

Power and the Compilation of Knowledge: The Compilation of the *Nupango* during King Jeongjo's Reign

Ho-hun Jeong

The *Nupango* is a catalogue of the printing blocks (*chaekpan*) that were stored in the capital and eight provinces of Joseon compiled by Kyujanggak scholars in 1796 by order of King Jeongjo. The number of printing blocks listed in the *Nupango* is 616. Compilers arranged the books in the order of royal writings (*eocheonseo* 御撰書) or writings commissioned by the king (*eojeongseo* 御定書) followed by books in the traditional East Asian classification system: classics, histories, philosophical works, and collections (*gyeong* 經, *sa* 史, *ja* 子, *jip* 集). They also recorded the author, content, storage area of the printing blocks, and number of papers used for printing each book. Through the *Nupango*, the government learned accurate information about printing blocks throughout the country. Furthermore, it was able to faithfully understand the circumstances of various actors involved in the production and distribution of knowledge. By decisively establishing a hierarchy of knowledge, it was possible to realize the “grand righteousness of honoring the worthy” (*jonjon ui daeui*). Jeongjo's government aimed to showcase the publication of documents as a royally controlled operation. At the same time, it kept a watchful eye on all kinds of academic activities taking place in the private sphere, thereby securing the academic authority necessary for governing Joseon. The compilation of the *Nupango* provides an important point of view for understanding the relationship between the centralization of power and compilation of knowledge during Jeongjo's reign. It will also be helpful in understanding the changes in Joseon society during the nineteenth century after Jeongjo's death.

Keywords: The *Nupango*, printing blocks (*chaekpan*), King Jeongjo, Kyujanggak, Joseon society, power, compilation of knowledge

Ho-hun Jeong (jhh6085@snu.ac.kr) is an associate professor at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies

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