clock. Considering his description, his subjective evaluation and feelings about Western civilization were restrained. Kim Chang-eop also saw an automatic mechanism made in the West that allowed dolls in a box to continue moving when wound up and received a western compass from the interpreter Kim Sam-ga. There was only a factual recording of this event but no evaluation of the items. Accordingly, we can only confirm that the West approached as strange instruments in *Nogajae yeonhaeng ilgi* and it is difficult to find out an active and self-awakening response and a positive perception by Kim Chang-eop.

The experiences of Lee Gi-ji (1690-1722) who traveled to Beijing as a military attaché of his father Lee Yi-myeong eight years later in 1720 were somewhat different. Recently, the changing aspect of Western civilization in his record of travel in Beijing *Iramyeon-gi* (Diary of Iram's Travels to Beijing) has been introduced (Shin Ik-cheol 2005). According to this record, Lee Gi-ji stayed in Beijing for 55 days from September 4 - November 14, 1720, and made contact with missionaries for twenty days while visiting the South, the East, and the West Catholic churches. Of course, he had a keen interest in Western civilization and what is more interesting is that his perception of Western civilization deepened with the number of exchanges. Joseon envoys including Lee Gi-ji visited the Catholic churches, saw various things such as a statue of Jesus Christ, Western paintings, an armillary sphere, an alarm clock, a terrestrial globe, a fountain-pen and matches and even could experience Western food culture like wine and custard. Also, the Joseon envoys could obtain various books such as *Cheonju sirui* (True Principles of Catholicism), *Cheonmundo* (Astronomical Chart), *Jigudo* (Chart of the Earth), and *Gonyeodo* (A Map of the Earth) in addition to various Western instruments such as armillary spheres, alarm clocks and telescopes. However, such contact with Western civilization was not always uni-

lateral. Since the Western missionaries asked the way to Joseon and examined the possibility of establishing Catholic churches there, the Joseon envoys presented products to them in return.

When visiting the East Catholic Church on October 30, 1720, Lee Gi-ji obtained a new perception of the calendar and astronomy through a dialogue with the missionary Xu Mao-sheng. By revolving an armillary sphere, Lee Gi-ji could understand the difference between the length of day and night of regions located on the earth according to the difference of seasons and degrees. Confirming that this principle was applied to the real world, Lee Gi-ji realized there were considerable errors in traditional principles in regards to the calendar and astronomy of the East. Lee Gi-ji doubted the record of the *History of Tang*, which stated that night was short adjacent to the region the sun rose and also doubted the opinion of Shao Yong(1011-1077) that the daytime was not less than eight hours. He wrote: “With this thing only, I can be sure there are no faults in Western technology and there is no doubt about the theory that the sky is round and the earth is also round.” This passage by Lee Gi-ji showed his confidence and new perception of the precise nature of Western science and its observatory instruments. Lee Gi-ji is credited with introducing the vivid art of drawing and the perspective of Catholic frescoes and evaluated them by comparing them to pictures of Buddha at the Zhantan Temple (Shin Ik-cheol 2005).

As a chief envoy, Lee Ui-hyeon (1669-1745) went to Beijing in July 1732. His impression of visiting the South Catholic Church is contained in *Imja yeonhaeng jabji*” (Record of Imja Travels to Beijing). In November 1720, Lee Ui-hyeon had arrived in Beijing as an envoy but had not visited any Catholic churches. He expressed his regret, “It’s very lamentable that I couldn’t visit any Catholic churches because of the bad situation.” He recognized that the Catholic church with which he made contact for the first time was different from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism of the East, and expressed his cynical feelings toward the exclusive attitude of Catholicism. Such feelings deepened when he viewed the Catholic frescoes. He considered it “an odd thing” that the painting of the Holy Mother in heaven looked like a spirit in the world of the dead. A negative aspect of Occidentalism is its dependence on a kind of intuition rather than an attitude of perceiving other religions objectively and, furthermore, throws an image of “evil.” However, he showed a rather objective and positive attitude toward problems that did not involve ideology.

Lee Ui-hyeon met the missionary Fei Yin who had associated with Lee Gi-ji. Through his dialogue with Fei Yin, he widened his geographical knowledge of

Western countries. According to his travel records from Beijing, Fei Yin gave him a book about Catholic catechism entitled *Juje gunjing* (Catholic Doctrine) written by Adam Schall (1591-1666), another book of Catholic catechism entitled *Samsan nonhaggi* (Discussions on Catholicism) written by the Italian missionary Giulio Aleni (1582-1649), Western pictures, *heubdogseok* (poison-imbibing stone) and gogwa (a type of medicinal herb). He briefly commented on these two books about Catholicism as books of “telling Western magic” but had a very keen interest in Western medicine. It is apparent which side he emphasized. For example, *heubdogseok*, an object made of stone within the head of a viper from the western region of Indian Ocean, is very effective in curing poisonous insect bites, swelling and boils. It can be used continuously when put in fluid and then dried.

Despite visiting the same Catholic church in Beijing on their trips to Beijing as envoys, there was a considerable difference in the scope and aspect of contact and perception of Western civilization based on the critical mind and interest of each writer. Kim Chang-eop described rather disinterestedly the things that he had seen of Western civilization. Lee Ui-hyeon was rather skeptical of the catechism of Catholicism, a kind of Western spiritual culture and religious art but showed a favorable interest in medicine, a kind of Western material civilization. Lee Gi-ji who had an academic background made various contacts with Western culture, perceived very positively the advanced Western science and technology and even indicated the errors of traditional Eastern astronomy. Thus, in spite of the differences in individual experiences and perception, the envoys' contact with Western civilization through the Catholic churches in the former half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century enlarged their geographical understanding of the world and provided a new perception toward traditional thought about nature and the cosmos.

### ***Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*: Experiences of Western Civilization and the Dual Perception of the West**

Hong Dae-yong (1731-83) headed to Beijing as a military attache of his stepfather Hong Eok on November 2, 1765. While staying in Beijing for about two months from December 27, 1765 to February 29, 1766, he experienced Western civilization. He already knew about the excellence of Western natural science and had high expectations for visiting the Catholic church, which was unfavorable to the Joseon envoys at that time. According to “*Yeongi*” (Beijing Memoir), the

Joseon envoys who frequently visited the Catholic churches were sometimes discourteous, greedy for presents and made the church utensils dirty. Therefore, the missionaries would not receive the Joseon envoys. Nevertheless, Hong Dae-yong visited the South Catholic Church twice and the East Catholic Church once.

### 1. Negative Perception of Christianity

Hong Dae-yong first sent a person to the South Catholic Church in Beijing to ask for permission to visit and to explain in brief his knowledge of Western Learning and religion (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 7, 1766). Hong Dae-yong held a dual perception of Western civilization based on his understanding of Matteo Ricci. He believed that in the field of natural science such as astronomy and the calendar Western civilization surpassed the East, but the Catholic church itself was not worthy of mention because it was the church of barbarians. He made a clear distinction between Western Learning and Christianity and distinguished between the metaphysical *dao* (道) and the physical *qi* (氣). His basis for perceiving Christianity so critically lay in the theory that Christianity was “different from the *dao* of Chinese saints and that it was a church of barbarians.” Hong Dae-yong perceived the difference from others through Catholicism but evaluated Christianity as vulgar because his judgment was based on the China-centered value system, or a typical viewpoint of Sino-centrism. The following record was written before he himself had any experience with the Catholic church and his basic view of Western civilization and his preconceptions can easily be found.

I said again, “I hear Catholicism keeps pace with China together with Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. I’m from the Eastern State and don’t understand its principles. I would like to know its general principles.” A. Van Hallerstein said, “Catholicism is very admirable and profound. Which part would you like to know?” I said, “Confucianism admires benevolence and righteousness, Taoism purity and Buddhism achievements. I would like to know what Catholicism admires.” Hallerstein said, “Catholicism aims to teach people to love the Lord of Heaven and to love others as we love ourselves.” I said, “Does the Lord of Heaven mean the Supreme Being? Or does it indicate any other particular person?” Hallerstein said, “It means what Confucius said, ‘Propriety of teachers is to admire the Supreme Being.’ But it doesn’t mean the King of Heaven of Taoism.” Hallerstein also said, “In the notes of Sijeon

(The Book of Odes), isn't there a phrase that 'the Supreme Being rules the heavens'?" (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 19, 1766)

I asked again, "Are there people who admire Catholicism in the southern regions?" Pan Ting-jun said, "Catholicism has come to China recently and the gentry have no faith in it because it is barbaric. The Westerner Matteo Ricci came to China sometime during the Ming dynasty and Catholicism was performed using various books. One of them had written, 'The Lord of Heaven was incarnated to the world, tried to teach people and was lamentably accused of a crime and died after receiving a harsh punishment. Never fail to worship the God toward the cross and never forget the grace of God in tears.' These are extremely infatuated words." I said, "Western Learning's discussion of the degrees of heaven and astronomy are very high and beyond Chinese ability. But they stole the name of the Supreme Being of Confucianism and decorated their religion with transmigration of the souls of Buddhism. It is very filthy. How strange it is that there are often Chinese people who admire this religion!" Yan Cheng said that there was an order to prohibit Catholicism by the state. (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 24, 1766)

While discussing the historic Joseon relics and China with Pan Ting-jun and Yan Cheng (who were from Hangzhou and met Hong Dae-yong at Qianjingtong), they naturally entered into a conversation about Catholicism. Pan Ting-jun's knowledge of Catholicism was rather accurate, but he evaluated negatively Catholic catechism as being "extremely infatuated words." Hong Dae-yong believed the same and rebuked Catholicism more. He criticized Catholicism because he thought that it was not a spontaneous religion of the West but a fake religion that had stolen not only the existence of the Lord from the Supreme Being of Confucianism but also the principles of resurrection and immortality from the theory of transmigration of souls of Buddhism. In other words, he believed that the origin of Catholic catechism derived from China. According to this argument, it seemed "strange" to Hong Dae-yong that Chinese Catholics disregarded its Chinese origin and were infatuated with a foreign fake.

According to contemporary research, the influx of Western Learning into China grew during the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the former half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the relationship with the Qing dynasty stabilized. More than 50 books about Western humanities and natural science arrived in Joseon and a

considerable number of these books were about Catholicism (Ro Dae-hwan 1997). Naturally, such an influx of Western books caused native intellectuals to gain a better understanding of Western civilization and often to change their perception of the West. But in the case of Christianity, there were many intellectuals who believed that its catechism could not harmonize with Confucian values and Hong Dae-yong was one of them. As confirmed in his records of his travels in Beijing, the doctrine of Christianity was considered a heresy to Hong Dae-yong who recognized the Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius and the Learning of Principle during the Sung and Ming dynasty as right learning.

## 2. Dual Perception of Western art

The paintings in Beijing's Catholic churches were always striking and mysterious to the Joseon envoys and were good attractions. Those who had not had an opportunity to see the Western style of painting were shocked at Catholic sacred paintings. Hong Dae-yong was among them.

Looking at the South Catholic Church's frescoes, Hong Dae-yong was surprised at technique used in Western paintings which made it difficult to distinguish it from a real object. The pupil of the eye looked alive, the sound of the fall seemed audible and the drops of water were likely to soak clothes (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 9, 1766). Using expressions such as "all was real phenomena" and "it looked like a real landscape," he marveled at the vivid paintings. Unlike Oriental paintings which embody a spiritual aspect of the subject through lines of the brush and ink painting, he was deeply impressed by the realistic painting technique that focused on the delicate realization of the world and its matters. In an article stating his impressions on sacred paintings at the East Catholic Church, Hong Dae-yong thought there was an expression of vivid reality of Western paintings (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 24, 1766). Hong Dae-yong also knew that perspective representation was applied to realistic description of Western paintings that he saw at the East Catholic Church. In *Yupo mundap* (Dialogue of Yupo), this fact was described more in detail. "The figures were floating and moving as if they were alive. Moreover, in Western paintings expert in perspective representation, coloration was used in drawing the shown and hidden part of a stream and a valley, brilliant and misty part of smoke and cloud and even the vacant space of the far sky. As is often said, 'the secret of Western paintings that are proportional and excellent in delicate thought derives from mathematics.'"



The Italian artist Brunelleschi discovered perspective representation in 1425, and Massaccio drew the cathedral frescoes using this principle in 1425 and again ten years later. Alberti established this perspective as a science through mathematics and optics (Lee Jin-gyeong 1997). In this respect, Hong Dae-yong's indication as to mathematical proportion was appropriate. There was another painting about the death of Jesus Christ and showed Jesus lying in a coffin and people including Jesus' mother Mary crying bitterly. Hong Dae-yong said of this painting: "The mere sight of it made me sick." He had a negative evaluation of the thematic intention of this picture, that is, the spirit of the drawing. In short, Hong Dae-yong distinguished the art of drawing, or the technical aspect of the painting from the spirit of the drawing, or the thematic aspect of the painting. He perceived the former positively and the latter negatively.

Since he had a deep knowledge of music and was an excellent *geomungo* (Korean lute) player, Hong Dae-yong naturally had an interest in Western music. His record of travels in Beijing contained his experience with the Western musical instrument of the pipe organ. (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 9, 1766)

Hong Dae-yong wanted to hear the pipe organ played but it was impossible because the player fell ill. Fortunately, Hallerstein played a musical scale on the keyboard and Hong Dae-yong could hear the sounds. According to his record, the keyboard of the pipe organ at the South Catholic Church consisted of double boards, the upper and the lower. Hearing the splendid and clear sound when Hallerstein touched the first key of the upper board, Hong Dae-yong thought that the sound imitated *hwangjong* (first note of the 12-note system in Asian music), the fundamental pitch of the twelve chromatic pitches of the East. Similarly, he believed the thin and high pitch corresponded to *eungjong* (last note of the 12-note system in Asian music) and presumed the constitution of the sounds of the pipe organ was based on the system of *saenghwang* (mouth organ). Of course, Hong Dae-yong was accustomed to the system of twelve chromatic pitches used since Chou, China. He could not help comparing Western music according to the Oriental musical scale. His comments about Western music contained a certain China-oriented thought in them such as "...imitated the sound of *hwangjong*." In *Yupo mundap*, he described the pipe organ as follows: "It generally enlarged the system of *saenghwang* and did not consume human breath by using the power of air mechanism. Surely, it is a Western system." He presumed that the principle of this musical instrument was an enlarged application of an Oriental principle and took the position that he would agree to the excellence of Western science from the viewpoint of technology.

Hong Dae-yong's attitude towards Western art is dualistic. He has a negative attitude toward the basic spirit and principle of Western art. His writings about the spirit of drawing and his argument that the system of Western pitches imitated the old system of China prove that. On the other hand, he held a positive view about the technique of art and instrument. This is confirmed by his perceptions of the realistic technique and the use of perspective in Western art and a pipe organ made by advanced technology. Hong Dae-yong's attitude is based on the perception system of so-called dogiron that recognizes only the technical excellence of the West but denies the system of perception.

### 3. Positive Perception of Western Science and Instruments

Throughout his travels in Beijing, Hong Dae-yong described Western Learning as superior to Chinese as far as astronomy and the calendar were concerned. Actually, Hong Dae-yong applied the calendar and astronomy of the West before going to Beijing through an armillary sphere established in his private astronomical observatory, Nongsugak. Na Gyeong-seok who was accustomed to Western astronomy and the calendar designed this armillary sphere and Ahn Cheo-in who could use the principle of an alarm clock constructed it. In *Yupo mundap*, Hong Dae-yong's conviction for Western science and technology was apparent: "Nowadays, Western technique is based on mathematics, calculates everything and observes every phenomenon by way of observatory instruments. Far and near, high and deep, large and small, light and heavy, everything can be known like the palm of one's hand. It can't be too much to say what we couldn't have seen since the Han and Tang dynasty has happened."

The excellence of the Western calendar was publicly recognized by the state and the Joseon dynasty created a calendar according to the Western calendar in 1653 (the 4<sup>th</sup> year of King Hyojong) and used it officially starting the following year (Kim Yong-heon 1995). However, the Joseon calendar was incomplete without the calculation of a solar or lunar eclipse and without mathematics depending on the five planets. An utmost effort was made to learn the perfect Western calendar and because of this Ilgwan Lee Deok-seong followed the envoys of Hong Dae-yong and asked the office of astronomical observatory how to make the calendar. Hong Dae-yong came to experience Western science and technology through the Catholic church.

Hallerstein of the South Catholic Church was an identifier of a Qing dynasty observatory and Po Wu Guan was a vice-identifier. Both of these men had a pro-

found knowledge of the astronomical calendar. Hong Dae-yong was greatly interested in precise Western observational instruments because he thought that his armillary sphere fell short of preciseness in figuring out the principles of the astronomical calendar (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 19, 1766). As to the armillary sphere shown by the Catholic church, Hong Dae-yong immediately introduced the structure and function of *samjinui* (a part of celestial globe) while Hallerstein was explaining how to observe the difference of degrees by arranging the ecliptic.

Hong Dae-yong was surprised at the excellent function of a telescope. The discussion between the two men showed the gap between the East and the West in regards to astronomy. When Hong Dae-yong asked why a sunspot was not seen, Hallerstein explained using the principle of the sun's rotation.<sup>1</sup> He also explained about the telescope, a precise astronomical observational instrument and the scientific results of astronomical observation which were current in Western astronomy at that time. Hong Dae-yong's theory of cosmic structure established in *Uisanmundap* was similar to Tycho Brahe's (1546-1601) theory that the moon and the sun revolve around the earth and the five planets of Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn revolve around the sun (Kim Yong-hyeon 1995). This is proof that Hong Dae-yong recognized the excellence of Western natural science and accepted it positively. In his record about the alarm clock installed at the South Catholic Church, he evaluated it as "its delicate technique is beyond description" because of its enormous size and complicated mechanism (*Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, January 9, 1766).

Hong Dae-yong's surprise at Western science and technology is apparent in *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*. He could not help but be surprised by the instruments he had seen at the Catholic churches such as a wall clock striking its bell at the proper time, spectacles made of glass, a very small and delicate pocket watch, a compass with 360 degrees engraved, a fountain-pen, and a mechanism that sprinkles water at the vineyard. When he saw a Western enameled pictorial copperware in the show window of an antique shop in Beijing, he said: "It's a very hard and delicate ware." He could not help but recognize the excellence of Western materialistic civilization.

Although there was a tremendous gap between the East and the West in sci-

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1. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) observed a sunspot using a telescope he developed, and he stated in 1610 that the sun rotates on its axis through the appearance of the sunspot.

ence and technology, Hong Dae-yong whose ideology was governed by “Sino-centric thought” had his own theory to explain the cause of this phenomenon. When it is difficult to explain an enormous gap at the present, it will sometimes be useful to examine its origin. The theory we had already seen beforehand was used again. Maintaining the Chinese-oriented viewpoint, Hong Dae-yong recorded in *Yupo mundap* as follows: “When the two countries Wu and Ha deteriorated, Huihwa lost his position and astronomical technology was not handed down to posterity.” According to *Seogyong* (Classic of Documents), it is said that King Yo established an astronomical observatory and had Huihwa take charge of it while King Shun devised the observational instrument *seon-giokhyeong* (armillary sphere) and arranged the calendar. Hong Dae-yong wanted to remind people that when such an ideal time passed, the Chinese astronomical calendar deteriorated and eventually was surpassed by the West.

Hong Dae-yong’s experiences and perception of Western civilization centered on the Catholic church and his experiences, like all travelers, are fragmentary and partial because people depend on their sensual perception and intuition when traveling. Since his learning and epistemology was based on Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism, Hong Dae-yong’s judgment toward Western civilization changed based on the particular circumstances. His perception was dualistic: negative toward Western humanities and religion but positive toward science and technology. His perception was definitely China-oriented, nothing more than Sino-centric thought. The China-oriented theory of Hong Dae-yong was not objective thinking based on the law of cause and effect but was only a theory of conjecture and the strong words for insisting on the superiority of this side compared with that side. In this respect, Hong Dae-yong’s perception of the West in *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* was confined to subjective idealism. However, from the viewpoint of realism pursuing practicality and favoring the methodology of historical research, the thought of a pioneer of realism Hong Dae-yong to distinguish *dao* from *qi* was confronted with a limit. Accordingly, the divisional perception between ideology and reality was nothing more than incomplete and temporary subconscious phenomenon of the subject.

### ***Uisanmundap*: Overcoming Sino-Centric Thought and an Objective Perception of the West**

The proof that Hong Dae-yong was influenced by traditional Sino-centric

thought and the consciousness of Little China strengthened since the middle of the Joseon dynasty are found throughout *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*. On January 4, 1766, seeing the bustling streets and gorgeous buildings inside Joyangmun in Beijing, Hong Dae-yong wrote: "Thinking of our temperaments here, I feel lonely and piteous with a sigh of grief. The bustling of Shenyang was nothing compared with this. Alas! Although barbarians had taken these bustling places for over hundred years, there was no way of recovering them. Who dare say there are people in ten thousand *ri* (0.4 km) or more of China?" Also, on February 2, 1766, he said to Yan Cheng, a scholar from Hangzhou at Qianjingtong, "Joseon has nothing to be proud of because it is mountainous and the scale of customs is narrow. Nevertheless, it has been called Little China since ancient times because it respects the Odes, the Histories and propriety and imitates only China."

Sino-centric thought is a world-view that divides the world into two parts, the center of the world is China and the surroundings are barbarians; the former is full of self-sufficiency and civilization and the latter deficiency and barbarism. Here were attached the Chinese-centered racial viewpoint and civilized thought centering on art and culture (Kim Mun-yong 2003). Hong Dae-yong who had lived through King Yeongjo and King Jeongjo's reigns when the consciousness of Little China reached its peak could not be free from the influence of this dominant world-view. Of course Hong Dae-yong could not help but consider the West as others, the periphery, outsiders and barbarians. Accordingly, he took the headstrong position that while recognizing the difference from the West, applying Sino-centric thought that the basis of Western civilization originally derived from China or applying *dogiron* that distinguished the law of changing things *dao* from things themselves *qi*, he urged the superiority of Oriental civilization.

However, Hong Dae-yong's experience and inquiries into natural science came to subvert the scale of this perception of the world, and he came to recognize each unique character equally beyond discrimination. The objectivity of perceiving the West was acquired like this. From *Uisanmundap* which was written in his later days, it can be confirmed that his perception of the West changed relatively.

In *Uisanmundap*, there is a scene proving to an imaginary dialogist the scientific fact that the earth is round. Hong Dae-yong expressed his opinion that every place on the round earth can be the center and, likewise, any place cannot be the center (Park Hui-byeong 2002). It is said that either Russia in the north or Cambodia in the south can tell the position centering on itself. Thus, according

to the position of the subject, the world can be comparatively perceived. Such a comparative viewpoint developed into a negation of the China-oriented world-view, that is, the world-view of Sino-centric thought and brought a change of perception that the East and the West should take equal positions with parallel relations. This theory of Hong Dae-yong developed into the theory of no distinction between the interior and the exterior.

As the heavens bear lives and the earth grows them, those who have youthful vigor are the same people; those who excel among the crowd and rule countries are the same kings; those which make several gates and moat a castle are the same countries; a top hat of either the Yin dynasty or the Zhou dynasty, tattooing either on the body or on the forehead, they are all the same customs. Seen from the heavens, can there be a distinction between them? Therefore, it is all the same to the Chinese or the barbarians that everyone is kind to his own people, looks up to his own king, protects his own country and thinks his own customs convenient.

The distinction between the interior and the exterior is a subjective perception focusing on myself. However, seen from the heavens, every person and king, every country and its strange customs are all the same and of value. After all, by introducing an objective criterion “the heavens,” Hong Dae-yong could recognize the parallel equality of every person, country, race and custom on earth. Although he did not indicate the West directly, it can be assumed that Hong Dae-yong’s perception of the West might resemble this theory. However, as is generally known, *Uisanmundap* is a kind of philosophical argument and its connection with reality is doubtful. Like in *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, how was the perception of the West changed in actual life or in instruments for everyday life? Part of this changed perception of the West applicable to reality can be confirmed in *Hwangjong gogeu idongjiui* contained in *Damheonseo* (Writings of Damheon).

Hong Dae-yong criticizes item by item the traditional principles of music texts transmitted to China and Joseon as being illogical in reproducing the standard pitch of *hwangjong*, the basis of the twelve pitches. The standard pitch pipe of *hwangjong* takes a bamboo pipe stuffed with a fixed number of *gijang* (millet) and cuts it at the stuffed point. He thinks it is difficult to set a standard pitch because millet and bamboo change greatly according to regions, seasons and rich or poor harvests of agriculture. It is the negation of one’s own uncertain principles and as an alternative to this, he suggests the Western *geomungo*. According to

Hong Dae-yong, the Western lute corresponds with the principles of Oriental music and moreover, its pitches are very accurate and excellent in comparison with the traditional pipes of *hwangjong* in spite of trivial errors. Hong Dae-yong's indication that there is nothing better than Western lutes in seeking correct pitches shows his positive perception toward others. This is significantly different from the first time Hong Dae-yong listened to a pipe organ in *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*. While seeking the standard pitches of *hwangjong* Hong Dae-yong gives up traditional Chinese methods and communicates the composing principles of Oriental music with those of Western musical instruments. That is, Hong Dae-yong recognizes bilateral values of existence, takes only bilateral merits and pursues the construction of a better theory and practical application.

Thus, we can confirm that Hong Dae-yong's perception of Western civilization has secured objective horizons and can give us a certain degree of suggestions as to our attitude of enjoying culture at this time where a variety of worldly cultures are mixed and transmitted.

## Conclusion

The premise of this paper was to divide Hong Dae-yong's journeys to Beijing into the two stages of *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* and *Uisanmundap* and to more accurately and completely review his changing perceptions about the West. Also, in the case of *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok*, this paper concluded that it would reach a more accurate understanding to divide it into parts and review the difference of cases and the fundamentals of perception inherent in such differences.

As a kind of pre-history, there was a gap between experiencing and perceiving Western civilization according to each writer. Nevertheless, it can be evaluated that their contact with Western civilization through the Catholic churches in Beijing not only brought about the development of perceiving the West from the geographical point of view but also prepared for a momentum to secure a certain distance in the traditional system of thought toward art, nature and cosmos, forming a momentum of fresh perception. Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West lies on the extended line of such a tendency.

Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West in *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* is not constant but seems dualistic. In particular, as to Western religions like Catholicism, he shows a negative perception that barbarians have nothing to say in the church and argues that even Catholic catechism was stolen and restruc-

tured from the three Chinese religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. In the field of art, his perception of Western art is clear. In both fields of music and painting, he denies the basic spirit and principle of art but recognizes the excellence of technique and instruments. In the field of science and technology, he certainly shows his positive perception. Nevertheless, he presumes that they may be of Chinese origin. On the basis of his perception, the trend of respecting Ming and rejecting Qing during the 18<sup>th</sup> century maintained and Sino-centric thought, the consciousness of Little China, Sino-centric theory and *dogiron* worked. Hong Dae-yong's perception of the West remained clearly in the realm of subjective idealism.

However, from the standpoint of a realist who pursues practicability and lays emphasis on historical research, such a thought cannot be maintained any longer and his perception of the West changes greatly through scientific understanding of the world and is confirmed in *Uisanmundap*. When proving the theory of the globular earth, Hong Dae-yong argues that the West or any place can be the center according to the astronomical reasoning of wherever an observer is situated is the center of the earth. Discarding the tradition of perceiving the world according to the Sino-centric thought, he came to recognize the West as an equal world and gave the West the same value and status. Of course, this does not remain in a speculative sphere but extends to the application of reality. A good example is his attitude to combine the system of Chinese musical theory with the principle of structure of Western musical instruments. Incorporating the merits of both the East and the West, Hong Dae-yong had a firm belief that it would be more effective to find out the basic pitch of *hwangjong* using the Western lute. Discarding the subjective point of view and introducing the third viewpoint like the heaven, Hong Dae-yong reached an objective perception of the West.

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