

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910822010203321
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Titolo	A family of no prominence : the descendants of Pak Tokhwa and the birth of modern Korea // Eugene Y. Park
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Stanford, California : , : Stanford University Press, , [2014] ©2014
ISBN	0-8047-9086-8
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (262 p.)
Disciplina	929.209519
Soggetti	Social status - Korea - History Korea Genealogy Korea History Choson dynasty, 1392-1910 Korea History Japanese occupation, 1910-1945
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	From the mists of time -- Living with status ambiguity : guardsmen, merchants, and illegitimate children -- As a middle people : military officers, jurists, and calligraphers -- Long live the Korean Empire : hopes, fulfillment, and frustrations -- Fortunes that rose and fell with Imperial Korea : the Tanyang U in-laws -- Vignettes : colonial subjects of imperial Japan.
Sommario/riassunto	Koreans are known for their keen interest in genealogy and inherited ancestral status. Yet today's ordinary Korean would be hard pressed to explain the whereabouts of ancestors before the twentieth century. With A Family of No Prominence, Eugene Y. Park gives us a remarkable account of a nonelite family, that of Pak Tkhwa and his descendants (which includes the author). Spanning the early modern and modern eras over three centuries (1590–1945), this narrative of one family of the chungin class of people is a landmark achievement. What we do know of the chungin, or "middle people," of Korea largely comes from profiles of wealthy, influential men, frequently cited as collaborators with Japanese imperialists, who went on to constitute the post-1945 South Korean elite. This book highlights many rank-and-file chungin who, despite being better educated than most Koreans, struggled to

survive. We follow Pak Tkhwa's descendants as they make inroads into politics, business, and culture. Yet many members' refusal to link their family histories and surnames to royal forebears, as most other Koreans did, sets them apart, and facilitates for readers a meaningful discussion of identity, modernity, colonialism, memory, and historical agency.

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