1 Ideology: "Wise Mother, Good Wife"

On November 5, 2007, the Bank of Korea announced that it had decided to include a portrait of Lady Sin Saimdang (1504–1551) on the new 50,000 *wŏn* note.[1] The announcement listed a number of reasons for choosing Lady Sin for this honor. One was that she was the most renowned female artist from the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910). Indeed, her paintings are presumed to be the earliest examples of extant work by a Korean woman painter.[2] However, perhaps her greatest claim to fame is the fact that she was the mother of one of Korea's most prominent Confucian scholars, Yi I (1536–1584). Eulogized as the quintessential example of a "wise mother, good wife" (*hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*), she has long been celebrated as the ideal Korean woman.[3]

The selection of Sin Saimdang stirred lively debates among women's organizations that reflected mixed emotions about her. On the one hand, many women welcomed that, for the first time, a woman was considered significant enough to have her portrait printed on Korean currency. On the other hand, some were troubled by the selection of Sin Saimdang over other, perhaps more preferable, candidates, such as Yu Kwansun (1902–1920), who had become a symbol of female patriotism during Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945).[4] In

1 *Han'gyŏre*, November 5, 2007. *Wŏn* refers to the basic unit in Korean currency.

2 Martina Deuchler, "Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea," in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, eds. Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 163; Yi Sŏngmi, "Sin Saimdang: The Foremost Woman Painter of the Chosŏn Dynasty," in *Creative Women of Korea: The Fifteenth through the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Young- Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 58–77.

3 Yi, "Sin Saimdang," p. 59; Yung-Chung Kim, *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1979), p. 158; and Kim Sujin, "Chŏnt'ong ŭi ch'ang'an kwa yŏsŏng ŭi kungminhwa: Sin Saimdang ŭl chungsim ŭro" (The Invention of Tradition and the Nationalization of Women with a Focus on Sin Saimdang), *Sahoe wa yŏksa* 80 (2008): 215–55.

4 When the nationwide March First Independence Movement took place in 1919, Yu Kwansun was a student at Ewha Girls' School. Her leadership role in the movement landed her in jail, where she died. In popular imagination, she was tortured to death and her body was mutilated, reinforcing the idea of the brutality of the Japanese colonial authority. However, Jeannette Walter, who was a missionary teacher at Ewha at that time who helped bring Yu's body back to the school for burial, confirmed that "her body was not mutilated. I had dressed her for burial."

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a public forum organized by the feminist group "If," Kim Kyŏngae argued that Sin Saimdang was selected due to her status as the ideal of the "wise mother, good wife," and that that choice was primarily motivated by a desire to maintain the anachronistic patriarchal order of Korean society. Another participant, Kim Sin Myŏngsuk, further pointed out that the notion of "wise mother, good wife" associated with Sin Saimdang was in actuality a modern product of the Japanese colonial education system in Korea, which tried to suppress critical consciousness and propagate obedient female colonial subjects.[5] Despite the concerns expressed by women's organizations about the negative impact that such a conservative female role model might have on women in contemporary Korean society, the Bank of Korea issued the new bill with her portrait on it on June 23, 2009.[6]

What is most noteworthy in this controversy is the fact that, in spite of her status as a pioneering sixteenth-century woman artist, Sin Saimdang has been, perhaps first and foremost, the most potent symbol of the "wise mother, good wife" ideology in modern Korea, an ideology that continues to shape gender discourse even in the twenty-first century.[7] In 2007, a TV drama, *Sin hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ* (*New Wise Mother, Good Wife*), aired in Korea, envisioning a twenty-first-century woman who was physically beautiful, exceptionally devoted to her children and husband, and highly resourceful in terms of managing the family finances. Another popular TV drama, *Saimdang, pit ŭi ilgi* (*Saimdang, a Diary of Light*), broadcast in 2017, presented Saimdang's "womanly virtues" (*pudŏk*), such as moral integrity, purity, diligence, and endurance, while creatively imagining her artistic passion and tender emotions, including romantic feelings. The huge popularity of these dramas shows the everlasting currency of the idea of "wise mother, good wife," and the continuing fascination with the figure of Sin Saimdang.

Given the ongoing influence of the image of Sin Saimdang as "wise mother, good wife," a series of questions arises: What is the genealogy of that influential gender ideology? What exactly constitutes a "wise mother, good wife"? To what extent have women exercised their agency in accepting, resisting, or appropriating the dominant gender ideology? And what does the persistent invocation of a historical figure as the ideal "wise mother, good wife" tell us about resilient patriarchal systems? Feminist historian Judith Bennett has

Jeannette Walter, *Aunt Jean* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 142–3. Cited in Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900–1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), p. 183.

[5] *OhmyNews*, October 15, 2007.

[6] *Chosŏn ilbo*, October 15, 2008; *OhmyNews*, February 25, 2009.

[7] Hong Yanghŭi, "Sin Saimdang, 'hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ' ŭi sangjing i toeda'" (Sin Saimdang Becomes the Symbol of "Wise Mother, Good Wife") in *Sin Saimdang, kŭ nyŏ rŭl wihan pyŏnmyŏng* (Sin Saimdang: In Her Defense), eds. Ko Yŏnhŭi, Yi Kyŏnggu, Yi Sugin, Hong Yanghŭi, and Kim Sujin (Seoul: Tasan Kihoek, 2016), pp. 166–213.

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suggested that one strategy for bringing about a better understanding of the mechanisms of persistent patriarchy is to undertake case studies with an especial focus on historical times of exceptional crisis, and to examine how historical “transitions challenged patriarchies, how patriarchies changed in response to these challenges, and how patriarchies nevertheless endured.”[8] In exploring these questions within the Korean historical context, the concept of “wise mother, good wife” is a particularly expedient target for analysis because it has been extremely influential in (re)shaping gender discourse and practices in Korea. Furthermore, an analysis of the formation, maintenance, and rupture of “wise mother, good wife” sheds light not only on the complex mechanisms of patriarchy at the structural level but also on women’s own complicity in and resistance to these patriarchal arrangements.

Feminist scholars in Korea have probed the legacy of Sin Saimdang and the implications of that legacy for the changing gender dynamics in Korean history and society.[9] In her analysis of the various discourses on Sin Saimdang that took place between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Yi Sugin (aka Sookin Lee) illuminates the male-dominated Confucian politics of knowledge that invoked Sin as the model of ideal motherhood and the bearer of Confucian “womanly virtues.”[10] In an article focusing on the invention of tradition and the nationalization of women as citizens, Kim Sujin demonstrates that an array of social and political forces, including enlightenment-oriented Korean intellectuals of the early twentieth century, the Japanese colonial authority, the regime of President Park Chung Hee in the 1960s and 1970s, and various women’s groups, presented selected images of Sin Saimdang to promote their own distinctive and disparate agendas.[11] Hong Yanghŭi also offers an insightful analysis of the ways in which the status of Sin Saimdang as a symbol of “wise mother, good wife” has been used as a disciplinary tool to reinforce traditional gender roles and control women’s sexuality.[12] What these studies suggest is that for the past five centuries the imagery of Sin Saimdang as “wise mother, good wife” has been historically and discursively constructed, in some ways even fabricated, in accordance with the particular political and cultural

[8] Judith M. Bennett, “Feminism and History,” *Gender & History* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 259. See also the book forum in the *Journal of Women’s History* 20, no. 2 (2008), which focuses on Judith Bennett’s book, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[9] Ko et al., *Sin Saimdang*.

[10] Yi Sugin, “Sin Saimdang tamnon ŭi kyebohak (1) kŭndae ijŏn” (The Genealogy of the Discourse on Sin Saimdang in pre-Modern Korea), *Chindan hakpo* 106 (2008): 1–31.

[11] Kim, “Chŏnt’ong ŭi ch’ang’an kwa yŏsŏng ŭi kungminhwa,” 215–55.

[12] Sin’s image as an ideal woman has been contrasted with the demonized image of “New Woman” (*sin yŏsŏng*) in colonial Korea and “soybean paste girl” (*toenjangnyŏ*) in contemporary South Korea. See Hong, “Sin Saimdang.” For details about a “soybean paste girl,” see Jee Eun Regina Song, “The Soybean Paste Girl: The Cultural and Gender Politics of Coffee Consumption in Contemporary South Korea,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 429–48.

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demands of different historical agents. They have also elucidated the complex ways in which the norm of "wise mother, good wife" was deployed for the purpose of the Korean nationalist mandate, on the one hand, and Korean women's desire for a new ideal in the form of an "empowered" and "educated" mother and wife in the modern, nuclear family, on the other.[13]

What has been less explored, however, is the ways in which conservative Western gender ideology was enmeshed in the making of "wise mother, good wife," especially through the personnel and institutions of Protestant Christianity. The fact that the vast majority of educated Korean women in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century had either direct or indirect connections with American, Canadian, or Australian missionaries through education at mission schools or job opportunities in Christian organizations makes it impossible to talk about the evolution of a new ideal for women in modern Korea without considering the crucial influence of Protestant Christian groups.[14] Beyond the simple fact of the Western missionaries' influence, we must consider what ideals were elevated through their influence. In typical Korean historiography, Western missionary women have often been portrayed as pioneers of modern womanhood who delivered progressive notions of gender freedom and equality. However, their legacy is more complex than what that triumphant rhetoric would suggest.[15] As this chapter demonstrates, Western women missionaries in Korea held up a largely conservative ideal of Victorian womanhood that transpired in their educational and religious work. Significantly, their emphasis on domesticity and purity was quite compatible with Korea's traditional gender norms and became an integral part of the idea of "wise mother, good wife" in modern Korea.

In this chapter, I provide a fuller and more nuanced picture of the modern gender ideology of "wise mother, good wife," detailing how it evolved through a number of forces – national, colonial, and Protestant Christian – in turn-of-the-

[13] Kawamoto Aya, "Han'guk kwa Ilbon ŭi hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ sasang" (Ideology of Wise Mother and Good Wife in Korea and Japan), in *Mosŏng ŭi tamnon kwa hyŏnsil*, ed. Sim Yŏnghŭi (Seoul: Nanam Ch'ulp'an, 1999), pp. 221–44; Hong Yanghŭi, "Ilche sigi Chosŏn ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyuk: hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ kyoyuk ŭl chungsim ŭro" (Korean Women's Education during the Japanese colonial era: with a Focus on Education for Wise Mother and Good Wife), *Han'gukhak nonjip* 35 (2001): 219–57. [The journal *Han'gukhak nonjip* changed its title to *Tong Asia munhwa yŏn'gu* in 2010.] For an in-depth analysis of the discourse on filiality in Chosŏn dynasty, see JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Filial Emotions and Filial Values: Changing Patterns in the Discourse of Filiality in Late Chosŏn Korea," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55, no. 1 (June 1995): 129–77.

[14] According to Pak Sŏnmi, in 1935, about 65.4 percent of girls in high school were attending mission schools and 60 percent of those who enrolled in professional schools for women had attended mission-run institutes. Pak Sŏnmi, *Kŭndae yŏsŏng cheguk ŭl kŏch'ŏ Chosŏn ŭro hoeyuhada* (Modern Women Return to Korea via Empire) (Seoul: Ch'angbi, 2007), p. 53.

[15] For a critical approach to the missionary legacy in gender history in modern Korea, see Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

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twentieth century Korea. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries comprised arguably the most turbulent era in Korea's history, one that contained unprecedented challenges to the Korean patriarchal system. The era was characterized by foreign aggression and the influx of new and modern ideas from other countries. During this unsettled era,[16] not only were the traditional political and economic systems shaken but the Confucian moral and cultural values that had been the foundation of the Chosŏn dynasty came under critical scrutiny.[17] In particular, inspired by the Western notion that the status and treatment of woman reflects the level of civilization, the "woman question" emerged as a theme in the critique of Confucian-prescribed gender norms. Intellectuals and reformers endeavored to reconfigure the role women would play in the domestic, familial sphere as an integral part of a modern nation-state. The concept of "wise mother, good wife" came about within this particular historical moment, shaped by regional and transnational forces.

In her analysis of the construction of the concept of "good wives and wise mothers" (*liangqi xianmu*) in late Qing China, Joan Judge argues that the concept of "good wives and wise mothers" (*liangqi xianmu*) should be understood "as a product of its own transnational moment in history."[18] As she notes, the notions of *liangqi* (good wife) and *xianmu* (wise mother) are found in Chinese texts as early as the first century BCE.[19] However, it was Meiji Japan (1868–1912) that first developed a combined notion, *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother), which Japanese historian Koyama Shizuko characterizes "as an ideology that made women into members of the modern state, while at the same time assigning them to an existence within the boundaries of the home with their primary roles being those of wife and mother."[20] That concept of *ryōsai kenbo* subsequently traveled to China and Korea in the early twentieth

[16] The period between 1876 and 1910 is broadly known as the "enlightenment period" (*kaehwagi*). In his analysis of modern political thought, the Korean historian Pak Ch'ansŭng terms the particular period after Korea became a Japanese Protectorate (1905–1910) as the "self-strengthening movement era" (*chagang undonggi*) to capture the wide variety of social movements that came about during that time. See Pak Ch'ansŭng, *Han'guk kŭndae chŏngch'i sasangsa yŏn'gu* (A Study of the History of Modern Political Thought in Korea) (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 1993). See also Peter Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, vol. 2, *From the Seventeenth Century to the Modern Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 337–60.

[17] Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860–1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Vipan Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Korean Studies, 1988); and Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[18] Joan Judge, *The Precious Raft of History: The Past, the West, and the Woman Question in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 113.

[19] Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, p. 112.

[20] Koyama Shizuko, *Ryōsai Kenbo: The Educational Ideal of "Good Wife, Wise Mother" in Modern Japan*, trans. Stephen Filler (Boston: Brill, 2013), p. 8.

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century.[21] The evolution and circulation of the concept of "good wife, wise mother" or its reversal "wise mother, good wife" in East Asia should be understood within a historical context in which the onslaught of Western imperial powers prompted reformers in East Asian countries to overhaul the role of women in pursuit of a strong nation-state.[22] In the Eurocentric, masculinist discourse on gender and civilization, "a society's treatment of women was frequently held up as evidence of its degree of civilization, with 'rude' societies cruel to their womenfolk and 'advanced' ones respectful of them."[23] Although Western women themselves were, in reality, struggling to improve their status within their own "civilized" societies, reformers in East Asia were compelled to react to the prevailing perception in the West that Asian women were ignorant, oppressed, and superstitious. Thus, reforming the role and status of women became a national imperative. Significantly, Western-dominated representations of women do not necessarily mean that the direction of influence was unidirectional, moving from the West to the rest of the world. The concept and utility of "wise mother, good wife" illustrate how "traditional" gender norms interacted with the global flow of ideas and discourses, helping create a *localized* gender ideology with significant imprint of other societies and cultures whether it was through force or volition.

Focusing on divergent sources of influence, I argue that the ideology of "wise mother, good wife" in Korea was a transcultural modern construct. I demonstrate how it came about at the turn of the twentieth century through a convergence of the Chosŏn dynasty's Confucian ideal of *pudŏk* (womanly virtues), Japan's Meiji gender ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother), which transpired through Japanese colonial policies in Korea, and American Protestant women missionaries' Victorian ideology of domesticity in mission schools.[24] To be sure, *pudŏk*, *ryōsai kenbo*, and the Victorian notion of domesticity were shaped by their respective indigenous cultures and histories, and, as a result, the specific details of their particular notions of ideal

[21] In China, the phrase *liangqi xianmu* (good wife, wise mother) was most common, but we also find *xianmu liangqi* (wise mother, good wife), and *xianqi liangmu* (wise wife, good mother), while in Korea, the expression *hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ* (wise mother, good wife) was most commonly rendered.

[22] Barbara Molony, Janet Theiss, and Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender in Modern East Asia: An Integrated History* (Boulder: Westview, 2016), p. 139.

[23] Philippa Levine, "Introduction: Why Gender and Empire?," in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1–13, quoted on p. 6.

[24] Kim Sujin notes that, although the order changed in the literal translation from Japanese *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife and wise mother) to Korean *hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ* (wise mother and good wife), it does not mean that Koreans gave greater emphasis to motherhood. In colonial-era Korea, *hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ* (wise mother, good wife) and *yangch'ŏ hyŏnmo* (good wife, wise mother) were used interchangeably. See Kim Sujin, "1920–30-nyŏndae sin yŏsŏng tamnon kwa sangjing ŭi kusŏng" (Excess of the Modern: Three Archetypes of the New Woman and Colonial Identity in Korea, 1920s to 1930s) (PhD, Seoul National University, 2005), p. 344.

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womanhood varied.[25] However, they all placed high value on the idea that women should occupy the domestic sphere in which they were expected to contribute to the family and society in their capacity as mothers and wives. More importantly, the dynamic interactions among these various concepts took place in the specific historical context in which Korea was colonized by Japan, a non-Western and non-Christian imperial power, and Western missionaries in Korea were perceived by Koreans not as imperialists, but as allies in their struggle against the Japanese colonial power and harbingers of Western modern civilization.[26] It is within these complex historical and political dynamics that indigenous, Japanese, and Western gender beliefs and practices interacted to shape the new modern gender ideology.

I further argue that the promotion of this modern gender ideology of the "wise mother, good wife" was not simply a continuation of traditional patriarchal gender relations. Rather, it was a "transcultural discursive construct" that served as an expedient, flexible, and contested ideology that a diverse collection of sociopolitical and cultural agents – Korean intellectuals, the Japanese colonial authority, and American Protestant missionaries – all embraced, challenged, or strategically appropriated for their own unique mandate, whether it was for the reconstruction of the nation, efficient colonial governance, or the Christianization of the world. These groups actively participated in the rearticulation of this particular gender discourse, which was based on their own primary objectives and readjusted to reflect local particularities. In spite of the uneven power relations among these groups, I underscore the creative engagement of different agencies in promoting or challenging the emerging new gender ideology. An examination of the complexity of the idea of "wise mother, good wife" within this transcultural context helps us articulate major fissures and challenges that patriarchal systems faced; but, more importantly, it illustrates the paradoxical nature of the evolving patriarchies in which both oppressive and liberating forces were embedded.[27]

A Modern Discursive Construct of Gender

Korean intellectuals and reformers were keenly aware of the emergence of "woman" as a visible category in the discourse of "civilization and enlightenment"

[25] In this book, "Victorian" refers to American Victorian culture and society. See Thomas Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876–1915* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

[26] Hyaeweol Choi, "Christian Modernity in Missionary Discourse from Korea, 1905–1910," *East Asian History* 29 (June 2005): 39–68.

[27] Line Nyhagen Predelli and Jon Miller, "Piety and Patriarchy: Contested Gender Regimes in Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Missions," in *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, eds. Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 67–112.

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(K. *munmyŏng kaehwa*, J. *bunmei kaika*) that was dominated by Euro-American politicians and Christian groups at that time. In his 1895 book *Sŏyu kyŏnmun* (*Observations of My Travels to the West*), Yu Kilchun (1856–1914), a leading enlightenment-oriented reformer who was educated in Japan and the United States, noted that valuing women's education and treating them better were signs of an advanced civilization. He wrote that Westerners treated their women fairly well because they believed that the "woman is the foundation of human society and the girder of the house and thus if she is weak or ignorant, she would not be able to fulfill her central role."[28] He further noted that since children are the foundation of the country, their having well-informed and knowledgeable mothers is crucial to the well-being of the country.[29] It is important to note that Yu's writing about gender relations in Western countries is not so much an advocacy as a report based on his observations. He wrote: "The manners with which Westerners treat their women are quite different from those in Korea. I am not sure what preferences readers might have, but I am writing about the subject only based on what I saw and will reserve my judgment whether those Western manners are good or bad."[30] Yu's cautious statement about Western practices was relatively common among reformers in East Asia, who were "simultaneously drawn by Western wealth and power and repelled by aspects of the Western social ethos."[31] One of the strategies for dealing with this dilemma was to adopt Western material civilizations but to preserve Eastern morality, expressed in such terms as "*Tongdo sŏgi*" (literally meaning "Eastern Way, Western Method").[32]

A much harsher critic on "Eastern morality," including Confucian-prescribed gender relations, was Yun Ch'iho (1864–1945), who was another prominent reformist intellectual and politician with education in Japan, China, and the United States. From his point of view, the "doctrine of inferiority of women" that prevailed in Chosŏn Korea was deeply embedded in Confucianism – a root cause of Korea's backwardness – that "has made Corea [Korea] a hell."[33] In contrast, Yun believed that one of the features of advanced civilization was women having enhanced status in society. His discourse significantly echoes how Euro-Americans described Korean and Asian women at that time. It is evident that Yun's intellectual trajectory was significantly influenced by Young J. Allen (1836–1907). Allen was the founder of the Anglo-Chinese Southern Methodist School in Shanghai and ran an influential monthly magazine, called *Wanguo gongbao* (*Review of the Times*,

[28] Yu Kilchun, *Sŏyu kyŏnmun* (Observations of my Travels to the West), trans. Hŏ Kyŏngjin (Sŏul: Hanyang Ch'ulp'an, 1995), p. 350.
[29] Yu, *Sŏyu kyŏnmun*, pp. 326–27, 349–53. [30] Yu, *Sŏyu kyŏnmun*, p. 350.
[31] Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, p. 112.
[32] Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, *Sŏgu munhwa waŭi mannam* (Encounters with Western Cultures) (Kwach'ŏn: Kyŏngin munhwasa, 2010), pp. 28–34.
[33] Yun Ch'iho, *Yun Ch'iho ilgi* (Diary of Yun Ch'iho), December 12, 1893.

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1889–1907) that was well-known and circulated among Korean reformers as well as the late Qing reformers.[34] In his book, *A Survey of Female Customs in the Five Continents*, Allen suggests using "the status of women and their treatment in every country as the yardstick for judging the degree of civilization of each culture." He further argued that "no country could ever hope to flourish without elevating and educating its women."[35] Allen's view was squarely in line with his contemporary Euro-Americans, who placed Europe and the United States at the top of the hierarchy of "civilizations." Yun was a protégé of Allen when he studied at the Anglo-Chinese Southern Methodist School in Shanghai between 1885 and 1888. Allen was also instrumental in Yun's further education at Vanderbilt University and Emory University.

The "doctrine of inferiority of women," as Yun disparagingly referred to the prevailing practices, was related to the fact that there were no formal institutions of education for women in the Chosŏn dynasty. However, education was still of great importance in Chosŏn, especially for women of the upper class, for the purpose of maintaining and advancing the prestige of the family as well as distributing Confucian gender ethics.[36] Such education was done exclusively through informal instruction from family members within the domestic sphere, primarily emphasizing filial piety (*hyo*), chastity (*yŏl*), serving the ancestors (*pongjesa*), and domestic skills, such as sewing and cooking.[37] The government as well as illustrious families also published instructional books for women, often based on Chinese works. For example, Queen Sohye (1437–1504) published a book entitled *Naehun* (*Instructions for Women*), drawing selected passages from Chinese texts, such as *Elementary Learning* (*Xiaoxue*), *Notable Women* (*Lienü*), *Lessons for Women* (*Nüjiao*), and *Mirrors of Sagacity* (*Mingjian*).[38] King Yŏngjo (1694–1776) ordered the translation into Korean of the Chinese works, *The Four Books for Women* (*Nü sishu*) – a collection that includes "Lessons for Women" (*yŏ kye*), "Analects for Women" (*yŏ nonŏ*), "Teachings for the Inner Court" (*naehun*), and "Short

[34] Yi Kwangnin, *Han'guk kaehwasa yŏn'gu* (A Study of the History of Korean Enlightenment) (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1981), pp. 45–6.

[35] Cited from Hu Ying, *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China, 1899–1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 2.

[36] Han Hŭisuk, "Yŏhakkyo nŭn ŏpsŏtta, kŭrŏna kyoyug ŭn chungyo haetta" (There was no Girl's School, but Education was Important), in *Chosŏn yŏsŏng ŭi ilsaeng* (Lives of Chosŏn Women), ed. Kyujanggak han'gukhak yŏn'guwŏn (P'aju: Kŭrhangari, 2010), pp. 214–41.

[37] Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 38–40; Kim, *Women of Korea*, p. 154; Hong, "Ilche sigi Chosŏn ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyuk," p. 223.

[38] Molony, Theiss, and Choi, *Gender in Modern East Asia*, pp. 65–6; John Duncan, "The Naehun and the Politics of Gender," in *Creative Women of Korea: The Fifteenth through the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 26–57.

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Records of Models for Women" (*yŏbŏm ch'ŏmnok*).[39] Centering on "womanly virtues," these instructional works taught girls and women how to cultivate wisdom, morality, prudence, and resourcefulness within the domestic realm. For women to aspire to training beyond the domestic sphere was considered inappropriate. A prominent Confucian scholar, Yi Ik (1681–1763) noted that "teaching women scholarship (*hangmun*) will lead to disaster."[40]

However, when Korea was thrown into competition with modern countries beginning in the late nineteenth century, the idea of "educated women" began to take on new meaning. At that time, male reformers and intellectuals began to advocate for a "modern" form of schooling for all, including girls and women, in the spirit of distributing new learning (*sin hangmun*) appropriate for the new era.[41] Women also urged the government to establish schools for girls. Most notably, a group of "learned women from the north village in Seoul" distributed a circular letter entitled "After Five Hundred Years," dated September 1, 1898, to gain support for the establishment of a girls' school.[42] They also submitted a "Petition for a Girls' School" to the king, signed on October 10, 1898, urging him to understand the necessity of girls' formal education in strengthening the nation. They referred to "America and many countries in Europe" that "have reached enlightenment and progress by establishing schools for women to teach the various kinds of skills and arts," and asked "why is our country the only one neglecting women's education?"[43] The Korean government (The Taehan Empire, 1897–1910) was not able to establish a public girls' school in response to the above-mentioned petition. It was only in 1908 that the first public school for girls, Hansŏng Kodŭng Yŏhakkyo, was established.[44]

[39] Yi Sugin, trans. *Yŏ sasŏ* (The Four Books for Women) (Seoul: Yŏiyŏn, 2003). See also *The Confucian Four Books for Women: A New Translation of the Nü Sishu and the Commentary of Wang Xiang*, ed. and trans. Ann A. Pang-White (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[40] Deuchler, "Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea," p. 150.

[41] Chŏng Kyŏngsuk, "Taehan cheguk malgi yŏsŏng undong ŭi sŏnggyŏk yŏn'gu" (Characteristics of the Women's Movements in the Late Taehan Empire) (PhD dissertation, Ewha Womans University, 1989), p. 197.

[42] The circular was published with a somewhat paraphrased title, such as "A Circular for the Establishment of a Girls' School" in *Tongnip sinmun*, September 9, 1898.

[43] The petition and the king's written response to that petition were published in several newspapers. Se-mi Oh points to a significant shift in the "the dialogue between the monarch and the people" in the traditional form of petition "from government sector to public sphere as the king came into direct contact with the public through newspapers." See Se-mi Oh, "Letters to the Editor: Women, Newspapers, and the Public Sphere in Turn-of-the-Century Korea," in *Epistolary Korea: Letters in the Communicative Space of the Chosŏn, 1392–1910*, ed. Jahyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 157–67, quoted on p. 162.

[44] According to Sonja Kim, in response to the 1898 petition by women, the Korean government "did set aside money in its budget for a girls' school and instituted its Regulation on Girls' Schools in 1899," and this Regulation "laid the groundwork by establishing the purpose and recommending the curriculum of girls' schools." See Sonja Kim, *Imperatives of Care: Women and Medicine in Colonial Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), p. 33.

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Before then, it was mostly Western missionaries who opened the schools for girls.[45]

The emerging print media, especially from the 1890s onward, also served as a vehicle for challenging Confucian-prescribed hierarchical gender relations and advocating the critical importance of "educated" women for the family and the nation.[46] Some prominent newspapers, such as the *Tongnip sinmun* (1896–1899) and the *Cheguk sinmun* (1898–1910), and women's magazines, including *Kajŏng chapchi* (1906–1908), *Yŏja chinam* (1908), and *Chasŏn puinhoe chapchi* (1908), chose to publish in the Korean vernacular (*han'gŭl*) rather than in Chinese – the language of the elite for centuries – in order to reach out to as many women as possible and distribute new knowledge (*sin chisik*). Christian magazines and newspapers, such as *Sinhak wŏlbo* (1900–1909), were also important media for the dispersal of new perspectives on both the role of educated women in Korea's advancement to the status of a civilized country and the new ethics of gender relations in the Christian family.[47] Furthermore, after the first appearance of "New Fiction" (*sin sosŏl*)[48] in 1906, when Yi Injik (1862–1916) published the novel *Hyŏl ŭi nu* (Tears of Blood), that genre, along with other print media, engaged in the "woman question" by contributing new imagery of "educated women" at the intersection of enlightenment, nationalism, modernity, and selfhood.[49]

At the core of the new gender discourse during this era was the idea of the "wise mother, good wife" – a new, idealized image of woman who would be

[45] For the contribution of American missionaries to women's education in Korea, see Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea*, pp. 86–120.

[46] *Tongnip sinmun,* April 21, 1896, September 5, 1896, September 29, 1896, May 18, 1897, May 31, 1899; *Cheguk sinmun,* January 11, 1898; and *Taehan maeil sinbo,* July 2, 1907.

[47] Editorial, *Sinhak wŏlbo* 4, no. 7 (July 1904); "Pubugan chikpun" (Duties and Responsibilities of Husbands and Wives), *Kŭrisŭdo sinmun*, January 10, 1901. Other key pieces that appeared in Christian magazines and newspapers discuss "The Custom of the Inside-Outside Rule," *Sinhak wŏlbo* 3, no. 7 (1903): 187–90, "Education for Women," *Kŭrisdo sinmun*, February 28, 1901, "Questions and Answers about Marriage," *Kŭrisdo sinmun*, August 8, 1901, "The Ways of Husbands and Wives," *Sinhak wŏlbo* 1, no. 3 (1901): 101–4; and "The Vice of the Concubine System," *Sinhak wŏlbo* 1, no. 11 (1901): 437–41. For the translation of some of these articles, see Hyaeweol Choi, "A New Moral Order: Gender Equality in Korean Christianity," in *Religions of Korea in Practice*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 409–20.

[48] The label *sin sosŏl* first appeared in *Taehan maeil sinbo* (February 1, 1906) in the advertisement of Yi Injik's fiction, *Hyŏl ŭi nu*. For the role of *sin sosŏl* in the formation of new modern subjectivities, see Yoon Sun Yang, *From Domestic Women to Sensitive Young Men: Translating the Individual in Early Colonial Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Susie Jie Young Kim, "The Ambivalence of 'Modernity': Articulation of New Subjectivities in Turn of the Century Korea" (PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 2002).

[49] It should be noted that not all *sin sosŏl* have the theme of enlightenment and modernity. Although expected to play a key role in educating the public, the *sin sosŏl* also drew criticism because it failed to focus on nationalist-bent agendas and instead explored private, individual, and lascivious emotions. Yi Injik's *Kwi ŭi sŏng* was singled out as an example of bad literature. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, March 14, 1909.

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instrumental in creating a strong, modern nation-state. The terminology "wise mother, good wife" (*hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*) first appeared in Korea in 1906 when Korea was a protectorate of Japan (1905–1910) and Japan was rapidly expanding its control over Korean affairs, including the educational system.[50] The mission statement of Yanggyu Ŭisuk, a private Korean girls' school that followed the Japanese model, stated that the school aimed to "cultivate and perfect the qualifications for a wise mother, good wife (*hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*) by educating girls with academic work, dexterous skills for craft-making, and womanly virtues of compliance and wisdom (*pudŏk sunch'ŏl*)."[51] The board of directors of Yanggyu Ŭisuk, including the principal, Kwŏn Chunghyŏn, had studied in Japan, and thus it is feasible that they were aware of the discourse of *ryōsai kenbo* that had circulated throughout East Asia. In the case of China, as Joan Judge shows, one of the earliest uses of the term, *liangqi xianmu* (good wives and wise mothers) appeared in 1903 in "a translated excerpt from a treatise by the prominent Japanese educator Yoshimura Toratarō (1848–1917), *Contemporary Japanese Education* (*Nihon genji kyōiku*)." Yoshimura believed that "through their moral and intellectual influence on their children, 'good wives and wise mothers' in all nations are 'the mothers of national enlightenment and civilization'."[52] Those views on the role of women in "civilization and enlightenment" were clearly embedded in the mission statement of Yanggyu Ŭisuk.[53] The first public school for girls, Hansŏng Kodŭng Yŏhakkyo, was the first tangible product of the Japanese colonial policy on women's education pursuant to the Edict of High Education for Girls in April 1908.[54] The goals of Hansŏng Kodŭng Yŏhakkyo also echoed those of Yanggyu Ŭisuk in that the school aimed to train each student to become a "wise companion, benevolent mother" (*hyŏnbae chamo*) by teaching them morality, reading, art, hygiene, nursing skills, childcare, and home economics.[55] These goals significantly reflect the Confucian ideals represented by "womanly

[50] For Japanese educational policies during the protectorate era, see Yun Kŏnch'a, *Han'guk kŭndae kyoyuk ŭi sasang kwa undong* (The Ideology of Korean Modern Education and Its Social Movements), trans. Sim Sŏngbo (Seoul: Ch'ŏngsa, 1987), pp. 299–329.

[51] "Chappo" (Miscellaneous), *Taehan maeil sinbo* May 9, 1906, 3; Han'guk yŏsŏng yŏn'guso yŏsŏngsa yŏn'gusil, ed., *Uri yŏsŏng ŭi yŏksa* (Our Women's History) (Seoul: Ch'ŏngnyŏnsa, 1999), p. 264.

[52] Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, p. 111.

[53] *Taehan maeil sinbo* May 9, 1906, 3. Since its first appearance, enlightenment-oriented national organizations began to use the term, *hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*. See *T'aegŭk hakpo* 2, September 24, 1906, 12; *Taehan hyŏphoe hoebo* 4, July 25, 1908, 43; *Kiho hŭnghakhoe wŏlbo* 12, July 25, 1909, 11.

[54] The comment of the Japanese vice-minister of education captures the essence of women's education at the time: "It is not necessarily important to offer education to girls. When we do, we offer it only to the extent that facilities are available, and its curriculum should be rudimentary and practical." As a result, girls' education centered on "sewing, embroidery, and homemaking," tasks that were considered appropriate and practical for girls. See Yun, p. 310.

[55] Kim, *Women of Korea*, p. 225; Pak, *Kŭndae yŏsŏng*, pp. 192–3.

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virtue,” which was systematically propagated, especially after patrilineal social and economic arrangements were adopted and implemented during the Chosŏn dynasty.[56] At the same time, they also exemplified the beginning of the Japanese colonial imprint based on the Meiji gender ideology of *ryōsai kenbo*.

After Korea became a colony of Japan in 1910, the Japanese government systematically promoted the ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* through women's education in colonial Korea.[57] The most consistent and emphatic focus was on the cultivation of “womanly virtue” (*pudŏk*) and good character as a *national* subject (J: *kokumin*; K: *kungmin*). In 1911, the first Edict of Korean Education (1911–1922) proclaimed that girls' higher common schools should educate students “to cultivate ‘womanly virtues’ (*pudŏk*), build the character as a national subject, and learn knowledge useful to everyday life.”[58] In the second Edict of Korean Education (1922–1938), the goals remained very similar to the 1911 Edict with the addition of “physical development” and “proficiency in the national language [Japanese].”[59] The consistent use of the term *pudŏk* as an educational goal makes it clear that, as Theodore Jun Yoo argues, colonial education “promoted a cult of domesticity not for the purpose of fostering modern middle-class womanhood in the Western sense, which included cultivation of moral sensibilities, cultural refinement, and aesthetic taste [*bildung*], but with the sole intent of maintaining Korean women, who were knowledgeable about ‘modern ideals,’ within the traditional constraints of domesticity.”[60] Thus, it is no wonder that graduates of Hansŏng Kodŭng Yŏhakkyo (later Kyŏnggi Yŏja Kodŭng Hakkyo), one of the premier schools for girls during the colonial era, remember the emphasis that was placed on “wise mother, good wife,” giving the impression that it was the central theme of their education.[61]

[56] Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Kim, *Imperatives of Care*, pp. 17–22.

[57] The connection between Japan's *ryōsai kenbo* and Korea's *hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ* is relatively well-known, especially in the area of Japanese colonial education for women. See Hong, “Ilche sigi Chosŏn ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyuk”; Chang Migyŏng, “Kŭndae Ilbon susin kyogwasŏ e nat'anan yŏsŏng ŭi kŭndaesŏng kwa pan-kŭndaesŏng” (The Modern and Anti-modern Nature of Womanhood Reflected in Ethics Textbooks in Modern Japan), *Ilbon'ŏ munhak* 25 (2005): 219–37; Chŏn Migyŏng, “1920–30-nyŏndae hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ e kwanhan yŏn'gu” (A Study of Wise Mother, Good Wife in the 1920s and 1930s), *Han'guk kajŏng kwalli hakhoeji* 22, no. 3 (2004): 75–93.

[58] The original text reads: “女子高等普通學校ハ女子ニ高等ノ普通教育ヲ爲ス所ニシテ婦德ヲ養ヒ國民タルノ性格ヲ陶冶シ其ノ生活ニ有用ナル知識技能ヲ授ク”; http://contents.history.go.kr/front/hm/view.do?treeId=010704&tabId=01&levelId=hm_141_0010; and An T'aeyun, *Singmin chŏngch'i wa mosŏng* (Colonial Politics and Motherhood) (P'aju: Han'guk haksul chŏngbo, 2006), p. 93.

[59] The original text reads: “女子高等普通學校ハ女生徒ノ身體ノ發達及婦德ノ涵養ニ留意シテ之ニ德育ヲ施シ生活ニ有用ナル普通ノ知識技能ヲ授ケ國民タルノ性格ヲ養成シ國語ニ熟達セシムルコトヲ目的トス”; http://contents.history.go.kr/front/hm/view.do?treeId=010704&tabId=01&levelId=hm_141_0010.

[60] Yoo, *The Politics of Gender*, p. 70.

[61] An, *Singmin chŏngch'i wa mosŏng*, pp. 184, 194.

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At the same time, it is also important to recognize that the emphasis on *pudŏk* was not a simple repetition of Confucian prescriptions for women. In particular, there was a significant shift in emphasis in the modern era away from wifely duties and toward motherly ones. In her analysis of distinctive traits of "womanly virtue" in the Chosŏn dynasty, Sonja Kim argues that *pudŏk* was oriented "primarily toward their husband's affines . . . the role prioritized for them [women] was that of daughter-in-law and not necessarily mother." Furthermore, "[w]omen may have performed some of the tasks that contributed to the operations of a household but the main targets of *kajŏng* [governing the household] instructions were men."[62] A quite similar phenomenon is also found in the Edo period (1603–1867). Based on analysis of instructional texts for girls (*jokunsho*) from the Edo period, Koyama Shizuko notes that "the ideal woman portrayed in the *jokunsho* of the Edo period was mainly that of a good wife and daughter-in-law, and the main virtue demanded of her in that respect was that of submission to her husband and parents-in-law." She goes on to point out that "it was fathers who were responsible for children's education."[63] What took place in the transition into the modern era was a shift in emphasis from the role of wife and daughter-in-law to the role of mother, and particularly to the role of mother as caregiver and educator of the next generation. Koyama points out that the novel and distinctive aspect of *ryōsai kenbo* in the Meiji era lies in the cultivation of women as "citizens of the nation" in their capacity as educators of children. Women were assigned this new responsibility for the good of the nation-state, and that is what justified formal education for girls.[64]

One of the central goals of the Japanese colonial educational policy was to build character "as a national subject" (*kungmin*). It meant learning how to be loyal and obedient imperial subjects of the Japanese empire. From the beginning, Japanese colonial authorities were keenly aware of the critical role women would play in bringing about social harmony as the foundation of colonial governance. They believed that turning Korean women into loyal Japanese subjects would be the fastest way to achieve social integration.[65] "Womanly virtue" was promoted in this broader context of assimilation policy. To prepare them for their roles as mothers, women were trained in the basic knowledge appropriate for them to reproduce and raise children to be industrious, obedient imperial subjects, with knowledge of the Japanese language, Japanese ethics, and practical skills.[66]

[62] Kim, *Imperatives of Care*, pp. 19, 21, 22. [63] Koyama, *Ryōsai Kenbo*, p. 21.
[64] Koyama, *Ryōsai Kenbo*, pp. 23–6, 49.
[65] Hong, "Ilche sigi Chosŏn ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyuk," 236.
[66] Kumamoto Shigekichi, "Kyohwa ŭigyŏnsŏ" (An Opinion on Education), September 8, 1910, quoted in *Ilche kangjŏmgi chonggyo chŏngch'eksa charyojip* (A Sourcebook of the Religious Policies during the Japanese Colonial Era), ed. Kim Sŭngt'ae (Seoul: Han'guk kidokkyo yŏksa yŏn'guso, 1996), pp. 29–41. For a comparative study of the Japanese colonial education system in Taiwan and Korea, see E. Patricia Tsurumi, "Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, eds. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 275–311.

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However, in spite of the rhetoric about the importance of education for girls and women, educational opportunities for the colonized Koreans was exceedingly limited.[67] The vast majority of girls and women received no education at all. In 1919, only 2.2 percent of girls entered public elementary schools (compared to 10.2 percent for boys). Ten years later, the percentage had increased to only 7.9 percent (compared to 30.9 percent for boys).[68] Out of this small number of elementary school graduates, roughly one-fifth advanced to middle school. The scarcity of "educated" female students throughout the colonial era is in drastic contrast to the higher rate of school attendance among Japanese female students. Japan mandated primary education for both boys and girls beginning in 1872, and by 1920, 98.8 percent of Japanese girls were enrolled in primary school.[69]

Although a similar gender ideology was in place in both Korea and Japan, the significant disparity in educational opportunities for girls led to different outcomes. While the Japanese gender ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* "gradually replaced the premodern differentiation of women by class,"[70] the ideology of *hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ* that transpired in colonial education in Korea evolved into a marker of middle-class women, serving to distinguish them from the vast majority of women, who were low-income urban dwellers, factory workers, or peasants. In this vein, socialist intellectuals criticized the bourgeois nature of "wise mother, good wife." For example, Chŏng Ch'ilsŏng (1897–1958) contrasted well-educated bourgeois women and their presumably decadent lifestyle with working-class women in the cigarette and textile factories, who had little or no education and had to labor in terrible conditions merely to survive.[71] In a similar fashion, Kim Ŭnhŭi details the miserable lives of proletarian women, noting that "in their family life mired in poverty, every day proletarian women (*musan puin*) struggle to provide meals and wood for heating. They do not even have enough time to nurse their children crying out from hunger." In contrast, bourgeois women are described as "housewives who lead leisurely lives without shedding a drop of sweat." Although "educated mothers" were publicly lauded, Kim urged people to see the reality in which proletarian women could not even afford the opportunity to gain basic literacy because

[67] Yun, *Han'guk kŭndae kyoyuk*, p. 310.

[68] Kim Kyŏngil, *Yŏsŏng ŭi kŭndae, kŭndae ŭi yŏsŏng* (Modernity of Women, Women of Modernity) (Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa, 2004), p. 281.

[69] Elizabeth Knipe Mouer, "Women in Teaching," in *Women in Changing Japan*, eds. Joyce Lebra, Joy Paulson, and Elizabeth Powers (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), p. 161.

[70] Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890–1910," in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 172–3.

[71] Chŏng Ch'ilsŏng, "Amnal ŭl parabonŭn puin nodongja" (Woman Laborers and their Vision for the Future), *Tonggwang* 29 (December 1931): 70.

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they had to struggle daily just to sustain themselves.[72] Despite the growing criticism of "educated" women and their complacent, privileged lifestyle, the Korean model of "wise mother, good wife" remained a gender ideology closely associated with the middle class, accepted by and expected of those women who had garnered formal education in colonial Korea. Significantly, when there were few jobs for women, becoming a "wise mother, good wife" represented the most realistic "career option" available to the small cohort of educated women.[73] In this vein, "home economics" became the most coveted and competitive major field for talented women in colonial Korea.[74]

Together with the influence from Japanese gender ideology, Western Protestant women missionaries, largely from the United States, also shaped the modern gender ideology of "wise mother, good wife." Mary F. Scranton (1832–1909), the first American Methodist woman missionary, landed in Korea in 1885 and founded Ewha Haktang, the very first school for girls in Korean history, in 1886, and ever since that time American Protestant women missionaries (largely Methodists and Presbyterians) have had a significant impact on the lives of Korean women, particularly in the field of women's education.[75] Mission schools represented part of a larger strategy to spread the Gospel. Furthermore, education was regarded as "women's work" and thus became a major focus for women missionaries, not only in Korea but elsewhere.[76] Since Korean reformers established girls' schools relatively slowly, despite their rhetoric about the value of women's education, Korea proved to be a fertile ground for the mission to have lasting impact.[77] Further, as Horace G. Underwood (1859–1916), a Presbyterian missionary from the United States, wrote, during the colonial era, the "Japanese government in Korea avowedly does not propose to provide much beyond the grammar grade

[72] Kim Ŭnhŭi, "Musan puin undongnon" (On the Movement of Proletarian Women), *Samch'ŏlli* 4, no. 2 (1932): 64–7.

[73] Song Yŏnok, "Chosŏn 'sin yŏsŏng' ŭi naesyŏnŏllijŭm kwa chendŏ" (Gender and Nationalism of the "New Woman" in Korea) in *Sin yŏsŏng*, ed. Mun Okp'yo (Seoul: Ch'ŏngnyŏnsa, 2003), pp. 83–117.

[74] Hong, "Ilche sigi Chosŏn ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyuk," 252–53. The middle-class orientation of "wise mother, good wife" has been perpetuated, moreover, in the activities of the Korean Federation of Housewives' Clubs (Taehan Chubu K'ŭllŏp Yŏnhaphoe), which was founded in 1966 with the goal of enlightening middle-class housewives. The group even instituted an annual award, the Sin Saimdang prize, in 1968. See Kim, "Chŏnt'ong ŭi ch'angan kwa yŏsŏng ŭi kungminhwa," 240. Furthermore, in the aforementioned 2007 TV drama, "New Wise Mother, Good Wife," the first episode begins with a classroom scene at an elementary school. A girl student presents in front of her class that her dream is to become a "wise mother, good wife." The almost naturalized and taken-for-granted image of ideal womanhood embedded in the term, "wise mother, good wife" embodied by the historical figure, Lady Sin Saimdang, has been a "career option" for women from the colonial era into the twenty-first century.

[75] Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea*.

[76] Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), pp. 81–124, 160–62.

[77] Editorial, *Tongnip sinmun*, May 12, 1896.

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alleging that the mentality of the Koreans is of such a low grade that the few exceptionally bright ones can secure their higher education in Tokyo."[78] Because there were very few institutions of higher education, especially ones open to women, mission schools took the lead in educating the next generation of women beginning in the late-nineteenth century and continuing through the first half of the twentieth century.[79] As a result, at the turn of the twentieth century the vast majority of Korean women who had modern education up to the level of middle school were linked with Christianity because they attended and/or taught at mission schools or became involved in Christian organizations, such as the Korea YWCA.[80] Chu Yosŏp (1902–1972), a public intellectual during the colonial era, regarded the opportunity to receive a "modern education" as a criterion that distinguished "new women" (*sin yŏsŏng*) from "old-fashioned women" (*ku yŏsŏng*). According to his definition, the vast majority of "new women" had ties with Christian schools and societies.[81] In her discussion of the women's movement in Korea, Hwang Sindŏk (1898–1983), a graduate of Sungŭi Yŏhakkyo, a mission school in P'yŏngyang, commented that since the opening of Korea to other countries in the late-nineteenth century, "almost all women over thirty who were educated and had worked in society had been exposed to Christianity, even if it was only minor contact."[82] In this way, Christian-educated women often took center stage in setting agendas and activities for the women's movement in Korea.

Given the prominence of Christian-educated women in modern Korean history, it is not surprising to find American women missionaries hailed in Korean historiography as pioneers who ushered in new models of gender

[78] October 12, 1911, letter of H.G. Underwood to Arthur Brown, Record Group 140, pp. 11–26, Presbyterian Historical Society (hereafter PHS), Philadelphia. See also Tsurumi, "Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan," pp. 294–308.

[79] Especially for education at the middle school level, the oppressive policy of the colonial government resulted in the greater role of mission schools in meeting the demand of Koreans. Kim, *Yŏsŏng ŭi kŭndae, kŭndae ŭi yŏsŏng*, pp. 280–85.

[80] Ch'ŏn Hwasuk, *Han'guk yŏsŏng kidokkyo sahoe undongsa* (History of the Social Movement of Korean Christian Women) (Seoul: Hyean, 2000).

[81] Chu Yosŏp, "Sin yŏsŏng kwa ku yŏsŏng ŭi haengno" (The Ways of the New Woman and the Old-fashioned Woman) *Sin yŏsŏng* 7, no. 1 (January 1933): 32–5. The definition of the "new woman" (*sin yŏsŏng* or *sin yŏja*) in Korea varies. Kim Sujin detects two major trends in defining the "new woman" in Korea: one uses the label for an actual, collective group. In the popular imagination, the concept of the "new woman" often refers to a small number of elite women represented by Na Hyesŏk, Kim Myŏngsun, Kim Wŏnju, Yun Simdŏk, Kim Hwallan, and Pak Indŏk, who became prominent figures in art, literature, education, or journalism in the 1920s. The other trend focuses on the discursive formation of the image of the "new woman," largely through the print media. However, it should also be noted that within each trend, one can see subtle variations on the "new woman," depending on characteristics of education, attitude, ideology, and occupation. See Kim, "1920-30-nyŏndae sin yŏsŏng," pp. 1–19.

[82] Hwang Sindŏk, "Chosŏn puin undong ŭn ŏttŏk'e chinaewanna" (How has the Korean Women's Movement Developed), *Sin kajŏng* (April 1933): 22–3, quoted in *Yŏsŏng ŭi kŭndae, kŭndae ŭi yŏsŏng*, p. 74.

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roles based on conceptions of Christian gender equality and Western modernity.[83] However, the imagined role of Christianity and Western modernity in constructing a new gender ideology should be examined within the context of the prevailing gender norms in both American society and foreign missionary organizations at the time. It is also important to keep one key question in mind: What constituted modern womanhood in the minds of American women missionaries? One way to answer this key question is to examine the significance of the notion of "woman's work for woman," a motto prominent among women missionaries.

"Woman's work for woman" identified a separate sphere for women missionaries within the foreign mission enterprise, one in which women were precluded from the right to ordination and were channeled into the care of women and children.[84] This work assignment grew out of the prevailing gender ideology in the United States, which privileged religious piety, domesticity, purity, and submissiveness.[85] Significantly, this gender ideology of domesticity went hand in hand with the nineteenth century's singular notion of civilization being primarily informed by a worldview based in Christian and Enlightenment ethics.[86] In her analysis of American missionaries in Ottoman Europe, historian

[83] Yi Paeyong with the cooperation of Son Sŭnghŭi, Mun Sukchae, and Cho Kyŏngwŏn, "Han'guk kidokkyo yŏsŏng kyoyuk ŭi sŏnggwa wa chŏnmang – Ihwa Yŏja Taehakkyo rŭl chungsim ŭro" (Accomplishment and Prospect of Korean Christian Education for Women – With a Focus on Ewha Womans University), *Ihwa sahak yŏn'gu* 27 (2000): 9–36.

[84] Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985); Leslie A. Flemming, ed., *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); Kwok Pui-lan, *Chinese Women and Christianity 1860–1927* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Gael Graham, *Gender, Culture, and Christianity: American Protestant Mission Schools in China 1880–1930* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995); Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996); Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus, eds., *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Maina Chawla Singh, *Gender, Religion, and "Heathen Lands": American Missionary Women in South Asia (1860s–1940s*) (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000); Karen K. Seat, *"Providence Has Freed Our Hands": Women's Missions and the American Encounter with Japan* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie A. Shemo, eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); and Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, eds., *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014).

[85] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151–74; "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 30 (Winter 1978): 624–38.

[86] Prasenjit Duara, "The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism," *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (2001): 99–130.

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Barbara Reeves-Ellington notes that: "Evangelical Christian Americans believed that the United States was at the pinnacle of progress as a Protestant Republic where Christian women were educated and charged with the responsibility of shaping the character of the home and the nation by raising future generations. Domestic discourse established the moral authority of white, middle-class Protestant women within the home as the household became the 'empire of the mother'."[87] Women missionaries shared a sense of urgency about the need to spread Christian civilization to the entire world to rescue "heathen" women and children and create "Christian homes."[88] Especially in those countries that maintained the custom of keeping the genders separate, the role of women missionaries became vital in distributing the Gospel to local women because male missionaries did not have permission to interact with them. In the case of Korea, the culturally prescribed gender roles, expressed in the Confucian norm of the "distinction between man and woman" (*namnyŏ yubyŏl*), assigned women to the domestic arena and men to the public domain. This distinction manifested itself spatially in the architecture of the home – women stayed in inner chambers (*anbang*), and men in outer chambers (*sarangbang*).[89] William Scranton, the son of Mary F. Scranton, reported that "the seclusion of women in Korea has made this temporary separation in the places of worship necessary," and that the mission work for Korean women was "in the hands of the ladies of the WFM [Woman's Foreign Missionary] Society."[90] As Chapter 2 details, the creation of a "Christian home" became a central goal of "woman's work for woman" in which the role of the woman was valorized as the "moral arbiter" in nurturing children and fostering a loving conjugal relationship.[91] Women missionaries actively engaged in distributing and articulating the ideal of "domesticity" and "Christian home" in their interaction with Korean women. They largely succeeded in their primary goal, as affirmed by Yang Chusam (aka J. S. Ryang, 1876–?), a leading

[87] Barbara Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity: Women, Mission, and Nation Building in Ottoman Europe, 1832–1872," in *Competing Kingdoms*, pp. 269–92, quoted on p. 270.

[88] After World War I, the gendered division of labor in the foreign mission came to be challenged for the first time. See Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902–69* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002); Hill, *The World Their Household*.

[89] Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson, eds., *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room* (New Haven: East Rock Press, 1983). See especially "Introduction" by Kendall and Peterson (pp. 5–21) and "Women, Men, Inside, Outside" by Clark Sorensen (pp. 63–79).

[90] W. B. Scranton, "Report of Pastor, Baldwin Chapel and Ewa Hak Tang – 1893," Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Korea Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1893), pp. 44–6. See also Huldah A. Haenig, "From West Gate to East Gate," *Woman's Missionary Friend* 43, no. 1 (January 1911): 9–11.

[91] Dana Robert, "The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice," in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914*, ed. Dana Robert (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 134–65.

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Korean Christian of that time, who praised the role of women missionaries in bringing forth "true Christian homes" that "dignified the wife and raised the mother to a higher plane."[92]

The ways in which Confucian "womanly virtue," Meiji Japan's *ryōsai kenbo*, and the American gender ideology of domesticity intersected with one another in Korea should be understood within the context of Japan's burgeoning colonialism, Korea's struggle to modernize itself and regain national sovereignty, and the height of Western imperialism in political, economic, and moral spheres. Although they were rooted in different historical circumstances, these gender ideologies found both comparable and distinctive practices in one another's notions of ideal womanhood, and, ultimately, they each contributed to what would come to constitute ideal modern womanhood. In the next section, I delve into the ways in which the interactions among Korean, Japanese, and American gender ideologies in the contact zone challenged, reinforced, or appropriated gender rules, and discuss how the ideal of "wise mother, good wife" possessed both oppressive and liberating traits, depending on each woman's particular perspective on "modern" womanhood.

Modern Cult of Domesticity

When American women missionaries first arrived in Korea, they criticized the "oppressive" nature of the Confucian gender rules imposed on Korean women. They were shocked by the confinement of Korean women to the inner chambers, the lack of formal educational opportunities, and the practice in which individual women did not even receive names. They described a "heathen" womanhood that rendered the woman "unworthy of a name, a creature without rights or responsibilities, only a convenient adjunct to some man – his daughter, his wife, his mother."[93] They often characterized Korean women pejoratively as deeply ignorant and superstitious.[94] Women missionaries certainly felt much more liberated in comparison. After all, they were educated, had the freedom to work in public, and traveled overseas. However, despite being proud of this "liberated" status, women missionaries largely embraced the idea of having a separate sphere of "woman's work for woman," centered on domesticity and with particular emphasis on religious piety. This orientation toward "domestic

92 J. S. Ryang, "Foreword," in *Fifty Years of Light*, prepared by the Missionaries of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Commemoration of the Completion of Fifty Years of Work in Korea (Seoul, 1938).

93 Mrs. E. W. Rice, "A Woman of Korea," *Heathen Woman's Friend* 17, no. 8 (February 1886): 182–3; Mrs. T. J. Gracey, "Something about the Koreans," *Heathen Woman's Friend* 23, no. 12 (June 1892): 282–3; Ellasue Wagner, "Girls and Women in Korea," *Korea Mission Field* 4, no. 6 (June 1908): 82; Haenig, "From West Gate to East Gate," 9–11.

94 Josephine Paine and Lulu Frey, "Ewa Haktang, Seoul," Annual Report of the Korea Woman's Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (May 1903), pp. 7–9.

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feminism," which meant "women using domestic credentials to enhance their position in the family or in the society,"[95] provided a link with Korean reformers, who were keenly interested in the enlightenment of Korean women to the benefit of the nation but envisioned a "new" role for women as educated wives and mothers in the domestic sphere. The overall Japanese colonial policy on girls' education also centered on domesticity and practical knowledge with special focus on "morality" (*susin*) in order to assimilate Koreans into the Japanese empire. Through the curriculum of *susin*, the ideals of "wise mother" and "good wife" were actively promoted, often with Japanese women featured as exemplary models whom Korean girls were expected to emulate.[96] Ultimately, missionary women's advocacy of the "divine art of home-making,"[97] the Korean reformers' vision of the modern ideal Korean women as educated mothers, and the Japanese state's policies designed to produce obedient female imperial subjects converged to construct a gender ideology that placed a heavy emphasis on domesticity for women.[98]

This emphasis on the domestic proved to be a strategic advantage for the Korea mission. In the beginning of the mission in the late-nineteenth century, the Korean public feared that American women missionaries and their educational work would turn Korean girls into "American ladies" who would defy Korean customs and be uninterested in learning domestic skills. In response to this anxiety, the missionaries publicly emphasized the elements of domesticity in their curriculum for Korean girls. Emily Haynes (1877–?), a Methodist missionary, reported in 1910: "Having heard the fear expressed on more than one occasion that if the girls were educated they would not learn to sew, cook, and do other household tasks, we decided to put it to the test. Accordingly on the last half day of the winter term we had an exhibit of the girls' sewing.... Not a hint have we heard since that the girls would not know how to sew."[99] In addition, missionaries stressed that they came to Korea to help produce "better Koreans" with "home-grown Christian characters."[100] Annie Baird (1864–1916), a Presbyterian missionary, precisely expressed this caution.

[95] Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America," in *Clio's Consciousness Raised*, eds. Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), quoted in Glenna Matthews, *"Just a Housewife": The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 28.

[96] Kim Sunjŏn and Chang Migyŏng, "'Pot'ong hakkyo susinsŏ' rŭl t'onghae pon yŏsŏng myosa" (Portrayal of Women Reflected in "Book of Moral Education for Common School"), in *Cheguk ŭi singminji susin* (Empire's Moral Cultivation of the Colonized), et al. Kim Sunjŏn (Seoul: Cheiaenssi, 2008), pp. 304–24.

[97] Mary Swale Wilkinson, "The Place of the Missionary Training School," *Woman's Missionary Friend* 35, no. 11 (November 1903): 384–85.

[98] Yoo, *The Politics of Gender*, pp. 58–94.

[99] Emily Irene Haynes, "Union Academy School and Evangelistic Work on Pyeng Yang District," Annual Report of the Korea Woman's Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1910), pp. 55–60.

[100] Annie Baird, "Higher Education of Women in Korea," *Korea Mission Field* 8, no. 4 (1912): 113–16.

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She wrote: "We want a system which will train young women and yet leave them indigenous, their thoughts and affections deep in Mother Korea, who can reach out on all sides and draw to themselves other girls and young women in whom they can instill their own home-grown Christian characters, and to whom they can impart the training they have themselves received."[101]

The focus on domesticity and indigenous Korean character is most clearly manifested in the curriculum of mission schools that put particular emphasis on domestic science as a key subject, in addition to the Bible and Christian teachings. Josephine Paine and Lulu Frey, teachers at Ewha Girls' School in Seoul, stated that the aim of their school "is not only to educate the girls and lift them out of the ignorance and superstition in which the Korean woman is found, but also to teach them to be good house wives with cleanly habits."[102] Velma Snook (1866–1960), the principal of Pyeng Yang Academy for Young Women (P'yŏngyang Sungŭi Yŏhakkyo), proudly reported that "amid many discouragements and trials our hearts are made glad when we hear that Koreans say 'When you want a good cook for a wife go to the Women's Academy in Pyeng Yang,' and that the 'graduates of the Kindergarten Training Dep't are in great demand both as teachers and wives'."[103] The establishment of the "Self Help Department" at mission schools, which was originally designed as a work-study program to help poor students pay tuition by selling sewing and embroidery, also served as a platform for displaying the domesticity and femininity of their students to the public through regular exhibitions of the students' needlework.[104] The schools invited patrons and the general public to see that girl students "were learning to use their hands as well as their heads."[105] In addition to domestic skills, students received "lessons in neatness and cleanliness and obedience," and "their going and coming, receiving of visitors and such things [at the dormitory] have been given closer oversight."[106]

[101] Baird, "Higher Education of Women in Korea."
[102] Josephine Paine and Lulu Frey, "Ewa Haktang, Seoul," Annual Report of the Korea Woman's Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (May 1903), pp. 7–9, quoted on p. 7.
[103] Velma Snook, "Annual Report for 1928–29," Record Group 360, PHS.
[104] "Self Help Departments" at mission schools functioned as a financial device to support poor students by selling their needle work and crafts overseas. See Elizabeth M. Campbell, *After Fifty Years: A Record of the Work of the P.W.M.U. of Victoria* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing, 1940), pp. 21–22.
[105] Velma Snook, letter (no exact date indicated but it was filed on June 26, 1913), Record Group 140, pp. 11–13, PHS. To some students, earnings from their embroidery or sewing were crucial for continuing to study because they could muster no other financial resources. Missionary teachers "supervised, bought materials for, found a market for, and managed the business end of the work in the self-help department, which provided board and a little extra money for needy students." Anna Bergman managed the department particularly well with "a lot of thinking and planning to get the work ready for them and to sell it fast enough." Anna Bergman, March 28, 1931, Record Group 360, PHS.
[106] Velma Snook, "Pyeng Yang Union Academy for Women, 1911–1912," Record Group 140, pp. 7–28, PHS.

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The displays of domesticity and strict discipline not only reassured a skeptical public but were also an important tool in recruiting future students. Missionary teachers proudly noted that "we have already heard of some of the women who went home [after viewing the exhibit] saying that they had thought that girls who went to school did not know how to sew, but they had found out that they could do even better than others so they were going to send their daughters to us."[107] In 1940, a half-century after the introduction of Protestantism into Korea, a Methodist missionary teacher, Ellasue Wagner (1881–?), claimed that "the ideal woman of Korea to-day is, as it should be, the ideal wife and mother. We believe that there is no higher destiny than this. We remember the old saying that 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.' In Korea to-day, however, there is a new realization of the fact that the woman who wields this influence needs the best of education and training. We have heard it said over and over lately that the best families now demand an educated daughter-in-law."[108]

In this way, by consistently extolling the model of good wife and wise mother, the mission schools offered a model of female education that went hand in hand with Korean reformers' emphasis on the sacred role of mother as the core of a good female education.[109] Yi Kwangsu (1892–1950), a novelist and leading reformer, asserted that "the only duty that women have to humankind, to the nation and to society is to become good mothers and raise good children, and only women can do this. If a nation wants to produce good citizens, it first has to cultivate good mothers. Especially in a case like Korea, where the population urgently needs to reform its national character, there is a particular need for many good mothers."[110] A prominent Christian woman intellectual, Hwang Sindŏk (1898–1983), echoed Yi's call to center women's education on motherhood when she envisioned a new model of the mother in colonial Korea. She wrote that Korea is "waiting for strong-willed mothers . . . to raise children who could transform Korea from its miserable condition to the glorious future."[111] In this way, the "good mother," a model appropriate for the reconstruction of the nation, deeply resonated with the missionary emphasis on the role of mother as the moral arbiter in creating a "Christian home" that would raise "better Koreans."

[107] Velma Snook, letter (no exact date but was filed on June 26, 1913), Record Group 360, PHS.
[108] Ellasue Wagner, "Then and Now Founders' Day at Holston Institute May 15th, 1940," *Korea Mission Field* 36, no. 8 (1940): 133–5, quoted on 134.
[109] Yi Kwangsu, "Mosŏng chungsim ŭi yŏja kyoyuk" (Women's Education Centering on Motherhood), *Sin yŏsŏng* 3, no. 1 (1925): 19–20; "Mosŏng ŭro ŭi yŏja" (Woman as Mother), *Yŏsŏng* 1, no. 3 (June 1936): 8.
[110] Yi, "Mosŏng chungsim ŭi yŏja kyoyuk," 19–20.
[111] Hwang Sindŏk, "Chosŏn ŭn irŏhan ŏmŏni rŭl yoguhanda" (Korea Demands This Type of Mother), *Sin kajŏng* (May 1933): 12–15.

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The connection between domesticity and modern education put the focus on scientific homemaking and childrearing. The "modern" version of the "wise mother, good wife" should know how to raise children and manage the home scientifically. Since the opening of the nation in the late-nineteenth century, hygiene, nutrition, and scientific childrearing had come to be viewed as hallmarks of modernity and a necessary step on Korea's path to becoming an advanced civilization. To that end, a set of women's magazines, such as *Kajŏng chapchi* and *Chasŏn puinhoe chapchi*, provided a variety of information, ranging from ways to prevent disease and hygienically preserve food to the proper care of children.[112] In the 1920s and 1930s, women's magazines such as *Sin yŏsŏng*, *Sin kajŏng*, and *Yŏsŏng* poured out detailed information about scientific homemaking and childrearing, reinforcing the new mandate that women raise healthy children to be the future citizens of the modern nation-state.[113] Hwang Sindŏk urged Korean women to carefully observe their children. She wrote: "A mother who does not know her son's physical constitution, personality, taste, and goals in life is no different from a wet nurse. She must know what kind of exercise is good for his body, what kinds of toys suit his taste, and what pedagogical methods would maximize his ability to learn."[114] Like Hwang Sindŏk, an emerging group of experts, trained overseas and armed with modern scientific knowledge, played a crucial role in shaping the new modern family and the role of women within the family. Chapter 2 further probes the emergence of "home economics" as a scholarly discipline, describing how the transpacific network of Christian organizations played a key role in distributing the ideology of modern domesticity that brought with it new, scientific ways of managing the home and caring for children, the aesthetics of home interior design, and advice on how best to use family leisure time.

In addition, the modern perspective on domesticity included a denouncement of "superstitions." Western pundits commenting on "Eastern civilization" regarded the "ignorance and superstition of the women" as "the one insurmountable obstacle to the improvement of society in those countries."[115] The link between women and superstition came to bear connotations of backwardness and inferiority as problems to overcome.[116] Among the traditional Korean

[112] *Kajŏng chapchi* 1, no. 3 (1906): 6–8; *Chasŏn puin hoe chapchi* 1 (August 1908): 23–5.

[113] Yi Hwayŏng et al., *Han'guk kŭndae yŏsŏng ŭi ilsang munhwa* (The Everyday Life and Culture of the Korean Modern Woman), vol. 8 (Seoul: Kukhak Charyowŏn, 2004).

[114] Hwang, "Chosŏn ŭn irŏhan ŏmŏni rŭl yoguhanda."

[115] Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Kansas Campaign, 1867," quoted in Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), p. 10.

[116] Kim Yunsŏng, "1920-30-nyŏndae Han'guk sahoe ŭi chonggyo wa yŏsŏng tamnon: 'misin t'ap'a' wa 'hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ' rŭl chungsim ŭro" (Religion and Gender Discourse in 1920s and 1930s Korea: With a Focus on "Eradication of Superstition" and "Wise Mother, Good Wife"), *Chonggyo munhwa pip'yŏng* 9 (2008): 164–90. What is fascinating about this analysis is that regardless of race, women are often lumped together as the inferior gender easily subjected to

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religious beliefs and practices, shamanism was viewed as the quintessential example of superstition. Numerous missionary articles testified to the phenomenon of "demon possession" and to shamanist rituals performed to drive evil spirits away. Missionaries decried shamanism and portrayed shamans as evil, greedy, manipulative, and the "obedient servant[s] of Satan."[117] Annie Baird offered a vivid portrait of a "heathen" woman in a fictionalized story, entitled *Daybreak in Korea*. In the story, the female protagonist resorts to the "magical power" of a greedy shaman when her baby daughter contracts smallpox, and, ultimately, the daughter dies.[118] Another missionary, Ellasue Wagner, condemned the horror that ignorance and superstition brought upon children:

> Where ignorance and superstition prevail the burden is always heaviest on the helpless children. The fact that mother and father are devoted to their children and would give their very lives for them does not make any less dangerous the unsanitary conditions of the home, nor can that devotion mitigate their disobedience to every law of hygiene and common sense.... To whom can the mother go for help when the baby is sick? Probably, unless she is a Christian, she will think first of the sorceress, the mudang, for she has been taught all her life that sickness is the work of evil spirits and these must be driven out before there can be any relief.[119]

Offering a clear contrast between educated Christian women and ignorant "pagan" women, Wagner suggests that motherly devotion and love are no longer sufficient for good childrearing. A mother had to be educated, equipped with scientific knowledge for childrearing, and steered away from old practices based on the recommendations of shamans. In their attempt to encourage Korean women to use Christian childrearing techniques, women missionaries offered formal and informal lessons about the "care of children" at mission schools and local churches.[120] As the number of educated women in Korea increased, Korean women themselves began to identify superstition as a marker of backwardness. Kim Sŏkcha, managing director of the woman's magazine *Chasŏn puinhoe chapchi*, criticized Korean women's tendency to rely on the power of ghosts for luck and waste their resources on visiting shamans. She urged women to relinquish this "evil practice" (*p'yedan*) in favor

the temptation of superstition. Kim further notes that while Protestant missionaries assailed Korea's superstitions from the beginning, other Korean religions, including Buddhism and the indigenous Ch'ŏndogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way) also began to do so from the 1920s.

117 Annie Baird, *Daybreak in Korea: A Tale of Transformation in the Far East* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909); L. A. Miller, "The Conversion of a Sorceress," *Korea Mission Field* 2 (February 1906): 65.

118 Baird, *Daybreak in Korea*, pp. 25–39.

119 Ellasue Wagner, *Korea: The Old and the New* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1931), p. 107.

120 Esther L. Shields, "Nursing in Mission Stations: Work in Korea," *The American Journal of Nursing* 8, no. 5 (February 1908): 368–72.

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of joining civilized forces.[121] In the words of Bible woman Song Myŏngsa, conversion to Christianity meant that a woman had become "a born-again new person" and had broken away from a life drenched in superstition.[122] In this way, condemning superstition became an important criterion for distinguishing the educated modern wife and mother from the uneducated old-fashioned woman.

Cherished and Rebuked Ideology of Domesticity

The meaning of the modern form of domesticity has been neither singular nor unchallenged. Women often found strategic utility in largely complying with the dominant gender ideology while appropriating power and authority within the patriarchal family structure. Nancy Cott argues that American women cherished and strengthened the ideology of domesticity out of their own self-interest because the separate "woman's sphere opened to women (reserved for them) the avenues of domestic influence, religious morality, and child nurture."[123] American women missionaries – both single and married – and their interaction with Korean women precisely reflected the complex nature of this ideology of domesticity. In line with the global trend toward the "feminization of the mission force" that started in the late-nineteenth century,[124] women missionaries constituted the majority of personnel in the Korea mission field. In 1901, for example, women comprised 56.5 percent of the mission force in Korea. Among the women missionaries, 52 percent were unmarried and held leadership positions in "woman's work for woman."[125] The fact that single women held these leadership roles was at odds with the idealized gender image of the home-bound mother and wife that was common in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, unmarried women became

[121] Kim Sŏkcha, "Kwisin ege kidohaesŏ pok pilji malgo pulssanghan saram ege chasŏn ŭl pep'ul il" (Do Not Pray to Ghosts for Luck But Rather Exercise your Benevolence for Poor People), *Chasŏn puinhoe chapchi* 1 (1908): 3–5. See also Kim, "1920-30-nyŏndae han'guk sahoe ŭi chonggyo wa yŏsŏng tamnon," 164–90.

[122] Mattie Noble, ed. *Victorious Lives of Early Christians in Korea: The First Book of Biographies and Autobiographies of Early Christians in the Protestant Church in Korea* (Sŭngni ŭi saenghwal) (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 1927), pp. 20–22. A "Bible woman" (*chŏndo puin*) was generally defined as "a Christian woman employed in the distribution of Christian literature, and in biblical instruction" and was "supported by foreign funds who is the personal helper of one of the foreign women, and works under her personal supervision." See Mrs. Herbert Blair, "Women's Work in Kang Kai," *Korea Mission Field* 7, no. 11 (1911): 314–17.

[123] Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 200.

[124] Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, p. 14.

[125] Sung-Deuk Oak, "The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea: North American Missionaries' Attitudes towards Korean Religions, 1884–1910" (ThD dissertation, Boston University, 2002), p. 484.

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a vital component in the mission's plan to spread Christianity, and thus these women were able to actively participate in the foreign mission enterprise, where they had exceptional opportunities to exercise power and authority in their own "woman's work for woman."

These unmarried women became powerful role models for young Korean women to emulate. Korean girls and women encountered women teachers in mission schools, women doctors in hospitals, and women social workers in city centers.[126] Indeed, some of the most prominent Christian "new women" in Korea remained unmarried, two prominent examples being Kim Hwallan (1899–1970), the first Korean woman to obtain a PhD and one of the most influential female educators of that time, and Kim Maria (1892–1944), whose commitment to national independence was so inspirational to the general public that she came to be called "Korea's Joan of Arc."[127] Many of these women later stated that the pressures of Korean society made it difficult to remain single, but that their work in education or the national independence movement helped ratify their unusual choice and even enabled them to pave the way into new territory for women. It could be argued that, although these women defied the prevailing conception of the ideal Korean woman by remaining unmarried, they were accepted because they devoted their lives and careers to the fulfillment of the nationalist mandate of modernization and political independence. Although Kim Hwallan's history of collaboration with the Japanese authorities during World War II has made her a controversial figure,[128] the significant role she played in women's education has never been questioned. In her capacity as a leading educator, she declared in 1927 that "marriage is not necessarily an absolute thing to do if a woman has the will to pursue an important task."[129] The global mission to Christianize the world was seen as validating the work of single women missionaries. In parallel, Koreans were willing to tolerate the work of unmarried Korean women professionals as long as they contributed to the nation and future generations of educated women.

Just as unmarried women missionaries provided their students with a model of women as professionals, so married women missionaries exemplified the proper duties and behavior of wives and mothers. In her discussion of the role of missionary wives, Annie Baird presented the dual aspect of the woman's domain. Baird strongly believed in the clear division of roles between men and

[126] Induk Pahk, *September Monkey* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).
[127] Pak Yongok, *Kim Maria* (Seoul: Hongsŏngsa, 2003), p. 339.
[128] For a feminist critique on the public accusations against Kim Hwallan for her "collaboration" with the Japanese colonial power, see Insook Kwon, "Feminists Navigating the Shoals of Nationalism and Collaboration: The Post-Colonial Korean Debate over How to Remember Kim Hwallan," *Frontiers* 27, no. 1 (2006): 39–66.
[129] "Ilmun ildap, Kim Hwallan ssi pangmungi" (Question and Answer, Visiting Ms. Kim Hwallan), *Pyŏlgŏn'gon* 9 (October 1927): 49–54.

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women and felt that no one should try to blur gender boundaries. However, she also believed in the power of women. As she put it, a "good wife ought to influence a good husband and a good husband ought to be neither afraid nor ashamed to be influenced by a good wife; and by the use of this influence there are some ways, I am convinced, by which we may prove that we not only do not impede but do actually accelerate the promotion of the missionary enterprise."[130] To Baird, a woman's role as helpmate did not erode her influence; on the contrary, a woman was indispensable in advocating the evangelical mission from her own position within the domestic sphere as a good wife and mother.

The idea that the power of women resided primarily within the domestic arena had significant appeal to Korean converts. Mattie Noble (1872–1956), a Methodist missionary wife, described how the missionary home and family had become a model for Koreans in bringing about an enhanced role and status for wives and mothers:

> They [Korean students] have watched us in the training of our children and have seen our companionship with them. Different ones have told me how wonderful it appeared to them to see a mother in her home, educated and capable, able to enter into the fuller life experiences with her husband, and to be a real companion, mentally and physically, with her children, even with the grown-up ones.... I would like to tell of the scores of things material that have been improved in and around the homes of this land, of which a great deal has been due to the precept and example of the members of the missionary home – father, mother and children, (missionaries' children have a great part also in this out-going influence.) ... let me just say, that love through Christ gradually but surely brings cleanliness, purity and beauty.... The modern Korean woman, in many cases, is no longer the subservient one but the co-serving one; she no longer remains aside while her master, (the husband), and her sons eat; she no longer walks behind her husband with downcast eyes and covered by a cloak thrown over her head and held closely so as to nearly cover her face and form; no longer does she have to give to the mother-in-law complete authority in the raising of her child.... She is learning, and she sees the bearing out of this truth in concrete, tangible form in the missionary home, by observing the wife and mother – her freedom, her love, her authority ... this missionary mother has met people who have told her how, in the raising of the children, they have taken pattern after some methods they had seen used in the raising of children in the missionary home.[131]

Mattie Noble attributed the enhanced role and status of Korean women to Christian belief and practice. Indeed, the ideal "Christian home" drew Korean women to the new religion. For example, Kim Sedŭi, one of the early converts and a well-known Bible woman in the P'yŏngyang area, decided to join the church because she was told that if she became a Christian, "her family

[130] Annie Baird, "The Relation of the Wives of Missionaries to Mission Work," *Korean Repository* (November 1895): 417.
[131] Mattie Wilcox Noble, "The Missionary Home," *Korea Mission Field* 27, no. 4 (1931): 75–7.

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would be in peace, her husband would give up womanizing and her relationship with her husband would be harmonious."[132] The missionary family served as a new model, inspiring the Korean woman to become educated, pious, resourceful, and morally upright. She would have "her freedom, her love, her authority" in an idealized family in which she would be a true companion to her husband, would have control over the household free from her in-laws' intervention, and would practice clean, pure, and beautiful housekeeping.

This allegedly upgraded power of women within the modern Korean family constituted the core of the discourse on the "wise mother, good wife" in the 1920s and 1930s.[133] In her study of "new women" (*sin yŏsŏng*) in 1920s and 1930s Korea, Kim Sujin argues that, contrary to the common assumption that "new woman" was the polar opposite of the "wise mother, good wife," the discourse on "wise mother, good wife" constituted a crucial part of the discourse on "new woman."[134] She further suggests that in the late 1920s and early 1930s, there was a major shift in emphasis away from "wise mother" toward "good wife." The notion of *chubu* (house mistress) emerged as "a complex system of standard knowledge to be mastered to secure the role of good wife" in the new family.[135] In a similar vein, Chŏn Migyŏng distinguishes the role of "wise mother," a socially expected virtue, from that of "good wife," a virtue desired by new women who aspired to have modern love and equal companionship.[136] In an example of "Camera Art," the daily newspaper *Tonga ilbo* published a photograph in 1930 of a nest with two birds, taken in the city of Phoenix, Arizona. The title of the photograph is "sŭwit'ŭ hom (*tallanhan kajŏng*)" (sweet home – happy and harmonious family), signifying the new modern family.[137] The contemporary domestic sphere based on modern love became an integral part of the imagery of new womanhood. Indeed, this conception of the new family (*sin kajŏng*) provided an expedient platform on which the "new woman" could safely create a noble space for her own empowerment and individual subjectivity.

However, the association between the "new woman" and "wise mother, good wife" remained flimsy and contingent. Na Hyesŏk (1896–1948), one of the prominent new women, made comments critical of the notion of "wise mother, good wife" in a 1914 essay entitled "Isang chŏk puin" (The Ideal Woman):

[132] Noble, *Victorious Lives of Early Christians in Korea*, pp. 34–49.
[133] Yoo, *The Politics of Gender*; Kim, "1920-30-nyŏndae sin yŏsŏng tamnon kwa sangjing ŭi kusŏng," pp. 323–74.
[134] Kim, "1920-30-nyŏndae sin yŏsŏng tamnon kwa sangjing ŭi kusŏng," p. 323.
[135] Kim, "1920-30-nyŏndae sin yŏsŏng tamnon kwa sangjing ŭi kusŏng."
[136] Chŏn Migyŏng, "1920-30-nyŏndae hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ e kwanhan yŏn'gu" (A Study of Wise Mother and Good Wife in the 1920s and 1930s), *Han'guk kajŏng kwalli hakhoeji* 22, no. 3 (2004): 75–93.
[137] *Tonga ilbo,* February 15, 1930.

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We need to acquire all the strength we can muster and elevate our consciousness daily. By doing so, we can progress toward the best ideal. We cannot say that a woman has achieved an ideal if she is a moral woman by virtue of habit alone or by merely fulfilling her secular duties. I believe that she has to go one step farther and prepare herself to fulfill future ideals. I also believe that it is not wise only to pursue the customary ideal of "good wife, wise mother" (*yangch'ŏ hyŏnmo*). It seems to me that that ideal is one of the favorite marketing strategies that teachers have used. The man is both husband and father; however, I have never heard of any curriculum that emphasizes "good husband, wise father" (*yangbu hyŏnbu*). It is only women whose conduct as good spouses and wise parents is reinforced through our education, and this makes women into mere appendages of men. Such education does not develop our minds. In addition, the idea of warm and compliant womanhood, which has been a necessary point of the propaganda to turn women into slaves, cannot be an ideal for women.[138]

Na's interpretation of "good wife, wise mother" pointed to a patriarchal mechanism that continued to subjugate women to slavish bondage under men. After her highly publicized divorce in 1930, which had been prompted by an extramarital affair she had had during her sojourn in Europe, Na made an even bolder and more controversial comment on chastity, a thorny topic that often drew heated debate in the print media. She argued: "Chastity is neither morality nor law. It is merely a matter of taste. Just as we eat rice when we want to eat rice (*pap*), and we eat rice cake (*ttŏk*) when we want to eat rice cake, chastity depends on our will and usage. We should not be constrained.... In order to keep chastity, we often suppress our natural laughter, our irresistible passion, and our point of view. How ironic is that? Therefore, our liberation begins with our liberation from the requirement of chastity."[139] Na's rejection of the "requirement of chastity" directly affronted the order of the patrilineal Confucian society that valorized women's purity and fidelity.[140] In this context, society portrayed Na as uncontrollable and unconstrained, subject to the whims of her passions, while her husband, who was a lawyer, represented the safety of rules and convention. There is no doubt that the divorce greatly shook Na, but she publicly announced in her essay "Confession about my Divorce" that she was "going to willingly take all the ridicule and criticism from people and go on silently with the cross on my back. I am determined to continue my journey for renewal, listening to the gentle whisper of life coming from profound agony."[141] After her divorce, she continued to pen her challenges to the conventional male-centered moral codes and lifestyles.[142] Na's continuing

[138] Na Hyesŏk, "Isang chŏk puin" (The Ideal Woman), *Hakchigwang* 3 (December 1914): 13–14.
[139] Yi Sanggyŏng, ed., *Na Hyesŏk chŏnjip* (The Complete Works of Na Hyesŏk) (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2000), pp. 432–3.
[140] "Pyŏnhosa p'yŏngp'angi" (A Lawyer's Comment), *Tonggwang* 31 (March 1932): 65–68.
[141] Na Hyesŏk, "Ihon kobaekchang" (Confession about my Divorce), *Samch'ŏlli* 6, no. 8 (August 1934): 85.
[142] Na Hyesŏk, "Sin saenghwal e tŭlmyŏnsŏ" (Starting a New Life), *Samch'ŏlli* 7, no. 1 (January 1935): 70–81. See also "Manhon t'agae chwadamhoe, aa, ch'ŏngch'un i akkawŏra" (Debate on

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public discourse received unsympathetic responses from the public. One critic went so far as to suggest that Na suffered from a form of madness that drove her to publish these exhibitionistic essays in which she talked openly about her intimate private life and divorce in the print media. The same critic argued that Na's justification of her free-love lifestyle by using examples of Western practices was a mere delusion.[143]

The public's fear of the instability of the family as the fundamental social unit was further demonstrated when a prominent Christian woman intellectual Pak Indŏk (aka Induk Pahk, 1896–1980) filed for divorce in 1931. Her divorce became a national sensation and ignited heated debate on the tensions between selfhood and motherhood. On returning from studying in the United States, Pak sought to end her unhappy marriage, placing the blame for its failure on her husband's infidelities. She became the "first woman to divorce her husband for infidelity under new laws introduced by the colonial authorities."[144] In her autobiography, she wrote that "unless ills were cured they would go on hurting. I would rather have an arm amputated and live than to die because it was diseased.... Being bound by age-old concepts and traditions was the worst burden of all. I had learned that the most precious thing in the world is freedom to do what one believes is right and now I must choose between the Korean custom of remaining with my husband 'no matter what,' or starting out on an independent way of life."[145] Keenly aware of the scorn and notoriety her divorce would surely bring, Pak nonetheless ended her marriage. She claimed that the divorce was her sacrifice for the younger generation of women, providing them with a model of a woman opting for independence rather than remaining in a marriage where she would have to be subservient.[146]

And just as Pak had predicted, her divorce made her a social outcast, the target of harsh public criticism. Referring to Pak as "Korea's Nora Who Left the Doll's House," the media condemned her "selfish and irresponsible" decision to end her marriage as well as her justification for leaving. Here the invocation

How to Solve Deferred Marriage: Alas! The Blossom of Youth Lost!), *Samch'ŏlli* 5, no. 10 (October 1933): 84–9. In her response to a question asking why marriage-aged women remained single, she told the reporter at *Samch'ŏlli* that "it is because they have observed the unhappy married lives of their senior women friends . . . Indeed, how many couples lead a happy married life among the educated class of people? Statistically speaking, there are more unhappy couples than happy couples."

[143] *Sin kajŏng* (October 1934), quoted in Yi Sanggyŏng, *In'gan ŭro salgo sipta* (I Want to Live as a Human Being) (Seoul: Han'gilsa, 2000), pp. 425–6.

[144] Kenneth Wells, "Expanding their Realm: Women and Public Agency in Colonial Korea," in *Women's Suffrage in Asia*, eds. Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), p. 160.

[145] Pahk, *September Monkey*, pp. 162–3.

[146] For the criticism of Pak, see "Chosŏn ŭi Nora ro inhyŏng ŭi chip ŭl naon Pak Indŏk ssi" (Pak Indŏk: Korea's Nora Has Left the Doll's House), *Samch'ŏlli* 5, no. 1 (January 1933): 73–4; "Pak Indŏk konggaejang: Ihon sodong e kwanhayŏ" (Open Letter to Pak Indŏk: Regarding her Divorce Fiasco), *Sin yŏsŏng* 5, no. 11 (1931): 30–35.

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of the figure of Nora from Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was significant. Ever since a translation of the play had first appeared in *Maeil sinbo* in 1921,[147] the character of Nora had fascinated and inspired the new class of educated women and men in Korea just as it had elsewhere.[148] One literary critic asserted that Nora was not only a symbol of "new romance" (*sin yŏnae*) or "individualism" (*kaeinjuŭi*) but an icon of "self-awakening" (*cha'gak*).[149] Indeed, in her 1921 song lyric, "A Doll's House" (*Inhyŏng ŭi ka*), written nine years prior to her own divorce, Na Hyesŏk expressed her desire not to live as a doll for her father and husband but to live as a human being with full self-determination.[150] The self-awareness of such women as individuals and their desire to pursue the "freedom to do what one believes is right" was a continuing source of great anxiety and public criticism.[151]

A growing fear of the breakdown of the family transpired, with the public suspecting educated "new women" of causing deterioration of the family in the name of their own independence and self-realization. In the divorces and love affairs of these prominent women intellectuals, the public came to know this unexpected outcome of women's education. Theodore Jun Yoo notes that while members of the new class of educated women were expected to serve as "symbols of modernity, civilization, and nationalism," some social critics and commentators feared that these women were "undermining the stability of the family, compromising sexual morality, and denigrating national character."[152] Within this context, the idealized "wise mother, good wife" was regarded as the antithesis of the liberal womanhood of the West, which was understood to produce selfish, irresponsible, and extravagant women. In particular, various scandals involving high-profile women intellectuals who had had significant exposure to liberal ideas through their overseas education in the West and Japan functioned as powerful cautionary tales in warning of the danger of the modern.

[147] *Maeil sinbo*, January 25–April 3, 1921.

[148] Focusing on the Chinese adaption of *A Doll's House*, Yang Lianfen argues that "the project of woman's emancipation was more often than not unintentionally omitted in the course of the 'liberation of the human,' . . . most May Fourth literary works neglect the fact that Nora's discovery of her humanity is realized through reflection on her gender position." Rather, a more concerted focus was on "the generation gap between young people and their parents." Yang Lianfen, "The Absence of Gender in May Fourth Narratives of Women's Emancipation: A Case Study of Hu Shi's *The Greatest Event in Life*," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12, no. 1 (June 2010): 6–13, quoted on 9–10.

[149] Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, "Kŭndae munye wa Ipssen" (Modern Literature and Ibsen), *Kaebyŏk 7* (January 1921): 129–38.

[150] *Maeil sinbo*, April 3, 1921.

[151] Hŏ Yŏngsuk, "Puin munje ŭi ilmyŏn – namja hal il, yŏja hal il" (One Aspect of the Woman Question: Men's Work, Women's Work), *Tonga ilbo*, January 1, 1926 and January 4, 1926; "Myŏngil ŭl yaksok hanŭn sin sedae ŭi ch'ŏnyŏ chwadamhoe" (Talk with Promising Single Women of the New Era), *Sin yŏsŏng* 7, no. 1 (January 1933): 26.

[152] Theodore Jun Yoo, "The 'New Woman' and the Politics of Love, Marriage and Divorce in Colonial Korea," *Gender and History* 17, no. 2 (August 2005): 296.

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As Christine Marran argues in her book *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture*, the transgressive figure of the "undesirable woman" functions to reinforce what is considered ideal and desirous.[153]

Cautionary tales about "undesirable woman" prevailed not only in stories about women such as Na and Pak but also in the images of the ideal modern family and the role of the modern woman in it that were portrayed in the literary and visual arts. Two representative examples are the 1933 novel by Ch'ae Mansik (1902–1950) entitled *Inhyŏng ŭi chip ŭl nawasŏ* (After the Doll's House),[154] and the 1936 feature film, *Mimong* (Illusive Dream). Both works contemplate "what happened after Nora left home." Ch'ae's novel literally takes up the story of Nora Helmer as she slams the door in the final scene of Ibsen's play, while *Mimong* presents a Nora-like figure named Aesun, who mirrors Nora's dramatic rejection of the traditional home life. The two works, however, differ starkly in the outcomes they imagine for their respective Noras. The Nora in Ch'ae's novel experiences all manner of humiliation and deprivation, but she is ultimately redeemed and reborn as a factory worker, reflecting Ch'ae's interest in socialist realism at that time. In contrast, Aesun, the Nora figure in *Illusive Dream*, commits suicide as a final act of regret over her vainglorious desire for luxury, fashion, and bodily pleasure. It should also be noted that literary works like Ch'ae Mansik's novel could be enjoyed only by those who were literate, whereas films had much greater potential for far-reaching impact on the wider population. The consumption of films did not require literacy, and ticket prices were quite reasonable, so that even low wage earners (e.g., daily manual workers) could afford admission.[155] Although there are no records indicating how popular the film was, let alone the reception of the film, the plot of *Illusive Dream* sharply reflects a growing sense of despair over the temptations of modernity and the presumed consequence – the instability of the modern family.

[153] Christine L. Marran, *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

[154] For detailed analysis, see Hyaeweol Choi, "Debating the Korean New Woman: Imagining Henrik Ibsen's 'Nora' in Colonial Era Korea," *Asian Studies Review* 36 (March 2012): 59–77.

[155] Roald Maliangkay, "Dirt, Noise, and Naughtiness: Cinema and the Working Class during Korea's Silent Film Era," *Asian Ethnology* 70, no. 1 (2011): 1–31; No Chisŭng, "Na Ungyu yŏnghwa ŭi kwan'gek tŭl hogŭn musŏng yŏnghwa kwangek e taehan han yŏn'gu" (A Study on the Change of Spectatorship and the Meaning of the Na Ungyu's Films from the Late 1920s to the Late 1930s), *Sanghŏ hakpo* 23 (2008): 185–224.

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Figure 1.1 The opening scene of *Mimong* (Illusive Dream)
Source: Korean Film Archive[156]

The opening scene of the film sets the tone and theme. A bird cage dangling under the eaves of a tile-roofed house signifies this middle-class family home as a "modern prison with gold bars."[157] In the main room (*anbang*), while her husband reads a newspaper, Aesun is sitting in front of a mirror applying powder to her face. He asks her where she is going. She tells him that she is going to the department store to shop for some new Western-style suits because what she has is out of fashion. He complains about how frequently she goes out, and she retorts: "Do you want to keep me locked up in this room? I am not a bird in a cage!" He calmly reminds her of her duties as a housewife, scolding her for neglecting the housework. Upset by that comment, she shouts: "Why don't you find some little woman [concubine] who'll keep your house clean for you? You don't have to be stuck with me. Should I just leave?" In disbelief, her husband asks, "How could you say that?" to which she replies, "I am serious. I am leaving." The scene ends with her slamming the door as she leaves her "cage," mirroring the final act of Nora in *A Doll's House*.

Aesun's life after the "cage" is one of luxury, indulgence, and deceit. She takes up with a man and stays with him at a Western style hotel, drinking,

[156] The film is available for viewing online, provided by the Korean Film Archive. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmd_OBPFll8.
[157] Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York & London: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1911), pp. 201–202.

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smoking, and frequenting cafés, theaters, and the beauty salon. She indulges in modern luxuries and shows no hint of concern about her daughter or husband. Her daughter, in contrast, longs so desperately for her mother that she cannot study or sleep, and she finally falls ill. Aesun's life begins to fall apart when she discovers that her boyfriend is actually a con man and quite possibly a murderer. In the tragic climax of the film, she is rushing to get to the train station, trying to catch a male dancer for whom she has developed romantic feelings (although he has no feelings for her). She presses the taxi driver to go faster and faster, and, as the cab speeds through the city of Seoul, it hits a young girl, who turns out to be Aesun's daughter. She goes to the hospital with the child, and as she watches the doctors and nurses work to save her daughter, Aesun is filled with remorse. She despairs at her behavior and the emptiness of her pursuits, and ultimately she commits suicide.

The message is clear. A woman who would dare to abandon her family, who would conduct her life in a way that might bring harm to her own child, must pay the ultimate price. Her bold choice to leave the "cage" and her subsequent life filled with decadence and deceit are predictable plot points in a cautionary tale meant to instruct viewers on the consequences of not complying with the role of "wise mother, good wife" in a modern family. However, it is also important to note another aspect of the message conveyed through the irresistible temptations of the modern, as embodied in the fancy department store, the chic café, the seductive movements of the male dancer at the theater, the beauty salon, and the bustling urban landscape. In particular, Aesun's mad dash to catch the train – a symbol of modernity representing mobility, novelty, and infinite possibility – and her failure to achieve her goal reflect the tensions between what modernity promises and what the reality is.[158] Her relentless pursuit of a modern self ends abruptly when she causes devastating injury to her own child. She sees her daughter lying in the street, her body broken, nearly dead, and suddenly Aesun is filled with maternal concern. Yet the close-up shot of her weeping in remorse and her eventual suicide together convey a certain ambivalence as to what is expected of a woman in the modern family. In this connection, the alternative title of the film, *Chugŭm ŭi chajangga* (Lullaby in Death), is quite telling. Certainly the invocation of a "lullaby" is compelling, in that it invokes maternal love and care – the image of a mother singing her baby to sleep may be the quintessential image of motherly love. But what, then, does the suicide mean? Does Aesun commit suicide out of despair over what she has done to her daughter? Or does she commit suicide because she can't face the prospect of returning home, living like a caged bird, and denying her desire for

[158] Todd Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Marian Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity: India's Railway and the Culture of Mobility* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

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the modern? Although we cannot know what audiences of the film felt at the time, it is likely that many viewers condemned Aesun as a dangerous woman deserving only of condemnation for her failure to fulfill her duty and responsibility as a "wise mother, good wife."

Conclusion

The origin and evolution of the modern gender ideology of "wise mother, good wife" demonstrates the complex intersections of patriarchy, colonialism, nationalism, and Western modernity in which women conformed to, resisted, or appropriated the existing male-dominant structures. Various social agents strategically promoted this gender ideology. Korean nationalists actively utilized the ideology to revitalize the nation, emphasizing the sacred role of educated mothers in the modern scientific training of children as future citizens, and the crucial duty of educated wives in assisting their husbands. This ideology served as a central aspect of Japan's gender policy to discipline colonial subjects to be obedient and efficient with practical knowledge for the Japanese empire. The American missionaries' primary goal of spreading the Gospel went hand in hand with their emphasis on the vital role of the pious mother and wife as a moral guide in the Christian family.

It is significant that both Korean women reformers, including "new women," and American women missionaries strategically employed this domestic gender ideology as a way to empower women within a certain circumscribed domain. Even though the centrality of domesticity and "woman's work for woman" continued to restrict women to the domain of the private and the informal spheres, these factors also worked to extend the scope of lives and work of women into the public and even the global sphere. Those who benefited from an education that was focused on domesticity paved the way for the next generation of career women, especially in the fields of teaching and nursing, and empowered modern housewives (*chubu*). However, limited openings within the overall patriarchal system did not provide sufficient opportunities for those few pioneering new women to move beyond the confining roles of mothers and wives. Some of these women openly questioned and directly challenged the very roots of patrilineal social arrangements in discourses on chastity, marriage, divorce, and motherhood.[159] It is no surprise, then, that these pioneering women came under relentless criticism and antagonism. In a significant way, the self-righteous condemnation of these "new women" (and of fictional representations of them in literary works and films) was simply the

[159] For a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of "new woman" and the translation of major archival materials on the topic, see Hyaeweol Choi, *New Women in Colonial Korea: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2013).

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expression of a collective fear about the subversion of the basis of patriarchy and a deliberate effort to tame and discipline women.

It is important to note that even those "new women" who publicly resisted the gender-specific, discriminatory roles in their families and society did not necessarily deny the value of "wise mother, good wife." Motherhood in particular was often extolled as a glorious fulfillment for women. Kim Wŏnju (aka Kim Iryŏp, 1896–1971), the founder of the first feminist magazine, *Sin yŏja* (New Woman), praised motherhood (*mosŏng*) as the most beautiful and grand thing a woman could do.[160] Confucian-prescribed "womanly virtue" and the Japanese colonial regime's gender ideology of "*ryōsai kenbo*," combined with American missionaries' "true womanhood," had indeed produced a particular version of the "wise mother, good wife" ideal in these pioneering women. As I detail in Chapter 2, the scientification of the domestic and the enhanced power of women within the family added a significant flavor of the modern to the new ideal of wife and mother.[161] It can be argued that what the early feminists primarily refuted was the singular, confining role of women that suppressed intellectual, artistic, and sensual desires. Many of them also consciously distanced themselves from the caricature of the new woman who "wore a fox hair shawl and strong perfume,"[162] or the "contemporary woman" (*hyŏndae yŏja*) whose presumed vanity, carelessness, and conspicuous consumption often drew public criticism in the print media.[163] Nonetheless, the largely defamed personal lives of some of the best-known new women generated heated debates that were often led by male intellectuals. The public debates criticizing the scandalous lives of "new women," while intended as a way to tame and discipline them, ironically helped cleave the solid building-blocks of patriarchy by publicly addressing the unconventional life choices made by these women – choices that undermined male-centered social arrangements. In this sense, the promotion and critique of the modern gender ideology of "wise mother, good wife" in the pages of the male-dominated print and visual media and in the life experiences of actual "new women" demonstrated the complex formation of a new ideal womanhood. This new ideal constantly interacted – and continues to interact – with the resilient, ever-changing patriarchy that continues to evolve and accommodate the new demands of particular historical realities.

[160] Kim Wŏnju, "Chaehon hu ilchunyŏn ŭi hoego: in'gyŏk ch'angjo e" (Reflections on the Occasion of the First Anniversary of my Remarriage: on the Creation of Character), *Sin yŏsŏng* 2, no. 6 (August 1924): 40–43.
[161] Theresa Hyun, *Writing Women in Korea: Translation and Feminism in the Colonial Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 9–22; and Hyaeweol Choi, "Women's Literacy and New Womanhood in Late Choson Korea," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 88–115.
[162] Hwang, "Chosŏn ŭn irŏhan ŏmŏni rŭl yoguhanda," 12–15.
[163] Kim, "Chaehon hu il chunyŏn ŭi hoego," 40–43.

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