

Between Family, Nation, and Scholarship: Negotiating Ancestral Origins in Post-1945 South Korea

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Abstract

Although kinship groups have lost some of their prominence in South Korea, this article investigates how they continue to act as significant producers of historical knowledge in the present. Especially in writing histories of their own ancient origins, kinship groups have constructed narratives that clash with national histories or the scholarly consensus. This article sheds light on how kinship groups navigate countervailing narratives and reassert their epistemological agency through their own production of scholarship. Through this study, kinship groups emerge as potent sources of alternative knowledge that amplifies the plurality and contentiousness of historical knowledge in Korea.

Keywords

Korean history, kinship groups, family genealogies, historical memory, invention of family tradition

Introduction

In modern times, the nation has arguably been the prime focus of historical inquiry, commanding the most attention and even threatening to “obliterate or appropriate” other forms of community.¹ Despite this, alternative identity formations, whether based on local or regional ties, religious affiliations, political loyalties and the like, have endured as both subject matter and producers of historical knowledge. Especially more recently, scholars have turned their attention toward such “peripheral memory collectives” which have continued to generate their own historical knowledge on the margins of the nation.² One such memory collective that is particularly powerful is the family as it possesses the capacity to “disrupt” and “throw into question the solidity of the history of the nation.”³ Furthermore, due to their potential to create alternative regimes of historical knowledge, memory collectives like the family can also challenge the knowledge originating from other sources including the academic establishment, thereby upsetting perceived dichotomies between the private and the public as well as the amateur and the professional.⁴ As potent social frameworks of historical knowledge, families can thus reveal an epistemological pluralism that lies underneath and beyond narratives of the nation.⁵

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This article investigates how families in contemporary South Korea have been the driving force of alternative historical knowledge and how they have interacted and conflicted with other sources of knowledge.⁶ The focus will be on Korean kinship groups which are defined as collectives that share the same surname (*sŏng*), ancestral seat (*pon* or *pon'gwan*), as well as founding father (*sijo*), and are organized around patrilineal descent.⁷ While in Korean, the terms *munjung* or *chongjung* are used to refer to such kinship groupings, it needs to be noted that these collectives are imagined communities themselves as they are often based on perceived and even invented consanguinity.⁸ These groups of common descent have been significant creators of historical knowledge in Korea for centuries due to the traditional emphasis on venerating ancestry and compiling family genealogies in order to establish social distinction. During the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) in particular, members of the *yangban* aristocracy found it important to trace their family history by compiling *chokpo* (family genealogies) in order to affirm legitimate provenance and social status. This had real social, cultural, and political consequences as a person's ancestry could determine one's eligibility for the prestigious civil service examination, positions in the government, as well as military service exemptions.⁹ In the first half of the twentieth century, far from disappearing, the trend to compile and publish family genealogies only became more widespread in Korea as all strata of society began to imitate the practices of the erstwhile elite and lay claim to noble origins. This invention of ancestry was made possible thanks to increased access to printing as well as commercial brokers.¹⁰ At the same time, it was also facilitated by the government's bureaucratic impulse to make society more "legible" by recording and categorizing the entire population by surname and ancestral seat alongside other markers.¹¹ While this can be seen as a modern drive to meticulously document the entire population, it effectively allowed Koreans to invent and register newly-claimed identities. As the government did not have the capacity to vet each claim, they were entered into the government's database without much pushback, attaining the status of official record.¹² This meant that suddenly, a vast number of Koreans had become descendants of royalty and nobility, with the government's official documents to back up these claims.

In post-1945 South Korea, kinship groups have continued to be prolific producers of historical knowledge. Especially due to the need to recover familial ties in the wake of the Korean War (1950–1953) and rapid urbanization, efforts to compile genealogies remained widespread. The 1980s in particular were seen by some as another heyday of *chokpo* publishing, with an entire industry thriving around it.¹³ Granted, in the present day, clan affiliations are no longer core determinants of a person's success or access to power.¹⁴ Nevertheless, kinship groups endure as highly active producers and custodians of historical knowledge: For one, many are now organized as officially registered clan associations, taking the form of corporations and foundations with governance, laws, and in some cases, substantial assets and endowments. These associations publish not only various kinds of family genealogies, but also narrative histories and biographies of illustrious ancestors. Moreover, clan associations even produce journals and newspapers to circulate the latest clan-related news and maintain a sense of connection among its members. On a material level, clan associations develop and manage a substantial number of historical heritage sites as well as their own museums and archives containing precious historical documents. These activities are often supported by a clan's own research groups consisting of genealogists and historians dedicated to the protection of the clan's heritage.¹⁵

Korean and Western scholars so far have paid ample attention to the culture of kinship groups and *chokpo* compilations in premodern Korea, bringing to light the invented and political nature of family genealogies.¹⁶ More recently, studies have focused on the activities of kinship groups from the late nineteenth century to the colonial period (1910–1945), illuminating how many Koreans negotiated and reimagined their family identities during a time of intensifying contact with modernity.¹⁷ At the same time, how this culture of kinship groups has continued to evolve beyond 1945 is only beginning to receive more focused scholarly attention.¹⁸ In the Anglophone realm, Eugene Park has conducted

longue-durée studies of certain clans, offering a critical approach to family genealogies and revealing them as constructed and negotiated products. In doing so, Park has also offered vignettes of how family genealogies continue to be negotiated and rewritten in post-1945 Korea.¹⁹ This paper seeks to contribute to this approach by critically investigating the substantial output of contemporary Korean kinship groups. This includes *chokpo*, clan periodicals, internal reports, as well as scholarly publications. The Ch'ŏngju Han and Kwangsan Kim clans factor prominently in this study, as they not only boast impressive pedigrees from the Chosŏn dynasty, but have also been industrious in publishing, commemorating, and preserving their family heritage in the post-1945 period.²⁰ Both have demonstrated substantial organizational cohesion, leaving behind a considerable historical footprint that reveals many of the intricacies of clan politics. In addition, both clans have also been able to mobilize substantial scholarly resources, illustrating the evolving dynamics between clan narratives and professional scholarship. A look at how these clans have wrestled with their own origins can thus reveal the negotiations, tensions, and conflicts that exist within and between various "memory collectives," illuminating a more pluralistic and diverse landscape of historical knowledge in Korea.

Diverging from National Narratives

Korean kinship groups usually trace their origins back to a single founding father. One problem, however, is that these founding fathers are designated by later generations without consistent rules to guide the selection process. For some clans, the founding father is the oldest known ancestor; for others, the first one to receive the surname and/or settle in what would become the clan's "ancestral seat." Sometimes, the founding father is the most illustrious of early ancestors due to educational and political achievements, trumping older ancestors with less remarkable credentials.²¹ What complicates this matter is that founding fathers in many cases are products of family myth and cannot be historically substantiated via outside sources.²² Because of the many difficulties, a clan nowadays can designate multiple founding fathers: an "original" founding father (*wŏn sijo*) who is considered the progenitor of an entire clan, as well as multiple "middle" founding fathers (*chung sijo*) who are often the progenitors of individual branches of the clan. While both types of founding fathers are commemorated and celebrated, it is those "middle" founding fathers that usually stand on firmer ontological grounds.

A clan's founding father is thus not a natural starting point of a lineage, but subject to numerous retrospective considerations, negotiations, and even inventions. In premodern Korea, it became fashionable for clans to claim increasingly more ancient and illustrious origins to elevate their own prestige. Alleged ancestors who had never been mentioned before suddenly began to appear as a genealogy's starting point, allowing a clan's genesis to be pushed further and further back into the past.²³ For example, around the sixteenth to seventeenth century, clans such as the Ch'ŏngju Han or Haengju Ki clan (in addition to the T'aewŏn Sŏnu clan) began to claim Kija (Ch. Jizi), the legendary sage king from the eleventh century BCE, as their founding father.²⁴ Kija was a nobleman of China's Shang dynasty, who, according to lore, fled the country as the fortunes of the dynasty declined. Eventually, a tradition emerged in China and Korea that saw him as having relocated to what is now Korea where he established his own dynasty. Above all, Kija was seen as the conduit for culture, spreading classical Chinese civilization to Korea. This allowed Kija to become a much-venerated cultural icon among members of the Korean Confucian elite as he allowed them to claim a deep-rooted, millennia-old link to the center of civilization. The clans that claimed to be Kija's descendants were thus appropriating and internalizing national-level symbols to their own advantage. At the same time, the clans were also making their own contributions to the general lore surrounding Kija: one example is a rather detailed genealogy of 41 generations of Kija's bloodline which first emerged in clan documents sometime in the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty.²⁵ Granted, there was skepticism even among scholars and government officials

at the time about claims of Kija-descent due to their sudden appearance and lack of historical documentation.²⁶ Eventually, however, the clans' expanding lore surrounding Kija became too valuable to ignore as it was useful in adding flesh to the history of Kija and accentuating his connection to Korea. Thus, the clan's claims were eventually incorporated by other scholars and officials, allowing these clan genealogies to become part of the public narrative.²⁷

In the early twentieth century, however, the rise of ethnic nationalism in Korea led to the rapid decline of Kija. Tan'gun, who had traditionally been honored as the first ruler of a Korean state but received somewhat less attention than Kija, was redefined by nationalist historians as the progenitor of the ethnic Korean nation and became their primary focus. At the same time, Kija's Chinese background began to be seen as an embarrassment as it entailed Korea's subservience to China. As a result, within the writings of nationalist historians, Kija was de-emphasized and began to be eclipsed by the figure of Tan'gun.²⁸ In post-colonial Korea, the trend to downgrade Kija continued: for one, textbooks began to make fewer and fewer mentions of him, so much so that he has been all but erased from history curricula.²⁹ In addition, it became prevalent among mainstream historians to deny that Kija had ever even come to the Korean peninsula. This would imply that he could not have sinicized Korea early on or have left any descendants there, which directly contradicted the clans' most foundational claims.³⁰

However, since Kija had been so deeply engrained in the clans' identities—after all, he had allowed these kinship groups to claim to be some of the most ancient in Korea—it was not feasible to simply erase him from their genealogies.³¹ Instead, the Ch'ŏngju Han and Haengju Ki clans chose to hold on to their traditional narrative of Kija, refusing to bow to the trends of the time, in effect prioritizing family history over national narratives. For instance, in the genealogical compilations created by the two clans from the early twentieth century to the present, the narrative of Kija's transformation of Korea remains unchanged.³² Furthermore, the clans' memorial sites which have been reconstituted in recent decades equally persist in attesting to Kija's purported exploits in Korea. Thus, despite the dominance of newer national narratives, physical reminders of Kija can still be found in the country thanks to these clans.³³ In some cases, members of the clans are even able to count which generation they belong to starting from Kija—a contemporary member of the clan would be considered roughly Kija's 140th-generation descendant despite significant gaps in the genealogy—maintaining a sense of personal connection to the founding father.³⁴ Granted, while Kija has not been the sole focus of these clans' ritual practices as some closer ancestors are celebrated with more frequency, he endures as an ineradicable part of their historical identity.³⁵

Even within the academic realm, the clans were able to have their voices represented against all odds. This was possible thanks to the efforts of Han Yŏngu (1938–2023), a highly renowned scholar of Korean history who spent his professorial career at Seoul National University, the country's most prominent academic institution. Aside from being a household name within the historical profession, he also happened to be an active member of the Ch'ŏngju Han clan association, engaging in several of its endeavors to research and preserve the clan's history.³⁶ Even in the capacity of an academic, he published scholarship that was aligned with the clan's narrative, challenging the dominant views on Kija. One key impetus within Han's research was to stress that for much of Korean history, Kija and his legacy in Korea had been considered real by so many, suggesting that there must have been a genuine cause for the memory of Kija to become so deeply embedded. In fact, Han emphasized that for over two thousand years prior to the modern era, nobody had ever been skeptical of the existence of Kija and the state entity he founded, making the modern reevaluation of the figure look more adventitious.³⁷ While Han failed to consider other reasons for the popularity of Kija in premodern times, his work did point at the relative novelty and contingent nature of contemporary nationalist imaginations.

In holding on to the memory of Kija, these clans serve as stubborn reminders of a bygone historical imagination while also illustrating the strength of kinship groups as frameworks of historical

memory. The Korean nation may have moved on from Kija, but the clans' genealogies remain truthful to a prior self-understanding that many Koreans have disavowed or simply forgotten. National history, in this case, is not all-pervasive as seemingly anachronistic pockets of resistance continue to attest to the vagaries of historical memory. Of course, members of the Ch'öngju Han and Haengju Ki clans are aware of the contemporary consensus on Kija. In making their case, however, these clans are able to draw on an extensive archive that has been built up over centuries as both Chinese and Korean documents throughout history have repeatedly attested to Kija's exploits in Korea. While contemporary studies by various scholars highlight the constructed nature of such narratives, they also reveal that deconstructing this considerable archive rooted in millennia of tradition requires a more complex operation.³⁸

At the same time, members of these clans sometimes seek a middle ground to satisfy both their familial and national allegiances which leads to a further diversification of discourses: one solution that they have come up with is to argue that Kija had been "Korean" all along instead of "Chinese," making his purported relocation to and takeover of the Korean peninsula much less problematic. This view has emerged in the clan's monthly journal, promotional videos, and online forums, suggesting that it has gained currency within the kinship group.³⁹ The narrative, however, is also aligned with a broader theory that claims much of Chinese civilization to be originally "Korean" and is popular among a fringe group of history aficionados.⁴⁰ Because these claims are problematic to say the least, they also encounter some resistance within the clan. Han Yöngu, for instance, has tried to distance himself from such views as they employ dubious sources, even though he was also at pains to argue that Kija's state entity was independent of China, rendering the figure more acceptable to nationalist sensibilities.⁴¹ Thus, even efforts to navigate the gap between national and familial history result in increasing the plurality of historical perspectives.

Challenging Scholarship with Scholarship

Another clan in which debates over family origins have been particularly intense is the Kwangsan Kim clan which prides itself in having produced numerous renowned literati in the Koryö (918–1392) and Chosön dynasties.⁴² Even today, the clan is represented by a well-organized, well-endowed, and highly prolific clan association which seeks to emulate the scholarly achievements of previous generations through its own historical investigations and scholarly rigor.⁴³ As part of that, the clan takes documentary inconsistencies, new narratives, and countervailing evidence seriously, not shying away from lively discussions and even controversy. While this has revealed a dynamic culture of debate and inquiry within the clan, it has also laid bare—necessarily so—friction not only within the clan, but also with other clans and the academic community.

One enduring issue for the Kwangsan Kim clan has been the elusive character of its founding father. Although various clan documents had agreed that he was a member of the royal family of the Kingdom of Silla (ca. 4C CE – 935 CE), different documents offered different biographical information. It was thus not clear when he was born or which Silla monarch's offspring he was—this would have provided a clearer estimate of his dates—while it was also not agreed how to refer to him. In the mid-1950s, as the Kwangsan Kim clan was reconstituting its genealogy in the wake of the Korean war (1950–1953), debates surrounding the identity of the founding father flared up. In order to settle the issue, the path chosen was "history via resolutions" in that the historical facts of the founding father were to be resolved by a vote.⁴⁴ Through an arduous process that lasted twelve hours,⁴⁵ it was eventually decided that his name was "Kim Hünggwang" which some, but not all of the clan's records had mentioned, settling the issue of how to refer to the progenitor. In regard to where he fit in within Silla's royal family, however, no clear settlement was reached and it was resolved to simply refer to him with the general title "Silla Prince," maintaining a deliberate sense of vagueness.⁴⁶

Due to the irresoluteness of this resolution, however, there continued to be dissatisfaction within the clan as some members were not happy with “resolving” historical issues via compromise rather than historical argumentation.⁴⁷ Part of the issue was that there was indeed a Kim Hŭnggwang in Silla’s royal family—even spelled with the same Chinese characters—although he did eventually become king under the regnal name King Sŏngdŏk (691–737 CE) while his dates were too early and thus not compatible with the clan’s timeline. For the Silla Prince to chronologically mesh with the clan’s subsequent genealogy, he had to have lived toward the end of Silla around the early tenth century. This, however, raises the possibility that the Kim clan at some point in time may indeed have “adopted” this Silla king as their founding father although without sufficient attention to chronology. Whatever the case, the clan’s claim of Silla royal heritage was aligned with the common practices of *yangban* elite families in the Chosŏn dynasty to link their genealogy to illustrious ancient figures whether real or imagined.⁴⁸ However, with subsequent generations realizing the chronological discrepancy, it may have become standard for the Kim clan to distance their founding father from the more well-documented historical monarch, separating the figure into two different individuals. While this allowed the clan to preserve its chronology, its version of Kim Hŭnggwang now exists only in the clan’s documents and cannot be substantiated through any external sources. To this day, the exact identity of the founding father remains unsolved, although to the clan’s credit, its genealogical publications now openly acknowledge the uncertainties that surround him.⁴⁹ In fact, ever since this compromise was reaffirmed in the early 1990s, many of the clan’s publications have tried to refrain from depicting the Silla Prince as the offspring of a particular king.⁵⁰ While this has not prevented the clan from continuing to celebrate the founding father with utmost devotion, the debates reveal the heterogeneity of views that exist within the same clan.

Another problem for the Kim clan was that archeological discoveries in the twentieth century further challenged the clan’s mantra about its royal origins. Even though the clan’s own records of the identity of the founding father had been inconsistent, the Kim clan had at least been consistent in their belief in the Silla Prince as their progenitor, whatever his biographical details. In fact, the earliest known reference to the Silla prince as the clan’s progenitor is usually traced back to 1307, the late Koryŏ period.⁵¹ Thus, the Kim clan has been able to refer to a fairly enduring, deeply rooted identification with the Silla Prince. His biographical details may not have been transmitted properly, but at least his link to the clan had been passed on unambiguously, adding weight to the clan’s historical assertions.

In 1910, however, the discovery of a tombstone threw the clan’s claims into doubt.⁵² The tomb, located in the Kaesŏng area, was that of Kim Ŭiwŏn (1066–1148), a member of the Kwangsan Kim clan and nowadays considered its eighth-generation ancestor.⁵³ The tombstone inscriptions which were dated to 1153, however, not only preceded all existing genealogical records of the clan, but also offered a genealogy that was different from the one that was known: instead of listing the Silla Prince as the founding father, it posited Kim Kil (dates unknown), nowadays considered the clan’s third-generation ancestor, as the oldest known member of the Kim clan. Granted, the inscriptions vaguely mentioned that he had Silla origins, yet there was no mention of royalty. Even more problematic for the clan, the text also stated that no genealogical records of previous generations had been passed down. This would suggest that when the tombstone was erected in the mid-twelfth century, the Kwangsan Kim had no knowledge of the Silla Prince, and it was only sometime between this and the early fourteenth century that the figure came to the surface. One possible explanation would be that new evidence emerged in the meantime, although the clan was never able to proffer any. An alternative explanation would be that the Silla Prince was invented sometime between 1153 and 1307 in order to add further layers to the family’s heritage. This does not sound too far-fetched considering that other clans did the same in connecting their lineages to ancient royalty.⁵⁴

The questions that arose created headaches for the clan. Why was the founding father not mentioned in the 1153 tombstone? How can one explain the gap between the progenitor’s supposed

life around the tenth century and his first known mention in 1307? The problem became especially acute beginning in the 1970s as scholars unaffiliated with the Kwangsan Kim began to dig into the clan's history, bringing its problematic origins into academic discourse.⁵⁵ One of these academics was Yi Sugŏn, a leading scholar of *chokpo* compilations and kinship groups.⁵⁶ At first, the clan association was reluctant to respond, as there was hesitance among some of its members to stir up further debate and put public spotlight on the scholarship challenging the clan's narratives.⁵⁷ This revealed a rift between those who favored using scholarly investigation to defend the clan's genealogy and those who believed that this was a battle that the clan could not win in the arena of scholarly discourse. Eventually, the clan did initiate efforts to address the issue. For one, searches were undertaken to find the Silla Prince's tomb as a discovery could potentially settle the issue once and for all.⁵⁸ The search, however, remained unsuccessful, with the clan's own internal research report eventually acknowledging that the chances of finding any tomb associated with the founding father were virtually non-existent due to the general dearth of tombstone inscriptions from the Silla period.⁵⁹

In the absence of any new discoveries, circumstantial evidence and conjecture were used to argue that there were political reasons for the clan's long silence about its founding father. It was argued that the clan had intentionally elevated Kim Kil over his "grandfather," the Silla Prince, since the former had contributed to the founding of the Koryŏ dynasty and would hence magnify the clan's political contributions while the dynasty was still ongoing.⁶⁰ Moreover, it was argued that the Silla prince was the offspring of a monarch who had been viewed negatively in the mid-Koryŏ period, making it difficult for the clan to openly reference its founding father.⁶¹ In identifying the prince as the son of a specific king, however, the claim also went against the clan's earlier consensus of leaving the identity of the founding father vaguely defined. In this regard, the clan's attempts to find solutions to unfavorable evidence generated new issues within the clan's historical narratives.

The most existential challenge to the clan, however, was not the contention that something was problematic about the founding father. Instead, it was the accusation that the Kwangsan Kim clan, sometime in the distant past, had appropriated the genealogy of another clan, making the Kwangsan Kim in effect imposters. The tombstone inscriptions that had been discovered in 1910 included a statement that was problematic for the Kwangsan Kim clan in that it identified the ancestor buried there with the locale Kwangyang instead of Kwangsan.⁶² While both are located in what is now the Chŏlla Province, Kwangyang is located on the south coast, whereas Kwangsan (present-day Kwangju) is further inland. The scholars that began to study the Kim clan's genealogy in the 1970s highlighted the tomb inscriptions to argue that the Kwangsan Kim had adopted its first eight generations from the Kwangyang Kim's genealogy. While the Kwangsan Kim clan came to prominence in the latter part of the Koryŏ period as members began to assume important government posts, the Kwangyang Kim, once powerful, had fallen out of favor and were in decline by that point. This became an opportunity for the arriviste clan to appropriate the cultural capital of the older clan.⁶³ While an increasing number of scholars began to ascribe to this understanding of the Kwangsan Kim's origins, they were not seeking to publicly attack the clan specifically.⁶⁴ Rather, their goal was to understand the social and political changes that happened during the Koryŏ dynasty, with a focus on elite families, their practices, and their changing fortunes. In fact, the Kwangsan Kim clan was only one of several examples these scholars focused on and there was no intent to single out one over the other.⁶⁵

Nonetheless, as awareness of this scholarship grew within the clan association, it finally resolved to form a research committee in 1998 to contest the argument that the Kwangsan Kim clan had appropriated the genealogy of the Kwangyang Kim.⁶⁶ The idea was to bring the battle into the academic sphere by mobilizing the considerable connections of the clan, challenging scholarship with its own scholarship. In so doing, the association was able to draw on prominent historians that happened to be members of the kinship group, with one example being Kim Yongsŏp (1931–2020), a former professor of history at Seoul National University and Yonsei University. Kim had achieved eminence

in Korea beginning in the 1970s for formulating the “internal development” theory which left a huge impression on Korean history writing. For one, the theory argued that Korea had already been developing the sprouts of capitalism before encounter with Japanese imperialism. This engendered a more positive evaluation of the Chosŏn dynasty and endowed Koreans with a tool to challenge negative Japanese depictions of Korean history often referred to as “colonial historiography.”⁶⁷ As a consequence, Kim’s theory was enthusiastically received in Korea, allowing Kim to become one of the most prominent names in the field. With Kim as one of its key members, the clan’s research committee spent three years (2000–2003) investigating and publishing on the clan’s early history in an attempt to defend the Kwangsan Kim’s genealogy using the means and practices of academia. Articles explaining the clan’s history were published in renowned academic journals, while numerous internal research reports were also filed.⁶⁸ In order to achieve a degree of objectivity and fend off possible criticisms of partiality, the research committee even succeeded in enlisting the help of outside scholars who would also publish research in favor of the clan’s views.⁶⁹

As before, the research group was unable to unearth any new historical documents that could strengthen the clan’s stance in a critical way. In light of this, circumstantial evidence and conjecture were again used to make sense of the unfavorable historical sources. The academic view was that the Kwangsan Kim and Kwangyang Kim had been two separate entities with the former commandeering the ancestral lineage of the latter. In opposition to that, the research group argued that the two kinship groups were in fact identical but had simply been identified in two different ways due to changes of residence. That was why the clan was associated at times with Kwangsan and at other times with Kwangyang. This is not entirely implausible as there are cases where clans have used different names to refer to their ancestral seat or where the actual location of the ancestral seat had changed.⁷⁰ However, the research committee was unable to present any direct documentary evidence for this change of ancestral seat and instead had to use circumstantial reasoning to explain the clan’s possible relocation. Especially the political instability preceding the unification of the Korean peninsula by Koryŏ was highlighted as a major factor that potentially propelled the clan to seek refuge elsewhere.⁷¹ Moreover, members of the research group argued that the conventions surrounding ancestral seats had not been solidified yet in the Koryŏ period, with people sometimes being identified with their current residence and sometimes with their ancestral seat.⁷² This was used to explain why the tombstone discovered in 1910 identified the person buried there with Kwangyang, his contemporary seat of residence, rather than Kwangsan, his ancestral home.

The publicized results of the research group were faithfully aligned with the broader goal of defending the clan’s history in the academic sphere. Within the clan association and the committee itself, however, internal documents reveal lingering doubts over the project.⁷³ For one, there were skeptical voices within the clan association that feared that these scholarly endeavors might end up drawing even more attention to the unfavorable scholarship, potentially backfiring on the clan.⁷⁴ These critics also likened the committee’s investigations to the study of the mythical Tan’gun, effectively characterizing the research as a futile and even ludicrous attempt to substantiate something that was outside the realm of history.⁷⁵ Moreover, in trying to defend its narrative, the committee had ended up creating a whole new chapter in the clan’s history in which its ancestors relocated several times to escape political turmoil. It was, as one member said, a heretofore unknown “tragic history” (“Piunsa”) which radically altered the clan’s early history.⁷⁶ This also became the object of criticism, as opposing voices noted that this new chapter was equally not based on any direct historical evidence and deviated from established narratives too much.⁷⁷

Within the research committee, there was further disagreement over what to do about the Kwangyang Kim clan which still existed but was now vastly outnumbered by the Kwangsan Kim.⁷⁸ The committee had studied the Kwangyang Kim’s more recent genealogical compilations, discovering that the clan had actually edited its ancestral lineage several times during the twentieth century to incorporate the new scholarly discoveries. Thus, the committee argued that it was the

Kwangyang Kim clan which had adopted the Kwangsan Kim clan's early genealogy, and not the other way around. Some members of the research group were eager to expose the Kwangyang Kim publicly, although others such as Kim Yongsŏp successfully resisted doing so as they were concerned about the optics of publicly confronting a much smaller clan.⁷⁹ While open conflict between the clans was thus avoided, the two clans continue to make diametrically opposed assertions about their origins, each claiming to be the true heirs of an ontologically questionable progenitor.

Overall, the Kwangsan Kim clan's research endeavors illustrate its capacity as a dynamic and highly active producer of historical knowledge. The scholarship developed by the clan may have had a clear objective, but the process of achieving it was just as conflicted and tortuous as knowledge produced elsewhere. Furthermore, while scholarship was used as a tool in service of the clan's agenda, the means of scholarship were not applied in a cynical or frivolous way, as at every step of the way, there seems to have been an effort to remain transparent and within the realm of the plausible. Indeed, there are no signs that new evidence was simply conjured up to buttress the clan's narrative, suggesting that there was a certain degree of academic discipline and self-reflectivity that regulated the clan's researchers, setting them apart from some of their predecessors who engaged more freely in imagining ancestral origins.

Conclusion

In contemporary South Korea, kinship groups have ceased to play the role they inhabited during the Chosŏn dynasty as nowadays, being a descendant of an illustrious *yangban* clan no longer guarantees political connections or any other insurmountable advantages in public life.⁸⁰ Due to the continuous inflation of ancestry-related cultural capital since the late nineteenth century, family genealogies have lost much of their value in producing social distinction.⁸¹ Because of this, it is not surprising that public and scholarly interest in the contemporary incarnation of Korean kinship groups is limited. Despite this loss of significance, however, clan associations have continued to be highly active sites of historical knowledge production in post-1945 South Korea. In excavating, commemorating, and defending a clan's history, the examples discussed in this paper illustrate that family history is still pursued with fervent devotion. This may be ascribed to the fact that family history is ultimately personal and identitarian in nature, which in turn amplifies the intensity and affect with which members of a clan relate to their history, both real and imagined.

This passion has also allowed family histories to withstand and challenge other powerful historical narratives—be they national or academic in nature—attesting to the resilience of family history and the plurality of historical knowledge in South Korea. In some cases, family histories are able to retain an alternative cultural memory of a bygone era, resisting the hegemony of modern narratives of nation. Indeed, Anglophone scholars have often emphasized the nationalist character of Korean historical writings, failing to pay sufficient attention to the multitude of narratives that privilege other forms of community.⁸² If anything, kinship groups illustrate that for certain segments of Korean society, family history is a larger concern than national history. Furthermore, while much of the history writing by kinship groups is geared toward an internal audience as the goal is to reconfirm group solidarity and familial pride, sometimes a clan goes beyond its own confines to target a broader audience, blurring the boundaries between the private and the public. This is particularly so when members of a clan feel attacked by competing historical narratives originating from professional scholars, other clans, or different branches within the same clan. In such cases, what was originally a private or semi-public affair can become a conflict played out in the public realm.

The contests over family history also raise questions about the nature and boundaries of scholarly knowledge. In their efforts to claim and maintain authority over their own history, kinship groups can and do appropriate the tools of professional scholarship to fend off any perceived transgressions from outside forces, especially academia. In doing so, the histories clans produce go beyond hagiographies

or genealogical compilations and assume the form of academic research with all its frills and processes. This bespeaks a willingness and capacity by kinship groups to evolve and speak to an audience of professional scholars. It is particularly significant that even renowned scholars such as Han Yōngu and Kim Yongśōp have used their capacity as established academics to engage in “kin work.” Such instances suggest that the boundaries between family narratives and professional scholarship are porous and mutable, with spheres and interests overlapping. Contemporary clan associations are thus not merely atavistic remnants of a bygone era but are part and parcel of the contemporary landscape of competing knowledge regimes and epistemological pluralism. While it remains to be seen how the fortunes of clan associations will evolve in the future, their incessant historical productions and memorialization suggest that they will not go down without having etched themselves into history.

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Notes

1. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 229.
2. Elisabeth Boesen, ed., *Peripheral Memories: Public and Private Forms of Experiencing and Narrating the Past* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012). Also see: Radmila Švaričková Slabáková, ed., *Family Memory: Practices, Transmissions and Uses in a Global Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2021); Barbara Korte and Sylvia Paletschek, eds., *Popular History Now and Then: International Perspectives* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012); Sylvia Paletschek, ed., *Popular Historiographies in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Cultural Meanings, Social Practices* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011).
3. Tanya Evans, “Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History,” in *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), 51.
4. See Rita Garstenauer, “Private, Semi-Public, Published: Rural Autobiographies Within the Family and Beyond,” in *Peripheral Memories*, ed. by Boesen, 121. Also: Stefan Berger, “Professional and Popular Historians: 1800–1900–2000,” in *Popular History Now and Then*, ed. by Paletschek, 13–29.
5. Slabáková, *Family Memory*, 1.
6. North Korea is beyond the scope of this paper as access to relevant data is limited and the situation there is different from that of South Korea. According to observers, knowledge of clan affiliation has been severely limited in North Korea compared to the South as the culture of kinship groups was considered a feudal remnant that needed to be eradicated. Many North Korean defectors demonstrate little awareness of their ancestral seat or family genealogies although older generations may still have some memory. However, since the 1990s, there has been something of a revival of genealogical knowledge in North Korea, although there is nothing akin to the many large clan associations in the South. See Yi Hyōn’gi, “Nambuk’an ūi sōngssiwa chokpo p’yōnch’an” [Surname groups and compilation of genealogies in South and North Korea], *Chayu ashia pangsong*, 2018.11.16, https://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/d1b5c77cbb38d654c0b0cc45/uniculture-11142018142359.html. Eugene Park also notes how in North Korea, there has been an attempt to revive the legacies of the Koryō dynasty since the 1990s, leading to an increased effort by descendants of the Kaesōng Wang in North Korea to connect with their ancestry.

Eugene Y. Park, *A Genealogy of Dissent: The Progeny of Fallen Royals in Chosŏn Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 183–184.

7. In some rare cases, there are clans that share the same surname and ancestral seat, but have different founding fathers. In such cases, the two clans are generally regarded as separate kinship groups. Furthermore, while the term *sijo* is translated here as “founding father,” it may also be translated as “apex figure” or “apical ancestor.” “Founding father” is useful in that it captures the patriarchal nature of the Korean concept.
8. In this paper, I will refer to these collectives as kinship groups or clans. Kinship groups usually consist of smaller branches (*p’u*) which often publish their own branch genealogies. This occurs more frequently than the publication of an entire clan’s genealogy as the latter requires much more effort and coordination.
9. For more on elite *yangban* culture in premodern Korea, see Martina Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors’ Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).
10. Yang-Hee Hong, “The Paradox of Genealogy: Family Politics and the Publishing Surge of *Chokpo* in Colonial Korea,” in *Korean Studies* 46 (2022), 294–316.
11. According to James Scott, modern governments have sought to contrive new ways to render society and nature more readable and manageable. Such schemes, however, can also create unintended consequences, distorting the very reality they try to capture. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).
12. This practice became formalized toward the end of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1909 in efforts to record the entire population. The practice was then further expanded and executed by the Japanese colonial government after its takeover of Korea in 1910. See Son Pyŏnggyu, *Hojŏk, 1606–1923: hogu kirok ūro pon Chosŏn ūi munh-wasa* [Family Registries, 1606–1923: The Cultural History of Chosŏn as Seen through Census Records] (Seoul: Humanist, 2007).
13. Pak Hongyŏl, “Yojigyŏng sok chokpo sanŏp” [A closer look at the genealogy publishing industry], in *Chŏn’gyŏng Munhwa* 257 (July 1986), 374–385.
14. Eugene Park notes that the two individuals that arguably shaped post-1945 Korea in the most critical ways, Park Chung Hee (1917–1979) and Kim Il Sung (1912–1994), were able to achieve their positions without the social capital afforded by illustrious kinship groups. Eugene Y. Park, “Old Status Trappings in a New World: The “Middle People” (*Chungin*) and Genealogies in Modern Korea,” in *Journal of Family History* 38(2), 179.
15. *Chokpo sinmun* [Genealogy newspaper] which began publication in 1991 is a good starting point to study contemporary kinship groups in South Korea, offering insight into the many activities they are involved in.
16. One representative Korean-language monograph is Yi Sugŏn, *Han’guk ūi sŏngssi wa chokpo* [The surnames and genealogies of Korea] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2011). More studies will be referenced throughout this paper. English-language scholarship that touches upon the culture of family genealogies includes the following: Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Deuchler *Under the Ancestors’ Eyes*; Edward W. Wagner, “The Ladder of Success in Yi Dynasty Korea,” *Occasional Papers on Korea*, no. 1. (April 1974), 1–8; Kenneth R. Robinson, “The Chinese Ancestors in a Korean Descent Group’s Genealogies,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 13(1) (2008): 89–114; Sangwoo Han, “The Historical Background of the Popularity of Genealogies in Korea,” in *Journal of Family History* 45(4) (June 2020), 498–516; and Sun Joo Kim, “Yu Taech’ing Family Documents and the Kigye Yu of Puyŏ,” *Acta Koreana* 23(1) (June 2020), 65–96.
17. Hong, “The Paradox of Genealogy;” Eugene Y. Park, *A Family of No Prominence: The Descendants of Pak Tŏkhwa and the Birth of Modern Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014)
18. In Korea, Yi Kibaek has highlighted how studying *chokpo* can be revealing in understanding contemporary Korean society. Yi Kibaek, “Chokpo wa hyŏndae sahoe” [Chokpo and contemporary society] in *Han’guksa simin kangjwa* 24 (1999), 108–117. Kwŏn Kisŏk similarly highlights the potential of studying the culture surrounding *chokpo* in contemporary Korea. Kwŏn Kisŏk, “Han’guk ūi chokpo yŏn’gu hyŏnhwang kwa kwaje” [The Status and Tasks of Korean Chokpo Research], in *Han’gukhak nonjip* 44 (2011), 86–87.
19. Park focused on the Miryang Pak and Kaesŏng Wang clans. See Park, *A Family of No Prominence* as well as Park, *A Genealogy of Dissent*.

20. Both clans have also been able to create searchable online databases of their genealogies. While this is a larger trend among clan associations, such digitization projects require the mobilization of a significant amount of resources, something which some other prominent clans have not been able to achieve.
21. Deuchler discusses the Chinsŏng Yi clan as one such example. Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors' Eyes*, 205–206.
22. See Pak Honggap, “Chōntong sahoe kagye kirog kwa sijo mandŭlgi” [Making family documents and founding fathers in traditional Korea], in *Yōksa yōn'gu* 96 (2009), 91–123.
23. See Pak, “Sijo mandŭlgi.”
24. For more on when claims of Kija-descent began to emerge, see Kim Pyōng'in, “Ch'ōngju Hanssi 'Kija huyesōl' chaegōmt'o” [Reconsidering 'Kija descent' of the Ch'ōngju Han Clan], in *Han'guk sahakpo* 74 (2019), 39–73, as well as Kang Minsik, “Ch'ōngju Hanssi ūi yōnwōn kwa sijo chōnsŭng” [The transmission of the Ch'ōngju Han clan's origin and founding father], in *Changsōgak* 30 (2013), 322–341.
25. Pak Kwangyong, “Kija Chosōn e taehan insik ūi pyōnch'ōn” [The evolution of perceptions of Kija Chosōn], in *Han'guk saron* 6 (1980), 279.
26. Kim Pyōng'in, “Ch'ōngju Hanssi,” 58–67.
27. Pak Kwangyong, “Kija Chosōn e taehan insik,” 279–280.
28. See Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), 175–181; Stella Xu, *Reconstructing Ancient Korean History: the Formation of Koreanness in the Shadow of History* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016); Henry Em, *The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).
29. Kuksa P'yōnch'an Wiwōnhoe, *Kuksa* [Korean history] High School Second Edition (Seoul: Kyoyuk Kwahak Kisulbu, 2011), 33–34.
30. Jaehoon Shim, “A New Understanding of Kija Chosōn as a Historical Anachronism,” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62(2) (2002), 271–305; O Hyōnsu, “Kija chōnsŭng hwaktae kwajōng kwa kŭ yōksajōk maengnak” [The expansion of Kija transmission and its historical context], in *Taedong munhwa yōn'gu* 79 (2012), 147–182.
31. For an example, see Ch'ōngju Hanssi chungang chongch'inhoe, *Yōksa yōngsangnok Ch'ōngju Hanssi* [Historical documentary of the Ch'ōngju Han clan] (Ch'ōngju Hanssi chungang chongch'inhoe, 2002).
32. See the following: Han Yōngho, *Ch'ōngju Hanssi yōnwonnok* [Records of the origins of the Ch'ōngju Han clan] (Seoul: Ch'ōngju Hanssi Taedongboso, 1920), 34; Han Sōngtaek, *Ch'ōngju Hanssi kasing* [Family heritage of the Ch'ōngju Han clan] (Changsōng: Han Sōngtaek, 1931), 3; *Ch'ōngju Hanssi chokpo* [Ch'ōngju Han genealogy] (N.p., 1955), 3a–3b. Ch'ōngju Hanssi taedong chokpo p'yōnchan wiwōnhoe, *Ch'ōngju Hanssi taedong chokpo sangsep'yōn* [Ch'ōngju Han comprehensive genealogy, antiquity part] (Taejōn: Ch'ōngju Hanssi taedong chokpo p'yōnchan wiwōnhoe, 1987), 33–35; Haengju Kissi Taejongjung, *Haengju Kissi daedongbo* [Haengju Ki comprehensive genealogy] Vol. 1 (N.p.: Haengju Kissi Taejongjung, 1942), 1a-2b; Haenjgu Kissi Taedongboso, *Haengju Kissi taedongbo* [Haenjgu Ki comprehensive genealogy] Vol. 1 (Taejōn: Haenjgu Kissi Taedongboso, 1982), 14–16.
33. The Haengju Ki clan, for instance, maintains a memorial site at its ancestral seat in Haengju district of the city of Koyang, just outside of Seoul. At the entrance to the site, a plaque faithfully displays the clan's traditional narrative of Kija.
34. Yu Kyōngjong, “Koyang e ppuri rŭl tun myōngmun'ga, Haengju Kissi rŭl sogae hamnida” [Introducing the historical family with roots in the city of Koyang, the Haengju Ki Clan], in *Koyang sinmun*, February 10, 2017.
35. See Sōngssi iyagi p'yōnch'anshil, *Ch'ōngju Hanssi iyagi* [Stories of the Ch'ōngju Han clan] (Seoul: Ollin p'ip'ŭl sŭt'ori, 2014). This volume is an example where Kija receives only cursory treatment while much more focus is put on the clan's middle founding father, Han Ran, who is claimed to have contributed to the founding of the Koryō dynasty in the tenth century.
36. Han Yōng'u has been an active member of the Ch'ōngju Han's clan association, offering his services when his skills and scholarly authority were required. He participated in the production of the clan's documentary and has been involved in the clan's research endeavors to excavate the achievements of ancestors. See “Sōnjodŭl ūi yōksajōk ōpchōk palgul saōp pon'gyōk ch'ujin” [Pushing ahead with project to excavate the historical achievements of ancestors], in *Ch'ōngju Hanssibo* 185, September 3, 2008.

37. See Han Yöngu, “Koryö-Chosön chön’gi üi Kija inshik” [The perception of Kija in Koryö and the first half of Chosön], in *Han’guk munhwa* 3 (1982), 19–56, as well as Han Yöngu, “Kija Chosön ün sashil in’ga högu in’ga” [Is Kija Chosön truth or fiction], in *Chindan hakpo* 136 (2021), 1–40.
38. See Shim, “A New Understanding of Kija Chosön” as well as O Hyönsu, “Kija chönsüng hwaktae kwajöng.” As these studies attest, it requires perseverance and close attention to detail to untangle the webs of narratives surrounding Kija that have accrued over the centuries if not millennia.
39. See “Hanminjok üi maek kwa Ch’öngju Hanssi üi künwön” [The lineage of the Korean nation and the roots of the Ch’öngju Han clan], in *Ch’öngju Hanssibo* 92, December 31, 1992, as well as Ch’öngju Hanssi chungang chongch’inhoe, *Yöksa yöngsangnok*. The clan association’s website also provides insight into the discussions about the “Korean” origins of the clan. See “Yöllin madang” [Open forum], Ch’öngju Hanssi chungang chongch’inhoe. Last accessed January 6, 2023. <http://www.Ch’öngjuhan.net/>
40. One example of such tendentious scholarship that is accessible in English is An Hosang, *The Ancient History of the Korea-Dong-I Race: The Korea-Dong-I Race, Creator of East Asian Culture* (Seoul: Institute of Baedal (Korea) Culture, 1974).
41. Han Yöngu, “Kija Chosön ün sashil in’ga högu in’ga,” 2–7.
42. One famous Kwangsan Kim literatus whose works have been studied in English is Kim Manjung. See Gregory N. Evon, “Buddhism and Death in Kim Man-jung’s *A Nine Cloud Dream*: From Fact to Fiction, and Nowhere Back Again,” in *Death, Mourning, and the Afterlife in Korea*, edited by Charlotte Horlyck and Michael J. Pettid (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014), 190–212.
43. While most clan associations publish one periodical as a kind of newsletter, the Kwangsan Kim clan association publishes two, that is, the *Kwangsan Kimssi chongbo* [Kwangsan Kim Clan Association gazette] (est. 1975) as well as the *Wölgan Kwangsan nyusu* [Monthly Kwangsan news] (est. 1992). Both of these offer insight into the many activities of the association while also delivering news on members of the clan.
44. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi taejonghoe 60 nyönsa* [60 years of history of the Kwangsan Kim Clan Association] (Seoul: Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, 2014), 466–468.
45. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyönsa*, 246.
46. *Ibid.*, 468.
47. *Ibid.*, 469–472.
48. See Pak, “Chöntong sahoe.”
49. See for instance, Kim Ilsu et al., *Kwangsan Kimssi Chugch’önbo* [Kwangsan Kim Chugch’ön branch genealogy] (Taejön: Kwangsan Munhwasa, 1994), 1–3.
50. Kwangsan Kimssisa Yön’gu Wiwönhoe, *Kwang Kim sön’gye yön’gu pogosö* [Kwangsan Kim early lineage research report], (Seoul: Kwangsan Kimssisa Yön’gu Wiwönhoe, 2003), 145.
51. Kim Yongsöp, “Koryö Ch’ungyölwangjo üi Kwangsanhyön cheyöngshisö üi punsök” [An analysis of Kwangsanhyön cheyöngshi sö during the reign of Koryö’s King Ch’ungyöl], in *Yöksa hakpo* 172 (2001), 58. It should be noted, however, that the original version of the text that references the Silla Prince has not been transmitted. The only surviving versions of the text are reproductions found in the clan’s later documents. Thus, there is the possibility that the identification with the Silla Prince as founding father started later than often assumed.
52. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyönsa*, 528.
53. Kim Yongsön, *Koryö kümsök-mun yön’gu* [A study of Koryö epigraphs] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2004), 50–53.
54. Pak, “Sijo mandülgi,” 101–102. Yi Sugön, “Kwangsan Kimssi yeamp’a üi segye wa kü sahoe kyöngjejök kiban” [The lineage of the Yean branch of the Kwangsan Kim clan and its socio-economic basis], in *Yöksa kyoyuk nonjip* 1 (1980), 107.
55. Hō Hüngsik, “Koryö hogudanja üi shillye wa kukpohojök kwa üi pigyobunsök” [New examples of Koryö household registrations and a comparative analysis with national treasure family registers], in *Sach’ong* 21 (1977), 263–282. Yi Sugön, “Koryö chön’gi t’osöng yön’gu” [A study of local clans in early Koryö], in *Taeegu sahak* 14 (1978), 29–70.
56. Over the decades, Yi has written numerous works on Korean kinship groups. Much of it is synthesized in Yi Sugön, *Han’guk üi söngssi wa chokpo*.
57. Kwangsan Kimssisa Yön’gu Wiwönhoe, *Kwang Kim sön’gye*.

58. Kwangsan Kimssisa Yŏn'gu Wiwŏnhoe, *Kwang Kim sŏn'gye*, 65.
59. Kwangsan Kimssisa Yŏn'gu Wiwŏnhoe, *Kwang Kim sŏn'gye*, 150.
60. Kim Yongsŏp, "Kwangsanhyŏn cheyŏngshisŏ ūi punsŏk," 67.
61. In particular, the claim was that the Silla Prince must have been the offspring of King Sinmu (?–839) who received a negative evaluation from the Koryŏ dynasty's most eminent historian Kim Pusik (1075–1151) in his work *Samguk sagi* [The history of the Three Kingdoms] (1145). Kwangsan Kimssisa Yŏn'gu Wiwŏnhoe, *Kwang Kim sŏn'gye*, 151–153.
62. "Kim Ŭiwŏn myojimyŏng" [Kim Ŭiwŏn epitaph], Koryŏshidae kŭmsŏngmun munjajaryo, Kuksap'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, last accessed January 8, 2023, https://db.history.go.kr/KOREA/item/gskoDetail.do?levelId=gsko_002_0530.
63. Yi Sugŏn, "Kwangsan Kimssi yeap'a," 105–111.
64. Kim Kwangch'ŏl, "Koryŏ hugi sejkch'ŭng kwa kŭ tonghyang e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [Late Koryŏ aristocrats and their activities] (Tonga University PhD dissertation, 1987), 82. Kim Yongsŏn, "Koryŏ sidae kagye kirok kwa chokpo" [Family records and chokpo during the Koryŏ period], in *Han'guk sahak nonch'ong: Yi Kibaek sŏnsaeng kohŭi kinyŏm* 1 (1994), 703–704. Ch'oe Yŏngho, "Koryŏ chŏn'gi Kwangyang Kimssi Kim Yanggam kamun ūi sŏngjang kwa kŭ sŏnggyŏk" [The growth and character of the Kwangyang Kim's Kim Yanggam family in the first half of Koryŏ], in *Sŏktang nonch'ong* 42 (2008), 247, footnote 2.
65. Yi Sugŏn's study of 1978, for instance, discusses dozens of different clans alongside the Kwangsan Kim. See Yi Sugŏn, "Koryŏ chŏn'gi t'osŏng."
66. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyŏnsa*, 527–530.
67. See Kim Yongsŏp, *Chosŏn hugi nongŏpsa yŏn'gu* [A study of the agrarian history of late Chosŏn], 2 vols. (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1974). This research, while influential in Korea, has also received criticism for its tendentiousness. See Carter Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 1–6.
68. Kim Yongsŏp, "Koryŏ Ch'ungyŏlwanjo ūi Kwangsanhyŏn cheyŏngshisŏ ūi punsŏk" [An analysis of Kwangsanhyŏn cheyŏngshi sŏ during the reign of Koryŏ's King Ch'ungyŏl], in *Yŏksa hakpo* 172 (2001), 55–126. Chi Tuhwan, "Koryŏ sidae sajak seryŏk ūi hyŏngsŏng kwa pyŏnch'ŏn: Kwangsan Kimssi rŭl chungshim ūro" [The formation and development of literati forces in the Koryŏ dynasty: with a focus on the Kwangsan Kim clan], in *Han'guk sasang kwa munhwa* 14 (2001), 97–122.
69. See Chi Tuhwan, "Koryŏ sidae sajak seryŏk."
70. Chŏn Kyŏngmok, "Komunsŏ rŭl t'onghae pon chokpo p'yŏn'gan kwajŏngsang ūi punjaeng" [Disputes in the process of compiling family genealogies as seen through old documents], *Han'gukhak nonjip* 44 (2011), 235–265.
71. Kim Yongsŏp, "Kwangsanhyŏn cheyŏngsisŏ ūi punsŏk," 78–79.
72. Chi Tuhwan, "Koryŏ sidae sajak seryŏk," 101.
73. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyŏnsa*, 52.
74. Chŏn Kwangsan Kimssi sa yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe sowiwŏn iltong, "Kwangsan Kimssisa yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe ūi yŏn'gu kyŏlgwa e taehayŏ" [On the research results of the Kwangsan Kim history research committee], *Wŏlgan Kwangsan nyusŭ* (May/June, 2003), 38–42.
75. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyŏnsa*, 63.
76. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyŏnsa*, 152.
77. Kimssi sa yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe, "Kimssisa yŏn'gu wiwŏnhoe ūi yŏn'gu," 43.
78. According to the 2000 population census of South Korea, 837,008 people identified as members of the Kwangsan Kim clan while only 1,987 claimed membership in the Kwangyang Kim clan. T'onggyech'ŏng, "2000 in'gu chut'aek ch'ongjosa: sŏngssi mit pon'gwan chipkye kyŏlgwa" [General population and housing census of 2000: surname and ancestral seat statistics] (T'onggyech'ŏng, 2003), 28.
79. Kwangsan Kimssi Taejonghoe, *Kwangsan Kimssi 60 nyŏnsa*, 56.
80. This is not to say that there are no advantages to being an active member of an illustrious kinship group in contemporary South Korea. While clan membership is not essential in assuming key official posts in the government (including the presidency), one can still gain access to valuable burial grounds owned by the

clan, certain financial help such as scholarships, and the more intangible benefits of being a member of a support network.

81. While clan affiliation may not be able to produce social distinction anymore, one can argue that it is conducive to creating a sense of social equality as virtually everybody in Korea can now claim to be of *yangban* descent. In this regard, claims of clan affiliation contribute to social homogeneity in present-day Korea, rather than difference.
82. Some examples of Anglophone scholars emphasizing the nationalist character of historiography in Korea include James B. Palais, "A Search for Korean Uniqueness," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55(2) (December 1995), 409–425 as well as Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000).

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