Abstract

Previous scholarship on the *Naehun* (Instruction for the Inner Sphere) has often understood the *Naehun* as its author Queen Sohye’s attempt at forcefully imposing the notion of women’s absolute submission to men and that the text was written exclusively for a female audience. These analyses, thought not entirely wrong, appear to be based on certain misrepresentative portions of the text and is closely related to the modern day valorization of King Sejong in his creation of the Korean vernacular script, the *hunmin chong’üm* (Correct Sound for the Instruction of the People). Therefore, in this thesis, I propose a way of re-reading Queen Sohye’s *Naehun* by contesting the traditional understandings about the text’s intended audience and its theme and by de-mythologizing the nature of the vernacular translation (*ónhae*) portions in the *Naehun*. I then offer an intertextual analysis of Sohye’s *Naehun* and Ban Zhao’s *Nüjie* (Precepts for My Daughters) in order to argue that the underlying philosophy in the *Naehun* is the notion of Neo-Confucian universality (“sagehood for all humankind”) and the text’s initial intended audience included both men and women. I propose that the most emphasized virtue of women in the *Naehun* is intellect, moral rectitude, and capability to act as counselors and remonstrators to their men. Such portrayal of women suggests a subversive notion of a “blurred” demarcation of the inner and the outer spheres. Bearing in mind this “subversive” idea in the light of the historical context of Queen Chŏnghŭi regency, one can read Sohye’s *Naehun* as an argument intended to subdue any brewing dissatisfaction against Chŏnghŭi’s leadership among male Confucian scholars in the court.
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Preface

This thesis deals with the *Naehun* (Instructions for the Inner Sphere, 1475), a Neo-Confucian morality text supposed to have been written originally in Classical Chinese (also known as Written Chinese or Literary Sinitic), or *hanmun* (in modern Korean), with Korean vernacular translations, or *onhae*. The author of the text is Queen Sohye Han-ssi (1437-1504), the primary consort of Crown Prince Úgyông (1438-1457) and the mother of King Sŏngjong (1457-1494; r. 1469-1494). The *Naehun* consists of seven chapters: “Ónhaeng 言行” (Speech and Comportment); “Hyoch‘in 孝親” (Filial Piety); “Hollye 昏禮” (Bond of Marriage); “Pubu 夫婦” (Husband and Wife); “Motŭ 母儀” (Motherly Rectitude); “Tonmok 敦睦” (Cordiality in Sibling Relationships)” and “Yŏmgŏm 廉儉” (Integrity and Frugality). The preface to the *Naehun* reveals that Queen Sohye drew her materials from four existing classical Confucian primers: the *Xiaoxue* (Elementary Learning; K. Sohak), the *Nujiao* (Teachings for Women; K. Yogyo), the *Lienu* (Biographies of Women; K. Yollyo;), and the *Mingjian* (Mirror).

1 Duncan has translated the *Naehun* as “Instructions for Women” and used different names for chapter title in his “The *Naehun* and the Politics of Gender in Fifteenth-Century.” I have not used Duncan’s English translations for the chapter title because a close examination of the text seems to suggest deficiencies in the existing translations of the titles. The chapter titles Duncan uses are “Speech and comportment”; “Filial piety”; “Marriage”; “Husband and Wife”; “Motherhood”; “Amiability”; and “Thrift.”
2 Sohye’s status was elevated to queen after her son, Sŏngjong, ascended the throne.
3 I treat the *Naehun* as a piece of literature that an exceptional individual wrote at a specific and significant historical time and that contains the ethos of contemporary Chosŏn (Korea (1392-1910). See Appendix (xi) for an abridged family tree of Queen Sohye.
4 In the near future, I hope to write a paper that argues the need for a separate space for the discussion of conduct manuals as a separate literary genre unto themselves in Korean literature.
5 The author Sohye and Court Lady Cho, who wrote the postface to the text, agree that the *Naehun* was a compilation based on these four existing texts. However, I have not been able to locate any text called the *Nujiao*. Having found the five chapters of the original seven chapters of the *Nujie* (Precepts for My Daughters), a conduct manual written by the Han scholar-historian Ban Zhao (48-118), I initially suspected that the *Nujiao* might refer to this text by Ban Zhao. However, during my reading of the *Naehun*, I have discovered that some entries that claim to have come from the *Yŏgyo* are nowhere to be found in Ban Zhao’s *Nujie*. Moreover, given that Sohye states in her preface that all of the four texts are “lengthy and voluminous,” I defer making any judgment. It is possible that “*Nujiao*” refers to a presently obscure text that deals with various teachings for or of women. A thorough intertextual investigation between the four texts and the individual entries in the *Naehun* is still required.
6 Two things should be noted about this text. First, the *Naehun* identifies one of its Chinese source books as the *Lienū* 烈女.
This text refers to the *Lienü zhuan* (列女傳, *K. Yellyo-jôn*) written by Liu Xiang (劉向, B.C. 79-B.C. 8); the *Naehun* includes some fifteen biographies of women and fourteen of these are from Liu Xiang's text. Liu Xiang's *Lienü zhuan* underwent numerous reproductions and its adaptations were included in the Chinese official histories from Later Han and onward in the form of a separate chapter. For details, see Lisa Raphals' *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China* and Sherry J. Mou's *Gentlemen's Prescription for Women's Lives: A Thousand Years of Biographies of Chinese Women*. The original *Lienü zhuan* consists of seven chapters full of sketchy life stories of women who are either famous or infamous for their conduct: its chapter titles are “Muyi 母儀傳” (Motherly Rectitude); “Xianming 賢明傳” (The Capable and Intelligent); “Renchi 仁智傳” (The Benevolent and Sagacious); “Zhenshun 誠順傳” (The Chaste and Obedient); “Jieyi 裂義傳” (The Principled and Righteous); “Biantong 辨通傳” (The Articulate and Eloquent); and “Niebi 僭嬖傳” (The Pernicious and Draped). Whereas the original *Lienü zhuan* contains stories of notorious women for circumspection purposes, the contents changed over time in its adaptations in the official histories as well as in its reproductions during Ming and Qing times, and negative examples were gradually eliminated. Thus, the connotation of the text's title was transformed from biographies of "various" women into those of "virtuous" women. Moreover, the Neo-Confucianism came to thrive in Song and Ming made women’s chastity to their husbands and their in-law families the most prized virtue of all.

According to U K’wae-je, “Yölyo-jôn úi chollae wa suyong yangsang koch’al,” Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan* was first imported in Korea during the Koryó Dynasty. The records in the *Koryósa* (Official History of Koryó) reveal that in 1091 the Chinese court requested from the Koryó court a counter-importation of several texts authored by Liu Xiang. Among the names of the texts appears the “Seven Chapters by Liu Xiang” (*劉向七略*). It is possible that this refers to the *Lienü zhuan* published during the Song dynasty in 1063. (To read critically U K’wae-je’s observation through Raphals’ textual examination of various extant versions of the *Lienü zhuan*, 425-468, this Song dynasty version U K’wae-je refers to appears to be a Yuan dynasty publication of the text but with a preface that is dated in 1036, not 1063.) Also the *Ta’æjo Sillok* (Annals of King T’aegi) records that the Choson court imported 500 additional copies of a Ming dynasty edition of Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan*. This clearly indicates that there had been another importation of the text of the same edition prior to this date. U K’wae-je suspects that these two different editions of the *Lienü zhuan*—imported during Koryó and Choson, respectively—must have been Queen Sohye’s sourcebook. After that, significant adaptations of the text were made during the Choson dynasty. They are the *Samgang haengsilto* 三綱行實圖 (The Actual Conduct of the Three Bonds, Illustrated), published during the reign of Sejong, and Queen Sohye’s *Naehun*. In the *Naehun*, one can speculate that Sohye had read Liu Xiang’s text from reading Sohye’s own preface. In the preface, Sohye itemizes the names of women whose biographies utterly distressed her at the time of her reading. The names include Daji 嘎己 (K. Talgi), Baosi 班似 (K. P’osa), Li ji 鑫姬 (K. Yŏhŏ), and Feiyan 飛燕 (K. P’yŏn); their names are found in the last chapter, “The Pernicious and Draped,” of Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan*. The first translation of the entire *Lienü zhuan* was carried out during the reign of Chungjong. These texts indicate a wide circulation of Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan*.

The second concerns the Chinese character used for *lie* and why Sohye used the character “烈” when Liu Xiang’s original text uses the character without the “fire” radical. Originally, Liu Xiang’s text uses *lienü* 列女 (K. *yellyo*) in the sense of “grouped/various women.” Therefore, the title of Liu Xiang’s text originally means “Biographies of Notable Women,” not “Biographies of Virtuous women.” The tradition of biographies as history begins with the Han historian Sima Qian. Following Siman Qian, Fan Ye 范嶽 (398-445) wrote *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Standard History of the Later Han), introducing the “Biographies of Women” chapter into the realm of official history, whence the beginning of the adaptation of the *Lienü zhuan* into Chinese official histories. Fan Ye’s biographies of women adopted Liu Xiang’s original title, but do not include the examples of negative conduct of women. Mou, in *GPWL* 19, argues that this change “draws the connotation closer to its homophone ‘virtuous women’ and that indeed among various virtuous characteristics in Liu Xiang’s original text, ‘chastity becomes the focal point.’” According to Raphals, 113-138, illustrations in the *Yellyo-chon* also reflect the thematic transformation of the text. For instance, the body size or posture of women whose biographies are being told also reflect a growing emphasis on male domination and women’s submission.

There appears to have been a similar semantic transformation of the term “列女” during Choson Korea. The first version of the *Samgang haengsilto* published under King Sejong included life stories of 110 women, but the number of biographies included in its successive version released during the reign of King Sŏngjong was drastically reduced to 35.

According to Yi Hye-sun, “Yellyo-sang úi chont’ong kwa pyŏnmo,” although the “Yellyo” chapter of the original *Samgang haengsilto* was titled with the character “烈,” one should interpret this character as the original “列” suggested by Liu Xiang, because this text illustrates life stories of praiseworthy mothers as well as girls yet to be married. By contrast, the 35 biographies in the Sanjong version published under King Sŏngjong present only the exemplary conduct of “chaste” wives. Yi argues that the later version presents 35 biographies that emphasize the quality of “chastity” for married women, showing a transformation in the ideology: from one where a woman’s noteworthiness could originally be labeled as “列女,”
of Sagacity; K. Myŏnggam). Queen Sohye’s social status as the mother of the reigning king seems to have helped to secure for the text a respected position; the records of the Chosŏn wangjo sillok

朝鮮王朝實錄 (Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty) indicate that the Naehun went through multiple editions.

The Naehun is the first Chosŏn text authored by a woman; it is also the first text to deal with the issue of gender norms and gender relations according to Neo-Confucian philosophical teachings, the “impulse” for social transformation that the state of Chosŏn had embraced. In approaching this monumental text, then, I pose the following questions: what is the image of the ideal Chosŏn woman mapped out by Queen Sohye?; to what extent does Queen Sohye’s delineation of the virtuous woman resemble the image of docile, subservient Chosŏn women current in modern Korea? Does it perhaps

indicating the variety in the areas where women could earn herself a name, to one where a woman is valued and praised only for her chastity to her husband as in “烈女.” More interestingly, these two characters 列 and 烈 were possibly used interchangeably. The writings of Chosŏn literati Sŏng Hon 成渕 (1535-1598) and Song Ik-p'il 宋翼弼 (1534-1599) provide one such example. On separate occasions, each wrote on his discussion of a certain biography titled the Ên’a-jŏn 銀娥傳, a story about a girl named Ên’a 銀娥. While Sŏng writes that the protagonist Ên’a has read the 烈女傳, Song writes that she has read the 列女傳. Yi proposes a plausible explanation for this apparent discrepancy. According to Raphals in SL and Mou in GPWL, this this very interchangeablity of the “列” with its hononym “烈” in Chinese tradition is found as “chastity” increasingly became the most praised virtue of women. Interestingly, not all the biographies of women in Sohye’s Naehun are excerpts from Liu Xiang’s text. Sohye’s inclusion of a biography of Empress Gao 高皇后 of the Ming dynasty is one such example. See the footnote under “Mingjian” for further explanation.

7 “Mingjian” appears to an abbreviation of the Mingxin bojian 明心寶鑑, compiled by the Ming scholar Fan Liben 范立本 (n.d.) in 1393. According to Ch’oe Hyŏng-uk, “Myŏngsim pogam ŭi yujŏn, p’anbon mit p’yŏnja e taehan koch’al,” 511-527, the first Chosŏn version of the Mingxin bojian was published as a woodblock print in Ch’ŏngju, Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, in 1454. This Ch’ŏngju version is the only one containing the entire contents of the Chinese original written by Fan Liben while other subsequent Mingxin bojian versions produced in Korea are all reduced versions of this original by Fan Liben. It is likely that Sohye consulted this Ch’ŏngju version. Another, an important fact to mention is that there exists a text called the Hubi myŏnggam 后妃明鑑 (Mirror of Sagacity of Famous Empresses and Consorts). This compilation of famous Chinese empresses and imperial consorts was written for admonitory purposes. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to gain access to this text. While more facts about this text will be discussed in the last section of this thesis, for now, I would like to suggest that the existence of this text might shed light on how the biography of Empress Gao of the Ming dynasty—clearly anachronistic if one reminds oneself that Liu Xiang’s original text was written during the Han dynasty—came to be included in the Naehun.

8 There is a far greater amount of information dealing with the Naehun’s republications than with Sohye’s actual involvement in writing the Naehun. For instance, scholars can agree that the Naehun was published in 1475 based solely upon the information revealed in the text’s preface and postface. No entry from 1475 in the Sŏngjong Sillok (Annals of King Sŏngjong) remarks on Sohye’s Naehun projects.

subvert this image?; and to what extent does Queen Sohye’s choice of written language—Classical Chinese—work effectively for her intentions in the composition of the text?

Language and script are significant features of the Naehun because Queen Sohye’s choice of Classical Chinese empowers the text with didacticism and public authority. First, Queen Sohye employed Classical Chinese, a tool rarely adopted by Choson women. Historical documents do reveal the existence of other Korean women equipped with literary talents in Classical Chinese,¹⁰ male scholars who exchanged letters in the Korean vernacular script—’on’gan 訳簡 (letters written in the vernacular script)—with their family members,¹¹ or diplomats in emergency situations who also used the vernacular script as a major means of communication.¹² Nonetheless, it was always hanmun that was affiliated with official and public matters while the vernacular script occupied an appreciated position chiefly in the inner sphere.

The public nature of the Naehun is once again sanctioned on account of Queen Sohye’s social status as the mother of the reigning king. The significance in it is that Queen Sohye possibly saw herself as negotiating a position of authority that could be extended from her household, the inner court, to the entire realm of the state of Choson, if we consider the Neo-Confucian paradigm of viewing the state as an extension of the family, with the king as the father of the state. Such facts, together with the facts that Sohye used texts that were mostly authored by male scholars and that

¹⁰ The examples include several kisaeng women, such as the well-known Hwang Chin’i 黃真伊 (n.d.); the celebrated poet, Hö Nansôrhôn 許蘭雪軒 (1563-1589); the scholar Yunjidang Im-ssi 允摯堂任氏 (1721-1793); and Lady Üiyudang Üiryông Nam-ssi 意幽堂宜寧南氏, who left a collection called the Üiudang Kwanbuk yuram ilgi 意幽堂關北遊覽日記 (Travelogue of a Sightseeing Trip to the Kwanbuk Region)—the author of this text used to be known as Yôn’an Kim-ssi 延安金氏, but has been proved otherwise. See Deuchler, “Propagating Female Virtues in Choson Korea” for several examples of literate women depicted in biographical accounts recorded by their male descendants.

¹¹ For examples of on’gan exchanges in men-women relationships as well as men-men relationships, see Kim II-gûn’s On’gan ui yôn’gu.

¹² Ibid., 46-48. Kim discusses how on’gan was used in solving complicated international matters. For example, when various ethnic groups living on the outskirts of China took Korean diplomats hostage and forced them to write letters of contract promising endowments of land or materials, Koreans would use on’gan instead of the official literary language, Written Chinese, in order to appease Korea’s relationships with these people and to secure Korea’s official ties with the Chinese court.
Sohye, a female compiler, manipulated a male voice in her text, make Sohye’s *Naehun* a site where the public or official and domestic spheres intersect and where the demarcations separating them become blurred. My thesis, then, is that behind the writing of the *Naehun* flows a current of tension between the domestic and public spheres. This tension, I hope to show, challenges the modern-day ubiquitously accepted notion of homogeneity in the image of Chosŏn women as submissive and suppressed and helps us to comprehend the variety, plurality, and dynamic nature of the development of the image of the virtuous woman in the early Chosŏn period. Moreover, this tension is helpful in examining what kind of pedagogical philosophy Queen Sohye desired to propose throughout the *Naehun*.

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\[13\] The authors of the three texts are Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) for the *Xiaoxue*; Fan Liben for the *Mingjian* (1393); and Liu Xiang (77 B.C.-A.D.7) for the *Lienü zhuan*. 
1. Introduction: Why Re-read Sohye’s *Naehun*?

In the past, the voice of Chosŏn women was most often interpreted as dissatisfied and *han*-laden, and their bodies as yoked in “domestic confinement;” this “encaged” image of Chosŏn women needs much exploration and contestation. Indeed, the advent of Neo-Confucianism as a social force during the Chosŏn period brought about a conspicuous reduction in women’s mobility—social as well as physical1—by state-sanctioned propaganda concerning women’s chastity,2 and weakened women’s economic independence by depriving them of property claim rights through the custom of primogeniture.3 Such changes, however, were never abrupt.4 Desires for a radical social transformation from a devout Buddhist state to a staunch Neo-Confucian one required a great amount of time and required constant indoctrination. Elite women, in particular, became the target of the most indoctrination. The modern-day confined image of Chosŏn women seems closely tied to the fervent desire for modernization on the part of nationalists and modernizers; while “new women (*sin’yŏsŏng* 新女性)” were considered the voices fighting for equal treatment of men and women, Chosŏn women were conceived of as relegated to a “sorry plight” inflicted by the patriarchal, *pre-modern* Confucian social structure.5 Such an understanding largely disregards Chosŏn women’s self-awareness, their agency and subjectivity as members of society, and their role in the reproduction of the very Neo-Confucian social norms that spanned a period of some five hundred years. As a result of these two prevalent generalizations about the

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1 Deuchler, “Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea,” 143-144.
2 Ibid., 160-165.
3 For discussions of lowered status of women and deprived socio-economic freedom see Deuchler, *Confucian Transformation of Chosŏn Korea* or “Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea,” 143-144.
4 Mark Peterson, *Korea Adoption and Inheritance: Case Studies in the Creation of a Classic Confucian Society* and Martina Deuchler, “Neo-Confucianism: The Impulse for Social Action in Early Yi Korea,” provide examples of the gradual nature of the genealogical reformation and of the painstaking trials undergone in developing a Chosŏn Neo-Confucian philosophy, respectively.
5 Kim Chin-yŏng’s “Chŏn kŭndae-jŏk yŏsŏng insik kwa kŭ pansŏng” is one such example. Kim frequently uses “chŏn-gŭndae-jŏk yŏsŏng insik” (pre-modern female consciousness) to create an ahistorical summation of pre-modern Korean women and calls for “pansŏng” (women’s self-examination) so that women can learn whether they are making a mistake by participating in the production of the notion of “*hyŏnmoyangch’ŏ*” 贤母良妻 (Wise Mother and Good Wife).
lives of Chosŏn women, today we are often left outside the “inner quarters” of Chosŏn women while their lives and thoughts remain unrepresented or misrepresented, even mystified. In the process, Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism, too, seems to have been conveniently packaged and labeled more or less as the “enemy of Chosŏn women.”

Several scholars in Chinese studies have raised their voices against similar generalizations about pre-modern Chinese women as voiceless victims. Dorothy Ko, in her discovery of Chinese intellectual females whose erudition often led to their employment as live-in tutors in the imperial palace or in elite households, calls for a rethinking of the lives of pre-modern Chinese women. Ko draws attention to the anti-tradition propaganda of the May Fourth Movement and considers the passive and subservient image of pre-modern Chinese women a by-product of this political movement. She warns against such an “ahistorical” approach to the understanding of pre-modern Chinese women. Patricia Ebrey asserts that by emphasizing women’s victimization, one would further obscure what women were able to accomplish. She examines an apparent deterioration of the status of women during Song times (960-1279) and a strong property rights possessed by women. By focusing on women and marriage during the Song dynasty, she shows that women actively participated in the changes concerning the formation of male-female relationship and “female attractiveness” in their times. Some reveal that a woman “inside” could be influential in the “outside” through her personal reputation for learning or virtue; through the reputations of her daughters as wives and daughters-in-law, and through the successes of her sons.

Given the aforementioned complexities in Korea’s Confucianization process and the hugely influential anti-traditional sentiment of modernists, the question arises as to how Chosŏn

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6 Dorothy Ko, Teachers of the Inner chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China.
7 Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Inner Quarters, 1-20.
8 Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng, eds., Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History, 2.
women themselves conceived of the emerging notions of the separation of men and women, and of the concepts of the inner and outer spheres during the early Chosŏn period.

Herein lies the potential significance of Queen Sohye’s *Naehun* as Chosŏn Korea’s very first Neo-Confucian philosophical text dealing with the need to position individuals in different spheres according to one’s gender.

Scholars of the *Naehun* in the past have agreed on reading the text as Queen Sohye’s attempt at imposing the notion of women’s complete submission to men by selecting certain portions from Chinese source texts Sohye referred to those dealing with male dominance and strict patriarchal codes. \(^9\) As a result, not much is known as to the kind of education Queen Sohye professed and how her pedagogical philosophy is applied throughout the *Naehun*. However, I propose here that such readings fail to appreciate the overall theme of Queen Sohye’s text. I, therefore, intend to depart from these conventional approaches and read Sohye’s *Naehun* in the hopes of a close encounter with and recovery of Sohye’s own voice.

My reading of the *Naehun* is indebted to previous scholarship, in particular, that of de Bary, who highlights the text’s emphasis on the “instructor motif” in women as well as its underlying Neo-Confucian principle of “sagehood for all humankind”; \(^10\) John Duncan analyses Queen Sohye via Bourdieu’s perspectives of symbolic power and utilization of language as capital and reveals Queen Sohye to be a linguistically erudite as well as a politically-minded individual of high rank who reasons for the importance of education for women through her text and argues for a space “in which women could exercise some agency within the Confucian-constructed gender norms” during the time of Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency; finally, Ch’oe Yŏn-mi investigates various xylograph versions of the *Naehun*, and situates the *Naehun* with various

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\(^9\) Examples of scholars who attempted to discuss the contents of Sohye’s *Naehun* in this way are discussed in the next section.

\(^10\) Yongho Ch’oe et al., eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition—Volume Two: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, 46.
Buddhist sutra publications during the reign of Sejo and Sŏngjong (Sohye’s father-in-law and son, respectively) and introduces Sohye as a devout Buddhist and politically active Buddhist lobbyist.¹¹

As significant as these findings are, considerably little discussion has been directed to Sohye’s role as a compiler and editor of the four texts she used for her own Naehun; therefore, I would argue that her compilation process itself plays a role in her argumentation and exposition. As I heed Sohye’s textual authority, my reading of the Naehun detects an underlying theme that is uniquely “Sohye,” reflecting her beliefs, and her understanding about the environment—particularly the Confucian environment—and the social station and situation to which she belonged at the time of her writing. I believe that through her text Sohye makes a statement about Neo-Confucian philosophy and its teaching of gender roles and gender relations from both her position as royal mother and as someone who commanded a profound knowledge of hanmun and of Neo-Confucian philosophy. In doing so, I heed De Bary’s notion of the universality of Neo-Confucian education.¹²

Moreover, behind the labeling of the Naehun as a morality manual that deals with the theme of the education for women specifically targeting women there appears to lurk a formulaic reading of the text under the influence of prevalent modern images of the “confined, suppressed” lives of Chosŏn women and of the notions that vernacular translation texts (ŏnhae) were originally meant to be read by people without sufficient knowledge of Classical Chinese. Such an understanding has led to the dead-end of generating a formulaic impression of the Naehun, one that undermines the philosophical undercurrents and unmistakably subversive notion of a “blurred” demarcation of the inner and the outer spheres apparent throughout the text. Therefore,

¹¹ In the 23rd year of King Sŏngjong, Sohye, together with the wife of deceased King Yejong, petitioned for the abolition of the law prohibiting commoners from becoming Buddhist monks.
¹² Ebrey voices a similar opinion when she remarks in The Inner Quarters, 4, that Confucian scholar such as Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi "took increasing interest in building a more ideal society from the bottom up."
it seems necessary to contextualize the coming of the *Naehun* within the two situations of (i) Chosŏn’s attempt to contrive its own script and (ii) King Sejong and Sejo’s interest in the proper education of future monarchs of the Yi dynasty. I discuss some of the core issues involved in the invention of the *hunmin chŏng’ŭm* 訓民正音 (Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People), or the native Korean script, and propose that by focusing on King Sejong’s (1397-1450; r. 1418-50) concerns about students of Neo-Confucianism and certain scholars’ hostile attitude toward the invention of the new script, one can discover that Sohye’s pedagogical values correspond to Sejong’s concern for the people of Chosŏn and for their education.

I then move onto to discuss an intertextual analysis of Sohye’s *Naehun* and Ban Zhao’s¹³ *Nüjie* (Precepts for My Daughters). These two texts show striking textual as well as cultural parallels in that both texts call for a kind of social reform that asserts the importance of providing education for women. However, as we will discover, these two texts differ considerably in their proposed audience, overall themes, portrayals of virtuous women, and degrees of authority appearing throughout the text. I find the source of Sohye’s authority in not only in her social position but also in her pedagogical stance, focusing on the text’s Neo-Confucian philosophical elements. Finally, I show how Sohye’s authoritative voice constitutes a reconciliation device resolving the tension generated by the blurred demarcations between the inner and the outer spheres.

In the last section of this thesis, I provide a possible interpretation of Sohye’s understanding of Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency. I argue that the contemporary Chosŏn political situation during the time of the first female regency by Queen Chŏnghŭi has close ties with the amount of authority Sohye was able to project. Furthermore, whereas Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency has been best depicted as the backdrop to the coming of the *Naehun*, Queen Chŏnghŭi’s political

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¹³ Ban Zhao (48-118).
moves as regent and her role as matriarch of the Yi dynasty, in effect, directly influenced Sohye's Naehun.
2. Bibliographical Survey of Previous Scholarship of the Naehun

Ever since Kim Chi-yong’s “About the Naehun” (Naehun-go), several scholars of Korean language have taken an interest in examining the various linguistic features of the Naehun. Several others have read the Naehun from educational and sociological perspectives focusing on Chosŏn’s education of Neo-Confucian gender roles. While earlier discussions of the Naehun tend to focus largely on the text’s linguistic and physical features in order to determine accurate dates for the various xylograph versions of the text, subsequent discussions that emerge mainly from the 21st century offer more holistic and interdisciplinary approaches by placing the contents of the text and its writer, Queen Sohye, in the particular historical context of the reign of King Sŏngjong. Therefore, I dedicate this section to a survey of the existing research on the Naehun so as to introduce and summarize several essential discussions of the text and to facilitate further discussion in the sections to come. The contents of this section will serve as a helpful introduction to how the prevailing understandings of the Naehun’s contents have been formed.

Kim Chi-yong’s Naehun-go (An examination of the Naehun)\textsuperscript{14} of 1969 is the first comprehensive discussion of the text. In it, Kim Chi-yong examines a xylograph version of the Naehun belonging to the Japanese Hōsa Library (J. Hosa Bunko蓬左文庫) in Tokyo. While Kim Chi-yong’s interpretation of the text offers bibliographical information, historical background, and a cross-cultural comparison of the Naehun with the Ming dynasty text by the same name in Chinese, Neixun (Sohye’s Neixun and the Ming Neixun share the same Chinese characters in their titles) his ultimate interests seem to lie in extrapolating the date of publication of the particular xylograph version of the text he examined.

\textsuperscript{14} Kim Chi-yong, Naehun-go.
Kim relies upon various historical sources such as the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty), *Yŏllyo sil kisul* 燃藜室記述 (Yŏllyo's Records of History),\footnote{This history text authored by 燃藜室李英録 Yŏllyo Yì Kŭng-ik (1768-1840) differs from the *Annals* because it describes major events in Chosŏn history selected by the author with heavy reliance on individual accounts, rather than record historical events in a chronological fashion.} and *Kwanghaegun Ilgi* (Daily Records of Prince Kwanghae) and concludes that the *Naehun* underwent at least seven republications including the original version in 1475. The seven presumed xylograph versions are as follows.

1. Sŏnghwa 成化 (C. Chenghua) in 1475 (Sŏnjong 6)
2. Kajŏng 嘉靖 (C. Jiajing) in 1522 (Chungjong 中宗 17)\footnote{1488-1544; r. 1506-1544.}
3. Mannyaŏk 萬曆 (C. Wali) in the fourth month of 1537 (Sŏnjo 宣祖 6)\footnote{1552-1608; r. 1567-1608.}
4. Pre-Imjin War in the sixth month of 1537 (Sŏnjo 6)
5. Mannyaŏk kong-ja in 1622 (Kwanghae 光海君 3)\footnote{1575-1641; r. 1608-1623.}
6. Sunch'i 順治 (C., Shunzhi) in 1656 (Hyojong 孝宗 7)\footnote{1619-1696; r. 1649-1659.}
7. Ŭje Naehun 御製內訓 in 1736 (Yŏngjo 英祖 12)\footnote{1694-1776; r. 1724-1776.}

After a screening process employing several historical demarcators, Kim concludes that the Hŏsa Library version is the first xylograph version of the *Naehun*. Kim's examination begins from his conviction that there was a publication of the *Naehun* in 1475 upon Sohye's completion of the text. First, this version contains linguistic features of typical fifteenth-century Korean language. Second, Sohye's social position as the mother of the reigning king must have compelled an immediate publication of the text. Third, an entry in the *Chungjong sillok* (Annals of King Chungjong) reveals that the publication during the reign of Chungjung was based upon a copy of the pre-existing *Naehun*, which had been preserved in the royal library.\footnote{Kim Chi-yong, *Naehun-go*, 5.} Thus, with these thoughts on mind, he eliminates unsuitable candidates among the seven. His screening is as follows. First, noting the presence of tone dots (*panggiŏm* 偏點) in the Hŏsa Library xylograph
version, he recalls that tone dots disappeared in post-Imjin 壬辰 War (1592-1598) texts. Thus, he
presumes that the Hŏsa library version was published before the Japanese invasions. Second, an
entry in the Sŏnjo Sillok (Annals of King Sŏnjo) in the fourth month of 1537 (Sŏnjo 6) records a
conversation between the king and Yu Hui-ch’ün 柳希春 (1513-1577), the head of the printing
organ (Kyosŏgwan 校書館), that one of the characters in the previously released Naehun
contains a “miscarved” character—where the character “kong 公” was the character “pun 分.”
Using this correction as his next pointer, Kim is convinced that the Hŏsa Library version of the
Naehun could be either the original of 1475 or the 2nd republication of 1522. Finally, Kim
considers the fact that both Queen Sohye’s preface and in Court Lady Cho’s (Sang’ŭi Cho-ssi 尚妓 奕 姜氏) postface clarify the completion of the text as the year 1475 a proof that the Hŏsa
Library Naehun was a xylographic version of the original Naehun of 1475.

Some of Kim Chi-yong’s verdicts on the dates of the various xylograph versions of the
Naehun including the Hŏsa Library version he examined have been proven erroneous by later
scholarship. In fact, there were several issues Kim Chi-yong himself found rather perplexing;22
(i) the Hŏsa Library xylograph version is comprised of 3 fascicles and 4 volumes23 (3巻 4冊)
while all the other xylograph versions he has encountered are of 3 fascicles and 3 volumes (3巻
3冊) and (ii) this same version contains a seal of the royal signet (naesa 内賜) indicating King
Sŏnjo’s endowment of this text in 1573 to a certain subject, who is revealed to be Sim Chung-
gyŏm 沈忠謙 (1545-1594), according to Kim’s consultations of the Sŏnjo Sillok. Sim Chung-
gyŏm had a close connection with the royal family in that he was a brother of Queen Insun
(1532-1575), the wife of Myŏngjong (1534-1567; r. 1545-1567). Sim had been in attendance on
King Sŏnjo when he took refuge outside the capital during the Imjin Wars. These doubts

22 Ibid., 3.
23 The second fascicle is divided into two, with the chapter “Husband and Wife” split into sang 上 and ha 下 sections.
notwithstanding, historical facts about Sim lead Kim Chi-yong to conclude that the 1475 xylograph version of the *Naehun* was somehow taken possession of by the Japanese and that since then this version has been preserved in Japan’s Hōsa Library, one of the private libraries of the descendents of Tokugawa Ieyasu (德川家康 1542-1616), the successor of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉 1536-1598).24

Yi Chông-huí25 and Chông Yong-su,26 in each of their examinations of the Hōsa Library xylograph version of the *Naehun*, leave King Chi-yong’s verdicts uncontested; both of them accept the Hōsa Library version as the original 1475 xylograph version of the *Naehun*.

Hô Ung’s brief introduction to a book titled *Naehun Yōsasō* (The Instructions for the Inner Sphere and the Four Books for Women) in 1973,27 however, disagrees with Kim Chi-yong’s extrapolation of the Hōsa Library version of the *Naehun*. As he compares this version with another version of the *Naehun* preserved at Seoul National University’s Kyujanggak 奎章閣 Archives, he argues that the former was printed during the reign of King Chungjong (1506-1544). Furthermore, Hô denies the possibility of the existence of a 1475 version of the *Naehun* for the reason that no historical accounts support the release of the *Naehun* in 1475.28

Predating Chông Yong-su and Hô Ung, An Pyông-huí presents a new perspective on the Hōsa Library version of the *Naehun*.29 An Pyông-huí agrees with Kim Chi-yong that this version does indeed predate the *Imjin* Wars; however, he corrects Kim by arguing that this version was published under King Sŏnjo and not under Sŏngjong or Chungjong. According to An, there is no precedent for a naesa signet to bear a discrepancy as great as one century, contrary to what Kim Chi-yong reasoned in his paper. Furthermore, he observes that a different version at the

26 Chông Yong-su, “*Naehun ūi ūm’un koch’al*,” 41-56.
27 *Naehun Yōsasō*, 3-8.
28 Ibid., 6.
Kyujanggak contains various linguistic features that predate those found in the Hosa Library version.

In 1987, Yi Ki-mun makes several significant contributions. Yi confirms An Pyong-hui’s discussion by saying that the Hosa Library version was published during the reign of King Sonjo. Yi introduces another xylograph version of the Naehun, one that has never been discussed or reproduced because it was preserved in the private collection of O Su-yol. This version retains only the first volume and the rest of the text is missing. Finally, Yi compares this O Su-yol version with both the Kyujanggak version introduced by Hø Ung and the Hosa Library version. Yi’s conclusions are that the O Su-yol version retains the oldest Korean linguistic forms and thus predates the other two versions. Yi also observes that the Kyujanggak version and the Hosa Library version seem to have been modeled after yet another, as-yet-unknown version. Yi closes his article by expressing his ambition to track down the version-potentially-to-be-discovered and regrets the partial loss of the O Su-yol version.

In 2000, Ch’oe Yön-mi brings a conclusive end to some of the issues dealt with in previous scholarship. Her conclusions are as follows. First, no historical accounts support the publication of the Naehun in 1475. Second, Ch’oe claims that despite the belief held by all previous scholars, there was never a republication of the Naehun during the reign of King Chungjong. According to Ch’oe, many scholars have mistaken the phrase “Hwanghu Naehun (皇后內訓)” (Empress’ Naehun) for Queen Sohye’s Naehun when the phrase in fact refers to the Ming Neixun written by Empress Renxiao 仁孝. Third, Ch’oe offers further explanations for the Hosa Library version by drawing more Naehun-related entries from the Sonjo sillok 宣祖實錄 (Annals of King Sonjo) and arguing that one entry reveals an important conversation between

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30 Yi Ki-mun, “Naehun e taehayŏ,” 1-17.
King Sŏnjo and Yu Hŭi-ch’un. In this conversation, Yu Hŭi-ch’un suggests that the second volume of the existing *Naehun* should be split into two due to its bulkiness. Ch’oe reasons that Yu was appointed as head of the publishing organ only for a period of some months—from the 1st day of the 1st month of 1573 until the 26th day of the 2nd month of the same year. Thus, it would only make sense that any versions of the *Naehun* published before these dates in 1573 were in the form of 3 fascicles and 3 volumes. This solution answers all the questions Kim Chi-yong raised and also confirms all the more that the Hŏsa Library version was published during the reign of King Sŏnjo (1567-1608).

Having presented a bibliographical survey of previous scholarship and the attempts to extrapolate the dates of publication of the various xylograph versions of Queen Sohye’s *Naehun*, I now discuss interpretations that have been proposed as to the actual contents of the text. In the following paragraphs, I aim to discuss the formation of a certain *pattern* that has been shaping ways of understanding Queen Sohye’s *Naehun*, one that ultimately projects a lopsided impression of the text, with its excessive emphasis on those contents of the *Naehun* that most obviously support the notion of women’s absolute submission to patriarchal authority. I argue the over-emphasis on the aforementioned aspect of the *Naehun* has overshadowed a variety of insightful opinions that have been voiced and ultimately has generated a formulatic reading of the text, one that not only misrepresents Queen Sohye’s intention of writing the *Naehun* in the first place but also undermines the significance that the *Naehun* bears in terms of Chosŏn society in general and of the royal family of the Chosŏn period in particular. See the following discussions for a survey of previous scholarship on the actual contents of the *Naehun* starting from Kim Chi-yong in 1969 until the most scholarly discussion, Martina Deuchler in 2003. (The

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32 It appears that the entry that Ch’oe Yŏn-mi uses for her claim is the same entry referred to by Kim Chi-yong in his introduction of a conversation between Sŏnjo and Yu Hŭi-ch’un.
actual contents of the \textit{Naehun} and Queen Sohye's own words in the preface of the text will be dealt with in later sections.)

Kim Chi-yong's \textit{Naehun-go} begins with diverse aspects of the \textit{Naehun}.\footnote{33} Kim understands the publication of Queen Sohye's \textit{Naehun} as a part of the Chosŏn state's Confucianization propaganda. Kim considers the contents of the \textit{Naehun} to epitomize of Sohye's views on morality, practical principles, and the ideal image of a virtuous woman.\footnote{34} In the latter part of this book, Kim states that Sohye instructs and "inflicts or imposes" (\textit{kang yo})\footnote{35} her moral standards upon her intended readers—"\textit{kungjung pibin kwa punyŏja} (queens and royal consorts and housewives)—by citing the "study of sages" (\textit{sŏnghak}) and the "sages' admonitions on strategems for rulers" (\textit{sŏng'innohun}). Interestingly, Kim concludes his remarks by discussing the composition of the \textit{Naehun}\footnote{36} and stating that Sohye extracted various portions from four existing Chinese texts "because these texts are too voluminous and thus are not appropriate for a novice learner (\textit{ch'ohaka})"\footnote{37} (my emphasis added). At the end of his discussion Kim Chi-yong makes it clear that he understands Queen Sohye's intended audience to be a female audience;\footnote{38} he concludes that the lessons of the \textit{Naehun} as a discussion of the ideal

\footnote{33} On page 4, Kim Chi-yong evaluates the \textit{Naehun} as a historical source for the lives of contemporary Chosŏn women. This statement is misleading. Being a compilation of four pre-existing texts from China and from much older times than contemporary Chosŏn, the \textit{Naehun} is hardly suitable as a source for the cultural customs of the lives of 15th-century Chosŏn women.

\footnote{34} Ibid., 7. Kim Chi-yong states that Queen Sohye "weaved"(\textit{ch'oljip}) into the text her own admonitions (\textit{kyohun}) as a part of her compilation. John Duncan, too, mentions this issue in "The \textit{Naehun} and the Politics of Gender in the Fifteenth-Century Korea," 29. However, so far as my own reading is concerned, there is no clear indication in the texts I have examined—the two most commonly discussed versions, the Hosa Library version and the Kyujanggak version discussed by Hŏ Ung in his \textit{Naehun Yŏsaso} and by Yi Ki-mun in his "\textit{Naehun e taehayŏ},"—that particular entries or portions of certain entries are Sohye's own words. My observation is not intended in any way to undermine Sohye's textual authority as editor but to emphasize that the seven chapters of the \textit{Naehun} appear to be a compilation from four Chinese texts, without Sohye's own words. A thorough intertextual matching is necessary to decide this issue.

\footnote{37} Ibid., 1. Kim Chi-yong, "\textit{Naehun e pich'wŏjn Yijo yŏin túl úi saenghwa saenggalsang}," 334-366. Kim quotes four passages to support this argument. One comes from Sohye's preface in which she compares men (\textit{namja}) and women (\textit{yŏja})
image of a virtuous woman for Sohye.\(^{39}\) This ideal woman is a woman who follows the Four Kinds of Conduct,\(^{40}\) who is essentially a filial daughter-in-law, a wife who is respectful, submissive, tolerant, and subservient, and finally a mother who is sagacious, authoritative, righteous, and loving all at the same time.

Such a conclusion seems to have been influenced by various historical accounts that portray Sohye as example of the aforementioned aspects of an ideal woman. To borrow Kim Chi-yong’s own words,\(^{41}\) Queen Sohye was the “paragon of a well-born woman of the Chosŏn period”; she was brought up under strictly Confucian regulations that were into practice in the way she was educated. She possessed a quiet disposition yet at the same time was stringent. She was a wife as virtuous as Tairen and Taisi,\(^{42}\) a mother equipped with uprightness as great as that of Mencius’ Mother, and a recognized filial daughter-in-law. Sohye was a strict instructress to queens and consorts and royal descendents.\(^{43}\) These depictions lead Kim Chi-yong to the conclusion that Sohye accepted the notion of “Men are to be respected, women lowered” \((Namjon'yôbi 男尊女卑)\) unquestioningly, and was “content with the idea of women’s complete subsordination [to men].”\(^{44}\) Kim further goes on to state that, despite this submissive attitude, Sohye argued for education for women because she “lamented women’s ignorance.”

I would like to point out that although Kim Chi-yong brings up the idea of educating women in the context of the teachings of the Confucian sages, he defines Sohye’s pedagogical stance as one that is closer to passive learning, a male-centered “indoctrination” of women with the concept of women’s absolute subordination to men.

\(^{39}\) Kim Chiyong, Naehun-go, 7-8.
\(^{40}\) This “Four Kinds of Conduct” refers to the Four Wifely Virtues prescribed by Ban Zhao.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 5.
\(^{42}\) Tairen 太任 (K. T'aeim) and Taisi 太妣 (K. Taesa) are two famous mothers of sage kings of the state of Zhou. More discussion can be found later in this thesis.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 5.
\(^{44}\) As for the Korean original for “content,” Kim Chi-yong uses the expression “manjok.”
Virtually all scholarly and non-scholarly discussions of the Naehun repeat Kim’s verdicts. Hô Ung presents a somewhat divergent view in that he states that Sohye’s intention was to provide a text that offered women the “way of the sages” and that for that reason the Naehun was the most authoritative work of conduct literature in contemporary Chosôn Korea. Yet, much like Kim Chi-yong, Hô adds that Sohye’s four Chinese source texts were chosen due to their “appropriateness in the education of women.” Yi Ch’ông-hûi and Chông Yong-su, too, present similar ideas.

Ch’oe Yôn-mi and Duncan show a somewhat neutral stance in that Ch’oe includes “wangjok (王族 royal family members)” as Sohye’s intended audience and Duncan states that the Naehun contains arguments for “education for women,” without making a specific comment on the issue of the text’s intended audience.

De Bary, like Ch’oe and Duncan, does not directly contest prior conclusions as to the Naehun’s intended audience, but, more significantly, superimposes the idea that Sohye’s Naehun is predicated on one basic Neo-Confucian principle—“the universality of the Heaven-bestowed moral nature in all humankind, male and female; the capability of all for cultivating this nature to achieve sageliness; and the necessity of education for women to achieve this goal”—and that the Naehun stresses the “key role of women as advisers to rulers and husbands.” De Bary’s

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45 Naehun Yôsasô, 4.
46 Ibid., 3.
47 Yi Ch’ông-hûi, “Naehun sogo: p’yogigip-bop ûl chungsim úro,” 77-78. In this paper, Yi Ch’ông-hûi, as he confesses, paraphrases Kim Chi-yong’s conclusions that the Naehun’s intended audience was a female audience and that Sohye’s editorial attempt was to reduce the weightiness of the four Chinese texts.
48 Chông Yong-su, “Naehun ùl úm’un koch’al,” 41. Chông Yong-su understands Queen Sohye’s Naehun as the “only (juithan)” conduct text.
49 Perhaps these two scholars observed some problematic aspects in the existing scholarship’s understanding of the Naehun’s intended audience; however, by the same token, neither of them questions Kim Chi-yong and others’ judgments on the text’s intended audience.
50 Ch’oe Yongho et al., eds., Sources of Korean Tradition, 46. In this book, de Bary makes this statement as he compares Sohye’s Naehun with the Ming Neixun. The Neixun was released in 1407, but the preface to the text reveals that it was completed in the fifteenth day of the first month of the year 1405.
statement, I argue, is the product of a close—closer than almost all other previous discussions—and, as he claims, a “dispassionate” reading of the text.

De Bary’s findings notwithstanding, they do not seem to have attracted much scholarly attention. Deuchler’s examination of the Naehun repeats Kim Chi-yong’s verdicts on the text’s overall theme. According to Deuchler, Queen Sohye wrote the Naehun because “she deplored the inferior natural qualities of women” (my emphasis added) and because “education for women was imperative for rectifying the womanly nature and bringing it in line with the moral exigencies of a Confucian society” (my emphasis added). The female nature to be “rectifed” in Deuchler’s interpretation was based on women’s innate deficiency, and Deuchler claims that “morality literature” like the Naehun was “written based on the conviction that even women could be transformed into moral beings” (my emphasis added). The admonitions in the text are analyzed by Deuchler as a depiction of the dutiful life of a young girl growing up in her natal home and the supportive and devoted role of a married woman in her husband’s family. The biographies in the text highlight “how human impulses and emotions could be transformed into disciplined disposition of character sustaining behavior appropriate to Confucian social values.” In this analysis, education is considered “empowerment” for women and woman’s “goodness” generated by education can “influence, beyond the domestic realm, the moral condition of public life.” Yet, Sohye’s ultimate intention in writing the Naehun remained as her wish that education of women prepare women “for their exacting roles as daughters-in-law, wives, and mothers.”

What is interesting about Deuchler’s discussion is that she states that the Naehun’s vernacular translation (オンヘ 諥解) section was added “in order to facilitate comprehension”; in

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51 Deuchler, “Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea,” 142-169.
52 Ibid., 147.
53 Ibid., 148.
54 Ibid., 148.
two pages later she states, “for women who were unable to read the Chinese originals, the persual of these manuals (referring to conduct literature) was facilitated by vernacular versions.” Whether Deuchler categorizes the Naehun’s vernacular translation as one of these vernacular versions produced in order to facilitate comprehension by a reader within sufficient knowledge of Classical Chinese is unclear; what is notable is that the above statement is closely related to prevailing understandings of the Naehun, which, I argue, have generated a rather formulaic reading of the text.

The prevailing understandings of the Naehun, then, can be summarized as follows; the facts that Naehun was written by Queen Sohye, a queen known for her strictures and high standards in palace decorum based on Confucian education, and that Sohye professes the importance of education for women, signify that the Naehun’s main theme is inculcation of Chosŏn women with morality education based on Confucian gender norms. That the Naehun contains vernacular translation sections accompanying the original texts in Classical Chinese is interpreted as reflecting that Sohye intended people who had little or no knowledge of Classical Chinese as her primary target audience. These notions, combined with the popular modern understanding of the lives of Chosŏn women as suppressed victims under Chosŏn patriarchal Neo-Confucianism, have resulted in a prejudgment of the Naehun as a text written exclusively for a female audience and whose overall theme is the teaching of gender norms imbued with the idea of male dominance over women and submission of women to men. In short, the issues concerning Naehun’s inclusion of women’s intellectual virtue or teaching women the “way of the sages” did not take root and was never explored further. Rather, the Naehun has been understood as conduct literature specifically targeted at a female audience whose innate qualities

55 Ibid., 149.
have to be either rectified or improved in order for women to become filial daughters-in-law, virtuous wives, and wise mothers.

Having diagnosed current understandings and problems crucial to an accurate understanding of the Naehun, I now intend to dismantle the prevailing ideas about the Naehun. As the first task, I discuss the issue of the Naehun's language, particularly the presence of önhae vernacular translations in it.
3. A New Understanding of the *Naehun*'s Vernacular Translations and the Coming of the *Naehun*

In this section, I offer a new understanding of the three literary languages in the *Naehun*—Classical Chinese, or *hanmun*; *kugyŏl* (whose definition follows shortly); and the *hunmin ch'ŏng 'um* 訓民正音 (Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People; hereafter cited as *HC*) or the Korean vernacular script. I discuss these three literary codes and the multi-facetedness of the *Naehun*'s vernacular translation section. My goal is to show how Queen Sohye manipulated these literary codes for the purposes of not only self-actualization and producing a text of her own, but also of sharing in the articulation of the dynastic vision of a cultural commitment to Neo-Confucianism.

As I have discussed in the previous section, some popular modern ideas about the HC have become a stumbling block, preventing modern readers from reading the *Naehun*’s various subversive elements in terms of the text’s intended audience and the variety of its portrayals of virtuous women. These popular ideas emphasize the inclusion of the vernacular translations in the *Naehun* as simply a tool to facilitate comprehension for a reader who lacks sufficient knowledge of Classical Chinese. Thus, first of all, I examine Sohye’s own voice as revealed in the preface and the contents of the text regarding her intended audience. If we accept contemporary Chosŏn women’s lack of sufficient knowledge of Classical Chinese and to apply uncritically this aforementioned idea, this can only lead to the conclusion that while Sohye may

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56 My intention is far from debunking this established notion. In the early sixteenth century, we see that the inclusion of an *onhae* along with a *hanmun* original was indeed due to the authors’ concern for the ignorant. Ch’oe Se-jin’s 崔世珍 (?-1542) *Hunmong chahoe* 訓蒙字會 (1527; Collection of Characters for Training the Unenlightened) is one such example. See Ledyard’s PhD dissertation, *The Korean Language Reform of 1446*, 382, for a discussion of Ch’oe Sejin’s achievements and contributions regarding dissemination of the vernacular script. Yi Ki-mun’s doctoral thesis shed light on a text called the *Ch’ohak chahoe* 初學字會 (Collection of Characters for Elementary Learning), a textbook for *hanja* education, which was, according to the *Annals of King Sejong*, fixed with a vernacular translation during the reign of King Sejong. Yi Ki-mun observes that the original *Ch’ohak chahoe* was composed in *hanmun* only and may have been a direct predecessor of Ch’oe Sejin’s *Hunmong chahoe*. *Ch’ohak chahoe* is not extant and remains obscure in Korean academia. The first two characters of the titles of these two texts—*hunmong* (Instructing the Ignorant) and *ch’ohak* (Entry-level Learners), respectively—seem to indicate the difference in each text’s intended audience.
have succeeded in displaying her prowess and intellect as an individual, she failed to achieve her
goal as a writer by deliberately and quite unwisely making herself inaccessible to her own
intended audience group. I also suspect that this idea is not irrelevant to the modern-day
valorization of King Sejong and his achievement of the invention and the promulgation of the
vernacular script. Most often, the phrase “hunmin 訓民” has been understood as Sejong’s desire
to provide commoners, who had little or no knowledge of Classical Chinese and thus lacked an
instrument with which to express their thoughts in writing, with a learner-friendly, phonographic
vernacular writing system. While such an understanding of the nature of the word “min 民”
cannot be entirely contested, one would nonetheless be considerably mistaken if one considered
such as the only function expected from the new script. As I will discuss in the following
paragraphs, King Sejong and his palace-based pro-HC faction were much more concerned with
providing an accurate transcription tool for Classical Chinese for scholars, students, and various
other people in the most official domains where Classical Chinese and other Chinese character-
based written codes were the major means of communication. In order to emphasize the
inclusive nature of term “hunmin”—which concerns all classes of people in society—I discuss
the Confucian elites’ language planning involving the famous controversy over the invention of
the vernacular script between King Sejong and his pro-HC faction and the anti-HC faction
headed by Ch’oe Mal-li 崔萬理 (n.d.-1445). In doing so, I apply the fairly recent language
ecology perspective in order to explain the extreme anxiety expressed by the anti-HC faction.

My chief intention is to contextualize the nature of the deployment of the vernacular
script included in the Naehun and to argue that, given that the primary role of the attached

57 The layout of the Samgang haengsilto (The Actual Conduct of the Three Bonds, Illustrated) is noteworthy. The
fact that the intended audience of this text explicitly includes the “ignorant” may have been the reason for presenting
each entry with the onhae first, followed by its hanmun original. This text was originally published in 1434 by King
Sejong and translated into the Korean vernacular script in 1481 during the reign of Sŏngjong, although the
vernacular translation project is known to have begun already during the reign of King Sejong. For this, see An
Pyŏng-huí, Kug’ŏsa yŏng’gu charyo, 147-165.
vernacular translations was first to elucidate and clarify the meanings of the *hanmun* original, one should also read the *Naehun* as a text that was meant to be read by people who *already* had considerable knowledge in Classical Chinese—just as Sejong and Sejo intended as they worked on vernacular translations of Confucian texts. Such an approach also allows us to consider Sohye and her text in a demythologized, more impartial environment so as to decode the subversive elements so obviously present in the text, and possibly to delineate what drove Sohye to write the *Naehun* in the first place. Then I discuss how Sejong desired to materialize his vision for the new script in the form of vernacular translations of the Confucian Classics. I believe these issues surrounding other dynastic projects concerning the vernacular script influenced Sohye’s *Naehun* and argue that Sohye must have shared Sejong’s vision—a vision that Sejo, Sohye’s father-in-law, was the first to inherit.

3.1. Sohye’s Intended Audience: What does the *Naehun* tell us?

Starting with Kim Chi-yong and continuing until some of the most recent discussions of the text, scholars have generally agreed that the *Naehun* was intended for women of various social standings (“*wangsil pibin* 王室妃嬪” and *pu’nyô 婦女*). This assumption seems to have originated mostly from statements found in the *Naehun*’s postface written by a court lady known as Court Lady Cho 侍儀曹氏, and perhaps from the text’s title, which includes the character “*nae 内* (C. *nei*)” representing the “inner sphere.” In the following paragraphs, I read

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58 I correct Duncan’s understanding of Lady Cho’s status from “consort” to a female court official. *Sang ŭi* or *sanggung* 侍儀/侍宮 refers to a rank-five female official in the palace. Rank-five female officials were never royal consorts, but immediate subordinates of royal consorts. Sin Myŏng-ho, *Chosŏn wangsil ŭi ürye wa saenghwal: kungjung munhwâ*, 172-3, offers a sketchy description of the lives of female court officials. Lady Cho is also known to have participated in some of the vernacular translation editions of Buddhist sutras. She participated in the publication of volumes 5 through 7 of the *Myohŏp yŏnhwagyoong* 妙法蓮華經 (Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Marvelous Law; *Tripitaka Sutrapitaka Saddharmapundarika Sutra*), according to the *palmun* 掌文 (postface) to this sutra. I have found the information about the connection between Lady Cho and this sutra from a Google.com search under a combination of “*sangŭi* + chossi + pulgyŏng + Chŏnghŭi.” The URL is “http://gcp.go.kr/sanchek/bomul/959.htm.”
closely both Lady Cho’s postface and Queen Sohye’s preface in order to argue that it is possible that the intended audience of the Naehun is not gender-specific and goes beyond a female audience. The relevant statements by Court Lady Cho are as follows.

Therefore, how can the makings of this book be only for the precious royal progeny? This [text] should reach to the unlearned commoner housewives, and weaving girls [so that] during their idle moments they might memorize it in the morning and recite it in the evening, reflecting on its meanings in their minds. Then they will gradually become knowledgeable about excelling in household management. It (Naehun) cannot be of little help in the edification of public morals.59

These sentences sound tempting enough to compel one to agree on the “restricted” female audience. While I acknowledge previous discussions are not entirely impossible, it should be noted that this particular passage of Lady Cho’s postface needs to be read within its larger context. Here is the passage in which the above excerpt is embedded:

I venture to observe that many were the famous sagacious queens who exerted themselves in serving their parents-in-law with the virtue of utmost generosity and filial piety and in perfecting the wellbeing of the state and the household by teaching their children with stringency. However, rare were the ones who produced precepts of their own and passed on their admonitions [to generations to come].

Therefore, how can the makings of this book be only for the precious royal progeny? This [text] should reach to the unlearned commoner housewives, and working girls [so that] during their idle moments they might memorize it in the morning and recite it in the evening, reflecting on its meanings in their minds. Then they will gradually become knowledgeable about excelling in household management. It (Naehun) cannot be of little help in the edification of public morals.

59 See Appendix (ii) for a translation of the entire postface.
I suggest that Lady Cho’s statement about the text’s readership itself should be read first as her personal appreciation of the text—a book review in today’s sense—and that Sohye’s own target audience should be examined differently from Lady Cho’s own take on the text. The phrase, “for the precious royal progeny,” seems to refer to Sohye’s status as royal mother and denizen of the palace. Sohye’s preface and the contents of the *Naehun* seem to suggest something different, an interpretation that contrasts with the continuous reaffirmations of Kim Chi-yong’s original conclusions about the *Naehun*’s intended audience.

Now see Lady Cho’s comment on the *Naehun*’s inclusion of vernacular translations.

She (Queen Sohye) named it “Instructions for the Inner Sphere.” She went on to provide the vernacular translation of this text, making it easily comprehensible. The dullest and the most unintelligent can [understand it] accurately [even] in one reading so as to make memorization and recitation [of it] easy.

Again, if one considers Lady Cho’s postface primarily as a summary of her own appreciation of the *Naehun*, one should be aware that Lady Cho’s commentary on the inclusion of the vernacular translations of the *hanmun* original emphasizes the text’s intended audience as a female one incapable of comprehending Classical Chinese. Yet, depending on how one parses the *hanmun* original, one can dissociate the significance of Sohye’s adding the vernacular translation from the benefits Lady Cho mentions. This could indicate that Lady Cho eulogizes the vernacular translations for serving as so effective a parallel supplementary guide to understanding the *hanmun* original—even the dumbest person can understand its meaning with little effort. Unfortunately and significantly, the *Naehun* does not provide a vernacular translation of Lady
Cho’s postface. 60 This difficulty in understanding what exactly Lady Cho meant by her comment on the included vernacular translations forces us to depend all the more on a closer reading of the Naehun itself.

What, then, does the Naehun tell us? First, a considerable number of entries in the Naehun do not claim a gender-specific, female-particular readership. Chapters such as “Marriage,” “Husband and Wife,” and “Motherhood” suggest their gender-specific nature and thus do contain a predominant number of entries addressed to women only. However, on the whole, the entries throughout the Naehun that call for exclusively female attention are outnumbered by the entries that either do not assume a specific reader gender or those that refer specifically to male readers. The entries for women include entries that open with quotations from instructional texts such as the Nüjiao 女教 (Teachings for Women), the Lishi nüjiao 李氏女教 (Teachings for the Women of the Li Clan; Master/Madame Li’s Teachings for Women) or the Fangshi nüjiao 方氏女教 (Teachings for the Women of the Fang Clan; Master/Madame Fang’s Teachings for Women). 61 The non-gender-specific ones do not particularly discuss the proper role of women. In fact, a notable number of entries discuss the proper comportment of the Confucian Gentleman (君子). For instance, the first chapter, “Speech and Comportment,” contains merely seven entries from a total of thirty-four entries that directly claim female listeners. The women referred to in this chapter cover women in general (wives, daughters-in-law, mothers, etc). The rest of this chapter consists of non-gender-specific discourses on the ideal conduct for human beings designated by the Three Bonds (三綱)—as loyal subject to one’s ruler, filial child to one’s parents, caring siblings, etc. The images one finds in the admonitions

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60 Lady Cho’s command of Written Chinese is noteworthy. I hope to see a book that deals with the lives of court ladies—female officials of various ranks at the Chosón court, to be precise—along the lines of Pricilla Ching Chung’s Palace Women in the Northern Sung 960–1126.

61 I have not come across any individual texts with these titles.
included are often none other than the manifestations of the Confucian Gentleman. Likewise, in “Filial Piety,” the first entry addressed to women does not appear until the seventh installment and, moreover, the first three entries depict the story of filial kings of the state of Zhou 周. Most of the entries in this chapter call for the attention of both sons and daughters. A number of entries specifically discuss what is considered filial conduct for a son. In the last chapter, “Integrity and Frugality,” only a single entry out of all ten is dedicated to the story of a wife, such that one hardly detects any specific appeal to women’s attention.

Second, among the passages excerpted from the Sohak, which is divided into two sections—the Oep’yŏn 外篇 (Outer Sphere) and the Naep’yŏn 內篇 (Inner Sphere)—one finds a far greater number of passages from the former than from the latter. Most of the items extracted from the “Oep’yŏn” are by nature ‘family instructions’ (家訓). To name but a few, these family instructions include the Yanshi jiaxun 颜氏家訓 (Family Instructions of Master Yan) by Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-591) and the Liushijiaxun 柳氏家訓 (Precepts for the Liu Clan) by Liu Pin 柳玭 (n.d.), and the Jiafan 家範 (Precepts for Family Life) by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1018-1086). Also found are numerous teachings by Song Confucian scholars such as the brothers, Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073), and Kang Jieshao (1011-1077). Pre-Song teachings include the admonitions of Han Zhaoliu 漢昭烈 (Liu Bang 刘邦), Ma Yuan 马援 (B.C.14-A.D. 49), and of Kong Kan 孔戡 (n.d.). Most of these admonitions mention almost nothing about proper gender roles; instead, they discuss life conduct and worldly wisdom (K. ch’ŏse 處世) in interpersonal relationships or advise against self-indulgence. As one can easily assume, these are instructions passed on from man to man among

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62 These family instructions were called by other names such as jiagui 家規 or jiayue 家約. They were issued as individual volumes or included in genealogies. See Wilkinson, Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged Edition, 116.
father-son or uncle-nephew relationships. These instructions are often for non-intrafamilial interpersonal relationships.

Third, it seems that Sohye herself does not specifically mention that she meant her work to be read exclusively by women. One need only read the preface, which Sohye wrote herself. One can see that the word "you" is used in its plural sense, represented by the Chinese original as "汝等 (yŏđūng)." The first character 汝 is a combination of the character for "woman 女" with the water radical on its left. Despite its appearance deceptively suggestive of the character for "woman 女," the character 汝 is not gender-specific at all. Sohye asserts the importance of education of women when she writes, "the order and disorder, and the rise and fall of a country are related to the wisdom and ignorance of men, but are also closely tied to the goodness and badness of women; thus, women must be taught." And she explicitly deplores the ongoing predicament of Chosŏn society’s failure to provide women with educational opportunities at the time of her writing the Naehun. It is also noteworthy that nowhere in the entire preface Sohye does make it clear, like Lady Cho, that she limits her audience to women or residents of the palace.

There are a few like cases in which subjects wrote their own impressions in the prefaces to texts commissioned by kings; the examples include Sejong’s Myŏnghwang kyegam (Admonitory Mirror of Bright Emperors) and Sejo’s Myŏnghwang kyegam ᴏnhae (Vernacular Translation of the “Admonitory Mirror of Bright Emperors”), the prefaces devoted to these texts are written by Pak P’aeng-nyŏn (1417-1456) and Ch’oe Hang (1409-1474), respectively. Whereas the Sejong Sillok (Annals of King Sejong) made it clear that

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63 This translation is an excerpt from John Duncan, “The Naehun and the Politics of Gender in Fifteenth-Century Korea,” 26-57. Appendix (i) provides a partial translation of Sohye’s preface based on Duncan’s work with minor modifications.

64 These two texts will be broached once again in the discussions of Sohye’s pedagogical concerns.
King Sejong’s target audience was himself and his successors, Pak P’aeng-nyôn, in his preface to the text, expanded the range of the text’s intended audience by adding that the text was written for “later generations (後之觀者)” in general. Likewise, Ch’oe Hang 崔恒 (1409-1474), in his preface to the vernacular translation of the Myonghwang kyegam ordered by Sejo, acknowledged that Sejo intended the text for the future kings of Chosôn, but he broadened the text’s intended audience by commenting that the text was beneficial for self-cultivation (修身).65

Judging from what these facts suggest, I conclude that we cannot base our judgments solely on Lady Cho’s postface and that the Naehun includes men as well as women as its intended audience. The issue of non-gender-specific audience will be discussed in more detail in the comparison of the Naehun with Lady Ban’s Nujie in the context of Sohye’s Confucian pedagogical stance expressed in her text. For now, I merely suggest the possibility of a non-gender specific reading of the Naehun.

In the following paragraphs, I discuss a couple of issues central to understanding how Korean writing codes were perceived by the 15th-century Chosôn elite—the principles underlying the creation of the vernacular script and the well-known controversy surrounding the script’s promulgation. Before proceeding directly to this topic, it will be helpful to re-/familiarize ourselves with some of the key points in the history of Korean written codes before and after the invention of the HC.

3.2. Diglossia and Digraphia: Hanmun and the Pre-alphabetic transcription systems (Ch’ajap’yogi Writing Systems; hereafter cited as CP writing methods).

Pre-modern Korean literary practice was diglossic and digraphic. Korea’s digraphic tradition is thought to have begun along with the importation of Chinese characters (hanja 漢字)

and Classical Chinese (*hanmun* 漢文), and thus dates back as early as before the formation of the Three Kingdoms Period (approximately from the fourth-century through the seventh-century).

Before the invention of the vernacular script, one of the two codes in this tradition was Classical Chinese (*hanmun*) and the other systems are referred to collectively as *ch’aja p’yogi* 借字表記 (denotation with borrowed Chinese characters).

First, *hanmun* refers to an archaic form of Classical Chinese and is putatively derived from one branch of dialects in Chinese. There is no accepted date for the invention of Chinese characters, but it is often assumed to have been as early as around the second millennium B.C. Within the cultural sphere in East Asia under the strong influence of Chinese civilization, knowledge of *hanmun* was regarded as cultural capital. The ruling classes in this Chinese-character cultural sphere systematically used their identification with Chinese civilization to wield political and cultural superiority and legitimacy over the general populace. Written language played an important role in the legitimization, dissemination, and reproduction of such cultural notions, in that knowledge of Classical Chinese served as a direct conduit for communication and the exchange of knowledge. As important as continuous importations of new ideas from China was, transmission of new knowledge also entailed a need for various ways of translating, interpreting, and annotating imported texts. In understanding the high prestige of *hanmun* in Korean civilization, it is imperative to recall that pre-modern Korean society cannot be fully understood outside of the context of the Sino-centric world order, especially Korea after the Silla 新羅 unification of the Korean peninsula in 668. Unified Silla (668-935) launched the establishment of officially acknowledged international economic and political ties with China. Inclination toward Chinese civilization experienced a particular surge during the late Koryó 高麗

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66 The first chapter of Ledyard’s *The Korean Language Reform of 1446*, 31-83, discusses the subject of writing in Korean prior to the invention of the vernacular script.

67 Kim Hyŏn, “Han’guk munhak ūi wisin,” 126.
period with the introduction of Song 宋 (960-1279) Neo-Confucianism. The book-
reading, land-holding elite social group known as the sadaebu 士大夫 (scholar-officials; C. shidafu) identified themselves with the Song literati, and constituted the major force in the
dynastic change from Koryŏ to Chosŏn. Therefore, the idea of a Sino-centric world order is an
essential element in understanding the legitimacy of the elites’ superior position in the society of
Chosŏn.

Continuous incorporation hanmun textual into existing native knowledge called forth the
need to devise a linguistic instrument—termed “chaja p’yogi” by contemporary scholars
that reflected the indigenous language of one’s own culture and that could serve as a ‘ crib’ for
understanding the foreign writing system. CP refers to a range of literary devices that share a
common origin, characterized by the use of borrowed Chinese characters (i) to denote Korean
phonemes or syllables expressing native Korean lexical items; or (ii) in a more sophisticated
fashion to mark grammatical elements such as nominal particles and verb endings, and (iii) to
indicate Korean word order. There are four main types of Korean CP: (1) koyu myŏngsa p’yogi
固有名詞表記 (denotation of native proper nouns), (2) idu 吏讀 (clerk writing), (3) hyangch’al
郷札 (poetic composition in the native language), and (4) kugyŏl 口訳 (hanmun crib).

Putatively, Korea’s CP, like similar systems devised by various other ethnic groups
around China, manifested the Korean cultural desire to evince the qualities and characteristics
unique to Korean. This started out with the use of Chinese characters to denote indigenous
Korean proper nouns—such as place names or titles of state offices. This method dates back as
early as the Three Kingdoms period. The earliest extant example of this type of CP is found in

68 According to Song Kijung, “Ch’aja p’yogi úi munja-jŏk sŏnggyŏk,” 5-30, it is Yang chudong who coined the term ‘ch’aja,’ or “borrowed characters.” Linguists began using the term CP in the early 1980’s.
69 The ethnic groups who took Chinese characters and adapted them to their own languages include the Mongols, the Tungus, the Tanguts, the Lolo and the Moso, the Vietnamese, the Japanese, etc. See Konô Rokurō, “The Chinese Writing and Its Influences on the Scripts of the Neighbouring Peoples: With Special Reference to Korea and Japan,” in which he provides extensive explanations about the operations of these languages.
the well-known epitaph of the Great King Kwanggaet'o 廣開土大王 (r. 391-412) of Koguryô 高句麗 (B.C.37-A.D.668).\textsuperscript{70} The significance of the rise of CP is that it indicated Koreans’ linguistic response to Chinese and other neighboring cultural traditions and a certain claim of linguistic identity, in that it was used to mark distinctive features of the Korean language that were difficult to express using only characters imported from China. Henceforth, Koreans continued to develop and devise new CP.

Now let us fashion working definitions of and general notions about types (2)-(4). All three CP systems are based upon the use of Chinese characters either (i) by borrowing their pronunciations (sori/ûm 音)—i.e., as phonograms—but with the original sound values modified in accordance with Korean phonology and with meanings not necessarily in accordance with their original meanings as they came to mark Korean linguistic peculiars, or (ii) by borrowing their meanings (ttûł/hun 訓)—i.e., as semantograms. They were designed as a foreign-language-facilitative translation device (idu, kugyl, and occasionally hyangch'âl),\textsuperscript{71} a philosophico-pedagogical device (idu, kugyl for Buddhism and Confucian learning), or possibly as a functional substitute for Classical Chinese (conveyance of personal feelings or opinions as in the case of the major use of hyangch'âl). The yongja 用字, or the Chinese characters used in these CP writing systems, included Chinese-origin Chinese characters as well as characters contrived by Koreans so that phonemes distinctive in Korean language could be represented—in particular,

\textsuperscript{70} Except for a few names of places and persons, this epitaph consisting of some 1,800 Chinese characters completely follows the conventions of Classical Chinese. Ledyard, 35, suspects a possibility that Chinese scribes were in the employ of the state of Koguryô but is convinced that this epitaph testifies to the capability of the Koguryô people in use of Chinese characters in the fifth century.

\textsuperscript{71} The usage of hyangch'âl, though greatly limited, included transcription of the names of plants, trees, or herbals. According to Ledyard, \textit{The Korean Language Reform of 1446}, 67, Yi Ki-mun provides an explanation of one such example.
characters used to represent sound values alone featured succinct strokes and meanings that did
not convey negative notions. Now let us examine hyangch'al, idu, and kugyol in more detail.

**Hyangch'al** The character for "hyang 部" means "native; local; hometown." The
term hyangch'al seems refer to the native expression as a counterpart to the literary
code of contemporary Tang China. This term, however, did not exist during Silla times.
One can find only a vague description of it in some Koryo texts. The term was first
used by Ch’oe Haeng-kwi 崔行錫, a Koryo person who translated the poems by his
contemporary Kyun’yó 均如 (923-973) into Classical Chinese. The hyangch'al
system features purely Korean grammatical composition, and was most often used to
serve literary and aesthetic functions in the hyangga 郵歌 (Native songs). This
system thrived during the Unified Silla through early Koryó periods and is thought to
have survived during the early Choson period as well.

**Idu** As its manifestation in Chinese characters indicates, idu 吏讀 carries the
meaning of "scribe/clerk writing." Its earliest form featured a simple rearrangement

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72 Ledyard, 39-40, discusses the changes that occurred in selecting Chinese characters for the names of Silla kings. While the first 17 kings have semantically unflattering phonetic transcriptions, an effort to select characters that would reflect some credit on their bearers begins to be observed.
73 I have relied heavily upon Ledyard, 44-53.
74 Hyangga does not necessarily mean lyrics written only in hyangch'al, but could also designate native musical lyrics in general. When native songs were put into words, this was done through hyangch'al. When recording only the meanings of these songs, not the sounds, the songs could be (and were) translated into hanmun as well. There are only 25 hyangga extant today. The small number of extant texts makes it difficult to produce completely reliable decipherments because comparisons and cross-checking cannot be conducted sufficiently. To provide some visual idea, I introduce some characters used in the hyangch'al system. Certain Chinese characters had acquired status as frequently used phonograms (e.g., 阿=a, 伊=i, 也=ya, 古=ko, 仇=ku, 叔=no, etc). Some were employed to denote final consonants (e.g., 隠=-n, 音=-m, 乙=-l, 音=-p, etc.)
75 In the popular mind today, hyangch'al is understood to have reached its pinnacle during the Silla period, dying out by Choson period. But Nam P’unghyon, Kugyol yon’gu, and Ledyard, 53, acknowledge the possibility of the existence of hyangch'al during the Choson period, although the popularity of this method remains highly questionable.
76 Traditionally, idu was referred to by several different names such as isó 吏琶, it'o 吏詠, ido 吏道, ido 吏刀, imun 吏文, ich'al 吏札. Korean scholars often group pre-alphabetic transcription systems under the term idu.
of the word order of certain parts of Classical Chinese phrases/sentences. This earlier form of idu is thought to have continued until the eighth century.\(^7\) By the Koryô period, a more complicated system had developed whereby not only Korean word order but also various particles and other Korean morphemes were incorporated. Thus, by early Chosôn times, idu captured much of the phonology, lexicon, and grammar of early Korean. During Chosôn times, idu was widely used in translating Chinese texts (e.g., the translation of the Daminglù 大明律 (Great Ming Code) some time around 1395) and recording official documents.\(^7\) Such usage of idu brought about a significant change in the way idu was used. In order to prevent possible “textual meddling,” idu characters came to be inserted to clarify the relationship of a group of words. This change was different from the original idu method, whereby the Korean word order was left intact while the idu characters indicated various grammatical markers.\(^8\)

The idu system survived until the reforms of 1894 officially discontinued it.

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\(^7\) See Ledyard, *Korean Language Reform in 1466*, for various interpretations of the term idu suggested by scholars and to learn how the current interpretation “scribe/clerk writing” came to be agreed upon.\(^8\) Ibid., 60-67.\(^9\) Yu Myông-u’s “Han’guk pôn’yôksa esô pon Chosônjo önhae pôn’yôk,” examines the significance of vernacular translations in the history of Korean translation and argues for a need to approach vernacular translations of foreign texts during the Chosôn period from the perspective of translation theories (pôn’yôkhak) (rather than follow the traditional linguistics approach) by emphasizing Anthony Pym’s approach in *Method in Translation History*.\(^8\) See Ledyard, 37-58, for this type of development and changes in idu writing. I provide several examples taken from Ledyard, 55-58, to show these changes in the idu system.

**Total people: 125. Of these, the total of the people who were here formerly, plus those who have been born in three years’ time [i.e., since the last census]: 118.”**

This example above is found in a list of statistics appearing in a Silla manuscript. The 中 seems to stand for a Korean dative-locative ending corresponding to the modern -e. The expressions for the most part conform to Korean word order.

The following shows a more refined idu style. The following example is taken from the idu translation of the Daminglù (The Great Ming Code). The underscored characters are conventional idu characters. Several idu glossaries were compiled during Chosôn times, making idu texts far more intelligible.

**凡公事乙未錯誤亦俟內違，自以 省覺現告為在乙思，免罪寢**

“In all cases where [an official] has bungled the public business and, realizing his own [error] has reported [it], he escapes indictment.”

The following example shows changes that occurred in the idu system with the increasing use of idu for educational purposes.

**天地之間萬物之衆 匈 唯人 伊 稀 貴為尼 所 貴 乎 人者 蘭 以其有五倫也 範**
Kugyŏl can be defined as a grammatical and annotational literary apparatus designed to facilitate the reading and translation of Classical Chinese texts. Kugyŏl differs from the two other types of CP in that kugyŏl was always annotational—always parasitic to a hannyaum text—rather than functioning as a completely independent code. Kugyŏl had three subcategories: Interpretive-kugyŏl (sŏktok 釋讀/hundok 訓讀), Reading-kugyŏl (úmdok 音讀/sundok 順讀), and Shorthand-kugyŏl (puho 符號/kakp'il 角筆). It is also distinguished because kugyŏl existed in its own distinct form as the so-called kugyŏl-script, a kind of phonogram syllabary, similar to the Japanese kana 假名, made by abbreviating Chinese characters in various ways. After the invention of the HC, kugyŏl also existed in the form of the Korean vernacular script (termed by modern-day scholars as “han'gul kugyŏl”).

“In the multitude of the myriad things midst heaven and earth, Man (he) is the most noble (and this is why): What is noble in man (it) is his possession of the Five Human Relationships (it is).”

This type of idu usage brought about redundancy and clumsiness of expression (indicated in parentheses). However, when reading the text out loud, one found this method easy to understand and remember.

82 Until recently, kugyŏl was known to feature two kinds: Reading-kugyŏl and Interpretive-kugyŏl. Recent discoveries reveal that there is a third type: Shorthand/Stylus-mark-kugyŏl. The recent discoveries of Shorthand-kugyŏl are significant in many ways. It is not only a great cultural addition and historical finding, but linguistically, it provides illuminating information about the building block shapes of the vowels of the vernacular script, the HC. Most significantly, finding a precursor to the HC redefines the birth of the HC not as an invention but as a concentration of accumulated cultural tradition. Hyangga yŏn'gu: Kungmunhak yŏn'gu ch'ongsŏ—Ku'gŏ kungmunhakhoe pyŏn, 13.
83 Yi Sung-jae, “Another type of Korean Translation: Stylus-marked Kwukyel [口訣].”
84 It might be useful to learn how these working definitions came into existence. Since the beginning of active academic discussions about CP in the 1970s and 1980s, controversies have surrounded the appropriate definition of certain terms, history, and functions of the CP writing systems and their methods and correlations. To this day, the popular understanding of CP tends to place idu as the earliest system, after the rise of simple koyu myŏngsa p'yŏgi systems, and preceding hyangch'al and kugyŏl. The developmental order of the CP systems was thus understood as: koyu myŏngsa p'yŏgi → idu → hyangch'al → kugyŏl. Then came the discovery and decipherment of a fragment of a certain Buddhist sutra, the Kuyok inwang-gyong 俊譯仁王經 (Traditional Translation of the Benevolent Kings Sutra) in 1974, which complicated the issue further and opened a new era in the study of CP systems. The term kugyŏl was originally thought to derive from the idu-spelling of a native Korean word, “ipkyŏt.” But Nam P’unghyon asserts that the term kugyŏl 口訣—a combination of 口, for “mouth,” and 訣, for “formula/knack/bent”—is an abbreviation of kusubigyo 口授秘訣 (‘orally transmitted secret formula’). In the early years of literary education in ancient Korea, which of course started with Classical Chinese, scholars would initiate their studies by acquainting themselves with the phonetic readings of compositions, which were then followed by a literal rendition (透字的翻譯 ch’ukcha-jŏk pŏn’yŏk / 透語譯 ch’ug’ŏyŏk) of the given text. In the case of comprehending philosophical writings, in particular, meanings potentially vary greatly depending on the interpreter’s philosophical
3.3. Early Chosön Ch’aja p’yogi

All three CP writing methods survived into the Chosön period, but it was idu and kugyŏl that had the most importance in literary language practice. CP systems were valuable, but Classical Chinese as the direct cultural conduit in cultural importations of Chinese civilization was primary; on the whole, the role of CP systems appears to have been subordinate and supplementary to hanmun. Chosön Confucian scholars were keenly aware of this diglossic situation, as can be seen in the anti-HC memorial written by Ch’oe Man-li; in it, Ch’oe refers to idu as “vulgar/coarse” (匍匐).

Idu continued to be used for administrative and judiciary purposes and for translation of Chinese texts. Indeed, compared to earlier periods in Koryó times, idu during Chosön appears to have been even more widely disseminated into people’s everyday lives. Official edicts and royal decrees were conveyed for public understanding in idu composition, and evidence of individuals using idu is found in various legal matters concerning disposition of properties, property claims, inheritances, marriages, and divorces, etc. Idu was also used for person-to-person communication. People conveyed their inner thoughts and emotions to others through

stance. Consequently, a particular way or school of reading—a standardization of interpretation methods for Classical Chinese texts—began to develop, and the institutionalization of such annotative text marking heralds the inception of the kugyŏl tradition. This new theory emphasizes that all CP systems should be understood as one entity, within which different methods developed whenever the need arose. This theory understands the order of development in the CP writing systems as follows: koyu myŏngsa p’yogi → orally transmitted Interpretive-kugyŏl → idu → Written Interpretive-kugyŏl → hyangch’al → Reading-kugyŏl. The above information is extracted from Nam P’ung-hyon’s book Kug’osa riil uihan kugyŏl ydn’gu, published in 1999. This oral transmission method existed in ancient China as well. Because the Chinese writing system used few punctuation marks and texts were produced and copied in such a way that there was no indication of the beginnings and endings of sentences and paragraphs or where to insert pauses in reading them, scholars would tutor people and provide them with an effective reading method by using parsing marks. See Idema and Grant, The Red Brush, 26-27.

However, it is possible that the hyangch’al compositions surviving during the early Chosön period were either "re-transcribed in the vernacular script or sent into oblivion," as Ledyard, 53, observes, citing Yang Chu-dong. Many scholars in Korea seem to agree that the hyangch’al system gradually died out by the end of the Koryó period.

Han’guksa 27, 370-371.

epistolary exchanges in *idu*—for instance, the famous Chosŏn scholar Kim Chong-jik (1431-1492) is known to have exchanged letters in *idu* with his mother and wife—or by voicing their opinions to draw public attention. Scholars produced *idu* literary works as well. As in the case of Kim Chongjik’s mother and wife, women were not so marginalized in the practice of *idu*. To give but a few more examples, during the reigns of King Yŏnsan (1476-1506; r. 1494-1506, dethroned) and King Chungjong (1488-1544; r. 1506-1544), women would write (or have someone write on their behalf) various petitions to plead the innocence of their wrongfully accused husbands or fathers, to claim a burial site for their parents, or even to request the discharge of their sons or sons-in-law from public duties so that they could have someone as their caretakers.

The pedagogical employment of *idu* and *kugyŏl* thrived during early Chosŏn. Stalwart devotion to Song Neo-Confucianism, starting from the late Koryŏ period and continuing throughout the Chosŏn period, brought about significant changes in the way Korean CP worked. The most significant was the emergence of the “abbreviation of the most commonly used characters [referring to the *kugyŏl* script] into short forms. The result of this process was what one writer has called ‘Korean katakana.’ Many of the symbols thus formed are in fact quite similar to Japanese katakana. It is difficult to date the origin of this practice, but it probably arose around the same time as the unabbreviated *t’o* [(by this he means *kugyŏl*)—s.p.]. There are

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88 Pack Tu-hyon, “Chosŏn sidae úi han’gŭl pogup kwa siryong e kwanhan yŏn’gu,” 199.
89 The usage of *idu* composition was so widespread as to include private memoirs, native poetry and fiction. Examples of *idu* in native poetry and fiction can be found in Kim Kŭn-su (1961), cited in Ledyard, 57.
90 JaHyun Kim Haboush, “Private Memory and Public History: the Memoirs of Lady Hyegyŏng and Testimonial Literature” provides a reading of Lady Hyegyŏng’s *Hanjangnok*—written in the vernacular script and translated into English under the title of “Memoirs of Lady Hyegyŏng” by Haboush, but also known widely as “Records Written in Leisurely Time” (閑中錄) or “Records Written in Remorseful Emotions” (恨中錄) depending on how one interprets the word “han” in the title—as a piece of testimonial literature written in the vernacular script in which an individual pleads innocence against the state in an attempt to redeem her natal family’s reputation.
some cases of its being used in printed books, but for the most part it was a device for private punctuation and editing of an already printed text.” In light of Nam P’ung-hyon’s latest study on the kugyŏl, Ledyard’s speculation on the birth of the kugyŏl script is out-dated; however, it is of interest for our purposes here that he noted increasing interest in the use of CP writing methods for Neo-Confucian pedagogical employment.

An essential point to be noted is that by the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn, Korean CP methods increasingly gave way to hanmun due to hanmun’s emergence as the paramount literary tool.93 I have not yet found any academic or popular discussion as to why the use of hyangch’al had gradually receded to the extent that it was almost invisible by Chosŏn times. One speculation may be found in the increasing identification with hanmun among the literary elite during the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods. This phenomenon likely reflected the Chosŏn sadaebu’s ostentatious inclination toward Neo-Confucianism. In other words, the elites might have preferred using hanmun and avoided using CP. Kugyŏl’s development from hundok 訓讀 (a method much in the manner of Japanese kanbun kundoku (漢文 訓讀), which Korean hundok probably inspired) which allows a direct translation of the hanmun original into vernacular Korean language as one reads, to ūmdok 音讀 (a method requiring a more advanced knowledge of both Chinese characters and grammatical features of Classical Chinese on the part of the reader) also suggest that users of literary language were becoming more and more familiar with direct usage of hanmun, reducing the need for modification and annotation. The reasons for this increase in adeptness at hanmun and decrease in reliance on kugyŏl might be found in the elite’s interest in preserving the hanmun original and thus preserving their privilege and ensuring their membership was as exclusive as possible. Another more plausible reason would be the fear of “textual meddling,” which generated changes in the idu system. This notion of “textual

93 Nam P’yung-hyon, Kugyŏl yŏn’gu, 13.
meddled” resurfaces again during Sejo’s kugyŏl annotation projects of the Confucian Classics as well as during Sŏnjo’s vernacular translation projects of the Confucian Classics. Idu must have survived because it had become firmly established as a form of “clerk writing” utilized mostly for the purposes of administration and translation. The comments above are my linguistically untrained speculations.

What one stumbles upon with these speculations, though, is the controversy over the invention of the vernacular script. One finds Confucian scholars, such as Ch’oe Man-li, expressing a great degree of discomfort, even distaste, for the shift from the existing idu- and hanmun-based literary practice into the world of phonographs ushered in by the new script. Thus, in order to dismantle further the notion that the ónhae (Korean vernacular translations) of hanmun originals somehow always aimed at achieving a broader dissemination of the text into the hands of the general public, I first approach this subject from a language ecological point of view. Although the term language ecology is somewhat self-evident, it might be helpful to have a clearer understanding of what language ecology is before we discuss any applications of this notion to fifteenth-century Chosŏn language practice.

3.4. Contextualization of the Controversies surrounding the Emergence of the hunmin chŏng’ŭm

Put succinctly, language ecology is a fairly new academic field that studies language and language practice with the biological metaphor of ecology; it can be defined as the study of “interactions between any given language and its environment.”94 Here, “environment” refers to the society that uses a language and/or writing systems as agreed societal codes and conventions encompassing social situations in which individuals as members of society are bound to be

involved. The fundamental premise is that “everything around us becomes a potential bearer of meaning for us.” Language ecology differs from the original concept of ecology, first coined by Ernst Haechek in 1866. Haechek defined ecology as “the body of knowledge concerning the economy of nature—the investigation of the total relations of the animal both to its inorganic and its organic environment; including, above all, its friendly and inimical relations with those animals and plants with which it comes directly or indirectly into contact—in a word, ecology is the study of all those complex interrelations referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence.” Instead of accepting the Darwinist implication of the “survival of the fittest”, language ecology seeks out the ability to “co-exist and cooperate in complex relationships.” In this aspect, the modified concept of ecology in the study of language and language practice has been best served in the field of language planning and protection of endangered languages and dialects.

The invention and promulgation of the HC marked the introduction of a new, state-sponsored script into Korea’s language ecology. If one uses Bourdieu’s economic metaphor of language, this meant the advent of a new competing force in the symbolic market, i.e. Chosŏn language practice. The new script in Chosŏn Korea was fully supported by the ruler and by a number of his trusted scholars. They were committed to the cause of providing the people of Chosŏn with a new script that could accurately denote the sounds of spoken language. Of course, 14th-century Koreans were not familiar with these modern Western theories; nevertheless, one cannot help but notice the presence of voices cognizant of the radical impact of the new script on the linguistic environment of Chosŏn society. The degree of distress concerning the birth of the vernacular script and its dissemination into the Korean literary language market reflected what some of the Confucian scholars felt about the debut of the new script. While Sejong and

95 Colin Barron, Nigel Bruce, David Nunan, eds., Knowledge and Discourse: Toward an Ecology of Language.
exponents of the new script such as Chŏng In-ji 鄭麟趾 (1396-1478) and Sin Suk-chu 申叔舟 (1417-1475) were convinced of its potential benefits, Ch’oe Man-li and other opponents disapproved of even entertaining the idea of inventing a vernacular script. In fact, their responses closely resembled Haekchek’s Darwinist approach to ecology, as we will see presently. The ensuing discourse on the pros and cons of the HC revealed a complex conflict between two different Confucian approaches to language planning.

This language planning embodies a politics of literacy based on Chosŏn’s commitment to Neo-Confucianism between the Chosŏn elite’s conservatism and King Sejong’s monarchical authority. The following paragraphs discuss the ideas introduced in the Hunmin ch'ŏng’um haerye-bon 訓民正音解例本 (Explanations and Examples for the Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People; HCH) and the preface to the Tongguk chŏng’un 東國正韻 (1447; Correct Rimes for the Eastern State); these are also noteworthy in that they reveal the principles (ŭiŭi 意義) and purposes (mokjŏk 目的) behind the invention of the HC.97

With the HC, King Sejong envisioned a new language practice that moved from the existing hanmun-dominant literary practice toward one that embraced the vernacular script as equally important. In other words, King Sejong attempted to reorganize the contemporary digraphic system from Classical Chinese and “incomplete” CP writing systems, by replacing it with Classical Chinese and a new script. Thus, the invention of the vernacular script was an articulate critique of, and, in a sense, a proactive “revolution” in the existing language practice, as Ledyard correctly puts it. Chŏng In-ji in the HCH remarks:98

97 Kang Sin-hang’s “Sejong-dae ŏn’ŏ-gwan ŭi hyŏngsŏng” was extremely helpful and useful in crafting the following discussion. This article also provides an intertextual analysis of the birth of the HC and China’s Hongwu zhengyun 洪武正韻 (1375; Hongmu chŏng’un; Correct Sounds standardized during the reign of the Hongwu Emperor), a rимing dictionary, and discusses the realization of Sejong’s hunmin ch’ŏng’um and the tongguk ch’ŏng’un as a careful observation of this Ming precedent.
Since the languages of the outer kingdoms have their own speech sounds but lack characters for them, they have borrowed the characters of the Middle Kingdom to take care of their needs. This has been like a haft that ill fits its socket; how could they have been applied without difficulties? In fact, things are all at ease in accordance with where they are situated. They cannot be forced to be the same as the things elsewhere.

The first benefit the pro-HC faction pointed out about the phonographic characteristics of the vernacular script was that they were helpful in pursuing scholarly affairs and handling judiciary matters. According to Sin Sukchu, to whom the Tongguk chǒng'un is credited, the knowledge of vocal sounds (聲音) of books should precede one’s scholarly pursuit of the ways of the sages (聖人之道). The reason is as follows: “before the invention of writing (書), the way of the sages were in the heavens and the earth. Writing at last made it possible to manifest the Way of Sages in books far and wide. Therefore, if one desires to investigate the way of the sages, surely [the knowledge of] the principles of writing (文義) have to be pursued before [other things]. And if one wants to know the essence of the principles of writing, [this] surely begins from [the study] of vocal sounds [of a given writing]. Therefore, vocal sounds are the building blocks (權輿) of knowledge (學問) and the way (道).” Chong In-ji again in the HCH reaffirms that the purpose of the new script was first to resolve trouble that “students of books” had because of “the difficulty of understanding the purport and meaning [of Chinese characters]” and second to ease the burden of those “who administer the criminal law” because they had “difficulty comprehending the twists and turns [of a legal text].”

The pro-HC faction clearly emphasized the new script’s reader-, learner-friendly nature. They were convinced of the optimistic prospects of the new script; therefore, it bears reminding that the HC’s learner-friendly quality (p'yŏnminsŏng 便民性), as Kang Sin-hang (1982) labels it,
is double-sided. The first and foremost concern for the inventors of the Korean vernacular script was to provide an effective and accurate study and administration tool for those who already had advanced knowledge of Chinese characters and Classical Chinese, such as scholars, students, diplomats, and low and high officials. Then came the concerns for those who had no tool at all with which to express their thoughts in writing; it was, to borrow Chŏng In-ji’s words, one of many cases of the “universally applicable” nature of the HC. King Sejong, too, expressed his deep concern about the “ignorant,” in compiling a text like the famous Samgang haengsilto for people of all classes.

These optimistic, self-assured opinions of the pro-HC faction were countered, point for point, by Ch’oe Man-li and his associates. Their famous, even notorious, six poignant arguments were heavily loaded with political implications and supported by historical facts and legitimacy. The overall theme of the concerns expressed by the anti-HC group can be encapsulated as pollution of cultural identity and preservation of linguistic cultural tradition. As the first item in his memorial, Ch’oe pointed out that Chosŏn’s cultural advancement toward Chinese civilization has reached the point where the two share the same writing system and laws. Ch’oe feared the corruption of Chosŏn’s esteemed cultural tradition of “serving the Middle Kingdom.” These are some statements from his memorial:

If these graphs should flow into China, and if people there should adversely criticize them, how could we be without shame, considering our Service to the Great and our emulation of Chinese civilization!...

Although from ancient times customs and local usages have differed within the Nine Lands, there has never been a case of separately making a script based on local speech. Only the likes

99 The Sillok entry containing Ch’oe’s memorial and King Sejong’s response appears fragmentary, and at times both sides seem to be speaking at cross-purposes. The reason appears lie is in the fact that the give-and-take described in this entry is not a depiction of a simultaneous exchange but a later collection of summarized versions of what Sejong uttered and Ch’oe wrote, according to Ledyard.

100 Ibid., 141-146 provides a full translation of the entire anti-HC memorial.
of the Mongols, Tanguts, Jurchens, Japanese, and Tibetans have their own graphs. But these are the matters of barbarians, and not worth talking about. It has been traditionally said, “Change the barbarians using Chinese ways; we have never heard of changing toward barbarism.” From one age to the next, China has always regarded our country as having the bequeathed customs of Kija, but in matters of culture, literary and material, and in ritual and music, we have rather imitated Chinese civilization. To now separately make the Vernacular Script is to abandon China and identify ourselves with barbarians. This would be what they call forsaking the perfume of storax for the dungball pushed by the beetle. How can this fail to have great implications for our civilization!...

Generally, in establishing the merit of something, one should put no value on what is merely quick and close at hand. In our recent management in this country we have striven for quick completions. We fear that this is not what good government is all about.

It is important that the idea of preservation of cultural tradition argued so fiercely by Ch’oe Malli should not be understood from an anachronistic, nationalistic point of view (the way it most often has been in modern Korea). Rather, Ch’oe’s statements should be understood in the early Chosôn cultural and philosophical context, in which the state builders believed in the “authority of the ‘ancient institutions’ (koje 古制)” and envisioned the creation of a perfect Confucian society that resembled the three ancient dynasties of Xia 夏, Shang 商, and Zhou 周.\footnote{Deuchler, “Neo-Confucianism: The Impulse for Social Action in Yi Korea,” 79.}\footnote{Ledyard, 150-151.} Thus, Ch’oe Man-li’s opposition to the king on the basis of the accounts above was legitimate, given Chosôn’s standing as a genuine Confucian state and its concerns for the very political legitimacy of its existence.\footnote{Deuchler, “Neo-Confucianism: The Impulse for Social Action in Yi Korea,” 79.}

Toward idu, the anti-HC group displayed much more sympathy, for the reason that idu had been functioning as an instrument that fostered learning (hûnghaksông 興學性). As discussed previously, “hûnghaksông” was one of the positive aspects the pro-HC faction
advocated in their promotion of the vernacular script: the new script would be an enlightening tool for scholars when they encountered difficulties in understanding hanmun originals when studying only with hanja-origin references. Whereas both groups supported their arguments with the concept of “hûnghaksông,” the anti-HC faction’s voice is imbued with an elitist interest in “linguistic monopoly” in its response to the changes in the existing linguistic ecology or to any potential threats that might arise due to the emergence of the new script. See the following for Ch’oe’s remarks on idu and his arguments against HC:

...If we put the Vernacular Script into practice, then it will be the Vernacular Script that clerks will exclusively study. They will have no regard for learning. Clerks and officials will diverge from one another and form two classes with respect to writing. If clerks can gain positions by means of the Vernacular Script, then those who come afterward will see that it is so and regard knowledge of the twenty-seven letter Vernacular Script as sufficient to establish themselves in the world. Why would they have to strain their minds and labor their thoughts going through the study of “Nature and Pattern”? After a few decades of this, surely there won’t be too many people who know Chinese characters. They might be able to use the Vernacular Script in application to clerkly matters, but if they don’t know the writings of the sages and wise men, “they will not study, their faces will be to the wall.” They will be blind with respect to right and wrong in the Pattern of things...103

On one level, Ch’oe Man-li is deeply concerned about the future of Chosôn; on another level, however, one detects that his concern may be one that he professes as one of Chosôn’s vested interests, one concerning the potential agitation of the status quo. Ch’oe is clearly alarmed about the potential sharing of his privilege with some lowly clerks who do not possess the same profundity in knowledge of Neo-Confucianism. What Ch’oe views in the prospect of popularized

103 Ibid., 142-3.
use of the vernacular script is an opening of a different and "potentially subversive" path through which to gain social privilege. Such could be a potential threat to the economic and socio-political legitimacy that the Neo-Confucian elites had shared exclusively. In this sense, Ch’oe’s anti-HC memorial reflected the politics of literacy and was a proposal for language planning that sought economic and cultural supremacy of the elites—monopolization. Even so, Ch’oe’s elitist attitude manifested in his opposition to the invention of the vernacular script is a valid claim for a conservative Confucian scholar aware of one’s responsibility to maintaining the social stability and the wellbeing of the state through one’s constant effort in self-cultivation based on Neo-Confucian teaching. Moreover, as Ledyard (1966) observes, Chosôn’s “assertion of cultural independence was tantamount to political disloyalty,” considering Chosôn’s commitment to the full-fledged Sino-centric world order.

In response to Ch’oe’s arguments, King Sejong responded with another legitimate counter-argument and with his monarchical authority as a Confucian scholar-king striving to take responsibility for civilizing (敎化) his people through Neo-Confucian teaching by introducing an effective new script. For the learned group in society, Sejong wished to provide an accurate and effective writing system that could standardize Chinese character pronunciation so as to facilitate scholarly pursuits. For the less learned in society, Sejong wished to provide a learner-

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104 Ledyard, 151.
105 Herein perhaps lies what caused Ch’oe to be criticized most harshly and even vilified by present-day Koreans—with expressions like “Ch’oe’s elitist greed that audaciously objected to Sejong the Great’s lofty concerns for the general public.” The expression in the quotation is not a translation of an existing statement but still nonetheless encapsulates uninformed, popular sentiment against Ch’oe Man-li today. Some have even labeled Ch’oe a “sinner against Korean history” (yoksa ã‘ choeín 歷史의 罪人) in daily periodical articles. I would like to echo Ledyard’s view on how to judge or not to judge Ch’oe Man-li. Ledyard remarks on page 152, “Sejong’s language plans involved much more than reform; they required a social revolution... It is a tribute to his genius that, when the time was ripe, his alphabet stood ready to fill the need; only then could his hopes—and Ch’oe Man-li’s worst fears—come to pass. It will not do, however, to sit in judgment upon 15th-century Korea, and characterize Sejong as a lone, patriotic and progressive genius in an age of rasping reactionaries. In a society where the perfected standards of a revered antiquity were exalted, and the setting of new precedents was often feared, it was Sejong’s plans that were unrealistic and visionary, and Ch’oe Man-li’s conservatism that, for the bureaucratic class at least, was the responsible, position...”
106 Deuchler, 71-111.
107 Ledyard, 150.
friendly writing system so that they, too, could “become loyal subjects, filial children, and constant women.”

King Sejong showed enormous enthusiasm for experimentation with the new script at the court. He implemented a top-down process of dissemination of the vernacular script. Sejong’s concern about training in the vernacular script included the lowest civil officials like secretaries, those in the highest positions like his counselors, and the future ruler, the Crown Prince. Vis-à-vis his court officials, Sejong would purposely convey his messages in the vernacular script only in order to demonstrate the utility of the script as a literary language as well as to testify to the new script’s ability to decrease difficulties of communication in Chinese characters only.

Sŏnggyun'gwan (Royal Academy) students were now required to be competent in manipulating the vernacular script.

Perhaps in response to Sejong’s zeal, royal family members and other palace residents are recorded as the first to produce various writings in the vernacular script. The first historical record concerning a royal family member’s use of vernacular script is found in 1451, when Prince Yangnyŏng (Sejong’s eldest brother) wrote Munjong an ŏn’gan (vernacular script missive), demanding an early discharge of a certain literatus named Kim Kyŏng-jun, who was in exile at the time, so that Kim’s daughter could marry.

Although all formal training in the vernacular script in the palace seems to have been designed for men, women in the palace appear to have been far more active and perhaps more accepting in dealings with the vernacular script. The vernacular script was used as writing medium between various classes of women in the palace and they used it in order to profess their opinions and to influence public decisions. For instance, in 1453 there was an incident involving a report by a lady-in-waiting to the late Sejong’s consort about a sexual relation of her fellow

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108 Ibid., 148.
lady-in-waiting with a court servant (pyŏlgam). Sejong’s consort immediately wrote an ön’gan to the reigning king Tanjong seeking a proper punishment for people involved.110 A similar case is observed when a lady-in-waiting wrote an ŭngan for the Prince Kuŏng and conveyed her message through a eunuch. These cases of low-class women manipulating the vernacular script in expressing their private emotions may have caused some degree of deterioration in the new script’s reputation in the court.

The vernacular script was often used on politically charged occasions. There is evidence of certain queens and royal consorts writing petitions in the vernacular script to change political or legal decisions. For instance, Queen Chŏnghŭi, in an ön’gan from 1458, eloquently demanded that her husband, King Sejo, reconsider the degree of punishment of people involved in a certain political incident. Most notably, the vernacular script was used as a substitute for hanmun or idu especially during the period of female regency. Queen Chŏnghŭi, during her regency starting from 1469 and for the subsequent seven years (King Yejong and King Sŏngjong), would convey her messages relating to royal orders or policies in the vernacular script.

Various HC-related projects were launched and these prompted Sejong to employ whomever he considered optimal and capable, even if it meant depriving a district of its newly appointed magistrate. Thus, a certain official named Kim Ku 金駒 (n.d.-1462) had to be recalled in order to carry out an HC-related project for Sejong. Surprisingly, Kim Ku was recalled to replace Kim Mun 金汶 (n.d.-1448), who formerly opposed Sejong’s project to create the HC.111 By employing Kim Mun, Sejong demonstrated that he took the vernacular script so seriously as to disregard his personal emotions and place the results of the HC project as his top priority.

These HC-related projects reveal that Sejong and his pro-HC faction aimed to provide the Chosŏn literati, students and various clerks with an accurate literary tool to transcribe the sound

110 Kim Il-gûn, 21.
111 Kim Mun died soon after Sejong appointed him.
values of Chinese characters. The debates between the anti-\( HC \) faction and Sejong and his pro-
\( HC \) faction reveal that their primary concern was to Confucianize Chosôn and to preserve Chosôn’s cultural achievements in following Chinese civilization. These pros and cons surrounding the coming of the new script rarely focused on the potential benefits of the new script in the lives of the commoner class. My emphasis on Sejong and others’ elite-centered approaches to the invention of the vernacular script is not to deny Sejong’s concern for the general public. Indeed Sejong expressed his deep concern about the frequent injustices inflicted upon the general populace due to the ineffective writing system(s) based on foreign Chinese characters. And the fact that he planned and carried through the vernacular translation of the \textit{Samgang haengsilto} (Actual Conduct of the Three Bonds, Illustrated), despite skepticism expressed by Chông Ch’ang-son 鄭昌孫 (1402-1487),\footnote{Chông Ch’angson was employed by Sejong’s son, Sejo, for projects to fix \textit{kugyol} annotations to the Confucian Classics for their eventual vernacular translations.} is a clear indication that Sejong was a beneficent ruler for the general public. My emphasis is rather on the two-sided nature of the phrase “\textit{hunmin}” in the vernacular script and on how a lopsided emphasis on the alleged role of the vernacular script in the lives of the general public can eclipse the importance of the vernacular script in the lives of the elite.

\subsection*{3.5. Vernacular Translation Projects during Sejong and Sejo}

After the vernacular script was promulgated, the palace—both inner and outer—became the center where the script was studied, tested, and practiced; most importantly, it was where all the vernacular translations of various Chinese texts and other foreign texts took place. The year of 1475, when Sohye’s \textit{Naehun} was released, was characterized by various activities surrounding vernacular translations of Chinese and Buddhist texts. Admittedly, a far greater number were Buddhist texts; this, however, does not mean that the Chosôn court had forgotten about its
devotion to Neo-Confucianism. In fact, various historical facts surrounding the publication of the Naehun shed new light on a plausible scenario whereby Sohye’s writing of the Naehun is closely related to these vernacular translation projects taking place in the palace due to an increasing interest in the pursuit of studies of Confucian philosophy as well as to the royal family’s pedagogical concerns. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the vernacular translation projects that took place during the reigns of King Sejong and Sejo and how these royal projects must have formed the very motivation behind Queen Sohye’s idea to come up with her own Confucian educational text.

During his reign, King Sejong established an organization called the Ōnmunch’ōng 諫文廳 (Vernacular Script Commission) and used the Crown Prince’s—who later ascended the throne as Munjong 文宗 (1414-1452; r. 1450-1452)—office as the central bureau for the promulgation of the vernacular script. After King Sejong’s death in 1450, the enthusiasm for the new script appears to have subsided somewhat. But with the ascension of King Sejo to the throne in 1455, the situation changed and once again projects related to the vernacular script flourished. In 1461, Sejo established the Kan’gyong togam (Temporary General Directorate for the Publishing of Sutras) and through this organ produced huge numbers of Buddhist sutras. This organ lasted some 11 years and produced 33 hanmun-only sutras and 9 vernacular translations of sutras. Sejo took this publishing organ and his mission of text production seriously; he made sure that meticulous information was collected about how much manpower was mobilized, and who participated in each project.

Sejong’s interest in publishing was also conspicuous in his enthusiasm for fixing kugyŏl annotations to the Confucian Classics, although the evidence for this is not immediately obvious.

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113 Ledyard, 140.
114 Ch’oe Yun’gon, “Kan’gyong togam ū sîch’e wa puljón kanhaeng saôp,” 153-168.
115 See ibid., 154-158, for the structure, operation, and function of this organ.
No particular vernacular translations of Confucian philosophy-based writings were published during the reign of Sejong. And Sejong’s immediate successors, from Munjong, Tanjong (1441-1457; r.1452-1455), Sejo, Yejong and through to Sŏngjong, produced no translations of significant canonical Confucian writings; the texts published in the first decades of the new script included Chinese riming dictionaries, foreign language textbooks, medical manuals, agricultural manuals, etc. What we also find in the way of vernacular translations of texts from the reigns of Sejong through Sŏngjong are large numbers of Buddhist sutras. As far as texts related to Confucian philosophical learning are concerned, it was not until 1518 during Chungjong that we find a complete vernacular translation of the Xiaoxue —the Pŏn’yŏk Sohak (Elementary Learning, Translated). Furthermore, the first translations of all of the Four Books and the Three Classics appeared as late as during the reign of Sŏnjo.

But the Sejong Sillok (Annals of King Sejong) reveals that it was in fact Sejong who initiated the prolonged and tardy vernacular translations of the Four Books. Sejong’s drive to come up with a readable, accurately annotated Chosŏn version of the Confucian Classics had begun even before the promulgation of the hunmin chong’um, as he carried out the fixing of traditional kugyŏl annotations to the Four Books. In 1428, the tenth year of his reign, Sejong ordered his officials to launch a kugyŏl project for the Xiaoxue, Liji and the Four Books. Sejong’s intention was to come up with texts that could stand parallel to Zhu Xi’s and Cheng Yi’s annotations and commentaries to the Classics so that Chosŏn scholars could benefit from these in their Confucian education. Some of his subjects like Maeng

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116 The examples include Tongguk chŏng’un, Hongmu chŏng’un yŏkhun 洪武正贗譯訓 (1455; Tanjong 3), etc.
117 The Irop’a 伊路波 (1492; Sŏngjong 23) was a primer for learners of Japanese language.
118 Ku’gup kan’i-bang 救急簡易方 (Easy Guide for Medical Emergencies, 1489; Sŏngjong 20).
119 Kŭm’yŏng chammok 衮陽雜錄 (putatively 1492; Sŏngjong 23).
Sa-sŏng 孟思誠 (1360-1438) opposed Sejong’s idea on the grounds that providing such cribs would only make scholars grow lazy. Nevertheless, Sejong’s kugyŏl project moved ahead. Scholars’ opposition does not seem to have slowed down Sejong in carrying out his project; yet, this project did not come to fruition during his lifetime. Until Sejo ascended the throne, kugyŏl annotation projects for the Confucian Classics seem to have been left neglected.

Several possible reasons can be imagined for the tardiness in fixing first the kugyŏl, and then producing vernacular translations of Confucian philosophy texts. To start with the most superficial, one notes that most of the early state-sponsored publication projects were of Buddhist sutras and commentaries and one rarely finds publications of Confucian philosophical writings. Possibly, with all the bloodshed in the process of dynastic change from Koryŏ to Chosŏn in the case of T’aejo 太祖 (1335-1408; r. 1392-1398), followed by the legitimacy struggles in the case of T’aejong 太宗 (1367-1422; r. 1400-1418) who had to remove his own brothers from the throne, and Sejo, who overthrew his nephew Tanjong by a coup-d’État, these early kings of Chosŏn actively sponsored the publication of Buddhist sutras in the hopes of expiating their blood-shedding. Buddhist sutras were also published for the commemoration of deaths of royal family members. Not only were the early kings personally affiliated to or engaged in Buddhism, but they also had to be cautious in their Confucianization of a country where Buddhist elements were deeply rooted in people’s life and customs.

An Pyŏnghŭi and Deuchler seek answers as to how we should understand the tardiness of the realization of the translations of Confucian philosophical writings, given in the state of relative maturity of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism. As mentioned earlier, Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism can be traced back to the late-Koryŏ period. But, however enthusiastic early Chosŏn elites may have been in their reception of neo-Confucian philosophy, it is highly likely that the relative youth of the tradition left them ill-equipped and with insufficient practiced
knowledge at first. An Pyonghui informs us that “…Buddhism had occupied the scholarly and philosophical mainstream during Silla and Koryo and Confucianism was a minor tributary branch… Although Confucianism had the upper hand in the early Choson period, it is possible that Buddhist influence on society was equally strong…”\textsuperscript{120} He also points out that civil officials (文臣) such as Kim Su-on 金守溫 (1410-1481) and Han Kye-mi 韓繼美 (1421-1471) had profound enough knowledge in Buddhist philosophy to allow them to work as core participants along with the respected monk Sinmi 信眉 (n.d.) in the publications of vernacular translations of various Buddhist sutras. By contrast, the Sejong Sillok portray the scholar Pyön Kye-ryang 卞季良 (1369-1430) as declining Sejong’s order to fix kugyŏl to the Liji, and apologizing for his lack of competence because he had not studied this text before. It may be difficult to imagine a respected Choson scholar like Pyön confessing lack of knowledge of a canonical Confucian text, but considering the prolonged social transformation process, philosophical sophistication and maturity in Neo-Confucianism is likely to have taken just as long.

Deuchler also discusses the difficulties that early Choson state-builders faced in their adoption and adaptation of foreign Song Neo-Confucianism.\textsuperscript{121} Although early Choson Confucian scholars shared a common interest in the adoption of Song Neo-Confucianism, each had his own understanding about how the new philosophical foundation was to take root alongside the indigenous tradition. Some scholars insisted on whole-hearted commitment to the restoration of the ancient sage kingdoms, which Neo-Confucians believed Korea had once experienced through Kija Choson, even if it meant eventual riddance of the existing tradition; Chŏng To-jon 鄭道傳 (1337-1398) believed in a social reform that would “close the gap between the ideal past and the contemporary situation by removing the last vestiges of

\textsuperscript{120} An Pyonghui, “Sejo ui kyōngsŏ kugyŏl,” 165.
\textsuperscript{121} Martina Deuchler, “Neo-Confucianism: The Impulse for Social Action in Early Yi Korea,” 71-111.
indigenous, that is, pre-Kija customs, and replacing them with institutions that would guarantee the continuation and eventual integration of Kija’s teachings in Korean society. There were also less radical thinkers, such as the above-mentioned Pyŏn Kye-ryang, who were rather neutral, or others, like Yang Sŏng-ji 梁誠之 (1415-1482), who were keenly aware of the threat to native customs and asserted the importance of preserving indigenous tradition. These discussions by An and Deuchler suggest that the tardiness in the translations of Confucian classics was connected in no small way with the premature state of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism. Indeed, major philosophical debates and the formation of various Neo-Confucian schools (hakp’ap学校) become conspicuous only in the sixteenth century.

By Sejo’s time, scholars appear to have become more confident, at least insofar as no one turned down the king’s order to carry out the vernacular translations of the Confucian Classics, and they began to have debates concerning correct interpretations of the original hanmun texts of the Confucian Classics. Sejo’s contribution to vernacular translations of the Confucian Classics projects was enormous in that his enthusiasm in fixing kugyol to the main passages of the Classics later became the foundation for the eventual materialization of the complete translations of the Four Books and Three Classics. Sejo’s kyŏngsŏ kugyol projects aimed at completing nine texts. Here are the names of the concerned texts and the personages to whom the projects were entrusted.122

| Zhouyi 周易 (Book of Changes) | Sejo 世祖 |
| Shijing 詩經 (Book of Odes) | Chŏng In-ji 鄭麟趾 |
| Shujing 書經 (Book of Documents) | Chŏng Ch’ang-son 鄭昌孫 |
| Liji 禮記 (Book of Rites) | Sin Suk-chu 申叔舟 |
| Xiaoxue 小學 (Elementary Learning) | Sejo |
| Lunyu 論語 (Analects) | Yi Sŏk-hyŏng 李石亨 (1415-1477) |

122 The following table is a copy of the table in An Pyŏnhŭi, “Sejo ŭi kyŏngsŏ kugyŏl,” 161.
Sejo himself took charge of two texts—the Zhouyi and the Xiaoxue. The Sejo Sillok records Sejo’s
tireless devotion to the projects he inherited from his father, Sejong. Sejo also participated in the
*kugyŏl* project and fixed vernacular-script *kugyŏl* annotations for the *Wujing* 武經 (Classic of
Military Strategies). While working on these projects, Sejo and other participants disagreed on
many occasions about the interpretation of certain passages; their discussions delayed the *kugyŏl*
project further. Without being discouraged, Sejo took his subjects’ objections to his
interpretations of the texts as valuable reference points in perfecting the accuracy of his *kugyŏl*
annotations. For instance, by having his subjects compare his *kugyŏl* annotations with the
precedent set by Kwŏn Kŭn 權近 (1352-1409), in the time of King T’aejo 太祖 (1335-1408; r.
1392-98), Sejo continuously modified his *kugyŏl* annotations. The records of the Sejo Sillok
depict Sejo as continuing his discussions with his subjects or listening to their debates only
weeks before his death.

Given his prioritizing of book production over his own health, one wonders if he was not
perhaps equally obsessed with the vernacular translation projects. What made Sejo so committed
to this project? Two impulses are detected: the growing interest in and increasing sophistication
of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism, and the kings’ concern with appropriate pedagogy for successive

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123 There also appear to have been scholars who felt uncomfortable about Sejo’s attempt to conduct “textual meddling”—a notion that Yi Sung-nyŏng has suggested in his speculations about the origins of the anti-**HC** memorial. Considering that Sejo’s *kugyŏl* projects aimed at standardizing Chosŏn scholars’ Classical Chinese reading, Yi’s speculation is plausible. The conservative Confucian scholars’ fear of encountering any unwanted “textual meddling” must have continued even after Sejong and Sejo’s time. During Sŏnjo, a scholar-official named No Su-sin 底守慎 (1515-1590) broached a similar topic against Sŏnjo’s vernacular translation projects of the Confucian Classics in 1574, arguing that interpretation of the Classics should be dealt with by individual scholars and thus one should not attempt to translate the Confucian classics into the vernacular script based on the existing *kugyŏl*-ed texts. An Pyŏng-hŭi, “Sejo ŭi kyŏngsŏ kugyŏl, saop,” in which I found the aforementioned information, relates this issue with No Su-sin’s personal grudge against Yu Hŭi-ch’un, to whom Sŏnjo delegated the project. It is notable that a similar issue resurfaces some 100 years after it was first broached.
kings. Both Sejong and Sejo were noted for their pedagogical interests in producing admonitory
texts that could pass on to their successors. The *Myŏnghwang Kyegam* 明皇詔鑑 (Admonitory
Mirror of Bright Emperors) and the *Myŏnghwang Kyegam ónhae* (Admonitory Mirror of Bright
Emperors, Vernacular Translation) attract our interest. This Classical Chinese text dealing with
the Tang Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685-762; r. 712-756) and his beloved Yang Guifei 楊貴妃
(719-756) was commissioned by Sejong in 1411. Sejong, alarmed by the sudden fall of
Xuanzong into self-indulgence after his meeting with Yang Guifei, summoned subjects such as
Pak P’aeng-nyŏn and other members of the Royal Library (Chiphyŏnjŏn 集賢殿; College of
Assembled Worthies), to compile an admonitory text with illustrations and 168 accompanying
*kasa* compositions. His motivations were both self-guidance and concern for his successors.
Not surprisingly, Sejong’s strivings to become a beneficent Confucian monarch were inherited
by Sejo. Sejo, having read the text for himself, expressed a desire to supplement the existing
story with a more assertive accentuation of its themes. He, too, summoned his scholars to do
further research for the text and then to translate the results together with Sejong’s original into
the vernacular script.

Sejo himself also expressed an unmistaken eagerness for self-admonition and education
of future kings. Sejo bestowed an admonitory text upon his two sons—Tŏkchong and Yejong,
respectively—when each was his heir apparent. The first text was the *Difan* 帝範 (Codes of the
Emperor; K. *Chebŏm*) by emperor Taizong 太宗 (626-649) of Tang and the second is called
the *Hunsa* 訓辭 (Words of Instruction), modeled after the former and written by Sejo himself.

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125 鐘世之雰鑑.
126 The *Difan* consists of the following twelve chapters: Ch.1 帝體; Ch.2 建親; Ch.3 求賢; Ch.4 審官; Ch.5 納諫;
Ch.6 去諫; Ch.7 劍燕; Ch.8 崇儉; Ch.9 賞罰; Ch.10 務農; Ch.11 閻武; Ch.12 崇文.
127 The *Hunsa* consists of the following ten chapters: Ch.1 帝德; Ch.2 敬神; Ch.3 納諫; Ch.4 修謨; Ch.5 用人; Ch.6
勿侈; Ch.7 使宦; Ch.8 慎刑; Ch.9 正武; Ch.10 善述.
Yun Chông’s analysis of Sejo’s *Hunsa* and his interest in this Tang dynasty conduct manual for future emperors argues that behind Sejo’s enthusiasm lay his desire to strengthen his political legitimacy.¹²⁸ His desire to resemble his father, Sejong, was most likely related to his desire to consolidate his precarious political legitimacy as well as protect his successors.¹²⁹ It is unclear to what extent Sejo’s intentions were shared among the royal family members. What is clear, however, is that Sejong and Sejo shared a vision of transforming Chosôn into a Confucian state and chose to sponsor Confucian education through their commitment to faithful and accurate interpretation of the Classics using the new vernacular script and providing proper codes of conduct for themselves as well as for the future monarchs. The vernacular translation projects of the Confucian Classics were the burden they willingly shouldered as dutiful monarchs and as optimists of the vernacular script.

3.6. Sharing Visions: Coming of the *Naehun*

I wish to suggest that Sohye shared Sejong’s and Sejo’s vision of Confucian learning. It appears that Sohye, in fact, may have not only witnessed all the vernacular translations at close quarters, but also actively participated herself, perhaps as an assistant. According to Court Lady Cho’s postface to the *Naehun*, Sohye’s relationship with Sejo appears to have been very close:

¹²⁸ Yun Chông, “Chosôn Sejodae ‘Hunsa’ p’yŏnch’ an ūi chŏngch’ i sasang-jŏk úimi,” 31-63.
¹²⁹ Sejo’s legitimacy suffered an irrevocable blemish in that Sejo ascended the throne by usurping it from his own nephew, Tanjong. In the process, Sejo killed numerous people who were not only respected and brilliant, but also his father’s most beloved subjects. Yun Chông also remarks that Yongjo republished Sejo’s *Hunsa*. Yun does not provide any analysis of why Yongjo might have been interested in such a project. Remembering JaHyun Haboush’s *A Heritage of Kings*, which deals with Chosôn factionalism and the death of Prince Sado during Yongjo’s time with respect to Yongjo’s precarious political legitimacy, I suspect that Yongjo published Sejo’s *Hunsa* for a similar motivation; that is, to consolidate his own fragile political legitimacy due to the continued allegations against him of fratricide of his elder brother Kyŏngjong 景宗 (1688-1724; r. 1720-1724). Note also that he did not issue from a legitimate marital relation, but from that of a king, his father Sukchong 諧宗 (1661-1720; r. 1674-1720), and his mother, Sukpin Ch’oe 淑嫔崔氏, who once was a low-level lady-in-waiting.
Her Highness, Venerable Queen Insu (Sohye) tirelessly upheld the works of both [the inner and the outer palaces] day and night ever since the Great King Sejo was [residing] at the Chamjŏ. When she was named consort [of the Crown Prince], she cultivated the proper conduct of a married woman all the more. She volunteered to take care of the royal meals and was in attendance at all times. The Great King Sejo praised her as a filial daughter-in-law and made her filial sincerity known by endowing her with the emblem of “filial daughter-in-law.” She was by nature strict and upright, and in her upbringing of the royal offspring she would never leave the tiniest mistake unamended and hidden, but would admonish with a stern countenance. The two palaces called her the “Tigress Consort.”

One intriguing but inconclusive fact from this postface is Court Lady Cho’s reference to Sohye’s serving “both [the inner and the outer palaces] day and night ever since the Great King Sejo was [residing] at the Chamjŏ.” This word “Chamjŏ” designates the residence for an heir apparent. When I first encountered this statement, two questions immediately arose: what kind of business did Sejo have at the Chamjŏ? And what did Court Lady Cho mean when she said Sohye served “both palaces”? When I learned that Sejo as prince was involved in various kugyŏl projects as well as in the vernacular translations of texts even while Sejong was alive, I began entertaining the possibility of interpreting this comment of Court Lady Cho about “both palaces” as Sejo’s kugyŏl involvement in text production and vernacular translations, as well as Sohye’s involvement therein, however minor or major her role may have been. I am now even more convinced, as Ch’oe Yun-gon in his article on Sejo’s Kan’gyŏng togam interprets Sejo’s work at the “Chamjŏ” as his involvement in the vernacular translations of Buddhist sutras in assistance to his father Sejong.130

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130 Ch’oe Yun-gon, 153.
I would like to draw attention to the layout of Sohye’s Naehun, which presents each entry in the order of hanmun-cum-kugyŏl annotations followed by its reiteration in vernacular translations, with each column of the text’s leaves allowing just one line per column.131 This is exactly the format found in Sejo’s kugyŏl-annotated Confucian classics,132 clearly different from the vast majority of the vernacular translations of sutras from the Kan’gyŏng togam, which feature two/three-lined translations (ssanghaeng, two lines per column).133 In fact Sohye’s Naehun is one of the very first texts to follow this format in this period. Moreover, this format appears to have developed into the standard format for translations of Confucian canonical works: for instance, Sohye’s Naehun, the Pŏn’yŏk Sohak 麗譯小學 (Translated Elementary Learning, 1518; Chungjong 13), the Sohak ŏnhae 小學諧解 (Elementary Learning, Translated, 1587; Sŏnjo 20), the Chungyong ŏnhae 中庸諧解 (Book of Changes, Translated; Sŏnjo ?), and the Hyogyong ŏnhae 孝經諧解 (Book of Filial Piety, Translated) all feature this type of format.134 The question as to the reason for such a change is difficult to answer. Perhaps this kind of change occurred because Confucian works were far less voluminous than Buddhist sutras leading the publishers to come up with the idea of allowing two lines per column for translations.135

Apart from this hypothesis, I also propose that—bearing in mind Ch’oe Yŏnmi’s argument that one of the three motivations for Sohye’s writing of the Naehun originated with the

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131 See Appendix (iii) for images of Sohye’s Naehun.
132 One Buddhist sutra translation is in this format. This was published in 1490, about 15 years after the Naehun’s completion.
133 See Appendix (iv): (a)-(d) for images of Buddhist texts translated into the vernacular script.
134 See Appendix (vi) for images of these aforementioned texts.
135 Or perhaps one-line-per-column was found to be more suitable in creating a reader-friendlier environment for potential readers. Michael Kim’s contrast of “popular readers” of the latter half of the Chosŏn period as opposed to “elite literati males’ Confucian [text reading]” may shed light on the subject: “readership during the early period mostly consisted of elite literati males who had the persistence and financial resources to devote several years of their lives to the mastery of classical Chinese. Throughout much of the Chosŏn period, the literati generally read canonical texts intensively and repeatedly...” See Michael Kim, “Literary Production, Circulating Libraries, and Private Publishing in Chosŏn Korea,” 1-32.
zeal for publications of various Buddhist sutras initiated by Queen Chǒnghŭi\textsuperscript{136} that continued during the reign of King Sŏngjong, Sohye’s son—Sohye’s residence in an environment of ceaseless vernacular translations of the Confucian Classics made her keenly aware of her capability to produce a text of her own. Sohye was a core member of the royal family. As the primary consort of the deceased Crown Prince Êigyŏng, who once was the epitome of Sejo’s hope when he first bestowed the Difan upon him, and also as queen mother, she observed King Sejo and others working strenuously on the vernacular translations of the Confucian Classics. Her own knowledge of hanmun, through which she could comprehend the words of the sages and admonitions of scholars, and her frustration at the sight of people ignorant of the importance of education of women, may have prompted her to contribute to her forefathers’ Confucianization process. In such a way, both the new script and the translation projects using the new script opened up to Sohye a way for her to materialize in the Naehun her stance on Confucian philosophy and the importance of education of women. That Sohye’s Naehun is one of the earliest admonitory texts produced by the Chosŏn court seems to indicate that Sohye shared the dynastic pedagogical projects first indicated by her father-in-law’s interest in instructing her husband when he was the crown prince. In this respect, the Myŏnghwang Kyegam, Chebŏm and the Hunsa served as forerunners to the Naehun, and for this reason, it is possible that Sohye included her son, Sŏngjong, among her potential audience.

\textsuperscript{136} Two other reasons that Ch’oe Yŏn-mi finds for the publication of the Naehun in 1475 are (i) the state of Chosŏn was keenly aware of the need for education of women for reasons of consolidation of the Confucian social order (“kukka chǒngbi ch’awón”) and (ii) Sohye hoped for an enlightening (kyemong 启蒙) precept (kyohunsŏ 教訓書) translated into the vernacular script so that it could be spread among women in the palace as well as among other women.
4. A Comparison of Ban Zhao's *Nüjie* and Queen Sohye's *Naehun*

In the previous section, I suggested that Sohye likely deepened her knowledge of Confucian philosophy through her close connection to the Chosŏn state's vernacular translation projects taking place in the palace. This particular environment of vernacular translation projects at court seems to have affected the way Sohye understood and applied Confucian philosophy in her concept of “*nae* (C. *nei*; inner)” and “*hun* (C. *xun*; instructions).” I argue that Sohye’s instructions reveal that she understood the line demarking men and women as a rather flexible one—one through which women could actively affect the public sphere occupied by men—and that Sohye’s instructions possibly address the entire state of Chosŏn, not merely women of Chosŏn. In order to argue this, I examine the Confucian gender roles pursued by Sohye and how she applied her understanding to the *Naehun* by comparing the voices in Sohye’s *Naehun* and Ban Zhao’s *Nüjie*.\(^{137}\)

There are several reasons I have chosen Ban Zhao’s text. One *Sillok* entry of 1469 (Sŏnjong 1) reveals that six years prior to the release of Sohye’s *Naehun* in 1475, a complete set of the Venerable Madame Cao’s [Ban Zhao’s husband’s surname] *Nüjie* was taken out to be fixed with *kugyŏl* annotations by the *Yemun’gwan* (Office of Literary Production).\(^{138}\)

First, both the *Nüjie* and the *Naehun* consist of seven chapters. The authors of both texts share  

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\(^{137}\) Several scholars of the *Naehun*, in fact, have compared Empress Renxiao’s *Neixun* and Sohye’s *Naehun* for their apparent resemblances. Kim Chi-yong, Yang Myŏng-hŭi, “*Naehun*,” 159-172, Duncan, and Ch’oe Yŏn-mi, have included in their articles comparisons, both brief and extensive, between the *Neixun* and the *Naehun*. But all of them acknowledge that there is little resemblance. In my opinion, de Bary is right to point out that the resemblance between the *Neixun* and the *Naehun* is to be found in their devotion to the theme of learned, instructress women. Sohye herself never mentions Empress Renxiao or Ban Zhao in her *Naehun*. Nor does she ever acknowledge the existence of her use of any text that features commonalities with her own text. Not only do China’s *Neixun* and Sohye’s *Naehun* share the same title, they also feature other commonalities. What scholars have pointed out is as follows: both were written in the fifteenth century; both authors were female, and both were wives of rulers (although, in Sohye’s case, her husband received a posthumous title much after his death, when Sohye’s son, King Sŏnjong, ascended the throne. Deciding a proper name for the deceased crown prince was one of the lengthiest discussions in the history of the Chosŏn court.) The contents of the *Neixun* and the *Naehun* deal with the education of women and emphasize the importance of women’s education for the good of not only the household but also the state.  

\(^{138}\) *Sŏnjong sillok* 8 (01/02/07).
the experience of serving female regents—*de facto* rulers—as private counselors.  

Both texts argue in unison for the importance of education for women in the prefaces written by their authors. Out of the seven chapters of Ban Zhao’s text, five chapters are incorporated in Sohye’s *Naehun*. These two texts also came into existence at a time of growing concern over how to foster Confucian gender norms in Han China and Chosŏn Korea, respectively. Most importantly, scholars of the *Naehun* have often selected passages from Ban Zhao’s text in order to discuss their analyses of the *Naehun*; the problem with these analyses is that it is questionable Ban Zhao’s text legitimately represents as the summary of the entire contents of the *Naehun*.

These two texts will be compared in terms of their proposed audience, overall themes, portrayals of virtuous women, and finally, of their authors’ tone of voice. Each topic reveals Sohye’s wish for her text to manifest Chosŏn’s commitment to Neo-Confucianism through an alignment of her text with Ban Zhao’s *Nüjie*.

Before I proceed, I would like to provide some biographical information about Ban Zhao and illustrate the popularity of her text *Nüjie* and her command of textual authority in Confucian China. Ban Zhao is the first woman in Chinese history “to write a significant body of work in all of the genres of literature of her time.” One of the many well-known facts about Ban Zhao is her contribution to the *Han shu* (Official History of Han Dynasty), the dynastic history of the Western Han. This work was originally the task of her father Ban Biao, who felt a need to write a history that would supplement Sima Qian’s (B.C.145?-90?) *Shiji* (史記). When Ban Biao died, his son Ban Gu took over the project. When Ban Gu, too, died, Ban Zhao was summoned to court to continue the project and to take charge of completing the Eight Tables.

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139 Admittedly, no official history explicitly states Sohye’s role as personal counselor to Queen Chŏnghŭi. However, as Duncan, 37-8, suggests it is highly likely that Sohye was involved in court politics one way or another. Sohye was an active advocate of securing Buddhist monks’ rights, as Ch’oe Yŏn-mi and Duncan point out.

140 Kim Chi-yong and Yi Chŏng-dŏk, “Urinara ŭi chŏnt’ong-jŏk pudŏk ŭl koch’al” are such examples.

141 Idema and Grant. 18.
(8表) and Treatise on Astronomy (天文志). This project was later completed by Ma Xu 马续 (n.d.). Ban Zhao served as an imperial tutor of the young Empress Deng (whose biography Sohye includes in her Naehun) and when Empress Deng ruled as empress dowager from B.C. 160 to B.C. 120, Ban Zhao served as her advisor. She wrote her Nüjie in late in life to instruct her daughters who were about to get married.\textsuperscript{142} The Nüjie, consisting of seven chapters, along with her biography, was included in the Han shu, and enjoyed the most prestigious status as mother of all canonical works that discuss wifely duties. For example, in the Nü xiaojing (Book of Filial Piety for Women), attributed to a woman known as Née Zheng sometime after the Han dynasty,\textsuperscript{143} it is said that she wrote her text by making “considerable adaptations [of the Xiaojing (Book of Filial Piety)] to make [her text] suit females.”\textsuperscript{144} Interestingly, the author of the Nü xiaojing places Ban Zhao in the position of Confucius. Nü xiaojing circulated during the Song dynasty and evidence for it is found in some paintings that survive to this day.\textsuperscript{145} Not only women like Miss Zheng expressed respect toward Ban Zhao and her work, but also a prominent Song Neo-Confucian, Sima Guang, quoted her work in his own precepts, the Jiafan, in order to argue that women “would make better wives if they had learned to read.”\textsuperscript{146}

4.1. Naehun and Nüjie: Intertextual Connections

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<th>Nüjie</th>
<th>Naehun</th>
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<td>卑弱 Lowly and Weak</td>
<td>言行 Speech and Comportment</td>
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\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 33. Note these two hypotheses about the “daughters” that Ban Zhao mentions: “It would seem, however, that her daughters would have been married by then, unless we assume that her daughters were born very late. Another possibility is that the daughters concerned were the daughters born to younger concubines of her husband.”

\textsuperscript{147} Ebrey states, “Evidence for dating of the Book of Filial Piety for Women is scanty” in “Book of Filial Piety for Women,” 47-69.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 47.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{146} Ebrey, Women and the Family in Chinese History, 29.
The intertextual relationship between these two texts is as follows.

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<th>Nüjie</th>
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<td>Lowly and Weak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
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<td>Respect and Circumspection</td>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
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<td>Wifely Comportment</td>
<td>Speech and Comportment</td>
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<td>Complete Devotion</td>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
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<td>Compliant Docility</td>
<td>Husband and Wife</td>
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<td>Harmony with Brothers- and Sisters-in-law</td>
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The admonitions in Ban Zhao’s *Nüjie* concern the strict separation of men and women and women’s stations in the household as unmarried girls, wives, daughters-in-law, and sisters-in-law. Women’s lives are defined using the yardstick of marriage; thus, the most emphasized role throughout the seven chapters in the *Nüjie* is the proper role of a married woman and most of the admonitions concern the husband and wife relationship. The overall theme of Ban Zhao’s admonitions aims at teaching her audience to learn the proper station of women. In so doing, Ban Zhao emphasizes that the separation does not stop at a physical level, but extends to behavioral differences. She thus argues for the importance of women to be docile, submissive daughters, daughters-in-law, and wives to their husband’s families—perfectly conforming to the Threefold Obediences. The first chapter, “Lowly and Weak,” opens with a description of the symbolic significance of the tradition of placing a new-born girl under the bed and giving her a tile to play with: “She was placed under the bed to show her lowliness and weakness, and emphasize that she would serve others. She was given a tile to play with to show that she had to get used to hard
work, and to emphasize that she would keep to her tasks.” The “Wifely Comportment” chapter deals with four areas which women are advised to cultivate. They are labeled as “Wifely Virtue 婦德,” “Wifely Speech 婦言,” “Wifely Appearance 婦容,” and “Wifely Labor 婦功.” The explanations of the four virtues are as follows. “Wifely Virtue” asks the audience to be quiet, placid, loyal, conscious of shame, and principled in action. “Wifely Speech” means using discreet, refined language and not speaking in a hasty manner lest one offend the listener. “Wifely Appearance” emphasizes physical cleanliness of women, such as frequent bathing and clean outfits. Lastly, “Wifely Labor” means concentrating on weaving and providing hospitality to guests with food. Notably, these four “Wifely Virtues” are discussed on the premise that human behaviors are reflections of one’s inner mind and thus demand not just simple action but engagement in self-cultivation of in 仁 (C. ren, benevolence; humanity). Ban Zhao shows her belief in women’s ability to achieve these virtues: “these [four great womanly virtues] are considerably easy to put into practice. One need only inscribe them in one’s heart.” This assumption of women’s ability to attain the Four Wifely Virtues is parallel to the morality required from men: “these four womanly virtues are the greatest womanly virtues and must not be abrogated... through these four one can reach the state of “仁” if one wants.” It is worth noting that the aforementioned instruction about moral cultivation does not entail any notion of women’s inferiority to men in terms of women’s capacity for moral cultivation; however, it is also important to notice that all four of these virtues are aimed at teaching women Confucian gender roles along with the notion of the proper station of women in society.

“Complete Devotion” discusses the famous analogy of husband and Heaven: while the man has the duty to remarry [upon the death of his wife], a wife cannot marry because she is bound to one man who is the sky “just as one can nowhere escape from the sky.” “Compliant Docility” concerns women’s serving of their parents-in-law. Lastly, “Harmony with Brothers-
and Sisters-in-law” emphasizes modesty and obedience as the cornerstone in “winning the sympathy of [one’s] brothers- and sisters-in-law.” The overall image of a virtuous woman that Ban Zhao delineates in these chapters is of a young bride who upholds the honor and respect of her natal family at the cost of a cautious life in her husband’s home.

These notions of female subservience are more conspicuous in the chapters “Husband and Wife” and “Respect and Circumspection.” In “Husband and Wife,” Ban Zhao argues that husband’s moral rectitude and wisdom are prerequisites for wife’s obedience by stating that “if the husband is not wise, he will be incapable of governing his wife and if the wife is not wise, she will be unable to serve her husband.” She then goes on to argue for the importance of education for girls lest girls be ignorant of the fact that “a husband and master must be served and ritual duties must be performed” and of the “different norms governing the ones and the other.” “Respect and Circumspection” emphasizes the importance of mutual respect in the husband-and-wife relationship. Ban Zhao first presents an extreme case in which a husband has to beat his wife on account of her disobedience but seeks reconciliation by arguing that mutual respect is necessary in the husband and wife relationship. “Respect and Circumspection” states that “in men one prizes strength and as for women weakness is a beauty.” These two chapters provide a more philosophical explanation for why men and women need to be separated.

4.2. Understanding the Intended Audiences

The scope of the intended audience of the Naehun is more far-reaching than that suggested in Ban Zhao’s Nüjie. As we shall see presently, Ban Zhao’s admonitions were intended exclusively for her daughters whereas Sohye remains ambiguous about the gender of her intended audience. See the following passages for a comparison of each author’s intended audience for her text.
Generally, the minds of men move amid the broad flowing power and develop their will from mysterious sources such that they can on their own, distinguish between right and wrong and sustain themselves; how could they possibly wait for my teachings before acting? Women, however, are different. They know only the thickness and thinness of thread and do not know the urgency of virtuous action; this is my constant regret. Also, a person with even an originally clear nature who has not seen the teachings of all the sages will, if elevated to high station, be like a monkey wearing a crown or a person standing in front of a wall. (Sohye; Naehun Excerpt 1)

Nevertheless, now that he is a man and able to plan his own life, I need not again have concern for him. But I do grieve that you, my daughters, just now at the age for marriage, have not at this time had gradual training and advice; that you still have not learned the proper customs for married women." (Ban Zhao; Nüjie, Excerpt 1)147

Both express their confidence in men and their future, but Sohye’s words are more specific and also more inclusive than those of Ban Zhao. Nonetheless, the gist of their statements is the same; Sohye’s statement that the “minds of men move amid the broad flowing power and develop their will from mysterious sources such that they can, on their own, distinguish between right and wrong and sustain themselves” in essence means that men are able to “plan [their] own li[ves].”

Another parallel is drawn between the Naehun’s preface and a passage from the Nüjie.

All persons at birth receive the spirit of Heaven and Earth, and all are endowed with the virtues of the Five Relations. There is no difference in the principle of jade and stone, yet how is it that orchids and mugwort differ? It depends on whether one has done one’s utmost in fulfilling the Way of cultivating the self. The civilizing transformation of King Wen of Zhou was enhanced and broadened by the brightness of his consort Taisi and the hegemony enjoyed by King Zhuang of

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147 English translations of the Nüjie are available in Nancy Lee Swann, Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China, 82-99, as well as in Idema and Grant, 36-42.
Chu was largely due to the efforts of his consort Fanji; who could do more to serve her king or her husband? The order and disorder, the rise and fall of a country are related to the wisdom and ignorance of men, but are also closely tied to the goodness and badness of women; thus women must be taught. (Sohye; Naehun, Excerpt 2)

I have noticed that the gentlemen of today understand only that a wife must be governed and that one's dignity must be preserved and for this reason they instruct their sons and test their reading ability... Does not instructing only the sons and not the daughters betray a total ignorance of the different norms governing the one and the other? According to the Rites, children should be taught to read and write when they are eight years old, and at fifteen they should be sent to school. Cannot we simply make this the general rule? (Ban Zhao; Nüjie, “Husband and Wife”)

This pair features a greater resemblance; both authors argue that as much as sons are educated, the same amount of education should be provided for girls, who are currently deprived of such opportunity. It is true that by arguing for the importance of education for women, both authors are negotiating for a social reform, and thus speaking to men and women, so that society can recognize the importance of providing education for girls. Yet, Ban Zhao’s admonitions through her text focus on the proper conduct and station of women as wives in the household and require women to show submissive attitude to their husbands and in-law family members. By contrast, Soyhe’s claim requires an act of self-realization from women and an act of social recognition from men of the importance of providing education for women. Sohye reminds women that it is not menial labor that women should be mindlessly immersed in but cultivation of their minds; at the same time, she addresses men and takes issue with the state of current education policy in society.
As discussed previously, Sohye also includes a great number of entries that are non-gender-specific admonitions dealing with a wide range of human virtues typically required of scholar-officials—discernment, self-restraint, brotherly love, frugality, and forgiveness—throughout her text. Sohye’s *Naehun* contains many such admonitions which seem closer to men’s precepts for future generations of life conduct and worldly wisdom in interpersonal relationships; first, they are not-at-all intrafamilial and second, they advise against self-indulgence for men and women. This suspicion grows all the more when one considers that two of her Chinese source books, the *Mingjian* and the *Xiaoxue*, do not call for a gender specific audience. Furthermore, another source Sohye referred to, Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan*, is known to have been written originally to serve as an instructional, advisory morality guide for Emperor Yuan 漢元帝 (r. B.C.48-B.C. 33) so that the emperor could rid himself of his indulgence of the Zhao sisters—Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 and Zhao Hede 趙鶴德—and consort Wei:

Xiang saw that customs were getting more extravagant and licentious; people like [empress and Consort] Zhao and [Consort] Wei, who were of low birth, went beyond propriety. Xiang believed that the teaching of the early kings started from inside and extended outside, from the near to the far. So from the *Classic of Poetry* and *The Classic of History*, he selected the sage consorts and chaste women—who had made states prosper and families become distinguished, and thus could be emulated—as well as the illegitimate and the favorite, who brought about chaos and destruction. Listing them in order, he compiled *The Biographies of Women*. Altogether there are eight chapters [zhuan] used to admonish the son of Heaven. (My emphasis added)¹⁴⁸

Moreover, the fact that Liu Xiang intended his text to be read by “the son of Heaven” increases the likelihood that Sŏngjong, Sohye’s son, was considered a potential reader of the *Naehun.*

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¹⁴⁸ Mou, 9.
Sohye’s writing of the *Naehun* is in this respect reminiscent of Sejo’s interest in Sejong’s *Myŏnghwang kyegam* and Sejo’s writing of the *Hunsa*, which he once endowed upon her deceased husband when her husband was Crown Prince.

In conclusion, while Ban Zhao’s admonitions revolve around the theme of separation of men and women and assert docility and submission as proper conduct for women in the household, Sohye’s admonitions are neither limited to the theme of proper gender norms or the separation of women, and include more general notions of codes of life conduct.

4.3. Emphasis on the ‘Instructress Motif’ in the *Naehun*

In her delineation of the virtuous woman, Ban Zhao stresses the image of a bride who exerts herself in serving her husband and her in-law family members; but in Sohye’s *Naehun* the most emphasized image of the virtuous woman is as instructress. This “instructress” motif is most conspicuous in chapters four and five—“Husband and Wife” and “Motherhood”—in the stories mostly excerpted from Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan*. The influence of these women is not limited to their households; rather, their “virtue” often penetrates into the public realm insofar as their men are appreciative of their advice and carry out what their women instruct them to do. Women are men’s mothers, wives, but sometimes also strangers who indirectly teach men the way of upholding principles and morality. The most striking image of woman as instructress is described in the analogy of the husband-wife relationship to that of ruler and subject. Five out of seven biographies in the *Naehun*’s “Husband and Wife” chapter deal with women who are praised for their minister-like achievements and contributions to the state ruled by their husbands. Among the following, i) through iii), v) and vi) are summaries of the minister-wives in Sohye’s *Naehun*:
i) Fanji is praised for her “power” to make it possible for her husband King Zhuang of Chou to become the hegemonic lord over the neighboring states. Fanji’s articulate comment on the nepotistic workings of the current Prime Minister, Yuqiuzi, made her husband realize his faults and recommend a virtuous man named Sun Shu’ao. Within three years of Sun’s administration, King Zhuang rose to the position of hegemon.

ii) Yue Ji is known to have sacrificed herself at the time of an inauspicious occurrence that could have endangered not only her husband, King Zhao of Chu, but also the entire state of Chu. The successor to King Zhao was Yue Ji’s son and his ascension to the throne owes to his mother’s determination and virtuous sacrifice.

iii) Empress Ma of later Han is known to have managed the household affairs and ruled the house servants already as a child, but her handling of matters was like that of an adult. She recited the Yijing (Book of Changes), enjoyed reading the Chunqiu (Spring and Autumn) and the Chuci (Songs of Chu), and boasted a profound knowledge of the Zhouguan and the works of Dong Zhongshu (B.C. 1707-B.C. 1207). She entered the palace as a consort. Her exemplary virtue eventually earned her the position of empress. She advised the emperor to exercise fair judgment and sparing treatment concerning a certain rebellion in the region of Chu. The emperor took her words to heart, and finally showed benevolence and lessened the criminals’ punishments significantly. She handled the affairs of the inner palace.
she was in attendance upon the emperor, she would offer him her insights. In the palace, she practiced frugality and conducted herself with modesty. One recurrent theme in this story is the image of Empress Ma constantly turning down any proposition of political advancement for her uncles. Only when the state reached a time of prosperity and peace did she allow her three uncles to accept offers of better positions.

iv) Empress Deng of Later Han 鄧皇后 of later Han excelled in history at the age of six. When she was twelve, she was well versed in poetry and the Analects, and would inquire of and converse with her older brothers about things she found difficult to understand.\(^{154}\) She was selected to enter the palace as imperial consort but the event was deferred due to the unexpected death of her father, upon which she mourned him for three years with excessive sorrow and abstinence. When Deng finally entered the palace, she was met with extreme hostility on the part of the existing empress. However, Deng served the empress with utmost sincerity. Later the empress was dethroned for her practice of ominous shamanistic rituals in her attempt to expel Deng. Deng tried to persuade the emperor to spare the empress. She went so far as to isolate herself from the outside world when the emperor would not listen to her and instead carried out what he thought was proper punishment for the empress. Before long, the emperor elevated Deng to the position of empress, praising her most prominent virtue among all the imperial consorts. Like Empress Ma, she refused many times any offer of opportunities for political advancement to her immediate relatives.

v) Empress Gao of Ming 高皇后 is praised through the story for her intellect and wisdom, prescience and circumspection, and rhetorical skills. Not only does she study Confucian philosophy, but she also spreads these teachings through her words and

\(^{154}\) 六歲能史書，十二，通詩，論語。諸兄每讀經傳，輒下哀難問
exemplary conduct. She is depicted as benevolent but strict. Before her husband, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-98; r.1368-98), ascended the throne as founder of the Ming dynasty, she was his valued secretary and strategist. Realizing her preciousness, the emperor later utters, “A virtuous wife at home is like a virtuous prime minister for a state.” The emperor valued her advisory comments on the mandate of heaven so much that he summoned a court historian to record her words. When the empress’s death was imminent due to illness, he asked for her final insights, not once but twice. This biography ends—somewhat oddly—with the image of the emperor sorrow-stricken at the death of his wife.

iv) Suliu 宿瘤 (Goiter Woman) meets King Min of Qi 齊閔王 on his hunting excursion to the region where she was picking mulberries in a field. She boasts perhaps the most prominent rhetorical skills of the minister-like wives included in the Naehun. Her reply to the king and her comments at times sound rather too critical and almost eccentric. She is described as committed, frugal, and sagacious. On the day of her entrance to the palace, the Goiter Woman is greeted by the king’s consorts, all of whom laugh at her deliberately unadorned appearance—she had refused to dress up, reasoning that to do so would conceal her true self. Instead of being intimidated, she delivered an astute speech asserting that instead of adorning one’s appearance, one should be concerned the cultivation of one’s inner heart. Moved by her insightful and poignant message, all the court members begin behaving themselves and carrying out her

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155 家之良妻, 獨國之良相.
156 The Goiter Woman is described as always quick to give her response or comments to others people. This quality is in fact not so praiseworthy, when compared to the speech patterns of other women whose biographies are included in the Naehun. Other women were strict and articulate, but were also extremely cautious and careful in providing their admonitions and advice. By contrast, all comments made by Goiter Woman are sharp-tongued, even cynical criticism. Not surprisingly, the story of the Goiter Woman is also found in “The Accomplished Speakers 辯通傳” section in Liu Xiang’s Biographies of women.
instructions. Within months, her teachings reach the neighboring states, whose rulers feel compelled to visit the king and pay their respects to him. Ultimately the king came to be called emperor and this was largely due to the Goiter Woman’s efforts.\textsuperscript{157}

Among over one hundred biographies in Liu Xiang’s \textit{Lienü zhuan} and possibly other sources, Sohye presents these minister-like women, all of whom are described as morally upright, perceptive, and prescient. Among these six, the latter five were not originally primary consorts to their husbands but secondary;\textsuperscript{158} these women outdid their rivals and secured their positions as primary consorts through their erudition.

The instructress-wife stories depict a husband and wife relationship that is based on mutual respect. Men as recipients are appreciative of their wives’ advice and are deeply touched and enlightened by their words. Men’s proper relationships with others function as a precondition that dictates women’s proper relationships with others. Yue Ji of Chu elucidates this principle as follows: “How great is Your Majesty’s Virtue! This very fact makes me wish to follow Your Majesty…” Her discovery of her husband’s virtue leads her to volunteer to sacrifice herself so as to propitiate the ominous clouds threatening the ruin of the state of Chu.\textsuperscript{159} The female “compliance” delineated by Sohye is something that requires a man to be worthy of his wife’s devotion. A wife’s compliance demands moral rectitude on the part of the male; moral rectitude of a husband is a prerequisite for him to expect proper help from the inner sphere from

\textsuperscript{157} ...期月之間, 行徔園, 諸侯朝之, 侵三晝, 懼秦楚, 一立帝號.
\textsuperscript{158} Empress Ma of Han was initially one of the imperial consorts 貴人. She later became empress by the recommendation of Queen Dowager Yin, who had been observing Ma's virtuous conduct. Empress Deng of Han, too, was an imperial consort for a long time before she was appointed empress by the Emperor himself. The Emperor’s reason for this decision was also his eyewitness evidence of Deng’s virtue. Empress Ma of Ming was designated empress when her husband, Zhu Yuanzhang, became the founder of the Ming dynasty. The Goiter Woman Suliu of Qi became primary consort when her husband was deeply impressed by her wisdom and decided to expel all other wives he already had in the palace.
\textsuperscript{159} 大哉, 君王之德, 以是, 妾願從王矣. 昔日之遊, 淫樂也. 以是, 不敢賜. 及君王復於禮, 國人皆謂為君王死, 而況於妾乎.
his wife—"naejo 内助" (wife’s contribution to husband’s wellbeing; literally, “help from the inner sphere”).

Another type of learned women in the Naehun is the teacher-mother. The virtuous mothers in the “Motherly Rectitude” chapter are sacrificial for the sake of their sons and providers of proper education for them. In the opening entry to this chapter, Sohye states that providing one’s children with love alone will spoil the children; proper education must accompany the rearing of children. Another entry, originally written by Sima Guang (1019-1086), emphasizes that one should teach girls various Confucian texts such as the Lunyu and the Xiaojing and have them be able to discuss and interpret the contents of such texts, and criticizes people who teach their girls exclusively the composition of poetry or lyrics, or train them in musical instruments without emphasizing book-learning for girls. The teacher-mother motif is found in the story of Tairen 太任—the mother of King Wen 文 of the state of Zhou 周—to exemplify a devoted mother who began her education for her child already in the prenatal stage. Also presented is arguably the most famous story of a mother as enthusiastic educator of her son—the story of Mencius’ mother, who moved house three times in order to find the best educational environment for her boy.

One story depicts the mother of Tian Jizi 田稷子, Prime Minister of the state of Qi 齊: a remonstrative mother whose moral rectitude and articulate arguments bring about the rectification of her son. In this story, the mother, who has instructed her son not to be a corrupt official, one day hears that her son has received a bribe. Upon hearing this, she rebukes her son. She argues that through this unrighteous conduct he lacks devotion and integrity in serving his ruler and that such behavior makes him an unfaithful subject. Moreover, by being an unfaithful subject to the king, he is acting in an unfilial manner, so she threatens to disown him. Realizing

160 This story is found in “Motherly Rectitude.”
his fault, Tian Jizi resigns and confesses his crime to the king, asking for decapitation. When the king learns what has happened, he is deeply moved by Tian’s honesty and his mother’s virtue. The king not only endows the mother with material benefits, but also reinstates Tian as Prime Minister.

A woman’s moral rectitude can influence men outside the circle of her immediate relatives. The “Cordial Relationship Between Siblings” chapter tells the story of a “Virtuous aunt” (Yiguzhe 義姑者) of the state of Lu 鲁. Yiguzhe sacrifices her own child in order to save her sister-in-law’s child. The states of Lu and Qi 齊 are at war; in the middle of the battlefield, a Qi general happens to witness a scene where a woman, one child in her bosom and another seemingly abandoned child straggling to catch up, forges mercilessly ahead without looking back. The general asks her for an explanation of the situation. She answers that the child in her bosom is the child of her sister-in-law and the crying child tagging along behind is her own. She says, “Cognizant of the imminent danger of the situation and the possible burden of my carrying both children, I have decided to abandon my own and take hers with me.” She adds, “Loving one’s own child is to follow natural human instinct, but loving my sister-in-law’s child is to uphold public rectitude.” Upon hearing this, the general of Qi orders his soldiers to stop the battle and sends an envoy to the ruler of Qi to give a full account. The ruler of Lu is also informed of the news and decides to bestow a large sum of money upon her. The commentary applauds her virtue because it resulted in public goodness and praises her as follows: “a mere woman though she was, the whole country followed her. It goes without saying how great a country becomes when one rules with righteousness such as this!”

These learned women may dwell within the system of institutionalized separation of men and women, but they strive to cultivate their minds in order to be prescient, wise, and morally

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161 This story is found in “The Principled and Righteous.”
superior to men. Many is the time a reader of the Naehun meets men who can restore once-ruined public order and stability as they listen to their women’s words, carry out what they are advised and encouraged to do, and expel any selfish or corrupt desires from their hearts. The domestic sphere where these women dwell is hardly a space of confinement or restraint, but a place where they cultivate their minds, and command respect and authority by molding and remolding the minds of their men; a nameless woman’s decision to choose the child of her sister-in-law over her own in the name of moral rectitude could make men go as far as to stop a prolonged war between two states.

4.4. The Authors’ Voices: Confucian Gentlemen in the Naehun

I am simpleminded and unenlightened and not naturally intelligent. But I enjoyed the doting affection of my late father and relied on the exemplary instruction provided by my mother. When I was fourteen—now more than forty years ago—I took up dustpan and broom in the Cao family. Trembling with fear, I was always afraid of bringing divorce and dishonor upon myself, which would bring further shame on my parents and add to the burdens of my relatives. From early morning until late evening I put forth my best efforts and toiled without complaining of weariness. But from now on I know that I will be spared all of that.

By nature I am lax and lazy and have no talent for teaching. I have always been afraid that my son Gu would betray our pure court and bring dishonor upon it... (Ban Zhao; Nüjie Excerpt II)

Ban Zhao is one of the most famous women in Chinese history; she is celebrated as the first female historian and praised as imperial tutor, accomplished poet, and articulate writer. Ban Zhao’s admonitions argue for education for girls and boys and call for mutual respect in the husband-and-wife relationship, yet her prescriptions center on the need for a submissive attitude on the part of married women and her voice in the preface to the Nüjie is rather too cautious. She
depicts her life as married woman as fearful, anxious, and passive. She even denigrates her scholarly achievements. Her voice is personal, filled with emotion. Such caution and worry is also found in her admonitory poem, “Rhapsody on a Journey to the East,” written as she accompanied her son on his journey to take up his new official post. Her voice in this poem dedicated to her son is calm and composed, reserved yet assured. Not much emotion is involved in her admonition to her son. Nor is much self-degradation noted. Instead, she refers to history and to historically praised and celebrated persons, her language is Confucian, scholarly, and non-gendered. Here are a few portions from “Rhapsody on a Journey to the East”:

... Arriving in Kuang I remembered the past, thought of the Master's misfortune and toil: during those days of disaster bereft of the way. They mobbed and they threatened even the Sage! ...

As soon as I came to the borders of Changyuan, I observed the people who lived in its field, I gazed at the hillocks and ruins of Pucheng, all grown over with brambles and thorns. Startled I came to my senses and asked around and called to mind the might of Zi Lu. The people of Wei laud his valor and virtue and even today they still sing his praises...

Know that both your nature and fate rest with Heaven. You must rely on your own great efforts to achieve humanity. Maintain your lofty vision and follow after brilliance, Exhaust your loyalty and forgiveness on behalf of others...

High position and great riches may be the object of our quest, but we walk the Way correctly, waiting for the proper time. Long or short as our like may be—wise and fool are equal here. Respectfully we trust our fate, whether fortune or disaster...

See Idema and Grant, 23-26, for an English translation of this poem.
Ibid., 23.
This difference in her voice depending on the difference in her listener probably originated from her stronger emotional inclination toward her daughters than toward her son. Alternatively, it is possible to consider that Ban Zhao "lowered self" as a gesture of humility and decorum, a highly admirable quality in a woman as well as a high minded scholar. Another way to understand this difference is to pay attention to Ban Zhao’s position and to the kind of language she uses when speaking to an audience of the other gender. Toward her son, she places herself in the position of not only a concerned parent representing both mother and father, but also of a scholar. Her words and metaphors in her admonition toward her son are the ones her son, a newly appointed official who has had Confucian education, can relate to. By contrast, toward her daughters Ban Zhao speaks from the position of someone who shares the experience of a young bride herself, and shares facts and principles of a married life she herself has possibly tasted, experienced, and witnessed firsthand.

The personal, emotion-filled voice characteristic of Ban Zhao’s admonitions toward her daughters is not found in Sohye’s _Naehun_; rather, Sohye’s tone carries authority and self-confidence. This authority and self-confidence is manifested in Sohye’s understanding of the goal of education of women. When one compares the _Nüjie Excerpt I_ and the _Naehun Excerpt II_, one learns that Ban Zhao and Sohye aim at different goals in their advocating of education for women. As discussed previously, Ban Zhao is mainly concerned about her daughters, whose lack of education poses the potential danger of bringing shame upon her family and clan. On the other hand, Sohye presents the far more active goal of the education of women as cultivation of one’s inner self, a self that—just as much as any man’s—possesses innate moral goodness and "the virtues of the Five Relations" endowed by "the spirit of Heaven and Earth."

Confucian philosophy explains that uprightness or corruption in society is due to people’s selfish minds and unrestrained self-indulgence. Education is the crucial cornerstone that teaches
one to be aware of one’s responsibility and of the importance of attaining and maintaining of a state of moral rectitude. However, since Confucianism in reality was almost always used from the elitist and hierarchical viewpoint, the means of education were not at always accessible to every human being; therefore, those with access to the knowledge shoulder the responsibility of becoming exemplars for those without. The educated were considered the paragons for the general populace, and through their good examples, people with education gained others’ trust and respect, which then established the rulers’ legitimacy over the ruled. In this sense, the ignorance of the general population was not an object of contempt but of sympathy, and something to be looked after.  

Here we see Sohye calling for the education of women by reasoning that “order and disorder, and the rise and fall of a country are related to the wisdom and ignorance of men, but are also closely tied to the goodness and badness of women; thus women must be taught.” This is a reference to the very core of education, whereby education is understood as the development of one’s innate qualities, not as a forceful insertion or inculcation of foreign elements. The women whose biographies are included in the Naehun are depicted as having a great sense of self-regulation, constantly guarding against selfish interest, and seeking out benefits for the public. Their moral rectitude was not something easily gained, but was the outcome of a life-long journey of self-control and self-effort. This pursuit of self-effort is much like the strenuous work required from a Confucian gentleman. Effort is not a form of passive learning; instead, it is an act of active participation, and taking command of one’s self. According to Zhu Xi, “self-effort” was something to be pursued once one was considered to have achieved adulthood, on the premise that one’s mind is then “capable of reason and discernment” and “equipped with basic

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intellectual abilities.” Sohye’s *Naehun*, in this sense, is an adoption of Ban Zhao’s claim of the importance of providing education for women as well as an adaptation of the Neo-Confucian philosophical notions of “cultivation of one’s inner self” for all.

Sohye’s idea of women’s education is drawn from the idea of introducing the universal message of Neo-Confucian philosophy and inviting women into “sagehood.” Women are in no way inferior to men by nature, nor do their natural qualities need rectification due to this alleged inferiority. The idea of women being aware of their proper station in society may coincide with Ban Zhao’s teaching in her *Nüjie*; however, it is imperative to note that the ultimate goal of Sohye’s education is achieving sagehood; for this a female to follow the Threefold Obedience is but one instrument in one’s endeavor to materializing this goal. Sohye takes the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and cites numerous other renowned Confucian gentlemen (those extracted from the *Xiaoxue*); she incorporates them to delineate her idea of the education of women, namely, that all persons, regardless of their gender, can become like Yao and Shun, the revered sage kings of ancient China. Judging from the obvious inclusions of the “instructress” motif and her statement in the preface, Sohye seems to have truly believed in the innate goodness of women and in the power of education to materialize such inherent moral endowments. All the women in the *Naehun* boast noteworthy moral rectitude, and all of them contributed to the achievement of good for their family or state. These educated women were morally as great as any men. Their men might make mistakes, but order in the public sphere was not threatened so long as these educated women humbly provided advice and counsel.

One might argue that Sohye borrowed these male scholars’ voices and that her voice thus becomes de-powered and de-gendered, something Duncan (2003) finds in his observation of the position of Chŏnhŭi insofar as “only when she decided to step down as regent that the *Sillok*  

166 Ibid., 171.
states that her instruction [at court] was written in vernacular Korean (어문).”\textsuperscript{167} However, I argue that Sohye’s voice does not always undergo the process of “de-gender[ing] the self.” Her voice is empowered even while it remains largely a gendered voice. As one can read in the story of the mother of Tian Jizi and that of the “Virtuous Aunt of Lu,” Yiguzhe, Sohye’s women wield direct or indirect power in whatever position they occupy. Sohye’s gendered voice is most pronounced when she borrows the voices of the three Empresses Ma, Deng, and Gao, in the biographies of women.

\textsuperscript{167} Duncan, 36-37.
5. Queen Chŏnghŭi and the Matriarchs in the *Naehun*

Scholars have given Chŏnghŭi little credit for her role in the compilation of the *Naehun*, and she has often been depicted as a quiet individual who turned down the regency on account of her lack of competence and recommended Sohye instead. Her regency, too, has been discussed more or less as a backdrop to the coming of Sohye’s *Naehun*. However, one can construct a drastically different image of her. For instance, upon deciding the successor of King Yejong (1441-1469; r. 1468-69) who died without designating his heir, officials mentioned Sohye’s two sons whom Sohye had born to the deceased Crown Prince. According to the entries in the *Yejong Sillok* (Annals of King Yejong), Queen Chŏnghŭi was as politically alert as she was quick in action to persuade people to have Prince Chaûlsan (who was later enthroned as Sŏngjong) ascend the throne instead of the firstborn, Prince Wŏlsan. This is a keenly politically-minded act of hers, the act of a person aware of her role and responsibilities in court as Queen Dowager. When offered the regent position, she turned it down several times, displaying humility and decorum, before finally accepting it. She demonstrated her humility by recommending someone whom she thought would be a better fit for the position—Sohye—reasoning that Sohye was well versed in “words” (referring to Sohye’s knowledge of Classical Chinese). After she became regent, she demonstrated her responsibility by enforcing the education of the boy-king and through self-blame in times of drought—the acts of a concerned, responsible ruler.

Therefore, I wish to achieve two goals in this section. First, I propose a more accurate way to understand Queen Chŏnghŭi’s role in the coming of the *Naehun*. I argue that Queen Chŏnghŭi’s contribution to the *Naehun* was far more direct than what has been discussed.

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168 *Yejong Sillok* 8 (01/11/28).
169 *Sŏngjong Sillok* 3 (01/02/16).
170 *Sŏngjong Sillok* 6 (00/06/03).
previously. In the following paragraphs, I show how certain biographies of Chinese empresses in the *Naehun* can serve as a device reinforcing Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency. By consulting some entries in the *Sŏngjong Sillok*, I also propose the possibility that Sohye’s intention in writing the *Naehun* can be surmised as an act of and acknowledgment of the notion of filial piety in the royal Yi family. Furthermore, I present Sohye as an individual who dreamt of wielding political power just like the matriarchs in her text.

5.1. Voices of the Matriarchs: “I Am the Mother of the Realm”

Duncan points out that there exists a strong sense of identification between the writer Sohye and the empresses whose stories are included in her text and dwells on the fact that Sohye does not include any mention of Empress Deng’s handling of political affairs as Empress-Regent and relates this issue to two hypotheses. The first is that Sohye might have been pressuring Chŏnghŭi to step down; however, Duncan quickly dismisses this speculation on the premise that the *Naehun* contains no portrayals of mother-advisors to their son kings. Instead, he relates this matter to the fact that Sohye’s deliberate omission is her articulate statement that “wisdom and knowledge of (Sohye’s) women [is] to be kept out of the public realm through the device of relegating them to the status of private, personal confidants and advisors to their husbands.”

Later in the footnote, Duncan adds that Professor Sonja Häußler of Humbolt University commented on a draft of his paper as follows: “The time when Sohye compiled the *Naehun* was a critical time for her son, King Sŏngjong. Not only was the regency of Queen Chŏnghŭi about to come to an end, but also a search was underway to find a consort for the young king. Professor Häußler suggests that Sohye—who was concerned that the early deaths of both her husband,

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171 Duncan, 42, “It is tempting to speculate that Sohye, by omitting any discussion of the “public” political activities of female regents, may have been attempting indirectly to pressure Chŏnghŭi to step down, perhaps in hopes that she, as the king’s mother and as a woman who was literate and well versed in the Confucian classics, would then have a bigger voice in political decision-making.”

172 Duncan, 43.
Tōkchong, and his brother, Yejong, may have been due to the vengeful spirit of Tanjong’s mother—was seeking to stabilize the inner court and return order and harmony to the state and the cosmos, which had been disrupted by the interference of such a harmful female element.”

Duncan and Häußler both entertain the idea of Sohye’s uneasiness toward Chŏnghŭi and the idea of female regency. However, I would like to present a different approach to Sohye’s possible attitude toward Chŏnghŭi’s regency. I suggest paying closer attention to the biographies of Empress Ma, Deng, and Gao than to the other entries of the Naehun. First, I note that these three entries combined occupy almost one fifth of the entire text.

| Volume 1   | 1a-87b (174 leaves) | Empress Ma (32b-58b) |
| Volume 2-1 | 1a-58b (116 leaves) | Empress Deng (1a-19b) |
| Volume 2-2 | 1a-76b (152 leaves) | Empress Gao (20a-65b) |
| Volume 3   | 1a-70a (140 leaves) |                          |

This calculation includes the number of fascicles that include the main body of the Naehun, excluding the preface and the epilogue. I refer to the Hŏsa bunko version, reproduced by Kim Chi-yong in 1969.

I also note that among the six consecutive presentations of minister-like wives, the story of Empress Deng is found to be much less typical in this regard. One may note that the story of Empress Deng is located between that of Empress Ma and Empress Gao. It is likely that the story of Empress Deng was chosen because of the very historical fact of Empress Deng’s regency, which bore a resemblance to Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency on behalf of boy-king Sŏnjong in contemporary Chosŏn society. The story of Empress Deng, together with that of Empress Ma and Gao, is about a woman who wields considerable political power, and not only learns but teaches both men and women in the palace mostly through her exemplary conduct, moral cultivation and strict practice of frugality, but at times also through direct instructions. Several
entries in the *Yejong Sillok* (Annals of King Yejong) and those of *Sŏngjong Sillok* (King Sŏngjong) shed light on the correlation between these three empresses and Queen Chŏnhŭi.

More interestingly, the entries in the *Annals of King Sŏngjong* reveal that three years prior to the completion of the *Naehun*, Queen Chŏnhŭi had ordered exactly what Empress Gao is described to have done in her biography, also depicted in the *Naehun*:\(^{173}\) that stories of exemplary rulers and their wives be researched and collected from the classics and histories. In making her order, Chŏnhŭi specifically mentions that she intended this collection to be read not only by herself, but by the king (主上) and his wife (中宮).\(^{174}\) Note that Chŏnhŭi lists Sŏngjong as her intended audience. This act of Chŏnhŭi is clearly reminiscent of her deceased husband Sejo’s interest in the importance of education for the ruler as well as Liu Xiang’s concern for Emperor Yuan. Queen Chŏnhŭi’s order seems to have been realized as the *Hubi Myŏnggam* 后妃明鑑 (Mirror of Sagacity of Famous Empresses and Consorts) in the form of a chapter included in a text titled the *Yŏktae chewang myŏnggam* 歷代帝王明鑑 (Mirror of Sagacity of Famous Emperors).\(^{175}\) These facts again confirm that it is likely that Sohye possibly considered her own son, Sŏngjong, to be one of the main target readers of her *Naehun*.

Although Sohye remains silent about any direct connection between the *Hubi Myŏnggam* and her *Naehun*, these facts suggest that the biographies of women included in the *Naehun* were a deliberate act, not a mere coincidence. The probability of this hypothesis increases when we look at the process of the official ennobling ceremony of royal family members in the second to seventh reign years of Sŏngjong. In the second year of Sŏngjong’s reign, he offered up official honorary titles (尊號) and auspicious poems (箋文) to the three matriarchs of the Yi family:

\(^{173}\) \*Sŏngjong Sillok* (01/02/23).
\(^{174}\) \*I have not had a chance to read this text.*
Chŏnghŭi, Yejong’s wife, and Sohye. The persons to whom Sŏngjong compares these three queens merit our attention for the particularly striking parallel between Chŏnghŭi and those compared. Sŏngjong compared Chŏnghŭi’s virtue and ability to that of the following four characters—Tairen, Taisi, Empress Ma, and Empress Deng—all appearing in the biographies of women in the Naehun. As for Yejong’s wife and his own mother, Sohye, however, the king did not make any particular comparisons, but offered no less praise and honor to them. With particular respect to Sohye, he mentioned the Osprey Poem (關雎 C. Guanju; K. Kwanjŏ) in the Shijing, also found in one of the excerpts from Ban Zhao’s Nüjie, in praise of Sohye’s virtue. In the 7th year of his reign, Sŏngjong ordered royal painters to draw illustrations of Chinese kings and queens and emperors and empresses whose conduct was exemplary, and of those whose conduct was praiseworthy at first then deteriorated drastically. Among the names of persons who appear are those of Empress Ma and Empress Gao. The overlapping of names suggests that at least in the Naehun, Sohye does not appear to voice an explicit opposition to Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency. Rather, Sohye’s producing of the Naehun on its most personal level was perhaps (i) an act of her sincere and filial acknowledgement of Chŏnghŭi’s virtue and (ii) an act of heartfelt gratitude to Sŏngjong’s filiality in recognizing her erudition.

Queen Chŏnghŭi’s regency started out with the Chosŏn literati’s urgent request and Chŏnghŭi’s reluctance. At the beginning of her regency, the Chosŏn literati suggested that Chŏnghŭi’s regency should be made known to officials and to commoners in and outside the capital. However, the patriarchal nature of Confucianism together with the physical and mental growth of the striving boy king, conspired to instigate criticism of Chŏnghŭi’s regency. Although the officials did not bluntly attack the idea of female regency—since it was but a

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176 Sŏngjong sillok 9 (02/01/18).
177 Sŏngjong sillok 71 (07/09/13).
178 Sŏngjong sillok 1 (00/12/08).
179 Ibid., The same entry.
normal, legitimate procedure in the absence of a mature king—dissatisfaction seems to have brewed. Opinions surfaced finally in 1476: a text criticizing her regency was posted on the street of the capital city and a year later the regency came to an end.

Concerning the relation between Sohye’s Naehun and this incident involving Queen Chǒnghǔi’s regency, I propose that Sohye’s Naehun can be conceived of as a device to justify Chǒnghǔi’s regency by i) presenting the role of woman as a competent state counselor—a capable minister to a ruler—, ii) emphasizing the role of a mother who shoulders the responsibilities of education for her children, and finally iii) securing the position of matriarchs within the patriarchal Confucian social order. Chǒnghǔi’s position as the grandmother of the reigning king meant a potentially invincible political power because of her role as de facto ruler as well as the boy king’s obligation to express filial piety toward his grandmother. Again, had it not been for Chǒnghǔi’s support, Sǒngjong could never have ascended the throne. In the three biographies of Empress Ma of Later Han, Empress Deng of Later Han, and Empress Gao of Ming, one cannot help but notice the concept of a powerful matriarch within the patriarchal Confucian social structure, when one encounters Empress Ma declaring “I am the mother of the realm,” \footnote{吾為天下母.} Empress Deng being praised by her husband as the only person in the inner palace worthy to become the mother of the realm, \footnote{皇后之尊, 與朕同體, 承宗廟, 天下母, 豈易哉, 唯鄭貴人, 德冠後庭, 乃可當之.} and finally Empress Gao stating, “I have now become the mother of the myriads of people.” \footnote{今日陛下為億兆主, 委為億兆母.}

5.2 Becoming a Matriarch

Sohye may have dreamt of a position of matriarch for herself. After all, Sohye’s position in the Chosŏn court was no less significant than that of Queen Chǒnghǔi. Sohye was the primary
consort of the deceased crown prince, the mother of the reigning king, and had been a favored
daughter-in-law of Sejo. As for her natal family, her father and many of her male relatives were
all well ensconced in respected government positions. The Ch’ongju Han clan, to
which Sohye belonged, was one of the most prestigious families during the Choson period. The
Ch’ongju Hans had numerous royal connections through marriage; they produced royal consorts
as well as husbands of princesses. It was especially during the bloody power shift from Tanjong
to Sejo that the Ch’ongju Han secured its position in politics and the chief protagonist in this
upward mobility was Han Myông-hoe (1415-1487), a stalwart merit subject (kongsin
功臣) of Sejo. A total of fifteen people of this clan, including Sohye’s father Han Hwak (1403-1456), served in high government positions including that of prime minister around this
time. It is possible that the children of the Ch’ongju Han, regardless of gender, were raised by
their parents in the hopes that they might establish a closer and more influential connection with
the royal family and enhance the family reputation through their children’s marriages.

One characteristic that distinguished the Ch’ongju Han clan from other elite families was
that they had not only personal but also official ties with the Ming court ever since the founding
of the state of Choson. Sohye’s father, Han Hwak, participated in diplomatic missions to China.
Two of Sohye’s brothers also had experiences as diplomats to China. Sohye’s two aunts—sisters
of Han Hwak—were imperial consorts in the Ming court. These Ch’ongju Han women curried

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183 Some of the most well-known facts about Sohye are that Sohye dethroned Sŏngjong’s wife, Queen Yun-ssi, and that Sohye continued to sponsor publications of vernacular translations of various Buddhist texts as late as the reign of Regent Yŏnsan, Sŏngjong’s successor.
184 The Kongsin title was bestowed in recognition of appreciation by the king on those who performed distinguished services for the state.
185 One was married to the fourth emperor of the Ming Emperor Chengzu (r. 1402-1424) in 1417, and the other to the fifth emperor, Xuanzong (r. 1426-1435) in 1429. Interestingly, the empress of the Chengzu emperor is none other than the author of the Neixun, Empress Renxiao. This fact suggests that Sohye had knowledge of the existence of the Neixun before she decided to write her own Naehun. More intriguingly, the fact that the author of the Neixun repeatedly pays respect to Empress Gao in her preface to the Neixun and that Sohye included in her text the biography of Empress Gao, among the three biographies that are not included in Liu Xiang’s text, increases all the more increases the suspicion that Sohye’s knowledge of the Neixun. Concerning these facts about Sohye had
favor with the emperors. One of them was “honorably” buried alive together with the founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398; r. 1368-1398), husband of Empress Gao, whose story Sohye included in the *Naehun*. Visits to the Ming emperor meant receiving precious gifts, whether officially to the state of Chosŏn or personally to Han Hwak. The official historians did not view favorably Han Hwak’s close connections with the Ming court. But most notable for our purposes here is that growing up in a family with such special connections to the centre of civilization and whose members were at the centre of state politics, Sohye must have had ample opportunities to learn and read materials in Classical Chinese. The *Sillok* record has it that Sohye made epistolary exchanges with at least one of her aunts in China.

It can be argued that Sohye did in fact achieve her dream of becoming a matriarch by producing the *Naehun*. Her *Naehun* was recognized as mother of all Chosŏn’s instructive texts dealing with Confucian gender norms throughout the Chosŏn time and afterward. Sohye commanded a great deal of textual authority because she wrote the text not only as Sŏngjong’s mother but also because she included the words of Confucian tradition; she expressed respect to the words and wisdom of the ancient sages. She also described relationships between women are largely male-centered terms and depicted the ideal image of womanly virtue in the image of the virtue of the Confucian gentleman. These facts suggest that Sohye’s alignment of her text with Ban Zhao’s *Nujie* was her attempt to align the *Naehun* further with other books of moral cultivation in the Confucian tradition, an ambitious attempt to produce one single consummate

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186 The entries of the *Sillok* reveal that Han Hwak was given precious gifts, sometimes personal, from the Ming emperor.
187 Entries in the *Sillok* accused Han Hwak and his relatives who occupied major positions in the court of causing detriment to the state treasury due to their frequent visits to China and to the gifts, as well as of accumulating wealth and fame in this way.
volume that not only includes admonitions but also the actual conduct of people through their biographies.

Sohye’s particular interest in pursuing the development and utilization of her intellect can also be seen in the postface by Court Lady Cho. In the postface, the most pronounced image of Sohye is as a filial daughter who attended upon her father-in-law, Sejo, with utmost sincerity and care. Her epilogue states that Sejo always commended Sohye for her filiality and that he recognized her filiality by bestowing upon her an insignia with the two characters “filial woman.” Yet, it is intriguing that despite such official royal recognition, Sohye herself did not place her greatest emphasis on filiality as women’s most important virtue, and instead emphasized wisdom, intellect, and moral uprightness.
6. Conclusions

I have discussed a way of re-reading Queen Sohye’s Naehun by contesting the traditional understandings about the text’s intended audience and theme and by de-mythologizing some prevalent ideas that have prevented a more accurate understanding of the writer’s intention in producing the text. This de-mythologization presents a Chosön queen who potentially projects rather more yang than yin. She was able to “de-gender” herself more than any other woman of her time due to her profound knowledge of and competence in Classical Chinese. Indeed, the particularly Neo-Confucian theme of the text calls for an educational reform that argues for the need to educate women not simply with the goal to position women in their proper stations in society but with the goal of enlightening both men and women to realize the possibility of sagehood through self-effort and constant cultivation of one’s minds. The characters she depicts in her text intervene in the affairs of the public sphere, and are not merely confined to their living quarters. It is important also to note that Sohye does not entirely de-gender herself; rather, by depicting instructress mothers and wives who master moral rectitude. Sohye’s women characters were agents who within the gender systems, but by using the voices of matriarchs in the biographies of the three empresses, her authority surmounts that of scholar-officials, blurring further the demarcation separating the inner and the outer spheres. It is this flexible demarcation that symbolizes Sohye’s prerogative because the “inner sphere” in Sohye’s view could potentially coincide with that of the state itself, within which her authority and power were fully licensed.
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*Han'guksa*, Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'ŏn wiwŏnhoe, 1996.


Yi Sung-jae.


Appendix i

A Partial Translation of Queen Sohye’s Preface to the Naehun

All persons at birth receive the spirit of Heaven and Earth, and all are imbued with the virtues of the Five Relations. There is no difference in the principle of jade and stone, yet how is it that orchids and mugwort differ? It depends on whether one has done one’s utmost in fulfilling the Way of cultivating the self. The civilizing transformation of King Wen of Zhou was enhanced and broadened by the brightness of his consort Taisi and the hegemony enjoyed by King Zhuang of Chu was largely due to the efforts of his consort Fanji; who could do more to serve her king or her husband? The order and disorder, the rise and fall of a country are related to the wisdom and ignorance of men, but are also closely tied to the goodness and badness of women; thus, women must be taught.

Generally, the minds of men move amid the broad flowing power and they develop their will from mysterious sources so that they can, on their own, distinguish between right and wrong and sustain themselves; how could they possibly wait for my teachings before acting? Women, however, are different. They know only the thickness and thinness of thread and do not know the urgency of virtuous action; this is my constant regret. Also, even a person with an originally clear nature who has not seen the teachings of all the sages will, if elevated to high station, be like a monkey wearing a crown or a person standing in front of a wall. Such a person will find it difficult to behave appropriately or speak properly.

The great sages Yao and Shun each had sons, Danju and Shangjun, respectively. Despite the teachings of their strict fathers, Danju and Shangjun did not become good sons. Yet I, a widow, hope to have a daughter-in-law with a mind like jade. Thus, although there are texts—such as the Sohak, Yøllýø, Yøgyo, and Myønggam—which are highly appropriate and clear, they contain too many fascicles and would be hard to master, so I have chosen important passages from those four texts and written the seven chapters which I give to you. Ah, the learning of one body is all here. Once you lose the Way, you may repent but how can you recover? Inscribe these teachings in your hearts, engrave them on your bones and strive every day to follow the sages. A bright mirror has great luster; how can you not take heed?
Appendix ii

Court Lady Cho’s Postface to Queen Sohye’s Naehun

Her Highness, Venerable Queen Insu (Sohye) tirelessly upheld the works of both [the inner and the outer palaces] day and night ever since the Great King Sejo was [residing] at Chamjŏ. When she was named consort [of the Crown Prince], she cultivated the proper conduct of married women all the more. She volunteered to take care of the royal meals and was in attendance at all times. The Great King Sejo praised her as a filial daughter-in-law and made her filial sincerity known by endowing her with the emblem of “filial daughter-in-law.” She was by nature strict and upright, and in her upbringing of the royal offspring she would never leave the tiniest mistake unamended and hidden, but would admonish with a stern countenance. The two palaces called her the “Tigress Consort.”

She ensured the happiness of her seniors. In her spare time she admonished about and warned against the ignorance of women. Because the Yŏllyŏ, Yŏgyo, Myŏnggam, and the Sohak are voluminous and bulky, an elementary learner suffered. [Therefore,] she carefully edited and extracted the essence, and completed these seven chapters. She named it “Instructions for the Inner Sphere.” She went on to provide the vernacular translation of this text, making it easily comprehensible. The dullest and the most unintelligent can [understand it] accurately [even] in one reading and memorize and recite with little effort. As I peeked in, many were the famous sagacious queens who exerted themselves in serving their parents-in-law with the virtue of utmost generosity and filial piety and perfected the wellbeing of the state and the household by teaching their children with stringency. However, rare were the ones who produced precepts of their own and passed on their admonitions [to generations to come].

Therefore, how can the makings of this book be only for the royal offspring? It should reach the unlearned commoner housewives, and weaving girls [so that] during their idle moments they might memorize it in the morning and recite it in the evening reflecting on its meanings in their minds. Then they all gradually become knowledgeable about excelling in household management. It cannot be of little help in the edification of public morals.
Appendix iii
Ban Zhao’s Preface to the *Nüjie*\(^{188}\)

I am simpleminded and unenlightened and not naturally intelligent. But I enjoyed the doting affection of my late father and relied on the exemplary instruction provided by my mother. When I was fourteen—now more than forty years ago—I took up dustpan and broom in the Cao family. Trembling with fear, I was always afraid of bringing divorce and dishonor upon myself, which would bring further shame on my parents and add to the burdens of my relatives. From early morning until late at night I put forth my best efforts and toiled without complaining of weariness. But from now on I know that I will be spared all of that.

By nature I am lax and lazy and have no talent for teaching. I have always been afraid that my son Gu would betray our pre court and bring dishonor upon it, but he has enjoyed the emperor’s grace beyond measure, and inexplicably been honored with the gold and purple insignia. This is something we had not even dared hope for. As a man my son will be able to take care of himself, and I will no longer have to worry about him. But I am concerned about you, my daughters, who are about to be married. Because you have not been immersed in instruction and censure and know nothing of the proper behavior for women, I am afraid that you may lose face with your husbands’ families and bring shame upon your ancestors.

The illness I now suffer from is serious and persistent and my life may be over any day. Whenever I think about you all, I become sad and depressed. In my leisure time I have written *Precepts for My Daughters* seven chapters. My daughters, each of you make yourself a copy: perhaps it will be of some use and benefit to you. Do your best once you have left home!

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188 Idema and Grant, 36.
Appendix v

Three Vernacular Translations (1)-(3) and a Kug'yol Annotation (4) of Buddhist Sutras from the Sejo’s Kan’gyong Togam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) 楞嚴經譯解 (1461 Sejo 7)</th>
<th>(2) 金剛經言解 (1464 Sejo 10)</th>
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<th>(4) 圓覺經口訣 (1465 Sejo 11)</th>
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[^189]: An Pyonghui, *Kug’osa charyo yon’gu*, 508; 512; 514; 515.
Appendix vi

Four Examples of Sejo’s Kugyol Annotations of Confucian Classics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) 易傳義口訣</th>
<th>(2) 論語大文口訣口訣</th>
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<tr>
<td>(3) 小學集說口訣</td>
<td>(4) 禮記集説大全口訣</td>
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Appendix vii

Images of Vernacular Translations of Four Confucian Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pŏnyŏk Sohak 翻譯小學</th>
<th>Sohak onhae 小學譯解</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chungyong onhae 中庸譯解</td>
<td>Hyogyong onhae 孝經譯解</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix viii: Queen Sohye Han-ssi's Family Tree, Abridged

Sejong
(4th monarch; 1397-1450; r.1418-1450)
  
Munjong
(5th monarch; 1414-52; r.1450-1452)
    
Tanjong
(6th monarch; 1441-1457; r.1452-1455)
  
Sejo
(7th monarch; 1417-68; r.1455-1468)
    
Queen Chŏnghŭi
(Regency: 1469-1476)
      
Crown Prince Ùgyŏng (Tŏkjong)
(1438-1357)

Queen Sohye

Yejong
(8th monarch; 1450-1469; r.1468-1469)
  
Prince Wŏlsan
(1454-1488)

Sŏngjong
(9th monarch; 1457-1494; r.1469-1494)
  
Yŏnsangun
(10th monarch; 1476-1506; r.1494-1506)