

Edward W. Wagner and His Legacy:
Toward New Horizons in the Research of Korean History

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Today, we are here to celebrate the late Professor Wagner's accomplishments, and in particular his contributions to the development of Korean studies at Harvard and in North America. I did not think I would be the best person to make a speech on this auspicious occasion because there are many prominent former students of Professor Wagner and other scholars who must have known him much better than I. I think it is just a coincidence that I got tenure this past summer and became something like a successor of Professor Wagner during this fiftieth anniversary year of his appointment, and thus I reluctantly yet also with immense honor agreed to give a lecture today.

The reluctant part was because I encountered Professor Wagner only once, about thirteen years ago, at a conference held at the University of Washington in Seattle, in 1995. Back then, I was still a graduate student. However, I had read some of his work and I was already using the fruits of his long-term project, the Munkwa Project, for my dissertation research. In that first and last encounter, I took my courage in hand to tell Professor Wagner how much I admired his foresight in creating the *munkwa* database, and I am glad that I had a chance to thank him for that.

In traditional Korea, a student-in-training claims to have become the student of a renowned scholar even if he has just one chance to meet him casually or to read that scholar's work. So I guess it is not too much for me to claim that during that moment in 1995 I became a student of Professor Wagner. At any rate, my mentor Professor James B. Palais *was* Professor Wagner's student, so no one could object to the notion that I am an intellectual granddaughter of Professor Wagner.

As my colleague Carter Eckert says in the *Gazette* article,¹ Professor Wagner's work "transformed our understanding of pre-modern Korean institutions and society and laid the groundwork for all subsequent studies of Korean studies," and I could not agree more. Professor Wagner did so, most importantly, through his use of family genealogies and higher civil service examination rosters (*munkwa pangmok*), both of which make up a large part of our Korean rare book collection at the Harvard-Yenching Library.

When Professor Wagner started using both these sources for his research and, in the latter case, started computerizing them, almost no scholar in Korea paid serious attention to them, except his longtime academic partner Professor Song Jun-ho. Today I'd like to share my research experience in using genealogical records and the Munkwa Project database, and the kinds of discoveries I've made through the foundation that Professor Wagner laid down for us. Then I will conclude with a few words on future directions of research in Korean history in light of Professor Wagner's accomplishments.

I would like to first introduce the Munkwa Project, the lifelong work of Professor Wagner. *Munkwa*, the higher civil service examinations, were the primary means of recruiting officials for major central and provincial government posts during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910). The Munkwa Project was launched by Professor Wagner in 1967, in collaboration with the late Professor Song Jun-ho and with long-term financial support from the Harvard-Yenching Institute. Its purpose was primarily to computerize data related to more than 14,600 men who passed the *munkwa* during the Chosŏn dynasty, as well as their close relatives.

Raw data come from a number of sources, including the so-called *pangmok* in particular. A *pangmok* is a list of successful candidates of a particular *munkwa* exam, such as the example shown in Figure 1, the roster of a special examination carried out in 1672. The roster usually has information not only on the person who earned the *munkwa* degree but on his four ancestors' names, clan seat, residence, former occupation and status, etc. Professor Wagner corroborated information obtained from the roster with many other sources and developed a database known as the Munkwa Project.

¹ Ken Gewertz, "Edward Wagner Dies at 77," in *Gazette* (December 17, 2001). See on-line *Gazette* archive at: <http://www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/2001/12.13/wagner.html>

Figure 1. The *Munkwa* Roster of the 1672 Special Examination. Woodblock print. Harvard-Yenching Library.



Professor Wagner devoted his lifetime to creating this database, initially using old computer technology, thus involving key-punch computer cards, devising codes, assigning meaningful numbers and codes, etc. I got a glimpse of his work from his report on the project made to the twenty-second annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in 1970.² In this report, Professor Wagner explains the processes he had used to computerize data extracted from the rosters and other primary sources, and how he had solved various difficulties that he encountered in these processes. He provides a number of sample images concerning his project, in particular data related to the successful *munkwa* candidate Yun Hyoson, whose assigned identification number is 0947, to illuminate the complexity of the project.

As a person who is still not well versed in computer technology in the twenty-first century, I cannot begin to express how farseeing and meticulous he was in carrying out this project. One of the end results of the project is now available through a commercially developed website serviced by Dongbang Media, through which present users can search and trace data, and get the results in the blink of an eye. I believe that the final edition of the Munkwa Project will be also published as a multivolume set within a year.

One of the premodern sources that Professor Wagner utilized to a great extent as he worked on the Munkwa Project was family genealogies (*chokpo*), the published records of a patrilineal descent structure. In conventional historical study in Korea, genealogical records have been largely discredited for their fraudulent content, namely, fabrication of records. Professor Wagner, however, from early on asserted the usefulness of genealogy as a historical source, as you can learn from Professor Wagner's 1969 essay on genealogies and other works.³

In terms of the reliability of *chokpo*, Professor Wagner argues that “deliberate

² Edward W. Wagner, “A Computer Study of Yi Dynasty Civil Examination Rosters,” paper read at the 22nd Annual Meeting, Association for Asian Studies, San Francisco, California (April 3, 1970). I consulted a copy in the Harvard-Yenching Library.

³ Edward W. Wagner, “The Korean Chokpo as a Historical Source,” paper presented at the World Conference Records and Genealogical Seminar, Salt Lake City, Utah (August 5–8, 1969). Also see his essay, “Two Early Genealogies and Women’s Status in Early Yi Dynasty Korea,” in Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson, eds., *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room* (East Rock Press: 1983), 23–32.

falsification of family records was unthinkable to those who took upon themselves the often awesome burden of compiling and publishing a *chokpo*.” He continues to say that *chokpo* prefaces often inform the reader of the pains taken to research and verify material of doubtful authenticity submitted to a compilation committee. Basically, he thinks that the *chokpo* is “a faithful mirror of life” and that outright forgery is not a serious problem in using *chokpo* as source because such cases are easily discovered upon close examination.⁴ I basically agree with Professor Wagner’s view on genealogy and I will add a few other ways to interpret genealogy later in this lecture.

By combining these two sources, namely, *munkwa* rosters and genealogies, Professor Wagner made a number of important findings.⁵ Especially those points made about residents of northern provinces became a crucial guide for me to develop my research agenda in relation to the Hong Kyōngnae Rebellion of 1812, the topic of my dissertation and my first book, *Marginality and Subversion*, as well as my current research.

Most importantly, Professor Wagner put emphasis on the relative openness of the *munkwa*, which resulted in “marked diversity” in the composition of Chosŏn elites and thereby contributed to the stability of the system and the longevity of the Chosŏn dynasty. In relation to the northern provinces, my research focus, he found from the Munkwa Project that due to the openness of the system, “many ambitious lineage groups in the north were striving to acquire the education and emulate the life-style of the southern yangban.”⁶ Indeed, northerners in the late Chosŏn period became very successful in obtaining the *munkwa* degree, to the extent that they outnumbered their southern counterparts.

A close analysis of the distribution of successful candidates from the northern provinces reveals that P’yōngan Province produced almost 70 percent of the north’s successful candidates from about 50 percent of the total population of the north. More

⁴ Wagner, “The Korean Chokpo as a Historical Source,” 4.

⁵ See Edward W. Wagner, “The Ladder of Success in Yi Dynasty Korea,” *Occasional Papers on Korea* 1: 1–8, and “The Civil Examination Process as Social Leaven: The Case of the Northern Provinces in the Yi Dynasty,” *Korea Journal* 17:1 (Jan. 1977): 22–27.

⁶ Wagner, “The Civil Examination Process as Social Leaven,” 26.

interestingly, a few places within each northern province show a heavy concentration of successful passers. For example, Haeju and P'yŏngsan in Hwanghae, Hamhŭng and Anbyŏn in Hamgyŏng, and P'yŏngyang and Chŏngju in P'yŏngan Province boasted a remarkable concentration of successful candidates. The success of candidates from the town of Chŏngju, just north of the Ch'ŏngch'ŏn River in P'yŏngan Province, was most striking. Chŏngju, whose population was less than 4 percent of P'yŏngan and less than 2 percent of the total population of the northern provinces, produced 282 successful candidates—27 percent of the P'yŏngan total, and 18.7 percent of the overall northern total.⁷

What are the social and political implications of the northerners' phenomenal success in the *munkwa*? Professor Wagner knew that northerners were discriminated against in their bureaucratic advancement at the central court, yet he concludes that “the longevity of the Yi dynasty is substantially owed to its ability to ensure physical and psychological contentment in the lives of all major components of its population, not merely to a favored few.”⁸ Despite all the admiration I have for Professor Wagner (especially a number of extremely insightful points he raises about the northerners' success, its patterns, etc.), I have some doubts about his overall conclusion—the connection between the openness of *munkwa* and longevity of the dynasty in light of northerners' success in *munkwa*. We just need more concrete evidence to support, revise, or reject his claim.

One critical weakness of Professor Wagner's thesis becomes apparent when we consider the Hong Kyŏngnae Rebellion of 1812, whose geographical base was northern P'yŏngan Province, with Chŏngju district in particular as the rebels' stronghold. Therefore, I came to ask the following questions: Why did this large-scale anti-dynastic rebellion break out in the place that produced so many *munkwa* degree-holders in the late Chosŏn dynasty? As you recall, Professor Wagner suggested that the *munkwa* had the effect of creating stability in society. Did the *munkwa* degree-holders participate in the rebellion? If not, what were their attitudes toward the rebellion?

⁷ Wagner, “The Civil Examination Process as Social Leaven,” 24.

⁸ Wagner, “The Civil Examination Process as Social Leaven,” 27.

From my research, I know that there is no clear evidence that verifies the participation of one single *munkwa* degree-holder in the rebellion. So was Professor Wagner right about his claim? As shown in Table 1, I found quite a few cases in which close relatives of *munkwa* degree-holders did lend a hand to the rebel leadership. And I do not think this table is an exhaustive list because I discovered more relevant evidence of the relationship between the *munkwa* degree-holders and the rebels after I published my book. Thus I believe further in-depth and focused research will unearth more cases.

Table 1. *Munkwa* Degree-Holders and Rebels⁹

Name (Residence)	Relation to the degree-holder	Role played in the rebellion
Kim Iksu (Kasan)	Kim Sökt'ae's (<i>munkwa</i> in 1790) uncle and Kim Kõnsu's (<i>munkwa</i> in 1762) younger brother	Chief commander of Kasan
Kim Kukpõm or Ch'angbae (Kwaksan)	His brother, Kim Ch'angje, passed the <i>munkwa</i> in 1810	Strategist, and a member of the vanguard cavalry
Kim Sayong (T'aech'õn)	Kim Ch'ijõng's (<i>munkwa</i> in 1783) remote relative. Kim Ch'ijõng was a candidate for magistrate of T'aech'õn under the rebel administration; Kim Sökt'ae of Kasan (<i>munkwa</i> in 1790) was the father-in-law of Kim Ch'ijõng's daughter	One of the core leaders
Kim Namch'o (Chõngju)	His son, Kim Rinsu, passed the <i>munkwa</i> in 1819	Supervised military affairs under the rebels, but fled after four days
Kye Namsim (Sõnch'õn)	His grandfather, Kye Tõkhae, passed the <i>munkwa</i> in 1774	As a master of occult arts, devised a strategy to occupy Ŭiju
Sõng Ilsul (Chõngju)	Sõng Ido's (<i>munkwa</i> in 1675) close relative, and Sõng Kyõnghang's (<i>munkwa</i> in 1786) close relative	Granary supervisor
Sõng Chõnghang (Chõngju)	Sõng Ryun's (<i>munkwa</i> in 1774) remote relative	Rebel military officer

⁹ For more extensive and detailed information on *munkwa* degree-holders and rebels, see Sun Joo Kim, *Marginality and Subversion in Korea: The Hong Kyõngnae Rebellion of 1812* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 62–63.

Such focused research involves very close examination of various sources, including *munkwa pangmok* and genealogies. I would like to pick up one example from the table—Kim Iksu, in the first row—to show you exactly what I mean. From a government report made during the rebellion, I learned that Kim Iksu was Kim Sökt’ae’s youngest uncle.¹⁰ I checked the on-line *munkwa pangmok*, and the search word “Kim Sökt’ae” in Korean yielded a number of hits. As I went through those hits, I found out that Kim Sökt’ae passed the *munkwa* in 1790. Also from these data, I came to know that this Kim family’s clan seat is Sunch’on and that they resided in Kasan, northern P’yöngan Province. I was fortunate to get a copy of the genealogy for the Sunch’on Kim of Kasan, with all due respect and thanks to Professor Wagner, who meticulously collected the genealogies, including modern editions.

Table 2. Kim Iksu (red) and *Munkwa* Degree-Holders (yellow-highlight) from His Immediate Family¹¹

11 th generation	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Kükch’ung	Ch’angsön	Hongjip 1744						
	Ch’anghu	Koengjip	Könsu 1762	Sökt’ae 1790	Kyöng	Suin 1855		
					Chu	Sugan 1853		
					Chun 1840	Suhön	Yong	Ch’ang-wön 1885
				Songri	Hyön 1849			
			Ch’isu					
			Iksu	Sökchöm	Yu 1867			

From the genealogy, I found Kim Sökt’ae as well as Kim Iksu, just a few pages

¹⁰ *Kwansö p’yöngnallok* [The Record of the Pacification Campaign of the Hong Kyöngnae Rebellion], 5 vols., edited by Han’gukhak munhön yön’guso (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1979), 3: 123.

¹¹ *Sunch’ön Kim ssi Ch’örwöngong-p’a sebo*, 669–98 and 760.

apart.¹² As I flipped through the genealogy and also viewed those data related to Kim Sökt'ae in the on-line *munkwa pangmok*, I found out that Kim Iksu—a rebel who died inside the walled-town of Chŏngju while he was resisting the government campaign—belonged to a very prominent family that produced nine *munkwa* passers in the late Chosŏn period, as Table 2 shows.

In an ordinary genealogy, Kim's name would not appear because he was a “traitor.” The reason his name can be still found in this genealogy is most likely because of his grandson Kim Yu's later success in the *munkwa* in 1849. Sometime after the rebellion, Kim Iksu's name must have been cleared from the list of rebels, given that so many of his close blood associations earned the glory of a *munkwa* degree after his disastrous involvement in the 1812 incident. From a biographical essay on Kim Sökt'ae from the genealogy, I learned that Kim Sökt'ae was wealthy and played a key role in feeding hunger-stricken people of Kasan district during the post-rebellion period.¹³ I assume that this benevolent act probably helped the family erase the terrible memory of its affiliation with the rebel side from popular memory as well as the public record.

In addition to the cases like Kim Iksu and others shown in Table 1, I have discussed a few suspicious cases of *munkwa* passers being sympathetic to the rebel side, namely, the cases of Paek Kyŏnghae and Han Houn, in my book *Marginality and Subversion in Korea*.¹⁴ Yet I had only circumstantial evidence for my hunch that they might have initially pledged their support for the rebel cause but changed their position later on. In the book I also examined how many lower civil service exam degree-holders, military exam degree-holders, as well as former officials who held centrally appointed posts participated in the rebellion, and I discovered that quite a lot had done so.¹⁵

Now let's turn our attention to the other side of the same problem. We know that no *munkwa* passers outright supported the rebellion. Were they then actively involved in

¹² *Sunch'ŏn Kim ssi Ch'ŏrwŏngong-p'a sebo* [The Genealogy of the Cunsh'ŏn Kim, Ch'ŏrwŏngong Branch] (Seoul: Sunch'ŏn Kim ssi Ch'ŏrwŏngong-p'a poso, 1980), 680–94.

¹³ *Sunch'ŏn Kim ssi Ch'ŏrwŏngong-p'a sebo*, 70.

¹⁴ Sun Joo Kim, *Marginality and Subversion in Korea*, 57–60.

¹⁵ Sun Joo Kim, *Marginality and Subversion in Korea*, 61–65.

putting down the rebellion, either by mobilizing militia forces or donating material resources to the government side? Existing sources do not lend this much support. The central court recognized the so-called six loyal subjects from the region—Han Houn, Paek Kyōnghān, Che Kyōnguk, Hō Hang, Kim Taet’aek, and Im Chihwan—who died during the battle or killed by the rebels for various reasons. They were solemnly enshrined in the P’yojōlsa (Temple of Illuminating Loyalty) after the rebellion.

Among these six personalities, there was only one *munkwa* passer, Han Houn, and another person, Paek Kyōnghān, was the brother of a *munkwa* degree-holder, Paek Kyōnghae. Im Chihwan, a descendant of a military commander who died during the Manchu invasion in the early seventeenth century, was a local scholar from Anju, P’yōngan Province, pursuing Confucian scholarship when he volunteered to fight against the rebels. Che Kyōnguk from Seoul, who had held a minor provincial post, was also a descendant of a war hero, from the time of the Japanese invasion in the late sixteenth century. The other two were local military men at the time.¹⁶

Table 3. Militia Leaders during the 1812 Hong Kyōngnae Rebellion

Name	Residence	Occupation or Social status
Ch’a Kyōngjin	Sōnch’ōn	Former Changryōng (third inspector of the Office of the Inspector General), <i>munkwa</i> in 1789
An Myōngryōl	Anju	Local yangban (<i>hyangin</i>)
Kang Inhak	Ch’angsōng	Kwōn’gwan (Outpost Officer, Jr. 9)
Pak Taegwan	Ch’ōlsan	Chinsa
Kim Kukch’u	Ch’ōlsan	<i>Hallyang</i> (military men without post)
Ham Ŭihyōng	Hūich’ōn	Hallyang
Song Chiryōm	Kanggye	Yangban scholar (<i>sain</i>)
Kye Unhae	Kanggye	Hallyang
Kim Chonguk	Kilchu	<i>Hallyang</i>
Kang Chip	Kwaksan	Chwasu (director of local yangban association)
Wōn Yōngjōng	Kwaksan	Hallyang
Kim Chihwan	Kusōng	Former Manho (sub-area commander)
Kim Kyōngno	Pyōktong	Yangban scholar
Yi Sibok	T’aech’ōn	Yangban scholar
Ch’oe Sinyōp	Ŭiju	Military officer
Hong Yōil	Ŭiju	Former Ch’ōmsa (army second deputy commander)
Chōng Naehong	Ŭiju	Yōngjang (chief commancer)

¹⁶ For more detailed discussion on these six loyalists, see Kim, *Marginality and Subversion in Korea*, 148–49.

Table 3 is a list of militia leaders, those who mobilized troops and joined the government campaign against the rebels. I only list here most prominent ones that were later recognized by the central court. Most of them were local elites who were pursuing either Confucian scholarship or a military career, and there was only one *munkwa* passer, Ch'a Kyōngjin from Sōnch'ōn (first row), who led a militia.

What about those who donated material resources to help out the government side? As Table 4 illustrates, *munkwa* passers did not chip in much. An Sagwōn' son, An Kubin, from a very remote district, Pyōktong, passed the *munkwa*, but only after the rebellion, in 1815.

Table 4. Donors to the Government Camp

Name (Residence)	Social status	Amount	Reward
Hong Tūkchu (Ūiju)	Confucian scholar (<i>yuhak</i>)	1,218 <i>sōm</i> of grain and 5,200 <i>yang</i>	Entry-level office
Ch'a Hyōnggi (Sukch'ōn)	Local yangban (<i>hyangin</i>)	2,000 <i>yang</i>	Military office in border region
Pak Kyōng (Anju)	Hyangin	1,500 <i>yang</i> and 8 <i>sōm</i> of grain	Military office in border region
Kim Kyōngjung (Anju)		1,000 <i>yang</i>	Pondo chōllang
Ch'a Hyōnggyu (Sukch'ōn)	<i>Chinsa</i> (lower civil service exam degree)	30 <i>sōm</i> of grain, 35 <i>yang</i> , and 7 cows	Provincial award as wished
An Sagwōn (Pyōktong)	Hyangin Father of An Kūbin (<i>munkwa</i> 1815) and grandfather of An Kyohūi (<i>munkwa</i> 1854)	100 <i>sōm</i> of rice	Provincial award as wished
Kye Chinhūng (Chūngsan)	Military officer	20 cows	Provincial award as wished
Yi Hyōnt'aek (Sakchu)	Hallyang	15 <i>sōm</i> of rice and 10 cows	Provincial award as wished

To further contextualize these findings, let's take a look at Table 5, which shows the number of *munkwa* passers from P'yongan Province throughout the Chosōn period. From this table, we know that there were hundreds of *munkwa* passers from P'yongan

Province from the late eighteenth century to the 1812 rebellion, many of whom might have been alive at the time of the rebellion. To make the numbers make more sense, I counted the number of degree-holders from northern P'yŏngan Province from 1770 to 1811, and it was 126. From Chŏngju alone, which was the rebels' stronghold, there were 78 *munkwa* passers in the same 40-year period, and we can assume that many of them were alive at the time of the rebellion and resided in the district (see Table 6).

Table 5. *Munkwa* Passers from Northern and Southern P'yŏngan Province, by 50-Year Periods

	1392-1450	1451-1500	1501-1550	1551-1600	1601-1650	1651-1700	1701-1750	1751-1800	1801-1850	1851-1900	Total
Northern P'yŏngan				2	3	26	57	160	147	202	597
Southern P'yŏngan	5	9	8	14	26	47	63	78	85	151	486
Total	5	9	8	16	29	73	120	238	232	353	1083

Table 6. *Munkwa* Passers from Chŏngju by 50-Year Periods

	1392-1450	1451-1500	1501-1550	1551-1600	1601-1650	1651-1700	1701-1750	1751-1800	1801-1850	1851-1900	Total
Chŏngju						12	26	90	81	73	282

What kind of conclusions can we draw from these data? The *munkwa* certainly was open to a relatively larger population, including northern literati. Despite political and social discrimination against northern residents, northern residents were not only allowed to sit for the civil service examinations but did very well indeed. As for northern exam passers and their close relatives, as well as those passers with obscure backgrounds, were they simply satisfied with the fact that they had earned the great honor of entering the pantheon of exam degree-holders, and did they thus develop a feeling that they were part of the ruling elite of the dynasty? Therefore, was it almost automatic that they pledged their loyalty to the dynasty? Or were they resentful that their chances of political and bureaucratic advancement were blocked because of their less prominent pedigrees and their native places of origin? Consequently, would they have accumulated so much

resentment, frustration, and feeling of deprivation—because their talent was not rewarded in fair ways—that they harbored treasonous thoughts against the existing rule?

We have a mixed picture from the evidence presented so far. To a large degree, I agree with Professor Wagner that the relative openness of the *munkwa* did stabilize the society, fulfilling the ambition and at the same time neutralizing the anxiety of local elites. Yet, as many social scientists have argued, the production and existence of a large pool of unemployed educated degree-holding elites is unhealthy for the stability of society, whether those marginalized elites directly engage in subversive activities or not. Especially when state institutions have been too rigid to absorb aspiring elites and in financial trouble, marginalized elites have tended to channel their discontent into open defiance of the state, leading to social and political chaos and, ultimately, to regime changes.¹⁷

In this regard, one of Professor Wagner's remarks is worth citing. He said, "The importance of this phenomenon for determining the course Korea took in the period of transition from traditional to modern society must not be overlooked. In the light of the role of Chŏngju residents in late traditional Korea, the fact that the famed Osan Chūnghakkyo (Osan Middle School) was established there takes on new meaning."¹⁸ Although Professor Wagner did not elaborate on this issue, he was aware that many people from P'yŏngan Province, Chŏngju and P'yŏngyang in particular, became leaders of Korea's modernization by rather swiftly turning their attention to Western education and Western ideas. And he was suggesting that such a turn to various modern apparatuses had to do with their success in *munkwa* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This foresight, I believe, influenced the scholarship of Kyung Moon Hwang, one of the last students of Professor Wagner, who has examined a few exemplary northerners who made such a turn.¹⁹

Going back to the Chosŏn period, the possible uses of the Munkwa Project database on

¹⁷ Jack Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

¹⁸ Wagner, "The Civil Examination Process as Social Leaven," 27.

¹⁹ Kyung Moon Hwang, *Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press., 2004).

both the macro and micro levels are limitless. For macro-level research, another former student of Professor Wagner, Milan Hejtmanek, is the forerunner, and he has analyzed the dataset and produced a few interesting articles, such as the one titled “The Geography of Power: Career Success and Failure among Chosŏn Period Munkwa Examination Passers,” a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in April 2008. I hope the *munkwa pangmok* dataset becomes available and downloadable in very near future for this kind of statistical analysis and interpretation, which would certainly deepen our understanding of Chosŏn society and politics.

Table 7. *Munkwa* Passers of the Suan Yi Lineage of Unsan

24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
#Ŭngjŏn	Kyesul	Ch’angbŏn	Chŏnggo	^Yu				
			^Yang					
	#Kyedal	Tongŭi	Chŏnghān	Siham	Sŏp	Yongjip	*Ingnyŏl	
					Kŭp	Ŭjip	*Sŭngnyŏl	
				*Sihang				
		Yŏngbŏn	#Chŏnghŏn	*#Sihong				
				^Kim				
			Chŏnggil					
	Kyeson	*Sobŏn	#Chŏnggil (A)	Sijŏm	Yu	Chŏnghwi	Song	*#Chibong (A)
								^Hong
							#Yong	Chibong
				*Sijae				
				#Sirim				
	Kyeun							
	^Kim							

The number on the top row indicates the generation, counting from the apical ancestor in the early Koryŏ period.

* *Munkwa* degree-holder

^ Last name of son-in-laws who either held an exam degree or had degree-holders among their immediate descendants.

Cases in which close members of their spouse’s family held exam degrees.

(A) adopted son.

Source: *Suan Yi-ssi chokpo* [Genealogy of Suan Yi] (Seoul: n.p., 1957).

For micro-level study, the Munkwa Project, combined with other sources such as genealogies, can reconstruct social networks among particular groups of people, or

An examination of the Suan Yi's marriage ties shows that they formed multiple marriage ties with the Yōnan Kim of Chōngju, which produced the highest number of *munkwa* passers from Chōngju—a phenomenal 51 of them. The Paech'on Cho family of Chōngju, who produced the second most *munkwa* passers (29), is also closely related to the Suan Yi by marriage (see Figure 2).

This is only a representative sample of the emerging social and cultural networks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we can reconstruct from the Munkwa Project and genealogies. From this discovery, we learn that the local society was very tightly knitted together through marriage ties. Such close networks must have had a strong bearing on the continued success in the *munkwa* exam among in-group network members. In addition, as members of illustrious families, they certainly became leaders in various local matters, including control of wealth.

In regard to genealogies, in addition to tracing descent lines, I propose to read them in some different lights. In the late Chosŏn period, a written, published genealogy was not just a record of a family's past and present but an important site of memory—one that defined the status of its commemorators, as well as of the living members of the lineage, at the time of compilation. The greatness of ancestors, whether invented or not, affected the level of status of their descendants. A genealogy is clearly a private record, yet its public nature cannot be overlooked.

Genealogy is surely one of many manifestations of the Confucian emphasis on ancestor worship. Commemoration of ancestors took many forms, such as performing ancestral worship rituals, compiling genealogy and exam rosters, erecting tomb inscriptions and guardian statues, dedicating ancestors' biographies, and publishing ancestors' literary writings. Yet to view all these cultural practices, including compiling and publishing genealogies, as simply a way for elites to fulfill the Confucian value of filial piety is not satisfactory, because only a small fraction of the people recorded in a family genealogy may have been true practitioners of Confucianism, including ancestor rituals. Rather, a genealogy was a document that was instrumental in proving one's status—yangban elite status in particular—thus qualifying a man for state examinations or for membership in the local yangban association. If these were the main reasons for

genealogical records, there is one big question that begs an answer: Why does a genealogy retain so many names?

Although genealogy in general reflects hierarchical patrilineal structure, it also has egalitarian features because a majority of members share the same kind of entry in a genealogy. As Professor Wagner mentions, most individuals recorded in a genealogy have plain records of birth and death year, wife's family name, and the location of their tomb, although a few prominent ancestors have more embellished entries while others have nothing but name.²¹ Why did the compilers use such a format? And why was there a surge in genealogical compilation and publication in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Why were certain kinds of people interested in compiling genealogies?

I suggest that we regard the genealogy as an economic document. This is not totally a novel idea for I am very much inspired by my colleague Michael Szonyi, who has persuasively argued that economic factors generated strategies of kinship organization in late imperial China, from his examination of the people of the Fuzhou region in South China.²²

In late Chosŏn, military taxation was regarded as a heavy financial burden and also stigmatized as a non-yangban obligation. Local elites and their extended relatives took every means possible to avoid being listed in the military roster. Genealogy provided one useful space for such a purpose. I also have to emphasize that the function of genealogy or kinship organization may have evolved as social and economic conditions changed over time. That is, as the taxation system changed from a per capita tax based on one's status into a quota system over certain units of administration in the late Chosŏn, villagers, including yangban elites, found themselves pressured to meet an assigned amount of taxes. Genealogical records in this case may have provided a base for sharing the tax levy among lineage members, who oftentimes lived in the same village, ward, or sub-district area. All of these partly explain the surge in genealogical compilation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

What was the use of the information about the location of ancestral tombs? In

²¹ Wagner, "The Korean Chokpo as a Historical Source," 4–5.

²² Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

Chosŏn Korea, the forest surrounding a tomb belonged to the descendants of the tomb's occupants. Forests yield a number of important resources, including fuel. In light of the increasing number of litigations over disputes about forest rights and stealing tomb sites in the late Chosŏn dynasty, genealogical records on tomb locations probably provided some proof of ownership of particular forest lands.

Lastly, for northern residents, genealogies provided another tool to authenticate their status origin. Like people of Fuzhou in South China who wanted to fashion their origin from North China for various reasons, northerners used the genealogical record—its prefaces and postscripts in particular—as a site in which to encode their origin, explain when and why their apical ancestors had moved to the place in the north where their descendants had then lived for centuries, and make connections to their southern brethren.

For a few decades from the 1960s on, Professor Wagner meticulously read, analyzed, interpreted, and digitized information found in *munkwa pangmok* and genealogies. There is no doubt that his unparalleled insight and tireless diligence had a great influence on many of students and on their scholarly endeavors. As you can tell, I am certainly a beneficiary of his work.

Whenever I see physical traces of Professor Wagner's work in library books (such as the blue and green dots next to names in Figure 3), it warms my heart. I do not care about the instruction given by a great scholar of the eighteenth century, Yi Tong-mu, in his book *Small Manners for Scholars (Sasojŏl)*, that readers should not make marks in a book.²³ I confess, the more I work on my research, the more deeply I appreciate Professor Wagner's scholarship and the foundation he laid for the study of Korean history. I am very happy that I was able to highlight a fraction of his accomplishments today.

To conclude, I would like to offer you a passage from the *Analects*:

子曰、溫故而知新、可以爲師矣。

The Master said, "If one keeps cherishing one's old knowledge so as to continually be acquiring new, one may be a teacher of others." (論語, 爲

²³ Boudewijn Walraven, "Reader's Etiquette, and Other Aspects of Book Culture in Chosŏn Korea," in Wilt L. Idema, ed., *Books in Numbers* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University, 2007), 257.

