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## **The Achievements of Astronomer – King Sejong as Viewed by Modern Western Scholars**

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### **Abstract**

Many of King Sejong's splendid accomplishments in astronomy have only become familiar to Western scholars in recent years – largely through the work of Joseph Needham and his collaborators. Notable among these is his establishment of what was probably the best equipped observatory in the world in the 15th century. Other remarkable works were King Sejong's initiation of the production of an automatic striking clepsydra and also the improvement of the existing Chinese calendar for Korean use.

King Sejong was unusually gifted in his abilities to select skilled scholars and artisans. What is particularly notable is his own active involvement in almost every aspect of the astronomical work which was undertaken at his court. This attitude is almost unique among monarchs throughout history.

A lasting memorial to King Sejong is the series of astronomical observations recorded in the Josun Wang Jo Sillok. Even long after his reign they followed the tradition initiated by King Sejong himself. In particular, the supernova, cometary and solar-related observations have attracted the attention of Western astronomers for their value in modern science.