Hunmin jeongeum as Read in the Modern Korean Language

Hunmin jeongeum(the correct sounds for educating the people)[1]

Since the phonological system of Korean is different from that of Chinese, the Chinese characters that describe both Chinese and Korean cannot be used in communication. Accordingly, there are many among the general public who cannot express themselves in Chinese characters even though they have something they want to say. Feeling sorry for this, I have newly created twenty-eight letters because I want our people to learn them easily and use them

1 Hunmin jeongeum(訓民正音), the Korean alphabet often abbreviated as Jeongeum(正音), was originally promulgated by King Sejong [1397-1450], fourth King of the Joseon Dynasty [reigned 1419-1450].

conveniently everyday.[2]

- ㄱ is a velar sound[3], like the initial sound of the character 君 /kun/[4]
- ㄱ written dually abreast as ㄲ is like the initial sound of the character 虯 /k'ju/

2 This paragraph is King Sejong's preface stating the object of the promulgation of the Korean alphabet.

3 This is one of the five kinds of Korean consonants collectively classified according to the place of articulation. The classification of consonants in Hunmin-jeongeum follows the traditional Chinese model of consonant classification in Chinese phonology, that is, molar, lingual, labial, dental and glottal. To these, Hunmin-jeongeum adds the categories semi-lingual and semi-dental. These models are sometimes referred to as five-sound and seven-sound models of consonant classification, respectively.

4 The phonetic symbols used in this book are as follows.

Consonants

ㄱ /k/	ㄲ /k'/	ㅋ /k^h/		
voiceless lenis velar plosive	voiceless fortis velar plosive	voiceless aspirated velar plosive		
ㄷ /t/	ㄸ /t'/	ㅌ /t^h/	ㄴ /n/	
voiceless alveolar lenis plosive	voiceless fortis alveolar plosive	voiceless aspirated alveolar plosive	alveolar nasal	
ㅂ /p/	ㅃ /p'/	ㅍ /p^h/	ㅁ /m/	ㅸ /β/
voiceless bilabial lenis plosive	voiceless fortis bilabial plosive	voiceless aspirated bilabial plosive	bilabial nasal	voiced bilabial fricative
ㅈ /č/	ㅉ /č'/	ㅊ /$č^h$/		
voiceless alveolar lenis affricate	voiceless fortis alveolar affricate	voiceless aspirated alveolar affricate		
ㅅ /s/	ㅆ /s'/			ㅿ /z/
voiceless alveolar lenis fricative	voiceless fortis fricative			voiced alveolar fricative
ㅎ /h/	ㆅ /x/	ㆆ /ʔ/	ㅇ /ɦ/	ㆁ /ŋ/
voiceless glottal	voiceless fortis	voiceless glottal	voiced glottal	velar nasal
lenis fricative	velar fricative	plosive	fricative	
	ㄹ /ɾ/ voiced alveolar flap			

* ㄹ is changed lateral approximantat /l/ at the final.

Vowels

ㅣ /i/	ㅡ /ɨ/		ㅜ/u/
	ㅓ /ə/	ㆍ /ㅅ/	ㅗ/o/
	ㅏ /a/		

ㅋ is a velar sound, like the initial sound of the character 快 /kʰwai/

ㆁ is a velar sound, like the initial sound of the character 業 /ŋəp/

ㄷ is a lingual or tongue-tip sound, like the initial sound of the character 斗 /tu/

ㄷ written dually abreast as ㄸ is like the initial sound of the character 覃 /t'am/

ㅌ is a lingual or tongue-tip sound, like the initial sound of the character 呑 /tʰʌn/

ㄴ is a lingual or tongue-tip sound, like the initial sound of the character 那 /na/

ㅂ is a bilabial sound, like the initial sound of the character 彆 /pjəl/

ㅂ written dually abreast as ㅃ is like the initial sound of the character 步 /p'o/

ㅍ is a bilabial sound, like the initial sound of the character 漂 /pʰjo/

ㅁ is a bilabial sound, like the initial sound of the character 彌 /mi/.

ㅈ is a dental sound, like the initial sound of the character 卽 /ǰɨk/

ㅈ written dually abreast as ㅉ is like the initial sound of the character 慈 /ǰ'a/

ㅊ is a dental sound, like the initial sound of the character 侵 /ǰʰim/

ㅅ is a dental sound, like the initial sound of the character 戌 /sjul/

ㅅ written dually abreast as ㅆ is like the initial sound of the character 邪 /s'a/

ㆆ is a glottal sound, like the initial sound of the character 挹 /ʔiɨp/

ㅎ is a glottal sound, like the initial sound of the character 虛 /hə/

ㅎ written dually abreast as ㆅ is like the initial sound of the character 洪 /xoŋ/

ㅇ is a glottal sound, like the initial sound of the character 欲 /ɦjok/

ㄹ is a tongue-flap sound, like the initial sound of the character 閭 /ɾjə/

ㅿ is a semi-dental sound, like the initial sound of the character 穰 /zjaŋ/

ㆍ /ʌ/ is like the medial sound of the character 呑 /tʰʌn/

ㅡ /ɨ/ is like the medial sound of the character 卽 /čɨk/

ㅣ /i/ is like the medial sound of the character 侵 /čʰim/

ㅗ /o/ is like the medial sound of the character 洪 /xoŋ/

ㅏ /a/ is like the medial sound of the character 覃 /t'am/

ㅜ /u/ is like the medial sound of the character 君 /kun/

ㅓ /ə/ is like the medial sound of the character 業 /ŋəp/

ㅛ /jo/ is like the medial sound of the character 欲 /ɦjok/

ㅑ /ja/ is like the medial sound of the character 穰 /zjaŋ/

ㅠ /ju/ is like the medial sound of the character 戌 /sjul/

ㅖ /jə/ is like the medial sound of the character 彆 /pjəl/

For the final sounds, the initial-sound letters are also used.[5] If ㅇ is written underneath the labial sounds, it makes all these sounds light labial sounds.[6] If the initial-sound letters are used in combination, they are written side by side, and combined final sounds are written in the same way.[7] ㆍ, ㅡ, ㅗ, ㅜ, ㅛ and ㅠ are written directly below the initial sounds, while ㅣ, ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅑ, and ㅕ are written to the right of them.

All letters must be combined in order to make sounds(syllables).[8] One dot added to the left [of a cluster][9] means that the tone is departing (去 : *qu* 'high' tone in Korean) and two dots mean a rising tone (上 : *shang* 'rising' tone in Korean). If there are no dots then the tone is even (平 : *ping* 'level' tone in Korean).[10] In the case of the entering tone (入: *ru* 'high-falling' tone in Korean) tone with final ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, marking with dots is the same but they are pronounced rapidly.

5 In Korean, each syllable is either open or closed and here the "final sound refers to the final consonant of the closed syllable. In Korean, stop sound in syllable-final position are the unreleased variants of their corresponding initial stops.

6 That is, the Chinese labial fricatives f, f', v and ㅱ are represented by placing ㅇ underneath the bilabial sounds ㅂ/p/, ㅍ/pʰ/, ㅸ/p'/ and ㅁ/m/, producing ㅱ, ㆄ, ㅹ and ㅱ, respectively.

7 The combined use of the initial and final letters is of two types: one is the doubling of the same letter as in 깍, 딱: the other is the combined use of different letters as in 짝, 빡, 홁, 낛. But in the modern Korean writing, only the doubled consonants occur in the syllable initial position(ㄲ, ㄸ, ㅃ, ㅆ and ㅉ). In the syllable-final position, however, both types are used in modern writing.

8 In this case, 'sound' means the Korean syllable with its three component parts-initial, medial and final-the letters of which are combined to form a monosyllabic cluster, such as 입, 눈, etc. This is parallel to the monosyllabic Chinese character with its phonological analysis into the onset, nucleus and coda.

9 The phrase within the brackets is added by the translator.

10 This indicates that Middle Korean had three tones in contrast with the Chinese four tones.

Commentaries and Examples[11] of *Hunmin jeongeum*.

Explanations of the Forming of the Letters

The ways of the universe are solely governed by the principle of Yin and Yang[12] and the interaction of the Five Elements[13](五行). Between *Kon*(坤: read '*kun*' in Chinese) "earth" and *Bok*(復 : read '*fu*' in Chinese) "return" is formed the Supreme Ultimate(太極); after the Supreme Ultimate moves and stops Yin and Yang are formed. How could all living things between heaven and earth ever depart from the principles of Yin and Yang? Therefore, all human speech sounds are governed by the principles of Yin and Yang. However, people have not been able to understand this fact. Now the making of the Correct Sounds(正音: jeongeum, other name of Hunmin jeongeum) has not been achieved by intellectual efforts and a laborious search from the very beginning, but it is simply the result of the mastery of the principle of sounds based on the speech sounds. Since the principle is not dual, how could the use of it not be shared with

11 There are five explanations and one set of examples, that is, explanations of the forming of the letters, of the initial, medial and final sounds, and of the combining of the letters; and examples of the use of the letters.

12 Yin and Yang are considered to be the two opposing forces in Oriental thinking that pervade all universal phenomena, natural and human, such as manifest in the oppositions of east-west, north-south, male-female, dark-light, hot-cold, etc.

13 There are wood, fire, earth, metal and water, which interact on the principles of mutual begetting and mutual overcoming. "wood → fire → earth → metal → water → wood" is the cyclical order of mutual begetting that symbolizes harmony, and "wood → earth → water → fire → metal → wood" is the cyclical order of mutual overcoming that symbolizes discord.

Heaven, Earth, and Spirits? Each of the twenty-eight letters of the Correct Sounds is made according to the shape of the speech organs.

For the initial sounds there are seventeen letters in all. The velar sound ㄱ/k/[14] is the shape of the tongue root closing the throat; the lingual(tongue-tip) sound ㄴ/n/ is the shape of the tongue attached to the upper jaw[15]; the labial sound ㅁ/m/ the shape of the mouth; the dental sound ㅅ/s/ the shape of the teeth, and the glottal sound ㅇ/ɦ/ the shape of the throat; the sound of ㅋ/k^h/ as compared with ㄱ is harsher, and so one stroke is added; ㄷ/t/ is formed from ㄴ/n/, ㅌ/t^h/ from ㄷ/t/. ㅂ/p/ from ㅁ/m/, ㅍ/p^h/ from ㅂ/p/, ㅈ/č/ from ㅅ/s/, ㅊ/$č^h$/ from ㅈ/č/, ㆆ/ʔ/ from ㅇ/ɦ/ and ㅎ/h/ from ㆆ/ʔ/.[16] The meaning of the additional stroke according to the strength of the sound is the same for all these cases; only ㆁ is different.[17] Semi-lingual(liquid) ㄹ/ɾ/ and semi-dental ㅿ/z/ show the shapes of the

14 The sounds in the International Phonetic Alphabet are supplied by the translator.

15 This means the upper alveolus.

16 This is what is called the stroke-addition principle. [Prof. Lee Hwanmook perfers the term 'feature-addition principle' because the addition of these strokes results in changes in the features of the sounds involved] ㄱ, ㄴ, ㅁ, ㅅ and ㅇ represent the basic velar, lingual, labial, dental and glottal sounds respectively. The other letters with added strokes represent homorganic sounds with different phonetic features.

Basic Sounds		→	Sounds with Added Features		
Velar(牙)	ㄱ/k/	→		→	ㅋ/k^h/
Lingual(舌)	ㄴ/n/	→	ㄷ/t/	→	ㅌ/t^h/
Labial(脣)	ㅁ/m/	→	ㅂ/p/	→	ㅍ/p^h/
Dental(齒)	ㅅ/s/	→	ㅈ/č/	→	ㅊ/$č^h$/
Glottal(喉)	ㅇ/ɦ/	→	ㆆ/ʔ/	→	ㅎ/h/

17 ㆁ/ŋ/ is a velar homorganic with ㄱ/k/, but the added vertical stroke is not an application of the stroke-addition principle.

tongue and teeth respectively but their forms are altered and do not have the meaning of strength as given by an additional stroke.[18]

Human possession of speech sounds is based on the interaction of the Five Elements. Therefore speech sounds are not discordant with the four seasons and are in harmony with the five notes.[19] The throat is deep and wet and it can be regarded as representing water. The sound coming through it[20], are free and not obstructed, just as water is clear and flowing. They correspond to the season of winter in time and to the note of 羽[la or A] in [musical] sound.

Molar teeth are uneven and long and can be regarded as wood. Molar sounds[21] are similar to glottal sounds but more substantial, like trees growing out of water but yet having solid forms. They correspond to the season of spring in time and to note of 角[mi or E] in sound.

The tongue is sharp and mobile and so it is fire. The sounds made with the tongue[22] roll and fly like fire rolling and expanding and fluttering. They correspond to the season of summer in time

18 That is to say, ㄹ and ㅿ are homorganic with ㄴ and ㅅ respectively, but the added stroke in each letter does not indicate any strengthening or intensification of the basic sounds ㄴ and ㅅ.

19 i.e., the five musical notes. The relationships between the Five Elements and the other phenomena are as follows:

Five elements	water	wood	fire	metal	earth
Five speech sounds	glottal	velar	lingual	dental	labial
Five seasons	winter	spring	summer	autumn	Indian summer
Five notes	la (羽)	mi (角)	sol (致)	re (商)	do (宮)
Five directions	north	east	south	west	center

20 i.e., ㅇ, ㆆ, ㅎ.

21 i.e., ㆁ, ㄱ, ㅋ, that is, velar sounds.

22 i.e., ㄴ, ㄷ, ㅌ.

and to the note of 徵[sol or G] in sound.

The [non-molar] teeth are hard and cutting; they are metal. The sounds made with the teeth[23] are at first broken or fragile but coagulative just as metals are powdered and then tempered so as to become solid. They correspond to the season of autumn in time and to the note of 商[re or D] in sound.

The lips are square and they join, so they are regarded as earth. The sounds made with the lips[24] are inclusive and broad, as is the earth which contains and stores the myriad things broad and large. They correspond to the season of Indian summer in time and to the note of 宮[do or C] in sound.

Water is the source of all life and fire functions as the agent of production. Therefore, water and fire are the most important of the Five Elements. Since the throat is the gate through which all sounds are emitted and the tongue is the organ with which all sounds are modulated, the glottal and lingual sounds are the principal of the five sounds.

The throat is at the back of the mouth and then the velum is next; they are the directions of the north and east. The tongue and teeth come next, so they are the directions of the south and west.[25] The lips come last and the corresponding earth does not have any definite direction, yet it is attached to and strengthens the four

23 i.e., ㅅ, ㅈ, ㅊ.
24 i.e., ㅁ, ㅂ, ㅍ.
25 i.e., see note 19.

seasons.[26] This means that among the initial sounds there exist the principles of Yin and Yang, the Five Elements and directional positions.[27]

Further, we may speak of the speech sounds in terms of clarity and dullness. ㄱ/k/, ㄷ/t/, ㅂ/p/, ㅈ/č/, ㅅ/s/ and ㆆ/ʔ/ are wholly clear (voiceless and unaspirated)[28], ㅋ/k^h/, ㅌ/t^h/, ㅍ/p^h/, ㅊ/$č^h$/ and ㅎ/h/ are partly clear[29] (voiceless and aspirated) and ㄲ/k'/, ㄸ/t'/, ㅃ/p'/, ㅉ/č'/, ㅆ/s'/ and ㆅ/x/ are wholly dull[30] (voiceless, unaspirated, glottal stop). ㆁ/ŋ/, ㄴ/n/, ㅁ/m/, ㅇ/ɦ/, ㄹ/ɾ/ and ㅿ/z/ are neither clear nor dull[31] (voiced sounds).

The sounds of ㄴ/n/, ㅁ/m/ and ㅇ/ɦ/ are the mildest, and although they stand last in the series of sounds(the 23 consonants) as just mentioned they are [part of] the basis in the forming of letters in that they depict the shape of the speech organs.[32] Both ㅅ/s/

26 The lips, regarded as earth, are located at the forefront of the mouth, outside the oral cavity. The earth has no fixed direction and does not belong to any one of the cardinal directions. It is located at the center and flourishes with the four seasons. This paragraph relates the five places of articulation that have been compared to the Five Elements in the previous paragraphs to the four cardinal directions and the center, implying the earth' s all-inclusiveness.

27 At the beginning of this Explanations, it is mentioned that all human speech sounds are governed by the principles of Yin and Yang.

28 In Chinese phonology, consonants are classified into two groups depending on the degree of force associated with them in the course of articulation. Clear sounds are those articulated with light force and considered to be voiceless. Dull sounds are articulated with heavy force and considered to be voiceless. Dull sounds are articulated with heavy force and considered to be voiced. Wholly clear sounds are unaspirated voiceless consonants.

29 Partly clear sounds are aspirated voiceless consonants.

30 There are two views regarding the nature of the wholly dull sounds. One is to view them as voiced consonants and the other as aspirated voiced consonants. It seems that at the time of the promulgation of the *Correct Sounds*, those intense sounds written with double letters were considered to be dull sounds. In this translation, the second view has been taken in the transcription.

31 Sounds neither clear nor dull are voiced, mostly nasal consonants and liquid.

32 See note 16.

and ㅈ /č/ are homorganic and wholly clear, but ㅅ is milder than ㅈ and so it is a basic letter to form dental letters.

As for the velar sound ㆁ/ŋ/, the tongue root closes the throat but the sound and breath come out of the nose. This sound is similar to ㅇ/ɦ/, and in books of phonetics 疑(ㆁ) and 喩(ㅇ) are often confused with each other. The form ㆁ is taken from the shape of the throat and is not used as the basic letter for velar sounds. The throat is assigned to water and the velar to wood. Although ㆁ stands with the velars it is similar to ㅇ [which is a glottal sound]. It is analogous to the buds and sprouts of a tree grown in water; they are soft and pliant and have more of a watery substance.[33]

ㄱ/k/ represents the solid substance of a tree, ㅋ/kʰ/ flourishing growth of a tree and ㄲ/k'/ the aged vigor of a tree.[34] All these letters are from the shape of the molar teeth and the state of articulation.

If wholly clear sounds are written dually side by side, they become wholly dull(全濁 : *quanzhuo*), because when wholly clear sounds (全清 : *quanqing*) are coagulated, that is, glottal closure or glottal tension, they become wholly dull or glottal stop.[35] Only the

33 The velar ㆁ and the glottal ㅇ are respectively wood and water in terms of the Five Elements. It seems that the similarity of these sounds is derived from the "Principle of Mutual Begetting of the Five Elements(五行相生之說), which states that the water begets wood(水生木), wood fire(木生火), fire earth(火生土), earth metal(土生金), metal water(金生水) and on and on in cycle.

34 Thus the meaning of each additional stroke is compared to the growth of a tree.

35 Light force is applied for the pronunciation of wholly clear sounds(ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅈ, ㅅ, ㆆ) and heavy force for wholly dull sounds (ㄲ, ㄸ, ㅃ, ㅉ, ㅆ, ㆅ). When the light wholly clear sounds coagulate, they become heavy and wholly dull, and are written double.

partly clear*(次清 : ciqing)* glottal sound[36] becomes wholly dull, because ㆆ/ʔ/ is a deep sound and cannot be coagulated. The pronunciation of ㅎ/h/ is shallower than ㆆ/ʔ/, so it is coagulated and becomes wholly dull.[37]

ㅇ written vertically underneath the labial sounds makes them light labial sounds, because a light sound closes the lips slightly and emits more of the glottal voice.[38]

For the medial sounds[39] there are eleven letters in all. ㆍ/ʌ/ is pronounced with the tongue constricted [some prefers 'retracted'] and the voice is deep as heaven opens at the Hour of the Rat.[40] ㆍ/ʌ/ is made first. The roundness of the shape is modeled after Heaven. ㅡ/ɨ/ is pronounced with the tongue slightly constricted and the voice is neither deep nor shallow, and as the Earth opens at the

36 The partly clear glottal sound is ㅎ/h/.

37 This means that ㆆ/ʔ/ is a glottal plosive with deep sound effect and cannot be further intensified or coagulated. This is the reason why the shallower and lighter ㅎ[h], which is partly clear, is coagulated and becomes wholly dull ㆅ.

38 The use of ㅇ indicates that the sound is throatish. The light labial sounds indicated by ㅇ are labial fricatives. See Note 6.

39 i.e., the vowels.

40 "Rat"〔子〕is the first of the twelve zodiacal signs to form the sexagenary cycle. It means midnight, the zero hour that starts the day. When ㆍ/ʌ/ is produced, the tongue is constricted and the articulation takes place at the back of the oral cavity with deep sound effect. As in the case of the glottal initial sound ㅇ/ɦ/, ㆍ/ʌ/ can be assigned to water of the Five Elements. Water is regarded as the source of all life, and is assigned to Heaven, which in turn opens at the Hour of the Rat. This signifies that Heaven was created first. The subsequent sentences, by referring to the second〔丑〕and third〔寅〕signs of the zodiac, state that Earth came second, and Man came into being third. As the initial sound ㅇ is articulated first at the innermost part of the oral cavity and referred to as Heaven, so the round dot ㆍ depicting Heaven forms the mental image of Heaven and heads the series of eleven medial sounds. The sexagenary cycle has sixty combinations of ten celestial stems and twelve zodiacal signs, each combination denoting a particular year of the cycle.

41 "Ox"〔丑〕is the second of the twelve zodiacal signs to form the sexagenary cycle, and it also indicates two o' clock in the morning. The text thus states that the Earth was created second.

오音흠은소리니訓훈民민正정音흠은百빅姓성ᄀᆞᄅᆞᆫ치니시訓훈ᄂᆞᆫ正정ᄒᆞᆫ소리라

Hour of the Ox[41], ㅡ is made secondly. The flatness of the shape is modeled after the Earth. ㅣ/i/ is pronounced with the tongue not constricted and the voice is shallow, for Man comes into being at the Hour of the Tiger.[42] ㅣ is made thirdly. The vertical shape is modeled after the upright posture of Man.[43] The horary signs of Rat, Ox, Tiger symbolize the order of the birth of myriad things in the universe.

The eight sounds following these are alternately closed and open.[44] ㅗ/o/ is like ㆍ/ʌ/[45] but is pronounced with the lips rounded. Its shape is the combination of ㆍ and ㅡ and means the first intercourse of Heaven and Earth.

ㅏ/a/ is like ㆍ/ʌ/[46] but the mouth is spread open, and its shape is the combination of ㅣ and ㆍ. It means that the functions of Heaven and Earth originate from activities and things, but wait for Man for their fruition.

42 "Tiger"(寅) is the third of the twelve zodiacal signs to form the sexagenary cycle, also indicating four o' clock in the morning. The text thus states that the Man was created third.

43 This paragraph explains the three basic vowels (ㆍ, ㅡ and ㅣ) of the eleven medial sounds by showing their sound values and depiction. The constricted tongue and deep voice of ㆍ/ʌ/ indicate that it is a back vowel. The slightly constricted tongue and neither-deep-nor-allow voice of ㅡ/ɨ/ indicate that it is a central vowel. The unconstricted tongue and shallow voice of ㅣ/i/ indicate that it is a front vowel. The deep-shallow scale of voice indicates the back-front scale of the place of articulation. The order of ㆍ, ㅡ, ㅣ indicates the order of place of articulation in the vocal tract starting from the back of the oral cavity toward the front.

44 The eight sounds are ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅜ, ㅓ, ㅛ, ㅑ, ㅠ and ㅕ respectively /o, a, u, ə , jo, ja, ju, jə /. "Closed" is equivalent to "rounded", the lips draw together but do not actually shut.
"Open" is equivalent to "unrounded". The eight sounds are thus alternately rounded and unrounded.

45 This means that ㅗ/o/, like ㆍ/ʌ/, originates from Heaven and belongs to Yang(陽). It is articulated by starting with ㆍ/ʌ/ and drawing the lips together.

46 This means that ㅏ/a/, like ㆍ/ʌ/, also originates from Heaven and belongs to Yang(陽). It is articulated by starting with ㆍ/ʌ/ and opening the lips broader.

ㅜ/u/ is like ㅡ/ɨ/[47] but is pronounced with the lips rounded. Its shape is the combination of ㅡ and ·, and it also means the first intercourse of Heaven and Earth.

ㅓ/ə/ is like ㅡ/ɨ/[48] but is pronounced with lips spread open and its shape is the combination of · and ㅣ. This also means that the functions of Heaven and Earth originate from activities and things, but wait for Man for their fruition.[49]

ㅛ/jo/ is like ㅗ/o/ in form and sound value, but the pronunciation starts with ㅣ/i/. ㅑ/ja/ is like ㅏ/a/ in form and sound value, but it also starts with ㅣ/i/. ㅠ is like ㅜ in form and sound value, but it also starts with ㅣ. ㅕ/jə/ is like ㅓ/ə/ in form and sound value, but it also starts with ㅣ.[50] ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅜ and ㅓ begin with

47 This means that ㅜ/u/, like ㅡ/ɨ/ originates from Earth and belongs to Yin(陰). It is articulated by starting with ㅡ and pursing the lips.

48 This means that ㅓ/ə/, like ㅡ/ɨ/ originates from Earth and belongs to Yin(陰). It is articulated by starting with ㅡ and opening the lips broader.

49 The preceding four paragraphs show how the vowels ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅜ and ㅓ are designed by arranging the basic sounds ·, ㅡ and ㅣ, as well as indicating what their sound values are. The similarity of ㅗ and ㅏ to · means that they share the same tongue position or place of articulation, as does likewise the similarity of ㅗ and ㅓ to ㅡ. The difference between ㅗ and ㅏ and between ㅜ and ㅓ is based on lip rounding, the first sound of each pair being pronounced with lips rounded, and the secod unrounded. The tongue constriction, as explained for ·, ㅡ and ㅣ, is the horizontal scale for the front-back position of vowels.

The vertical scale, that is, the high-low scale, of vowels is indicated by the rounding and unrounding of the lips, rounded being high and close, unrounded low and open. The distinction between rounding and unrounding, that is, the high-low distiction, is made on the bases of · and ㅡ. Therefore, · and ㅡ can be described as neither rounded nor unrounded, but as half-closed and half-open, and half-high and half-low. These simple vowels can be charted as follow:

	Front	Central	Back	
High	ㅣ	ㅜ	ㅗ	Closed
Half-low Half-high		ㅡ	·	Half-closed Half-open
Low		ㅓ	ㅏ	Open
Yin/Yang	Neutral	Yin	Yang	Yin/Yang
Sound effect	Shallow	Neither deep nor shallow	Deep	Sound effect

Heaven and Earth and are the primary sounds. ㅛ, ㅑ, ㅠ and ㅕ start with ㅣ and are thus associated with Man; they are the secondary sounds.

The single dot of ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅜ and ㅓ means that these sounds are produced first and the two dots of ㅛ, ㅑ, ㅠ and ㅕ mean that thesse sounds are produced second. The dot or dots of ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅛ and ㅑ are either above ㅡ or on the outside of ㅣ. This is because they come from Heaven and become Yang(陽). The dot or dots of ㅜ, ㅓ, ㅠand ㅕ are either below ㅡ or on the inside of ㅣ. This is because they come from Earth and become Yin(陰).

The fact that ㆍis common to these eight sounds is analogous to Yang(陽) governing Yin(陰) and permeating through the myriad things. ㅛ, ㅑ, ㅠ and ㅕ are associated with Man, this is, ㅣ/i/. Because Man is the supreme being among the myriad things and can participate with the Twin Modes[51], that is, Yin and Yang. These letters are modeled after Heaven, Earth and Man and are therefore

50 This paragraph explains that ㅚ, ㅑ, ㅟ and ㅕ share the same tongue position and height with ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅜ and ㅓ respectively, whereas each of the former group is initiated with the sound of ㅣ/i/. The additional dot is regarded as a shrunken form of ㅣ that stands for Man, indicative of Man's participation. The adding of ㅣ/i/ to ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅜ and ㅓ as an onset produces diphthongs /jo/, /ja/, /ju/ and /jə/ respectively; that is ㅚ, ㅑ, ㅟ, and ㅕ.

51 "Twin Modes" is a designation for Yin and Yang, the opposing forces. *The Book of Changes* tells of the Supreme Ultimate(太極), which produced the Twin Modes(兩儀), which in turn produced the Four Symbols(四象). The Four Symbols in turn produced the Eight Trigrams(八卦).

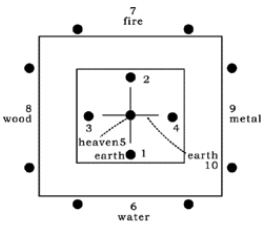
52 Heaven, Earth and Man are here collectively termed *Samjae*(三才). "*Jae*"(才) refers to the rudiment of a living organism, that is, the initial stage in development or evolution. Therefore, it has the power of birth and growth. It also means "talent" or "ability", the quality that can be cultivated in Man. The principle of the Three Rudiments can be termed the "Law of the Universe."

provided with the principles of the Three Rudiments [other papers included in this volume prefer 'the Three Powers'].[52] Though these three are the source of the myriad things, Heaven is still the beginning of the three. Accordingly, just as ·, ㅡ and ㅣ are the head of the eight sounds, · is the crown of these three letters.

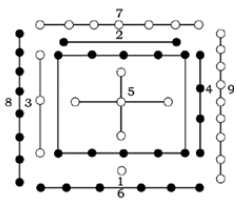
ㅗ is born first in Heaven, that is, letters are formed in combination with ·, and is the position of Heaven 1 giving birth to water.[53] ㅏ is born next and is the position of Heaven 3 giving birth to wood. ㅜ is born first in Earth and is the position of Earth 2 giving birth to fire. ㅓ is born next and is the position of Earth 4 giving birth to metal.

ㅛ is reborn in Heaven and is the figure of Heaven 7 forming fire. ㅑ is reborn next and is the figure of Heaven 9 forming metal. ㅠ is reborn in Earth and is the figure of Earth 6 forming water. ㅕ is reborn next and is figure of Earth 8 forming wood. Water (ㅗ, ㅜ) and fire (ㅜ, ㅗ) are inseparable from the spirit and are in the

53 According to *Gyesajeon*, Book I (**繫辭傳上**), which explains the principles of changes, the Heaven figures are 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9, and the Earth figures are 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. They can be diagrammed as follows in analogy with the *Hado*(河圖), which has 55 dots arranged in a square.



The Medial - Sound Chart



The Hado (河圖)

The figures from 1 to 5 are "birth" figures.
The figures from 6 to 10 are "formation or growth" figures.

beginning of intercourse between Yin and Yang, and they are constricted (rounded).[54] Wood (ㅣㆍ , ㆎ) and metal (ㆍㅣ , ㅣㆍ) are fixed substance of Yin and Yang and are spread out (unrounded).[55]

ㆍ is the position of Heaven 5 giving birth to Earth. ㅡ is the figure of Earth 10 forming earth. ㅣ alone has no position or figure because in Man, the truth of the Ultimateless[56] and the essence of the Two and the Five[57] combine dexterously and congeal, and therefore cannot be dealt with in terms of fixed positions or growth figures.[58] Thus the medial sounds also have Yin and Yang, the Five Elements, and positions and figures.

To say something about the initial sounds as opposed to the medial sounds, Yin-Yang is the way of Heaven and hardness-

54 In this paragraph and the preceding one, the water letters are ㅗ and ㅜ, and the fire letters are ㅛ and ㅠ. They are pronounced with the lips constricted or rounded. Water and fire are regarded as inseparable from the spirit or ether that creates the myriad things through the intercourse of Yin and Yang; and being in the beginning stage of the intercourse, they are constricted.

55 Wood and metal here are represented by ㅣㆍ , ㆎ and ㆍㅣ , ㅣㅣ respectively. They are pronounced with the lips unrounded. Wood and metal are regarded as fixed substances produced after the intercourse of Yin and Yang. The relationship between the metal sounds and the other basic phenomena of the universe as explained in the last two paragraphs is shown in the following tables:

Birth Figures	H1 ㅗ	H2 ㅜ	H3 ㅣㆍ	E4 ㆍㅣ	H5 ㆍ	H = Heaven E = Earth
Growth Figures	E6 ㅜ	H7 ㅛ	E8 ㆎ	H9 ㅣㅣ	E10 ㅡ	
Five Elements	Water	Fire	Wood	Metal	Earth	
Directions	North	South	East	West	Center	

56 "Ultimateless" is synonymous with the Supreme Ultimate.

57 "Two and Five" are the Twin Modes(兩儀: Yin and Yang) and the Five Elements.

58 The sentence means that the vowel ㅣ /i/ stands alone as a front vowel and is not in close association with ㆍ and ㅡ, and their derived vowels ㅗ, ㅣㆍ , ㅜ, ㆍㅣ . See note 49.

59 Here, Yin and Yang pertain to the two classes of the medial sounds, ㅡ, ㅜ, ㆍㅣ , ㅜ and ㆎ being the former, ㆍ , ㅗ ㅣㆍ , ㅛ and ㅣㅣ the latter. Hardness and softness are the criteria for the consonant classification (the initial sounds).

softness is the way of Earth.[59] As for the medial sounds, some are deep and others are shallow;[60] some are constricted(rounded) and others are spread out(unrounded). This is because the medial sounds are divided into Yin and Yang and are provided with the spirit of the Five Elements.[61] This is the work of Heaven.

As for the initial sounds, some are empty and others are solid; some are flutter and others are stationary; some are heavy and others light.[62] This is because hardness and softness come into being and form the substance of the Five Elements [for the initial sounds]. This is the achievement of Earth.

The medial sounds are pronounced first with their deep/shallow and rounded/spread quality and then the initial sounds respond to them afterward as final sounds with their clear or dull shades of the five sounds.[63] Thus the initial sounds also become the final sounds. By this we can see that everything is born in Earth first and again returns to Earth in the end.[64]

60 The medial sounds are classified as follows:
Deep: ·, ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅛ, ㅑ
Neither deep nor shallow: ㅡ, ㅜ, ㅣ, ㅠ, ㅕ
Shallow: ㅣ
Constricted (rounded): ㅗ, ㅜ, ㅛ, ㅠ
Open (unrounded): ㅏ, ㅣ, ㅑ, ㅕ

61 See note 55 for the relationship between the medial sounds and the Five Elements.

62 The classification of the consonants is as follows:
Empty—glottals: ㅇ, ㆆ, ㅎ (water)
Solid—molars: ㄱ, ㅋ (wood)
Fluttering—linguals: ㄴ, ㄷ, ㅌ (fire)
Stationary—dentals: ㅅ, ㅈ, ㅊ (metal)
Heavy/Light—labials with/ without ㅇ: ㅁ/ㅱ, ㅂ/ㅸ, ㅍ/ㆄ (earth)

63 The five sounds refer to the glottal, velar, lingual, dental and labial.

64 This is analogous to initial sounds being used as final sounds.

To say something about the characters that are composed of the initial, medial and final sounds, they also have the meaning of mutual rooting of motion and stillness and of the alternate changes of Yin and Yang. Motion is Heaven (initial sound) and stillness is Earth (final sound). Associated with both motion and stillness is Man (medial sound). When the Five Elements are in Heaven they perform dexterous functions and on Earth they form substances. When they are in Man they perform the spiritual functions of benevolence, civility, faithfulness, righteousness and knowledge; they also form the substance of the liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys.

The initial sounds have the meaning of origin and motion; this is what Heaven does. The final sounds have the meaning of stopping and fixing; this is what Earth does. The medial sounds follow upon the onset of the initial sounds and come into contact with the final sounds for completion.[65] This is what Man (medial sound) does.

In general the essential part of the rime [of a syllable] lies in the medial sounds; the initial and final sounds, by joining the medial sounds, complete the pronunciation (syllable). This is just as the Heaven and Earth create and rear the myriad things but their management and mutual assistance must be entrusted to Man.

The dual use of the initial sounds as the final sounds is due to the fact that everything that is dynamic and Yang is positive and everything that is still and Yin is also positive; the positive, when

65 This indicates the tripartite construction of a Korean syllable.

filled and matured, is divided into Yin and Yang, but there is nothing it does not control as the Supreme Being.[66] The spirit of the Great Beginning rotates endlessly and the four seasons circulate without end. Thus jeong (貞)—the last—become won (元)—the first—and winter becomes spring again.[67] That the initial sounds become the final sounds and the final sounds become the initial sounds comes from the same principle.

Ah! With the making of the Correct Sounds, the principles of the myriad things of Heaven and Earth are all provided for. How divine it is! Heaven has seemingly opened the king's mind and lent its hand to him.

In summary.[68]

The creation of Heaven and Earth[69] originates from one spirit.[70]

Yin-Yang and the Five Elements alternately form the beginning and ending. Things[71] form shapes and sounds between the two.[72]

There being no two origins, the principle prevails.[73]

---

66 The positive(乾) refers to Heaven from which the myriad things originate. In this sense it is designated as the Supreme Being(君).

67 This refers to won(元), hyeong(亨), i(利), jeong(貞) in *the Book of Changes*, meaning spring, summer, autumn and winter respectively.

68 What follows is a summary in metrical form, 86 lines of seven syllables each. It has irregular rime and recapitulates all that has been explained. It is said that the summary was written compactly in metrical form for easy understanding.

69 The creation of the myriad things of the universe.

70 The Supreme Ultimate

71 The myriad things.

72 Heaven and Earth. This verse indicates the designing of the Correct Sounds.

73 The principle of Heaven and Earth governs the myriad things.

The design of the Correct Sounds is modeled upon the shapes of the speech organs.

According to the strength of the sound strokes are added.

Sounds come from the molars, tongue, lips, teeth and throat.

These are the seventeen initial-sound letters.

The molar sounds are modeled after the shape of the tongue root closing the throat.

Only ㆁ(業) and ㅇ(欲) are similar in shape[74], but different in signification.

The linguals are formed from the shape of the tongue touching the upper palate.

The labials clearly have the shape of the mouth.

The dentals and glottals take directly the shape of the teeth and throat.

With the five meanings[75] understood, the sounds are self-evident.

There also are the semi-lingual (ㄹ) and the semi-dental (ㅿ).

The modeling of their shapes is the same but the forms of the letters are different.[76]

ㄴ, ㅁ, ㅅ and ㅇ are not harsh sounds.[77]

74 The Chinese characters which are used to exemplify the sound values of the letters at the beginning of Hunmin-jeongeum are used in this poem as names of the letters. Some of these characters are used to demonstrate both initials and medials.

75 The five significations of the five places of articulation.

76 This verse means that ㄹ and ㅿ are formed from ㄴ and ㅅ respectively, but their additional stroke does not mean reinforcement of ㄴ and ㅅ.

77 The text gives the Chinese characters to designate these sounds here as in subsequent verses.

Though they each come last, each is the base of other letters.[78]

These five sounds[79], assigned to the four seasons and the harmonious spirit of the universe,

Are not incongruous with the Five Elements and the Five [Musical] Notes.

The glottals are Water and correspond to Winter and the sound of 羽.

The molars are Spring and Wood, with the sound of 角.

The 徵 sounds are Summer and Fire, and are lingual.

The dentals are 商 and Autumn, and are Metal.

The labials have no fixed position or figure,

And they are the Earth and late Summer, and the sound of 宮 .

Sounds also have clearness and dullness in themselves,

So detailed study is required for the initial sounds.

Wholly clear sounds are ㄱ, ㄷ and ㅂ.[80]

ㅈ, ㅅ, and ㆆ are also wholly clear.

As to ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅊ and ㅎ, each of them is partly clear.

Wholly dull sounds are ㄲ, ㄸ and ㅃ.

So are the sounds of ㅉ, ㅆ and ㆅ.

Wholly clear sounds, if written side by side, become wholly dull,

But only ㆅ, which comes from ㅎ, is different.[81]

78 ㄴ, ㅁ, ㅅ, ㅇ are each the last sound in the classes of linguals, labials, dentals, glottals respectively among the seventeen initial sounds as presented at the beginning of *Hunmin jeongeum*. However, each is a basic letter for forming other letters belonging to the same class.

79 The five types of sounds that are collectively classified according to the place of articulation.

80 See notes 74 and 77.

81 See note 37.

ㆁ, ㄴ, ㅁ, ㅇ and ㄹ, ㅿ are neither clear nor dull.

ㅇ written underneath labial sounds makes them light labial,

With much glottal sound but with lips slightly closed.

Eleven medial sounds also come from the shape,

But the delicate meanings of which are not easily seen.

ㆍ is modeled after Heaven and its voice is the deepest;

Its shape is as round as a marble.

ㅡ is neither deep nor shallow.

Its flat shape comes from the Earth.

ㅣ is like a standing man and the voice is shallow;

The ways of the Three Rudiments[82] are thus provided.

ㅗ comes from Heaven and is still round;

Its shape depicts the round Heaven and the flat Earth.

ㅓㆍ is also from Heaven that is already open;

Things begun with matter mature when Man participates.

These[83] use one dot for the meaning of first birth;

They come from Heaven and are Yang, being above or outside.[84]

(ㅗ, ㅓㆍ)

ㅛ and ㅕ involve Man and are rebirths,

As their two round dots indicate their meaning.[85]

ㅜ, ㅐ, ㅠ and ㅖ come from the Earth;

82 Heaven, Earth and Man.

83 i.e., ㅗ and ㅓㆍ.

84 The position of ㆍ being above ㅡ and to the right of ㅣ.

85 The pronunciation of ㅛ and ㅕ starts with ㅣ /i/

Their meaning being already clear, what explanation is needed?

· is common to eight sounds.[86]

Because Heaven's function pervades through everything.

Four sounds(ㅗ, ㅣ:, ㅜ, :ㅣ) involve Man(ㅣ) and for this reason[87]

Man participates in Heaven and Earth and is supreme.

And as to the three sounds(initial, medial, final),[88] if we examine their principles,

There are hard and soft sounds, and Yin and Yang sounds.

The medial sounds, being Heaven's function, divide into Yin and Yang.

The initial sounds, being the Earth's affairs, appear as hard and soft.

When the medial sounds call, the initial sounds respond,

Because Heaven's preceding the Earth is quite natural.

The responding sounds can be both initial and final sounds,

Just as everything born goes back to Earth.

Yin changes into Yang and Yang changes into Yin,

Motion and stillness serve alternately as each other's root.

The initial sounds also have the meaning of birth,

And they become the motion of Yang and govern Heaven.

The final sounds can be compared to Earth and the stillness of Yin,

And the sounds of the letters stop and become fixed here.[89]

---

86 They are ㅗ, ㅣ·, ㅜ, ·ㅣ, ㅛ, ㅣ:, ㅠ and :ㅣ.

87 The four sounds are ㅗ, ㅣ:, ㅜ and :ㅣ starting with ㅣ /i/, the symbol for Man. One of the two dots, the first in writing these letters, is considered to be the shrunken form of ㅣ.

88 i.e., initial, medial and final sounds.

89 i.e., The final sounds close the pronunciation of Korean syllable clusters.

오音흠은소리니訓훈民민正정音흠은百빅姓성이기른치시논正정훈소리라

The essence of the rime lies in the function of medial sounds,
Since Man can aid Heaven and Earth's intent.
Yang's function permeates through Yin,
And, if developed fully, it returns to Yang again.
Although the initial and final sounds divide into Yin and Yang,
The reason for the use of initial sounds is understood.
The letters of the Correct Sounds are only twenty-eight;
Their principles were sought and their deep reasoning exhausted.
Their meanings are profound but the sounds are familiar and are easy to teach to the people.
It is a heavenly gift, but could it be the work of human wit and skill?

Explanations on the Initial Sounds

The initial sounds of the Correct Sounds are equivalent to the "character-mothers" (字母 : zimu, 'consonantal sound') of the rhyme books [some prefer 'rhyme dictionaries'].[90] All speech sounds are born from these; therefore they are mothers. For example, the initial sound of the character 君 is ㄱ/k/. ㄱ and ㄷ make 군/kun/. The initial sound of the character 快 is ㅋ/k^h/. ㅋ with ㅐ makes 쾌 /kwai/. The initial sound of the character 虯 is ㄲ/k'/. ㄲ and ㅠ make 뀨/k'ju/. The initial sound of the character 業 is ㆁ. ㆁ with ㅂ

90 In Chinese phonology the initial consonant is called 'sound mother' and the following syllable nucleus with or without a final consonant is called 'rhyme mother'

becomes 업/ŋəp/.

The lingual sounds of ㄷ(斗), ㅌ(呑), ㄸ(覃) and ㄴ(那), the labial sounds of ㅂ(彆), ㅍ(漂), ㅃ(步) and ㅁ(彌), the dental sounds of ㅈ(卽), ㅊ(侵), ㅉ(慈), ㅅ(戌) and ㅆ(邪), the glottal sounds of ㆆ(挹), ㅎ(虛), ㅇㅇ(洪) and ㅇ(欲) and the semi-lingual and the semi-dental sounds of ㄹ(閭) and ㅿ(穰) are all like this.

In summary:

ㄱ(君), ㅋ(快), ㄲ(虯) and ㆁ(業) are velar.

Linguals are ㄷ(斗), ㅌ(呑), ㄸ(覃) and ㄴ(那).

ㅂ(彆), ㅍ(漂), ㅃ(步) and ㅁ(彌) are labial.

Dentals are ㅈ(卽), ㅊ(侵), ㅉ(慈), ㅅ(戌) and ㅆ(邪).

ㆆ(挹), ㅎ(虛), ㅇㅇ(洪) and ㅇ(欲) are glottal.

ㄹ(閭) is semi-lingual, ㅿ(穰) is semi-dental.

These twenty-three letters are mother-sounds,

And all speech sounds come from them.

Explanations on the Medial Sounds

Medial sounds occupy the middle of the syllabic rime and they combine with the initial and the final sounds to complete the pronunciation [or 'syllable']. For example, the medial sound of 呑 is ·, and being between ㅌ and ㄴ it makes 툰. The medial sound of 卽 is ㅡ, and being between ㅈ and ㄱ, it makes 즉. The medial sound of 侵 is ㅣ, and being between ㅊ and ㅁ, it makes 침. The

medial sounds ㅗ, ㅏ·, ㅜ, ·ㅣ, ㅛ, ㅑ:, ㅠ and :ㅖ of 洪, 覃, 君, 業, 欲, 穰, 戌 and 彆 respectively are all like this.

As for the combined use of two letters, ㅗ/o/ and ㅏ·/a/ both come from ·/ʌ/, and they are combined to form ㅘ/wa/; ㅛ/jo/ and ㅑ:/ja/ both come from ㅣ/i/, so they are combined and become ㅙ/jwa/; ㅜ/u/ and ㅓ·/ə/ both come from ㅡ/ɨ/, so they are combined and become ㅝ/wə/; ㅠ/ju/ and ㅕ:/jə/ both come from /i/, so they are combined and become ㅞ/jwə/; these combined letters come from the same source and form similar groups, so when combined they show no discordance.[91]

There are ten one-letter medial sounds that can combine with ㅣ/i/. They are ㅓ·/ə/, ㅡㅣ/ɨ/, ㅚ/oi/, ㅐ/ai/, ㅞ/uəi/, ㅟ/ui/, ㅔ/əi/, ㅙ/joi/, ㅒ/jai/, ㅝㅣ/jui/ and ㅖ/jəi/. There are four two-letter medial sounds that can also combine with ㅣ. They are ㅘㅣ/wai/,ㅞㅣ/uei/, ㅙㅣ/jojai/ and ㅞㅣ/jujəi/.[92]

ㅣ/i/ can occur with deep, shallow, close and open sounds because it is pronounced with a spread tongue and its sound is shallow and the opening of the mouth is easy. By this we can see that Man can participate and help in the opening of things and that there is nothing Man does not penetrate.

91 The Three Rudiments as represented by ·, ㅡ and ㅣ are the bases of ㅗ, ㅏ, ㅛ, ㅑ and ㅜ, ㅓ, ㅠ, ㅕ; the former group belongs to Yang, the latter to Yin, each respectively coming from · (Heaven) and ㅡ (Earth). Therefore Yang sounds quite naturally combine with Yang sounds(ㅗㅏ,ㅘ), and Yin with Yin(ㅜㅓ, ㅝ) and they are quite reasonable.

92 These four are three-letter medial sounds, that is, vowels formed with three letters.

In summary:

As all basic characters have their medial sounds,

Seek from the medial sounds whether they are closed or open.

ㅗ and ㅏ come from ㆍ and can be combined.

ㅜ and ㅓ come from ㅡ and can also be combined.

ㅛ combines with ㅑ and ㅠ with ㅕ.

The reason for these combinations is understandable.

The use of ㅣ is most numerous;

It accompanies fourteen sounds throughout.

Explanations on the Final Sounds

The final sound follows upon the initial and medial to complete the rime of the character [syllable-cluster]. For example, the final sound of 卽 is ㄱ/k/, and it is positioned at the end of ㅈ/čɨ/, forming 즉/čɨk/. The final sound of 洪 is ㆁ/ŋ/ and it is positioned at the end of 홍/xo/, forming 홍/xoŋ/. The lingual, labial, dental and glottal sounds all behave the same.

Sounds differ in their slowness and rapidness, and thus the final sounds of the even (平 : 'level'), rising (上 : 'rising') and departing (去 : 'high') tones are not as rapid as the rapid closing (入 : 'falling') tone. Those sounds which are neither clear nor dull are not strong; therefore, when used as final sounds, they duly become even, rising and departing. Those sounds which are wholly clear, partly clear or wholly dull are strong and therefore, when used as final sounds,

they duly become rapidly closing. Therefore, the six letters ㆁ, ㄴ, ㅁ, ㅇ, ㄹ and ㅿ[93] become the final sounds of even, rising and departing tones, while the rest[94] form the final sounds of rapid tone. But the eight letters ㄱ, ㆁ, ㄷ, ㄴ, ㅂ, ㅁ, ㅅ and ㄹ are sufficient for use [as final sounds]. For example, in 빗곶/pʌiskoč/, meaning "pear blossom," and 영·의갗 /ɦiəzɦiɨkač^{h}/ meaning "fox hide," the letter ㅅ can be used throughout. Therefore only ㅅ is needed [instead of ㅈ and ㅊ].[95] And ㅇ/ɦ/ is void and empty and need not be written in final position, in which case the medial sound can complete the pronunciation.[96] The ㄷ of 별(鷩), the ㄴ of 군(君), the ㅂ of 업(業), the ㅁ of 땀(覃), the ㅅ of the colloquial ·옷(衣) and the ㄹ of the colloquial :실(絲) are all final sounds.

The slow and rapid sounds of the five classes of sounds respectively form pairs. For example, the velar ㆁ/ŋ/ pairs with ㄱ /k/, and when pronounced suddenly ㆁ changes into ㄱ and becomes rapid. ㄱ, if pronounced slowly, changes into ㆁ and becomes slow. Linguals ㄴ/n/ and ㄷ/t/, labials ㅁ/m/ and ㅂ/p/, dentals ㅿ/z/ and ㅅ/s/ and glottals ㅇ/ɦ/ and ㆆ/ʔ/ also form pairs according to their slowness and rapidity in the same way.

The semi-lingual ㄹ/l/ must be used for colloquial Korean words but must not be used for Chinese characters [as final sounds]. For

93 Since these are neither clear nor dull.
94 The wholly-clear ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅈ, ㅅ, ㆆ and partly-clear ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅊ and ㅎ.
95 The pronunciation of the three final consonants in these cases is the same, namely that of the basic ㅅ.
96 i.e., the pronunciation ends in an open syllable.

example, the character 鷩 /pjət/ is a rapid tone, and ㄷ/t/ should be used for its final sound but it is popularly pronounced ㄹ/l/. Presumably ㄷ has changed and become light. If ㄹ is used as the final sound of 鷩, the sound is slow and relaxed and does not become a rapid tone.

In summary:

Sounds neither clear nor dull(不淸不濁 : *buqing-buzhuo*)[97] are used as final sounds;

They become even, rising and departing tones but not rapid ones.

Sounds wholly clear, partly clear and wholly dull

Make rapid tones which are sudden and hurried.

Initial sounds can be final sounds with reasons quite natural

But just eight letters are enough to use in all cases.[98]

Where it is proper for ㅇ to appear as the final sound,

The medial sound itself completes the syllables.

To write 즉(卽) use ㄱ as its final sound.

홍(洪) and 변(鷩) end with ㆁ and ㄷ.

What about the final sounds of 군(君), 업(業) and 땀(覃)?

They are respectively ㄴ, ㅂ and ㅁ.

The six sounds[99] are used both for Chinese and Korean.

97 i.e., ㆁ/ŋ/, ㄴ /n/, ㅁ/m/, ㅇ/ɦ/, ㄹ /ɾ/, ㅿ/z/.
98 i.e., ㄱ, ㆁ, ㄷ, ㄴ, ㅂ, ㅁ, ㅅ and ㄹ for final sounds.
99 i.e., ㄱ, ㆁ, ㄷ, ㄴ, ㅂ and ㅁ as final sounds for Chinese characters and Korean words.

ㅅ and ㄹ are used for Korean words 옷 and 실 as final sounds.

Slow and rapid sounds of the five sounds[100] form pairs:

ㄱ is a rapid pronunciation of ㆁ ;

ㄷ and ㅂ, pronounced slowly, become ㄴ and ㅁ ;

ㅿ and ㅇ also pair up with ㅅ and ㆆ.

ㄹ is good for Korean but not for Chinese (as a final sound).[101]

ㄷ pronounced lightly becomes ㄹ; this is the general practice of the people.

Explanations on Combining the Letters

The initial, medial and final sounds combine and make characters(syllables). Initial sounds come either above the medial sounds or to the left of the medial sounds. For example, the ㄱ/k/ of 君[군] is above ㅜ, and the ㆁ/ŋ/ of 業[업] is to the left of ㅓ. Those medial sounds which are round or written horizontally, ㆍ, ㅡ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, and ㅠ, come below the initial sounds. Those written vertically come to the right of the initial sounds: these are ㅣ, ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ and ㅕ. For example, the ㆍ/ʌ/ of 呑[툰] comes below the initial sound ㅌ; the ㅡ/ɨ/ of 卽[즉] comes below the initial sound ㅈ, and the ㅣ/i/ of 侵[침] comes to the right of the initial sound ㅊ.

Final sounds come below the initial and medial sounds. For example, the ㄴ/n/ of 君[군] comes below ㄺ, and the ㅂ/p/ of 業

100 i.e., five classes of sounds: glottal, velar, lingual, dental and labial.

101 i.e., ㄹ is used in colloquial Korean words but not in Chinese character words.

[ᄋᆞᆸ] comes below ᄋᆞ.

Two or three initial sounds, when combined, are written side by side as in the colloquial Korean words ᄊᆞᅡ, meaning "the earth" (or 'land'); ᄲᆞᅡᆨ, meaning 'couple' (or 'pair'), and ᄇᆞᆰ, meaning 'gap' (or 'crack'). In cases where the same letter is written side by side, the colloquial Korean word ᄂᆞᆨᄒᆞ 'tongue' become ᄂᆞᆨᄒᆞᆨ 'to pull'; ᄀᆞᆯᄋᆞᄫᆞ 'I love someone' becomes ᄀᆞᆯᄋᆞᄋᆞᄫᆞ 'someone loves me'; ᄉᆞᄃᆞᆫᄃᆞ 'to cover(or overturn) things' becomes ᄊᆞᅀᆞᄃᆞᆫᄃᆞ 'to shoot,' and so on.

Two or three medial sounds are combined to be used as follows: the colloquial Korean word ᄀᆞᅪ means 'bridge of the harp chord'; ᄒᆞᅫ means 'torch,' and the like.

The combined use of two or three final sounds is as follows: the colloquial Korean word ᄒᆞᆱ means 'dirt'; ᄂᆞᆺ means 'angling', and ᄃᆞᆰᄀᆞᄢᅢ means the 'hour of the cock' [i.e. 6 p.m.].

When these sounds are combined and written side by side, they are written from left to right. In case of the initial, medial and final sounds, they are all written in the same say. For the mixed use of Chinese characters and Korean words, some medial and final sounds are added depending on the sounds of the preceding Chinese characters. For example, 孔子ㅣ 魯ㅅ ᄉᆞᅡᄅᆞᆷ, which means 'Confucius (is) a man of 魯.' [102]

Korean word of even, rising, departing and rapid tones are as

102 This is an illustration of the mixed use of Chinese characters and Korean characters. The inserted ㅣ /i/ is the nominative case ending and ㅅ/s/ the possessive ending. They are placed after the Chinese characters.

百姓ᄋᆞᆷ은소리니訓民正音은

follows: ·활/hwal/ means 'arrow' and the sound is even: ·돌/tol/ means 'stone' and the sound is rising: ·갈/kal/ means 'knife' and the sound is falling, and ·붇/put/ means 'brush' and the sound is rapid.

In general, adding one dot to the left of a letter means a departing tone, two dots a rising tone and no dots an even tone. The rapid tone of Chinese characters is similar to the departing tone [of the colloquial Korean]. The rapid tone of Korean words is not fixed; some are similar to the even tone, as is ·긷/kit/, meaning 'pillar', and ·녑/njəp/, meaning 'side'; some are similar to the rising tone, as in ·낟/nat/, meaning 'grain', and ·깁/kip/, meaning 'silk'; some are similar to the departing tone, as in ·몯/mot/, meaning 'nail' and ·입/ɦip/, meaning 'mouth.' Adding dots is the same as for the even, rising and departing tones [of Chinese characters].

The even tone is steady and mild. It is spring, when the myriad things unfold and are easy. The rising tone is mild and rising. It is summer, when the myriad things flourish more and more. The departing tone is raised and stout. It is autumn, when the myriad things become ripe. The rapid tone is sudden and blocked. It is winter, when the myriad things are locked and stored.

The initial sounds of ㆆ and ㅇ are similar to each other and for colloquial Korean words they can replace each other. There are two semi-lingual(liquid) sounds, light and heavy. However, in phonetic books (of China) there is only one character, and although the

Korean language does not differentiate light and heavy sounds, they both can [be written to] form sounds. If one wants to use the fully provided form, he may write ㅇ, in accordance with the examples of light labial sounds, below ㄹ as ᄛ. It becomes a semi-lingual light sound and the tongue slightly touches the upper alveolar.[103]

ㆍ and ㅡ beginning with the sound of ㅣ are not used in the Korean language.[104] The speech of children and the languages of the bordering dialects sometimes have them. The two letters should be used in combination, like ᄀᆝ/kiʌ/ and ᄀᆜ/kiɨ/. The vertical stroke is written first and then the horizontal stroke. This is different from the other cases of combined letters.

In summary:

The initial sounds come to the left or above the medial sounds.

ㆆ and ㆁ are the same in native Korean usage.

When attaching the eleven medial sounds to the initial sounds,

Write the round and horizontal letters below and the vertical letters to the right.

Where are the final sounds to be placed?

They are written immediately below the initials and medials.

103 This passage demonstrates an awareness of phonemics by the ancient Korean scholars. The semi-lingual heavy sound ᄙ and the semi-lingual light sound ᄛ are in complementary distribution and so do not require distinct letters, but the device of adding the ㆁ is suggested as a means of distinguishing these sounds whenever necessary. The latter sound is treated in modern Korean as a flapped sound between vowels.

104 Letters that do begin with the sound of ㅣ /i/ are ㅛ/jo/, ㅑ/ja/, ㅠ/ju/ and ㅕ/jə/.

Combined initial and final sounds are written side by side.
Medial sounds also, when combined, begin writing from the left.
How are the four tones of native Korean distinguished?
Even is 활 'arrow', and rising is 칼 'stone';
칼 'knife' is departing, and 붓 'brush' is rapid.
Observe these four things and the rest can be understood.
Tones based on dots on the left are divided into four:
One dot is departing, two dots rising, and none is even.
Korean rapid tone is not fixed but dots are added.
Chinese rapid tone is similar to the [Korean] departing one.
Dialects and rustic speeches are many and diverse.
Sounds without letters make it difficult to communicate through writing.[105]

The creation of the Correct Sounds (by the king) in one day is like a divine work,
And on this great Eastern land darkness will forever be dissipated.

Examples on the Use of Letters

The initial sound ㄱ/k/ is as in 감/kam/(柿), meaning 'persimmon', and 골/kʌl/(蘆), meaning 'reed'; ㅋ/k^h/ is as in 우케/ɦuk^h əi/(未舂稻), meaning 'unhulled rice', and 콩/k^hoŋ/(大豆),

105 This line refers to the fact that the Korean speech, having no letters to express it, finds it difficult to communicate through Chinese characters.

meaning ‘bean’ ; ㆁ/ŋ/ is as in 러ᅀᅮᆯ/ɾəŋul/(獺), meaning ‘sable,’ and 서ᅀᅦ/səŋəi/(流漸) meaning ‘frostwork’ ; ㄷ/t/ is as in ·ᄃᆡ /tui/(茅), meaning ‘miscanthus,’ and ·담/tam/(墻) meaning ‘wall’ ; ㅌ /tʰ/ is as in 고·ᄐᆡ/kotʰi/(繭) meaning ‘cocoon’ , and 두텁/tutʰəp/(蟾蜍), meaning ‘toad’ ; ㄴ[n] is as in 노로/noɾo-/(獐), meaning ‘roe-dear’ , and 납/nap/(猿), meaning ‘ape’ ; ㅂ/p/ is as in ᄇᆞᆯ /pʌl/(臂), meaning ‘arm’ , and ᄇᆞᆯ /pəl/(蜂), meaning ‘bee’ ; ㅍ/pʰ/ is as in ·파/pʰa/(蔥), meaning ‘onion’ , and ·풀/pʰʌl/(蠅), meaning ‘fly’ ; ㅁ/m/ is as in ᄆᆞ뫼/moi/(山), meaning ‘mountain’ , and ·마 /ma/(薯蕷) , meaning ‘potato’ or ‘yam’ ; ㅱ/β/ is as in 사·ᄇᆡ/saβi/(蝦), meaning ‘shrimp’ , and 드ᄫᅵ/tɨβɨi/(瓠), meaning ‘gourd’ ; ㅈ/č/ is as in ·자/ča/(尺), meaning ‘ruler’ or ‘measure’ , and 죠·ᄒᆡ /čoh∧i/(紙), meaning ‘paper’ ; ㅊ/čʰ/ is as in ·체/čʰəi/(籮), meaning ‘sifter’ , and ·채/čʰai/(鞭), meaning ‘whip’ ; ㅅ/s/ is as in 손 /son/(手), meaning ‘hand’ , and ᄉᆞᆷ /sjəm/(島), meaning ‘island’ ; ㅎ /h/ is as in ·부헝/puhəŋ /(鵂鶹), meaning ‘owl’ , and ·힘/him/(筋), meaning ‘muscle’ ; ㆆ/ɦ/ is as in ·비ᅀᅭᆨ/piɦjuk/(鷄雛), meaning ‘chicken’ , and ·ᄇᆞᆷ/pʌɦjam/(蛇), meaning ‘snake’ ; ㄹ/ɾ, l/ is as in ·므ᄅᆡ/muɾui/(雹), meaning ‘hail’ , and 어·름/ɦəɾɨm/, meaning ‘ice’ ; ㅿ/z/ is as in 아ᅀᅮ/ɦaz∧/(弟), meaning ‘younger brother’ , and ᄂᆞᅀᅵ/nəzi/(鴈), meaning ‘wild goose’ .

The medial sound ㆍ/ʌ/ is as in ·ᄐᆞᆨ/tʰʌk/(頤) meaning ‘chin’ , and ᄑᆞᆺ/pʰʌs/(小豆), meaning ‘red bean’ ,[106] ᄃᆞ리/tʌɾi-/(橋), meaning

106 The Chinese characters literally mean “small bean.”

'bridge', and ·구래/kʌɾai/(楸), meaning 'walnut'; ㅡ/ɨ/ is as in ·믈/mɨl/(水), meaning 'water', ·발측/palcɨk /(跟), meaning 'heel', 그력/kɨɾjək/(鴈), meaning 'goose,' and 드레/tɨɾʌi/(汲器), meaning 'well bucket'; ㅣ/i/ is as in ·깃/kis/(巢), meaning 'nest', ·밀/mil/(蠟), meaning 'beeswax', ·피/pʰi /(稷), meaning 'millet', and 키/kʰi/(箕), meaning 'winnower'; ㅗ/o/ is as in ·논/non/(水田), meaning 'peddy field', 톱/tʰop/(鉅), meaning 'saw', 호·미/homʌi/ meaning 'hoe', and 벼·로/pjəɾo/(硯), meaning 'inkstone'; ㅏ/a/ is as in ·밥/pap/(飯), meaning 'cooked rice', ·낟/nat/(鎌), meaning 'sickle', 이·아/ɦiŋa/(綜), meaning 'woof', and 사·슴/sasʌm/(鹿), meaning 'deer'; ㅜ/u/ is as in ·숫/sus-/(炭), meaning 'charcoal', ·울/ɦul/(籬), meaning 'bamboo fence', 누·에/nuɦəi/(蚕), meaning 'silkworm', and 구·리/kuɾi/(銅), meaning 'copper'; ㅓ/ə/ is as in 브·섭/pɨzəp/(竈), meaning kitchen furnace', ·널/nəl/(板), meaning 'board' (or 'plank'), 서·리/səɾi/(霜), meaning 'frost', and 버·들/pətɨl/(柳), meaning 'willow'; ㅛ/jo/ is as in ·죵/čjoŋ/(奴), meaning 'servant', ·고욤/koɦjom/(榲), meaning 'wild persimmon'. ·쇼/sjo/(牛), meaning 'cow', and 삽·됴/saptjo/(蒼朮菜), meaning 'tractylisovata'; ㅑ/ja/ is as in 남·샹/namsjaŋ/(龜), meaning 'tortoise', 약/ɦjak/(龜鼈), meaning 'a kind of turtle', 다·야/taja/(匜), meaning 'wash basin', and 자:감/čjakam/(蕎麥皮), meaning 'rye hull'; ㅠ/ju/ is as in 율·믜/ɦjulmɨi/(薏苡), meaning 'pearled barley', ·죽/čjuk/(飯粟), meaning 'rice gruel', ·슈·룹[sjuɾup](雨繖), meaning 'umbrella', and ·쥬련/čjuɾjən/(帨), meaning 'handkerchief'. ㅖ/ə/ is as in ·엿/ɦjəs/(飴餹), meaning 'candy', ·뎔/tjəl/(佛寺), meaning 'temple,' ·벼/pjə/(稻),

meaning ‘unhulled rice,’ and ·져비/čjəpi/(燕), meaning ‘swallow(bird)’.

The final sound ㄱ/k/ is as in ·닥/tak/(楮), meaning ‘paper mulberry’, and ·독/tok/(甕), meaning ‘jar’; ㆁ/ŋ/ is as in :굼벙/kumpəŋ/(蠐螬), meaning ‘maggot’, and ·ᄒᆞᆯ창/ɦolčʰaŋ/(蝌蚪), meaning ‘tadpole’; ㄷ/t/ is as in ·갇/kat/(笠), meaning ‘hat’, and ·싣/sit/(楓), meaning ‘maple’; ㄴ/n/ is as in ·신/sin/(屨), meaning ‘shoes’, and ·반되/pantoi/(螢), meaning ‘firefly’; ㅂ/p/ is as in ·섭/səp/(薪), meaning ‘firewood’, and ·굽/kup/(蹄), meaning ‘hoof’; ㅁ/m/ is as in :범/pəm/(虎), meaning ‘tiger’, and :심/sʌim/(泉), meaning ‘spring’ (or ‘well’); ㅅ/s/ is as in :잣/čas/(海松), meaning ‘pine-nut(tree)’, and ·못/mos/(池), meaning ‘pond’; ㄹ/l/ is as in ·ᄃᆞᆯ/tʌl/(月), meaning ‘moon’, and :별/pjəl/(星), meaning ‘star’.

Preface of Jeong Inji

If there are sounds natural to Heaven and Earth, there should certainly be writing natural to Heaven and Earth. (That is, there should be letters to describe natural sounds.) Thus ancient people made letters according to the sounds and through them the feelings of the myriad things were communicated and ways of the Three Rudiments were described. The people of the later generations cannot change them.

However, the features and circumstances of various places are

different, and so naturally (human) sounds and breaths differ accordingly. The languages of countries other than China have their own sounds but not their own letters. These countries have borrowed the Chinese characters for their use. This absurdity is like putting a square peg in a round hole. How can it be freely used without hindrance? In fact, all things are safe in their proper places and they should not be forced to be the same.[107]

The ceremonials, music and literature of Korea are comparable to and imitative of those of China, but the language of this country is not the same as that of the Chinese. Those who study books have been troubled by the difficulty of understanding the meaning [of Chinese characters] and those who enforce laws have been distressed at the difficulty of distinguishing right and wrong.

In the olden times of Silla, Seolchong[108] originated the Idu[109] characters which have been used in the government offices and among the people until now. But they use borrowed Chinese characters [for Korean sounds], and in some cases the Idu characters are awkward and in others hinder understanding of the language. They are not only rustic and crude and unreasonable; when it comes to the realm of actual speech, they are impossible to express the language in one out of ten thousand cases.

107 This emphasizes the fact that every country should have its own letters fitting the sounds of its language.

108 The son of the Buddhist monk Wonhyo.

109 Idu: A kind of writing system which was used during Silla Dynasty by borrowing the sounds or meanings of Chinese characters to express the Korean language. Also called Hyangchal.

In the winter of the year Gyehae(A.D.1443)[110], our King created the twenty-eight letters of the Correct Sounds and adduced some brief examples and explanations by which to demonstrate them and named them *Hunmin jeongeum* ('Correct Sounds for Educating the People'). The letters depict shapes[111] and resemble the ancient seal characters.[112] Based on pronunciation, the sounds fit the seven musical notes.[113] The meaning of the Three Ultimates[114] and the exquisiteness of the Two Ethers[115] are all included and provided (in them). Though only twenty-eight letters are used, their shifts and changes (in function) are infinite. They are concise and to the point, and precise and easily understood. Therefore, wise men can understand them within one morning, and even stupid people can learn them in ten days. If books (in Chinese) are explained with these letters, the situation can be made clear.

As for the phonology of the characters, clearness and dullness can easily be distinguished, and as for music and song, the sounds are in accord with the notes. For the use of the sounds, there is nothing unprovided for, and for expressions they serve all purposes. Even the sounds of the winds, the crowing of a crane, the cackle of a rooster and the barking of a dog—everything can

110 The 25th year of King Sejong, A.D. 1443.
111 i.e., they depict the shape of the speech organs and the Three Rudiments.
112 A kind of beautiful writing style of Chinese characters used prior to the Chin Dynasty.
113 They are 宮(do or C), 商(re or D), 角(mi or E), 徵(sol or G), 羽(la or A), 半商(half-re) and 半徵(half-sol).
114 i.e., the Three Rudiments: Heaven, Earth and Man.
115 i.e., the Twin Modes: Yin and Yang.

be written well with these letters.[116]

Upon the order of His Majesty to add detailed explanations and examples and teach the people, his subject,[117] along with his subject Choe Hang,[118] Eunggyo[119] of Jiphyeonjeon,[120] his subject Bak Paengnyeon[121] and his subject Sin Sukju,[122] Bugyori,[123] his subject Seong Sammun,[124] Suchan,[125] his subject Gang Huian,[126] Jubu[127] of Donnyeongbu,[128] his subject Yi Gae[129] and his subject Yi Seonro[130], acting Busuchan[131] of Jiphyeonjeon, have cordially drafted some explanations and examples and described their outlines. It is hoped that the readers come to understand for

116 This passage emphasizes the practical value of the Correct Sounds.
117 i.e., Jeong Inji(鄭麟趾)
118 Choe Hang(崔恒, 1409-74). His other name was Taeheojeong(太虛亭). He helped to compile the Gyeonggukdaejeon, *Sejongshillok*, *Dongguktonggam*, etc.
119 Eunggyo(應敎), Regular 4th official grade of Jiphyeonjeon. See next note.
120 Jiphyeonjeon(集賢殿): A kind of royal research institute. It conducted political studies, wrote and compiled the official histories of the kingdom, sponsored open lectures attended by the King and his court, and furnished tutors for the Crown Prince.
121 Bak Paengnyeon(朴彭年, 1417-56). His other name was Chwigeumheon(醉琴軒). One of the six faithful subjects who were killed by Sejo(1417-68), 7th king of the Joseon Dynasty.
122 Sin Sukju(申叔舟, 1417-75). His other names were Bohanjae(保閑齋) and Hihyeondang(希賢堂). He helped to compile the Sejoshillok, Seongjongshillok, *Dongguktonggam*, etc. Deputy 5th official grade of Jiphyeonjeon.
123 BuGyori(副敎理). Deputy 5th official grade of Jiphyeonjeon.
124 Seong Sammun(成三問, 1418-56). His other name was Maejukeon(梅竹軒), One of the six faithful subjects killed by King Sejo.
125 Suchan(修撰). Regular 6th official grade of Jiphyeonjeon.
126 Gang Huian(姜希顔, 1417-64). His other name was Injae(仁齋). Noted for his poetry, handwriting and drawing during the reign of King Sejo.
127 Jubu(注簿). Vice 6th official grade of Donnyeongbu. See next note.
128 Donnyeongbu(敦寧府). Office of Royal Household dealing with the affairs of friendship and solidarity among the royal family and its relatives.
129 Yi Gae(李塏, 1417-56). His other name was Baekokheon(白玉軒). He was one of the six faithful subjects who were killed by king Sejo.
130 Yi Seonro(李善老). His early name was Yi Hyeonro(李賢老).
131 Busuchan(副修撰). Vice 6th official grade of Jiphyeonjeon.

themselves without a teacher. The profound origin and the dexterity of the precise meaning (of the Correct Sounds) are not something that could have been initiated or developed by his subjects.

We respectfully regard His Majesty as a heaven-sent sage, and that all institutions and every aspect of his administration exceed and excel those of one hundred other kings. The creation of the Correct Sounds is not something that was initiated by our ancestors but was perfected out of Nature itself. Since their profound reasons can be found everywhere, can this be a man-made private thing? Now this eastern country, since coming into being, cannot be called not old. However, the great wisdom to enlighten and accomplish everything has had to be awaited until the present day.

At the beginning of the ninth moon of the eleventh year of Jeongtong,[132] his subject Jeong Inji,[133] Ubingaek[134] of the crown prince, Jichunchu gwansa,[135] Daejehak[136] of Jiphyeonjeon, Yejo-panseo,[137] Jaheondaebu,[138] has respectfully written this preface.

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132 正統十一年 : i.e. the 28th year of King Sejong, A.D. 1446.

133 Jeong Inji (鄭麟趾, 1396-1478). His other name was Hag yeogje (學易齋). He compiled *Jachitonggam hunui* (資治統監訓義), *Taepyongyoram* (太平要覽), *Yeokdaebyeongyo* (歷代兵要), (*Goryeosa* (The History of the Goryeo Dynasty (高麗史)) etc. He wrote his own *Hagyeokjae Anthology* (學易齋集).

134 世子右賓客. The regular 2nd official grade post in the office of 世子侍講院 (Academy for Tutoring the Crown Prince).

135 知春秋館事. The regular 2nd official grade post in the office of Chunchugwan (春秋館, 'Office of Chronicles') in charge of recording current affairs of the administration.

136 Daejehak (大提學). Regular 2nd official grade.

137 Yejopanseo (禮曹判書). Regular 2nd official grade in charge of the Ministry of Rituals (禮曹, one of six ministries of the Joseon Dynasty) dealing with rites and ceremonies, music, protocol, diplomacy, schools, civil service examinations, etc.

138 Jaheondaebu (資憲大夫). Regular 2nd official grade.

Note about Preface of Jeong Inji

Since the preface of Jeong Inji is attached at the end of the text of "Explanations and Examples of *Hunmin jeongeum*," it is also named 'the Epilogue of Jeong Inji' to distinguish it from King Sejong's Preface at the head of the text.

Since the King's Preface was recorded on the September clause in the 28th reign of King Sejong (*Annals of King Sejong*, Chapter 36 ab-Chapter 37a) together with King's Preface and the text of *Hunmin jeongeum*(Examples and Meanings), the text of the 'Explanations and Examples of *Hunmin jeongeum'* was already well known among scholars even before the text was discovered in 1940 in Andong, Gyeongsangbukdo. Especially a clause in the Preface referring to the creation of Hunmin jeongeum letters stated that they were modeled after the old seal characters and thus steadily supported the theory that *Hunmin jeongeum* was copied after 'old seal characters.'

The contents of the preface can be summarized as follows:

1. Characters created by the ancient people cannot be changed by their posterity at will.
2. However, as the geographical conditions differ, so the people's pronunciations become different accordingly. In spite of this, countries other than China, in the absence of their own letters,

borrowed the Chinese characters for their use. It is hardly expected to have things go well in such circumstances.

3. The Korean cultural level is comparable to the Chinese one but despite the language difference, Korean writings use Chinese characters, which causes readers to find it difficult to understand when studying through books and officials dealing with law-breakers do not understand documents written in Chinese characters.
4. The once used Idu since Silla era was very inconvenient and was hardly communicative in it.
5. Therefore in the 25th reign of King Sejong (1443), he created 28 correct sounds (letters) and named them Hunmin jeongeum (Correct Sounds for Educating the People).
6. Letters were formed in the shapes of the speech organs and are similar to the ancient Chinese seal characters.
7. The number of letters is no more than 28 but their application to describing sounds is almost limitless.
8. The letters are so easy to learn that a few morning hours for the wise or no more than ten days for the fool will be enough to master the letters.
9. With the creation of the letters, books written in Chinese characters could be understood easily and law-breakers could express themselves clearly. Furthermore, the pronunciation of Chinese characters became distinct and the musical scale harmonious. Even the sound of wind and the cackle of a

rooster could be described.

10. The compilers of this book were eight including Choe Hang et al.
11. The letters were created solely with King Sejong's creative idea.

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