

Materials on Korean Studies

**Royal Genealogical Records of
the Joseon Royal Family**

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1. Kinds of Royal Genealogical Records of the Joseon Royal Family

The royal family thought more highly of revealing its lineage than any other family, because to reveal its lineage was directly connected with the king's authority. Therefore, there have been royal family records since the Three Kingdoms period. There are no extant royal family records from the Three Kingdoms period to the Goryeo dynasty, but their existence can be confirmed in *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms), *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), and *Goryeosa* (History of Goryeo).¹ However, various royal genealogical records were compiled during the Joseon dynasty and are still extant.

The royal genealogical records contain information about the blood relatives of the royal family (the king, the queen, and the Crown Prince's wife). These royal genealogical records are divided into two: one for blood relatives of the king and the other for blood relatives of the queen and the Crown Prince's wife. The records of the king's blood relatives are generally referred to as genealogical documents of royal origins. They were the most numerous of royal genealogical records and were compiled during the Joseon dynasty. The genealogical records of the blood relatives of the queen and the Crown Prince's wife can be found in three places: in the chapter titled "The Queen" in *Donnyeong bocheop*

1. Regarding the royal lineage of the Goryeo dynasty, in addition to *Goryeosa*, *Goryeoseongwonnok* (Royal Family Records of the Goryeo Dynasty) contained the genealogy of the Gaeseong Wangs (Kim 2002:143).

(Genealogical Documents of the King and Queen's Relatives), in *Wangbi sebo* (Family Records of the Queen), and in *Sejabin bocheop* (Family Records of the Crown Prince's Wife).

The genealogical documents of royal origins are comprised of *Seonwonnok* (Descriptions of Royal Origins), *Eocheop* (Exclusive Descriptions of the King's Immediate in Its Direct Linearity), *Palgojodo* (Ancestry Records to the Family's 8th Grandfather), *Seonwon gyebo giryak* (Geneological Table of the Royal Clan of the Joseon Dynasty), *Seonwon sokbo* (Succeeding Descriptions of Royal Origins), and the chapter titled "The Great King" in *Donnyeong bocheop*. In noble Joseon families, genealogies were compiled to reveal their bloodline and prove the status of their family, but some of the genealogical documents of royal origins were compiled for the added purpose of investigating royal relatives.

The genealogical documents of royal origins which recorded the bloodline of the royal family during the Joseon period are *Eocheop*, *Palgojodo*, *Seonwon gyebo giryak*, and *Seonwon sokbo*. *Eocheop* resembles a family record of the noble family. It lists all the generations starting from Yi Han, the direct founder of the Joseon royal family, through Yi Yangmu, the direct 17th generation descendant, and his son Mokjo, who was made king after his death, to Sunjong, the last of the Joseon kings. *Eocheop* stated the names and official positions from the founder to Yi Yangmu and the honorary names of the late kings and queens, the names of sons and daughters (both legitimate and illegitimate princes and princesses), and the conferred names since Mokjo. In the case of princesses, the names of their husbands, royal sons-in-law, and their official positions were also described. *Eocheop* briefly described the main family members: the king, queen, and their children. Some documents have the same publication system but bear different names: *Joseon gukbo*, which was most likely published at the beginning of King Sukjong's reign, *Gukjo eocheop* (or *Gukjobocheop*), *Seonwon segye*, and *Seonwon segyerok*, which had been copied since 1681, the 7th year of King Sukjong.

Palgojodo aimed to reveal one's lineage with precision. It revealed the bloodline and succeeding lineage of the king and described lineally the extended family to the husband and wife's 4th node of grandparents. In the case of an adopted son, his adoptive and real parents were described together. It is remarkable that *Palgojodo* revealed the lineage of the king himself and also showed the succession to the throne. During the Joseon dynasty, the rule was for the legitimate first son to succeed to the throne. However, there were some exceptions to this rule: Occasionally, a second or third son of a wife other than the queen, an

illegitimate son, or an adopted son became king.²

Compiling *Palgojodo* was problematic for an illegitimate son or an adopted son. In the case of an adopted son, there were two *Palgojodo*: one described the king's real parents and the other described his adoptive parents. In the case of an illegitimate son, two *Palgojodo* were compiled: one that described the real mother and another that described the queen as the mother. Describing the real mother revealed the lineage but describing the queen as the mother did not entail the concept of an adoptive mother but simply revealed succession to the throne.

Seonwon gyebo giryak was the first genealogical document published in 1679, the 5th year of King Sukjong. This genealogy is composed of an exclusive description of the king's immediate family in its direct linearity, of ancestry records to the 8th grandfather, and of clan registers of previous kings. It was supplemented over a hundred times.³ At first, only the lineages of King Jungjong and kings who reigned afterwards were included, but all the lineages of King

Figure 1 *Joseon gukbo*



Figure 2 *Palgojodo* of King Injo the Great



2. Kings Jeongjong, Taejong, Sejong, Sejo, Jungjong, and Myeongjong are examples of sons born to the queen but were not the first born. Examples of illegitimate sons include kings Seonjo, Wonjong, Gyeongjong, and Yeongjo. Kings Seongjong, Jeongjo, Cheoljong, and Gojong are examples of adopted sons .

3. According to its general introduction, *Seonwongyebogiryak* was first published in 1679 and 114 revised editions were subsequently published. In reality, there were fewer publications.

Taejo and those kings who reigned afterwards were added beginning in 1760, the 36th year of King Yeongjo. Also, the lineages of kings enthroned after their deaths such as kings Mokjo, Ikjo, Dojo, and Hwanjo were compiled beginning in 1872, the 9th year of King Gojong.

This genealogy contains only blood relatives of successive kings: up to the 5th generation in the case of blood relatives with the same family name as the king, and up to grandsons in the case of the king's daughter's sons. The generations included were restricted to the king's blood relatives by King Yeongjo. *Seonwon gyebo giryak* was based on *Seonwonboryak*, written by Yi Kan, the second son of Inheunggun, who was the twelfth son of King Seonjo. Therefore, the genealogy begins with the lineage during the reign of King Jungjong, but the genealogy of King Seonjo is more precise. Though the genealogy of King Jungjong contains descendants with the same family name up to the 4th generation and grandchildren by daughters up to the 2nd generation, the genealogy of King Seonjo is not restricted by a set number of generations. While *Seonwon gyebo giryak* continued to be published, only the genealogy of King Seonjo continued to be updated. As a result, it increased to seven volumes. Indicating that *Seonwon gyebo giryak* was not a genealogy of a private family, King Yeongjo restricted the generations to blood relatives of the kings. Also, since he thought it proper to have all genealogies of successive kings in *Seonwon gyebo giryak*, King Yeongjo had all the genealogies included (Won 2007).

Seonwon sokbo is a comprehensive assembly of all royal records of the same family name, which was first published in 1867, the 4th year of King Gojong. It is not a genealogy of successive kings like *Seonwon gyebo giryak* and *Seonwonnok*. It is composed of a preface, which is a single volume, and of numerous volumes dealing with the genealogy of 101 successive princes including the sons of kings Mokjo, Ikjo, Dojo, and Hwanjo. Each prince became a first ancestor branching further down to create smaller genealogical divisions. The total number of books of *Seonwon sokbo* published in 1867 is 331 books.⁴

In 1899, the 3rd year of Gwangmu, there were discussions to restart the publishing of *Seonwon sokbo*. As a result, it came out again in 1900 and 1902. Errors were corrected and descendants who had previously been omitted were added. In addition, two kinds of indirect and collateral lineages of the royal fam-

4. Out of the 101 genealogies of princes, two that were published in 1867 are housed at Jangseogak.

ily were also published as *Seonwon hapbo*. While the 1867 *Seonwon sokbo* is a comprehensive assembly of all royal records of the same family name, *Seonwon sokbo* republished in 1900 and 1902 are that of the Jeonju Yi family. The republished *Seonwon sokbo* are composed of a book of the lineage of royal origins and 458 books of the lineages of 115 different divisions (*Seonwon sokbo moknok*). Of the 115 divisions, 113 of them are lineages of princes, and the other two divisions are collateral lineages of the royal family. Both lineages are *sijung-gongpa* (small genealogical division of an ancestor who once was a Goryeo prime minister)⁵ and *pyeongjangsapa* (small genealogical division of an ancestor who once was a Goryeo high official).⁶

There are two other records, *Seonwonnok* and *Donnyeong bocheop*, which do not aim to reveal and record the bloodline of the royal family but whose purpose it was to be used as evidence for claiming either a title given to a king's relative or a title given to a royal relative of the queen's family or the family of the Crown Prince's wife, or for serving in a special army which ensured that royal descendants were treated with respect. Therefore, these records are considered royal genealogies and official documents of the state. Every third year, the Office of Royal Pedigree and the Office of Royal Relatives received a list of royal genealogy and a list of royal relatives and then revised *Seonwonnok* and *Donnyeong bocheop*.

Every royal relative up to the 4th generation of the king was given a title. Since the title given varied according to whether one was a legitimate son, an illegitimate son, or a son born of a female servant, the origin and name of the real mother was clearly stated in *Seonwonnok*. The Office of Royal Pedigree evaluated each claim for a title given to the king's relatives and reported them to the Ministry of Personnel. Even if they did not have a title, the king's relatives were treated with respect while undertaking a general duty for the people such as military service. The Office of Royal Pedigree had to investigate not only the king's relatives but also the descendants of the royal family. Those within the scope of the king's relatives were registered in *Seonwonnok* and descendants outside the scope were included in other genealogies such as *Childaeihajasonnok* (Offspring Record up to the 7th Generation) or *Sipdaerok*

5. This is the lineage headed by Yi Seosin, the second son of Yi Gungjin, the 14th generation of Yi Han, the founder of the Jeonju Yi family.

6. This is the lineage headed by Yi Geo, the second son of Yi Yongbu, the 15th generation of Yi Han, the founder of the Jeonju Yi family.

(Genealogical Record of Ten Generations).⁷ Those who were omitted from *Seonwonnok* submitted a list of royal genealogy, and then *Gahyeonnok* (Updated Genealogical Record at Regular Intervals) was compiled and preserved every third year.

King Taejong prepared the system used for *Seonwonnok* in 1412, the 12th year of his reign. He had the royal genealogical records subdivided into *Seonwonnok*, *Jongchinnok*, and *Yuburok*. *Seonwonnok* contained the king's ancestors; *Jongchinnok*, the legitimate sons; *Yuburok*, the legitimate daughters, the illegitimate children, and the children born of female servants.⁸ Since it contained the king's ancestors, it was called *Seonwonnok*, but in the data that are still extant, it is called *Seonwonseongyerok* (Description of Royal Ancestry).⁹ *Seonwonseongyerok* goes from the founder Yi Han to King Taejo. The genealogy of successive kings was compiled in *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*. The people in *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* were not clearly divided. According to *Taejong sillok* (Veritable Records of King Taejong), princes and their legitimate sons should have been included in *Jongchinnok*, while princesses and illegitimate sons of princes should have been listed in *Yuburok*. However, it cannot be confirmed whether *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* were published in accordance with this system.

Existing *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* are not the ones that were compiled during the first half of the Joseon dynasty. During the Japanese Invasion of Korea in 1592, two of the three history archives were burnt down and the genealogies preserved at the Jeonju history archive were copied. The genealogies that had been preserved at the palace were burnt during the Manchu Invasion of Korea in 1636, and the genealogies that had been preserved at the Taebaek Mountain history archive were recopied in 1637, the 17th year of King Injo. The existing *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* are the ones that were copied in 1637.

The existing *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* have different compiling systems from those used during King Taejong's reign. Illegitimate princes of the king and illegitimate births below the king's grandsons were included in

7. Descendants up to the 6th generation were registered in *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* before 1681, the 7th year of King Sukjong. *Childaehajasonmok* began to be compiled to register descendants that could not be included in them during the reign of King Hyeonjong. Since *Seonwonnok* listed descendants up to the 9th generation, *Sipdaerok* began to be compiled to register descendants up to the 10th generation who had been excluded from *Seonwonnok*.

8. *Taejong sillok*. Vol. 24. October 26, the 12th year of King Taejong.

9. *Seonwonseongyerok* (K2-1053, K2-1054)

Jongchinnok. Therefore, legitimate and illegitimate male linkages were part of *Jongchinnok*, while legitimate and illegitimate female linkages were included in *Yuburok*.

Since the existing *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* were copied, it cannot be asserted that they were compiled according to the system prescribed during King Taejong's reign. In fact, it seems that the compiling system established during King Taejong's reign was not maintained continuously. According to *Sejong sillok* (Veritable Records of King Sejong), the State Council suggested in 1447 that *Seonwonnok*¹⁰ should be compiled more precisely following historical precedents as the system was too simple.¹¹ Thus, it can be assumed that the compiling system of *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* changed somewhat according to the period.

Since there were many errors in *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*, these were revised in 1681, the 7th year of King Sukjong, and a total of 51 volumes of a catalogue and 50 genealogies of successive kings from King Taejo to King Sukjong were compiled. After the publication of *Seonwonnok*, supplemental genealogies were described in *Gahyeonnok*. When *Seonwonnok* was revised in 1681, *Seonwonnok* from King Sukjong to King Yeongjo was copied into *Dangdaeseonwonnok*.¹²

Donnyeong bocheop is a genealogy composed by the Office of Royal Relatives, the department in charge of managing the relatives of the king, the queen, and the Crown Prince's wife. *Danmunchin* (distant relatives) with the same family name as the king and *simachin* (proper close relatives) with a different family name from the king could belong to a specially selected army known as *jokchinwi*. Besides relatives to the sixth node, *simachin* with a different family name could belong to a specially selected army known as *chungsunwi*. The Office of Royal Relatives had to control illegitimate births with the same family name and relatives with a different family name. Also, it had to report the members of *jokchinwi* to the Ministry of Military Affairs and *donnyeong* government post holders to the Ministry of Personnel. Rankings for the government post of *donnyeong* were as follows: The king's relatives like sons-in-law of legitimate princes and sons of legitimate princesses were given a seventh grade

10. This doesn't mean *Seonwonnok* but is the common name used for *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*.

11. *Sejongsillok* Vol. 118. December 14, the 29th year of King Sejong (Imsin).

12. *Dangdaeseonwonnok* was compiled every third year. Since 1681, the lineages of successive kings after King Sukjong were arranged but *Seonwonnok* was not revised. It was preserved only in the form of *Dangdaeseonwonnok*.

official rank, and sons-in-law of illegitimate princes and legitimate princesses and sons of illegitimate princesses were given an eighth grade official rank at first. Sons-in-law who were married to a prince's daughter whose mother was a commoner concubine were given a position one grade below, and sons-in-law who were married to a prince's daughter whose mother was a female servant were given a position two grades below. To obtain the government post of *donnyeong* as a relative of the queen entailed being a relative from the eighth family node with the same family name or the fifth family node with a different family name. In the case of the Crown Prince's wife, relatives could obtain a government post if they were over the sixth family node with the same family name and the third family node with a different family name as well as uncles, sisters, nieces, and granddaughters of the above relatives.¹³ Thus, the chapter titled "The Great King" in *Donnyeong bocheop* focused on illegitimate births with the same family name and relatives with a different family name. The chapter titled "The Queen" in *Donnyeong bocheop* focused on the relatives of the queen and the Crown Prince's wife.

The extant *Donnyeong bocheop* was compiled since King Seongjong's reign, but *Donnyeong bocheop* from the first half of the Joseon dynasty no longer exists because all of them were destroyed during the two Joseon dynasty wars. It was not until 1648, the 26th year of King Injo, that *Donnyeong bocheop* began to be compiled again.¹⁴ The Office of Royal Relatives asked that it be published again since the office could not properly report to the Ministry of Personnel and Military Affairs the relatives for the government posts of *donnyeong* and *jokchinwi*. Thus, it began to be compiled again every third year.¹⁵

The chapter titled "The Great King" in *Donnyeong bocheop* included the descendants up to the 9th family node with the same family name and up to the 6th family node with a different family name. However, not all the king's relatives were included. Those who were included were mainly those entering into *jokchinwi* and those who were offered a government post of *donnyeong*.

13. *Gyeonggukdaejeon* (Grand Code of Managing the Nation). Vol. 1. The Code of the Ministry of Personnel. The Clause of the Office of Royal Relatives.

14. *Donnyeong bocheop* is preserved only at Jangseogak. *Donnyeong bocheop* that began to be compiled in 1648 (25th year of King Injo) and was completed at the coronation of King Hyojong, *Donnyeong bocheop* that was compiled every third year until 1756 (32nd year of King Yeongjo) and the part of *Donnyeong bocheop* that was compiled during the reign of King Gojong are still extant.

15. *Seungjeongwonilgi* (Diary of Royal Secretariat). July 8, the 26th year of King Injo (Sinminyeon).

Figure 3 Chapter titled “The Queen” in *Donnyeong bocheop*



Therefore, the chapter titled “The Great King” in *Donnyeong bocheop* is different from *Seonwonnok*.

The chapter titled “The Queen” in *Donnyeong bocheop* documented the relatives of the queen and the Crown Prince’s wife. The queen’s relatives were within the 8th family node with the same family name and the 5th family node with a different family name. The relatives of the Crown Prince’s wife were within the 6th family node with the same family name and the 3rd family node with a different family name. The chapter titled “The Queen” in *Donnyeong bocheop* that began to be compiled in 1648, the 26th year of King Injo, was very simple and there was no principle for its compilation. It included the direct relatives of the queen and mainly focused on the relatives of paternal lineage, starting from the queen’s father, grandfather, or great-grandfather.

Principles about who would be included were established during King Yeongjo’s reign. Using these principles, the chapter titled “The Queen” in *Donnyeong bocheop* had been compiled since 1739, the 15th year of King Yeongjo. It included the father’s side, the mother’s side, the paternal grandmother’s side, and the maternal grandmother’s side. In the case of the father’s side,

relatives from the great-great-grandfather to the descendants of the 6th generation of the queen's brothers and the queen's 8th family node were included. In the case of the mother's side, relatives from the maternal great-grandfather to the maternal nephews who were the 5th family node of the queen were included. In the case of the paternal grandmother's side, relatives from the great-grandfather to the queen were included. In the case of the maternal grandmother's side, relatives from the great-grandfather to the queen's mother were included.

The end of the chapter titled "The Queen" in *Donnyeong bocheop* contained the relatives of the Crown Prince's wife. Because the Crown Prince's wife was almost appointed queen, she was temporarily included in *Donnyeong bocheop*. However, when the Crown Prince died, she was listed as the Crown Prince's wife and was contained at the end of the chapter titled "The Queen" in *Donnyeong bocheop*. King Jeongjo had the genealogy of the Crown Prince's wife recorded separately and had *Sejabin bocheop* compiled.

Wangbi sebo was the genealogy of the queen that was compiled together with *Seonwonnok* when it was revised in 1681, the 7th year of King Sukjong.¹⁶ This genealogy was a kind of lineage. That is, it contained the direct couples of ancestors of the queen, thus revealing the origin of the queen's bloodline. The number of generations contained in *Wangbi sebo* is different for each queen and is connected with the rise and fall of the queen's family and the genealogical tendencies during the Joseon dynasty. A distinguished queen's family had many generations contained in the genealogy because the family record began early. Also, during the first half of the Joseon dynasty when the publication of genealogy was not generalized, not many genealogies recorded more than ten generations. Those that recorded more than ten generations during the first half of the Joseon dynasty were: Queen Wongyeong (Yeoheung Mins and wife of King Taejong); Queen Hyeondeok (Andong Gwons and wife of King Munjong); Queen Jeonghi (Papyeong Yuns and wife of King Sejo); Queen Sohye (Cheongju Hans and wife of King Deokjong); and Queen Inmok (Yeonan Kims and second wife of King Seonjo).¹⁷ Meanwhile, since the 17th century when the publication of genealogy was vitalized, most recorded more than the 10th genera-

16. During the Daehan Empire, *Wangbi sebo* was changed to *Hwanghu Wangbisebo* because the queen's title was changed to "empress" when King Gojong was made emperor.

17. If queens were from the same family, the first queen's ancestors were introduced with no omission while the later queen's ancestry was restricted to the 4th or 5th generation grandfather. In the early Joseon dynasty, this sort of tenet was applied to such queens' families, in which it

tion and some of them recorded more than the 20th generation.

One characteristic found only in *Wangbi sebo* is that it contained the epitaphs of couples. In particular, the epitaphs of the queens' mothers are interesting. They tended to reveal precisely not only a queen's parents' home but also the family on her mother's side. However, many epitaphs were not transmitted. The following epitaphs are included: Queen Jeonghyeon, wife of King Sejo; Queen Jeonghyeon, second wife of King Seongjong; Queen Jangryeol, second wife of King Injo; Queen Inhyeon, second wife of King Sukjong; Queen Jeongsun, second wife of King Yeongjo; Queen Sunwon, wife of King Sunjo; and Queen Myeongseong, wife of King Gojong.

2. Compiling System of the Royal Genealogical Records of the Joseon Royal Family

The genealogical compiling system during the Joseon dynasty changed while rituals were studied in-depth, and the family system that gave priority to paternal relatives was settled. During the Goryeo dynasty, genealogical records were compiled so they could be used for applying for the civil service examination, taking an official job, and inheriting the right to be given a position by the government. Those genealogical records are mainly composed of tables of family lineages, both paternal and maternal ancestors. In the table of family lineages, an ancestor connected through paternal lineage and descendants connected through paternal lineage are excluded. There is a table of relatives that arranged the lineages of horizontal sons and daughters and remote relatives. As the table of family lineages or the table of family aimed to trace the origin of the family bloodline and reveal the family's status, official positions and matrimonial relations which decided the family status were essential.

Genealogies during the first half of the Joseon dynasty were made by combining the table of lineages describing vertical direct ancestors during the Goryeo dynasty with the table of relatives describing the sons and daughters and

was restricted up to the 10th generation; for example, the Papyeong Yun family which included the Succeeding Queen of King Sungjong, the First Queen of King Jungjong, and the Succeeding Queen of King Jungjong; and the Chungju Han family which included the First Queen of King Yejong, the Succeeding Queen of King Yejong, and the Queen of King Sungjong.

remote relatives and by enlarging retroactively and making the table of family lineages and the table of family. Therefore, as the genealogies during the first half of the Joseon dynasty contained the sons and daughters and distant relatives, they should not be considered paternal-relative-centered genealogies. *Seonghwabo* of the Andong Gwons published in 1476 (7th year of King Seongjong) is a genealogy from the first half of the Joseon dynasty that used this compiling system. The only personal items mentioned in *Seonghwabo* are official positions.

During the second half of the Joseon dynasty, while the paternal-relative-centered family system was settled, the principles of a more precise description of the son's lineage rather than of a daughter's, or son first and daughter later, were applied. Therefore, the records of the female line decreased and the birth order was distorted. Genealogies appeared that did not record the female line to a daughter's child but only described the names of sons-in-law or excluded the female line from the beginning. During the first half of the Joseon dynasty, when registering sons and daughters in a genealogy, they were described in the order of birth. But according to the principle of son first, the order of birth was neglected. Also, personal items mentioned became more precise than in the first half of the Joseon dynasty and the dates of birth and death, the official position, the wife's line, and the tomb came to be described.

The compiling system of the royal genealogical records was also influenced by such social changes as the deepening of ritual studies and the settlement of a patriarchal society. Nevertheless, the royal genealogical records that confirm the compiling system during the first half of the Joseon dynasty are *Joseon gukbo*, an exclusive description of the king's immediate family in its direct linearity, and *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* that were descriptions of royal origins. The existing royal genealogical records are those that were compiled after the seventeenth century. The change began in 1681, the 7th year of King Sukjong, when *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* were revised to become *Seonwonnok*. Therefore, royal genealogical records that were compiled before 1681 still maintain the compiling system of the early Joseon dynasty.

The basic principle for the compiling of *Eocheop*, *Jongchinnok*, and *Yuburok* was to draw a line between both legitimate and illegitimate and male and female. When registering sons and daughters, legitimate children were distinguished from illegitimate children and the sons and daughters of legitimate children were distinguished from those of illegitimate children. Accordingly, they were described in the order of legitimate princes, legitimate princesses, illegiti-

mate princes, and illegitimate princesses. It seems that such a compiling system derived from the compiling system used in *Seonwonnok* that King Taejong had suggested. King Taejong had the legitimate and illegitimate as well as the male and female contained separately and the royal genealogical records named *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*.

The reason the royal family distinguished legitimate children from illegitimate ones, for example an illegitimate child born of a commoner's concubine or one born of a female servant, was connected with the titles that could be given to the king's relatives. The titles were based upon legitimacy and illegitimacy. The titles were only granted for four generations. The fifth generation ceased to be a relative of the king and his status was then based upon his mother's status. Therefore, the distinction between an illegitimate child born of a commoner's concubine or of a female servant was very strict. And unlike the genealogy of the noble family, *Seonwonnok* clearly stated "son of a concubine" or "daughter of a concubine," and revealed the name and status of the real mother.

Jongchinnok and *Yuburok* adhered to a principle of compilation and their contents differed from that of the noble family records. *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* contained the legitimate and the illegitimate children's names, dates of birth, official positions, real mothers, and spouses. The names of sons and daughters were also included. In the genealogy of noble families, the names of the sons-in-law were written instead of the names of the daughters. In *Seonghwabo*, the expression "the husband of daughter so-and-so" appeared instead of the daughter's name. In contrast, the name of a daughter appeared in *Yuburok*. In the case of an unidentified daughter, the space was left blank. The son-in-law was separately described as a spouse and his name and official position were described. Few female names except for some special cases were described during the Joseon dynasty. The names of daughters were only found in genealogies of the royal family. In *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*, the real mother was described because of the characteristic of the royal genealogy. In the case of illegitimate births, real mothers were described. By providing the name and status of the real mother, it was clear whether they were sons of common women or of female servants.

Jongchinnok and *Yuburok* are different from genealogy of noble families in description. The genealogy of noble families was influenced by Chinese genealogy. A page was divided into five or six spaces horizontally and one person's description was written in one space (Figure 5). In *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*, seven lines were drawn like in Figures 3 and 4 to describe a generation. As the

generation got longer, the contents were described horizontally one line lower. This style of description was also used in *Donnyeong bocheop*.

The number of generations contained in *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* was restricted to the 6th generation of the king. The scope of the king's relatives was up to the 9th family node with the same family name and to the 6th family node with a different family name. By changing the 9th family node with the same family name into a generation, it was the same as the 5th generation. Strictly speaking, descendants beyond the 5th generation were not relatives of the king. *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* described descendants up to the 6th generation, which exceeded the scope of the king's relatives. These descendants contained distant relatives (sons and daughters) up to the 6th generation. In the compiling system of *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*, there was a distinction between sons and daughters but no distinction between the sons and daughters of a great-great-grandson and those of a great-great-granddaughter. It shows that the family system focusing on paternal relatives was not completely settled during the first half of the Joseon dynasty despite the Confucian ethical system.

The compiling system of *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* was changed when they

Figure 4 *Jongchinnok* of Taejong the Great



Figure 5 *Yuburok* of Kongjeong the Great



were revised, combined, and renamed *Seonwonnok*. The order of description was *Jongchinnok* followed by *Yuburok*. The style and contents also changed. The changes to the compiling system of *Seonwonnok* were influenced by the compiling system of the genealogy of the noble family during the second half of the Joseon dynasty.

First, the style of description changed to that of the genealogy of noble families because to draw lines horizontally and to write in each space was easier to understand than to write the contents vertically in a lower space as the generations went on. *Gahyeonnok*, which had used the same style as *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok*, was also changed.

According to the principle that the description of a son's lineage should be more precise than that of a daughter's lineage, the son's lineage was more precise and the daughter's lineage was shorter. The number of generations contained in *Jongchinnok* and *Yuburok* was up to the 6th generation of the king irrespective of son or daughter. However, the number of generations contained in *Seonwonnok* increased to the 9th generation of the king because the number of generations for a son's lineage could not be the same as that for a daughter's lin-

Figure 6 *Seonwonnok* of Taejo the Great



age. Also, the names of daughters were not described separately but appeared alongside the names of the sons-in-law as annotations.

Royal genealogies that followed the compiling system of the genealogy of noble families during the second half of the Joseon dynasty were *Seonwon gyebo giryak* and *Seonwon sokbo*. The compiling system of *Seonwon gyebo giryak* faithfully followed the principle that the description of a son's lineage should be more precise than that of a daughter's lineage, and contained the king's descendants up to the 5th generation in the case of sons and up to the 2nd generation in the case of daughters. *Seonwon sokbo* published in the nineteenth century described only the sons-in-law instead of the daughters' names. Also included was such personal information as the dates of birth and death, official positions held, wife's lineage, and tomb.

3. Publication and Preservation of the Royal Genealogical Records of the Joseon Royal Family

The Office of Royal Pedigree was in charge of the publication of royal genealogical records (its primary duty), the investigation for the diligence or negligence of the royal family school, and the correction of the relatives' faults. The genealogies that the Office of Royal Pedigree and the Office of Royal Relatives revised every three years were *Seonwonnok* and *Donnyeong bocheop*. The genealogies were revised at the Office of Corrections in the Office of Royal Pedigree and at the Office of Genealogy in the Office of Royal Relatives. The procedures for correcting the genealogies were contained in *Seonwonnok samok* and *Mujasiknyeondeungnok*, which is the document that the Office of Royal Pedigree registered every three years.¹⁸ No data exist to confirm what procedure was followed for correcting *Donnyeong bocheop*. However, according to the system for making *donnyeong*, which was outlined in *jeonyultongbo* (the code that prevailed at that time), the procedure for receiving the provincial records of *donnyeong* should have followed the system used for the recording of lineages in *Seonwonnok*.¹⁹

18. The existing *Seonwonnok samok* (Gyu 9701) was published in 1645, the 23rd year of King Injo, and the existing registration, *Mujasiknyeondeungnok* (Gyu 13000), was published in 1648, the 26th year of King Injo.

19. *Jeonyultongbo*, Extra Edition. Article of the System of the List of *Donnyeong*.

The procedure for revising *Seonwonnok* was as follows: Every third year, the Office of Royal Pedigree notified each ministry in *hanseongbu* (capital prefecture) and local government inspectors of the acceptance of the lineage lists. First, the lists of the records of royal family offspring within the scope of the king's relatives were made, as well as documents of royal family offspring beyond the king's relatives. Then, a family representative and two relatives collected and checked the lineage lists. The family representative and a local representative checked the lists and signed them. Finally, the lists were presented to obtain the seal of the local government. Based on the presented lists, *Seonwonnok* was revised and copied. One copy of *Seonwonnok* was preserved at the palace's lineage library and four were stored at local historical archives.

At first, King Taejong had two copies of *Seonwonnok*: One was stored at the royal archive and the other at the residence of the Crown Prince. During the reign of King Sejong, only one copy of *Seonwonnok* was preserved at the Office of Royal Pedigree and then it was moved to the shrine for past kings. In 1457 (3rd year of King Sejo), according to the suggestion of Yang Seong-ji, four copies were stored at local historical archives.²⁰ Since then, the genealogical documents of royal origins including *Seonwonnok* have been preserved at the palace and at local historical archives. Following this precedent, royal genealogies such as *Eocheop*, *Palgojodo*, *Wangbi sebo*, and *Seonwon gyebo giryak* were then preserved at the palace's royal library and local historical archives.

Donnyeong bocheop was revised and two fair copies were made at the Office of Genealogy Books in the Office of Royal Relatives. One copy was kept at the library for royal genealogical records and the other was kept at the Office of Royal Relatives. During the reign of King Sukjong, both copies were held at the library for royal genealogical records and a draft was preserved at the Office of Royal Relatives.²¹ Meanwhile, in 1717 (43rd year of King Sukjong), based on a suggestion by Min Jin-hu, one of the copies held at the library for royal genealogical records was moved to the temporary palace at Mount Bukhan Fortress.

While *Eocheop* was revised every third year along with *Seonwonnok*, *Gukjo eocheop*, like *Seonwon gyebo giryak*, *Palgojodo*, and *Wangbi sebo* was only revised when necessary.

20. *Sejo sillok*. Vol. 7. March 15, the 3rd year of King Sejo (Muinnyeon).

21. *Seungjeongwonilgi* (Diary of Royal Secretariat). January 15, the 29th year of King Sukjong (Sinyunyeon).

Some royal genealogical records were fair-copied. *Seonwon gyebo giryak* and *Seonwon sokbo* were published in large quantities. In particular, *Seonwon gyebo giryak* was a block genealogy which was supplemented and published over one hundred times. The intention of King Sukjong, who had first published *Seonwon gyebo giryak*, was not to keep it at the library for royal genealogical records but to distribute it to relatives and key subjects. Ten were published exclusively for imperial inspections and 242 books were distributed to high subjects, totaling 252 books. The books for high subjects were given to the royal family, sons-in-law of the king and the Crown Prince, the daughter's offspring during the reign of King Seonjo, present and past subjects, ministers of the six ministries, the mayor of the capital city, and the ministers of the three offices of law, royal secretaries, and chroniclers.²² In the event of a partial revision, only the revised part was distributed, but in the case of a drastic revision, an entirely new genealogy was distributed. *Seonwon sokbo* was a printed genealogy published under the supervision of the Office of Royal Pedigree during the reign of King Gojong. This royal genealogy was published for distribution to each family division of the princes. Hand-written genealogies are now held at Gyujanggak and Jangseogak, but printed copies of *Seonwon gyebo giryak* and *Seonwon sokbo* that were distributed are kept at other locations.

4. Historical Value of the Royal Genealogical Records of the Joseon Royal Family

Joseon was a bureaucratic society of the nobility and a society of status though the lower echelons of the ruling class were larger than in the Goryeo dynasty. To gain fame and fortune in Joseon society was based first of all on passing the civil service examination and entering into a government position. Selecting bureaucrats through examination was an objective evaluation of one's ability. However, to pass the civil service examination, to hold an important post in government, and to be part of the core ruling class was not possible only through one's ability. One's family position and academic connections also worked as important elements. In particular, because of the closed bureaucracy that began in the seventeenth century, the family's position became more important.

Marital relations were very important when evaluating a family's position.

22. *Seonwonnokijeongcheonguigwe* (K2-3834).

Genealogies began to be published by noble families in the fifteenth century, and the reason for publishing these genealogies was to show off the position of one's family. Marital relations and official history shown in the genealogy served to evaluate the family's position.

Genealogies that kept careful records of the marital relations of well-known families were the royal genealogical records. Beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century, the family system was changed to a paternalistic one, where the records of paternal relatives were precise but those of the matrilineal relatives, or female lineage, were simple. However, *Seonwonnok* contained the descendants up to the 6th generation of the king in female lineage, which made it possible to confirm the marital relations of both male and female lineages. It became an important clue to confirming a family's connection with royal relatives.

One marital aspect shown in *Seonwonnok* was to have several marriages with particular families. Sometimes a woman became a maternal relative and daughter's offspring in the royal family. Other times, the queen was chosen in the royal lineage of a daughter's offspring. Among the key bureaucrats in the second half of the Joseon dynasty, there were many who became relatives of the royal family through marriage. Whenever *Seonwon gyebo giryak* was revised and published, the present and past academicians composed an epilogue and most of them were about marriages with the royal family. It is thus safe to say that well-known Joseon families were almost always contained in royal genealogical records.

Donnyeong bocheop and *Wangbi sebo* reveal very well the position of the queen's family and marital relations. In *Donnyeong bocheop*, the queen's relatives were divided into a paternal line, a maternal line, a paternal grandmother's line and a maternal grandmother's line and it is possible to confirm the marital relations with a variety of families. In *Wangbi sebo*, the epitaphs and morals of the queen's predecessors make it possible to easily obtain information on the core ruling class.

Marital relations of the core ruling class can be confirmed through the royal genealogical records. Also, the concrete evidence provided by the marital relations shown in the royal genealogical records suggests that marital relations became an important element to decide a family's position.

Another social phenomenon that can be verified through the royal genealogical records is the diversification of the classes. Descendants up to the 4th generation of the king could receive a title given to the king's relatives and live as the

ruling class irrespective of the real mother's status. However, beginning with the 5th generation, they are diversified into various classes. If descendants continued to pass the civil service examinations, the family became a family of civil official bureaucrats. When descendants applied for the military service examinations, the family produced generations of military officers. And if descendants applied for miscellaneous examinations, the family became part of the social class of technical officials and local government clerks. All of these divisions can be confirmed through the royal genealogical records and various announcement lists. Thus which family division of the prince became the bureaucratic class and which one became middle class can be seen and will contribute to the study of Joseon's social history.

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