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## **Household Goods in Early Nineteenth Century Korea as Seen in the *Kyuhap Ch'ongsŏ***

### **Abstract**

One of the puzzling aspects of historical studies is to actually draw a picture of how life might have been lived at particular points in time. Beyond names, places and dates, putting an authentic face on a moment is more difficult as records do not always provide depth the pieces and nuances of times in the past. In particular, one could ask how life would have been if I could step back into a historic time. What would I have worn, where would I have lived, what foods would I have eaten and what objects would have surrounded me. These such questions are not always easily found in official histories that tend towards the institutional or political aspects of society.

This paper will endeavor to open a small window into the life of an upper-status woman, one Lady Yi, and her household in the late Chosŏn period as told through her own writings. She was not famous in any real way in her own lifetime and her family was not particularly prosperous. She was one of some 18 million inhabitants on the Korean peninsula, but despite this rather minuteness, we can extrapolate from her writings a compelling look at what an upper-status household might have possessed and how they led their lives.