

A Study on Hangul and Obangjeongsae that appear on Hunminjeongeum**EunBae Moon****Chungwoon University, Incheon, KOREA*

* mooncd11@naver.com

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted mainly based on the records of Korea's traditional colors, which could be found in old literature. Specifically, this study was intended to define the identity and interconnectivity between Korea's traditional five colors known as "Obangjeongsae" and the basic consonants of Hangeul by investigating the principles of Yin-Yang & Five Elements (of the Universe) and invention of Hangeul with a focus on Isusin Edition on the basis of Hunminjeongeum Haerye Edition and Silhak (Realist School of Confucianism) of the mid and latter part of the Joseon Dynasty among classical literatures. The 5 Basic consonants of Hangeul, i.e.,

"A," and "o," were invented based on the principles behind Yin-Yang & Five Elements and vocal organs. Molar sound (velar sound) "ㄱ" was placed on the left side of the Five Elements to imply trees and spring while lingual sound "ㄴ" was placed on upper side to signify fire and spring. Moreover, labial sound "ㅁ" was placed at the center to denote soil and late summer and dental sound "ㄷ" was placed on the right side to signify iron and autumn. Meanwhile, the guttural sound "ㅇ" was placed on the lower side to denote water and winter. However, we established relationship between consonants of Hangeul and Korea's traditional Obangjeongsae (five traditional colors) based on interconnectivity between "Obangjeongsae" recorded in Isusin Edition and "Yin-Yang & Five Elements" incorporated into Hunminjeongeum due to the absence of a relationship with Obangjeongsae. The results of this study may provide useful basis for the development of Oriental ideology and Hangeul design.

KEYWORDS: Korea's traditional five colors, Hangul, Obangjeongsae

THEORY

The Hunminjeongeum, which records the principles and structure of Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, is divided into Ye-Eui (Samples and Significance Edition of Hunminjeongeum) and Haerye (a commentary on the Hunminjeongeum). Ye-Eui contains the reason behind the invention of Hangul and its usage. Haerye Edition records the principles of the invention of Hangeul, which are related to Yin-Yang & Five Elements. The Haerye Edition is a detailed description of the principles behind the creation of consonants and vowels in Hangeul and their usage. The commentaries were provided by scholars of the Hall of Worthies or Jiphyeonjeon who participated in the invention of Hangeul, such as Jeong In-Jin, Choi Hang, Park Paeng-Nyeon, Shin Sook-Joo, Seong Sam-Moon, Gang Hee-An, Lee Gae, Lee Seon-Ro, etc., while assisting King Sejong. The original copy of Hunminjeongeum containing both Ye-Eui (Samples and Significance Edition of Hunminjeongeum) and the Haerye (a commentary on the Hunminjeongeum) was discovered in 1940, which is Hunminjeongeum Haerye Edition. The Haerye Edition records the principles of the invention of Hangeul in connection with Yin-Yang & Five Elements. After the nation's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the Hunminjeongeum Haerye Edition was revealed by the scholars of the Joseon Language Society to the public, and furthermore, the fact was clearly proven that Hangeul was a pictographic character depicting vocal organs. The principle behind each character and the initial vocalization of Hangeul characters were established based on the principles of Yin-Yang & Five Elements and Aseolsunchihu, the Jejaha of Hunminjeongeum, which

described the principle of consonant and vowel invention. Hunminjeongeum was created to contain the Five Elements, body structure, and nature in each character. The five basic consonants match the principles of Yin-Yang & Five Elements with the sounding in molars, tongue, lips, front teeth, and throat. Vowels are based on the heaven, Earth, and human, imitating their shape. All vowels are made up of a combination of three elements: heaven (•), land (—), human (1). Yin and Yang, the foundation of Hangul, represents the order and principle of the universe and is manifested in black and white in color.

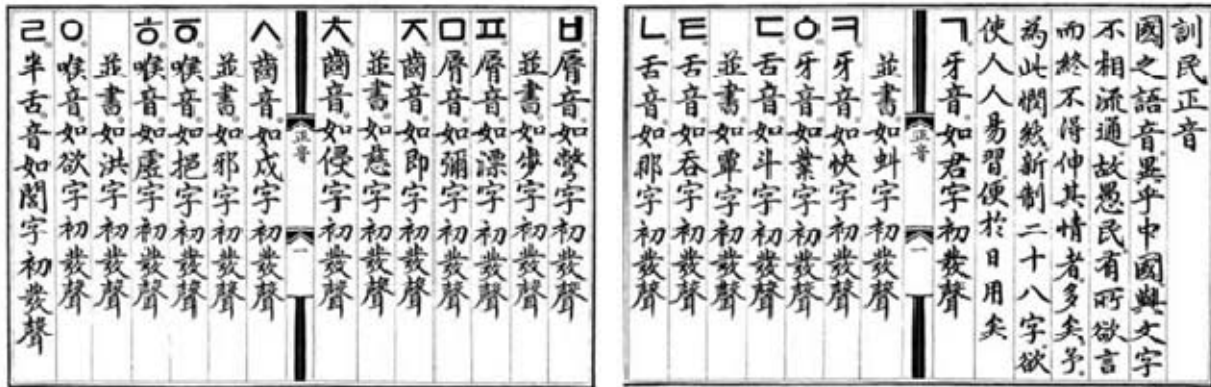


Fig. 1: Humminjeongeum, haerae

Obangjeongsae is the five symbolic colors of blue, red, yellow, white, and black embodying the Five Elements extracted from Yin and Yang, and its formal name is Obangjeongsae. FISusin Edition j recorded the primary color, secondary color, and miscellaneous color interpreted according to Yin-Yang & Five Elements. Five directions are formed based on the center and the four sides, and there are eight directions and sixteen directions between the respective azimuth. The five cardinal colors are assigned also according to orientation and the interrelationship of the Five Elements creates neutral color. Infinite colors can be created in the halftone of this process. Five primary colors and ten secondary colors become the basic colors of Yin and Yang that creates all colors. These colors are also .basic colors of Korean traditional colors. Obangjeongsae and secondary color are also defined through each point of the compass even in Bingheogak Lee's FGyuhap Chongseo (Women's Encyclopedia)j. Five cardinal colors conform to the Five Elements, followed by orientation and seasons.

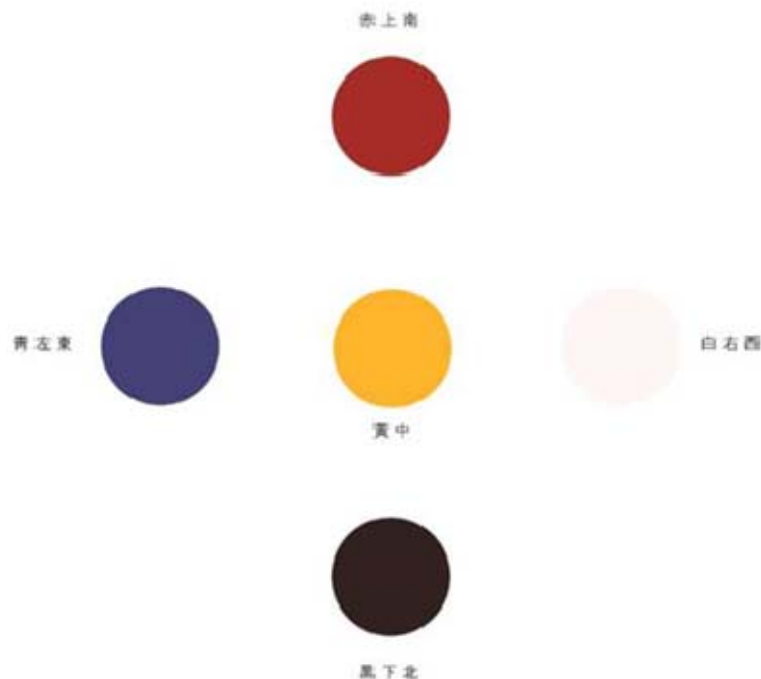


Fig. 2: Diagram of Yin-Yang & Five Elements Obangjeongsae Dystem (Moon Eun-Bae, 2012) in Isusin Edition

CONCLUSION

This study provided an explanation of the Isusin Edition that recorded the primary color, secondary color, and miscellaneous color interpreted according to Yin-Yang & Five Elements and systematic order of the Five-Sounds (Gung, Sang, Gak, Chi, Wu) associated with the human body structure, the 4 seasons and orientations based on the order of Yin-Yang & Five Elements. Thus, the colors of consonants in Hangul were defined by likening the orientation, seasons, Five-Sounds (Gung, Sang, Gak, Chi, Wu), and Yin-Yang & Five Elements to colors. By substituting the consonants of Hangul with reasons/logics and colors suited for Yin-Yang & Five Elements, the Consonant Five Element Diagram(Fig. 4) suitable for the traditional colors of Korea was derived. The labial sound at the center means soil and late summer which is classified

as yellow. The lingual dental sound means “above,” which denotes the fire and summer. The sibilant overtone sound “A” means the right side, which is classified as white and signifies iron and autumn. The guttural sound “o” means the lower side and denotes the winter and water. Finally, the molar sound consonant means the left side, which is classified as blue color and denotes tree and spring. The following is the Diagram of Consonant Five Elements, which conforms to the logics of Jejahae based on the principles of Yin-Yang & Five Elements in Hunminjeongeum and traditional colors recorded in Isusin Edition. Based on the results of this study, it was found that the Diagram of Consonant Five Elements was developed through the combination between the order of Yin-Yang & Five Elements and Yin-Yang & Five Elements-based characteristics of consonants.

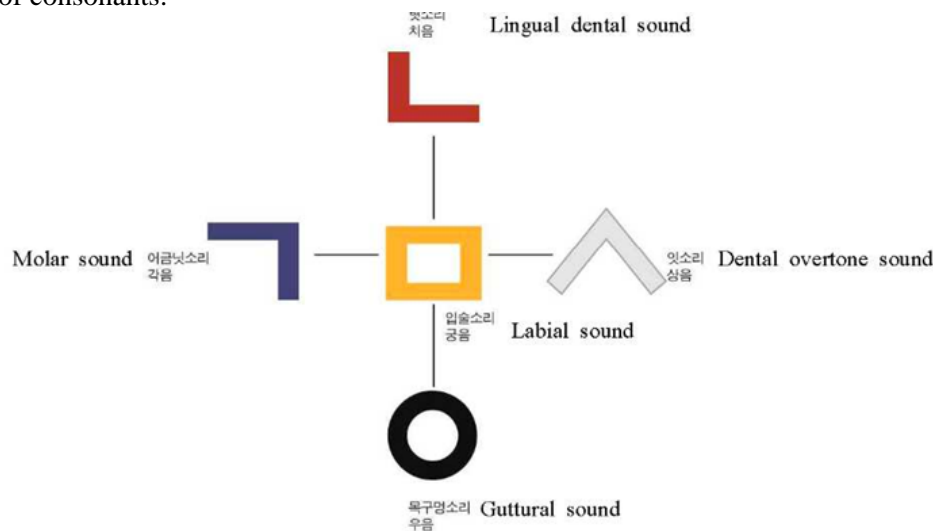


Fig. 3: Diagram of Hangeul Consonant Five Elements based on principles of Yin-Yang & Five Elements in Isusin Edition and Hunminjeongeum Jejahae

This researcher hopes that the results of this study would help identify the interrelationship among Hangeul, Yin-Yang & Five Elements, and colors and provide the basis for the development of Hangeul design.

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