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## Retrieving the Past with Genealogies

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## Retrieving the Past with Genealogies

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Recent years have witnessed increasing interest in written genealogies as historical sources for East Asian societies. These documents have already been examined from various perspectives [Eberhard 1962; Meskill 1970, 1979; Palmer 1972; Taga 1981; Hanley and Wolf 1985]. The present study takes as its point of departure the fact that such genealogies are periodically updated, a practice that has yielded many different editions of the genealogy of the same clan, each compiled at different dates, which are available for comparison.

The focal problem of this study arises from the fact that the Korean kinship system as it exists today, including Confucian-style ancestor worship and demonstrable genealogies, did not exist at the time of the apical ancestors identified in these very genealogies. Instead, the kinship system developed during the period covered by the genealogies themselves. By comparing different editions of a genealogy, compiled at different dates, I attempt to reconstruct the developmental process of the system. In so doing, I will also explore the value of genealogies as anthropological sources. Computer processing that was developed for this purpose is introduced here as well.

### Present and Past in Kinship Institutions

The Korean kinship system acquired many of its contemporary characteristics as a result of developments that occurred during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) under the strong influence of Neo-Confucianism. These developments represented an important part of the Korean response to a process that originated in Sung dynasty China and later spread to other East Asian societies. Since family relationships are basic to Confucian teachings, it is not surprising to find today many parallels among the institutions related to kinship in both China and Korea, though the Korean system remains distinctively Korean.

An intriguing feature of the Korean kinship system is the existence of clearly demarcated clans. Each clan is identified by the combination of a surname and the name of a clan seat (*pon'gwan*). A clan's seat is its place of origin, the place where its apical ancestor resided. Designating a place of origin or clan seat underscores the dispersal of clan members throughout the country. The clan seat was part of the necessary information recorded in official household registers since the early fifteenth century [Arii 1966:62]. Since at least the middle of the Chosŏn dynasty, each clan constituted an exogamous unit.

Foreign anthropologists have encountered the Korean kinship system primarily as it operates at their local fieldwork sites, especially when agnates gather to worship their ancestors. Services are offered at home to patrilineal ancestors of the four most recent generations, but ancestors beyond fourth generations are offered tomb rites. An anthropologist can observe the tomb rites if they are performed near his or her research site, i.e., if the ancestors of the villagers being studied have lived there for more than five generations and thus have tombs located nearby. A researcher often finds that some villagers leave the village to attend tomb rites elsewhere. These villagers include people whose ancestors migrated in recent generations.

Ancestor worship provides the structural framework for the organization of kin groups. Agnates living in the same locality may or may not have formal organizations. But when they formally organize themselves into a localized lineage, called a *munjung*, the first immigrant to the present locality is characteristically chosen as its focal ancestor. A kin group's internal segmentation then proceeds in such a way that smaller segments nest within larger segments. Segmentation is not an automatic process but a result of a positive action on the part of some descendants to establish a group identity of their own. For example, organizing a new lineage segment usually involves setting up a common fund. The degree of agnatic organization in each particular case is thus located somewhere along a spectrum between no formal organization at one end and a highly developed lineage organization with many levels of segmentation at the other.

These features resemble those of Chinese lineages as reported from southeastern China and Taiwan. Therefore, Maurice Freedman's model, which stimulated a good deal of research on Chinese lineages, has also stimulated studies of Korean lineages [Janelli & Janelli 1978]. The chain of genealogical relations that unites kin into a local lineage extends back to remoter ancestors. By following this chain of relations, we are led to phenomena that took place beyond the immediate scene of field research. We encounter two fundamentally different, though mutually related, aspects of clanship there.

On the one hand, higher-order lineages are organized by focusing on remoter ancestors. Local lineages often send their representatives to the rituals for these ancestors at remote locations, where higher-order lineage council meetings are held. Through participation in these activities, local lineages anchored in different parts of the county are connected to the supralocal hierarchy of relations. In some cases, a clan association is also organized that purports to embrace the entire clan in its membership. To unsuspecting eyes, the hierarchical relations may appear to be complete from the level of local lineages up to the level of the whole clan. However, such a situation remains an ideal to be achieved [Shima 1990].

Even when the members of a local descent group, whether formally organized into a lineage or not, do not take part in the activities of the higher-order organizations, a written genealogy (*chokpo*) shows their position in the total genealogical configuration of their clan. Clan affiliation is not just a matter of

belonging to an unstructured category of people who are thought to share a common ancestor. The clan system as we see it today rests on the premise that genealogical relations should be demonstrable. When people offer rituals to their local ancestors, their performances imply their links to still remoter ancestors and ultimately to the apical ancestor of their clan. Although ancestors provide the reference points, the organizations of agnates and the yearly rituals they offer are issues of an essentially contemporary nature, referring to the structural position of the living vis-à-vis the ancestors and vis-à-vis each other. Put in anthropological terms, the perspective is structural-functional.

On the other hand, the genealogical chain indeed links the present with the past. The apical ancestors of most clans were men of the Koryŏ (918–1392) or even earlier periods. Written genealogies are records of individuals who lived sometime between the days of those apical ancestors and the present. With due caution, therefore, we may look to genealogies for information pertaining to the past.

A consideration of the procedure for compiling genealogies helps us understand what each edition of a genealogy stands for. First, some people take the initiative in setting up a board of compilers.<sup>1)</sup> Since the clan is widely dispersed, the compilers do not have direct access to the recent details of their genealogy. Accordingly, they send out notices to the clan members asking for information. Those members who receive the notice return information concerning themselves to the compilers. The compilers, in turn, screen the information and decide what to include. Finally, copies of the newly completed edition are sent to the clan members.

Thus, the compilation of a genealogy entails several steps of communication between the compilers and each of the clan members. There is no question that the records contained in each edition concern individuals who were somehow in touch with each other and recognized each other as belonging to the same clan. Thus, we may take each edition as the result of a communication network connecting the clan members to each other, however indirectly and tenuously. By comparing different editions of the genealogy of a single clan, we may be able to discern the changing extension of this network and explore its meaning from the point of view of the historical development of the clan system.

### Data and Procedures

The genealogy that is examined here concerns a part of one of the major branches (*p'a*)<sup>2)</sup> of the Yŏngju Sŏ-ssi clan (a pseudonym). The apical ancestor of Branch J is a fourteenth-century figure who stands at the eighth generation in the clan genealogy. He held a civil office at senior third rank in the Koryŏ court, but during court strife, he fled from Kaesŏng, the Koryŏ capital, to Ch'ŏnwŏn county in South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province. The genealogy of the descendants of his six great-grandsons at generation eleven is examined in detail.

Eight different editions of the Yŏngju Sŏ-ssi genealogy have been collected, all

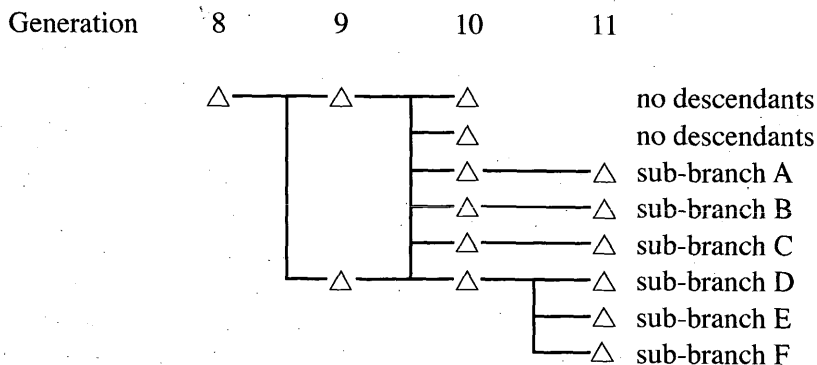


Fig. 1. Genealogical Configuration of Branch J

compiled since the early eighteenth century. Each edition is referred to by a number assigned according to the date of its compilation. Five of the eight editions are examined in detail, though other editions are sometimes consulted for particular information:<sup>3)</sup>

- Edition 1. Compiled by a member of sub-branch B at generation level 18, dated 1701<sup>4)</sup>
- Edition 3. Clan genealogy (*taedong-bo*), dated 1845
- Edition 4. Branch genealogy (*p'a-bo*) compiled by a member of sub-branch D at generation level 24, dated 1909
- Edition 6. Clan genealogy, dated 1936
- Edition 8. Clan genealogy, dated 1980

The analysis of these genealogies comprised three steps, each of which is described

Table 1. State of Recording by Edition and Sub-branch

Sub-Branch	Edition				
	1	3	4	6	8
A	—	+	—*	+	+
B	+	+	+	+	+
C	+	—	—	+	+
D	+	+	+	+	+
E	+	+	+	+	+
F	+	+	+	+	+

+: recorded

—: not recorded

\*record ends at generation level 15.

in detail below.

### ***Step 1: Database Compilation***

Since the information concerning individuals is standardized in genealogical records, these data lend themselves to computer processing.<sup>9)</sup> The first step was to compile a database consisting of classified information about all the individuals recorded in each of the five editions. The following items were chosen as the basic information about the individuals who make up the database:

1. serial number
2. source of data (code number for the edition of the genealogy, and volume and page numbers)
3. generation
4. sex
5. recorded order among siblings
6. personal name
7. father's name
8. eldest son's name
9. location of tomb
10. birth year
11. death year
12. adoption
13. legitimacy
14. special notes (titles, offices, etc., if any)
15. spouse(s)

Tables 2 through 6 provide statistical summaries of the database for each of the five genealogy editions analyzed. The sex ratio of the entries heavily favors males, reflecting a strong male bias in the records.

In order to facilitate comparison between the editions, the next step was to put data from all five editions together and use a computer to compile an all-inclusive genealogy by identifying the same individuals recorded in different editions. Thus, the computer-compiled genealogy includes all the individuals recorded at least once in any of the editions (see Table 7). A general trend is that later editions include more individuals from each generation, but no single edition is complete. For this reason alone, one must be careful about using genealogies for demographic research.

### ***Step 2: Computation of Birth Years***

A major problem facing any diachronic analysis of the genealogical data is that many of the entries, particularly for earlier generations and in earlier editions, lack

Table 2. Summary of Edition 1 (1701)

Gener- ation	Total Number of Men	Adop- tion Cases	Actual Number of Men	Number of Women	Men & Women Total	Birth Dates Listed	Birth Dates Deter- mined	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Tomb Site Listed
11	5	0	5	0	5	0	0			2
12	14	0	14	2	16	0	0			1
13	23	0	23	7	30	0	0			1
14	19	0	19	4	23	0	0			1
15	23	0	23	3	26	0	0			2
16	32	0	32	4	36	0	0			0
17	28	0	28	16	44	0	0			0
18	36	0	36	14	50	0	0			0
19	22	0	22	4	26	1	0			0
20	12	0	12	1	13	0	0			0
21	10	0	10	0	10	0	0			0
22	6	0	6	0	6	0	0			0
	230	0	230	55	285	1	0			7

Table 3. Summary of Edition 3 (1845)

Gener- ation	Total Number of Men	Adop- tion Cases	Actual Number of Men	Number of Women	Men & Women Total	Birth Dates Listed	Birth Dates Deter- mined	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
11	6	0	6	0	6	0	0		
12	13	0	13	5	18	0	0		
13	24	0	24	11	35	0	0		
14	29	1	28	4	32	1	0		
15	35	1	34	3	37	2	0		
16	60	0	60	9	69	6	1	1604	1604
17	61	1	60	7	67	7	3	1625	1685
18	102	5	97	18	115	10	5	1568	1686
19	162	3	159	30	189	23	11	1644	1702
20	235	9	227	69	296	45	14	1683	1780
21	341	21	322	104	426	106	24	1690	1821
22	292	18	277	86	363	196	45	1723	1854
23	363	30	338	110	448	238	36	1735	1828
24	291	20	274	66	340	180	30	1762	1834
25	162	17	151	30	181	94	24	1778	1841
26	63	4	61	8	69	40	10	1823	1845
27	1	0	1	0	1	1	0		
	2240	130	2132	560	2692	949	203		

Table 4. Summary of Edition 4 (1909)

Gener- ation	Total Number of Men	Adop- tion Cases	Actual Number of Men	Number of Women	Men & Women Total	Birth Dates Listed	Birth Dates Deter- mined	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
11	6	0	6	0	6	0	0		
12	13	0	13	5	18	0	0		
13	25	0	25	8	33	0	0		
14	30	1	29	4	33	1	0		
15	36	0	36	3	39	2	0		
16	62	1	61	9	70	1	1	1526	1526
17	29	0	29	2	31	2	0		
18	58	1	58	8	66	4	2	1568	1643
19	111	1	110	24	134	14	6	1644	1695
20	179	6	174	43	217	30	8	1628	1772
21	248	17	233	78	311	57	7	1710	1765
22	208	15	193	42	235	111	16	1728	1818
23	262	24	240	69	309	152	11	1755	1847
24	321	23	304	68	372	225	13	1780	1856
25	369	38	336	74	410	280	11	1811	1847
26	321	25	298	90	388	229	2	1844	1855
27	170	16	157	54	211	127	0		
28	68	4	65	10	75	57	0		
29	5	0	5	1	6	5	0		
	2521	172	2372	592	2964	1297	77		

vital statistics (birth and death dates). Even when the dates are provided, the years are generally given only in terms of the East Asian sexagesimal cycle. Only when the name of the reigning king is provided can the date be translated directly into the western calendar. Translated in this way, the birth years of individuals of the same generation vary greatly. The data from edition 8, for example, produce birth dates for a single generation that may range as far as 127 years (see Table 6, generation 8). Thus, the sequence of generations is a poor index of the passage of time. To arrive at a rough estimate of birth years, the following procedures were used:

- a) When the name of the reigning king was given in addition to the years of the cyclical sequence, the years were converted directly into their western equivalents.
- b) Years in the cyclical sequence were translated into their western equivalents if they were given for generations in succession and if any one of them could be translated as described in the preceding paragraph. Since the birth dates for recent generations as recorded in the latest edition are given in western years, these dates were fully used for this purpose. In this operation, an age difference between father and son of 16 to 71 years was automatically accepted. When the age difference could be read as either 12 to 15 or 72 to



Table 5. Summary of Edition 6 (1936)

Gener- ation	Total Number of Men	Adop- tion Cases	Actual Number of Men	Number of Women	Men & Women Total	Birth Dates Listed	Birth Dates Deter- mined	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
11	6	0	6	0	6	1	0		
12	14	0	14	8	22	0	0		
13	32	0	32	16	48	2	0		
14	38	1	37	8	45	5	2	1522	1601
15	47	0	47	5	52	8	3	1557	1641
16	74	0	74	25	99	6	6	1564	1655
17	53	0	53	11	64	12	6	1596	1639
18	100	4	96	26	122	30	13	1635	1666
19	169	3	166	48	214	60	36	1587	1716
20	266	9	258	83	341	107	47	1626	1756
21	369	26	345	135	480	131	66	1698	1799
22	326	25	301	107	408	211	107	1722	1833
23	411	44	372	133	505	291	138	1743	1862
24	533	50	489	190	679	420	135	1737	1863
25	616	56	566	270	836	501	805	1726	1917
26	745	42	702	277	979	614	11	1765	1926
27	638	28	618	231	849	549	0		
28	349	14	336	85	421	265	0		
29	103	2	101	11	112	91	0		
30	11	0	11	0	11	7	0		
	4900	304	4624	1669	6293	3311	1375		

75 years, however, a determination was made on a case-by-case basis.

- c) When no birth date was offered, but the dates could be determined for an ancestor and a descendant in a linear sequence, the difference between these dates was divided by the number of intervening generations to give approximate birth years.
- d) When adoption was involved, the birth year was calculated by referring to the natal father's data.

Birth years were determined or estimated for over 80 percent of the men in the all-inclusive genealogy. Table 8 shows the number of men estimated to have been born in each fifty-year period since 1430. Here, information that was originally given in terms of generations has been arranged in terms of time sequence. We may consider that those born before 1844, for instance, constitute the potential candidates for inclusion in edition 3, compiled in 1845. Thus, we can compare potential candidates with those who were actually recorded in a genealogy.

Unlike birth dates, which were generally given in terms of years alone, death

Table 6. Summary of Edition 8 (1980)

Generation	Total Number of Men	Adoption Cases	Actual Number of Men	Number of Women	Men & Women Total	Birth Dates Listed	Birth Dates Determined	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Tomb Site Listed
11	6	0	6	0	6	1	1	1423	1423	5
12	15	0	15	8	23	0	0			10
13	31	0	31	11	42	3	2	1470	1584	22
14	42	1	41	10	51	6	4	1522	1601	23
15	60	0	60	6	66	10	3	1557	1631	35
16	91	1	90	25	115	13	8	1564	1638	47
17	87	0	87	12	99	23	10	1612	1650	69
18	151	7	144	30	174	44	25	1568	1695	91
19	210	5	206	55	261	80	47	1587	1717	166
20	351	11	341	100	441	143	65	1626	1751	269
21	531	37	497	183	680	201	99	1674	1792	304
22	540	33	509	134	643	347	145	1696	1857	452
23	744	59	688	194	882	517	198	1692	1898	594
24	1037	72	977	268	1245	780	297	1737	1938	788
25	1525	112	1421	524	1945	1256	553	1773	1973	862
26	2218	104	2125	884	3009	1866	1141	1786	1978	718
27	2912	80	2843	1233	4076	2779	1947	1817	1979	472
28	2966	59	2913	1240	4153	2872	2199	1844	1979	231
29	1988	24	1965	884	2849	1942	1633	1864	1979	92
30	1081	13	1068	472	1540	1047	923	1892	1979	27
31	365	4	361	183	544	356	323	1915	1979	6
32	128	1	127	68	195	123	123	1945	1978	0
33	7	0	7	4	11	7	7	1971	1978	0
	17086	623	16522	6528	23050	14416	9753			5283

dates were more often recorded by designating a month and day without giving a year. Since information on death years was recorded for less than ten percent of the individuals in the all-inclusive genealogy, no attempt was made to compute death years.

### *Step 3: Identification of Tomb Sites*

The network among a clan connects people living in different parts of the country. As mentioned above, such a network exists only when mutual acknowledgement prevails. By identifying the places of residence of the people recorded in a genealogy and tracing them on the map, we can estimate the extent of such a network.

Important clues to identifying places of residence can be gleaned from tomb locations. Information about a tomb typically includes its location, the direction

Table 7. Summary of Males in the All-Inclusive Genealogy

Generation	All-Inclusive Genealogy	Edition 1	Edition 3	Edition 4	Edition 6	Edition 8
11	6	5	5	5	6	6
12	20	14	13	13	14	15
13	41	23	21	22	30	31
14	51	19	28	29	37	42
15	79	23	35	36	47	60
16	123	31	60	62	74	91
17	135	28	61	26	49	86
18	210	35	98	56	100	149
19	277	22	141	98	157	208
20	422	12	205	158	255	348
21	620	10	309	227	352	529
22	660	6	283	200	316	539
23	899	0	339	253	409	742
24	1240	0	270	309	518	1032
25	1780	0	152	360	592	1521
26	2541	0	62	311	691	2206
27	3259	0	1	160	580	2895
28	3166	0	0	68	289	2947
29	2035	0	0	5	94	1976
30	1082	0	0	0	7	1076
31	365	0	0	0	0	365
32	128	0	0	0	0	128

Table 8. Estimated Birth Dates of Men

Period	All-Inclusive Genealogy	Edition 1	Edition 3	Edition 4	Edition 6	Edition 8
1430	8	1	7	6	8	8
1480	3	0	3	3	3	3
1530	7	1	5	5	7	7
1580	26	0	18	9	17	26
1630	65	2	39	7	40	60
1680	142	1	65	13	92	130
1730	299	0	131	42	162	261
1780	520	0	157	59	312	445
1830	720	0	63	74	376	613
1880	3123	0	57	226	872	2777
1930	8556	0	37	228	422	8293
1980	124	0	2	31	64	91

in which the coffin was buried, and whether a husband and his wife had a shared burial mound (*happu*), separate mounds placed side by side (*ssangbun*), or mounds located in the same tomb site (*tongwŏn*). The records also note whether any stone structures were placed in front of the mound, such as monuments or stone tables for holding offerings.

A tomb's location is often indicated in extremely local terms referring to a single hill, valley, or nearby hamlet. Without local knowledge, therefore, it is almost impossible to identify the site's township or county. However, the tomb records of close relatives tend to include the same place names, allowing us to infer that they are in the same locality. Sometimes, however, a man's tomb is located far away, in a different township, county, or even province, from those of his close relatives, even those of his parents. In such circumstances, the name of an administrative unit is often indicated. Conversely, it seems safe in most cases to assume that tombs are located in the same general area unless the names of different administrative units are indicated.

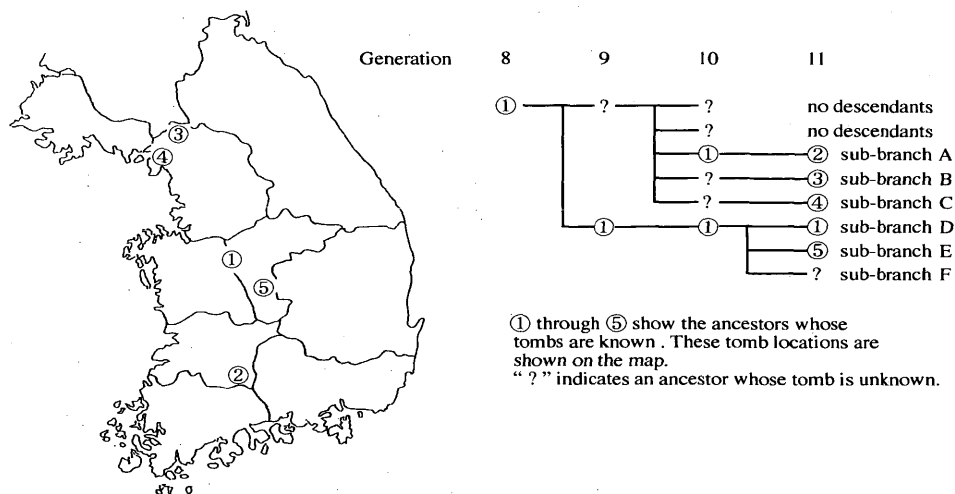
An ancestor's tomb site may not always be near the place where the ancestor lived. Also, when a tomb site suggests that a man migrated (because it is not in the same region as his father's tomb), the record is silent as to the stage of his life at which he moved. For operational purposes, however, we may roughly identify the tomb sites with places of residence.

Identification of tomb sites was based primarily on information provided in edition 8. For those entries whose tomb sites could not be identified in that edition, information was sought in other editions. Of the 18,870 men in the all-inclusive genealogy, 4,180 of the entries record the location of their tombs. For about 4,000 of these, or about 22 percent of the total, their locations have been identified in terms of counties, most of them also down to the level of townships. For those born before 1910 (i.e., approximately 9,800 men), tomb sites have been identified for about 40 percent.

## Analysis

The information on birth dates and tomb locations that was calculated as described above was incorporated into the all-inclusive genealogy. Thus, the all-inclusive genealogy now contains information not recorded as such in any of the editions examined, but derived through computation and analysis. The data thus incorporated allows us to trace the geographic distribution of the clan and its change over time.

The common ancestor of the branch under consideration fled from Kaesŏng to Ch'ŏnwŏn (hereafter referred to as Locale 1) towards the end of the fourteenth century. He was forty-four years old at the time. Though the age of his first son is not known, his second son was fourteen and the third son twelve years old. They most probably followed their father in his flight. From Ch'ŏnwŏn, their



Map 1. and Fig. 2. Location of Tombs of Branch J Ancestors

descendants moved to other parts of the country. The locations of the tombs of his six great grandsons—all but one are known—show that they were scattered at the time of their deaths, probably towards the end of the fifteenth century (see Map 1 and Figure 2).

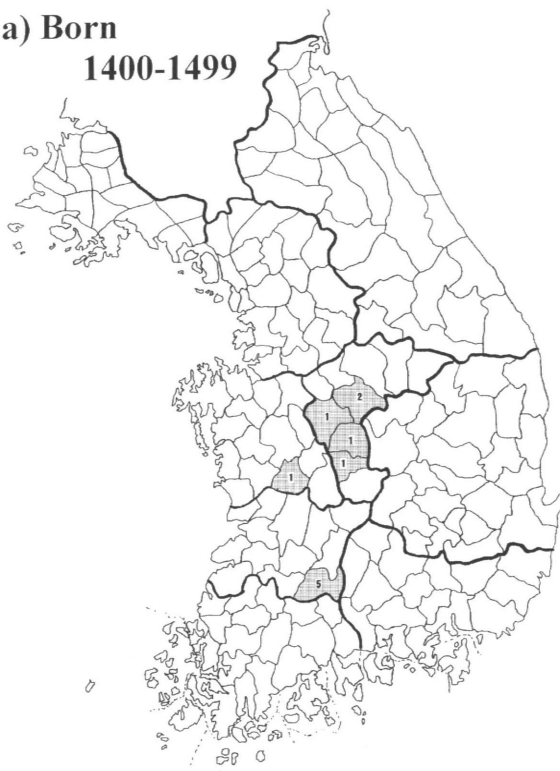
Map 2 shows the distribution by county of the tombs of the people in the all-inclusive genealogy who were born during each of the centuries after 1400. The distribution of tomb sites is evidence of how the descendants gradually spread out over the country. The distribution of the descendants is geographically uneven, and certain counties emerge as places of particular concentration during the course of time.

### Case History of Sub-Branch A

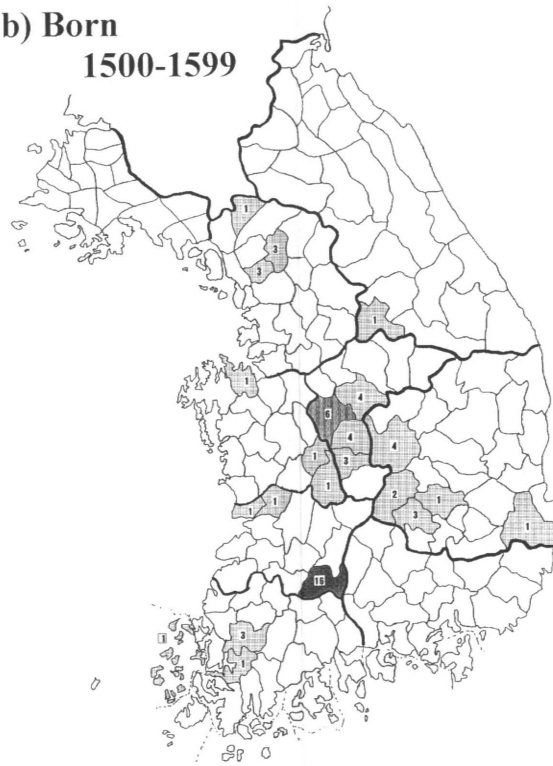
The founding ancestor of this sub-branch passed the higher civil service examination (*munkwa*) in the middle of the sixteenth century. Indeed, he was the only member of Branch J who passed the *munkwa* during the Chosŏn dynasty. He was appointed county magistrate but resigned from the post in protest when King Tanjong was dethroned in 1455. At that time he retired to the southern part of North Chŏlla Province (Locale 2 on Map 3). He had five grandsons, four of whom left descendants.

According to edition 8 (1980), most of the contemporary descendants of the grandson by the eldest son of the founder (segment A-1, see Figure 3) live in Koksŏng and Imsil, counties adjacent to Locale 2, as well as Yongin, far away in Kyŏnggi Province. Segment A-1 as a whole is not recorded in edition 3. In edition 6, the Koksŏng and Imsil sub-segments are recorded, while the Yongin sub-segment farthest away appears only in the most recent edition. Of segment A-2, subsegment

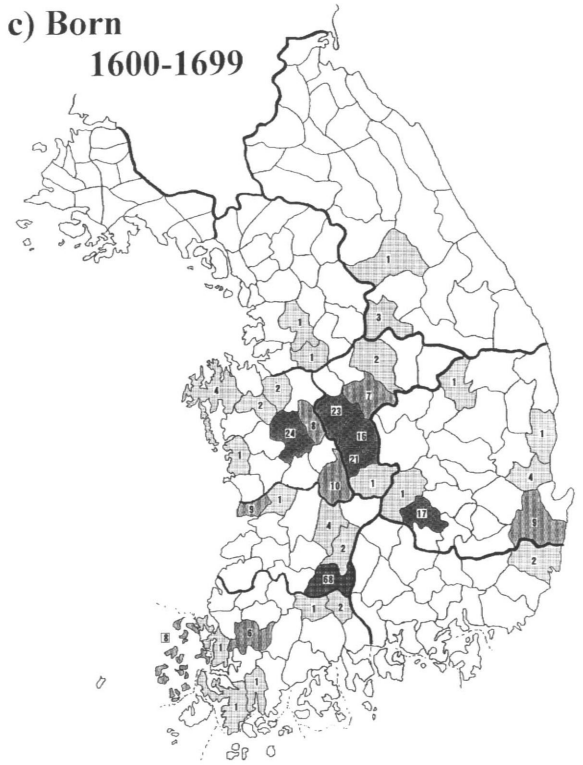
a) Born  
1400-1499



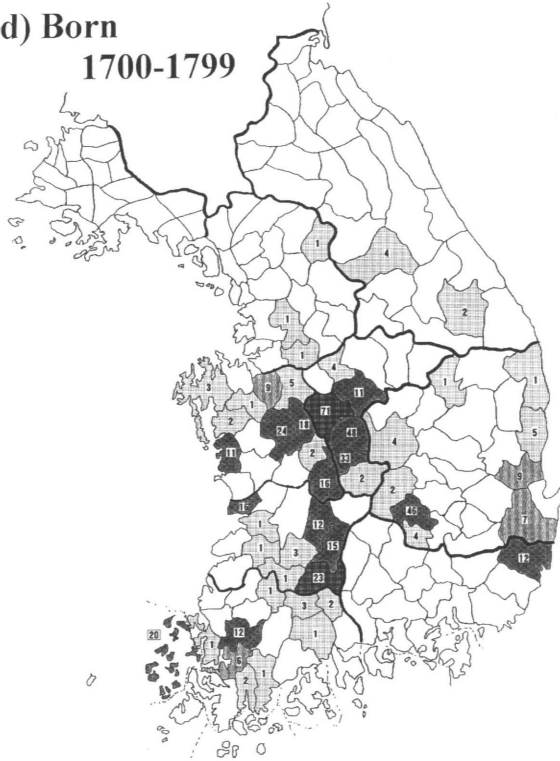
b) Born  
1500-1599



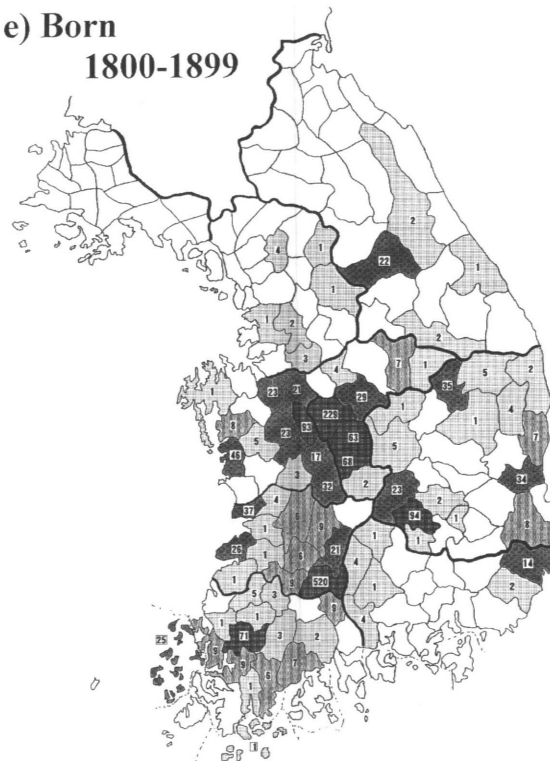
c) Born  
1600-1699



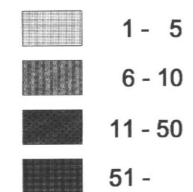
d) Born  
1700-1799



e) Born  
1800-1899

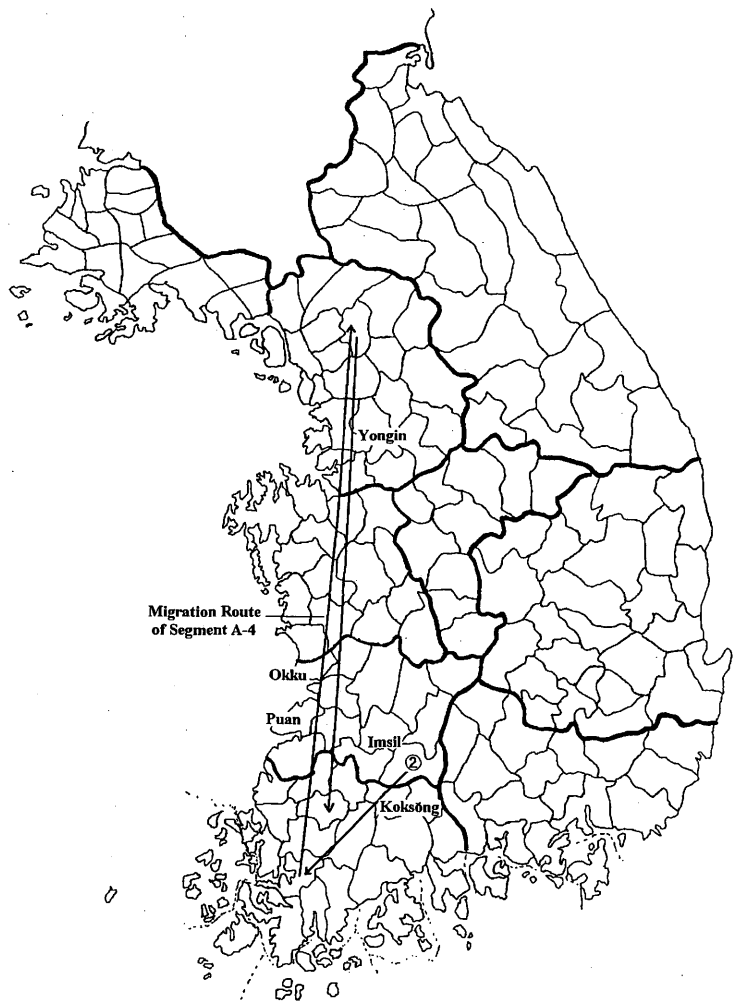


legend: The number of tombs

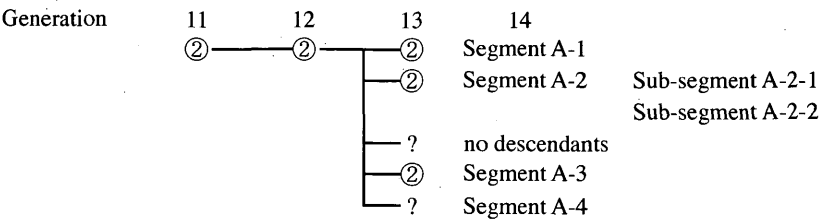


Map 2. Changing Distribution of Men (All-Inclusive Genealogy)





Map 3. Distribution of Sub-branch A (Partial)



② refers to the location of the tombs in Map 1.

Fig. 3. Genealogical Configuration of Sub-Branch A



A-2-1, which stayed in Locale 2, is found in edition 3. On the other hand, subsegment A-2-2, which moved to Okku county in the northwestern part of the same province in the early sixteenth century, is not recorded until edition 6.

Segment A-3 is by far the most populous among the four segments, numbering about three thousand men over the past five centuries. It also shows the greatest stability in terms of place of residence: approximately one thousand tombs are located in a single county (Locale 2). Even among this segment, however, many members left to live elsewhere.

One example is provided by a man at generation level 24 who left Locale 2 in the latter half of the eighteenth century. His descendants for the next three or four generations seem to have changed residence frequently within the same province, finally settling in Puan county towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, these migrants are not recorded until the latest edition of the genealogy. In edition 3 (1845), the genealogy stops at generation level 19, i.e., five generations *before migration began*. In edition 6 (1936), the genealogy continues, but only to generation level 22, still two generations before emigration. Thus, when the descendants finally gained full entry in edition 8, they had to reclaim not only those ancestors who migrated but also those whose tombs had remained in Locale 2 all the time.

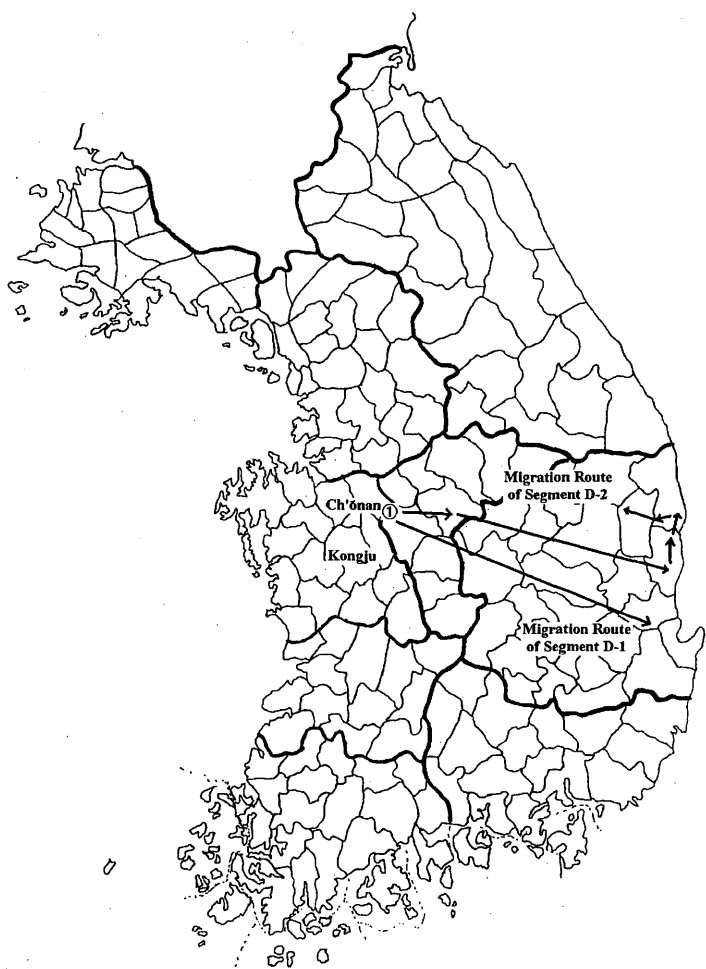
Segment A-4 is the second largest of the four segments. The names of more than nine hundred men are now recorded, but this segment gained entry only in the latest edition. According to the genealogy, their ancestors moved far away from Locale 2 at an early period. These ancestors settled in a village in South Chōlla Province during the first half of the sixteenth century, where many of the descendants have stayed to date, forming a lineage village (Map 3). Many others migrated further to various places in the same province. Most of the members of branch J who reside in South Chōlla Province belong to segment A-4.

These cases from sub-branch A show that migration from the place of ancestral residence affects the state of entry of the descendants in the genealogy. Emigrants are likely to drop out most probably because they lose contact with their agnates.

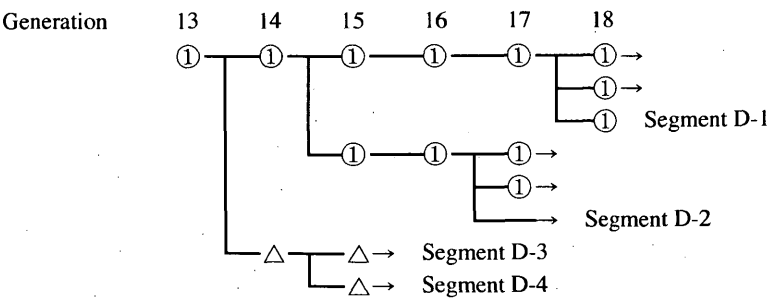
### ***Case History of Sub-Branch D***

The central core of this sub-branch has remained in Locale 1. More than one thousand tombs are recorded in two adjacent counties there. This is where the sub-branch's fourteenth-century ancestor sought refuge, although it was several generations later that his descendants settled down permanently in the present villages. The ancestor of segment D-1 at generation level 19 moved to the eastern part of North Kyōngsang Province in the early eighteenth century and his descendants have stayed there ever since. This segment was connected with the rest of the genealogies in edition 6 (Map 4).

For segment D-2, in contrast, the genealogy records continual itinerancy beginning with a man at generation level 17. This segment is represented by a single



Map 4. Distribution of Sub-branch D (Partial)



① refers to the location of the tombs in Map 1.  
“→” shows there are descendants to date.

Fig. 4. Genealogical Configuration of Sub-Branch D (Partial)

line of descent down to generation level 24. Two brothers at generation level 25 finally settled down in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their number grew to four at generation level 26, eleven at generation level 27, and twenty-seven at generation level 28. They found entry in the genealogy in edition 8.

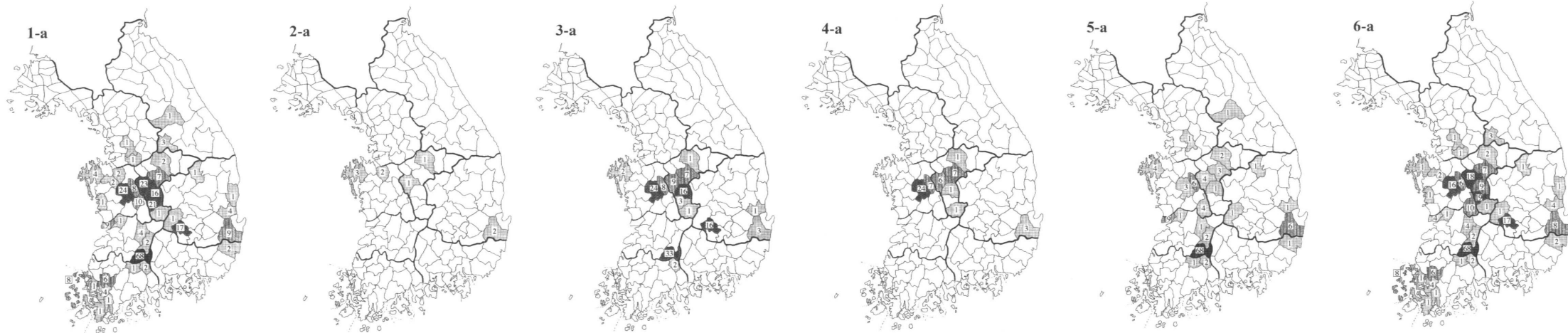
While some segments find entry in later editions by reclaiming their ancestors, other segments are permanently lost from the record. Following the same sub-branch D, we find segment D-3 in editions 3 and 4, whose members at generation levels 16 through 22 seem to have lived in the Kongju - Ch'önan area from the latter half of the seventeenth century through the early nineteenth century. Their tomb sites are not recorded in these editions, but the information is contained in edition 2. Omission of their tomb sites may indicate that this segment was on the point of vanishing from the record by the time edition 3 was compiled in 1845. The records of this segment are omitted entirely from editions 6 and 8. The descendants may have died out, or they may have dropped out of the information network, perhaps as a result of migration. When descendants disappeared, their ancestral records were also dropped. In its place, another segment (D-4), whose members had lived not far from Kongju, found entry in edition 6, reclaiming ancestors after a lapse of more than 12 generations.

It was not only those who emigrated who needed to reclaim their ancestors. Edition 1, compiled in 1701, says that the tomb of branch J's apical ancestor is at Locale 1. According to later editions, however, the tomb had been lost and was found again in 1704, three years after the compilation of edition 1. The finder of the tomb was a man of sub-branch D at generation level 20. He happened to find this tomb when he was looking for the tomb of the founder of sub-branch D at generation level 11. Edition 4 reproduces the inscription on the monument erected at the branch founder's tomb. It says that in 1787 his descendants finally mustered enough funds to erect a stone monument to their branch founder. Thus we learn that the eighteenth-century descendants who lived in Locale 1 searched for and regained the tombs of their ancestors nine to twelve generations back and undertook collective action to commemorate them.

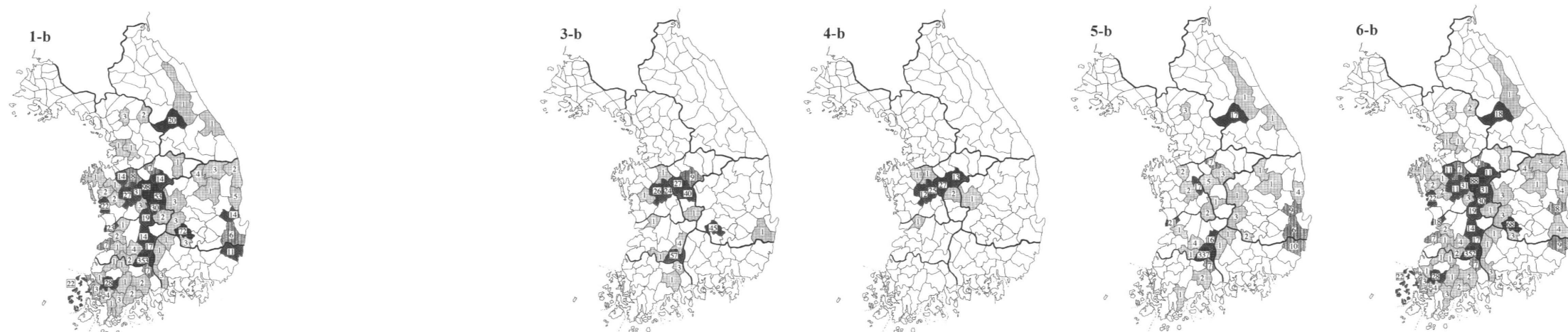
These are only a few of the huge number of cases that are contained in the genealogy. By comparing editions from the point of view of the network that each of them represents, we may trace the changing network among the clansmen. The inclusion of more people in a written genealogy means that the network has expanded. If segments hitherto unrecorded find entry in later editions, it reflects descendants' activities to get reconnected to the network and reclaim their ancestors in order to place themselves articulately in the clan structure.

The case histories examined above convey the crucial importance of either remaining in the locality of ancestral residence or settling down in a new locality in order to be connected to the information network among the clansmen. By becoming dispersed, even a sizable segment runs the risk of disappearing from the clan's genealogy. Conversely, after several generations of stable residence in a new

Born 1601 - 1700 (Period 1)



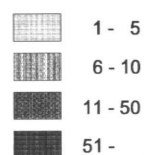
Born 1745 - 1844 (Period 3)



Born 1809 - 1908 (Period 4)



legend: The number of tombs



All-Inclusive genealogy

Edition 1 (1701)

Edition 3 (1845)

Edition 4 (1909)

Edition 6 (1936)

Edition 8 (1980)

Map 5. Distribution of Men by Edition and Period



locality, supported by multiplying numbers, descendants can afford to commence their search for their ancestors, and their claims can be accepted as genuine. In sum, a genealogy incorporates only those who succeeded in this feat.

### *Extent of the Network*

We now turn to an examination of the geographical extent of the information network that was effective in compiling different editions of the genealogy. For this purpose, we take the three centuries preceding the compilation of editions 1, 3, and 4. Corresponding approximately to the dates of the editions, we refer to these periods as Period 1 (1601–1700), Period 3 (1745–1844) and Period 4 (1809–1908). The people born in each period, according to the all-inclusive genealogy, would have been potential candidates for inclusion in editions 1, 3, and 4, respectively. Maps 5-1a (Period 1), 5-1b (Period 3), and 5-1c (Period 4) indicate the geographical distribution of these potential candidates, according to the all-inclusive genealogy.

Map 5-2a (Period 1 - Edition 1) shows the geographical distribution of those born in Period 1 who are actually listed in edition 1. This map indicates that the network mobilized for compiling edition 1 extended across five counties in three provinces. But these counties barely include those that were already emerging as centers of agnatic concentration (Map 5-1a). Evidently, edition 1 records only a very minor portion of branch J. To be more exact, the only members of the branch living at the time of compilation who are entered in edition 1 belong to sub-branches B, C, and one segment of sub-branch D only.

Likewise, Map 5-3b (Period 3 - Edition 3) shows the geographical distribution of those born in Period 3 who are actually listed in edition 3, compiled in 1845. The network mobilized to compile the clan genealogy of 1845 covered sixteen counties in five provinces, including counties that were unquestionably centers of agnatic concentration at the time, notably of those major sub-branches A, D, and E. In contrast, Map 5-4c (Period 4 - Edition 4), shows that the fourth edition was based on a more limited network, extending over only eleven counties, mostly in Ch'ungch'ong Province. An obvious reason for the narrower network is that edition 4 is not a clan genealogy but a branch genealogy, compiled by a member of sub-branch D. This is particularly evident when we compare Map 5-4b with Map 5-3b. The two adjacent counties around Locale 1 that show a conspicuous concentration of entries in both maps correspond to the strongholds of sub-branch D. On the other hand, sub-branch A, whose stronghold is in Locale 1, is entirely missing from Map 5-4b, as is much of sub-branches E and F. (We note in passing that the political situation of the twentieth century already makes itself felt in edition 4: one man who was born in 1900 later migrated to Japan and died there.)

The selection of ancestral records that are entered in a genealogy is affected by which of the descendants participate in the compilation. Thus, Map 5-3a (Period 1 - Edition 3) and Map 5-2a both represent the distribution of ancestors born during Period 1, as recorded in editions 3 and 1 respectively. The broader network shown

in the third edition reflects the people who joined in the compilation of that edition. It shows that these ancestors are different from those who participated in the compilation of edition 1 (Map 5-2a). The wider the network among the living descendants, the wider the distribution of ancestral tombs given in the genealogy.

Map 5-5c (Period 4 - Edition 6) tells that the clan genealogy of 1936, compiled during the Japanese colonial period, enlisted clansmen from widely scattered parts of the country. This is particularly impressive when we compare it with Map 5-3b, representing the network mobilized to compile a clan genealogy ninety years earlier.

Map 5-6c (Period 4 - Edition 8) compellingly suggests that the network mobilized in compiling edition 8 was much more extensive than the one used for edition 6. Descendants born before 1909, who could have been included in both editions 4 and 6 but in fact were not entered there, are now shown in edition 8 (1980). It is proof positive that many people responded to the call of the compilers and finally had themselves and their ancestors recorded in the written genealogy. Articulation of genealogical relations among the clan has never been more complete.

### **Genealogies as Anthropological Sources**

The history of genealogy compilation in Korea goes back to the early fifteenth century.<sup>6)</sup> Although more extensive research remains to be done, it appears that only a limited number of clans had their first genealogies compiled before the end of the sixteenth century [Ch'oe 1979; Chŏng 1987]. In a pioneering article probing the use of Korean genealogies as historical sources, Edward Wagner states that clan consciousness promoted through the preservation and compilation of genealogies was limited to the *yangban* class. He acknowledges the difficulty of defining *yangban*, and uses the term in a limited sense to refer to "a class composed of the lineages from which political leadership and major appointments in bureaucracy were drawn," estimating this class to be limited to less than ten percent of the population in traditional Korea [Wagner 1972:141-142].

As centuries passed, genealogy compilation became more popular and the proportion of the population that gained entry in written genealogies increased. The major force behind this development was the propagation of Confucianism and the spread of Confucian-style ancestor worship [Deuchler 1992].

It is now well known that earlier genealogies were records of cognatic descent relations. Genealogies began to become agnatic records during the seventeenth century as uterine descendants were eliminated from the records. By the end of the eighteenth century, the change was complete [Ch'oe 1979; Song 1980].<sup>7)</sup> What is not so well known is that the descent rule was not the only change that took place during these centuries. Most conspicuously, the earlier genealogies compiled in the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries contain only the individuals' names and official titles or positions in the civil-service bureaucracy. Good examples are the Andong Kwŏn-ssi [1476], the Munhwa Yu-ssi [1565] and the Ch'ongsong Sim-ssi

[1649] genealogies.<sup>8)</sup> The high proportion of individuals with titles or positions indicates that the records are about men of the ruling class. These genealogies record neither birth and death dates nor the locations of the tombs of the individuals recorded. The Andong Kwōn-ssi and the Munhwa Yu-ssi genealogies also lack information about wives. In short, they show no interest in the kinds of information that are the mainstays of more recent genealogies.

In the genealogies compiled in the eighteenth century, information about the tomb sites and some concern for birth and death dates begins to be evident (e.g., the Chōnūi Yi-ssi Genealogy of 1754 and the P'algō To-ssi Genealogy of 1767). Such information was standard in genealogies compiled after the nineteenth century.<sup>9)</sup> Thus, there was an apparent shift in the focal interest in compiling genealogies, as new kinds of information were chosen for inclusion.

The appearance of information about death dates and tomb sites reflects, even if indirectly, the popularization of Confucian-style ancestor worship. The recording of death dates by month and day was no doubt related to offering death-day memorial services. Since tomb rites are offered to ancestors who have passed beyond the stage of the home cults, we may assume that popularization of home cults either preceded or appeared at the same time as that of tomb cults. It has been suggested that home cults for four generations became widely practiced among the ordinary population by the eighteenth century [Furuta 1991]. The fact that the genealogies compiled in that century show an overwhelming concern for noting the locations of tomb sites tallies with this observation. We have seen that descendants of sub-branch D searched for and reclaimed their ancestral tombs at the beginning of the eighteenth century. As the tombs became the focus of general interest, this information was added to the ancestral records.

It is also important to note that most individuals entered in later genealogies were people without official titles or appointments in the bureaucracy. This development clearly indicates that later genealogies contain information predominantly about ordinary people.<sup>10)</sup> Written genealogies, which used to be concerned only with members of the ruling class, became concerned with recording all the agnatic descendants of shared ancestors: the descendants are treated as equals vis-à-vis each other with respect to their descent status.

Written genealogies record much more than genealogical information. They also reflect changing attitudes towards ancestors and changing relationships among the living. Kinship relations were reformulated and new behavioral customs came to prevail.<sup>11)</sup> These changes in the realm of kinship were no doubt related to changes in wider social conditions. Massive upward mobility in terms of legal status has been depicted as one of the major features of the late Chosōn dynasty [Shikata 1938].

Clan affiliation is a requirement of the Korean kinship system. Having a seat name, which is the name of the place of residence of a clan's apical ancestor, implies a connection with that ancestor. Therefore, the search for remote ancestors has been built into the system ever since tomb cults for ancestors beyond one's



immediate forebears became popular. Ancestors commemorated at their tombs unite people living in different parts of the country under a common clan genealogy and into a network of mutually recognizing clan members.

As has been noted before, compilation of a genealogy entails several stages of communication between the compilers and the clan members. Upon receiving a notice from the compilers calling for genealogical information, clansmen must decide on their response. Since they must share the cost of compilation in order to have their own and their ancestors' names entered, they may not always reply positively. One may also decide to ignore the notice for reasons other than financial ones.<sup>12)</sup> If clan members decide to respond positively, they may report the information selectively. Only the information thus sent to the compilers can be considered for inclusion.

On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the compilers to screen the information filed with them. They must be careful, because acceptance of those whose genealogical connections are doubtful would seriously damage the authenticity of the genealogy as well as their own credibility as compilers. When clan members are widely dispersed, the conditions for compiling genealogies are quite different from when the descendants live close together and know each other well.

Thus, each edition of a genealogy is the result of claims and counter-claims made by some clan members on the one hand and the compilers on the other. Completed genealogies do not record the specifics of transactions between the compilers and the clansmen. However, the content of each edition represents the genealogical configuration of the clan as agreed upon by both parties who participated in the compilation project. The compilers and the clan members are coauthors. Different editions of genealogies are of particular value as anthropological sources because they speak about those descendants who responded to the call of the compilers, were accepted by the latter, and thus acted collectively as coauthors of each edition. These people are as responsible for elaborating institutions concerning the ancestors as those who propagate Confucian teachings. They translate what the philosophers teach into their social organization.

## Conclusion

In analyzing Korean kinship organizations, anthropologists have taken their underlying genealogical relations for granted. Sometimes a need arises to refer to the past in order to explain the origin of a local lineage or the state of its internal segmentation. In such cases, it has been customary to refer to written genealogies. But hardly any of these references mentions which edition has been consulted. The assumption is that any edition is as good as any other: organizations may change their forms, but the framework of the system is unchanging. Any edition is indeed good, as long as the focus of interest lies in the current configuration of the local

lineage under examination, and the edition consulted explains it. But this does not mean that all editions carry the same information. Far from it. The contents of genealogies—both the kinds of information recorded and the range of people entered—have changed over time.<sup>13)</sup> We need to compare different editions because the differences between them contain information of the utmost significance for understanding the development of the clan system.

What needs to be stressed is that clan members themselves have been active agents in forming and transforming the clan system. The dead do not automatically become ancestors. It is the descendants who make their forebears into ancestors. The descendants need the ancestors as rallying points for organizing themselves and for showing their identity in genealogical terms. Both inter- and intra-clan social recognition are at stake.

Different editions are records of the activities of clan members who tried to retrieve their own past by reclaiming their ancestors. They represent the responses of clan members to the changing conditions in which many other clans came to compile genealogies, and in which new editions of the genealogy of their own clan were being compiled. The present kinship system is the cumulative result of the activities of past generations.

My next point pertains to methodology. Computer processing was developed here for comparing the contents of different editions of a genealogy and for deriving some information that was not explicitly recorded in any of the editions. The computer-generated data has been crucial for estimating when and where clan members of past generations lived and which ancestors they reclaimed. It has also helped infer the changing extent of a clan's network. A comparison of earlier with later editions reveals an expanding network, as increasing numbers of people came to organize their activities with reference to ancestors. This expansion reflects the social milieu in which increasing importance came to be attached to descent affiliation for proving one's identity.

Computer analysis of the genealogy was first designed for the purpose of reconstructing demographic change and geographical distribution of a clan over time by compiling an artificial but all-inclusive genealogy and making simulations. An assumption of this operation was that genealogy is static source material. Genealogy has proved, however, to be of a much more complicated nature than it had appeared at first. What the ancestors did—not so much the ancestors of the earliest generations as of the intermediate and recent generations—has had a profound effect on the articulation of structural positions among present-day descendants. The history of a clan that we read in a genealogy is the product of another history in which the clan members tried to retrieve their own past through compilation of their genealogy. Computer analysis yields proof of the activities that went into building the contemporary kinship system that is an integral part of Korean tradition.

*Appendix. A Consideration of the Nature of Edition 1*

The date of compilation, 1701, places edition 1 among those genealogies compiled at a fairly early period in the history of Korean genealogical compilation. Although this edition records basically agnatic descent, the cognatic principle still lingers and more than 12 percent of the entries are persons descended from the apical ancestor through women. Death dates are provided for only three very prominent ancestors in earlier generations. Birth dates are not provided at all.

Information about tombs is recorded, but this information seems to be limited to the ancestors of segments whose living descendants at the time of compilation were also recorded. It should be remembered that the Ch'öngsong Sim-ssi genealogy, compiled some forty years earlier, showed no interest in tomb sites, except for five ancestors of the first five generations. Indeed, edition 1 may be among the earliest genealogies in Korea providing information about tomb sites.

This edition was compiled by five individuals at generation levels 18 through 24, belonging to three of the major branches of the clan, including branch J. The first person in the list of compilers was a man of sub-branch B of Branch J. Judging from the ancestral tombs of these compilers, their places of residence are identified as below.

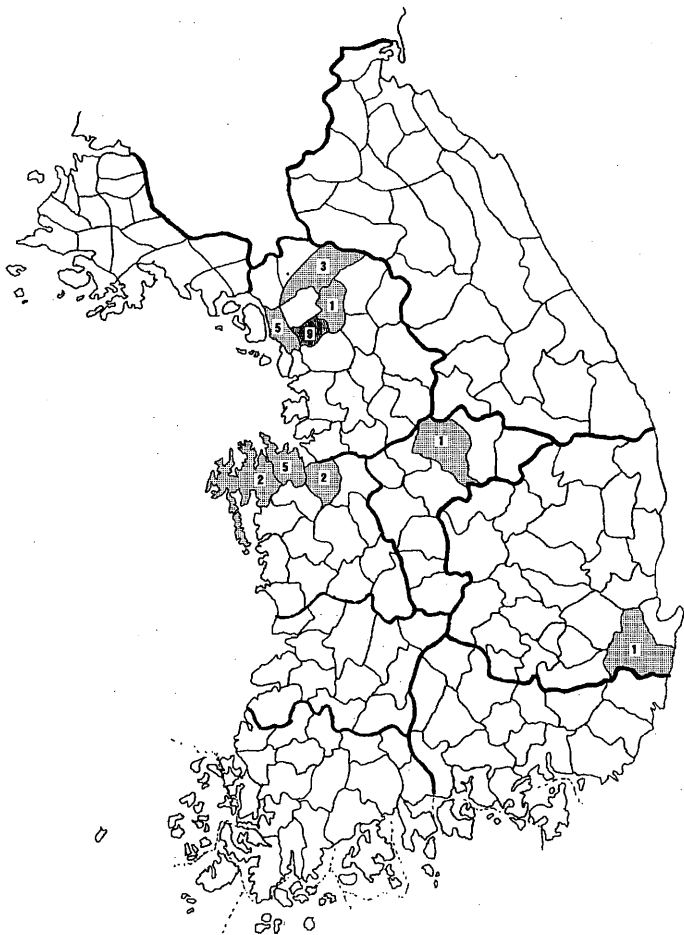
Table 9. Compilers of Edition 1

Province	County	Generation Level
South Ch'ungch'öng	Tangjin	18
Kyönggi	Kanghwa	24
	Yöñch'ön	21
	Koyang	18
Kangwön	Ch'unch'ön	20

The all-inclusive genealogy records 692 men who were born during the seventeenth century. Tomb locations have been identified for 270 of these men. Only nine of these are recorded in edition 1, however, suggesting the somewhat unusual nature of this edition.

Edition 1 itself records a total of 230 men (Table 2, above) belonging to the branch under consideration. Of these, 98 are recorded again in one or more of the later editions, including 77 who are recorded in edition 8. What is striking, however, is that as many as 132 men (almost 60 percent) never appeared again in later editions. This made it impossible to compute the birth years for most of the men recorded in edition 1. Consequently, Map 5-2a does not properly reflect the state of the network used in compiling this edition.

The records suggest that living members of the branch at the time of compilation belonged to generation levels 16 through 20. Accordingly, the tomb sites for those at generation levels 15 and after, even though birth years may not be



Map 6. Tomb Distribution of Men at Generation levels 15–20. Edition 1

Table 10. Tomb Locations in Edition 1

Province	County	Number of Tomb Sites Recorded
Kyōnggi	Kimp'o	5
	Koyang	9
	Yōnch'ōn	3
	Yangju	1
North Kyōngsang	Wōlsōng	1
South Ch'ungch'ōng	Asan	2
	Sōsan	4
	Tangjin	5
North Ch'ungch'ōng	Chungwōn	1

estimated, may suggest the location of the living members. Table 10 shows the number of tombs at these generation levels recorded in edition 1 (see also Map 6).

Close examination reveals that most of the 77 men listed in both editions 1 and 8 are of earlier generations, and belong to sub-branches or segments other than the ones that are fully listed in edition 1: the segments, whose living members at about 1700 are listed in edition 1, are almost totally lost from later editions. The only exception is one small segment of sub-branch C: this segment, whose living members are listed in edition 1, finds reentry in edition 8 after being lost from editions 3 through 6.

Four of the five compilers of edition 1, as well as their immediate ancestors, are not found in edition 8. The only compiler whose name is found in edition 8 does not have descendants at present. Edition 1 represents the activities of people early in the development of the clan system, who apparently failed thereafter to remain in the network of clansmen.

## Notes

- 1) The circumstances leading to the initiation of the undertaking are often mentioned in the preface or postscript of the edition concerned.
- 2) In an earlier paper I referred to "Lineage J," which will be considered below as "branch J" [Shima 1990]. The reason for this change in terminology is that the lineage concept should be reserved for cases where there are formal organizations [Ebrey and Watson 1985].
- 3) The other editions have been excluded from full-scale examination for no other reason than a shortage of time.
- 4) Edition 1 is not among the clan genealogies authorized as such in edition 8. However, it does include segments belonging to several major branches (*p'a*) comprising the clan. (See the Appendix.)
- 5) The computer programs for processing the data were devised by Professor Sugita Shigeharu of the National Museum of Ethnology, Ōsaka. I wish to express my appreciation for his assistance. For an outline of the computer processing procedures used, see Shima [1988].
- 6) The Munhwa Yu-ssi genealogy compiled in 1423, whose existence is known only through its preface (which has been reproduced in later editions), is generally considered to be the oldest genealogy in Korea. However, a recent study indicates that there were at least three earlier genealogies dating back to the beginning of the fifteenth century [Chōng 1987].
- 7) Compared with Chinese genealogies, however, it is noteworthy that the Korean genealogies insist on listing daughters along with sons. In Chinese genealogies, daughters are usually mentioned in the biographical notes of their fathers, not as a part of the genealogical relations. In contrast, Korean daughters are listed as individuals along with their brothers, even though they are listed only by their husbands' names and the coverage is far less complete than that of sons. This explains why, even after the genealogies became generally agnatic records, we see daughters' sons still recorded more than sporadically.

In genealogies compiled after the mid-1970s, we find some daughters listed under

their own names, followed by those of their husbands. Furthermore, some unmarried daughters are listed for the first time in the history of Korean genealogies.

- 8) The Andong Kwōn-ssi [1476] and the Munhwa Yu-ssi [1565] genealogies are the two oldest genealogies that exist today.
- 9) Since these observations are based on examination of only a small number of genealogies, further examination of genealogies compiled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will be required for formulating more than tentative conclusions.
- 10) We must be aware, though, that historically prominent figures may not always be particularly marked as such in the genealogies [Wagner 1972].
- 11) Peterson [1987] traces in detail the changes that took place in the institutions of marriage, ancestor worship, and inheritance during the late Chosōn period.
- 12) Occasionally, one reads passages in the prefaces criticizing the editorial principle of a preceding edition. Disagreement on such matters may lead a segment to opt out of the compilation of a particular edition.
- 13) I should emphasize that differences between editions do not imply contradictions or forgeries: contradictory information is rare, while the overall integrity of the editions deserves respect.

### Romanizations

Andong Kwōn-ssi (K)	안동 권씨 (安東權氏)
Asan (K)	아산 (牙山)
chokpo (K)	족보 (族譜)
Chōlla (K)	전라 (全羅)
Ch'ōnan (K)	천안 (天安)
Ch'ōngsong Sim-ssi (K)	청송 심씨 (靑松沈氏)
Chōnūi Yi-ssi (K)	전의 이씨 (全義李氏)
Ch'ōnwōn (K)	천원 (天原)
Chosōn (K)	조선 (朝鮮)
Ch'unch'ōn (K)	춘천 (春川)
Ch'ungch'ōng (K)	충청 (忠淸)
Chungwōn (K)	중원 (中原)
happu (K)	합부 (合附)
Imsil (K)	임실 (任實)
Kaesōng (K)	개성 (開城)
Kanghwa (K)	강화 (江華)
Kangwōn (K)	강원 (江原)
Kimp'o (K)	김포 (金浦)
Koksōng (K)	곡성 (谷城)
Kongju (K)	공주 (公州)
Koryō (K)	고려 (高麗)
Koyang (K)	고양 (高陽)
Kyōnggi (K)	경기 (京畿)
Kyōngsang (K)	경상 (慶尙)
Munhwa Yu-ssi (K)	문화유씨 (文化柳氏)
munjung (K)	문중 (門中)
munkwa (K)	문과 (文科)
Okku (K)	옥구 (沃溝)

p'a (K)	파 (派)
p'a-bo (K)	파보 (派譜)
P'algŏ To-ssi (K)	팔거 도씨 (八莒都氏)
pon-gwan (K)	본관 (本貫)
Sŏsan (K)	서산 (瑞山)
ssangbun (K)	쌍분 (雙墳)
taedong-bo (K)	대동보 (大同譜)
Tangjin (K)	당진 (唐津)
Tanjong (K)	단종 (端宗)
tongwŏn (K)	동원 (同原)
Wŏlsŏng (K)	월성 (月城)
yangban (K)	양반 (兩班)
Yangju (K)	양주 (楊州)
Yŏnch'ŏn (K)	연천 (漣川)
Yongin (K)	용인 (龍仁)
Yŏngju Sŏ-ssi (K)	영주 서씨 (榮州徐氏)

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