

## AN EVOLVING CONFUCIAN PATRIARCHY: AN ANALYSIS OF WEDDING AND FUNERAL RITES IN SIXTEENTH- CENTURY KOREA

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This article examines the notion of patriarchy and patrimonialism in Korean society during mid-Chosŏn through an empirical analysis of wedding and funeral rituals as portrayed in the sixteenth-century diaries of members of the Korean elite. Although Korean society during the Chosŏn era has been regarded as strongly patriarchal because of its Confucianization, the findings of this study provide further evidence of the fact that flexibility still existed. For instance, the diaries analyzed in this study show that newlywed couples resided temporarily at the bride's house, thus indicating that the Confucian transformation of the wedding rite remained incomplete as late as the sixteenth century. This is also evidenced by transitional aspects associated with *yangban* funeral rites at this time, namely the recognition of maternal kinship and the unsettled nature of primogeniture rule. Even though funeral ceremonies at the household level were performed in stricter accordance with orthodox Confucian rituals than those related to nuptials, the extent of Confucian piety exhibited across all social classes in the preparation of funeral rites hints at the less rigid nature during the sixteenth century of the patriarchal domination that characterized traditional Korean society. Meanwhile, the historical existence of a self-manufacturing domestic economy and the *yangban's* appropriation of government provisions—i.e. public goods being used for private purposes such as the carrying out of household Confucian rites—confirm the presence of patrimonial characteristics in mid-Chosŏn. The fact that mutual assistance between neighbors and close acquaintances at the community level was rooted in Korean tradition implies that communal networks of mutual-aid may have been an indigenous and essential resource in the performance of rituals in Korean society at the time.

Keywords: *Miam ilgi*, *Mukchae ilgi*, Yu Hŭi-ch'un, Yi Mun-gŏn, Max Weber, patriarchy, patrimonialism, wedding and funeral rites, rules of residence, Confucian piety, sixteenth century

## RITUALS AND CONFUCIAN PIETY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY KOREA

Rituals are symbolic expressions of culturally standardized language and behavior that serve as important indicators of a given society's understanding and interpretation of life's most important events. Examining a society's rituals makes it possible to better understand its values. Thus, in a Confucian society, rituals may serve as a barometer for assessing the degree of that society's Confucian orientation. There was a constant effort during the first 150 years that followed the foundation of the Chosŏn dynasty to "Confucianize" the social life of the country, a task that was mainly attempted through the formalization of coming-of-age, marriage, funeral, and ancestral rituals. However, transforming what had been a Buddhist society during the preceding Koryŏ era into a Confucian one proved to be an arduous task that took several centuries to achieve.

Up until early-Chosŏn, daughters were not discriminated against in favor of sons (Yi 1992; Mun 2004). The importance of sons became emphasized following the implementation of the Clan code (*chongbŏp* 宗法) that established primogeniture rule. Thereafter, the practice of adopting sons from relatives became popular among sonless families as a means to carry on the family name and manage ancestral rituals (Pak 1999; Peterson 1996, 1999). The adoption from the mid-seventeenth century of a system of patrilineal inheritance of rituals and property through the eldest son (*chŏkchangja*) was expected to empower the status of the patriarch within the family (*kamun*) from both a material and ideological standpoint (Pak 1999).

The ideological aspect of Chosŏn society was related to the Confucian piety on which social relations at all levels relied. The degree of individuals' filial piety was seen as a measure of their potential loyalty to the king when it came to selecting government officials. It has been noted that this kind of filial piety in households also formed the basis of Western patriarchy. Ancient Rome had a strongly patriarchal system wherein fathers controlled all aspects of the lives of family members. The use of patriarchy here derives from Weber's ideal type where the domination of patriarchy changed into patrimonialism (Weber 1997). Patrimonialism included a self-sufficient economic system based on the concept of the *oikos*,<sup>1</sup> and an ideology based on patriarchal power that stressed filial piety (Weber 1978). In a patrimonial society, the patriarchal relationships within the family are extended to the reciprocal relationship between the master and subject, wherein

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<sup>1</sup> The *oikos* economy was the basic economic unit of ancient Greece and was comprised of a single extended household characterized by its self-sufficiency and self-manufacturing.

once a status is bequeathed by the lord, it becomes regarded as a private privilege, and appropriation can ensue (Pak 1999).

Among East Asian countries, the term “patrimonial state” has been used to describe Chinese society (Weber 1951 [1920]). Outwardly, Chosŏn claimed to be a “small China” (*so-Chunghwa*) and tried to mimic China’s regional patrimonial archetype by changing its civil service examinations and even its political system. As a result, it has been argued that the Chosŏn dynasty became the most classic Confucian society in history, Chinese society notwithstanding (Deuchler 1992; Peterson 1996, 1999). In his study tracing the elements of Confucian culture and patrimonialistic states throughout history, the Weberian specialist Pak Sŏnghwan classified Korean society as one that was Confucian-patrimonial (Pak Sŏnghwan 1999). In this regard, the Chosŏn dynasty’s patriarchal characteristics and patrimonial traits, along with the Confucianization of its rituals, are worth analyzing.

The degree of Confucianization of sixteenth-century Chosŏn society has been a matter of debate. In one sense, sixteenth-century Chosŏn literati were in the process of adopting Confucian ethics. Prominent Confucian<sup>2</sup> scholars emerged and several Confucian ethics textbooks of the period referenced ancient Chinese texts. On the other hand, there was also an awareness at the time that Chosŏn was not fully Confucianized. In fact, some scholars in sixteenth-century Chosŏn opposed the idea of blindly adopting and mimicking Chinese culture, and asserted that the culture of Chosŏn Korea differed from that of China in the areas of matrilocality and equal inheritance rights for daughters (Yi 1992).

It has been argued that the Confucianization of rituals became more pervasive in sixteenth-century Korea as a response to the discrepancies that existed between the Confucian ideal and the Korean reality. However, contrary to what some period theorists have advanced, wedding rituals had in actuality not yet become a true reflection of Confucian principles by the mid-Chosŏn era. Confucian-style wedding procedures, as outlined in the *Family Rites of Zhu Xi* (朱子家禮, *Zhuzi jialǐ*; Kor. *Chuja karye*) as the textbook on Confucian rituals, were represented by the practice of *ch’inyŏng* (親迎), or transfer of the bride’s residence from her natal home to that of the bridegroom (Deuchler 1992). Although Confucian-style wedding rites characterized by the practice of *ch’inyŏng* were performed at the royal level, among the general populace, the public did not feel it necessary to change their traditional customs and practices to accommodate this new Confucianized form. Rather, some Confucian scholars opted for a hybrid version of the Confucian-style wedding, the so-called *pan ch’inyŏng* (半親迎), a compromise form

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<sup>2</sup> The term Confucian is used herein in its broadest meaning, encompassing what is also called Neo-Confucian.

of wedding rite that was a byproduct of governmental pressures to follow the Chinese/Confucian style of *ch'inyǒng*.

Scholars have posited Korean weddings as the least Confucianized rite during the Chosŏn period (Deuchler 1992; Ch'oe 1983), while funerals, by contrast, have been argued to be the most Confucianized (Ch'oe 1983). This result has primarily been linked to the emphasis on the most typical form of piety manifested in Confucian culture, the parent-child relationship. The funeral ceremony became a prime vehicle for officials to express their sincere filial piety. Although the Chosŏn government encouraged the Confucianized funereal form and supported the burial ceremonies of high officials, the funeral ceremonies of the *yangban* literati during the Chosŏn period were, much as was the case with the wedding ritual, performed in a rather mixed manner. This was especially prevalent during early Chŏson, when funeral ceremonies were performed at temples due to the persistent influence of Buddhism. The Korean traditional practice that could be traced back to the previous Koryŏ dynasty of observing a three-year mourning period following the death of a parent and residing near the deceased parent's tomb during that period (so-called *simyo sari*) were still widespread among *yangban* after the reign of King Chungjong (r. 1506–1544) during the mid-Chŏson period (Kim, 2001). Such practices were not recommended in standard Confucian ritual handbooks such as the *Family Rites of Zhu Xi*. Therefore, despite the ideological stress on filial piety, the performance of funeral rites was not yet fully Confucianized in sixteenth-century Chŏson.

With the exception of instances involving the royal court, wedding and funeral rites in early and mid-Chŏson were performed in transitional, hybrid ways not quite in accordance with strict Confucian principles. While a significant number of contemporary scholars have studied the rituals themselves, the transitional process underlying these Confucianized rituals has not yet been analyzed as a means of interpreting the degree of patriarchy in Chosŏn society during this period. Although the procedural details and implications of traditional Korean wedding rituals have been examined (Pak 1983) and Deuchler has made the distinction between the Korean wedding ceremony and its Chinese counterpart (Deuchler 1992), more research is needed on the distinguishing characteristics of Korean wedding ceremonies and their significance. A similar lack of analysis also applies to our understanding of Chosŏn funeral rites. This can be attributed to the fact that historians have thus far been more interested in presenting newly discovered data (Kim 2001) than exploring that data's meaning. Despite the fact that scholars have long been aware of the need for historical research on patriarchy (Cho 1988; Yi 1990; Ch'oe 2004), such research was not seriously

undertaken until Yi (2003), who tried to describe the patriarchy of the Chosŏn dynasty at the societal level.

This study examines the procedures and preparations of wedding and funeral rituals in order to understand the characteristics of patriarchy and patrimonialism in sixteenth-century Korean society. Analyzing these rituals will serve as a barometer for measuring the penetration of patriarchal ideology, or prevalence of Confucianism in society. Patriarchy in Weberian terminology focuses on the ideological aspects of domination. Here, patriarchy is defined as a system of domination in economic and ideological terms. Therefore, it can be divided into two aspects: a patriarchal domination from an ideological standpoint, and a patrimonial economic system. The structure of patriarchal domination as an expression of Confucian piety by those who participated in the rituals will be examined. The following points should be kept in mind: How strictly were Confucian ethics and the manifest practices enforced? Was there any stress or emphasis placed on paternal-side relations and kin? What was the self-sufficient economy, and how did the exercise of appropriation unfold in mid Chosŏn society?

### THE *MIAM ILGI* AND *MUKCHAE ILGI*

This study is based on data culled from the *Miam ilgi* (眉巖日記) and *Mukchae ilgi* (默齋日記). These were the diaries of Yu Hŭi-ch'un and Yi Mun-gŏn, sixteenth-century *yangban* who hailed from prestigious families dating back to the previous Koryŏ dynasty. Yi Mun-gŏn (1494–1567) was a very brilliant high-ranking official with a deep understanding of Confucianism and good handwriting who came from the Sŏngju Yi clan. His ancestors were founding members of the Koryŏ dynasty and served the king in high ranking positions such as Taejehak (Director of the Office of Royal Decrees). Yi Mun-gŏn was forced to step down from his government position after a literati purge (Kim 1998). Yu Hŭi-ch'un (1513–1577) was a well-reputed Confucian scholar and tutor of King Sŏnjo (r. 1567–1608) who came from the Sŏnsan Yu clan. Both Yu Hŭi-ch'un's maternal and paternal lineages, as well as his wife's clan, belonged to the *sarim* (forest of scholars) faction. In particular, his maternal grandfather Ch'oe Pu (1454–1504) was a leader of the *sarim* faction in the Honam region. Both authors held high official positions and were exiled during the so-called Ŭlsa sahwa (Literati Purge of 1545). Both handwritten diaries were later reproduced as printed works.<sup>3</sup> The *Miam ilgi* was

<sup>3</sup> As far as the *Miam ilgi* is concerned, this article relies on the version produced by the Chosŏnsa p'yŏnsuhoe (1938) as well the version translated into modern Korean by the Tamyang hyang'to munhwa yŏn'guhoe (1996).

kept by Yu's offspring for several hundred years. Recognized for its accuracy, it was one of the historical materials used to compile the *Sŏnjo sillok* (Annals of King Sŏnjo). Meanwhile, Yi's diary was found quite recently in the late twentieth century (Kim 1998).

Both diaries contain thorough accounts of the daily lives of *yangban* during the mid-Chosŏn era, including the procedures and actual performance of wedding and funeral rites. The *Miam ilgi*, which Yu kept until his death, was written from 1567 to 1577. In the fifth volume of his diary, Yu included precise accounts of his preparations for his grandson's wedding. The *Mukchae ilgi* includes Yi's daily records from the period 1535–1567, the first volume of which included one hundred days of entries regarding funeral rites. This article will focus on the specific rituals surrounding the transfer of the tomb of Yi's deceased father.

## I. The Preparations for and Procedures of Wedding Rituals

When an offspring approached a marriageable age in Chosŏn society, his or her potential future spouse was screened through their parents' kin network and go-betweens. Several factors, such as the subject's family wealth and his or her personality and appearance, were considered during this process. The series of procedural activities, from the initial marriage discussion to the conclusion of the wedding ceremony, reveals that marriage was a rather complicated matter comprising varied interests. More to the point, marriage functioned, especially among elite families, as a means of both reproducing status and determining the inheritance of property. For these reasons, a significant amount of time was spent in preparation before finally performing the actual wedding ritual.

### (1) Wedding Ritual Procedures

In this section, the preparation and process of the wedding of Yu Hŭi-ch'un's grandson, Yu Kwang-sŏn, with a daughter from the Kim family will be examined. Although both the Yu and Kim families could boast reputable backgrounds, Yu's in-laws were more prosperous than Yu himself. The two families were unacquainted prior to the marriage, as it was a marriage arranged by a go-between. As such, from the perspective of Yu's in-laws, their interest in proceeding with the marriage was somewhat ambivalent, and as a result, the marriage between the two families was delayed. Though it was reported that there had been death and illness in the bride's family, the postponement was primarily related to Yu's declining social status and wealth. After receiving a gift sent from the groom's house, the bride's father expressed his delight about the perfect size of the groom's clothing and the beauty of the bridal gift (*Miam ilgi*, 1576.01.13). It can be inferred from

this that prior to receiving this gift, the bride's family had been uncertain about the groom's family's distinction and social status. Given the importance placed on social status, Yu was determined to select the most prominent persons possible to serve as wedding guests (or *wiyo*) so as to emphasize and glorify the prominence of his family. Accordingly, he chose important government officials as *wiyo*.

The main factor characterizing the hybrid *pan ch'inyōng* wedding ritual was its rules of residence. These *pan ch'inyōng* rituals were different from both the Confucian style of wedding emphasized by the Chosŏn government, as well as the indigenous practice of matrilocality. Table 1 outlines the Yu family's wedding procedures, indicating that eventually *ugwi* (the bride's return to the groom's home) took place in the last month of the wedding year, or within one year of the completion of the wedding.

Table 1: Wedding Rite Procedures of Yu Kwang-sŏn and His Bride

Date (Lunar)	Wedding Rite Procedure
1573.08.19	(1) Wedding proposal ( <i>ũibon</i> 議婚)
1576.01.25–30	Invitation of wedding guests ( <i>wiyo</i> 圍繞)
1576.01.13	(2) Wedding betrothal ( <i>napch'ae</i> 納采)
1576.02.18	(3) Wedding ceremony ( <i>chōnan</i> 奠雁)
1576.02.18–22	Bridegroom's 1st visit to bride's house.
1576.02.29–03.17	Bridegroom's 2nd visit to bride's house.
1576.04.28–05.21	Bridegroom's 3rd visit to bride's house.
1576.10.28	Bridegroom's 4th visit to bride's house.
1576.12.25	(4) Bride enters the bridegroom's house ( <i>ugwi</i> 于歸). Newlywed couple settles there

As shown in Table 1, Yu Hŭi-ch'un's grandson's wedding was performed in the form of *pan ch'inyōng*, i.e., half-Confucian style, wherein the bride went to the bridegroom's home upon marriage.

The process of this *pan ch'inyōng* unfolded as follows: *ũibon* (wedding proposal), *napch'ae* (wedding betrothal), *chōnan* (wedding ceremony), and *ugwi* (bride's entering the bridegroom's house). The rules of residence for newlyweds under the *pan ch'inyōng* were a mix of the patrilocal and matrilocality forms. The bride stayed at her birthplace whereas the bridegroom went back and forth between the bridal home and his own home. Here it is important to note that Yu's bride resided with her parents during the first year of marriage, which demonstrates a form of uxori-locality or *namgwiŏgabon* (男歸女家婚).<sup>4</sup> However, this form of marriage was eventually transformed into the patrilocal form observed by the Confucian scholarly class of late Chosŏn.

<sup>4</sup> *Namgwiŏgabon* indicated that a man stayed at his wife's house after the marriage (*sŏryubugabon* 婿留婦家婚) or lived in one's wife's home (*ch'ŏgasari*).

The residential patterns of Yu's grandson demonstrate the flexibility possible in the adoption of Confucian procedures and rules of residence, and thus the transitional stage of patriarchy that prevailed during this period at the household level. Such flexibility in terms of residency practices allowed for the maximization of the family's resources for the grandson's future. If the in-laws had a superior social background, the groom could opt to reside at the bridal home. However, according to the *Miam ilgi*, Yu Kwang-sŏn's future residence was destined to be his grandfather's house, where the future heir could become acquainted with elite social networks. In addition, the rules of residence observable in the *pan ch'inyŏng* indicate that adaptation was not confined to the woman's side, but rather was required from both sides. After several visits during the first years of marriage, the bridegroom took some time to adjust to his in-laws. This was quite different from the patrilocal pattern wherein the bride had to adjust to the in-laws' culture from the very start of the marriage. Equal inheritance rights as practiced in mid-Chosŏn society may have been one reason for the flexibility in the rules of residence evident in the marriage of Yu Hŭi-ch'un's grandson. The bride inherited such property as a horse, house, and clothing, which were then bequeathed in the form of a gift from her parents to their son-in-law (Park 2007).

## **(2) The Preparation of Wedding Rituals**

During the early Chosŏn dynasty, giving extravagant bridal gifts was perceived as problematic at the societal level. Flaunting material wealth through wedding gifts and ceremonies was actually prohibited by the government. In keeping with this practice, the marriage of Yu Hŭi-ch'un's grandson was kept modest despite the fact that Yu Hŭi-ch'un was a high government official. The nuptial clothing and fabrics were prepared in the groom's house long before the wedding. Yu's wife prepared a gift for her future granddaughter-in-law even before Yu's grandson reached the age of marriage. Although coordinated by the bridegroom's family, the preparation of other bridal gifts, such as the bridegroom's horse-set and decoration of the wedding box, was actually carried out by special artisans. Other preparations for Kwang-sŏn's wedding were made by people outside the bridegroom's home, such as neighbors, other relatives, and members of Yu Hŭi-ch'un's social network.

Table 2: Preparation of Wedding Rites

Preparer	Wedding Item Preparation	Date (Lunar)
Bridegroom's Home	(Artisan) Horse stirrup manufactured	1573.09.15
	Silk fabrics dyed	1573.09.20
	Bridegroom's wedding clothing, hat and belt prepared	1575.11
	Servant's hat prepared by groom's father obtained	1575.12
	(Artisan) Silk wrapped around the wedding letter box	1576.01.09
	Several kinds of colored silk fabric prepared as a bridal gift	1576.01.10
	Servants for wedding brought from Yu's birthplace	1576.02.15
Friends and Kin	Horses, horse related items, and decorations borrowed from a friend	1573.08.23 1573.09.10
	Groom's arrow for the wedding ceremony borrowed from a friend	1573.09.15
	Groom's wedding hat and wedding shoes borrowed from a friend	1573.10.06
	Big wrapping cloth for wedding box borrowed from a friend	1573.10.23
	Wedding box carrier borrowed from a relative	1576.01.08
	Decorated fan for groom received from son-in-law	1576.02.13
	Three office servants borrowed from a relative	1576.02.16
	Two servants and horses borrowed from a relative	1576.02.16
	Servants and horses borrowed from nephews and a relative	1576.02.16
Officials	Saddle cover asked for and received from superintendent of post stations ( <i>ch'albang</i> 察訪)	1573.10.08
	Potassium nitrate asked for and received from governor's aide ( <i>p'an'gyan</i> 判官)	1573.11.12
	Saddle foot rest, leather bag, pheasant, ginger preserved in honey asked for and received from county magistrate ( <i>kunsu</i> 郡守)	1574.02.20
	Thick white paper, ink stick, writing brush received from provincial governor ( <i>kwanch'alsa</i> 觀察使)	1575.11.03
	Female goose received from small county magistrate ( <i>moksa</i> 牧使)	1576.01.12
	Male goose received from local magistrate ( <i>suryōng</i> 守令)	1576.02.14

As shown in Table 2, wedding goods were provided in several ways. The preparations undertaken by the family of the bridegroom were related to the wedding ceremony itself. The groom's father, who held the Junior Rank Nine position of Nūngch'ambong (Keeper of royal tombs) was away from home, and therefore was not deeply involved in the preparations. However, he sent his son a new hat and belt, as well as a hat for his servant to wear on the wedding day. The groom's mother was not healthy enough to take care of her son's wedding. Yu Hūi-ch'un, the bridegroom's grandfather, hosted the marriage, bringing two servants from the southern part of the peninsula where he was born. As the wedding host, Yu Hūi-ch'un ordered a special artisan to make the stirrup for the

wedding horse, and to wrap the silk around the wedding letter box. His wife dyed silk fabrics and sewed the groom's wedding clothing and wedding box for the bridal gift, which contained several lengths of silk fabric. As they mostly consisted of expensive and colorful silk fabrics that could not be immediately attained, the bridal gift preparations took place over a long period of time. Not all the wedding items were made at home. Some necessary items were borrowed from friends and kin. The fact that wedding ceremonies were occasionally held in his neighborhood allowed Yu to receive some community assistance. Some friends sent items before Yu even asked. Yu requested items related to the preparation and decoration of the horses which would be needed for the wedding day procession. The decorative arrow which would be worn by the groom was sent by a close friend. Some of Yu's pupils sent the groom a ceremonial hat and shoes which had been used in the weddings of their own sons. A huge wrapping cloth and a wedding box carrier were borrowed from a friend. The groom's decorative fan was sent by Yu's son-in-law, who also sent three servants to accompany them on the wedding day. Additionally, Yu's relatives and nephews sent servants and horses for the day of the nuptials.

Officials also contributed by giving or lending rare items that were hard to obtain. For instance, the saddle and decorations were borrowed from a superintendant of post stations. The potassium nitrate used for the torches was sent by a governor's aide (*p'an'gwan*). While a county magistrate (*kunsu*) sent a saddle footrest, leather bag, pheasant, and ginger preserved in honey, a provincial governor (*kwanch'alsa*) sent thick writing paper, ink, and a writing brush. For the wedding day, a pair of wild geese was sent by local and regional magistrates as a symbol of harmony for the newlyweds.

As demonstrated by these wedding preparations, the steps undertaken by the groom's family were confined to preparing the items necessary for the wedding ceremony itself. Influence and official positions were used to secure goods from relatives and friends. Moreover, Yu, who once held a high government position, utilized public resources and social capital for his grandson's wedding ceremony. By extending invitations to his high-ranking friends and asking them to be special wedding guests, or *njyo*, Yu was able to raise the status of the wedding, as well as impress his in-laws and the rest of the guests. Within the confines of the wedding preparations, public goods seem to have been appropriated in the form of help from government officials.

## II. The Procedures of and Preparations for Funeral Rites

The most visible measure for judging an official in Chosŏn society was his adherence to Confucian standards. In order to be considered a loyal servant to the

king, an official needed to maintain a strict adherence to Confucian procedures during his parents' funerals. The degree of Confucianization observed in the performance of a funeral was considered a litmus test for an official's Confucian piety. However, for most elites of the sixteenth century, funeral rites were practiced in a very mixed manner.

According to the *Family Rites of Zhu Xi*, Confucian norms required that tomb relocation rituals be performed as seriously as the original funeral rites. In his diary, *Mukchae ilgi*, Yi Mun-gŏn describes how he carried out the relocation ritual for his father's tomb, a ritual which was not a regular funeral but rather the transfer of an existing grave to a new location. Although he was the youngest son, the death of his two older brothers and Yi's holding of a government post effectively resulted in his becoming the first son, and in him directing the ritual. His nephew, Yi Hwi, who was the grandson of Yi Mun-gŏn's deceased eldest brother, assisted him in the process. In order to honor tradition and show respect to the main family (*pon'ga* 本家), Yi Mun-gŏn occasionally asked the main family about the tomb relocation ritual and received assistance from them.

Yi was forced to move his father's tomb because its location was going to overlap the boundaries of the royal tombs. The new grave for his father was to be united with his deceased mother's tomb. Coincidentally, the tomb relocation period for Yi's father overlapped the three year mourning period for his mother. The account in Yi Mun-gŏn's diary reveals the mindset of *yangban* families vis-à-vis their piety towards parents as well as their kinship relations through the flow of materials and emotional support.

In the following section, the process and preparation of the tomb relocation rite for Yi Mun-gŏn's father will be examined.<sup>5</sup>

### (1) Funeral Rite Procedures

Unlike most members of the *yangban* elite of the period, Yi adhered strictly to Confucian ritual guidelines when performing his father's tomb relocation funeral rite. The actual funeral rite was performed on the eleventh day of the second lunar month of 1536. However, the process of preparing for this single day's ceremony took a substantially longer period of time, with ten days needed from the opening of the old tomb to the building of a new one. Yi did his utmost to ensure he followed the procedures correctly.

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<sup>5</sup> This study relies on the annotated version of the *Mukchae ilgi* published by Kim Hyŏnyŏng (1998).

Table 3: Funeral Rite Procedures: Moving Yi Mun-gön's Father's Tomb  
(Key steps enumerated)

Date (Lunar)	Funeral Rite Procedure	Participants
1536.02.08	Yi's nephew informs his ancestors of his plan to move the tomb.	
1536.02.11	(1) Rite for the old grave and rite for the earth god performed.	Yi, cousin, nephew
1536.02.13	Clothing for the dead body prepared and grave dug.	Yi's wife prepared clothing
1536.02.14	Resin applied to the outer coffin, the ground consisting of ocher, sand, and lime trodden down. Food offered in the morning and evening to spirits.	Yi, cousin, nephew
1536.02.15	Full-moon ceremony ( <i>mangje</i> 望祭), and food offered morning and evening to spirits.	
1536.02.16	(2) <i>Taeryöm</i> (大殮), old coffin moved and the dead body re clothed.	Yi, cousin
1536.02.17	(3) Coffin lowered into the grave, rite for the earth god ( <i>t'ojisin-je</i> 土地神祭) and rite for the departed after the burial ( <i>uje</i> 虞祭) performed.	Yi, cousin, servant
1536.02.18	(4) Grave mound completed, rite held before the new tomb ( <i>myoje</i> 墓祭) performed.	Yi, cousin, nephew
1536.02.19	The remaining wood from the old grave buried.	Workers, servants
1536.02.20	End of the ceremony announced.	Yi
1536.02.21	Borrowed items returned, gravestones requested.	Yi

As shown in Table 3, Confucian procedures for tomb relocation such as removing the dead body from the old tomb and dressing it in new clothes before transferring it to the new coffin were strictly followed. As each new procedure began early in the morning, Yi started preparations at dawn of each day. Sacrificial rites for the earth god, old grave god, and new grave god were performed separately. It can be inferred from this record that Yi tried to follow the Confucianized procedures for the relocation rite delineated in the *Ceremonial Usage of the Jiali* (*Jiali yijie* 家禮儀節, Kor. *Karye ñijõl*). Yi's reproof of his neighbors for not following Confucian rules underscores the strictness with which Yi himself adhered to such Confucian norms.

The first procedural step in the tomb relocation ritual was the opening of the old tomb (1). It was on a frigid winter day that Yi shoveled away the snow, and then performed the ceremony dedicated to the earth god. During this ceremony, Yi and his nephew had to change their clothing for Yi's father's funeral. They removed the *yõnbok*<sup>6</sup> which they had worn to mourn Yi's dead mother. However,

<sup>6</sup> *Yõnbok* (練服) indicated mourning clothes made of coarse silk. Such clothes were worn from the first anniversary of the death of a person until the memorial service held twenty-seven months after the funeral.

they were unsure that the change of clothing would satisfy Confucian ethical standards. After servants formed the base for the new tomb out of coal, wood and lime, Yi demanded that they bring new clothing for his father's dead body. The second part of the procedure was dressing the corpse in new clothes (2). They opened the old coffin, clothed the corpse with the new clothes, and then moved the body to the new coffin. The third procedure was a ceremony for the coffin and the soul once it had finally settled into the new grave (3). In an attempt to protect the corpse from becoming infested with worms, they made the surface of the grave facing the outer coffin as solid as possible. The ceremony was performed in order to worship the earth god. The final procedure was a consecration of the grave and tomb following the forming of the tomb in an oval shape (4). Yi's cousin and nephew assisted during this final ceremony by reading a message of condolence. Once the ritual was finished, Yi visited to some of his friends and kin who had assisted with the tomb relocation rituals to thank them for their help.

The scope of the relatives who participated in this ritual reflects the boundaries of Yi's close kin. These included his cousin and his cousin's son, whose roles were included in the five mourning grades, or so-called *obokche* (五服制).<sup>7</sup> While the central positions were supposed to be held by Yi's deceased brother and that brother's son, Yi performed the role of host. Moreover, although Yi's eldest nephew was alive, he was limited to playing the role of an assistant rather than that of an initiator. This was because he lacked the power Yi Mun-gŏn possessed to mobilize resources. As such, the primogeniture rule was not strictly followed in Yi's execution of these funeral rites.

As we can see in the performance of his father's tomb relocation rituals, Yi Mun-gŏn did his best to strictly follow Confucian guidelines. However, his persistent concern for geomancy and his three-year mourning period for his mother were not part of standard Confucian practice. Rather, these seem to have been remnants of more traditional Korean society. The fact that the youngest son hosted the funeral rather than the eldest grandson is further evidence that the clan did not perform their roles in a strictly Confucian manner. Thus, patriarchy would appear to have been in a transitional phase when viewed within the confines of the funeral procedures undertaken by Yi Mun-gŏn.

## (2) The Preparation of Funeral Rites

Although the rite itself was completed in a short period of time, the actual preparations began in the eleventh month of 1535 and did not conclude until the

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<sup>7</sup> In Confucian funeral rituals, the closeness of relatives to the deceased is clearly demarcated by five kinds of funeral clothing.

second month of the following year. One hundred days of preparation were necessary. This is because the mobilization of the resources required for the funeral rite demanded massive human and material effort. Some of the items were manufactured at home, and others were provided by members of the extended social and familial networks. Table 4 shows Yi's preparation of the funeral rite using his own resources, as well as those of kin and non-familial social networks.

Table 4. The Preparation of Funeral Rites

Preparer	Item in terms of Funeral Preparation		Date (Lunar)	
Yi's Home	The new tomb area examined		1535.11.17	
	Case of another tomb relocation ritual studied		1535.12.10	
	A textbook on tomb relocation rituals borrowed and the procedure recorded		1535.12.18–19 1535.12.26	
	Fortune teller consulted over the date of the tomb relocation ritual		1535.12.27	
	Geomancer consulted on the location of the new tomb <sup>8</sup>			
	Letters carved on the new tombstone on the father's grave		1535.11.27 1536.01.9, 24, 26	
	Stone buried in the ground		1536.02.01	
	New clothing for the dead body made		1536.02.03	
	Cooks and maids prepare <i>kwa</i> (果), <i>chu</i> (酒), <i>myŏn</i> (麵) <sup>9</sup>		1536.01.21	
Preparation and Carrying of Coffin	Inner coffin	Blacksmith prepares the tools necessary for the iron nails and shovels	1536.01.19	
		Carpenter makes decorative instruments for the funeral ceremony		1536.02.05
		Manufacture of the coffin requested (to the <i>kwihusŏ</i> )	1535.11.02	
		Coffin paid for		
		Carpenter asked to make inner coffin	1535.12.27	
	Outer Coffin	Cart drivers carry wood to be used for the inner coffin	1536.01.13	
		Ruler borrowed from a neighbor instead of sending for the carpenter	1536.01.18	
		Yi Mun-gŏn seals the inner coffin with iron and resin	1536.02.06	
		Wood for outer coffin borrowed from a friend	1536.01.12	
Carpenters carve the outer coffin		1536.01.13		
Despite unfinished work, carpenter's labor paid for		1536.01.14		

<sup>8</sup> A geomancer is a person who searches for auspicious sites for graves and houses based on the tenets of Eastasian philosophy regarding the interpretation and use of land and space. On the other hand, a fortuneteller is a person who recommends auspicious dates, informs people of inauspicious dates, makes predictions and gives advice regarding coming events.

<sup>9</sup> *Kwa* indicates Korean traditional cookies made by frying flour in oil. Although the original document referred to *kwa* (果), it appears to have denoted 'making *kwa*' (菓), a variant of the character *kwa* (果). References to *chegwa* (祭果) on other dates would seem to indicate that *kwa* (果) was in fact being referred to herein. *Chu* refers to Korean traditional wine and *myŏn* to Korean traditional noodles.

		with clothing and beans	
		Mayor's cart drivers transport the outer coffin	1536.01.22
		Yi's nephew mends the outer coffin with resin	1536.01.15–02.13
Official help		Such food as millet, rice, and beans asked for and received from governor	1536.01.12–26
		Straw bags and torches asked for and received from castle lord (城主)	1536.01.20, 26 1536.02.09
		Coal, resin, and limestone asked for and received from high officials	1535.12.25–1536.01.29
		Soldiers and servants asked for and received from a nearby governor	1536.02.04–12
		Oilpaper and cords received from the royal stable	1536.02.02
		A ritual table with prepared dishes asked for and received from a friend named Kim	1536.01.20
Kin and Friends		White paper, wood, mat, cotton asked for and received from friends, including Kim	1536.01.12
		Rice asked for and received from Yi's uncle	1536.02.12
		Decoration for the funeral rite borrowed from cousin	1536.01.22

As shown in Table 4, Yi was very meticulous in his preparations for and performance of his father's tomb relocation rituals. To make sure he was following the correct procedures, Yi borrowed a copy of the *Ceremonial Usage of the Jiali* from his neighbor and transcribed the book by hand to ensure he did not miss any of the details associated with performing a proper ceremony. He also went to observe the tomb relocation ritual of one of his close relatives and for the father-in-law of King Injong (r. 1544–1545). He examined the location of the new tomb several times, and studied previous funeral ceremonies performed by another family. Yi borrowed texts about tomb relocation rituals, wrote out the proposed funeral procedures, consulted with a specialist regarding geomancy, and met with fortunetellers to determine the best date for moving the tomb. Despite the frigid winter weather, he personally carved the letters on his father's tombstone one after the other.

While he was attending to his mother's tomb, Yi asked his wife to make clothing to wear on the occasion of the opening of his father's tomb. Food and drink for the day of the ceremony such as *kwa*, *chu* and *myŏn* were prepared in advance by a cook and sent by Yi's paternal aunt and sister. The performance of the funeral rites was centered on the son, thus giving the impression that the role of daughters and wives was minimal. However, this impression may be due to the fact that the diary was written by a man. Women's participation in the preparation of food and clothing were routinely understated in diaries (Sŏng 1982, 5).

Yi asked a blacksmith to make the tools, iron nails, and shovels necessary for making the coffin and tomb. Servants were ordered to make decorative instruments for the funeral ceremony. Thick white paper, wood, straw mats, cotton fabrics, and decorations for the funeral rite were sent by Yi's kin and friends who

were members of his and his father's networks. Apart from these items, Yi's cousin sent decorations which he had borrowed from members of his own network for the funeral ceremony.

The preparation of the coffin was completed in two phases with the manufacture of an inner- and outer-coffin. During this period, coffins were structured such that an outer-coffin covered the inner one that contained the corpse. The Hoegwangmyo, which consisted of an inner coffin, outer coffin, and lime-soil mixture, could be traced back to the *Family Rites of Zhu Xi*, and was emphasized by the Neo-Confucian scholars of Chosŏn. The lime-soil mixture was plastered on all five sides of the wall in the hole dug out for a grave. The outer coffin containing the inner coffin hosting the corpse was inserted in the hole before the lime-soil mixture was plastered on the entrance of the hole. The thickly plastered mixture hardened like stone, thus preventing the infiltration of air and water (Im 1999, 207–211). The initial process, which can be dated to three months before the opening of the original tomb, began when Yi made a request to the Kwihusŏ (歸厚署), which was an official institution where high officials' funerary items were provided by the government as a courtesy. While Yi transported the inner-coffin from the Kwihusŏ, the outer-coffin was chiefly constructed at the main house of the Yi family before being carried to the gravesite. Yi traveled north to the capital to make the outer-coffin, leaving his nephew in charge of the mourning camp near the tomb. Yi paid a Kwihusŏ official the fees for manufacturing the coffins before obtaining the materials and wood needed for their construction. In order to ensure the quality of the materials, Yi gave his nephew, Yi Hwi, the task of choosing the proper wood for the coffin. Much as was the case when it came to building the inner-coffin, they were unable to obtain suitable wood for the outer-coffin. As a result, Yi was forced to borrow materials from a friend. This kind of borrowing, called *ch'ingnyŏm* (稱念), was a gift exchange custom among the literati.

The most urgent issue however was finding carpenters and rulers to carve the wood. Since carpenters were not always available, Yi had to borrow measuring rulers from his neighbor. Yi recounted his extreme frustration from the beginning to the end of his supervision of the workers, regularly complaining about their negligence and laziness. Yi was even forced to delay the onset of the work on the first day because of snow. While he consistently made efforts to keep the carpenters happy and started each day by offering them a drink, the latter routinely arrived late, failed to show up without notice, or forgot to bring their tools. They would also regularly leave without having made any progress on their work. Yi's servant's requests for a carpenter to come were roundly ignored by the latter. When Yi asked for the main board for the coffin, the carpenter refused to

send it. Instead, the carpenter requested a letter from Yi guaranteeing grain as compensation for his labor. Even though progress was hampered by the snow, Yi had to pay a half-day wage of cotton clothing to the carpenters. It was not until several days before the moving of the dead body that the inner-coffin and outer-coffin were finally completed.

The role of officials in carrying the outer-coffin carved by carpenters and resined by Yi's nephew was critical because they provided the ships, drivers, and carriages needed to transport the coffin. The provincial governor provided massive amounts of such provisions as millet and rice to feed several hundred workers during the preparation of the new tomb. Most of the workers were provided by the official in charge of the district where the tomb was to be relocated. Yi wrote letters to government officials asking for food and other necessities. In addition, high officials sent materials essential for the construction of the tomb that were not attainable by Yi himself such as coal and resins. In short, Yi relied heavily on his social network when it came to the relocation of his father's tomb.

## CONCLUSION

This study presents an empirical analysis of the underlying procedures and preparations for the wedding and funeral rites of two Korean *yangban* families. In so doing, it tries to bridge sociological theory and historical data with reference to Weber's patrimonialism and patriarchy in its analysis of Korean data during the sixteenth century.

In the wedding, patriarchal domination was seen in terms of the rules of residence, utilization of family resources, and reciprocal family relations. Yu Hui-ch'un's grandson's wedding took the form of *pan ch'inyŏng*, a style that was a compromise between Confucian and indigenous Korean culture, a phenomenon not dissimilar from the cases of other Confucian scholars (Yi 1992, 85). This initial matrilocality finally settled into patrilocality when the newlyweds settled together at Yu's grandfather's house. The main reason Yu's grandson resided at his grandfather's house after marriage was to make use of his grandfather's established networks, which included high government officials. This kind of residential pattern in Korean society, in which the newlywed couple lived for a while at the bride's house then later moved to the groom's house, required some compromises on the part of the groom. As such, this was a form of patriarchy where women were not merely conceding actors. Since both marriage partners changed residences and made concessions, the relationship was in part a reciprocal one. It can be inferred from this that patriarchal domination in the mid-

Chosŏn period did not take the form of the rigid, one-way male-domination in Roman patriarchy.

A look at funeral procedures also reveals that patriarchal domination in mid-century Chosŏn elite families also seemed to take on a rather mixed form. It can be examined in the filial piety, less organized paternal kinship, emotion towards maternal kinship, and weak Confucian piety between social classes such as master and skilled workers. The tomb relocation ritual for Yi Mun-gŏn's father reveals the preservation of filial piety. In preparation for the ceremony, Yi borrowed a textbook about the performance of funeral rites, and adhered to Confucian procedures as faithfully as he could. The relatives participating in the funeral included Yi's nephew, uncle and cousin, and their sons. Patrilineal kinsmen were more involved in the funeral rites than maternal ones; nevertheless, their roles were not strictly organized. Yi's emotional attachment to his mother and the proper observation of his mother's mourning period were not easy for him to relinquish. These were customs handed down from the preceding Koryŏ period when mourning by the kin on the mother's side was equally as emphasized as that by the kin of the father. Thus, the rule of primogeniture was not yet established at the societal level, nor strictly followed by some people, during mid-Chosŏn. Confucian piety between social classes was shown during the funeral preparations; however, relationships that both contravened and conformed to Confucianism co-existed.

Patriarchal domination or patrimonial characteristics can be seen in the preparation of both the wedding and funeral rites examined herein. Regarding the patrimonial economy of the rituals performed by Yu Hŭi-ch'un and Yi Mun-gŏn, one finds evidence of self-sufficient economies in that they manufactured ceremonial goods at home and obtained necessary items with the help of kin and governmental officials. Yu's patriarchal control over resource mobilization extended to the artisans who crafted the decorations for his grandson's wedding ceremony. Both Yu and Yi asked their kinsmen and friends to donate or lend necessary items. Goods which were not provided by kin were borrowed from neighbors and government officials. In keeping with their previous government positions, Yu and Yi primarily utilized their social rather than kinship networks, and as such lessened the patriarchal domination displayed with kinsmen. Exercising government power for an individual ceremony was a common form of appropriation of public goods among elites, and can be seen as having been a patrimonial characteristic of sixteenth-century Chosŏn society.

This demonstration of official support for funeral rites was not confined to Yi's household. Throughout the Chosŏn dynasty, official support was given to high officials in similar positions to that of Yi Mun-gŏn (Miyajima 1996; Chŏng

2003). Such practices were based on the belief that the government should perform the role of parent on behalf of a loyal subject who was like a filial son to the king. Moreover, these duties were performed by local rather than high government officials. Thus, it would appear to have been standard practice for *yangban* literati to utilize public property for private purposes. This was particularly true in the case of the family of Yi Mun-gŏn, who was related to the royal family (Yi's wife's cousin was married to King Injong [r. 1544–1545]) and whose use of public goods was upheld as legitimate. Although the scale of the economy and its characteristics may have differed from that of the *oikos* economy in which the king took care of his subject as a parent would a child, similar acts of patrimonial characteristics were also evident in mid-Chosŏn societies in the form of acts of appropriation wherein a government official had the power to help people he knew. As seen in the cases of Yu Hŭi-ch'un and Yi Mun-gŏn, resources obtained through networks were necessary and crucial in the performance of Confucian rites. This form of mutual help can actually be traced back to the practice of helping those in need stressed in the name of *hyangyak* (鄉約)<sup>10</sup> and called *ch'ingnyŏm* (稱念), which is evidence of a gift economy based on the anticipation of future reciprocation among literati.

Although, modern scholars have argued that the root of patriarchy can be traced back to the Chosŏn era, the characteristics of such patriarchal domination and patrimonial traits in sixteenth-century Chosŏn demonstrate that not only was it less strict than what has heretofore been thought, but this system was also operated in a rather flexible manner. Through an analysis of the marriage and funerary rites described in these diaries, this study has demonstrated that Chosŏn society during this period was in a transition towards Confucianization—although, unlike his contemporaries, Yi strictly adhered to Confucian rites and displayed sincere piety towards his dead father. For his part, Yu adopted a wedding style that was a compromise between a Confucian and indigenous one. Given that both individuals were dedicated neo-Confucian scholars during the mid-Chosŏn era, the differences in the degree of Confucianization exhibited during each ritual would seem to imply that filial piety was taken more seriously than wedding rites during this era.

The flexibility of patriarchy in the sixteenth century can be explained by the boundary between kin and related inheritance customs in Korea. As the mother's and father's sides were treated equally, daughters had an equal right to family property. Women held equal inheritance rights to the property the groom might

<sup>10</sup> The term *hyangyak* refers to self-governance rules of a local community. It was introduced by the *sarim* faction during the reign of King Chungjong of Chosŏn. Yi Hwang and Yi Yi established the Yean Hyangyak and Haeju Hyangyak based on the Lushi Xiangyue (呂氏鄉約) of China.

acquire through the bride, such as land which existed near the bride's family's house (Kim 1969). Therefore, we can see that uxori-locality existed. During sixteenth-century Chosŏn, sons-in-law who resided with the bride's family were regarded as a member of the in-law's family. In terms of ancestral rituals, the son-in-law or the son of the host's daughter could play a role and even inherit the position of the host in the performance of ancestral rituals. In keeping with this mentality, the tombs of famous sixteenth-century Confucian scholars were commonly found near their father-in-law's lineage tombs (Yi 1992).

A more rigid degree of Confucianized patriarchy is believed to have emerged after the mid-seventeenth century. In fact, it was not until this time that the adopted son of a relative was treated as a formally legalized son in terms of ancestral rites and property inheritance (Pak 1999, 701). Patrilineal inheritance of property through the eldest son, even though he was an adopted son, was thus expected to empower the status of the patriarch within the family from both a material and ideological standpoint (Pak 1999). This can be construed to mean that the systematic organization of paternal kin, which would later exercise control over the status of women, had not yet become popular in mid-Chosŏn society (Park 2010).

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