Sun Joo Kim:
“Gender Shift in Genealogy”

in: Eric Hounshell, Ruth Amstutz (eds.):

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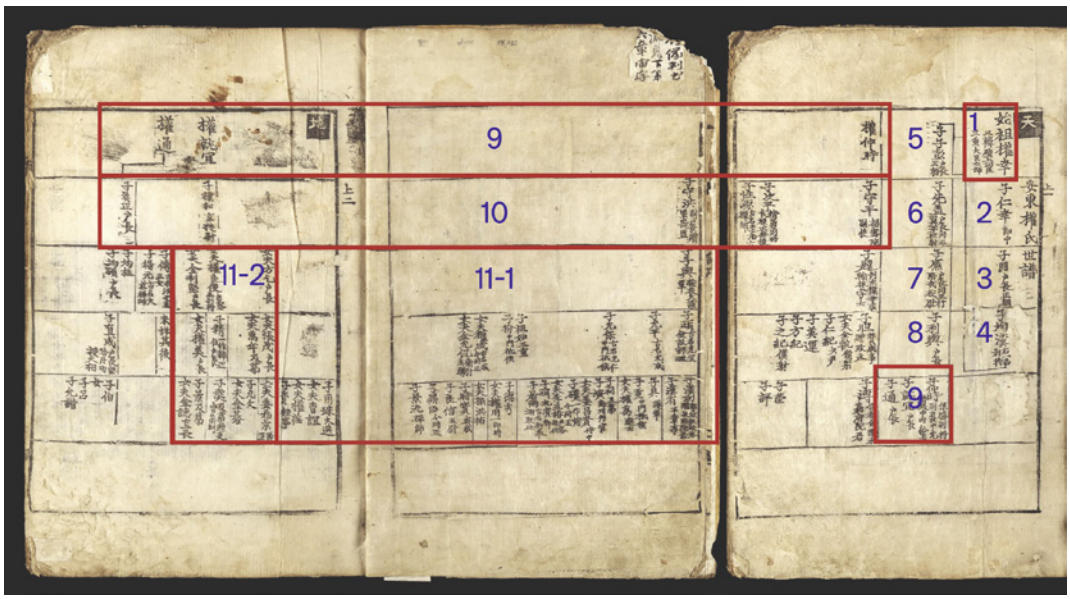
SHADOW OF THE TREE

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Sun Joo Kim

GENDER SHIFT IN GENEALOGY Before the Patrilineal Turn

Though Koreans kept family records from early in the country's history, they began to compile and publish genealogies starting in the fifteenth century. Since that time, elite descent groups devoted increasing resources to compiling and publishing their genealogical records, and from the eighteenth century on almost all elite descent groups participated in producing them. The popularity of genealogy coincided with the patrilineal turn in kinship organization, as prescribed in Neo-Confucianism. Scholars indicate that the Confucianization of Chosŏn Korea (1392–1910), a slow and uneven process which took place over centuries, had a debilitating impact on women as they lost their equal inheritance right along with full participation in ancestral rituals. Genealogies reflect this monumental transformation of society. Genealogies produced before the eighteenth century were compiled following the principle of bilaterality, whereas those compiled afterward adopted a patrilineal principle instead. The *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy* of 1476, the earliest extant genealogy, thus traces matriline and patriline in equal detail. In addition, daughters and sons were recorded in order of birth. The genealogy also recorded a woman's remarriage, signifying that remarriage of women was not stigmatized, unlike in late Chosŏn when an elite woman was supposed to maintain her chastity when widowed; together with loyalty and filial piety, chastity was one of three cardinal values among Chosŏn elites.[1]

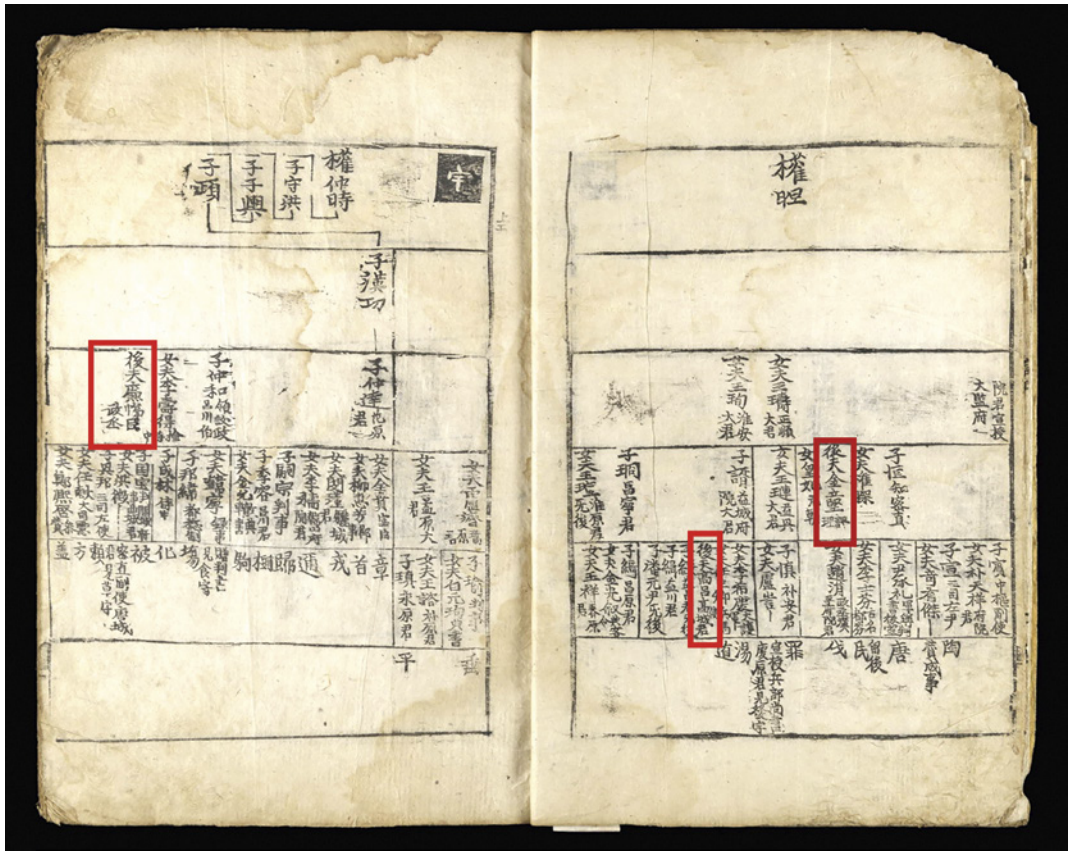


Sŏ Kŏ-jŏng: *Andong Kwŏn ssi chokpo [Andong Kwŏn Genealogy],* Andong (1476), 1: 1a–2a, https://kyudb.snu.ac.kr/book/view.do?book_cd=GR36020_00. Courtesy of Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University.

Andong Kwŏn Genealogy of 1476: The basic format of this oldest extant genealogy, probably modelled after Chinese precedents and distinct from the tree form popular in early modern Europe, became typical of subsequent genealogies. Each page is divided into several horizontal segments. The oldest generation occupies the top row followed by the next generation in the second row, and so on. The first child is written on the right immediately below his or her parent, with the next child to the left of the older sibling. Descendants of the people recorded at the bottom row appear in subsequent pages or in another volume not shown here. This form enables recording many dozens of generations in multiple volumes.

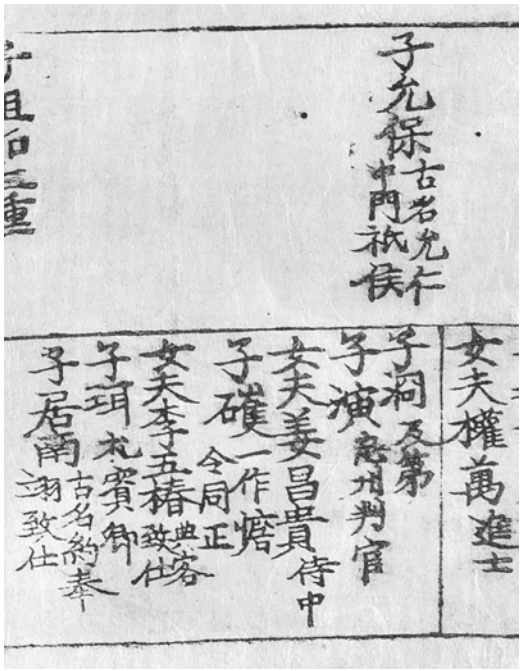
The Sinograph "*cha* 子" on top of a name written vertically in the genealogy means "son" and "*yŏbu* 女夫" means son-in-law. Although women in premodern Korea had their own name, they were referred to by their husband's name in genealogical records. The *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy* provides only one son's name in each of the first seven generations after the apical ancestor Kwŏn Haeng 權幸 (a vertical box on top right), already showing patrilineal bias. It lists three sons for the ninth generation and six sons for the tenth generation. Daughters appear only from the eleventh gen-

eration (11–2). From then on, both daughter's and son's descents are recorded equally. For example, [Kwŏn] Su-hong [權]守洪, the fourth son in the tenth generation, had one son and three daughters (11–1 and 11–2). [Kwŏn] Cha-yŏ [權]子輿, Su-hong's only son, had many children and grandchildren and thus takes up more space in these pages. But the boxes 11–1 and 11–2 trace both son's and three daughters' descendants equally. This genealogy, which offers 21 generations of records bilaterally, is in fact a multi-descent group genealogy, as only 380 people out of a total of around 9'000 belonged to the Andong Kwŏn descent group.



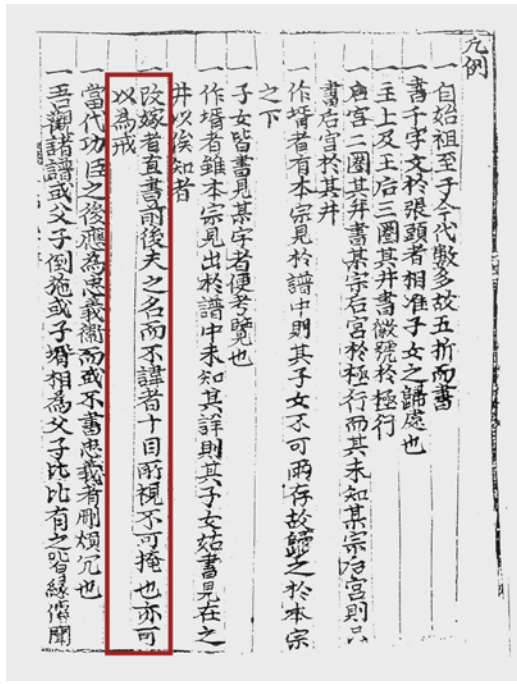
Sŏ Kŏ-jŏng: *Andong Kwŏn ssi chokpo* (1476), 1: 4b–5a. Courtesy of Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University.

Remarriage of women in the *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy:* Remarriage of elite women before the sixteenth century was common and not stigmatized, as the *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy* records a total of seventeen women's remarriage out of about 9'000 people. These two pages alone reveal three cases of remarriage, marked by "*hubu* 後夫" meaning "later husband." In comparison, the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1565 records eighteen cases of women's remarriages out of about 42'000 women and men. Of those eighteen, fourteen appear in the *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy*, demonstrating that women's remarriage decreased rapidly after the late fifteenth century.[2] There was no legal prohibition on remarriage. However, the prospects for elite women's remarriage were effectively blocked by the articles in the *Great Code of Administration* (1485), which prohibited sons of remarried women from taking the civil service examination, the primary avenue to enter bureaucracy, and also from holding both civil and military positions.[3] Increasing emphasis on moral values, most notably chastity, further discouraged elite women from remarrying.



Detail from *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy* (1476).

Daughters and Sons by Birth Order in the *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy:* In the early Chosŏn genealogical records, children are recorded in order of birth as shown here, with the first born on the right followed by the next born to the left. The birth order of [Kwŏn] Yun-bo's [權]允保 seven children is thus son, son, daughter, son, daughter, son, son.



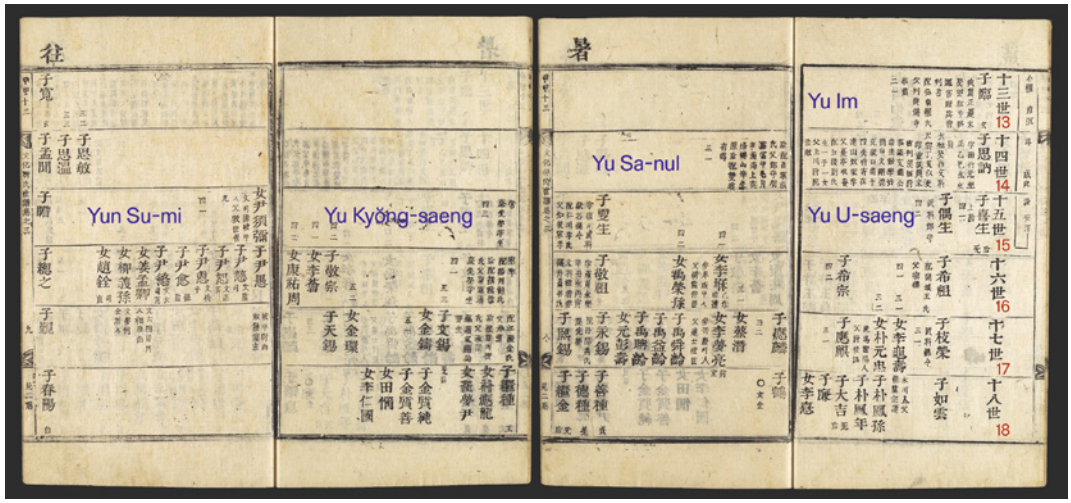
Yu Hŭi-jam: *Munhwa Yu ssi sebo [Munhwa Yu Genealogy]* (1565), pŏmnye [compilation principles]: 1a, reprint edition, Munhwa Yu ssi seboso (1979). The 1565 edition is available at http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr/jsp/aa/ImageView.jsp?aa10no=kh2_je_a_vsu_55021_0018&pageid=.

Compilation Principles for the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1565: The *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* spells out the following compilation principle concerning women's remarriage (red box), illuminating the changing elite ethos: "For those women who remarried, the names of both the first and second husbands shall be straightforwardly written with no attempt to conceal their remarriages because everyone knows these cases. In addition, such records would serve as an admonition to others."

GENDER SHIFT IN GENEALOGY After the Patrilineal Turn

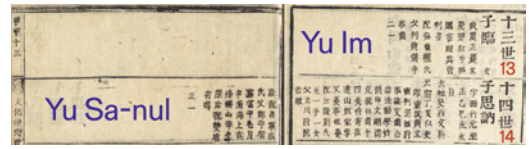
The compilation and publication of genealogies became popular from the latter part of the seventeenth century. Once a genealogy was compiled, the ideal among elites was to update it every thirty years, or once a generation, though in reality the gap between updates was often much longer. The ways in which women were recorded in genealogies after the eighteenth century reflected the patrilineal principle that elites adopted over the centuries. Sons were recorded first regardless of birth order. Daughters were recorded with a gender marker *"yŏ* 女*"* but in her husband's name following the previous Chosŏn practice. Records concerning the daughter's descendants were limited to one or two generations, usually with only names but sometimes with brief notes on their paternal ancestry, exam degrees, and bureaucratic positions. This brevity contrasts with more comprehensive entries for some male members, which could include style name, penname, birth and death years, grave location, exam degrees, positions, and information concerning the wife such as her ancestry and her birth and death years. Some entries are laden with more elaborate information such as the member's bureaucratic and literary career while many

other entries remain blank. A new feature in late Chosŏn patrilineal genealogy was the inclusion of wives, though the information concerning them is appended to the husband's entry. Mark Peterson captures this formatting nicely in noting that a woman became "an associate member of her husband's patrilineage in the Confucianized society."[4] Not surprisingly, perhaps, late Chosŏn genealogies recorded remarriage of men, but not of women.



Yu Pyŏng-gyun: *Munhwa Yu ssi sebo [Munhwa Yu Genealogy]* (1803), 3: 7b–9a, https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:45959090910$34i. Courtesy of Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University.

These pages from the 1803 edition of the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* show some members of Munhwa Yu descent group from the thirteenth to eighteenth generations (noted on the far right), descending from [Yu] Im [柳]臨, the entry on the top right next to generation marker "13 十三." He had three sons listed in the second row. His first son [Yu] Sa-nul [柳]思訥 (1365–1440) had three sons and one daughter while the other two had no descendants.



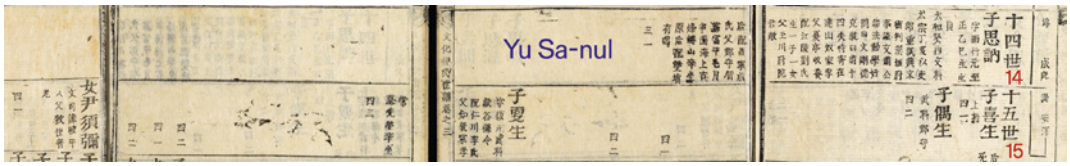
Detail from *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* (1803).

Yu Im and Yu Sa-nul in the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1803: The information provided for certain entries is multidimensional, going beyond simple biographical data. The gap between the man and woman is also notable.

Son, Im: He held a junior third rank position in the Agricultural Bureau (Chŏnnong Chŏng). / He was killed during the Red Turban invasion in 1363. / The court awarded him a posthumous position of minister of the Military Affairs (Pyŏngjo P'ansŏ). / Wife was Madam Kwŏn of Andong Kwŏn and her father was Kwŏn Suk 權肅, who held a senior third rank position in the Medical Bureau (P'an Chŏnŭisisa).

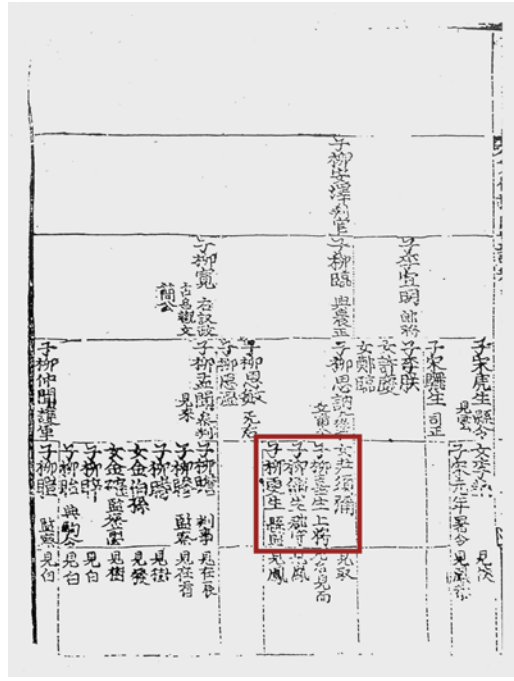
Son, Sa-nul: Style name is I-haeng. / He was born in 1365. / He held a classics licentiate degree. / He passed the higher civil service examination in 1393. / In 1407, he passed the special examination for officials and was director of the Office of Royal Decrees (*munhyŏng*, Sr. 2). / He served as magistrate of Hansŏng Capital Magistracy (Sr. 2). / His posthumous title is Lord Munsuk. According to the principles of creating a posthumous title, the letter "*mun* 文" is used for a person who loves scholarship and "*suk* 肅" is used for a person who is upright and benevolent, and who surmounts difficulties and attains great accomplishment. / He lost his parents at the age of 14 and entrusted himself at the house of a slave in Yŏnsan County. Then his uncle Yu Kwan 柳寬 (1346–1433) took him under his care and raised him. / Wife is Madam Yu of Kangnŭng Yu descent group.

She bore one son and one daughter. Her father is Yu Ch'ang 劉敞 (?–1421), Lord Okch'ŏn. / Second wife is Madam Sŏng of Ch'angnyŏng Sŏng descent group. Her father is Sŏng Sŭp 成習, who was a county magistrate. / His grave is located in "*sin* 辛" position on the Old Beacon Fire Mountain in Mowŏl Cape, Pup'yŏng County and both first and second wives are buried together in a twin mound. There is a stela.



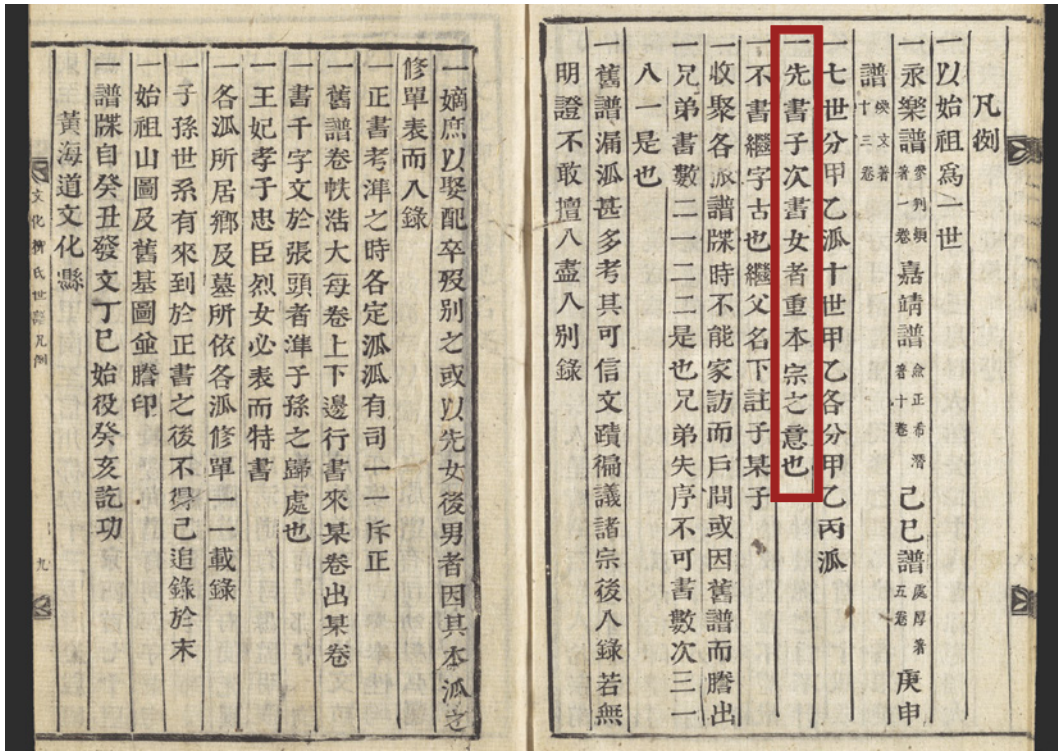
Detail from *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* (1803).

Yu Sa-nul's Descendants in the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1803: In the 1803 genealogy, the four children of Yu Sa-nul in the fifteenth generation are listed as follows: [first] son Hŭi-saeng 喜生; [second] son U-saeng 偶生; [third] son Kyŏng-saeng 叟生; and a daughter [who married] Yun Su-mi 尹須彌.



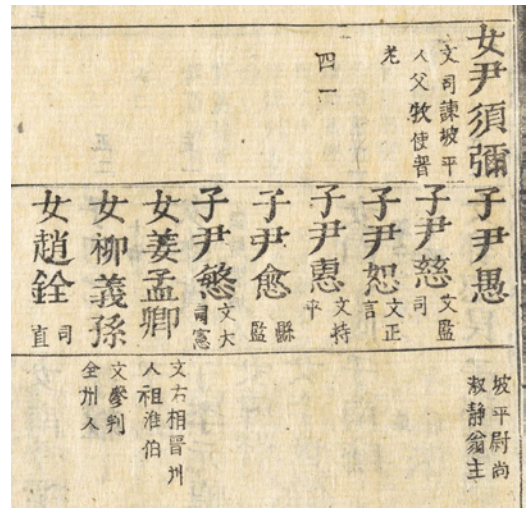
Yu Hŭi-jam: *Munhwa Yu ssi sebo* (1565) 1: 10b.

Yu Sa-nul's Descendants in the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1565: The 1565 edition of the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy,* however, informs us that the daughter was the first-born child, as she is listed first on the right followed by three sons to her left (see the boxed area).


凡例
一以始祖爲一世
一永樂譜參判與著第一卷嘉靖譜僉正希潛著第十卷己巳譜處厚著第五卷庚申譜樊文著十三卷
一七世分甲乙派十世甲乙各分甲乙丙派
一先書子次書女者重本宗之意也
一不書繼字古也繼父名下註子某子
一收聚各派譜牒時不能家訪而戶問或因舊譜而謄出
一兄弟書數二一二二是也兄弟失序不可書數次三一八一是也
一舊譜漏派甚多考其可信文蹟備議諸宗後入錄若無明證不敢擅入盡入別錄
一嫡庶以娶配卒歿別之或以先女後男者因其本派之修單表而入錄
一正書考準之時各定派派有司一一斥正
一舊譜卷帙浩大每卷上下邊行書來某卷出某卷
一書千字文於張頭者準于孫之歸處也
一王妃孝于忠臣烈女必表而特書
一各派所居鄉及墓所依各派修單一一載錄
一子孫世系有來到於正書之後不得已追錄於末
一始祖山圖及舊基圖金謄印
一譜牒自癸丑發文丁巳始役癸亥訖功
黃海道文化縣

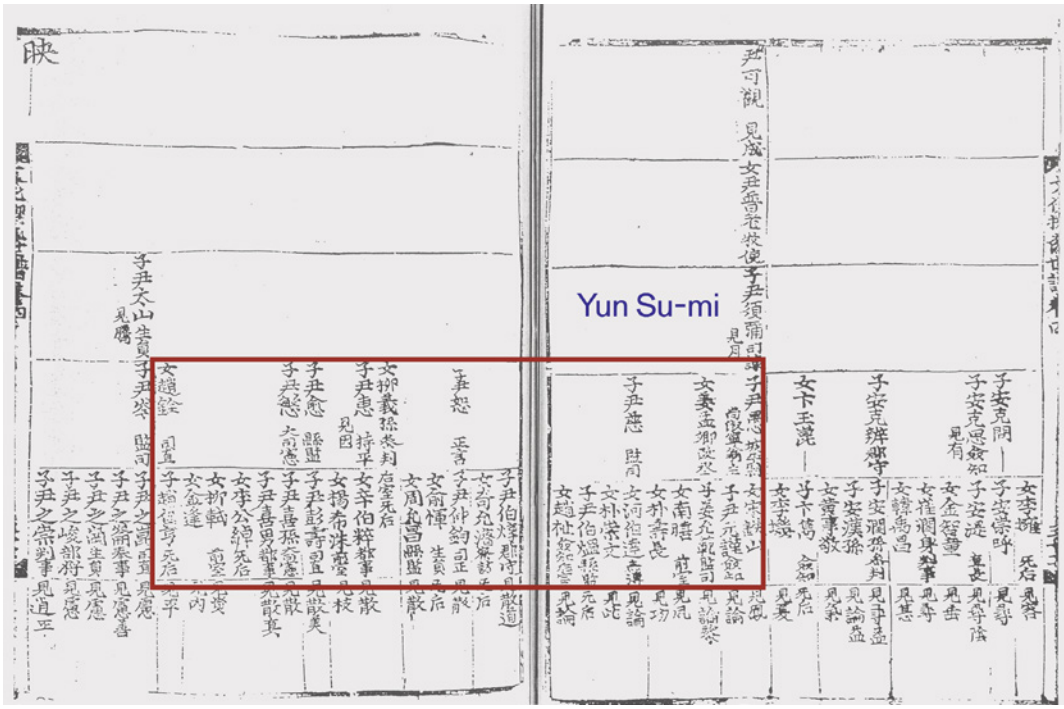
Yu Pyŏng-gyun: *Munhwa Yu ssi sebo* (1803), sŏ: 8b.

Compilation Principles of the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1803: Guided by Neo-Confucianism, elite society developed the idea that the patriline outweighs the matriline. Reflecting this shift, compilation principles guiding late Chosŏn genealogies discriminated against women, as this sample clearly spells out: "Sons shall be written before daughters in order to stress the importance of the primary line of descent *(ponjong* 本宗)." The primary line no doubt refers to the patrilineal descendants.


女尹須彌子尹思
坡平尉尚叔靜翁主
子尹慈 文監司
子尹恕 文正言
子尹惠 文持平
子尹愈 縣監
子尹愍 文大司憲
女姜孟卿 文右相晉州人祖准伯
女柳義孫 文參判全州人
女趙銓 司直
文司諫坡平人父牧使晉光
四一

Detail from *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* (1803).

A Daughter's Descendants in the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1803: In the 1803 edition, Sa-nul's daughter's line (i.e. son-in-law Yun Su-mi's line) records only one more generation of six sons and three daughters – sons first, followed by daughters.



Yu Hŭi-jam: *Munhwa Yu ssi sebo* (1565) 4: 32b–33a.

A Daughter's Descendants in the *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1565: In contrast, the 1565 edition lists the nine children in birth order and both daughter's and son's descents were equally recorded. Although the images here show only two generations of Yun Su-mi's descendants by his daughters and sons, more information concerning descendants of Su-mi's grandchildren at the second bottom row are provided in other volumes of the genealogy. Notations on the bottom row indicate which volume and page to look up.

Another significant element of the patrilineal turn was agnatic adoption *(iphu* 立後). In the *Andong Kwŏn Genealogy* of 1476, no single example of adoption among about 9'000 people is recorded. The *Munhwa Yu Genealogy* of 1565 shows 126 adoption cases among about 45'000 recorded people.[5] An analysis of those cases illustrates that although agnatic adoption began in the early part of the sixteenth century, it remained unpopular throughout the century. By the eighteenth century, however, about fifteen percent of the successful graduates of the civil service examination were adopted sons.[6] One mechanism behind this change was that elite families began excluding daughters from inheritance and ritual roles, instead preferring male adopted heirs to succeed the family line and perform ancestral rituals.[7] Genealogies, despite their shortcomings derived from inaccuracies and incompleteness, provide key insights into the social and cultural conditions of the time when they were compiled and published. By comparing various editions, we can discern the transformation of elite understandings of kinship structure and gender relations as well as the place of women in early modern Korea.

Notes

1 Terms and names in Korean are rendered using the McCune-Reischauer romanization system. Korean names are given surname first without a comma except for authors of works in English. When I use two words to designate a family or a descent group, the first word refers to the ancestral seat (usually a county or subcounty) and the second refers to the surname. Therefore, Andong in Andong Kwŏn refers to the ancestral seat of this descent group having Kwŏn as the apical ancestor's surname.

2 Edward W. Wagner: "Two Early Genealogies and Women's Status in Early Yi Dynasty Korea", in: Laurel Kendall, Mark Peterson (eds.): *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc. (1983), p. 28; Mark Peterson: "Women without Sons: A Measure of Social Change in Yi Dynasty Korea", in: Laurel Kendall, Mark Peterson (eds.): *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc. (1983), p. 38.
3 Ch'oe Hang et al.: *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* [*Great Code of Administration*] (1485), Yejŏn [Code of Rites], Chegwa [State Examinations], 3: 1b, https://db.history.go.kr:443/id/jlawa_103_0020_0010 and Ijŏn [Code of Personnel], Kyŏnggwanjik [Central Government Positions], 1:4b–5a, https://db.history.go.kr:443/id/jlawa_101_0040_0070.
4 Mark Peterson: "Women without Sons: A Measure of Social Change in Yi Dynasty Korea", in: Laurel Kendall, Mark Peterson (eds.): *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room,* New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc. (1983), pp. 33–44, p. 35.
5 Edward W. Wagner: "Two Early Genealogies and Women's Status in Early Yi Dynasty Korea", in: Laurel Kendall, Mark Peterson (eds.): *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc. (1983), pp. 23–32, pp. 26–27.
6 Mark Peterson: "Women without Sons: A Measure of Social Change in Yi Dynasty Korea", in: Laurel Kendall, Mark Peterson (eds.): *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc. (1983), pp. 33–44, p. 34.
7 Although the patrilineal and patriarchal model of genealogy had become dominant in late Chosŏn, elites also produced bilateral alternatives in which bilateral ancestors were equally represented.

Further Readings

Mark A. Peterson: *Korean Adoption and Inheritance: Case Studies in the Creation of a Classic Confucian Society*, Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University (1996).

Martina Deuchler: *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology*, Cambridge and London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University (1992).

Sun Joo Kim: "Adoption in Chosŏn Korea and in the Yu Taech'ing Family", in *Acta Koreana* 23/1 (2020), pp. 115–134.

Sun Joo Kim: "Inheritance Document and Mutual Agreement on the Division of Property *(hwahoe sŏngmun* 和會成文)", in *Acta Koreana* 23/1 (2020), pp. 97–114.

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