

A Re-Assessment of the Characteristics of Chang Hon's Instructional Texts*

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Chang Hon has drawn considerable attention for his academic efforts in the histories of literature, printing culture and education in the late Chosŏn period. This evaluation is substantiated because he compiled and published various books and also produced a sizable amount of his own poetry and prose. In particular, his accomplishments in the history of education are significant because the books he compiled, including *Ahŭi wŏllam* 兒戲原覽 (Primer in children's education) and *Mongyu p'yŏn* 蒙諭篇 (Book to instruct the ignorant) are considered as typical instruction books that represented a new trend of education in the nineteenth century. These books were evaluated highly because these attempts showed the potential for spontaneous modernization efforts in Korean education; however, this paper argues that previous scholarship in the history of education largely made such assessments without closely examining the characteristics of supporting documents. Based on a contextual reading of his works, I conclude that Chang Hon was not recognized as an educator by his contemporaries. Furthermore, his books were not intended as formal textbooks, but as reference books designed to impart miscellaneous knowledge or to assist in poetry composition. Additionally, the study materials he compiled should be understood as part of an interaction with the culture of both previous and contemporary generations. Chang Hon, as a man of the secondary status group *chungin*, was a poet who compiled his own instructional works and published them, yet at the same time participated in state publication projects; thus, his works should be seen as his own particular engagement with the culture of his day.

Keywords: Chang Hon (1759-1828), *chungin* ("middle people"), *Ahŭi wŏllam* (Primer in children's education), *Mongyu p'yŏn* (Book to instruct the ignorant), *Kŭmch'wi p'yŏn* (Gathering what is close at hand), history of education

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