Military Examinations in Late Chosŏn: Elite Substratification and Non-Elite Accommodation

Eugene Y. Park

In late Chosŏn, increasing domination of the civil branch of the central government by capital civil official families led to the political marginalization of other *yangban* families. Turning to military examinations, some in Seoul reproduced themselves as semi-hereditary military lines that enjoyed the powerful civil officials' patronage and government support. Many among the provincial elite also chose military careers in the course of their exclusion from central politics. Possible weakening of their local political hegemony, however, may have made the elite status more purely ascriptive in nature, and the military examination degree seems to have lost its appeal. Despite the differentiation, the central civil official, central military official, and local elite families continued to constitute one *yangban* status group. This elite substratification process ultimately allowed the capital military men to retain their membership in *yangban* society, take pride in their profession, and loyally defend the existing order. Meanwhile, commoners began to participate en masse in the military examinations, but the degree merely helped to satisfy their aspirations for higher social status without actually allowing their political participation. By facilitating elite substratification and non-elite accommodation, the military examinations in late Chosŏn appear to have promoted social stability and dynastic longevity.

In Chosŏn Korea the primary method for recruiting military officials *(muban)* from 1402 to 1894 was the military examination *(mukwa)* system.[1] Military officials and civil officials *(munban),* who were recruited through civil examinations *(munkwa),* together constituted the *yangban* ("two orders," "two divisions"). *Yangban* originally referred to both categories of central officials during the Koryŏ period (918–1392), but by mid-Chosŏn, roughly from 1550 to 1700, the term had come to denote the entire ascriptive, elite status group from which officials were drawn and would continue to be drawn throughout the dynasty.[2]

Korean Studies, Volume 25, No. 1. ©2001 by University of Hawai'i Press. All rights reserved.

In his case study on a local *yangban* military line, Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi suggested that the late Chosŏn military official families possibly formed a distinct *yangban* substratum, that is, between the families of civil officials and those producing no officials.[3] For the past five years, I have been pursuing an inquiry regarding the existence of such a social substratum through an investigation of the military examination system. There is yet to be a published empirical study offering a critical discussion of the late Chosŏn military examination system in the broader sociopolitical context of late Chosŏn,[4] by which I mean the period approximately from 1700 to 1863.

This oversight has three main sources: one, the fact that the military branch had generally been inferior to the civil branch in terms of both political power and social prestige; two, the assumption that the military examination system, supposedly plagued by administrative problems and corruption, lost its intended function of recruiting military officials and devolved into a means for the common people to climb the social ladder;[5] and three, the incompleteness of the extant data on military examination graduates.

The last in particular has posed a technically constraining factor. Although basic candidate data on all 14,607 civil examination *(munkwa)* passers, more than 60 percent of some 12,000 technical examination *(chapkwa)* passers, and roughly 70 percent of some 47,000 licentiates *(sama)* of the dynasty are available,[6] all the surviving military examination rosters *(pangmok)* account for only a fraction of some 150,000 to 170,000 degree holders,[7] among whom more than 23,000 are recorded on the rosters I have been able to examine over the years. For additional data on late Chosŏn military examination graduates, I had to turn to other sources, namely, the *sillok* ("veritable records"), the *Mukwa ch'ongyo* (Comprehensive Essentials of the Military Examination), the *Honamji* (Honam Gazetteer), the *Kyonam kwabangnok* (Examination Record for Kyonam), and several *mubo,* the eight-generation genealogies of elite nineteenth-century military examination passers.[8]

Of course, this study owes much to the existing secondary scholarship in presenting the overall sociopolitical context of late Chosŏn, when Korea had recovered from the devasting impact of the earlier Japanese and Manchu invasions; political power came to be exercised by an increasingly narrow segment of the elite; and achievements were made in various cultural genres. My overall argument, however, is based on a comprehensive examination of various primary sources on military examination graduates. In analyzing them, I have chosen to focus on several relevant issues: the evolution of the institution itself in early and mid-Chosŏn periods up to 1700; the emergence of semihereditary elite military lines and their place in late Chosŏn politics and society; the non-elite participation in the military examinations; and the possible dynamics of the military examination system's promotion of social stability through facilitating elite substratification and non-elite accommodation.

Evolution of the Military Examination System in Early and Mid Chosŏn, 1402–1700

In the early Chosŏn period, lasting to roughly 1550, the institutional base for the long-lasting dynasty was laid. The new dynasty administered the first military examination in 1402, after it had succeeded in bringing all military forces under the central command. Sim Sŭng-gu and Yun Hun-p'yo's excellent studies on the early Chosŏn military examination have shed much light on the basic institutional history, and it is not necessary to offer a detailed discussion here. In general, regular military examinations were administered triennially, with the regional quota followed more strictly in early Chosŏn than it would be later.[9] Besides the triennial examinations *(singnyŏnsi),* the government held various "special examinations" *(pyŏlsi),* including the "augmented examinations" *(chŭnggwangsi)* on special celebratory occasions in the royal household. Often abbreviated in format, the special examinations came to be given more frequently as the dynasty grew older.[10]

The government sought to insure that the military examination graduates possessed both an adequate knowledge of the classics and a competency in martial skills. Testing the former, the "classics exposition" *(kanggyŏng)* stressed the candidate's ability to recite and explain passages from four texts of his choosing, one from each of the four groups designated by regulations. The martial skills component, on the other hand, tested the candidate on various forms of archery, lance-wielding, polo *(kyŏkku),* and field hockey *(pogyŏk).*[11]

The examinations were open to all *yangban* and commoners *(yangin, yangmin, sangmin),* while excluding enfeoffed members of the royal family *(chongch'in)* and other groups barred for reasons concerning the nature of their (or their ancestors') marriages or a lapse in performing obligations to the state.[12] It used to be assumed that these restrictions applied only to the civil and licentiate examination candidates, but more recently Sim Sŭng-gu has demonstrated that they applied to the military examinations as well.[13]

Even among those who were legally eligible, the non-*yangban* must have found it practically impossible to invest years of studious effort in preparation for an examination. Moreover, even if literacy and erudition equipped a candidate for a part of the military examination, its weaponry component demanding horsemanship favored those who were wealthy enough to possess, train with, and bring their own horses. Most likely disadvantaged were the poorer candidates who had to ride government horses to which they were not accustomed. In general, the *yangban* elite dominated military examinations in early Chosŏn, when the military officials as a whole enjoyed greater political stature than they would later.[14]

In the sixteenth century, when the signs of institutional decay and more virulent factional politics clearly manifested themselves, the Japanese and Jur-

Table 1. Number of New Examination Passers and Population Increase in Korea, 1393–1900

Year	Estimated Population	Period	No. of New Civil Examination Passers	No. of New Military Examination Passers
1393	5.6 million	1393–1499	1,913	3,615+
1500	9.4 million	1500–1599	2,386	10,980+
1600	11.7 million	1600–1699	2,898	40,664+
1700	14.4 million	1700–1799	3,628	36,393+
1800	18.4 million	1800–1894	3,782	37,470+
1900	17.1 million			

Sources: Kwŏn T'ae-hwan and Sin Yong-ha, "Chosŏn wangjo sidae in'gu ch'ujŏng e kwanhan il siron" [A preliminary study on the population estimate for the Chosŏn dynasty period], *Tonga munhwa* 14 (1975): 287–330; Edward W. Wagner and June-ho Song, "*Munkwa* Project"; Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo" [The military examination system in the early Chosŏn period], *Pugak saron* 1 (1989): 1–73; Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn Sŏnjodae mukwa kŭpcheja ŭi punsŏk"; Song Chun-ho, "Chonsŏn hugi ŭi kwagŏ chedo" [Examination system in the late Chosŏn period], *Kuksagwan nonch'ong* 63 (1995): 37–191; and *sillok, Mukwa ch'ongyo, Honamji, Kyonam kwabangnok,* and individual examination rosters.

chen military threat escalated as well. A milieu of greater administrative inefficiencies and desperate need for military manpower prompted more frequent military examinations as a quick remedy, producing a larger number of military examination passers, but the *yangban* domination of these military examinations continued as before.[15]

During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when the Japanese and Manchu (formerly Jurchen) invasions devastated Korea, both the frequency of military examinations and the number of passers increased even further. Many military examinations produced hundreds, occasionally even thousands, of graduates at one sitting. Whereas the military examination was administered at least 156 times from 1402 through 1591, it was held at least 535 times from 1592 through 1894—the frequency increasing from roughly once every fifteen months in the pre-1592 period to once every six months in the later period. The drastic increase in the number of passers during the latter part of the dynasty is shown in Table 1 (with population figures given for comparison).[16]

Korea's population roughly tripled between 1393 and 1900, as did the number of new civil examination passers per century. Perhaps the civil examination system had to accommodate a certain percentage of the educated population, even though the size of the central bureaucracy essentially remained fixed.[17] In fact, there was little change in the total number of new examination passers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, probably reflecting a presumed decrease in total population during the nineteenth century, from about 18.4 million in 1800 to about 17.1 million in 1900.[18]

As for the military examinations, the above figures add up to just 129,122 passers, rather than Song Chun-ho's estimate of 150,000 to 170,000. The variance between my figure of 129,122 and Song's estimate can be explained by the fact that the former is the absolute minimum figure, the known total. Very often a *sillok* or *Mukwa ch'ongyo* reference to a late Chosŏn military examination gives only the name of the top *(changwŏn)* passer without the total number of graduates it produced. Accordingly, Table 1 leaves anywhere from 20,000 to 40,000 passers still unaccounted for, although it is certain that most of them earned their degrees in late Chosŏn.

In general, it is clear that the late Chosŏn military examinations produced far more passers than that the military branch of the central bureaucracy could accommodate. To determine when the tendency became visible, the military examinations given during the Imjin War (1592–1598) and the last years of Sŏnjo's reign (r. 1567–1608) deserve some attention (see Table 2).[19]

Even before the war there was an increase in the number of military examinations producing one hundred passers or more, rising from two in the fifteenth century (twice in 1460) to at least six during the sixteenth century prior to the war (once each in 1556, 1584, 1589, and 1591 and twice in 1583). This prewar increase, however, pales in comparison to what happened during the war, when at least three examinations were held, through which more than one thousand candidates were recruited at one sitting. It is also noteworthy that during the same period, military examinations were being given frequently without a matching civil examination, something that had no known antebellum precedent.

All these trends can readily be explained by the cataclysmic military crisis the Imjin War posed to Korea. As the government was desperately trying to mobilize manpower, anyone presenting a required number of enemy heads and passing a martial skill test was given a military examination degree.[20] It is said that throughout the four-year period between the recovery of Seoul in 1593 and the second Japanese invasion in 1597, all those who could hit the target just once in archery were given the degree without being tested on knowledge of the classics.[21] Although the main reason behind such military examinations was the government's frantic effort to mobilize manpower, these examinations likely were also meant to boost the morale of the population.[22] After all, the two reasons were closely linked. In suggesting ways to mobilize manpower during the Imjin War, the famous scholar-official Sŏng Hon (1535–1598) spoke of the great importance the people attached to obtaining a degree, despite the obvious price of being sent off to battles.[23]

The practice of frequent, large-scale administration of military examinations continued into the seventeenth century. In fact, nine of the thirteen military examinations producing more than one thousand passers were given during the period. In explaining the origin of such military examinations, informally known as the *mankwa* ("ten-thousand-passer examinations"), the *Yŏllyŏsil kisul*

Table 2. Military Examinations Administered, 1592–1606

Reign	Year	Month	Examination	No. of Passers Civil	No. of Passers Military
Sŏnjo	25 (1592)	06	Archery Inspection	—	1
	25 (1592)	06	Ŭiju Special	—	1+
	25 (1592)	07	Ŭiju Special	4	168
	25 (1592)	09	Ŭiju Special	—	1+
	25 (1592)	09	Sunan Special	—	500
	25 (1592)	09	Yŏngyu Special	—	1+
	25 (1592)	09	Kangdong Special	—	1+
	25 (1592)	09	Yangdŏk Special	—	1+
	25 (1592)	09	Sŏngch'ŏn Special	—	1+
	25 (1592)	10	Changjin Special	—	100
	26 (1593)	04	Yŏngyu Special	—	353
	26 (1593)	07	Chunghwa Special	—	1+
	26 (1593)	09	Yŏnan Special	—	6
	26 (1593)	12	Chŏnju Special	9	1,785
	26 (1593)	12	Hapch'ŏn Special	—	900
	27 (1594)	01	Kyŏngju Special	—	418
	27 (1594)	02	Courtyard	13	174
	27 (1594)	04	Hansan Special	—	100
	27 (1594)	06	Cheju Special	—	50
	27 (1594)	10	Courtyard	10	195
	27 (1594)	11	Special	19	107
	28 (1595)	11	Haeju Special	3	574
	28 (1595)	12	Special	15	28
	29 (1596)	07	Cheju Special	—	8
	29 (1596)	08	Hansan Special	—	1+
	29 (1596)	11	Courtyard	19	55
	30 (1597)	03	Special	19	478
	30 (1597)	04	Courtyard	9	69
	30 (1597)	04	Royal Visitation	8	1,073
	32 (1599)	03	Courtyard	10	206
	32 (1599)	08	Special	16	152
	33 (1600)	04	Special	16	186
	34 (1601)	05	Triennial	34	40
	35 (1602)	09	Royal Visitation	5	25
	35 (1602)	??	Special	11	1+
	36 (1603)	01	Courtyard	10	1,600
	36 (1603)	10	Triennial	33	34
	38 (1605)	03	Augmented	33	31
	38 (1605)	11	Courtyard	7	189
	38 (1605)	??	Special	12	1+
	39 (1606)	??	Augmented	36	1+
	39 (1606)	10	Triennial	33	37
Total				384	9,653+

Sources: Mukwa ch'ongyo, sillok, and *Kyonam kwabangnok;* Sim Sŭng-gu, "Imjin Waeran chung mukwa kŭpcheja ŭi sinbun kwa t'ŭksŏng: 1594 nyŏn (Sŏnjo 27) ŭi pyŏlsi mukwa pangmok ŭl chungsim ŭro" [The social status and special characteristics of the military examination passers during the Imjin War: The 1594 (Sŏnjo 27) special examination roster], *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 92 (March 19965): 109–46; Sim Sŭng-gu, "Imjin Waeran chung mukwa ŭi unyŏng silt'ae wa kinŭng"[The actual condition of the military examination management and its functions during the Imjin War], *Chosŏn sidae sahakpo* 1 (April 1997): 69–122; Song Chun-ho, "Chosŏn hugi ŭi kwagŏ chedo" [Examination system in the late Chosŏn period], *Kuksagwan nonch'ong* 63 (1995): 37–191.

(The Narratives of Yŏllyŏsil) notes that as tension escalated along the northern border, more than ten thousand men passed the military examination in 1619 alone.[24] By that year, Kwanghaegun (r. 1608–1623) could observe during a discussion over how many more soldiers should be dispatched to the north that the number of those who had passed the military examination since the outbreak of the Imjin War approached "several tens of thousand."[25]

Not surprisingly, many called for a military examination reform. Ku In-hu (1578–1658), a military official who played a key role in enthroning Injo (r. 1623–1649), pointed out that a fundamental problem with military examinations was that the candidates were selected only on the basis of horse-riding and archery skills. Ku advocated restoring the classics exposition, so that those with a knowledge of military strategies would not be excluded.[26] Given that his family was well on its way to becoming one of the most renowned, elite military lines of late Chosŏn, it is noteworthy that Ku stressed the need to recruit literate, military strategist types into the officialdom.

Then Ch'oe Myŏng-gil (1586–1647), his contemporary political colleague, who was a civil official, an Injo enthronement merit subject *(kongsin),* and a key figure in the dominant Westerner (Sŏin) party, more precisely identified the harmful effects of having too many military examination graduates: one, a steady decrease in the actual number of soldiers; two, increasing complaints among the unemployed passers, directed at the government; and three, lowered prestige of an official career.[27] Considering that the Westerners' grip on power was not entirely secure and that they had to rely on the cooperation of moderate Southerners (Namin) as a junior coalition partner in court politics during Injo's reign, it is plausible that Ch'oe and other influential Westerners had reason to be alarmed by the increasing number of unemployed military men, not all of whom could have been loyal to the Westerners.

As implied by Ch'oe's and Ku's comments, the military examination's prestige, which had never been as high as that of its civil counterpart to begin with, declined through mid-Chosŏn,[28] and by the end of the seventeenth century the government became very concerned over the lack of enthusiasm for military examinations among the *yangban*. For example, in the first month of 1690, King Sukchong (r. 1674–1720) lamented that not enough young men from *yangban* families bothered with military examinations. Four years earlier, in 1686, he had even gone as far as ordering some civil officials to have their sons take the military examination, but at least one such individual refused the royal command and later had to be punished.[29]

Various problems with the military examinations persisted into the eighteenth century. In his *Mongmin simsŏ* (A Book from the Heart on Governing the People), the famed Practical Learning (Sirhak) scholar Chŏng Yag-yong (1762–1836) identifies five chronic problems: (1) the candidates from influential Seoul families physically assaulting provincial candidates to prevent them

from taking the examination; (2) the large number of unemployed passers; (3) the government's putting the passers on the army draft register *(kunjŏk)* and imposing military cloth tax *(kunp'o)* on them; (4) the *mankwa;* and (5) candidates' hiring of substitutes to take the examination.[30]

Evaluating Chŏng's allegations in light of some empirical data, Song Chun-ho points out that aside from these problems on the surface, it still remains to be understood *why* the late Chosŏn government recruited so many military examination passers and *who* exactly these passers were. He then suggests that they were candidates from the influential families of Seoul.[29] This hypothesis has yet to be tested. What follows is an analysis of the *yangban* families that continued to participate in military examinations and pursue careers in the military branch of the bureaucracy.

The Ruling Elite and Military Examinations

EMERGENCE OF CENTRAL MILITARY OFFICIAL FAMILIES

In spite of the lowered prestige of military examinations, there is much evidence showing that numerous *yangban* families had come to opt for military examinations and careers by the eighteenth century. In stark contrast to Sukchong a century earlier, Chŏngjo (r. 1776–1800) could express contentment, in 1784, upon finding out that the latest military examination roster contained the names of young men from many distinguished *yangban* families.[32] Then in 1800, Chŏngjo was thoroughly pleased upon learning that a man from a family of "literacy and purity" *(munch'ŏng),* abandoning his brush in favor of preparing for the military examination, was among the latest military examination passers.[33]

A logical starting point for possibly confirming these observations and even identifying the elite military lines of late Chosŏn is to consult the *mubo,* which record the military examination graduates from eminent *yangban* families at the time of compilation. The types of information given for each passer include the graduate's given name, courtesy name *(cha),* examination type and year, and offices held, as well as the examination degrees and highest offices achieved by his patrilineal ancestors (over eight generations), father-in-law, and maternal grandfather. I was able to identify the successful later Chosŏn military families listed in Table 3 by consulting various editions of *mubo* and some multilineage genealogies.[34]

Of course, Table 3 is not exhaustive: many other late Chosŏn *yangban* families produced numerous military examination passers over several generations, including those from the Haep'yŏng Yun, the Kyŏngju Kim, the Namwŏn Yang, the Miryang Pak, and the various princely lines of Chŏnju Yi.[35] Among the six the table lists, the Tŏksu Yi and the P'yŏngyang Cho military lines are remarkable in that 215 and 146 military examination passers respectively from

Table 3. Some Prominent Central Military Official Families of Late Chosŏn

Choronym *(Sŏnggwan)*	Genealogical Apex Figure	Passers, ca. 1592–1894		Total Passers, ca. 1780–1894
		Subtotal	Total	
Tŏksu Yi	Yi Sun-sin (1545–1598)	215	215	103 (47.9%)
Chŏnŭi Yi	Yi Chun-min (1524–1590)	169	199	96 (48.2%)
	Yi Ku-jun (1569–1642)	30		
Nŭngsŏng Ku	Ku Yang (ca. 1380–?)	196	196	72 (36.7%)
P'yŏngsan Sin	Sin Cha-jun (ca. 1400–?)	134	155	80 (51.6%)
	Sin Wŏn (ca. 1460–?)	21		
P'yŏngyang Cho	Cho In (ca. 1570–?)	146	146	73 (50.0%)
Suwŏn Paek	Paek Ik-kyŏn (?–1498)	61	61	40 (65.6%)
Total			972	464 (47.7%)

Sources: Mansŏng taedongbo, Ch'ŏnggu ssibo, and various *mubo.*

each were all descended from relatively recent (that is, mid-Chosŏn) genealogical apex figures. Such genealogical distance is comparable to that common among the members of many aristocratic civil official families in late Chosŏn. For example, all the members of the royal in-law Andong Kim lineage, which so dominated politics of the nineteenth century, can be traced to the famed anti-Qing "Pure Westerner" (Ch'ŏngsŏ) statesman Kim Sang-hŏn (1570–1652) and his first cousins.[36]

Also noteworthy is the fact that roughly half the late Chosŏn military examination graduates from the elite military families listed above earned their degrees during the nineteenth century, suggesting that these military families were clearly identifiable by the late eighteenth century, if not much earlier. Thus the empirical data at hand seem to show that Chŏngjo was not mistaken when he observed that many young men from *yangban* families took military examinations. In fact, the six choronyms *(sŏnggwan)* listed above account for 464 out of some 1,500 military examination passers recorded in the four editions of *mubo* (covering the period from about 1780 to 1894) I consulted, even though more than fifty choronyms are recorded all together.

It is clear that these elite military families enjoyed much success with military examinations, but the degree of their presence in the central officialdom still needs to be investigated. Although new military examination graduates were supposed to be assigned to various government agencies as supernumeraries *(kwŏnji),* many from mid-Chosŏn onward remained unemployed or, at best, were assigned to duty in one of the Five Military Divisions (Ogunyŏng). Unlike common soldiers, however, the military examination passers serving in the Military Divisions could hope to receive an office later, according to Chŏng Hae-ŭn's analysis of the military examination graduates from 1674 to 1800.[37]

Table 4. Highest Known Achievements of Military Examination Graduates from Capital Elite

Office/Rank (Korean Name, Grade)	Tŏksu Yi	Nŭngsŏng Ku	P'yŏngyang Cho	Suwŏn Paek
Military Office				
Military Division Commander (Taejang/Yŏngjang, 2B)	29	19	25	9
Adjutant General's Officer (Sŏnjŏn'gwan, 3A–9B)	53	23	19	13
FMCH Commander/Deputy Commander (Owi Toch'onggwan/Puch'onggwan, 2A–2B)	3	6	1	4
FMCH Adjutant (Kyŏngnyŏk, 4B)	2	1	1	—
FMC Officers (3A–6B)	12	9	5	1
Palace Sentinel (Sumunjang, 6B)	—	—	—	1
Provincial Army/Navy Commander (Pyŏngma/Sungun Chŏltosa, 2A/3A)	34	23	27	13
Other Provincial Army/ Navy Officers (3B–4A)	4	2	5	2
Governor's Military Aide/Special (Chunggun/Pyŏlgun, 2B, 3A)	3	6	1	2
Other Provincial Troop Commanders (2A–2B)	13	11	12	1
Civil Office				
Minister of War (Pyŏngjo P'ansŏ, 2A)	—	3	—	—
Minister of Punishments (Hyŏngjo P'ansŏ, 2A)	2	—	1	—
Minister of Public Works (Kongjo P'ansŏ, 2A)	2	1	—	1
Vice-Minister of War (Pyŏngjo Ch'amp'an, 2B)	1	2	3	2
Vice-Minister of Punishments (Hyŏngjo Ch'amp'an, 2B)	1	—	—	—
Vice-Minister of Taxation (Hojo Ch'amp'an, 2B)	—	—	1	—
Vice-Minister of Public Works (Kongjo Ch'amp'an, 2B)	1	—	1	—
Vice-Minister (Ch'amp'an, 2B)	—	—	—	1
Third Minister of War (Pyŏngjo Ch'amŭi, 3A)	—	1	1	—
MWPO Minister (2A–3A)	7	12	7	2
Board Officers (5A–6B)	2	1	—	1
Border Defense Council Duty Officer (Pibyŏnsa Nanggwan)	1	1	2	1

(continues)

Table 4. Continued

Office/Rank (Korean Name, Grade)	Tŏksu Yi	Nŭngsŏng Ku	P'yŏngyang Cho	Suwŏn Paek
MTA Second/Third Deputy (Chi/Tongji Hullyŏnwŏnsa, 2A–2B)	3	—	1	1
MTA Second/Third/Fourth Secretary (Hullyŏnwŏnjŏng/ Pujŏng/Ch'ŏmjŏng, 3Ab–4B)	18	3	8	4
MTA Royal Secretary (Hullyŏnwŏn Sŭngji, 3A)	9	4	6	2
MTA Other Officers (5B–6B)	—	3	1	—
MTA/RPA/RHA First/Third/Fourth Secretary (Tojŏng/Pujŏng, 3A–4B)	10	1	—	5
MTA/RPA/RHA Junior Sixth Grade Officer (Chubu, 6B)	3	—	—	—
State Tribunal Third Magistrate (Tongji Ŭigŭmbusa, 2B)	1	—	—	—
State Tribunal/RHA/RSA/FMCH Other Officers (P'ansa/Tosa, 1B/5B)	—	1	1	—
Rituals-Related Duty Officers (Sajiksŏryŏng/Ch'ambong, 5A, 5B/9B)	1	—	1	—
Chief/Second Magistrate of Seoul (Hansŏng P'anyun/Chwayun, 2A/2B)	2	1	3	2
Provincial Governor (Kwanch'alsa, 2B)	—	1	2	1
Defense Command Magistrate (Pusa, 2A–3B)	29	25	13	7
City/Island District Magistrate (Moksa, 3A)	3	2	1	1
County Magistrate (4B–6B)	24	33	27	12
Frontier County Magistrate (Pyŏnji, 2A–6B)	14	6	4	2
Post Station Superintendent (Ch'albang, 6B)	1	1	—	1
Civil Rank Only (1B–3A)	5	4	2	1
Enfeoffment *(Ponggun)* Title	—	5	—	—
Posthumous Title *(Siho)*	3	5	3	1

Sources: Mansŏng taedongbo, Ch'ŏnggu ssibo, and various *mubo.*

Abbreviations: FMCH = Five Military Commands Headquarters (Owi toch'ongbu); FMC = Five Military Commands (Owi; existing in name only after Imjin War and comprising what were really sinecure posts); MTA = Military Training Administration (Hullyŏnwŏn); MWPO = Ministers-without-Portfolio Office (Chungch'ubu); RHA = Royal House Administration (Tollyŏngbu); RPA = Royal Princes Administration (Chongch'inbu); RSA = Royal Sons-in-Law Administration (Ŭibinbu).

As far as the military examination graduates who actually became military officials are concerned, Kenneth Quinones's study shows that, judging from the grave location, an overwhelming majority of military officials from 1864 to 1910 hailed from western central Korea, the "*yangban* crescent," which was the home of more than half of all central officials at the time.[38] It appears that although a military examination degree alone was a far cry from a guarantee of an appointment, those military examination passers who became military officials tended to be from the elite families based in Seoul.

Among those from such elite military lines, the most fortunate individuals might even attain some important, high-ranking civil posts, but this was rather rare. Whereas four military examination graduates attained a high state councillor *(samgong)* post from 1402 to 1591, the last three centuries of the examination system from 1592 to 1894 saw only three such cases,[39] an average of one per century. All three of the post-1592 cases date from the seventeenth century: Chief State Councillor (Yŏngŭijŏng) Sin Kyŏng-jin (1575–1643; degree in 1600, councillor in 1642), Second State Councillor (Chwaŭijŏng) Ku In-hu (1578–1658; degree in 1603, councillor in 1653), and Third State Councillor (Uŭijŏng) Yi Wan (1602–1674; degree in 1624, councillor in 1674). Both Sin and Ku commanded troops during the coup that put Injo on the throne. Ku also suppressed a rebellion in 1644. Yi, on the other hand, was actively involved in the Northern Expedition (Pukpŏl) project of Hyojong (r. 1649–1659) aimed at a future attack on the Qing. Without a doubt, all three military men were important pillars supporting the throne in particular and the ruling Westerner party in general.[40]

These three military men represent the most dramatic examples of how far a military examination graduate could advance in late Chosŏn. The highest known achievements of military examination passers from some of the capital elite military families, as recorded in the *mubo,* are shown in Table 4.

At a glance, the few cases of enfeoffment title and posthumous honor seem to suggest that some military examination graduates played significant political roles or provided important service to the state. A more important point to emphasize, though, is that the central military official families as a whole did not play the most *prominent* political roles. Table 4 clearly indicates that the central and provincial military posts, as well as the border region magistracies *(pyŏnji),* were the most important, realistically attainable, achievements for the military examination graduates from the four elite military families. Worthy of note in this light is the fact that the high-ranking central civil posts held by the passers tended to be no higher than a vice-ministership *(ch'amp'an),* even in the Board of War (Pyŏngjo), or a post in the Office of Ministers-without-Portfolio (Chungch'ubu). This suggests that the military officials were politically subordinated to the civil officials in central politics.

In fact, although elite military men serving as the central Military Divi-

Table 5. Civil Examination Passers Appointed as Military Division Commanders, 1593–1882

Reign	Years	Number of New Individuals Receiving Military Division Commander Posts	Number of Civil Examination Graduate Appointees among Them (%)
Sŏnjo	1593–1608	3	0 (0.0)
Kwanghaegun	1608–1623	11	1 (9.1)
Injo	1623–1649	13	1 (7.7)
Hyojong	1649–1659	5	0 (0.0)
Hyŏnjong	1659–1674	8	3 (37.5)
Sukchong	1674–1720	26	7 (26.9)
Kyŏngjong	1720–1724	2	1 (50.0)
Yŏngjo	1724–1776	30	7 (23.3)
Chŏngjo	1776–1800	18	6 (33.3)
Sunjo	1800–1834	23	5 (21.7)
Hŏnjong	1834–1849	14	3 (21.4)
Ch'ŏlchong	1849–1863	12	4 (33.3)
Kojong	1863–1882	33	8 (24.2)
Total		198	46 (23.2)

Source: "Tŭngdanok."

sion commanders *(taejang, yŏngjang)* also were members of the vitally important Border Defense Council (Pibyŏnsa), its key commissioner *(chejo)* appointments generally went to the most influential civil officials, who themselves often held the central Military Division commander posts.[41] Changes in the civil examination passers' share of Military Division commander posts between 1593 and 1882 are shown in Table 5. [42]

Although some protection privilege appointees could be found among the late Chosŏn Military Division commanders, most non-civil examination passers were military examination graduates. Thus the figures here illustrate that the military examination passers dominated these posts only until the mid-seventeenth century or so. After Hyŏnjong's reign, when partisan political struggle intensified and civil examination passers accounted for nearly 40 percent of the Military Division commander posts, the percentage of civil examination graduates among the Military Division commanders fluctuated between 20 percent and 33 percent (excluding the 50-percent figure for Kyŏngjong's reign based on the total sample of only two individuals). At the least, these statistics illustrate that even those from the most prominent central military official families could not take for granted the Military Division commander jobs, up to a third of which in late Chosŏn went to the oligarchic civil officials.

Outside the capital, in contrast, the military examination passers from prominent central military official families received a significant share of local magistracies. Traditionally the coastal and border region magistracies went to

both civil and military examination graduates, whereas the inland ones were given mostly to civil examination passers and some protection appointees. By the first half of the nineteenth century, however, this practice had changed: even protection appointees were being given coastal and border region magistracies, presumably edging out the military examination graduates. The new trend was indicative of the fact that the local magistrates in general were being drawn from the most politically powerful or well-connected families of Seoul. Given the bribery involved, short office tenure, and increasingly fierce competition among the candidates for a magistracy post, the successful bidders often ended up as rapacious magistrates.[43]

Despite the indications that many military men were given some important responsibilities both in and outside the capital, the available evidence seems to suggest a visible decline in their political stature since the mid-Chosŏn period. The capital elite military families continued to hold offices in the central government (unlike the members of the typically officeless local *yangban*), but these appointments generally insured that they played a subordinate or supportive role in relation to the aristocratic central civil officials. The elite military examination graduates' bureaucratic attainments generally were limited to military or military-related posts below a "glass ceiling." It would seem, then, that in late Chosŏn the central military official families had come to constitute a semihereditary, professional military elite.

The phenomenon of a relatively small number of families concentrating on, and perhaps even dominating, a specific type of career or the examination it required was not unique to the military track. Toward the end of the dynasty, the civil examinations also came to be dominated by an increasingly limited number of families in Seoul,[44] while the technical examinations were clearly monopolized by the *chungin* ("middle people") technical professionals in the government, such as physicians and interpreters.

This trend toward specialization is evident when a large patrilineage group's pattern of examination success is analyzed. Among the traditionally large, and socially diverse, choronym groupings such as the Kimhae Kim, Miryang Pak, Kyŏngju Kim, Kyŏngju Yi, and Kyŏngju Ch'oe, I chose the Miryang Pak for its impressive examination success across all four subjects, thus yielding large enough analytic samples. By consulting various examination rosters, it is possible to confirm that the Miryang Pak produced 258 civil examination passers, as well as at least 1,250 military examination passers, 825 licentiates, and 190 technical examination passers during Chosŏn.

Of course, one would be hard-pressed to regard all bearers of the choronym "Miryang Pak" as the members of a single, unsegmented descent group throughout the dynasty. Accordingly, it is more meaningful to limit the analysis of the Miryang Pak examination success to just one major branch *(p'a)*, although even a single major branch of a very common choronym group generally consists of numerous lineages in the strict sense of this word.[45]

In terms of its Chosŏn-period examination success, what is known as the Kyujŏnggong-*p'a* (so designated for the civil post of its founder) was the most successful among the twelve major Miryang Pak lines recognized by the lineage association *(chongch'inhoe)* today: it accounts for at least 81 of the 258 civil examination passers, 162 of the 1,250 military examination passers, 247 of the 825 licentiates, and 34 of the 190 technical examination passers. Based in Seoul at the beginning of the dynasty, the line produced political figures active in both the "Meritorious Old" (Hun'gu) and Sarim factions. The percentage of Kyujŏnggong branch civil examination passers with various types of examination passers among the close patrilineal relatives of third-cousin distance or closer is shown, broken down by century, in Table 6.[46]

The technical examination families branched out the earliest: by the seventeenth century, only 15 percent of the Kyujŏnggong branch civil examination passers had a technical examination passer among their close patrilineal relatives, third cousins or closer. In comparison, the civil-licentiate-military "cluster" remained intact longer: not until the eighteenth century could fewer than half of the Kyujŏnggong branch civil examination passers claim a military examination passer among their close relatives. The survival of the civil-licentiate cluster reflects the continuation of an early Chosŏn pattern, according to which the candidates from the elite capital *yangban* families continued to pass both examinations.[47]

Patrilineal kinship groups concentrating on one specific type of examination were most common with the technical examinations. All except three Kyujŏnggong branch technical examination passers came from two families that clearly were *chungin:* both are recorded in the *Sŏngwŏnnok,* which is a nineteenth-century compilation recording technical specialist *chungin* lines. Descended from the *sŏja* ("nothoi," "secondary sons") of *yangban* officials, the two *chungin* families produced technical examination passers specializing in various subjects. Table 7 illustrates how it became increasingly unlikely for a technical examination passer to have other types of degree holders among his close patrilineal kinsmen.

The fact that the Kyujŏnggong branch technical examination graduates continued to have military examination graduates among their close patrilineal relatives seems to suggest that military examinations remained more realistically accessible to them, while the same was not true with the civil and licentiate examinations.[48] This is not at all surprising, considering the greater social diversity among the late Chosŏn military examination passers as a whole, comprising the *yangban, sŏja,* and *chungin* passers among others.

Nevertheless the *elite* military examination passers of late Chosŏn tended to be from *yangban* families that had been specializing in military examinations and careers for generations: other than a handful of licentiates (generally before 1800), fewer than 10 percent of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century military examination graduates from the above-mentioned capital elite mili-

Table 6. Miryang Pak Kyujŏnggong Branch Civil Examination Passers with Examination-Passer Relatives, 1393–1894

Period	All Civil Examination Passers	With a Civil Examination Passer Relative	With a Military Examination Passer Relative	With a Licentiate Examination Passer Relative	With a Technical Examination Passer Relative
1393–1499	11	11 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)
1500–1599	9	9 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	7 (77.8%)
1600–1699	20	18 (90.0%)	13 (65.0%)	19 (95.0%)	3 (15.0%)
1700–1799	26	19 (73.1%)	7 (26.9%)	18 (69.2%)	— (0.0%)
1800–1894	15	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	3 (20.0%)	— (0.0%)
Total	81	59 (72.9%)	42 (51.9%)	60 (74.1%)	21 (25.9%)

Source: Edward W. Wagner and June-ho Song, "*Munkwa* Project"; idem, "Yijo sama pangmok chipsŏng"; Yi Sŏng-mu, Ch'oe Chin-ok, and Kim Hŭi-bok, comp., *Chosŏn sidae chapkwa hapkyŏkcha ch'ongnam* [A comprehensive look at the Chosŏn-period technical examination passers] (Sŏngnam, Kyŏnggi-do: Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1990); examination rosters; local gazetteers; and genealogies.

Table 7. Miryang Pak Kyujŏnggong Branch Technical Examination Passers with Examination-Passer Relatives, 1393–1894

Period	All Technical Examination Passers	With a Technical Examination Passer Relative	With a Military Examination Passer Relative	With a Civil Examination Passer Relative	With a Licentiate Examination Passer Relative
1393–1499	2	2 (100.0%)	2 (100.0%)	2 (100.0%)	2 (100.0%)
1500–1599	4	4 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)
1600–1699	8	8 (100.0%)	8 (100.0%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)
1700–1799	6	6 (100.0%)	4 (66.7%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)
1800–1894	14	14 (100.0%)	6 (42.9%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)
Total	34	34 (100.0%)	24 (70.6%)	6 (17.7%)	6 (17.7%)

Source: Edward W. Wagner and June-ho Song, "*Munkwa* Project"; idem, "Yijo sama pangmok chipsŏng"; Yi Sŏng-mu, Ch'oe Chin-ok, and Kim Hŭi-bok, *Chosŏn sidae chapkwa hapkyŏkcha ch'ongnam;* examination rosters; local gazetteers; and genealogies.

tary lines could claim any civil examination passer among their close patrilineal relatives within the third-cousin radius. The late Chosŏn Tŏksu Yi military line, for example, produced just one civil examination passer, who was Yi Sun-sin's tenth-generation descendant. Surrounded by a throng of military examination graduates, including his forefathers for the past seven generations and a brother, this lone civil examination graduate earned his degree in 1875.[49] In contrast, the P'yŏngsan Sin and Nŭngsŏng Ku military lines produced more civil and licentiate examination passers. This perhaps reflects the fact that the two families were the most politically well-connected among the six military lines, as illustrated by the political roles of Sin Kyŏng-jin and Ku In-hu discussed above.[50]

The evidence as presented makes it clear that the central military official families of late Chosŏn concentrated on military examinations and careers, but the causes behind the rise of such families still need to be discussed. Among others, two may be highlighted: one, a political catastrophe influencing a *yangban* family to opt for a military career, and two, the descendants' continuation of their famous military hero ancestor's legacy, often with state sponsorship. First we turn to some cases of political setback affecting a family's choice of examination type.

Words of admonition by Im Hyŏng-su (1504–1547), a Neo-Confucian scholar and official linked to the Greater Yun (Taeyun) partisans, to his sons before his execution are highly suggestive. The *sillok* records the melodramatic scene of his death, entailing his advice to the sons regarding the examinations:

> At the time, Im Hyŏng-su had been dismissed from his office and was at home. When it was time for his death, he faced the direction of his parents [who were not present] and bid them ritual farewell. Looking at his sons, he said: "Although I did not do anything wrong, I have finally come to face this predicament. Do not take examinations." Afterward, he spoke again: "As for the military examinations, take them if feasible. Do not take civil examinations." There was no hint of even the slightest loss of composure on his part. As he was about to lift up his bowl [of hemlock] and drink from it, he turned to a State Tribunal clerk and asked with a smile: "Would you also like a sip?" When someone suggested that it would be better for him to die inside the house, Im Hyŏng-su said: "I shall fittingly die where the gods of Heaven and Earth surround and watch me clearly. How could I go to a dark place and die there?" Then he drank the hemlock and died. All those who heard were saddened.[51]

The true motivation behind his admonition is not clear. It seems, though, that Im switched his position from essentially telling his sons not to serve in the government at all to stating that a military career, if feasible, would be permissible. Perhaps he saw it as a far less dangerous career path than the civil counterpart. I have found no examination passer, civil or military, among his direct male descendants in the genealogy, even though his brother's line continued to produce civil examination passers.[52]

For a case of political turmoil that seems to have contributed to the rise of a military line, one can look at the Seoul-based military family of the Miryang Pak Kyujŏnggong branch. A long history of civil examination success came to an end in 1623 when Chief State Councillor Pak Sŭng-jong (1562–1623) and his son, Kyŏnggi Province Governor Pak Cha-hŭng (1581–1623), who was the father-in-law of the crown prince, committed suicide after the dethronement of Kwanghaegun. Both Sŭng-jong and Cha-hŭng were civil examination graduates, and six out of their eight direct male ancestors had passed the civil examination in Chosŏn. However, no civil examination passer is known among Cha-hŭng's direct descendants, although the descendants of Sŭng-jong's second cousins passed military examinations in large numbers during the remainder of the dynasty.[53] Also worthy of note is that after Cha-hŭng's father-in-law, Yi I-ch'ŏm (1560–1623), who was held responsible by the victorious Westerners for inducing Kwanghaegun to murder three princes and confine the queen mother, was executed after the coup, along with all of his civil examination-passer sons; only military examination passers are known among the descendants.[54]

The Suwŏn Paek central military official line may also have emerged as a result of political catastrophe. Paek Yu-yang (1530–1589), a 1572 civil examination passer, was caned to death after the execution of his son, who was the husband of the infamous Chŏng Yŏ-rip's niece. Chŏng had already killed himself after his treasonous plot had been discovered (1589). Probably an Easterner (Tongin) by loose association with Chŏng, Paek Yu-yang was condemned by his own paternal uncle, Paek In-gŏl (1497–1579), and a cousin, Yu-ham (1546–1618), both of whom were civil examination passers and Westerners in partisan affiliation. Interestingly, whereas Yu-yang and his brothers' descendants then turned to the military examination, In-gŏl's and Yu-ham's descendants continued to take various types of examinations in late Chosŏn.[55] The Suwŏn Paek case seems to illustrate that although the whole event is murkier and more complex than outlined here, any two close relatives, even first cousins, could easily side with opposing partisan camps, and that a political catastrophe could push a *yangban* family toward military examinations.

In the case of the Chŏnŭi Yi central military official line descended from Yi Chun-min, the family did not suffer directly from any violent political retribution. It is plausible, though, that through Yi's famed Neo-Confucianist maternal uncle, Cho Sik (pen name: Nammyŏng, 1501–1572), the early seventeenth-century Chŏnŭi Yi were linked to the Northerners (Pugin). Nonetheless Yi Chun-min deeply respected the Westerner Yi I (pen name: Yulgok, 1536–1584). When the opposing partisans censured and attacked Yi I after his death in 1584, Yi Chun-min vigorously defended his reputation. Given that some Lesser Northerners (Sobuk) would later join the Westerners (including the above-mentioned Song Si-yŏl, who was personally close to many military

men and wrote epigraphic obituaries for Sin Ip [1546–1592], Sin Kyŏng-jin, and Ku In-hu), it seems fitting that the marginalization of Yi Chun-min's descendants from central politics took the form of turning to military examinations rather than a complete exclusion, as was the case with Great Northerner Yi I-ch'ŏm's descendants.[56]

If the Chŏnŭi Yi, Suwŏn Paek, and Miryang Pak capital elite military lines turned to military examinations upon a political setback, the Tŏksu Yi military line descended from Yi Sun-sin is a case of the continuation of a heroic legacy. Almost all the direct male descendants of Yi Sun-sin pursued military careers, making their patrilineage the most eminent military examination family of late Chosŏn, producing military officials and commanders to the very end of the dynasty.

Likewise, a majority of the late Chosŏn P'yŏngsan Sin military examination passers were descended from Sin Ip, who committed suicide after an unsuccessful effort to fight off the invading Japanese army at the Battle of Ch'ungju (1592), and his cousins. After Ip's death, the court appointed his son, Kyŏng-jin, an adjutant general's officer *(sŏnjŏn'gwan)*.[57] In addition to his father's loyalty to the state, Kyŏng-jin had some powerful political connections: not only was his sister married to Injo's paternal uncle, his father's sister was Injo's maternal grandmother. This connection apparently was significant enough to compensate for Kyŏng-jin's ties (his sister was married to one of Yi I-ch'ŏm's sons) to the losing political faction vanquished in 1623.[58] The case of the P'yŏngsan Sin military line illustrates that one's personal political stance or position could override his disadvantageous kinship ties.

In the case of the P'yŏngyang Cho military line descended from Cho In, we can identify at least two plausible factors that encouraged his descendants to turn to military careers. First, although his direct ancestors were civil officials (including his grandfather, who passed the civil examination in 1552), In's father died young without ever holding an office. Then In himself refused to serve in the government during Kwanghaegun's reign. Moreover, his son, Chŏng-ik (1599–1636), took his life on Kanghwa Island shortly before the Qing troops landed. Along with his wife, who followed him in death, Chŏng-ik was showered with posthumous honors by Injo's court. It was Chŏng-ik's son who passed the military examination, initiating the family's remarkable success with the military examinations in late Chosŏn. In sum, both the family's two-generation alienation from political power and courageous display of loyalty may have encouraged the descendants to turn to military careers.[59]

As for the Nŭngsŏng Ku central military official line, the abovementioned Ku In-hu was instrumental in establishing the family's prominence. He was Injo's maternal uncle as well as a grandson of Sin Kyŏng-jin's father's

sister. Together with his immediate Nŭngsŏng Ku and P'yŏngsan Sin relatives, Ku led troops during the coup against Kwanghaegun. Unlike Chungjong (r. 1506–1544), who had simply been put on the throne by Pak Wŏn-jong (1467–1510) and other coup engineers, Injo was actively involved in planning and executing the coup,[60] for which Ku and other military-men relatives of Injo provided the muscle. Besides fighting the Manchus in 1627, Ku essentially was entrusted with the physical security of the merit subjects supporting Injo, and he eventually attained the post of second state councillor. Likewise, his father's first cousin, Ku Koeng (1577–1642), a 1608 military examination passer, had a very similar career, including participation in the coup.[61] About two hundred direct descendants of both men and their cousins would pass the military examination in late Chosŏn.[62]

The descendants of meritorious military men such as Ku Koeng and Ku In-hu also received encouragement from the government in pursuing military careers.[63] For example, in 1734, King Yŏngjo observed in person the martial skills test of the descendants of the Eight Robust Ones (P'al changsa), who had escorted Hyojong during his captivity as a hostage in Shenyang. Then in 1774, Yŏngjo held a special examination for the descendants of loyal subjects *(ch'ungsin),* followed the next year by an "autumn extension examination" *(ch'ugaengsi)* for the descendants of the merit subjects who had helped quell the Yi In-jwa rebellion in 1728.[64] In the course of research, I have learned that each of the six prominent capital elite military lines had at least one member assisting the court in putting down the rebellion.

With state support, the military official families of Seoul played a role in late Chosŏn politics, albeit a limited one in comparison to that of the aristocratic central civil officials. In his study, Ch'a Chang-sŏp identifies the partisan affiliation for six of the nine prominent late Chosŏn military lines. Out of the six, four were Young Doctrines (Soron), one was Old Doctrine (Noron), and one was Southerner.[65] Of course, all three factions were active political players in the latter half of the seventeenth century, but the Southerners and Young Doctrines would lose much strength by the mid-eighteenth century.

In the milieu of partisan politics and struggle, the late Chosŏn military divisions *(kunyŏng)* in Seoul provided armed might to the dominant political factions. At a given moment, a party's control of various military divisions was so thorough that a new group gaining power had to carry out a wholesale change in military personnel, sometimes even creating an entirely new division. For example, during their brief period of ascendancy in the late seventeenth century, the Southerners created the Military Training Special Cavalry Unit (Hullyŏn Pyŏltae) to counter the Westerner-controlled divisions. Then in the late eighteenth century, Chŏngjo and his political supporters established the Robust Brave Guards (Changyongwi) as a new troop unit free of the Faction of Principle (Pyŏkp'a) elements that justified Yŏngjo's ordering of the death of his father, Prince Sado (1735–1762).[66]

In sum, the prominent central military official families of late Chosŏn were within some proximity to political power. They thrived as professional military men thanks to the patronage of influential central civil officials. The capital elite military families provided armed might to the oligarchic civil official families engaged in partisan strife. In late Chosŏn, eupatridian civil official families and elite military official families of Seoul formed a symbiotic relationship with each other in their respective roles as the superior and inferior in the political arena, which increasingly excluded provincial *yangban* families—the local elite.

LOCAL ELITE AND MILITARY EXAMINATIONS

From mid-Chosŏn onward, the percentage of provincial *yangban* candidates from the south holding an examination degree or an office declined sharply. By the eighteenth century, the local elite as a whole had lost links to the central bureaucracy.[67] This development was facilitated by the Southerner party's final defeat by the Westerners in 1694 and Yŏngjo's official rejection, in making policy decisions, of the so-called public discourse *(kongnon)* among the provincial literati, although many among the latter had Westerner connections. In the Kyŏngsang Province section of his work *T'aengniji* (Ecological Guide to Korea), Yi Chung-hwan (1690–1752) points out that the chasm between Seoul and the provinces had widened since the enthronement of Injo and the triumph of Westerners (1623); since then, Yi explains, high officials from Kyŏngsang had dwindled in number, as the men from "hereditary capital elite families" *(kyŏngsŏng sega)* have been favored for appointments.[68]

Roughly from the seventeenth century, some local *yangban* families no longer enjoying any success with the civil examinations turned to the military examinations. Although commoner participation increased during this period, the politically marginalized *yangban* continued to regard passing the military examination as a way to acquiring an office or maintaining their elite social status, according to Chŏng Hae-ŭn's analysis of military examination graduates from Sukchong's through Chŏngjo's reign.[69] It would appear that despite the decline in prestige of a military examination degree, many provincial elite families such as those listed in the *hyangan* (local *yangban* registers) of Kimhae, Ch'angnyŏng, Ch'angwŏn, and Miryang turned to the military examinations.

For example, the Namp'yŏng Cho lineage of Kimhae descended from Minister of Personnel Cho Yu-in, a 1396 civil examination passer, was producing only degreeless minor officials in mid-Chosŏn, before beginning to produce from the seventeenth century some military examination passers. The lineage was the one from which the wife of Nammyŏng Cho Sik (a Ch'angnyŏng Cho) hailed,[70] although both Cho Sik and his wife are today recognized as the Ch'angnyŏng Cho. Sometime in the eighteenth century, the Namp'yŏng Cho of Kimhae changed their choronym to the Ch'angnyŏng

Cho.[71] In the end, the change of choronym was justified with the belief that they had once branched off from the Ch'angnyŏng Cho; however, it may also have been a pragmatic action by a local elite line alienated from central politics assuming a better-known choronym, a practice quite widespread among those bearing more obscure choronyms in late Chosŏn.[72]

Like the Namp'yŏng Cho lineage of Kimhae, the Suwŏn Paek lineage of Chinju descended from Paek Sa-su, a 1454 civil examination passer, also began to produce some military examination passers from the eighteenth century after an examination dry spell spanning several generations. Interestingly the lineage's military examination success began after adopting a son, whom the family had brought in from a collateral line based in Seoul. The capital branch, also descended from the fifteenth-century civil examination passer, was one of the six prominent central military official lines mentioned above. The adopted son's son passed the military examination in 1777.[73]

Although some local *yangban* families turned to the military examinations in late Chosŏn, other such local *yangban* seem to have looked down upon this course, especially in Kyŏngsang Province. In the sixteenth century and perhaps as well in the fifteenth, Chŏlla Province produced more successful military examination candidates than the more populous Kyŏngsang Province.[74] It is notable that in the early seventeenth century, Kyŏngsang Province Governor Pak Kyŏng-sin (1560–1626) criticized the residents in his proposal for a local military examination: "Although this province neighbors the [Japanese] island barbarians, it is extremely pitiful that the people [here] do not study *mu* ["martial virtue"]. How about arousing them by administering an examination?"[75]

Then in the late eighteenth century, after finding out that only a small number of Kŏngsang residents had taken the recent military examination, Chŏngjo criticized the province's literati for looking down on the subject:

> Yŏngnam [Kyŏngsang] is a large province in size. However, the number of those [residents] who participate in the examination, which is a state event, is not on par with that of other provinces' large locales. Do not say that the locales of [Kyŏngsang] Province are places where learning thrives, as in the home villages of Confucius and Mencius. The martial art of archery is not a base thing. Considering that Confucius also performed archery, it must be that he was fond of it. Moreover, given that employing both *mun* ("literary virtue") and *mu* is the way to preserve the state for eternity, what more can be said?[76]

The issue of possible regional bias against the military examination has to be addressed in a more detailed study on attitudes toward the *mu* in a Confucian society, but perhaps the observations by both the governor and the king contain a kernel of truth concerning many Chosŏn literati's low regard for martial endeavors.

The extent of participation in the military examinations reflects changes

in the literati's sociopolitical and cultural positions in the provinces. Unfortunately, there still is no comprehensive paradigm that explains the local history in all parts of the late Chosŏn countryside in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite the significant variation in the pattern of change from one locale to another, broader conclusions offered by the conventional scholarship, comprising mostly case studies, do not seem to take adequate account of the potential complexity of the overall picture. The secondary scholarship on late Chosŏn local history can be divided roughly into two groups: those focusing on changes in local administration, its relations with the central government, and new social elements and those whose arguments give more weight to the largely cultural responses from older elite families and their growing conservatism.

Studies by Kim In-gŏl, An Pyŏng-uk, Kim Hyŏn-yŏng, and others argue that from the seventeenth century the *sinhyang* ("new local families") and *hyangim* ("local duty personnel"; not to be confused with the *hyangni,* the "local functionaries") began to challenge the political hegemony of the older, provincial *yangban* in local administration. Whereas the *sinhyang* mainly comprised those of *sŏŏl* descent, the *hyangim* (or *hyangjok,* "local families") included the less prominent local *yangban* previously excluded from the older elite *yangban*-dominated local institutions, as well as wealthy households (*yoho pumin*). Flooded with names from new families, the traditional *hyangan* was discontinued after the seventeenth century in most locales. Moreover, many areas experienced a conflict known as the *hyangjŏn* ("local war") as the old and new forces allegedly battled for control of the local administration. Eventually, from the eighteenth century, the central government was able to use the new social elements in weakening the sway of the older elite *yangban* in the local administration and bolstering the authority of the centrally appointed magistrate.[77]

This line of interpretation of local history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries puts forth a more complex picture of late Chosŏn rural elite society than that analyzing just the *yangban* represented in the *hyangan*. The undeniable fact that the *hyangan* came to be discontinued in most localities by the nineteenth century may suggest that at least some changes in the dynamics of political power, social status, and economic standing shaped new social groups and alliances. Overall, adherents of the interpretation deserve credit for calling our attention to the possibility of more powerful agents of social change having emerged beyond the confines of late Chosŏn central politics increasingly dominated by a small number of aristocratic families.

The interpretation has its weaknesses too. Above all, it seems to overestimate the economic power and the allegedly revolutionary tendencies of those who were challenging the hegemony of the old literati, despite the limited evidence. It is plausible that the *yoho pumin* included households that

clearly were not *yangban* in social status, but the fact that the vast majority of landowners even at the dynasty's end were bona fide *yangban* makes us wonder if the originally non-*yangban* elements really could have been preponderant among those of wealth in local communities. Moreover, it is far from certain that the participants in the 1862 riots in the south or the Eastern Learning (Tonghak) uprising in 1894 were "revolutionaries" in the sense of those seeking to replace the existing system with a radically new order.

While the emergence of the *sinhyang* and *hyangim* may have affected the power dynamics in local administration, research by many social historians suggests that the alienation from central politics and, if true, decreasing influence in local administration reinforced sociocultural conservatism on the part of the old elite. Studies by Song Chun-ho, Fujiya Kawashima, Chŏng Chin-yŏng, and Paek Sŭng-jong demonstrate that the older local *yangban* families came to espouse a stronger lineage consciousness, organizations, and activities. This trend presumably reflected the older local elite's effort to compensate for their diminished political stature in both the central and local governments, although the extent of such diminution at the local level is far from certain. The older *yangban* families manifested their status consciousness through, for example, frequent genealogical compilations, residence in same-surname *(tongsŏng)* villages, and establishment of various cultural edifices such as private academies *(sŏwŏn),* shrines *(sau),* and other buildings for educational, social, and ritual purposes *(che, chŏng, tae, tang).*[78]

In spite of many new insights provided by social historians, what impact the old elite's alleged loss of political hegemony in the local government and their growing sociocultural conservatism ultimately had on the local social hierarchy is yet to be understood clearly. It seems that membership in the local *yangban* status group in the strictest sense remained unchanged, because, as Song Chun-ho points out, such social status was largely ascriptive in nature and no new social elements, regardless of their political power or economic wealth, could make themselves "*yangban*."[79]

All the same, my own experience working with the genealogies of local *yangban* families in Kimhae, Miryang, Chinju, and Sach'ŏn indicate that by the mid-nineteenth century some new families appearing in the *hyangan,* such as a Namp'yŏng Mun line of Kimhae, were able to form marriage ties with older *yangban* families, such as the Namp'yŏng Cho lineage of Kimhae. Moreover, by the colonial period, such families from both groups, if the distinction still existed, would be found among those who set up modern schools with collective fundraising efforts in Kimhae.[80] Of course, the *yangban* identity, or even partisan affiliation, would persist even after 1945 among many *yangban* descendants and communities,[81] but I suspect that the pattern of social change toward the end of Chosŏn varied tremendously among different families and locales throughout Korea.

With their exclusion from central politics and, if true, their losing ground in local administration, the older *yangban* families came to maintain their elite status in a more ascriptive sense. This trend was paralleled by the declining practical significance of earning a civil or a military examination degree in defining one's *yangban* status in local society; increasingly detached from the central bureaucracy and court politics, neither degree could provide sure access to political power in Seoul. Although an examination degree could not have been entirely meaningless to the literati, perhaps many did not feel that it was worthwhile to invest years, if not decades, of studious effort in a degree that in itself could not insure a successful official career in the central politics increasingly dominated by select aristocratic civil official families of Seoul.

At the same time, the local *yangban* as an ascriptive status group still had to substantiate their assertion of cultural superiority over others through various activities serving educational, social, and ritual purposes as discussed above. Accordingly, passing a licentiate examination, which was a qualifying test for the civil examination and normally did not lead to an appointment, retained its special appeal among the literati, and many struggled for decades of their lives to earn a licentiate degree.[82] In her detailed analysis of the recently completed database of licentiates from all extant rosters, Ch'oe Chin-ok explains that an officeless individual with a licentiate degree alone would still be deemed a *yangban* in local society, because passing the examination proved that he possessed the basic Confucian cultivation befitting a literatus *(sajok)*.[83]

More important, however, even licentiate examination success decreased among the older elite families, and it became increasingly less likely for a late Chosŏn local *yangban* to be a graduate of any examination, not to mention an office holder.[84] The extent to which the local *yangban* became marginalized politically was much larger than that of the central military officials. Nevertheless, both groups would retain their membership in the ruling elite status group, undergoing a process of substratification in late Chosŏn. The following discussion seeks to explain how the shared *yangban* identity was manifested among the members of the ruling elite, comprising the central civil officials, central military officials, and officeless local literati.

PERSISTING TIES AMONG *YANGBAN* SUBGROUPS

Pointing to clear differences in the career patterns and the magnitude of political power yielded, it may be tempting to declare that the aristocratic central civil officials, central military officials, and officeless local *yangban* represented three different social status groups, insofar as the *hyangni* and the technical examination-passer *chungin* were distinct from the *yangban*. A good way to assess the extent of social status differentiation into various groups would be to analyze the patterns of marriage and adoption, as well as the genealogical

distance, among the oligarchic central civil officials, capital elite military men, and provincial *yangban.*

As far as the marriage pattern is concerned, the *mubo* is very informative in that it records the examination degree, office, or rank, if any, of the military examination graduate's father-in-law and the maternal grandfather. As recorded in a nineteenth-century *mubo,* the number of military examination passers from some elite military lines having a military examination graduate or a military official as the father-in-law or the maternal grandfather is: 43 out of 64 (67.1 percent) Tŏksu Yi, 48 out of 74 (64.9 percent) Chŏnŭi Yi, 36 out of 63 (57.1 percent) P'yŏngsan Sin, 21 out of 38 (55.3 percent) Nŭngsŏng Ku, 36 out of 40 (90.0 percent) P'yŏngyang Cho, 13 out of 21 (61.9 percent) Suwŏn Paek, and 11 out of 20 (55.0 percent) Miryang Pak military examination passers.[85] To put these figures in perspective, we can turn to the technical examination passers' marriage pattern. The *Yŏkkwa p'alsebo* (Eight-Generation Genealogy of Foreign Language Examination Passers) shows that 42 out of 46 (91.3 percent) Chŏnju Yi, 19 out of 20 (95.0 percent) Kyŏngju Ch'oe, 12 out of 13 (92.3 percent) Haeju O, all 17 (100.0 percent) Hanyang Yu, 36 out of 40 (90.0 percent) Ch'ŏllyŏng Hyŏn, 7 out of 8 (87.5 percent) Chŏngŭp Yi, and 10 out of 11 (90.9 percent) Miryang Pak foreign language examination *(yŏkkwa)* passers had a technical examination passer or a technical specialist as his father-in-law or maternal grandfather.[86]

The marriage data at hand seem to illustrate that a high degree of social homogeneity characterized both the capital elite military men and the technical specialist *chungin* in late Chosŏn. At the same time, the intragroup marriage rate of roughly 60 percent among the central military official families does not seem to indicate an exclusivity such as that characterizing marriage practices among the *chungin,* of whom more than 90 percent married into other *chungin* families.[87]

In fact, civil-military official marriage ties among central officials continued well into the seventeenth century. For example, Kangdong Magistrate Cho I-ryang (1641–1688), a 1672 military examination passer from the Namp'yŏng Cho lineage in Kimhae, married his son to a granddaughter of State Academy Lecturer (Chikkang) Kwak Yung, who was a 1627 civil examination graduate from the Hyŏnp'ung Kwak lineage residing in Hyŏnp'ung and a nephew of a famed "righteous army" *(ŭibyong)* commander, Kwak Chae-u (1552–1617). Also Paek Hŭi-jang (1644–1730), a Suwŏn Paek military examination passer (1666) from Chinju, married his son to a granddaughter of Second Censor (Sagan) Ha Chin (1597-1658), a civil examination passer (1633) from the same locale. Likewise, Provincial Army Deputy Commander (Pyŏngma Chŏlchesa) Chŏng Sa-sŏ (1569–1678), a Yŏnil Chŏng military examination graduate (1594) from Chinju, married his daughter to a son of Second Censor Kang Ing-mun (1568–?), a Chinju Kang civil examination passer (1606) from Hapch'ŏn.[88]

Because I have yet to come across a post-1700 *yangban* marriage tie between a civil official and a military official, the above cases seem to suggest that the seventeenth century was a mid-Chosŏn transition period, as far as the emergence of the distinct civil and military official lines of late Chosŏn was concerned. It is also noteworthy that the families involved in the above marriages were provincial *yangban* lineages that had not become strictly civil or military in career orientation. As far as the marriage pattern is concerned, then, the central military official families began to form a social group distinct from the central civil official families probably in the late seventeenth century.

Alongside the marriage union, exchange of adoptive sons may be considered another example of an "in-group" behavior as far as social status is concerned in late Chosŏn.[89] Although the aristocratic central civil officials, elite central military officials, and local *yangban* apparently were not linked by marriage ties after the seventeenth century, I know of cases where these groups gave out, or brought in, sons from one another to continue a patriline without a male heir. I noticed some years ago in a nineteenth-century *mubo* that a Tŏksu Yi military official line descended from Yi Sun-sin adopted an heir from the largely civil official line descended from Yulgok Yi I. Likewise, a local Suwŏn Paek *yangban* lineage of Chinju was able to obtain an adoptive son from a distantly related military line based in Seoul, as discussed above. Some other illustrative examples follow.

Sixth Rank Military Officer (Sagwa) Cho Kang (1622–1666), who was recorded in the *hyangan* (1641) and the first military examination passer (1656) of the Namp'yŏng Cho lineage of Kimhae, became a posthumous adoptive heir to a very distant kinsman of Seoul who had died without a son. In comparison to the Kimhae line that had been producing degreeless officials for several generations preceding Cho Kang, the Seoul family had a history of political fame: its direct ancestors included the first four kings of the Chosŏn dynasty, Security Council Superintendent (Chungch'uwŏn P'ansa) Sŏng Tal-saeng (1376–1444), Chief State Councillor Sin Suk-chu (1417–1475), and Minister of Personnel (Ijo P'ansŏ) Pak Chung-sŏn (1435–1481). The adoption case at hand seems to suggest that the Seoul family of illustrious ancestry regarded the local military line of Kimhae as a social equal belonging to the same *yangban* social status group.

For another example of adoptive son exchange as an indicator of in-group behavior, we can turn to the case of Kapsin Coup (1884) activist Kim Ok-kyun (1851–1894). Kim was born into a provincial Andong Kim family of a remote locale in Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, and no recent forebear of his held an office of any consequence other than some sinecure posts. Nevertheless, as a young boy, he was adopted by his father's Seoul-resident kinsman Fourth State Councillor (Chwach'ansŏng) Kim Pyŏng-gi, who had central officials among recent ancestors.[90] Assuming that no late Chosŏn *yangban* would even consider exchanging adoptive heirs with someone of different social status, such as a

chungin, a *hyangni,* or a commoner, the case of Kim Ok-kyun also suggests that a family's *yangban* status was not defined by its history of office holding or political participation.

Given that the elite social status of a prospective heir's family was determined more fundamentally by its *yangban* predigree than by its recent political stature, it seems natural that we find cases of a late Chosŏn *yangban* lineage having both civil and military official branches. For example, Kim Ik-sun (?–1812), a 1789 military examination passer and the grandfather of the famous wandering poet Kim Pyŏng-yŏn (also known as Kim Satkat, 1807–1863), came from an Andong Kim military line descended from one of the several early seventeenth-century cousins (including Kim Sang-hŏn), from whom the royal in-law Andong Kim civil officials of Seoul were also descended. Ik-sun himself was the Sŏnch'ŏn Military Command magistrate *(pusa),* when he surrendered to the rebel army of Hong Kyŏng-nae in 1811.[91]

For another case of a late Chosŏn *yangban* lineage having both civil and military official segments, we may turn to the Hamjong Ŏ case of Finance Minister (T'akchibu Taesin) Ŏ Yun-jung (1848–1896), the famous Kabo Reform (1894–1896) statesman, and Governor's Military Aide (Chunggun) Ŏ Chae-yŏn (1823–1871), the commander killed while fighting valiantly against American troops on Kanghwa Island. Whereas Yun-jung was a civil examination passer from a once politically important Old Doctrine civil official line from which the second queen of Kyŏngjong (r. 1720–1724) hailed, Chae-yŏn was a military examination graduate from a capital elite military line. Both lines were descended from Minister of Personnel Ŏ Hyo-ch'ŏm (1405–1475), a 1429 civil examination graduate. The descendants of his first cousins, in contrast, constituted the local *yangban* Hamjong Ŏ lineages in Kimhae, Haman, and Chinju. Shortly after Ŏ Chae-yŏn's death in 1871, Ŏ Yun-jung edited a Hamjong Ŏ genealogy recording all three lines.[92] Likewise, except for the P'yŏngyang Cho, all capital elite military families examined for this study—the Tŏksu Yi, the Chŏnŭi Yi, the P'yŏngsan Sin, the Nŭngsŏng Ku, and the Suwŏn Paek—had kindred central civil official lines, as well as local *yangban* lines in some cases.

All these examples of elite military families sharing relatively recent common ancestors, besides exchanging adoptive heirs, with the aristocratic civil official families seem to indicate that despite the lower prestige of military examinations and apparent lack of civil-military marriage ties after the seventeenth century, the central military official and local elite families retained their membership in the *yangban* status group, which of course included the oligarchic central civil official families. Most certainly the elite military families enjoyed a social status higher than the *chungin* and *hyangni,* both of whom formed social strata below the *yangban* and above the commoners. The central civil officials, central military officials, and officeless local *yangban* were all products of elite substratification.[93]

While the military examination graduates from the central military official families retained their membership in both the *yangban* social status group in general and the central officialdom in particular, the majority of late Chosŏn military examination passers could not expect any meaningful official appointment.[94] We now turn to such passers who, more likely to be non-elite social elements, had to be satisfied with the degree itself and whatever positive non-political meanings it may have carried.

Non-Elite Participation in Military Examinations

The practice of frequent, large-scale administration of military examinations began in earnest during the Imjin War and continued throughout the remaining centuries of Chosŏn. In his research on the social status of such military examination graduates during mid-Chosŏn, Yi Hong-du identifies fluctuation in the level of lowborns' participation in military examinations: the initial peak in the later years of Sŏnjo's reign and the entire reign of Kwanghaegun (1592–1623) was followed by the lowest ebb during the reigns of Injo and Hyojong (1623–1659), then followed by another peak during the reign of Sukchong (1674–1720).[95] As for the Imjin War period itself (1592–1598), Sim Sŭng-gu's studies demonstrate that non-*yangban* candidates of slave, *hyangni,* and *sŏja* status indeed passed the military examinations, although the passers as a whole were predominantly *yangban*.[96] It appears, then, that the Imjin War did not lead to an immediate, large influx of non-elite examination takers.

Most likely, non-elite participation in a meaningful sense began in the early seventeenth century during Kwanghaegun's reign. Not only was the king a practitioner of realpolitik, as reflected by his decision to maintain neutrality between the Ming and the ascendant Manchus, the dominant Great Northerners (Taebuk) supporting him (mothered by a royal concubine [*pin*]) over his young half-brother (Sŏnjo's only son by a queen [*wangbi*])[97] may have been more flexible on the issue of allowing talented *sŏja* more opportunities for advancement.

According to James Palais, Yu Hyŏng-wŏn (1622–1673), an early Practical Learning (Sirhak) scholar and social critic, claimed in his *Pan'gye surok* (The Jottings of Pan'gye) that most of the military examination candidates were "coarse and base people."[98] Although a clear exaggeration, this statement at the least suggests that by the time of Yu's writing (1652–1670), military examinations attracted and recruited men of diverse social origins.

In fact, from the seventeenth century on, certain military examination rosters record individuals generally from *yangban* families, whereas others list mostly non-elite passers who apparently cannot be found in any genealogical record. Once again I turn to the Miryang Pak, which is a very common choronym used by Koreans of diverse social origins in late Chosŏn. While up to half the graduates recorded in some military examination rosters can be traced gene-

alogically, other rosters, often with more than one hundred Miryang Pak passers, seem to contain no traceable individuals at all. An example of the former type is the 1651 special examination that produced 1,236 graduates, among whom I have so far been able to trace fourteen out of forty-six Miryang Pak passers. Examples of the second type of military examination include the 1637 Namhan Fort courtyard examination *(chŏngsi),* producing 5,536 passers, and the 1784 courtyard examination, producing 2,692 passers. The two examination rosters record, respectively, 260 and 139 Miryang Pak, but I have so far been able to trace none.

Most likely, investigation of their genealogical antecedents is futile: many bear the kind of given name no respectable *yangban* would have had. For example, one comes across some pure Korean names such as "Kaettong" ("dog crap"), "Malttong" ("horse crap"), and "Kŏm-dong" (same as "Kŏmdung" or "blackie"?). Also, many names of these candidates use character combinations that no literate *yangban* would have chosen for a personal name, such as "O-in" ("hating virtue") and "Ak-han" ("evil scoundrel"). The rosters recording them include many passers who were "freedmen" *(myŏnch'ŏn)* at the time of their degrees.

The existence in late Chosŏn of either genealogically untraceable or non-elite individuals using a traditionally well-recognized choronym such as the Miryang Pak can be explained in several ways. First, downward social mobility pushed many descendants of the *yangban* down the social scale, sometimes dropping them all the way to slave status over several generations. This was usually due to successive unions between a man and a woman of social status lower than his.[99] Second, "indigenous surnames" *(t'osŏng)* such as the Pak of Miryang had descent lines that sank into obscurity without ever achieving *yangban* status, although *chungin* and *hyangni* during Chosŏn kept their own genealogical records.[100] Third, recognized choronyms were commonly adopted by upwardly mobile non-elite families over several generations. Initially a widely known surname would be adopted and combined with the residence locale *(kŏjuji)* used as the "ancestral seat" *(pon'gwan)* before the latter would be replaced with a recognized ancestral seat for the given surname. Numerous case studies on household registers *(hojŏk)* elucidate this common late Chosŏn social phenomenon among the non-elite.[101]

That an increasing number of non-elite social elements were laying claim to a higher social status is also suggested by the depreciation in the value of the *muhak* ("military student") status label, referring to those enrolled in the provincial military schools (also called *muhak*) that were in existence by 1603. The military schools were set up throughout the country to promote military training, which in early Chosŏn had been entrusted primarily to the Military Training Administration (Hullyŏnwŏn) in Seoul. The individuals labeled *muhak* were initially local *yangban* men who, in exchange for support duties required

of them for the local military command, were exempted from active military duty or tax obligations, as were the *yuhak* ("young students") devoted to Confucian study. According to Yi Chun-gu, the *muhak* as a whole during Injo's reign (1623–1649) began to comprise those who had failed the military examination's classics exposition tests; then in Hyŏnjong's reign (1659–1674), the *muhak* started to form a social stratum between those of local *yangban* and commoners; and finally, by the early eighteenth century, even commoners making false enrollment claims could be found among the *muhak*.[102]

Yi also shows that in the interim, the *yangban* men preparing on their own for the military examinations and exempted from tax or military obligations became known as *ŏmmu* ("military vocation men"). From the late seventeenth century, however, the *ŏmmu* tended to be *sŏja*. Then beginning in the eighteenth century, the grandsons of *sŏja ŏmmu* and *ŏbyu* ("Confucian vocation men") were all permitted to register themselves as *yuhak*. Both *muhak* and *yuhak* status labels considerably depreciated in value from the mid-Chosŏn period on.[103]

Yi bases his overall argument on evidence gathered primarily from court records, legal codes, and census documents. Among these, the census documents from a single locale covering a period of several generations have been invaluable for scholars researching late Chosŏn social mobility. Without a doubt, many status labels originally reserved for *yangban* eventually came to be claimed by those originally not *yangban,* and Yi's findings reaffirm this well-known late Chosŏn trend. At the same time, though, Yi seems to conclude that many commoners claiming *muhak* status or earning a military examination degree essentially achieved upward social mobility by constituting an intermediate social stratum between the *yangban* elite and the commoner non-elite layers. Extrapolating on his conclusion even further, Yi regards changes in the way the older status labels were used on official documents as crucial evidence of the destruction of the existing social status system through the non-elite's upward social mobility during the period of transition from a "medieval" *(chungse)* to modern society.[104]

Although Yi provides solid empirical evidence demonstrating the overall depreciation in social prestige value of the originally *yangban* status labels, his larger general conclusion as stated above seems unwarranted. Ultimately, the extent to which the non-elite social elements were able to join the ranks of existing *yangban* elite must be assessed in discussing any meaningful upward social mobility in late Chosŏn. Actually, one looks almost in vain for an indication that the new social elements, such as the *sinhyang, hyangim,* and others, made inroads into the *yangban* elite core, be it the nineteenth-century central officialdom or the body of civil examination graduates.[105] As for the military examinations certainly recruiting from a much broader base of population, both Chŏng Hae-ŭn's detailed analysis of more than ten thousand military

examination passers from 1674 to 1800 and Kenneth Quinones's study of military officials from 1864 to 1910 show that the military examination passers of humble social origins and their descendants failed to gain membership in the existing bureaucratic elite of Seoul.[106]

In sum, the military examination system did not provide a route to political office or power for the non-elite; it simply granted degrees. Perhaps the military examinations in late Chosŏn sought to accommodate the non-elite social elements with status aspirations. The nature of a military examination degree's appeal will be analyzed in the following section, discussing the dynamics that allowed the non-elite accommodation and elite substratification processes to promote the stability of the Chosŏn dynastic system.

Military Examinations and Social Stability

The oligarchic central civil officials, central military officials, and officeless local *yangban* of late Chosŏn were products of an elite substratification process. Close genealogical distance and the continuing practice of exchanging adoptive heirs among the three groups suggest that they constituted one *yangban* social status group despite the significant differences in political stature among them. What still needs to be assessed, though, is whether the capital elite military families indeed were not unhappy with their lot in life, rather than forming a potentially subversive or even revolutionary force against the system.

In discussing an elite or a subelite social element dissatisfied with the existing order, arguably the *chungin* and *hyangni* deserve our attention; they can provide some comparative perspective in assessing the elite military men's attitude. While demanding equal treatment in the officialdom, the *chungin* and *hyangni* themselves became socially exclusive, keeping out those from below and forming social alliances (such as marriage) within their respective groups. The *chungin-hyangni* status consciousness was manifested by the compilation of their own genealogies, officer lists *(sŏnsaengan),* examination rosters, histories, and literary collections.[107] In the end, however, the fact that upon the Kabo Reform so many *chungin* and *hyangni* were quick to hide their origins by assuming en masse more *yangban*-sounding choronyms points to a weaker self-pride in their status and profession, both looked down upon by the *yangban.*[108]

In comparison to the *chungin* and *hyangni,* the central military officials may have taken a stronger self-pride in their status and profession. Like the *chungin,* the elite military men manifested their distinctive group identity through compiling their separate genealogy of examination graduates, the *mubo*. In recording the military examination passers from the most prominent central military official families, a *mubo* excludes not only the commoner passers but also the *sŏja, chungin,* and even local *yangban*. Besides genealog-

ical compilations, the elite military men expressed their self-esteem in various other ways. Some illustrative examples follow.

Late Chosŏn military official Cho U-sŏk (1782–1863), hailing from the prominent P'yŏngyang Cho military line of Seoul, proudly authored a military treatise, the *Mubi yoram* (Essential Observations on Military Preparedness; 1855), offering his expert knowledge on military administration, weaponry, war tactics, and even foreign relations.[109] In early Chosŏn, such military manuals, as was the *Tongguk pyŏnggam* (Military Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom) commissioned by Munjong (r. 1450–1452), would have been compiled and published by the government rather than a private citizen or a military officer.

An appreciation for the nobility of the military profession apparently was not unique to the capital elite military men. Coming from a local Chinju Kang *yangban* lineage of Mujang with civil examination-passer ancestors (the last one in 1656), Kang Ŭng-hwan (1735–1795) chose a military career. Reflecting the lower prestige with which the military vocation was associated in the eyes of many *yangban* literati, his father initially disapproved. However, after reading the poem, "The Song of a Martial Hero" ("Muhoga"), which the son wrote to express his lofty ambitions, the father was mightily impressed by the manifest conviction and granted permission. Not only did Kang eventually pass the military examination and have a military career, he was honored by both the government and the people he governed as a good district magistrate. His descendants also took up the sword.[110]

Capable military men could be genuinely respected, even though the Confucian society of Chosŏn Korea ostensibly held *mun* over *mu* in higher esteem. Considering that the *sillok* becomes more laconic in its coverage of various matters and events from the late eighteenth century, the following obituary notice upon the death of a military commander in 1802 is revealing:

> Military Training Division Commander (Hullyŏn Taejang) Sŏ Yu-dae died. The queen dowager came forth during the royal lecture *(kyŏngyŏn)* and stated: "This military commander had become old, but originally he was a seasoned general. Suddenly he met this fate." She greatly lamented his death for a long time. Sŏ Yu-dae was a man of Talsŏng, and he was a descendant of Lord Munjŏng, Sŏ Sŏng. Distinguished in appearance and surpassing others in strength, he graduated from the military examination through a special recommendation *(pyŏlch'ŏn)*. When he accompanied the diplomatic mission to the *bakufu,* the Japanese all called him "*shōgun*." Far and wide, he looked after the border against the Manchus; however, as he was tolerant and generous by nature, there was no soldier who complained. He was referred to as a commander of good fortune.[111]

Compared to Sŏ Yu-dae, Kang Ŭng-hwan, and Cho U-sŏk, all of whom were more purely, yet respected, military men, Sin Hŏn (1810–1884) had more diverse interests and excelled in many areas of talent: he was a military official, scholar, statesman, calligrapher, and painter all at once. Sin is remem-

bered in history as the chief of the Korean delegation at both the 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa with Japan and the 1882 Korean-American Treaty. Hailing from the P'yŏngsan Sin military line descended from Sin Ip's elder brother, he passed the military examination (1828) and held various high-ranking military and civil offices. Sin belonged to the circle of political figures, headed by Second State Councillor Pak Kyu-su (1807–1876), who advocated opening the country to the outside world beyond Northeast Asia for commerce. In fact, Sin studied under Practical Learning notables such as Chŏng Yag-yong and Kim Chŏng-hŭi (1786–1856), and he himself produced numerous treatises on the military, history, geography, agriculture, and epigraphy. His intellectual curiosities even extended to Buddhism, maintaining close personal ties to a prominent temple abbot in Haenam while serving in 1844 as the Right Chŏlla Navy commander (Chŏlla-udo Sugun chŏltosa).[112]

Then when Hŭngsŏn Taewŏn'gun (1821–1898), the father and regent for young King Kojong (r. 1863–1907), pursued a staunchly isolationist policy, Sin played more of a supporting role in the defense of Kanghwa Island against the invading French and American forces. That he was destined not for the battlefield heroics of his fellow capital *yangban* military men like Ŏ Chae-yŏn fighting against the "ocean barbarians" of the West became clear after the Taewŏn'gun stepped down (1873). The beginning of Kojong's personal rule soon led to a more accommodating stance toward commerce with the countries beyond the traditional sinitic horizon, and this set the stage for Sin's historic role in Chosŏn Korea's signing of its first two modern, Western-style treaties. In general, Sin's career epitomizes the ultimate achievement by a late Chosŏn military official despite the constraints of politics dominated by the oligarchic central civil official families.

If the individuals discussed above are representative of the elite military men as a whole, then it would seem rather unlikely that the central military officials constituted a potentially subversive or even revolutionary force against the system. To the contrary, one can expect to find many military officials duly performing their duties in serving the state. P'yŏngan Province Army Commander Pak Ki-p'ung, who was a collateral descendant of Chief State Councillor Pak Sŭng-jong, and other military commanders leading the government troops against Hong Kyŏng-nae's rebel armies (1811–1812) were generally from the capital elite military lines. And when engaging the French and American detachments on Kanghwa Island, capital elite military men such as Left Vanguard Commander (Chwasŏnbongjang) Yang Hŏn-su (1866, Chŏngjok Fortress) and Ŏ Chae-yŏn (1871, Kwangsŏng Garrison) led their troops with antiquated weapons and yet fought courageously against the technologically superior intruders.

Of course, more research is necessary on the status-consciousness of the late Chosŏn military men. Ideally, such an inquiry should examine the literary

works by learned elite military men such as Cho U-sŏk and Sin Hŏn to elucidate their understanding of the world and their place within it. Nevertheless, the fact that many military officials certainly continued to defend the system may indicate that they were not too unhappy with the status quo, according to which they remained members of the ruling status group, the *yangban*.

In the meantime, the status aspirations of non-elite social elements seem to have intensified. This desire must have been strengthened by the spread of Neo-Confucian values and ideals among the common people. Various non-elite social elements not only purchased offices and ranks, many adopted *yangban*-sounding choronyms and fabricated genealogies.[113] The fact that commoner participation in military examinations continued in the nineteenth century in spite of the restored classics exposition *(kanggyŏng)* requirements (as specified in the *Taejŏn hoet'ong* of 1865, a comprehensive update of the dynasty's administrative code)[114] may suggest that more commoners had come to possess at least a smattering of training in the pertinent classics, possibly oral, in vernacular translation or even in literary Chinese.

For the commoner military examination candidates, who could expect neither an office nor political power, the ceremony of receiving the "red warrant" *(hongp'ae),* the degree certificate, in the presence of royal majesty must have been a powerful, emotionally moving moment of triumph, true especially for those of humble origins. Even without the king's physical presence, the certificate was always issued as a "royal instruction" *(kyoji).*

Moreover, the military examination passers who lived to see the sixtieth anniversary of their degree conferral, regardless of their social status, were honored by kings. Although the *sillok* is very laconic in its overall coverage of the nineteenth century, it records many such events throughout the century. In the fourth month of 1823, when King Sunjo (r. 1800–1834) gave an audience to all those celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of their passing the civil or military examination, the First Royal Secretary (Tosŭngji) Yi Chi-yŏn (1777–1841) explained the reason behind the custom (emphasis added):

> From the reigns of royal ancestors, there is a precedent of bestowing special grace upon the elderly, even if they are common persons *(sangin). Because such men in particular must be generously rewarded, honored, and encouraged by the state, thus demonstrating that the noble cares for those below,* your subject dares to admonish [your majesty].[115]

Accordingly, for example, Sunjo gave an audience in 1826 to an individual simply recorded as an "elder" *(noin),*[116] King Hŏnjong (r. 1834–1849) granted in 1837 a rank to an individual mentioned only by his name,[117] and King Ch'ŏlchong (r. 1849–1863) in 1862 bestowed upon a man whose social status is unrecorded in the *sillok* a horse and a supply of rice and meat.[118] The term First Royal Secretary Yi used to label the recipients, *sangin,* could be

translated as "commoners" in the sense of a social status *(sinbun)* group, but of course one cannot be absolutely certain that they were. At least, though, the general practice of the *sillok* to record a former rank or office holder as such suggests that the individuals in question had never held an office or rank. These men must have appeared undistinguished, or "common," individuals to Yi, an aristocrat from an elite capital *yangban* line of royal descent who had passed the civil examination and held one important post after another as a key player in the court politics at the time.[119]

In considering the social functions of military examinations, some aspects of late Chosŏn popular culture also deserve mention. As the social pyramid became more stratified, with even the elite layer itself becoming substratified or professionally variegated, there was an increased need for culture to play a mediating role in bringing various social elements together and allowing the non-elite participants to express their desires or discontent. If "'culture' is, concretely, an open-ended, creative dialogue of subcultures, of insiders and outsiders, of diverse factions," as James Clifford states,[120] then late traditional Korean culture could be so viewed.

Among the various media of late Chosŏn popular culture, vernacular fiction, often produced by literate *yangban* authors, and *p'ansori* (a form of one-person opera) both attracted diverse audiences. Such works' portrayals of non-elite heroes and heroines embodying primary Confucian virtues such as loyalty *(ch'ung),* filial piety *(hyo),* and chastity *(yŏl),* all of which had been presumed to be the monopoly of educated *yangban* elite, must have had a strong appeal to the populace. In comparison, the masked dance *(t'alch'um)* performances, usually managed by the *hyangni,* showcased more direct satire of the elite. Functioning as a ritualized rebellion, such performances seem to have enabled the marginalized to express their discontent in a highly controlled, symbolic manner. Then there was the wedding ceremony, during which even the commoner bridegrooms were permitted to wear the official's outfit *(samo kwandae),* suggesting that the *yangban* elite tolerated the masses' status aspirations expressed in a harmless manner.[121]

The military examination system's influence reached into the realm of popular culture and imagination even though it inherently was a political institution that helped to define a segment of the elite status group. The non-elite participants in the military contests could not realistically expect meaningful careers in the central government, but the lure of martial heroics and glory, real or imagined, continued to attract the common people to the military examinations in real life and in fictional accounts alike. Success stories that were told and retold among the populace seem to have been transmitted orally. A common motif, as evident in traditional local gazetteers and modern collections of local tales, is that of a young man of humble origin performing amazing deeds of physical strength and courage such as killing a tiger that had

devoured his parent, retrieving the parent's body for a proper burial ritual, passing the military examination, and distinguishing himself as a norther frontier commander *(pyŏnjang)*.[122]

The most dramatic stories of martial feats, again real or imagined, came to be written down as vernacular novels celebrating the likes of Im Kyŏng-ŏp (1594–1646), a historical military man. Until his last breath under the interrogator's torture, Im held fast to his dream of avenging Chosŏn Korea's humiliation by the Manchu invaders, and he found an honored place in the collective consciousness outside official history. Not only was he celebrated as a larger-than-life hero in a form of late Chosŏn vernacular fiction known as the "military novel" *(kundam sosŏl),* Im became one of the numerous military men (such as Nam I, a fifteenth-century military examination graduate, and Ch'oe Yŏng, the famed late fourteenth-century general and first casualty of Yi Sŏng-gye's march toward founding Chosŏn) worshipped as deities by Korean shamans.[123]

Shamanism as favored by the populace and women represented the polar opposite of the elite, male Confucianism in the sociocultural landscape of late Chosŏn. Nevertheless, there existed a broad expanse of middle ground where a ritual often availed itself of both Confucian and popular religious interpretations, or a particular socioreligious need could be satisfied by Confucian and popular rituals that remained distinct from one another.[124] The sociocultural significance of the late Chosŏn military examinations in such a context deserves a more intensive discussion not feasible within the scope of this study. Suffice it to note, however, that the military examination system, too, may be regarded as an institution that bridged the worlds of commoners and *yangban.*

Surely the original purpose of military examinations as administered by the Confucian state could not have been the shamanistic apotheosis of military men. Yet the evidence presented in this study suggests that historically the military examination system evolved into an institution for promoting social stability through facilitating elite substratification on the one hand and nonelite accommodation on the other. The first function made feasible a limited political participation by the central military official families that had emerged with the differentiation of the ruling *yangban* status group into several subgroups; among them, the capital elite military men not only staffed the military bureaucracy but also provided the muscle to the aristocratic central civil officials involved in political disputes. The accommodation function, at the same time, was comparable to that of some cultural media mentioned above: it provided a ritualized, symbolic arena of popular "representation" vis-à-vis the center of power.

Regardless of the nature of social stratification and the resulting groups' political participation, a state needs to keep them satisfied enough not to com-

promise its own legitimacy in their eyes. To Jürgen Habermas, among others, "class confrontations lay behind the different manifestations of delegitimation," and he stresses that a political order must secure mass loyalty through legitimation for the sake of its long-term stability and survival—be it a traditional or a modern formation.[125] If so, then the remarkable longevity of the Chosŏn dynastic system is in part to be explained by the minimum accommodations it provided to the politically marginalized elite and the non-elite masses by utilizing institutions such as the military examination system. Although not regarded as highly as *mun* by the dominant Confucian ideology, *mu* in late Chosŏn Korea offered those beyond the locus of power some opportunities for advancement, whether it was limited political participation or symbolic status attainment.

Conclusion

This study is an inquiry regarding the role of the military examination system in conjunction with elite substratification and non-elite accommodation processes in the late Chosŏn period from about 1700 to 1863. Military examinations were held very frequently in late Chosŏn despite the prolonged peace following the Japanese and Manchu invasions. Often hundreds, if not thousands, of candidates were awarded degrees at one sitting, a radical departure from the earlier practice. Nevertheless, the military examinations in Chosŏn continued to legitimate office-holding in the military branch of the bureaucracy.

In fact, the increasing domination of the civil branch of central government by a relatively small number of capital civil official families resulted in the political marginalization of other official families. Some such families turned to the military examinations and careers in the military branch, reproducing themselves in the seventeenth century as semihereditary lines of military officials. The civil-military distinction became clear, and by the eighteenth century it was uncommon for a *yangban* examination passer to have a close relative (within third-cousin radius) passing a type of examination different from his own.

The military examination graduates from the central military official families tended to receive only those appointments that were directly related to military responsibilities, and a "glass ceiling" restricted their rise to the highest levels of bureaucracy. A significant share of even the military division commander posts from the mid-seventeenth century on went to powerful civil officials. The capital elite military families nonetheless enjoyed the patronage of oligarchic central civil official families to whom they owed their political allegiance. Also, the state encouraged them to continue the legacy of their military hero ancestors.

Outside the capital, some provincial *yangban* families also turned to military examinations. Their pursuit of military careers was a part of the long-

term process of their gradual exclusion from central politics. At the same time, the emergence of new social elements such as the *sinhyang* and *hyangim* may have weakened the old elite's local political hegemony. If true, then the stronger *yangban* lineage consciousness, organizations, and activities probably reflected an effort to compensate for their decreased clout in local administration. In this milieu, a military examination degree became less relevant for the maintenance of elite *yangban* status, which was ascriptive by nature.

The process of differentiation into central civil official families, central military official families, and local elite families did not produce three distinct social status groups. Intermarriages seem to have stopped after the seventeenth century, but the continuing exchange of adoptive sons and close genealogical distance among the three suggest that they still were seen as constituting one *yangban* status group. What took place was a process of elite substratification.

Meanwhile, the non-elite social elements had began to participate en masse in the military examinations. To such passers, including commoners and former slaves, the degree did not provide a route to office or political power, but it helped to satisfy their aspirations for higher, officially sanctioned, social status. The military examination system seems to have taken on a social role of non-elite accommodation, as the common people increasingly aspired to the status, lifestyle, and culture of the *yangban.*

In the late Chosŏn period, the following long-term processes were clearly underway: (1) a gradual alienation of more groups from political power; (2) filtering down of elite cultural values to the masses; (3) intensifying status aspirations among the non-elite; and (4) emergence of common cultural media utilized by all members of the society, with some venues even allowing the non-elite elements to express their discontent.

In such a setting, the military examinations appear to have promoted social stability by facilitating both elite substratification and non-elite accommodation. The elite substratification process enabled the elite military official families to retain their membership in *yangban* society, take some pride in their profession, and duly serve the existing order with loyalty. The non-elite accommodation function, on the other side, apparently was analogous to those of some late Chosŏn cultural phenomena such as vernacular fiction, masked dance, and shamanistic rituals. Through these media, the common people were allowed to express their discontent or status aspirations in a manner tolerable to the ruling elite.

The social status system of Chosŏn was fascinatingly complex, perhaps rigid at the extremes, but quite fluid in the middle. All the safety valve institutions such as the military examination may have helped to prevent the rise of potentially subversive or revolutionary forces. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, various social elements outside the locus of power had become increasingly vociferous and even violent in seeking political participation. Well

before the abolition of the entire examination system in 1894, it would appear that the late traditional order ruled by the oligarchy of central civil official families could no longer meet the rising expectations of various social groups and alliances throughout Korea.

NOTES

1. Throughout this study, I use the term "military examination" to refer only to the test that awarded the passer a special red warrant *(hongp'ae),* the formal degree certificate. Excluded from consideration are: (1) the *chungsi* ("re-examination"), which periodically retested military examination graduates; (2) the *paryŏngsi* ("examination for extracting the worthy"), the *tŭngjunsi* ("examination for elevating the lofty"), and the *chinhyŏnkwa* ("test for promoting sages") given for similar purpose; and (3) the *tosi* ("comprehensive examination"), which also periodically tested officials and soldiers on both martial skills and knowledge of military classics. My working definition is in general accord with the usage of the Korean term *mukwa* in both primary and secondary sources.

2. There is controversy among Korean scholars about whether the *yangban* constituted a discrete social status group in the late Koryŏ–early Chosŏn periods. For the view that the early Chosŏn social status system legally recognized only the "good" (*yang*) and the lowborn (*ch'ŏn*), with the "good" still not stratified into rigidly defined *yangban* and commoner status groups, see Han Yŏng-u, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi sahoe kyŏngje yŏn'gu* [Studies on the society and economy of early Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ŭlyu Munhwasa, 1983), 393–404, and Yu Sŭng-wŏn, *Chosŏn ch'ogi sinbunje yŏn'gu* [A study of the status system of early Chosŏn] (Seoul: Ŭlyu Munhwasa, 1987), 6–174. An argument that early Chosŏn society embodied strong meritocratic tendencies, exemplified by an examination system essentially open to all groups, is put forth by Ch'oe Yŏng-ho, "Chosŏn wangjo chŏn'gi ŭi kwagŏ wa sinbun chedo" [The examination and social status systems in the early Chosŏn dynasty period], *Kuksagwan nonch'ong* 26 (1991): 143–82. Yi Sŏng-mu recognizes the existence of the *yangban* as a distinct social stratum comprising central officials and their descendants, but he regards it only as the elite section of the "good." See Yi Sŏng-mu, *Chosŏn ch'ogi yangban yŏn'gu* [A study of the *yangban* in the early Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1980), 2–17, 366–67. For an argument that a status hierarchy with a legally sanctioned ruling status group had already formed by early Chosŏn, see Song Chun-ho, *Chosŏn sahoesa yŏn'gu: Chosŏn sahoe ŭi kujo wa sŏngkyŏk mit kŭ pyŏnch'ŏn e kwanhan yŏn'gu* [Studies in the social history of Chosŏn: Studies on the structure and characteristics of Chosŏn society and its change] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1987). Although disagreeing on the exact timing of more rigid stratification, most historians, including the scholars cited above, generally agree that the "classic" social status system of Chosŏn, comprising the *yangban, chungin,* commoners, and lowborn, was not in place until later in the dynasty.

3. Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi, "Chosŏn hugi yangban ŭi sahwan kwa kase pyŏndong: Sŏnsan muban'ga No Sang-ch'u ŭi sarye rŭl chungsim ŭro" [The office-holding and changing family fortune among the late Chosŏn *yangban*: The case of No Sang-ch'u from a military family of Sŏnsan], *Han'guksa ron* 19 (1988): 383–84.

4. There are several studies focusing on the institutional history of the military examinations and the social status of the passers over a short period of time in late Chosŏn. These include: Yi Hong-nyŏl, "Mankwa sŏlhaeng ŭi chŏngch'aeksajŏk ch'ui: Chosŏn chunggi rŭl chungsim ŭro" [Trends in the establishment and administration of *mankwa* from a policy historical perspective: The mid-Chosŏn period], *Sahak yŏn'gu*

18 (1964): 207–46; Song Chun-ho, "Yijo hugi ŭi mukwa ŭi unyŏng silt'ae e kwanhayŏ: Chŏng Tasan ŭi oransŏl ŭl chungsim ŭro" [On the actual condition of military examination management in the late Yi period: Focusing on Chŏng Tasan's theory of five chaotic abuses], *Chŏnbuk sahak* 1 (February 1977): 19–44; Chŏng Hae-ŭn, "Chosŏn hugi mukwa ipkyŏkcha ŭi sinbun kwa sahoejŏk chiwi: Sukchong-Chŏngjo nyŏn'gan ŭi 'mukwa pangmok' punsŏk ŭl chungsim ŭro" [The social status and social standing of the military examination passers in the late Chosŏn period: An analysis of the "military examination rosters" from the reigns of Sukchŏng through Chŏngjo], *Ch'ŏnggye sahak* 11 (1994): 187–243; and Yi Hong-du, "Mukwa rŭl t'onghae pon Chosŏn hugi ch'ŏnin ŭi sinbun pyŏndong" [Social mobility among the lowborn in the late Chosŏn period as seen through military examinations], *Minjok munhwa* 19 (1996): 269–307. For a study on the military officials (*muban*) as represented by the military examination graduates from *yangban* families, see C. Kenneth Quinones, "Military Officials of Yi Korea: 1864–1910," in *Che 1-hoe Han'gukhak kukche haksul hoeŭi nonmunjip* [Papers of the 1st International Conference on Korean Studies] (Sŏngnam, Kyŏnggi-do: Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1980), 691–700, and Eugene Y. Park, "Military Officials in Chosŏn Korea, 1392–1896" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999).

5. Corruption is especially emphasized in Yi Hong-nyŏl, "Mankwa sŏlhaeng ŭi chŏngch'aeksajŏk ch'ui," 207–46. An argument that the military examinations provided a venue for successful upward social mobility for the non-elite is made by Yi Hong-du, "Mukwa rŭl t'onghae pon Chosŏn hugi ch'ŏnin ŭi sinbun pyŏndong," 269–307.

6. I would like to thank Professors Edward W. Wagner and June-ho Song (Song Chun-ho) for making available to me their civil examination graduate and licentiate data. The technical examination data come from Yi Sŏng-mu, Ch'oe Chin-ok, and Kim Hŭi-bok, comp., *Chosŏn sidae chapkwa hapkyŏkcha ch'ongnam* [A comprehensive look at the Chosŏn-period technical examination passers] (Sŏngnam, Kyŏnggi-do: Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1990).

7. This is as estimated by Song Chun-ho, who has researched on the Chosŏn examination system for decades. "Chosŏn hugi ŭi kwagŏ chedo" [Examination system in the late Chosŏn period], *Kuksagwan nonch'ong* 63 (1995): 39–40. Also, my own research on very common choronyms such as the Miryang Pak suggests that the military examinations produced very roughly ten times as many passers as did the civil examinations. Unlike the case of the civil examination, comprehensive rosters for the other examinations are not known today. Nevertheless, because it is known when the individual examinations were administered throughout the dynasty, the total number of military, licentiate, and technical examination passers can be estimated. Whereas one can only rely on the individual examination rosters for the military examination graduates and licentiates, several compilations recording more than half the technical examination passers have survived.

8. The publication information is: *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* [Veritable records of the Chosŏn dynasty] (Seoul: Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1955–58, 1963), 48 vols. and index; Im In-muk, comp., *Mukwa ch'ongyo* [Comprehensive essentials of the military examination] (Completed ca. 1820; reprinted in Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1974); *Honamji* [Honam gazetteer] (Chŏngŭp, Chŏlla-pukto: preface dated 1934), 6 vols.; *Kyonam kwabangnok* [Examination record for Kyonam] (Kyŏngsan, Kyŏngsang-pukto: 1936), 9 vols.; "Mubo" [Genealogy of military examination passers], 3 vols., bound photocopy of the original in Changsŏgak collection (2-1741); "Mubo" [Genealogy of military examination passers], 2 vols., bound photocopy of the original in Changsŏgak collection (2-1742); "Mubo" [Genealogy of military examination passers], 2 vols., manuscript., ca. 1900, Harvard-Yenching Library collection; and "Mujinsin p'alsebo" [Eight-

generation genealogy of military *yangban*], manuscript, no date, Harvard-Yenching Library collection.

9. A triennial examination *(singnyŏnsi)* involved three stages: first, the local preliminary examinations *(ch'osi)* given throughout the country with regional quotas; second, the metropolitan examination *(hoesi, poksi)* administered in Seoul to select twenty-eight men; and third, the palace examination *(chŏnsi)* held in the royal audience, during which all successful candidates from the second stage were ranked for the final roster. According to regulations, the preliminary examination selected 190 candidates. The metropolitan examination then selected 28. Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo" [The military examination system in the early Chosŏn period], *Pugak saron* 1 (1989): 22–25, and Yun Hun-p'yo, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo yŏn'gu" [A study of the military examination system in the early Chosŏn period], *Hangnim* 9 (1987): 32–41.

10. Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo," 25–29, and Yun Hun-p'yo, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo yŏn'gu," 23–25.

11. The four groups of texts were: (1) the *Four Books* and *Five Classics;* (2) the *Seven Military Classics (Mugyŏng ch'ilsŏ);* (3) the *Great Code of State Administration (Kyŏngguk taejŏn);* and (4) miscellaneous works. Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo," 36–45.

12. These groups included: (1) the elite guardsmen married to a non-*yangban*-wife; (2) the *sŏja* ("nothoi," "secondary sons") and their descendants; (3) the *hallyang,* increasingly comprising, by the sixteenth century, not the local notables holding a supernumerary post *(ch'ŏmsŏljik)* but rather persons of some wealth who, unrecorded on the household or army register *(hojŏk, kunjŏk),* performed no specific duties to the state; and (4) the sons and grandsons of remarried or disreputable women. Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo," 57.

13. Sim Sŭng-gu, "Chosŏn ch'ogi mukwa chedo," 50–61. For an older view, see Yi Hong-nyŏl, "Mankwa sŏlhaeng ŭi chŏngch'aeksajŏk ch'ui," 178.

14. Eugene Y. Park, "Military Examination Graduates in Early Chosŏn: Their Social Status in the Fifteenth Century," *The Review of Korean Studies* 3, no. 1 (2000): 126–53.

15. Park, "Military Officials in Chosŏn Korea," 109–44, 174–227.

16. Kwŏn T'ae-hwan and Sin Yong-ha, "Chosŏn wangjo sidae in'gu ch'ujŏng e kwanhan il siron" [A preliminary study on the population estimate for the Chosŏn dynasty period], *Tonga munhwa* 14 (1975): 324–28. Of course, there is always room for uncertainty with population figures for traditional periods before the advent of modern census-taking.

17. According to the *Great Code of State Administration (Kyŏngguk taejŏn),* compiled in the late fifteenth century, 1,779 civil and 3,826 military posts were available. Yi Sŏng-mu, *Chosŏn ch'ogi yangban yŏn'gu,* 126.

18. Causes may have been the widespread famine, natural disasters, popular rebellions in the 1860s, and the Eastern Learning (Tonghak) Uprising (1894–1895). More research is needed on their demographic impact.

19. Data for the Imjin War period were taken from Sim Sŭng-gu, "Imjin Waeran chung mukwa kŭpcheja ŭi sinbun kwa t'ŭksŏng: 1594 nyŏn (Sŏnjo 27) ŭi pyŏlsi mukwa pangmok ŭl chungsim ŭro" [The social status and special characteristics of the military examination passers during the Imjin War: The 1594 (Sŏnjo 27) special examination roster], *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 92 (March 1996): 87–88, and Song Chun-ho, "Chosŏn hugi ŭi kwagŏ chedo," 100. The postwar data are based on my own research, using the *sillok,* the *Mukwa ch'ongyo,* the *Honamji,* and the *Kyonam kwabangnok.*

20. Two or more enemy heads were required from a *sŏja* and three or more from

a lowborn. These men then were to proceed to the palace examination, eventually given after the war in the third month of 1599. There were 206 finalists. *Sŏnjo sillok* [Veritable records of Sŏnjo] 39, 1593.06.*mujin, kisa*. All *sillok* citations in this study come from the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* [Veritable records of the Chosŏn dynasty] (Seoul: Kuksa P'yŏnchan Wiwŏnhoe, 1955–58; index, 1963), 48 vols.

21. *Songwa chapki* [Record of miscellanies by Songwa], cited in Yi Kŭng-ik, ed., *Yŏllyŏsil kisul* [Narratives of Yollyŏsil] (Seoul: Chosŏn Kosŏ Kanghaenghoe, 1912–14), *Pyŏljip* [Special collection] 10, *Kwanjik chŏn'go* [Reference to official posts], *Kwaje* [Examination system] 4, *Mugŏ* [Military recruitment].

22. Yi Su-gwang, *Chibong yusŏl* [Various tales of Chibong], cited in Yi Kŭng-ik, *Yŏllyŏsil kisul, Pyŏljip* [Special collection] 10, *Kwanjik chŏn'go* [Reference to official posts], *Kwaje* [Examination system] 4, *Mugŏ* [Military recruitment].

23. Yi Su-gwang, *Chibong yusŏl.*

24. Yi Su-gwang, *Chibong yusŏl.*

25. *Kwanghaegun ilgi* [Daily records of Kwanghaegun] 143, 1619.08.24 (*kapsul*).

26. *Yŏllyŏsil kisul, Pyŏljip* 10, *Kwanjik chŏn'go, Kwaje 4, Mugŏ.*

27. Ch'oe Myŏng-gil, *Chich'ŏnjip* [Works of Chich'ŏn], cited in *Yŏllyŏsil kisul, Pyŏljip* 10, *Kwanjik chŏn'go, Kwaje* 4, *Mugŏ.*

28. Yi Hong-nyŏl, "Mankwa sŏlhaeng ŭi chŏngch'aeksajŏk ch'ui," 207–21.

29. *Sukchong sillok* [Veritable records of Sukchong] 22: 1a–2a [1690.01.03 *(ŭlmi)*], 17: 21b–22a [1686.ic04.23 *(pyŏngja)*]. An intercalary month (*yundal*) is denoted by "ic."

30. Song Chun-ho, "Yijo hugi ŭi mukwa ŭi unyŏng silt'ae e kwanhayŏ," 26–36. The late Chosŏn military examination system as described in the *Supplement to the Great Code (Sok taejŏn)* of Yŏngjo's reign (1724–1776) no longer required polo *(kyŏkku)* nor horseback archery using targets *(kisa),* but there were some newly added items: (1) musket *(choch'ong)* shooting, (2) iron arrowhead *(yuyŏpchŏn)* target archery, (3) light arrow target archery *(kwanhyŏk),* (4) horseback metal whip lashing against dummy targets *(p'yŏnch'u),* and (5) horseback archery using dummy targets *(kich'u).* See Yi Sŏng-mu, *Han'guk ŭi kwagŏ chedo* [The examination system of Korea], rev. ed. (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1994), 236.

31. Song Chun-ho, "Yijo hugi ŭi mukwa ŭi unyŏng silt'ae e kwanhayŏ," 32–33, 35–36.

32. *Chŏngjo sillok* [Veritable records of Chŏngjo] 18: 52a–b [1784.11.18 *(kisa)*].

33. *Chŏngjo sillok* 54: 2b [1800.04.09 *(sinmyo)*].

34. "Mubo," Changsŏgak collection (2-1741); "Mubo," Changsŏgak collection (2-1742); "Mubo," Harvard-Yenching Library collection; "Mujinsin p'alsebo"; *Mansŏng taedongbo* [Grand genealogy of ten thousand surnames] (Seoul: Mansŏng Taedongbo Kanhaengso, 1931–33), 3 vols.; and *Ch'ŏnggu ssibo* [Genealogy of Korean families] (Ch'ŏkch'ŏmdae, 1926).

35. Ch'a Chang-sŏp also includes the Chinju Yu, Haeju O, "Old" (Ku) Andong Kim, Prince Hyoryŏng branch Chŏnju Yi, and Kyŏngju Yi military lines, while excluding the Suwŏn Paek, P'yŏngyang Cho, Kyŏngju Kim, Haep'yŏng Yun, Namwŏn Yang, and Miryang Pak military lines. *Chosŏn hugi pŏryŏl yŏn'gu* [Studies on the elite families in the late Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997), 85, 200–204. Various editions of *mubo* do not agree perfectly on the coverage of military examination passers, but the most prominent families do not fail to get recorded in all editions. Examples include the Tŏksu Yi, the Chŏnŭi Yi, the Nŭngsŏng Ku, and the P'yŏngsan Sin.

36. Regarding such central civil official families and court politics, see Han'guk Yŏksa Yŏn'guhoe 19 Segi Chŏngch'isa Yŏn'guban [Korean History Research Asso-

ciation, 19th-century Political History Research Team], *Chosŏn chŏngch'isa* (*1800–1863*) [The political history of Chosŏn (1800–1863)] (Seoul: Ch'ŏngnyŏnsa, 1990), 1: 236–56, 327–39, and Ch'a Chang-sŏp, *Chosŏn hugi pŏryŏl yŏn'gu,* 58–62, 279–340.

37. Chŏng Hae-ŭn, "Chosŏn hugi mukwa ipkyŏkcha," 224–38.

38. Quinones, "Military Officials," 697–700, and C. Kenneth Quinones, "The Prerequisites for Power in Late Yi Korea: 1864–1894" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1975), 144–47.

39. Kang Hyo-sŏk, comp., *Chŏn'go Taebang* [Reference for old Korea], rev. and exp. ed. (Kyŏngsŏng: Hanyang Sŏwŏn, 1925) 2: 1a–33a.

40. For basic biographical data on Sin Kyŏng-jin, Ku In-hu, and Yi Wan, see Han'guk Minjok Munhwa Taebaekkwa Sajŏn P'yŏnch'anbu [Compilation Board for Encyclopedia of the Culture of Korean People], ed., *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* [Encyclopedia of the culture of Korean people] (Sŏngnam, Kyŏnggi-do: Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1991) 13: 667, 3: 552, and 18: 102–3.

41. From 1800 to 1863, nineteen out of fifty-six (33.9 percent) individuals holding the Military Training Agency (Hullyŏn Togam), Forbidden Guard Division (Kŭmwiyŏng), Royal Division (Ŏyŏngch'ŏng), Anti-Manchu Division (Ch'ongyungch'ŏng), or Robust and Brave Division (Changyongyŏng) commander posts were civil officials or protection appointees. Seven out of nineteen were the royal in-law Andong Kim, whereas twenty-one out of thirty-seven military men appointees were from the prominent military lines as mentioned. *Chosŏn chŏngch'isa* (*1800–1863*)*,* 2: 774–6.

42. "Tŭngdannok" [Record of military division commander appointments], in Kang Hyo-sŏk, comp. *Chŏn'go Taebang,* 64a–69a.

43. Yi Tong-hŭi, "19 segi chŏnban suryŏng ŭi immyŏng silt'ae" [The actual condition of local magistrate appointment in the first half of the 19th century], *Chŏnbuk sahak* 11-12 (1989): 212–29.

44. Edward W. Wagner, "The Ladder of Success in Yi Dynasty Korea," *Occasional Papers on Korea* 1 (1974): 3–6.

45. In general, male members of a late Chosŏn lineage (1) resided in one locale for generations, (2) recognized a common ancestor who had first settled in the area, (3) performed proper ancestral rituals, (4) maintained lineage grave sites, (5) published genealogies periodically, (6) used generational characters *(hangnyŏlcha, tollimcha)* for their names, (7) carried out adoptions within the patrilineage group, and (8) found marriage partners outside the group among other lineages of equal or higher social status. Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 6–14, 283–303.

46. A patrilineage having a common great-great-grandfather shared mutual mourning obligations, to which the Five Grades of Mourning clothes *(obok)* applied. Song Chun-ho, *Chosŏn sahoesa yŏn'gu,* 20.

47. Among those from less-prominent *yangban* families, the successful candidates tended to hold either a licentiate or a civil examination degree rather than both. Much more numerous than those with a civil examination degree only, such licentiates lived out the remainder of their lives enjoying the community's respect due them as erudite literati. Song Chun-ho, *Yijo saengwŏn-chinsasi ŭi yŏn'gu* [A study on the classics and literary licentiate examinations of the Yi dynasty] (Seoul: Taehan Min'guk Kukhoe Tosŏgwan, 1970), 24–52.

48. Yi Nam-hŭi, "16, 17 segi chapkwa ipkyŏkcha ŭi chŏllyŏk kwa kwallo chinch'ul" [Technical examination passers' prior experience and office appointment in the 16–17th centuries], *Minjok munhwa* 18 (1995): 271–76.

49. *Tŏksu Yi-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the Tŏksu Yi] (Preface dated 1898), 12 *(sin-*

sang): 12b–17b, 66b–102b, 13 *(sin-ha):* 1a–32b, 14 *(im-sang):* 38b–96b, 15 *(im-ha):* 1a–32a, 15 *(im-sok):* 1a–4a; and Cho Chong-un, comp., *Ssijok wŏllyu* [Origins of families] (original manuscript completed by 1683; published in Seoul: Pogyŏng Munhwasa, 1991), 97–98.

50. *P'yŏngsan Sin-ssi taedongbo* [Grand genealogy of the P'yŏngsan Sin] (Seoul: P'yŏngsan Sin-ssi Taejongjung, 1976) 1 *(hap'yŏn):* 20–27, 2: 136–298, 3: 346–891; *Nŭngsŏng Ku-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the Nŭngsŏng Ku] (Preface dated 1906), 1: 1a–3b, 10: 1a–1b, 2b–9a, 15b–70a, 85b–102b, 11: 1a–107b, 12: 1a–108b, 125a–146b, 13: 1a–141b, 14: 1a–151b; and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 624–25, 713–15.

51. *Myŏngjong sillok* [Veritable records of Myŏngjong] 6, 1547.09.21 *(kisa).*

52. For the genealogy of the descendants, see *Mansŏng taedongbo* 2: 218a.

53. For short biographies of Pak Sŭng-jong and Pak Cha-hŭng, see *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 9: 27, 65. Genealogical information comes from *Miryang Pak-ssi Kyujŏnggong p'a taedongbo* [Grand genealogy of the Miryang Pak, Kyujŏnggong branch] (Seoul: Miryang Pak-ssi Kyujŏnggong-p'a Taedongbo P'yŏnsu-hoe, 1980) 1: 1–2, 4, 45–47, 2: 446–532, 953–1157; and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 143.

54. Basic biographical data on Yi I-ch'ŏm are in *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 18: 161–62. Genealogical information comes from *Kwangju Yi-ssi taedongbo,* 1: 3–5, 16–17, 188–90; *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 85–87; and *Mansŏng taedongbo* 1: 99a–b.

55. For a short biography of Paek Yu-yang, see *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 9: 415.

56. Genealogical information comes from *Chŏnŭi-Yean Yi-ssi chokpo* [Genealogy of the Chŏnŭi-Yean Yi] (Seoul: Chŏnŭi-Yean Yi-ssi Taedongbo Kanhaeng Wiwŏnhoe, 1979), 1 *(sup'yŏn):* 36, 3 *(sang):* 6–24, 3 *(chung):* 50–197.

57. *P'yŏngsan Sin-ssi taedongbo,* 1 *(hap'yŏn):* 20–27, 2: 136–298, 3: 346–891; and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 624–25.

58. Yi Ki-sun, "Injojo ŭi panjŏng kongsin seryŏk e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [Study of the coup d'état merit subject force during the reign of Injo] (Ph.D. diss., Hongik Taehakkyo, 1989), 59–63.

59. Genealogical information comes from *P'yŏngyang Cho-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the P'yŏngyang Cho] (1791), 1: 2a–6b, 14: 1a–2a, 4a–16b, 19b–29a, and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 297–98.

60. Yi Yŏng-ch'un, *Chosŏn hugi wangwi kyesŭng yŏn'gu* [Study of royal succession in the late Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1998), 135.

61. Basic biographical data on Ku Koeng are found in *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 3: 450.

62. *Nŭngsŏng Ku-ssi sebo,* 10: 2b–9a, 15b–70a, 85b–102b, 11: 1a–107b, 12: 1a–108b, 125a–146b, 13: 1a–141b, 14: 1a–151b, and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 713–15.

63. Ch'a Chang-sŏp, *Chosŏn hugi pŏryŏl yŏn'gu,* 65–66, 85–88, 200–202.

64. *Muye tobo t'ongji* [Comprehensive illustrated manual of martial skills] (Seoul: Hangmun'gak, 1970), 35–38 (reprint pagination).

65. Ch'a Chang-sŏp, *Chosŏn hugi pŏryŏl yŏn'gu,* 202–4.

66. Yi T'ae-jin, *Chosŏn hugi ŭi chŏngch'i wa kunyŏngje pyŏnch'ŏn* [Politics and changes in the military division system in the late Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Han'guk Yŏn'guwŏn, 1985), 81–318, and O Chong-nok, "Pungdang chŏngch'i wa kunyŏng" [Partisan politics and military divisions], *Yŏksa pip'yŏng* 29 (summer 1995): 301–7.

67. Fujiya Kawashima, "A Study of the *Hyangan*: Kin Group and Aristocratic Localism in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Korean Countryside," *Journal of Korean Studies* 5 (1984): 9–16.

68. Yi Chung-hwan, *T'aengniji* [Ecological guide to Korea], cited in *Chosŏn chŏngch'isa* (*1800–1863*), 1: 193.

69. Chŏng Hae-ŭn, "Chosŏn hugi mukwa ipkyŏkcha," 196, 238–40.

70. *Kimhae hyangan kŭp Kimhae ŭpchi chŏryak* [Kimhae *hyangan* and abridged town gazetteer] (Preface dated 1912), *Mukwa* [Military examination], 16b–17a, and *Ch'angnyŏng Cho-ssi Sijunggong p'abo* [Genealogy of the Ch'angnyŏng Cho, Sijung-gong branch] (Photocopy of the original at Korean National Library), 1: 4–6, 26–27. The Namp'yŏng Cho father and son military examination passers also appear in their respective examination rosters.

71. From the eighteenth century on, the Namp'yŏng Cho males began to be recorded in their wives' family genealogies, as well as the examination rosters, as the Ch'angnyŏng Cho. Interestingly, a distant Seoul kinsman of the Kimhae lineage members is recorded in his licentiate examination roster as a Namwŏn Cho, whereas another Namp'yŏng Cho man appears in his wife's genealogy as a "Ch'angwŏn" Cho. Perhaps the two cases reflect the lineage's transition-phase choronyms, changing from Namp'yŏng to Namwŏn to Ch'angwŏn to Ch'angnyŏng.

72. Yi Su-gŏn, *Yŏngnam Sarimp'a ŭi hyŏngsŏng* [The formation of the Yŏngnam Sarim group] (Kyŏngsan, Kyŏngsang-pukto: Yŏngnam Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1979), 3–4.

73. *Paek-ssi taedongbo* [Grand genealogy of the Paek] (Seoul: Paek-ssi Taedongbo P'yŏnch'an Chungang Wiwŏnhoe, 1959), 1: 23–24, 7: 1–17, 89–106, 265–70, and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 663.

74. Park, "Military Officials in Chosŏn Korea," 205.

75. *Kwanghaegun ilgi* 130: 27a [1618.07.14 *(kyŏngja)*].

76. *Chŏngjo sillok* 39: 27a [1794.02.15 *(kyeyu)*].

77. Kim In-gŏl, "Chosŏn hugi hyangch'on sahoe kujo ŭi pyŏndong" [Structural changes in the rural village society of late Chosŏn period], in Pyŏn T'ae-sŏp Paksa Hwagap Kinyŏm Sahak Nonch'ong Kanhaeng Wiwŏnhoe [The Publication Committee for the Collection of Historical Studies in Commemoration of Dr. Pyŏn T'ae-sŏp's Sixtieth Birthday], ed. *Pyŏn T'ae-sŏp Paksa hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong* [Collection of historical studies in commemoration of Dr. Pyŏn T'ae-sŏp's sixtieth birthday] (Seoul: Samyŏngsa, 1985), 767–92; Pyŏng-uk An, "The Growth of Popular Consciousness and Popular Movement in the 19th Century: Focus on the *Hyanghoe* and *Millan," Korea Journal* 28 (April 1988): 4–19; and Kim Hyŏn-yŏng, "Chosŏn hugi Namwŏn chibang sajok ŭi hyangch'on chibae e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [A study on the control of rural villages by the Namwŏn *sajok* in the late Chosŏn period] (Ph.D. diss., Sŏul Taehakkyo, 1993), 109–45.

78. Song Chun-ho, "Sinbunje rŭl t'onghaesŏ pon Chosŏn hugi sahoe ŭi sŏngkyŏk ŭi ilmyŏn" [A facet of the nature of late Chosŏn period society as seen through the social status system], *Yŏksa hakpo* 133 (March 1992): 1–62; Kawashima, "A Study of the *Hyangan,*" 20–24; Chŏng Chin-yŏng, "Chosŏn hugi tongsŏng ch'ollak ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa paltal" [The formation and development of same-surname villages in the late Chosŏn period], *Yŏksa pip'yŏng* 28 (spring 1995): 335–43; and Paek Sŭng-jong, *Han'guk sahoesa yŏn'gu: 15–19 segi Chŏlla-do T'aein-hyŏn Kohyŏllae-myŏn ŭl chungsim ŭro* [A study in the social history of Korea: Chŏlla Province T'aein Prefecture Kohyŏllae-myŏn in the 15th-16th centuries] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1996), 195–205.

79. Song Chun-ho, "Sinbunje rŭl t'onghaesŏ pon Chosŏn hugi sahoe ŭi sŏngkyŏk ŭi ilmyŏn," 45–57.

80. Lists of various types of educational and cultural institutions established by the local elite families during the colonial period are found in *Kugyŏk Kimhae ŭpchi* [Translated Kimhae town gazetteer], translated by Kwŏn Chŏng-sŏk (Kimhae, Kyŏngsang-namdo: Kimhae Munhwawŏn, 1984). For genealogical information on the mar-

riages the nineteenth-century Ch'angnyŏng Cho (formerly Namp'yŏng Cho) of Kimhae contracted with newer families, such as the Namp'yŏng Mun, see *Ch'angnyŏng Cho-ssi Sijunggong p'abo,* 2: 50–51.

81. Song Chun-ho, "Sinbunje rŭl t'onghaesŏ pon Chosŏn hugi sahoe ŭi sŏng-kyŏk ŭi ilmyŏn," 57–62.

82. Song Chun-ho, "Chosŏn hugi ŭi kwagŏ chedo," 89.

83. Ch'oe Chin-ok, *Chosŏn sidae saengwŏn-chinsa yŏn'gu* [A study of the classics-literary licentiates in the Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1998), 265.

84. Kawashima, "A Study of the *Hyangan,*" 11–16.

85. "Mubo," Changsŏgak collection (2-1741).

86. *Yŏkkwa p'alsebo* [Eight-generation genealogy of language examination passers], bound, photocopy edition at Harvard-Yenching Library collection (K2291.7/ 1750.4).

87. For quantitative data on the marriage connections of technical examination passers, see Ch'oe Chin-ok, "Chosŏn sidae chapkwa sŏlhaeng kwa ipkyŏkcha punsŏk" [An analysis of the technical examination administration and passers in the Chosŏn period], in *Chosŏn sidae chapkwa hapkyŏkcha ch'ongnam,* 37–45.

88. *Ch'angnyŏng Cho-ssi Sijunggong p'abo* 1: 26–7; *P'osan Kwak-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the P'osan Kwak] (Seoul, 1925), 16: 63b; *Paek-ssi taedongbo* 7: 8–9; *Yŏngil Chŏng-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the Yŏngil Chŏng] (Seoul, 1963), 1: 47–51; *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 338, 620, 663; and *Mansŏng taedongbo* 1: 243a, 2: 114b–115a, 235a–b, 238b, 243b–244a.

89. For a critical English-language analysis of adoption as an institution in Chosŏn Korea, including a discussion on the kinship boundary within which heirs were sought out, see Mark A. Peterson, *Korean Adoption and Inheritance: Case Studies in the Creation of a Classic Confucian Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 163–90.

90. Genealogical information comes from *Andong Kim-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the Andong Kim] (1959), 3: 341, 344, 350–51, 394–95, 518–19, and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 213.

91. *Andong Kim-ssi sebo,* 3: 341, 344, 350–51, 394–95, 518–19; *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 213. For a basic biographical account on Kim Pyŏng-yŏn, see *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 4: 684–85.

92. Basic biographies of Ŏ Yun-jung, Ŏ Chae-yŏn, and Ŏ Hyo-ch'ŏm are in *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 15: 9–10, 17, and 43. Genealogical information comes from Ŏ Yun-jung, ed., *Hamjong Ŏ-ssi sebo* [Genealogy of the Hamjong Ŏ] (Prefaced 1871), 1: 1a–5a, 3: 1a–1b, 7b–8b, 8: 4b–8a, 9: 31a–33b, 14: 15a–16b, 15: 34b–36b, 20: 4b, and *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 777.

93. In what may be the first English-langugage discussion of late Chosŏn *muban* as a social class, Kyung Moon Hwang argues that the *muban* by the late nineteenth century were completely separated from the *munban* aristocracy and cannot be considered a lower-ranking partner within the *yangban* class. See "Bureaucracy in the Transition to Korean Modernity: Secondary Status Groups and the Transformation of Government and Society, 1880–1930" (Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 1997), 327–32. Of course, this view is somewhat different from mine presented in this study, as I see the *muban* as a substratum of the larger *yangban* class, that is, the same general class as the *munban* but different in terms of political power and social prestige. Hwang and I perhaps disgree on the extent of the *muban*'s fall from grace, but we most certainly agree on the fall itself.

94. Yi Hong-nyŏl, "Mankwa sŏlhaeng ŭi chŏngch'aeksajŏk ch'ui," 207–36.

95. Yi Hong-du, "Mukwa rŭl t'onghae pon Chosŏn hugi ch'ŏnin ŭi sinbun pyŏn-dong," 269–307.

96. Sim Sŭng-gu, "Imjin Waeran chung mukwa ŭi unyŏng silt'ae wa kinŭng" [The actual condition of the military examination management and its functions during the Imjin War], *Chosŏn sidae sahakpo* 1 (April 1997): 69–122, and Sim Sŭng-gu, "Imjin Waeran chung mukwa kŭpcheja ŭi sinbun kwa t'ŭksŏng," 109–46.

97. Sŏnjo remarried after his first queen died. While married to one queen *(wanghu),* a Chosŏn-dynasty monarch could have many royal concubines *(pin),* and Sŏnjo was no exception.

98. James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 199.

99. Edward W. Wagner, "Social Stratification in Seventeenth Century Korea: Some Observations from a 1663 Seoul Census Register," *Occasional Papers on Korea* 1 (1974): 43–54.

100. Yi Su-gŏn, *Han'guk chungse sahoesa yŏn'gu* [Studies in the social history of medieval Korea] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1984), 346–52.

101. For an English-language discussion of the various stages the individual households went through in the process of upward social mobility, see John N. Somerville, "Stability in Eighteenth Century Ulsan," *Korean Studies Forum* 1 (1976–77): 11–12.

102. Yi Chun-gu, "Chosŏn hugi ŭi 'muhak' ko" [An investigation on the '*muhak*' in late Chosŏn period], *Taegu sahak* 23 (1983): 49–81.

103. Yi Chun-gu, *Chosŏn hugi sinbun chigyŏk pyŏndong yŏn'gu* [Studies on the changes in social status and official obligations in the late Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1993), 34–92, 125–64.

104. Yi Chun-gu, *Chosŏn hugi sinbun chigyŏk pyŏndong yŏn'gu,* 259–60.

105. James B. Palais, "Political Participation in Traditional Korea, 1876–1910," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1, no. 1 (1979): 78.

106. Chŏng Hae-ŭn, "Chosŏn hugi mukwa ipkyŏkcha ŭi sinbun kwa sahoejŏk chiwi," 187–243, and Quinones, "Military Officials of Yi Korea: 1864–1910," 691–700.

107. For a study on the literary works of *chungin* writers and their consciousness reflected, see Yun Chae-min, "Chosŏn hugi chunginch'ŭng Hanmunhak ŭi yŏn'gu" [A study of the *chungin* stratum classical Chinese literature in the late Chosŏn period] (Ph.D. diss., Koryŏ Taehakkyo, 1990). For the late Chosŏn *hyangni,* see Yi Hun-sang, "Chosŏn hugi ŭpch'i sahoe ŭi kujo wa cheŭi: hyangni chiptan ŭi chŏngch'esŏng hollan kwa ŭpch'i cheŭi ŭi yuhŭihwa" [The structure of local control and ceremonial rituals in late Chosŏn: A confusion in self-identity of the *hyangni* group and transformation of the local-control ceremonial rituals into entertainment], *Yŏksa hakpo* 147 (September 1995), 47–94.

108. In the resumés *(iryŏksŏ)* of government officials submitted during the Kabo Reform era, many from technical examination and *hyangni* backgrounds use choronyms different from those recorded in older documents, such as the technical examination graduate and *hyangni* rosters.

109. Cho U-sŏk, *Mubi yoram* [Essentials of military preparedness] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1982), preface by Yi Pyŏng-do. For a genealogy of the P'yŏngyang Cho, see *P'yŏngyang Cho-ssi sebo,* 1: 2a–6b, 14: 1a–2a, 4a–5b, 20b; *Ssijok wŏllyu,* 297–98; and *Mansŏng taedongbo* 2: 82a–84b.

110. Song Chun-ho, *Chosŏn sahoesa yŏn'gu,* 376–415.

111. *Sunjo sillok* [Veritable records of Sunjo] 4: 35b [1802.09.24 *(imjin)*]. Sŏ Yu-dae (1732–1802) passed his military examination in 1759. He was a key military man during the Chŏngjo era, serving four times as the Anti-Manchu Division commander, seven times as the Royal Division commander, three times as the Military Train-

ing Agency commander, and seven times as the Forbidden Guard Division commander. *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 12: 21.

112. For a short biography of Sin Hŏn, see *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 14: 63–64.

113. Song Ch'an-sik, "Chokpo" [Family genealogies], in Song Ch'an-sik, *Chosŏn hugi sahoe kyŏngjesa ŭi yŏn'gu* [Studies in the socioeconomic history of the late Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997), 622–30.

114. Yi Sŏng-mu, *Han'guk ŭi kwagŏ chedo,* 237.

115. *Sunjo sillok* 26: 20a–b [1823.04.20 *(kimi)*].

116. *Sunjo sillok* 28: 7a [1826.04.13 *(kapcha)*].

117. *Hŏnjong sillok* [Veritable records of Hŏnjong] 4: 5a [1837.04.05 *(imja)*].

118. *Ch'ŏlchong sillok* [Veritable records of Ch'ŏlchong] 14: 3a [1862.03.17 *(kihae)*].

119. Han'guk Inmyŏng Taesajŏn P'yŏnch'ansil, ed., *Han'guk inmyŏng taesajŏn* (Seoul: Sin'gu Munhwasa, 1967), 735.

120. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 46.

121. On the role of *hyangni* in symbolically representing the masses and actually administering masked dance or *p'ansori* festivities, see Yi Hun-sang, *Chosŏn hugi ŭi hyangni,* 149–74. For an argument that Confucianism—the system of ethics traditionally championed by the elite to justify their privileged social status—gradually enabled the less-privileged elements such as women and even those of mean status to challenge the elite male domination, presenting a "counter-hegemonic discourse," see JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Filial Emotions and Filial Values: Changing Patterns in the Discourse of Filiality in Late Chosŏn Korea," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55, no. 1 (1995): 129–77. For an English-language introduction to the *p'ansori* and folk performances, see Tong-il Cho (Cho Tong-il), "The General Nature of *P'ansori," Korea Journal* 26, no. 4 (April 1986): 10–21, and Du-Hyun Lee, "Korean Folk Play," in *Folk Culture of Korea,* ed. Shin-yong Chun (Seoul: International Cultural Foundation, 1974), 113–29.

122. The tiger can easily be substituted with, for example, a marauding party of Japanese soldiers. I have seen variations of the theme involving a tiger or a Japanese gang in oral tales from Koyang (Kyŏnggi Province), Puyŏ (Ch'ungchŏng Province), and Kimhae (Kyŏngsang Province).

123. A short biography of Im Kyŏng-ŏp is in *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwa sajŏn* 18: 691–93. For a nineteenth-century edition of the *Im Changgun chŏn (Tale of General Im),* a late Chosŏn vernacular novel, with original text and translation as well as commentaries, see Kim Ki-hyŏn, trans., "Im Changgun chŏn" [Tale of General Im], in Koryŏ Taehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guso [Korea University National Culture Research Institute], ed., *Han'guk kojŏn munhak chŏnjip* [Collection of classical Korean literature] (Seoul: Koryŏ Taehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1995) 15: 219–93. My discussion of military heroes in the late Chosŏn popular culture is based on the following studies: Sŏ Tae-sŏk, *Kundam sosŏl ŭi kujo wa paegyŏng* [The structure and context of military novels] (Seoul: Ihwa Yŏja Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1985), 11–14, 219–40; Cho Tong-il, *Minjung yŏngung iyagi* [Tales of popular heroes] (Seoul: Munye Ch'ulp'ansa, 1992), 266–317; Cho Hŭng-yun, *Han'guk ŭi mu* [Korea's shamanism] (Seoul: Chŏngŭmsa, 1983), 94–111; and Kim T'ae-gon, comp. *Han'guk musindo* [Korean shaman god painting] (Seoul: Yŏrhwadang, 1989), 11–14.

124. Boudewijn Walraven, "Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society," in

Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea, ed. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 188–92.

125. *Communication and the Evolution of Society,* trans. with an intro. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 178–82. Of course, periodization of Korean history remains an unresolved issue, and proposed labels for the Chosŏn period have included medieval *(chungse),* feudal *(ponggŏn),* and early modern *(kŭnse).* At least according to the criteria used in Habermas's discussions of social principles of organization, Chosŏn society appears to have been "traditional": political class rule with state power and socioeconomic classes, "functional differention between social and system integration," and a potential for "internally determined identity crisis." Habermas contrasts such a modern formation with a liberal-capitalist one characterized by unpolitical class rule with wage labor and capital, "system-integrative economic system taking over socially integrative tasks," and a potential for a whole "system crisis." See *Legitimation Crisis,* trans. with and intro. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), 17–24.