I. Forward

The Joseon Dynasty compiled the household register every three years. The objects of registration in the household register were, at least legally, the entire household. In order to elevate the effectiveness of compiling the household register the government provided even some institutional devices. Nevertheless, in spite of the intent of the state, the number of households and mouths entered in the household register was limited and did not totally reflect reality. Rather, as time passed, the compilation of the household register tended to become formalistic. In spite of this, it can hardly be denied that the household register is an excellent source of data that can realistically confirm the relationship between household and family, statuses, and occupational roles. The household register can be utilized in various fields of research, and this has been the case. Regrettably, however, there are few moves to investigate what kind of data the household register contains, that is to say, the household register per se.

Many researchers would like to explain the fluctuations of Joseon society by utilizing the data from the household register. However, as a rule, if the premises are wrong, correct conclusions cannot be drawn. Researchers should pay attention to any criticism of the household register as a source material. In this study, with such awareness of the issue, the processes of formulating the household register are investigated. Each stage in the formulation of the household register also proved to be a process of conflict and adjustment between state and society, principle and practice or illegality. Therefore, an analysis of the processes for completing the household register and its contents is an effective means of clarifying the character of the household register itself.

II. The Formulation and Contents of the Household Registration Reports

1. The Formulation of the Household Registration Reports

The overall central supervisory institution for the matters related to the household register during the Joseon period was the Office of Hanseong. This Office prepared the official documents and rules for formulating the household register for transmission to local authorities. At the local level each locality established an interim organization called the office of household register, selected officials to be in charge, and informed the inhabitants of the pertinent matters. Then, in turn the inhabitants made two
copies each of the individual household registration reports recording the personal matters of members and changes at each household for filing. After receiving the individual household registration reports, government offices checked the reports against the past household register and returned one copy to each household, and used another copy as source data for formulating the household register. The period for the inhabitants to prepare the individual household registration reports for compiling at government offices varied to some extent according to locality and timing. An investigation of 132 cases of various individual household registration reports containing information on the timing of formulation of each locality resulted in conclusions as outlined below:  

1 First, while the timing for formulating the individual household registration reports was variable until the early part of the 18th Century, it was usually between the months of January and May in the year when the government compiled the household register. Second, in the late 18th Century the cases of individual household registration reports containing only the year of formulation and without an indication of the month completed increased on a large scale. And in cases where the month was indicated, it was January. Third, after the 19th Century such a trend further accelerated. It can be surmised from the foregoing that after the late 18th Century the formulation of the individual household registration reports was executed in January of the year when the government compiled the household register, or prior to that date. It may be conjectured that the fact that a large number of the individual household registration reports had no date of execution was caused by a formal difference by one year between the time of execution and the contents of the individual household registration reports. For this reason even those reports that had January as the date of execution had January of the household register year entered habitually, with a possibility that they were actually executed one year earlier. As the execution and filing of the individual household registration reports progressed, the intermediate process of the compiling of the household register was also extended. In this intermediate process, the total statistics for five households as one unit and the intermediate complete household register officially called the intermediate draft register for each village were completed. Also various kinds of complete volumes recording the changes in the households such as desertions, deaths, and migrations were compiled. Such intermediate processes were designed for a more realistic understanding of the household. However, at the same time such processes served to internally adjust the contents to be recorded in the household register.

The household register offices, after collecting the individual household registration reports, confirmed

1 For data used in the analysis, see Collections of Old Documents, 8 (Documents of Government Offices), 1992, The Royal Palace Library at the Seoul National University; Collections of Old Documents, 27 (for Yeonggwang, Yeongwul Sin Clan), 1996 at Korea Spiritual Culture Research Institute; Collections of Old Documents. 32 (for Geungju, Gyeongju Son Clan), 1997.
their truth or falsity by checking them against the household register of three years earlier. At this juncture the offices corrected wrongs by confirming facts, and designated numbers to each five households these were named block households and then returned the individual household registration reports. Before returning individual household registration reports, government offices used some for compilation, and merely stamped others. Related to this, a considerable number of what are known nowadays as quasi-households were possibly created by the returned individual household registration reports. The quasi-households are known to be documents that people requested government offices for issuance when they needed to confirm family relations, and the confirmation of ownership of slaves. However, actually the overwhelming majority of the quasi-households were formulated in the process of the creating the household register. This is evident from scrutinizing 324 cases of e 345 extant quasi-households all of which were issued in the year the household register was formulated. This fact supports the aforementioned assertion.2

Also, through the analysis of the timing for the issuance of quasi-households this can be confirmed. Prior to the 17th Century the issuance of quasi-households was carried out in several different months. Although quasi-households were issued over a several months period also in the first half of the 18th Century, the cases of no indication of issuance were largely increased. In the later half of the 18th Century characteristically the months of issuance were missing or were concentrated in the month of January, if entered. This trend was continuously maintained in the 19th Century. Such substance demonstrates a tendency similar to that in the afore-mentioned formulation of individual household registration reports. Therefore, it may be said that a considerable number of quasi-household were issued at a certain time after the filing of individual household registration reports, or they were issued by the concerned government offices as documents to acknowledge the filing of individual household registration reports sometime after the formulation of the household register was completed. Depending on localities quasi-households concurrently played the role of individual household registration reports that were returned after the inspection by government offices.

2. What do the Individual Household Registration Reports contain

The individual household registration reports as the basic data material for formulating the household register include the following contents: 3

2 For data used for analysis, see Old Documents, 8 (Documents of Government Offices), 1991, The Royal Palace Library at the Seoul National University.

3 For data for analysis, see Supplements to the Miscellaneous Laws, Separate Part, Individual Household Registration Formula.
1. Village Names

2. Occupational obligations, names, ages, and ancestral origins of the representatives of the households and their wives.

3. Occupational obligations, and names of the parents, the grandparents, the great-grandparents, maternal parents, the maternal grandparents of the representatives of the households and their wives.

4. Names and ages of the remaining members of the households.

5. Names and ages of slaves in the households.

6. Dates of preparation

These contents were reflected in the household register following the process of confirmation. Then, basically the head of the household was merely obligated to formulate the individual household registration reports, and file the reports. It was not that government officials personally visited individual households to confirm the details. From this point started the possibility that the individual household registration reports did not completely reflect the facts as they were. Legality required factually registering all the members of the households. However, it was possible that oftentimes habitually or intentionally parts of the households were omitted or distorted. In some individual household registration reports the ages of all members were altered. Even the individual household registration reports thus filed were still processed for confirmation by government offices. However, the investigation of the individual household registration reports was ended as a ceremonial process, or the altered ages were knowingly overlooked. If we assume that the contents of the individual household registration reports confirmed by government offices were entered as they were in the household register, it was entirely possible that some persons in the household register had factually wrong ages. In order to trace the customary record changes, different from intentional fabrications, let us investigate one family individual household registration reports by time period. The objects are the individual household registration reports and quasi-households of the Yangban Son clan in Gyeongju. What attract the attention are the facts that at least three sons of this clan were entered in the individual household registration reports after they reached 20 years of age and that some grandsons were entered only after they reached 16 years of age. Moreover, the genealogical records of this family reveal that a daughter existed but she was omitted in the individual household registration reports. This demonstrates the possibility that not all members of the households were recorded in the individual household registration

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4 Collections of Old Documents, 32 (for Gyeongu, Gyeongju Son Clan), 1997, at the Korea Spiritual Culture Research Institute
for single reports. If we take into consideration that the individual household registration reports were the starting point for the formulation of the household register, we might say that the household register contained uncertainty from the beginning. This point becomes clearer when we investigate records related to slaves. The 1666 documents include the individual household registration reports and special data similar in format to this called the temporary household register. Judging from the fact that the data contained many places crossed out or additions were made, they could be judged to be draft individual household registration reports rather than the individual household registration reports. This is more so in the respect that the individual household registration reports rather than the temporary household register for the same year matched the contents of the quasi-household register supplied by government offices. Only that it should be clearly indicated that in other areas the temporary household register was treated same as the individual household registration reports. In the temporary household register for the Son clan various facts were clearly recorded once and then all were erased. In the individual household registration for single household registration reports such erased contents were not entered. This suggests that the individual household registration reports were formulated after the temporary household register becomes more distinct.

First of all, the individual household registration reports reveal that 11 extant slaves and 10 fugitive slaves, 21 slaved in total, were entered. However, altogether 43 slaves were entered in the temporary household register. This reveals that a considerable number of slaves were omitted in the individual household registration reports. The problem is that while the names of the fugitive slaves in the individual household registration reports were confirmed among the fugitive slaves in temporary household register, only five out of 11 extant slaves were confirmed. The fact that not all slaves registered in the household registration for single members reports could be confirmed in the temporary household register which contained more facts compared to the household registration for single members reports amounts to that the temporary household register as well did not entirely reflect the facts. It is possible that the Son clan had more slaves. Although with a slight difference in time, in the documents related to the inheritance of property by five sons and one daughter altogether 51 slaves were confirmed. 5 Ultimately we should keep in mind that not only direct descendents but also slaves were not accurately entered in the individual household registration reports. In the household documents for the years between 1690 and 1705 sons aged seven and four were registered. This is a phenomenon attributable to the intensified policy of the government for registering the households in the late 17th Century. Nevertheless, while three sons all appeared in the individual household registration reports, the remaining four daughters listed in the genealogical records were also omitted. The ages of the children appearing for the first time in the individual household registration reports were young, yet the daughters still were not the targets for

5 Collections of Old Documents 32 (Part for Gyeongjuu, Gyeongju Son Clan), 1997 at the Korea Spiritual Culture Research Institute.
registration. It is entirely possible to confirm such a fact in other areas as well. Next, an inspection of the household registration documents for the years between 1717 and 1759 reveals that daughters were still excluded as the objects of registration. In contrast, sons were entered for the first time at various age levels between seven and 19. One of the outstanding features is that the given names of the registered persons were changed several times. Such a phenomenon was frequently observed in Yangban society at that time. It originated from the intensification of the clannish consciousness and the changes of childhood names. On the other hand, the changes of names for plain people were used as a means of deceiving their statuses or as a means of escaping the state control. Accordingly, in investigating the completed household register, only by closely checking not only ages but also names could we trace persons and family lines. In the household documents of this household from the latter half of the 18th Century on daughters were still not registered. Also, during the same period the contents of the changes in personal data began to be more crude and briefer than ever. This condition was reflected as it was in the household register formulated in the same period. And as a result the records reflecting the changes in the households gradually began to lose their rigorousness. While omissions and the fabrications of facts in the households were present customarily and intentionally, the formal framework of household documents was gradually breaking down.

III. The Compilation of the Intermediate Draft Household Register and Various Completed Volumes

1. The Compilation of the Intermediate Draft Household Register and Its Character

Following the completion of the individual household registration reports, the intermediate draft household register was compiled based on this. The intermediate draft was compiled by each village at the stage before the completion of the household register. This was not done in all the villages, nor was its format uniform. The timing for the compilation of the intermediate draft was accelerated in earnest from the latter part of the 18th Century on when the formulation of the individual household registration reports was stepped up. It is estimated that from this period on the intermediate draft register was generally compiled in the year preceding the standard year for the compilation of the household register. Although different according to areas, in the intermediate draft register the block number was assigned. Five households were bound as one block, and serial numbers were assigned starting with number one of block number one to organize the households. The principle for this was numbering the households as they were naturally situated. However, unless individual households were investigated one by one for numbering,

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6 Detailed Regulations for the Household Register, Date unknown, The Royal Palace Library at the Seoul National University
it was difficult to follow this principle.

Furthermore, if we suppose that new households were added or existing households were left out in the process of compiling the intermediate draft for adjustment, even the designated block numbers could be changed. As an example, in the individual household registration reports a person named Gweon Jae Hyun residing in Weonju in 1741 the block number designation was number 12 block and number three household. But the quasi-household register for the same year it was number 19 block and number four household. 7 This proves that in the intermediate process of recording the block and household numbers in the two sets of documents were changes in households. For this reason, the block and household numbers were not fixed. Rather, in extreme cases the designations could be changed every time the household register was compiled. Even an examination of the household documents of the Son clan of Gyeongju mentioned earlier the block and household designations were changed from block number six household number three in 1690 to block number four household number five in 1696, and to block number three household number five in 1702.8 This ultimately means that neighboring households did not form the same blocks and numbers. On the other hand, the possibility was that the formation of household blocks was not done with the neighboring households and villages as the unit. The reason for this is that the decision for the block designation and the compilation of the intermediate draft were implemented not with villages as the units but with urban villages that bound several rural villages as the units. A look at the intermediate draft households in Yangjwa Village of Gyeongju, the names of villages to which each household belonged were added to the top of each household entry. From block one and household one and on belonged to Village A; from block four and household two and on belonged to Village B; block five and household three again belonged back to Village A; and block five and household four belonged to Village C. In other words, while block one household one, and block five and household three were located in the same rural village, block five household three and block five household four were neither adjacent households to each other nor were they situated in the same rural village. When block and household numbers were decided, then block masters to take charge of block affairs were selected. Generally, common people or slaves were given the posts. In the intermediate draft household register traces of erasing or changing the names of block masters were sometimes observed. Now, the heads of the first household of each block were usually charged with the positions of block masters. But this was not always true. In 1853 in Hang-ri village in Geoje, of the total 15 blocks eight blocks had masters who were from households other than the first households. The next process in the compiling the intermediate draft household register was investigating the changes in the households and compiling statistics on the numbers of households. In the intermediate draft for Jeju not only the new-born babies

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7 Collections of Old Documents, 8 (Documents of Government Offices), The Royal Palace Library at the Seoul National University
8 Collections of Old Documents, 32 (Part for Gyeongju, Gyeongju Son Clan), 1997 at the Korea Spiritual Culture Research Institute
and the dead since the household register compiled last time, but also those migrated to other places, who
deserted, and who drifted away were recorded in detail. Not only that, occupational obligations, names,
and ages were compared, and errors therein were crossed out or corrected. This was an effort to enhance
the rigorousness in the compilation of the household register. Now, in the intermediate draft the numbers
of males and females were separately recorded by household, but in the last the numbers of entire
households were totaled. This was designed primarily to compare with the numbers of the households last
time, and in this process adjustments to the numbers of households were made as well. The principle for
formulating the household register during the Joseon period called for taking hold of all the households
without missing any. However, customarily the government added up the general outlines of the
households by taking into consideration of the burdens of the populace. ⁹ Thus collected were the total
numbers of households and the total numbers of mouths. The total numbers of households and mouths
were adjusted again by localities and then by rural villages. If one looks at the last section of the
intermediate draft household register of Yangjiwa-dong village, the numbers of households by villages and
the overall total number of households are added up. While the number of the total households was 231,
what is important is that the government ordered it reduced by 24 households. Accordingly, the total
number of households was modified to be 207. Such records reveal that at the stage of formulating the
intermediate draft the numbers of households were artificially adjusted. Especially in the case of
Yangjiwa-dong village only the number of households was entered without reference to the number of
mouths. Recording the number of households had a more weight than that of mouths. This had to do with
the status feature of those components residing in Yangjiwa-dong village. Yangjiwa-dong village was a
representative Yangban village of Gyeongju, and 196 households out of 231 had the occupational
obligation of Yangban. In other words, the percentage of common people with a military service
obligation was extremely small. For this reason this locality had relatively little interest in adding up the
number of mouths as the basis for its military service obligation. Related to this, the imbalance in the sex
ratio of the components in the intermediate draft register of Yangjiwa-dong village merits attention. In the
upper-class Yangban households with an occupational obligation not even one daughter was registered
and also young grandchildren were omitted. This agrees with the trend as analyzed in the individual
household registration reports in this area. In contrast to this, not even one son was registered in the
commonsers household registration for occupational obligations. Such imbalances in the sex ratio were the
result of combination of social practices and artificial adjustment. While it was an old practice for the
Yangban class not to register daughters, the absence of sons in the commonsers households was due to

⁹ Commentaries on the Admonitions on Governing the People III, Dasan (Jung Yagyong) Research
intentional omissions. In reality the ratio of commoners households in Yangiwa-dong village was extremely low, and their total number was only 56 of these 38 were females, and the number of males, 18 in total, who were obligated for military service except for invalids was extremely low. Accordingly, in Yangiwa-dong village, with a small number of males with obligation for military service, adding up the number of households rather than of mouths, and subsequent adjustment was considered more important. In contrast to this, it is confirmed that in the intermediary draft in Jeju more efforts were made to add up the numbers of mouths rather than of households. Let us now take a look at the fluctuations in the numbers of households in Sagye-ri village and Haweon-ri village in Jeju as reflected in the intermediate draft household register.¹⁰

Table Fluctuations of the Numbers of Households in Sagye-ri village and Haweon-ri Village, Jeju

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of village</th>
<th>Sagye-ri</th>
<th>Haweon-ri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housed. population</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁰ For objective intermediate draft household register, see The Intermediate Draft

*Household Register for Sagye-ri, Daejeong Prefecture, Jeju*, printed by the Damra Culture Research Center, Jeju University, 1995, and *The Intermediate Draft Household Register for Haweon-ri, Jejoo*, printed by the Royal Palace Library at the Seoul National University, 1992.
Most of the intermediate draft registrations of Sagye-ri village and Haweon-ri village from the 19th Century to early 20th Century are extant. The Table above adds up the fluctuations of the numbers of households and mouths generally at six-year intervals. From this Table two sets of facts emerge in these two areas as follows. First, while the numbers of households until 1861 did not show large fluctuations, the numbers of mouths were continuously increasing and the number of mouths per household were also on the rise. Second, although from 1867 on the numbers of households showed a slight increase, the numbers of mouths showed little fluctuations, with the numbers of mouths falling. Third, as the numbers of households increased rapidly in 1898, the average number of mouths per household showed a largest fall. Such characteristics demonstrate that the intermediate draft register for these two villages did not realistically reflect the natural fluctuations in the numbers of households. The number of the households in Sagye-ri village between 1807 and 1861 showed an increase of only three, but the number of mouths was increased by as many as 495 mouths. For this reason, the average number of mouths per household during the same period was increased as much as two-fold. There is no alternative but to view this as a result of making certain adjustments to the number of households, and this was revealed by the large-scale increase in the number of households after 1898. The increase in the number of households in 1898 was caused by the newly promulgated law for the household register in 1896, and these figures may be closer to the fact. Until the latter part of the 19th Century in the intermediate draft register the number of mouths was increased while the number of households was kept at a certain level. This reflected the fact that the total number of mouths continuously increased while the total number of households showed no large increase. As was pointed out earlier, the increase in the total number of mouths was the result of the complete counting of even newly born babies and the encompassing all blood-related members within the household. For this reason the intermediate draft register in this area was relatively thorough, adding up the changes in the households and totaled up the male and female components in each household.
If the individual household registration reports imperfectly reflected the facts due to customary practices and at times intentional fabrications, the next process, the intermediate draft register was one of artificial adjustments according to local circumstances. It was also a process of conflicts and compromise between the principle of thoroughly totaling up the numbers of households and the numbers of mouths and the popular resistance to it, and of adjustments between the total numbers of households and the total numbers of mouths. Results could vary depending on the time period and on what kind of input exerted more influence.

The Compilation of Various Kinds of Completed Volumes and Legal Regulations

Following the completion of revisions and adjustments in the individual household registration reports, the reorganized contents were made into clean copies and the household register was completed. In this process the state saw to it that completed volumes of various formats were separately made in order to enhance the effectiveness in adding up households and the level of perfection of the household register. The stipulated number of kinds of completed volumes was 29, with only specific information entered in each volume. For instance, one volume contained only the statistics of the numbers of households; another recorded the totaled numbers of those persons who had migrated, and another volume sorted out numbers of births, deaths, and so on. What local officials regarded important as the source materials for the household register were the completed volume of household locations and boundaries. The government saw to it that in the completed volumes of household locations and boundaries accurately recorded the occupational obligations, names, and ages of the components of the households as well as the scales of the houses and land, and the ownership of domestic animals. As the volumes added up the economic facts of each household, they were utilized as source materials for the formulation of the household register and for levying taxes. In the later Joseon period Jeong Yagyong (1762-1836), a scholar of the Practical Learning school, admonished that the completed volumes on household locations and boundaries recorded data as they really were while the household register recorded only what was necessary out of these. He made it clear that while he was a local government official he made active uses of the completed volumes on the household locations and boundaries. However, it is not clear whether the completed volumes of household locations and boundaries were compiled by all localities as the basic source materials of the household register. The remaining completed volumes were not always compiled.

It could vary according to the timing and the situations in localities. In Hang-ri village, Geoje, the intermediate draft register and 11 kinds of completed volumes were compiled of the completed volumes compiled, those with the most basic data concerning the numbers of households and mouths and their fluctuations were prevalent. While it is a fact that the completed volumes were compiled for the purpose

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11: Formula for the Completed Volumes in Accordance with 171 Details Formula, (Year unknown, the Royal Palace Library, at the Seoul National University)
of enhancing the level of accuracy in the localities concerned. After the intermediate draft household register and completed volumes were finished, the final household register ledger based on these was completed. The completed household register was dispatched before the stipulated date to the superior government offices. At the local level the completed volumes were compiled in triplicates and were sent to the Office of Hanseong and the Inspectorate Office, and one copy was reserved at the local office.

In the early Joseon period there was another copy to be sent to the Board of Taxation. On the other hand, the state endeavored with strict legal stipulations to enhance the level of accuracy in the processes from the compilation of the household register to its transfer to superior government offices. The household policy in terms of legal provisions was so extremely strict as not to tolerate any omission of household components. Legal control was being strengthened in the process of maintaining the institutions of Joseon society following the end of the war with Qing China. In the law codes in the reign of King Sukchong (1675-1720) it was stipulated that when the contents of the household register varied from the facts, not only the parties directly involved but also officials in charge and the superior officials in charge of villages were jointly held responsible. As a means of preventing omission from the household register, those who were omitted were not allowed to sue and when criminals were found to have been omitted were subject to an added punishment. Only when old females of over 70 years of age were found to have been omitted, their children were merely ordered to pay a penalty. When the omitted surrendered themselves they were guaranteed to be exempt from punishment.

In the law codes of King Yeongjo (1725-1776), if the victims of violence were found to have been omitted, the assailants were not punished. And legal provisions were added so as to make those who were omitted from the household unconditionally lose in lawsuits. To that degree the government endeavored to prevent the act of omission in the household register. The punishment meted out to those who were omitted in the household register or those who committed forgery in the household register was lessened little by little thereafter. The government was forced to take into consideration the problems of popular repercussion and the practicality of punishment.

12 Books Related to the Household Register, 1872, The Royal Palace Library at the Seoul National Library
13 Edited Records of Royal Instructions, Volume 2, Laws Governing the Households, and the Household Register
14 New Supplements to the Records of Royal Instructions, Laws Governing the Households, and the Household Register
15 The Volume Concerning the Copies of the Household Register, and The Records of Copies of the Household Register Offices, 1887, in the possession of the Tokyo University.
A problem to be mentioned at this juncture is whether such strict laws could be effectively applied, even when slightly relaxed. A clue to this problem may be sought in the records of that time. During the reign of King Sukchong (1675-1720) when stern legal controls were promulgated, the records clearly show that even though those who were omitted in the household register were punished, local officials were not jointly and severally held responsible.

This is a clear-cut deviation from the legal provisions. And it can be surmised that even those who were omitted and punished were only a fraction of those who were omitted. As was pointed out in the foregoing, the numbers of households were decided after going through several steps in the process of formulating the household register. In these processes, numerous households and mouths customarily failed to be recorded in the household register. From the legal standpoint, any omissions, no matter in what form, were illegal. However, in reality not only intentional illegal acts for reasons of personal profit, but also customary illegal acts were intermingled. It was impossible from the start to punish all kinds of illegal acts. Even so, the state could not legally recognize customary omissions. There existed during the Joseon period an enormous separation between the laws and the realistic customary practices in counting the households. According to the laws, the omission of one or two-year-old babies and unmarried females were not tolerated at all. However, as we have confirmed in the individual household registration reports and the intermediate draft, the instances of omissions of infants and unmarried females were numerous in some areas and in certain time periods. In Jeju, although the counting of infants and females was carried out at an extremely high level, this was not applicable to all time periods and areas. In spite of this until the end of the 19th Century the state adhered to its legal stance of not tolerating any omissions at all. Despite this, the management of the household register became more and more incomplete. Just as the contents of the individual household registration reports were shabby, from the latter part of the 18th Century on the household register also tended to lack in rigor in its recording. Even if family components were omitted and ages were raised in the individual household registration reports and others, punishment was not meted out as stipulated in the law codes. Rather the altered contents were reflected as they were in the next step, the household register. Besides the customary omissions, acts of intentional omissions and fabrications gradually increased.

Therefore, Jung Yagyong, a noted 19th Century scholar, pointed out while the household laws are not observed, the proclaiming such laws to the people will only make them distrust the orders of the state. This illustrates that the punishment provisions for not counting entire households remained practically in form only. In the household register during this period artificial adjustments and fabrications in the process of its compilation were more rampant than anytime before. By calling attention to such practices

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16 Journals of the Board of Justice, Legal Reviews Division, Decisions systems, Migrations
in the process of compiling the household register we are not denying the worth of the remaining household materials. The reason for this is that such customary practices themselves illustrate social structures or social phenomena of the time concerned. However, only if we overlook the fact that compilation of the household register went through many stages of adjustment and yet accept at face value the contents of the entries in the household register, are we likely to distort the image of society in that time period. Therefore, for the analysis of the household register we must draw out effective trends on the basis of clarifying social customary practices, adjustment processes, and the rigorousness of the contents.

IV. Conclusions

Although the household registers record extremely worthwhile information for understanding society of the later Joseon period, our understating of their character as research material remains at a superficial level. In spite of the enormous amount of research accomplishments by using household registers, actual attempts to analyze the household register itself have been insignificant. Hence, many errors have resulted. Therefore, in order to enhance the level of understanding of the household register and the qualitative level of related research it is necessary to analyze its formulation processes. The household register during the Joseon period was compiled generally by going through the processes of the filing of the individual household registration reports, the compilation of the intermediate draft household register, and the completion of the household register. The individual household registration reports were drafted by the household heads and filed. Hence, from the start this was open to possible omissions of household components and their artificial fabrications. The formulation of the intermediate draft register at the village level was the process of clashes and adjustments between the state principle for thoroughgoing control of households and popular resistance to it, and of the adjustment of the total numbers of households and mouths. Even in the concluding process of completing the household register following the revisions and adjustments made in the intermediate draft of the household register various kinds of additional records were separately compiled in order to enhance the accuracy of the household register. All these processes were subject to strict legal regulations. Nevertheless, it was impossible to punish customarily practiced illegal violations in the process of formulating the household register and also intentional illegal acts committed for the purpose of gaining personal benefits. For this reason, the household register reflects reality in a refracted form, as altered by the customary practices of the local society and popular resistance. In the final analysis the completed household register is a result that has come through many adjustments at many stages, omitting many households and mouths. Therefore, it is difficult to totally trust the recorded facts. However, this is not to negate the value of the household register as source material. We would like to contend that only if we rigorously take into consideration the
character of the household register before we analyze the social images that emerge from it can we draw out valid trends. This study is designed to provide a clue to it, but more analyses are called for to find out what kinds of households are recorded in or dropped from the household register.