

Introduction

In April 1932, the popular magazine *Samch'ŏlli* reported on a roundtable discussion featuring three prominent women intellectuals who had studied overseas: Ch'oe Yŏngsuk (B.A. from Stockholm University), Pak Indŏk (B.A. from Wesleyan College and M.A. from Columbia University), and Hwang Aesidŏk (M.A. from Columbia University).¹ These women were asked to share their observations on a variety of topics, such as childcare facilities, opportunities for employment, birth control, marriage, and divorce. The panelists frequently offered illustrative examples from Sweden and the United States, since they had studied in those countries, but they also referred to Russia, India, Britain, and France, places in which they had traveled briefly.² Although some of their observations were overstated, the time they had spent in the United States or Europe gave them a certain authority on foreign models and practices. Capitalizing on this newly acquired status, they presented the legal, economic, and social arrangements in those countries that, as they observed them, treated women as equal participants in society. For example, with respect to the workplace, the three women agreed that European and US societies offered women treatment equal to that of men. They stated that women were free to choose any profession they wanted, limited only by their individual merit and interests. Pak described Russia's state-run childcare centers, which provided reliable and professional childcare, a boon to working mothers. Ch'oe and Hwang made note that in Sweden and the United States divorce and child custody were handled in a way that did not make women vulnerable or put them at a disadvantage.³

¹ "Oeguk taehak ch'ulsin yŏryu 3haksa chwadamhoe" (Roundtable Discussion with Three Women Notables Who Graduated from Universities Overseas) *Samch'ŏlli* 4, no. 4 (April 1932): 32–38. Hwang Aesidŏk is also known as Hwang Aedŏk.

² It is significant to note that Japan, Korea's colonizing power, was conspicuously absent in the discussion.

³ This type of "roundtable" discussion was fairly common in popular magazines. See Sin Chiyŏng, *Pu/chae ūi sidae: kŭndae kyemonggi mit singminjigi Chosŏn ūi yŏnsŏl, chwadamhoe* (The Age of Absence: Speeches and Roundtable Talks in Korea during the Enlightenment and Colonial Periods) (Seoul: Somyŏng, 2012).

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Although their observations of the West contain some inaccuracies, the main point is that their transnational experience gave these women some cultural capital. The opportunity to travel abroad was an exceptional privilege, especially for women, and more and more Koreans sought out those opportunities. By the early twentieth century, a number of Korean women and men were traveling globally as students, representatives of international organizations, social reformers, performers, or tourists.⁴ In their travels, they interacted with and learned from a wide range of thinkers, reformers, and activists, including Sarojini Naidu, the Indian nationalist; Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish-born German revolutionary; Alexandra Kollontai, the Russian communist; Hiratsuka Raichō and Yosano Akiko, Japanese feminists; Mary Lyon, the founder of Mount Holyoke College; John R. Mott, a leader of the YMCA and World Student Christian Federation; Jane Addams, the pioneering social worker; and Ava Milam, a leading home economist.⁵ In addition, beginning in the late-nineteenth century a significant number of Protestant Christian missionaries from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Britain came to Korea, establishing modern institutions such as schools and clinics through which they disseminated modern knowledge and novel ways of life as well as Christian faith. These Christian institutions created a pipeline for Koreans to gain experience with foreign languages and culture. Some of the protégés of missionary teachers received advanced training in Japan, China, the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Australia. Furthermore, the flow of modern ideas, cultural icons, and material cultures into Korea from Japan, Europe, and the United States began to refashion gender identity and the practices of everyday life. Women were reading newspaper reports of world and local events and foreign literature in translation, largely Euro-American, watching Hollywood movies, and browsing the latest Western fashions in department stores.⁶ In this way, Koreans began to experience modernity either directly through contact

⁴ Yi Sunt'ak, *Ch'oeŕŕn segye ilchugi* (Record of the Recent Global Tour) (Kyōngsōng: Hansōng tosō chusik hoesa, 1934); "Ryundon, P'ari ro kanūn muhūi Ch'oe Sūnghūi" (Dancer Ch'oe Sūnghūi Going to London and Paris), *Samch'ōlli* 7, no. 11 (1935): 77–88; "T'aep'yōngyang hoeūi esō han hoeūi yōnsōl" (Address given at the Pacific Conference), *Samch'ōlli* 6, no. 8 (1934): 42–44.

⁵ For example, see Chōng Ch'īlsōng, "Amnal ūl parabonūn puin nodongja" (Women Laborers Looking Ahead), *Tonggwang* 29 (December 1931): 70; Pak Indōk, "6-nyōnman ūi na ūi pando, Amerik'arobut'ō torawasō yōjang ūl p'ulmyōnsō nyet hyōngje ege" (Returning from the United States to my Homeland after Six Years, To Brothers and Sisters While Unpacking), *Samch'ōlli* 3, no. 11 (1931): 89–91.

⁶ 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); Hanmee Na Kim, "'America' in Colonial Korea: A Vantage Point for Capitalist Modernity," *positions* 26, no. 4 (November 2018): 647–85; Kim Chinsong, *Sōul e ttansūhol ūl hōhara* (Permit Dance Halls in Seoul) (Seoul: Hyōnsil munhwa yōn'gu, 1999). Hollywood movies, in particular, captured the imagination of Korean moviegoers to the extent that "practically there was no distance between Hollywood and Kyōngsōng [Seoul, Keijō]" in terms of sharing news about movie stars and films.

and travel overseas, or secondhand, through exposure mediated by printed and visual materials at home.

However, Korea's pursuit of modernization, which began in the late-nineteenth century when Korea opened its doors to foreign countries, got much more complicated once Korea became a colony of Japan (1910–1945). Japan was a colonial power, and it was the dominant route through which modern knowledge and materials were introduced to Korea. Even before Korea was annexed to the Japanese empire, Japan served as the main conduit for modern knowledge, technology, and institutions exemplified by the dispatch of “Chosa Sich’aldan” (Korean Couriers’ Observation Mission), comprised of Korean high-level officials, students and translators, to Japan in 1881.⁷ Korea became a Protectorate of Japan in 1905, a “virtual annexation,” and the Japanese began to exert their legal, diplomatic, and administrative power over Chosŏn Korea.⁸ A great many Japanese texts as well as Japanese translations of foreign texts were translated into Korean at this time as useful sources for “modern” reforms.⁹ However, Koreans were not looking for Japanese thought or style in these works; rather, Japanese “translations and adaptations” were viewed as an access point for Euro-American ideas and practices, which had been part of the construction of the modern Japanese nation-state.¹⁰ In other words, Japanese sources were expedient samples of “trial and error” process Japan had gone through, demonstrating how Japan had apprehended modern Western civilizations for its own modernization, while reinterpreting the past history of Japan.¹¹ Just like reformers in China and Japan, who “were simultaneously drawn by Western wealth and power and repelled by aspects of the Western social ethos,” Korean reformers were concerned about the potential risks of adopting certain unsavory aspects of Western social practice, and

See Chang Tusik, “Ilsang sok ūi yŏnghwa” (Films in Everyday Life), in *Kūndae Han’guk ūi ilsang saenghwal kwa midia* (Everyday Life and Media in Modern Korea), ed. Tan’guk taehakkyo tongyang yŏn’guso (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2008), pp. 121–52, quoted on pp. 126–7. See also Dong Hoon Kim, *Eclipsed Cinema: The Film Culture of Colonial Korea* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

⁷ Chosa Sich’aldan (aka Sinsa Yuramdān) was not an official but informal envoy with a secret mission from King Kojong to observe modern developments in Meiji Japan. Donghyun Huh, trans. Vladimir Tikhonov, “The Korean Courtiers’ Observation Mission’s Views on Meiji Japan and Projects of Modern State Building,” *Korean Studies* 29 (2005): 30–54.

⁸ “The Annexation of Korea to Japan” (editorial comment), *American Journal of International Law* 4, no. 4 (1910): 923–25, quoted on 923.

⁹ Pak Chinyŏng, *Pŏnyŏk kwa pŏnan ūi sidae* (The Age of Translation and Adaptation) (Seoul: Somyŏng ch’ulp’an, 2011); Theresa Hyun, *Writing Women in Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004); Heekyoung Cho, *Translation’s Forgotten History: Russian Literature, Japanese Mediation, and the Formation of Modern Korean Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

¹⁰ Michael D. Shin, “Yi Kwang-su: The Collaborator as Modernist Against Modernity,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 1 (February 2012): 116.

¹¹ Pak Sŏnmi, *Kūndae yŏsŏng cheguk ūl kŏch’ŏ Chosŏn ūro hoeyu hada* (Modern Women Return to Korea via Empire) (Seoul: Ch’angbi, 2005), pp. 63–9, quoted on p. 65.

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they believed that understanding the Japanese experience with Western civilizations would save them from such risks.¹² In the end, Japan was seen as a mediator that had learned, experimented with, and adjusted Euro-American models in its modern nation-building. Koreans' perception of Japan as a "mediator" or "translator" of Western modernity continued even after Japan officially annexed Korea into its empire in 1910, although the colonial state and its affiliated institutions made persistent efforts in presenting Japan's prowess as a leading modern power through a plethora of colonial policies on the Koreans.¹³

When it comes to gender relations, the effect of Japanese colonial hegemony in Korea gets even more complicated. Before talking about gender dynamics in colonial Korea under Japanese rule in greater depth, it is worthwhile to discuss some of the unique characteristics of Japanese imperialism. As the historian Andre Schmid points out, unlike the European imperial powers, Japanese empire-building took place simultaneously with its modernizing process, and its colonial engagements had a significant impact on Japanese modernity.¹⁴ In addition, Japan's rise as an imperial power should be understood within the context of Euro-American imperial expansion and Euro-American-centric worldviews and racial conceptions that viewed Caucasians as superior and Asians as inferior. Japan was a latecomer to the imperial enterprise, and it succeeded in demonstrating its military prowess in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), and yet it struggled to gain status on a par with Euro-American countries when it came to racial, religious, and cultural matters.¹⁵ In this vein, Jordan Sand characterizes the Japanese as "subaltern imperialists," which means that the Japanese were "formally participating in the imperial system yet socially and culturally kept outside it."¹⁶ In other words, Japanese dominance in the political and economic

¹² Joan Judge, *The Precious Raft of History: The Past, the West, and the Woman Question in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 112.

¹³ In reality, Japanese imperial power was not a simple imitator of Western models. As shown in the cases of medical modernity, Japan was "coeval with the West." See Jin-kyung Park, "Picturing Empire and Illness: Biomedicine, Venereal Disease and the Modern Girl in Korea under Japanese Colonial Rule," *Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (2014): 108–41, quoted on 110. See also Kyung Moon Hwang, *Rationalizing Korea: The Rise of the Modern State 1894–1945* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Andre Schmid, "Colonialism and the 'Korea Problem' in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article," *Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 4 (2000): 951–76.

¹⁵ Joseph Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); and Emily Anderson, *Christianity and Imperialism in Modern Japan: Empire for God* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 63–6.

¹⁶ Jordan Sand, "Subaltern Imperialists: The New Historiography of the Japanese Empire," *Past and Present* 225, no. 1 (2014): 273–88, quoted on 275.

realms as an imperial power was not necessarily accompanied by cultural dominance. In his analysis of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan, Robert Eskildsen further elaborates on the ways in which Japan not only "resisted Western notions of Japanese inferiority" in Euro-American-centered discourse on civilization but also appropriated the discourse of civilization to justify its imperial ambition overseas. Eskildsen proposes the concept of "mimetic imperialism" to describe Japan's efforts in modernization as it adopted, adapted, and appropriated Western imperialism and its accompanying discourse on civilization.¹⁷

A concept that has been productive in understanding the complex history of colonial Korea under Japanese rule is "colonial modernity." Since the publication of the book, *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (1997),¹⁸ the concept has been usefully deployed to go beyond the Euro-American-centered framework by critiquing the modernization theory that relies on a linear and hierarchical view of history. It also shows the limitations of the binary approach to colonial power as violent oppressors and the colonized as hopeless victims. More importantly, the concept of colonial modernity attends to the contributions and agency of the colonized in perceiving, experiencing and appropriating what the modern meant (as it focuses on everyday life and material culture) within the context of a transnational dynamic beyond the confines of metropole and colony.¹⁹

In their highly influential book, *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (1999), the editors Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson posit that Japan "as a latecomer to the business of imperialism had the advantage of learning from Western colonialism and thus created uniquely effective control strategies," and they suggest considering "Japanese domination within the broader lens of *cultural hegemony*" [emphasis added] in part because modern forms of colonial domination are felt not only in the political and economic domains but even in mundane, cultural, and personal life.²⁰ Here Antonio Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" is important as it "helps to explain how political and civil society, with institutions ranging from education, religion, and family to the micro-structures of the practices of everyday life, shapes the meaning and values that produce, direct, and maintain the 'spontaneous' consent of the various strata of

¹⁷ Robert Eskildsen, "Of Civilization and Savages," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (April 2002): 388–418. See also Robert Eskildsen, *Transforming Empire in Japan and East Asia: The Taiwan Expedition and the Birth of Japanese Imperialism* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

¹⁸ Tani Barlow, ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson, eds., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Tani Barlow, "Debates over Colonial Modernity in East Asia and Another Alternative," *Cultural Studies* 26, no. 5 (2012): 617–44.

²⁰ Shin and Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, pp. 6–7.

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society to domination.”²¹ Shin and Robinson take the Japanese-initiated Rural Revitalization Campaign in the 1930s as an example of success in cultural hegemony. That movement was designed not only to save increasingly devastated rural households but to encourage “mental awakening” and “friendly feelings and hearty cooperation between Japanese and Koreans.”²²

Whether the Japanese succeeded in gaining “cultural hegemony” in Korea is still an open question. In her study of Japanese settlers in colonial Korea, Jun Uchida describes a telling story of how one of the Japanese settlers, the journalist Aoyagi Tsunatarō, saw “Japan as still ‘a second- or third-class inferior country’ lagging behind the West,” and he says that he “implicitly concurred with his ‘close Korean friends’ that unless Japan defeated the United States, the Japanese effort to capture Korean minds might forever be doomed.”²³ Indeed, as a Korean commentator put it in 1921, Japan had been trying to adopt from the West “new trends” (*sin sajo*) or “new morality” (*sin todōk*), such as class equality and gender equality, but it was far from being reformed.²⁴ In this comparison of Japan with the West, Koreans assumed that these new trends and the new morality for the modern era originally came from the West. While Japan played a key role in mediating and distributing knowledge about Western modernity to its colonies, Koreans considered Euro-American societies to be a more authentic source of modernity, and that attitude tended to diminish Japan’s influence, especially in social and cultural domains, in spite of its political dominance in Korea.

The question of Japanese cultural hegemony is especially pertinent to understanding modern gender relations. In colonial studies, the analysis of gender has been fruitfully used to shed new light on dynamic formations of imperial culture.²⁵ Often informed by postcolonial theories, these studies illuminate the complex power dynamics and multidirectional flow of influence between the

²¹ Shin and Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, p. 7.

²² Shin and Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, p. 8.

²³ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 219. See also Leo Ching, “Yellow Skin, White Masks: Race, Class, and Identification in Japanese Colonial Discourse,” in *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, ed. Kuan Hsing Chen (Routledge, 1998), pp. 65–86.

²⁴ Sōng Kwanho, “Na ūi pon Ilbon sōul” (The Capital of Japan from my Viewpoint), *Kaehyōk* 12 (June 1921): 66–71, quoted on 67.

²⁵ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus, eds., *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

colonizer and the colonized that took place in the “contact zone,” to use Mary Louise Pratt’s term.²⁶ However, most of that research has been focused on European colonialism and its colonial subjects. A much less explored question is how racial and gender dynamics played out in the contact zone when the colonial power was not Euro-American. As a non-Western, non-Christian colonial power, Japan is an interesting case to consider due to its geographic proximity to and its “racial, cultural and religious affinities” with Korea, including gender ethics stemming from Chinese Confucianism.²⁷

Needless to say, their shared history does not mean that Japanese and Korean women lived under the same conditions. For instance, in spite of the overall disregard for “educated women” in Confucian teachings,²⁸ the level of education for Japanese women was much higher than that of Koreans.²⁹ The Meiji government (1868–1912) made public education for boys and girls compulsory in 1872. Even before that, during the Edo period (1603–1867), Japanese girls had access to local schools (*terakoya*) and private academies (*shijuku*).³⁰ There were no such educational institutions for Korean girls during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) until the first girls’ school, Ewha Haktang, opened in 1886. In Chosŏn Korea, education for girls and women took place only informally and at home.

Nonetheless, Japanese women in society did not necessarily fare better than did the colonized women of Korea. The pioneering Japanese feminist Kishida Toshiko (1863–1901) points out that Japanese women themselves struggled with, “evil teachings and customs” inherited from the past. In her article in 1884, she wrote, “In ancient times there were various evil teachings and customs in our country, things that would make the people of any free, civilized nation terribly ashamed. Of these, the most reprehensible was the practice of ‘respecting men and despising women’,” a notion that was also prevalent in

²⁶ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992). See also Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

²⁷ Park, “Picturing Empire and Illness,” 108; Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Ch’anghae kōsa, “Kajok chedo ūi ch’ūngmyōn’gwan” (Opinion on Aspects of Family System), *Kaehyōk* 3 (August 1920): 23–8.

²⁸ Yi Sugun, trans., *Yō sasō* (The Four Books for Women) (Seoul: Yōiyōn, 2003); 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. 150.

²⁹ “Che myōngsa ūi Chosŏn yōja haebangwan” (Experts’ View on the Liberation of Korean Women), *Kaehyōk* 4 (September 1920): 28–45, quoted on 42.

³⁰ Those local schools and private academies were managed and taught by women. Martha Tocco, “Made in Japan: Meiji Women’s Education,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, eds., Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 39–41; Elizabeth Knipe Mauer, “Women in Teaching,” in *Women in Changing Japan*, eds. Joyce Lebra, Joy Paulson, and Elizabeth Powers (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), p. 161.

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Korea.³¹ In her study of Japanese colonial literature, Kimberly Kono illustrates how Japanese women had privileges as colonizers and how colonial territories functioned as “sites *outside* of the moral and social restrictions of the Japanese archipelago, identifying the *gaichi* [colony] as a place of liberation for Japanese women.” And yet in spite of certain privileges they enjoyed as colonizers, the actual lives of Japanese women were significantly restricted by “discourses of femininity” and “[t]he reality of patriarchal colonial governments and male-dominated communities in the colonies.”³² Colonial textbooks, especially the subject of “*susin*” (morality), clearly reflect such discourses of femininity. While Japanese women were featured as exemplary models whom Korean girls were expected to emulate, the central component of that model image heavily focused on Confucian ethics stemming from the Five Moral Imperatives (*oryun*) one of which is the “distinction/separation between husband and wife” (*pubu yubyōl*). Through this distinction a woman’s domestic duties and responsibilities are stressed, primarily in her capacity as daughter-in-law, wife, and mother.³³ In spite of the colonial discourse that portrayed the Japanese as “advanced” and “civilizing forces” for the presumably inferior Koreans, the shared Confucian legacy of “evil teachings and customs” deeply shaped the gender and racial dynamics in colonial Korea.

Here we need to return to the example of the roundtable discussion described at the beginning of the chapter. In spite of Japanese colonial dominance, it was not Japanese but Euro-American sources that were most frequently hailed as the most exemplary models for modern womanhood. The Western images were the ones that were circulated in the print media up until mid-1930s. The conspicuous absence of Japanese models and the omnipresent influence of Euro-American models in the discourse of modern womanhood in Korean print media lead to a question: To what extent did the Japanese colonial state exert its cultural hegemony in shaping gender relations? To put it differently, if the colonial state was a “mobilizing agent of modernity,”³⁴ how effective was it, especially when it had to face other competing forces – Euro-American cultural influences – in the emerging discourse on modern womanhood in Korea?

³¹ Barbara Molony, Janet Theiss, and Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender in Modern East Asia: An Integrated History* (Boulder: Westview, 2016), p. 145; “Che myōngsa ūi Chosōn yōja haebanggwān,” 29; Mark Peterson, “Women without Sons: A Measure of Social Change in Yi Dynasty Korea,” in *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, eds., Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson (New Haven: East Rock Press, 1983), p. 33.

³² Kimberly Kono, *Romance, Family and Nation in Japanese Colonial Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 34–5.

³³ Kim Sunjōn and Chang Migyōng, “‘Pot’ong hakkyo susinsō’ rŭl t’onghae pon yōsōng myosa” (Portrayal of Women Reflected in “Book of Moral Education for Common School”), in *Cheguk ūi singminji susin* (Empire’s Moral Cultivation of the Colonized), ed. Kim Sunjōn (Seoul: Cheiaenssi, 2008), pp. 304–24.

³⁴ Hwang, *Rationalizing Korea*, p. 253.

There are a number of areas in which the Japanese colonial state had a far-reaching impact on Korean women and their lives and work. Arguably, the most prominent colonial policy that significantly affected the domestic sphere is the “household-registry system” (J: *koseki*, K: *hojök*).³⁵ It clearly defined the legal boundaries of the “household” (*ie* in Japanese) with exclusive rights given to the male head of the family. This “household-registry system” differed significantly from the family system of the Chosŏn dynasty. Although family structure was still patriarchal in Chosŏn, it focused on the extended family lineage as well as all cohabitants, including slaves. A distinctive impact of the colonial “household” system was to weaken the extended family network and move toward the proliferation of nuclear families – parents and their children.³⁶ In her analysis of the colonial legal system with particular focus on civil disputes, Sungyun Lim challenges the long-held assumption that women were victimized by both Korean patriarchy and Japanese colonial oppression. Instead, she demonstrates how Korean women as colonized subjects proactively used the legal system to defend or claim their rights. Lim even suggests that Korean women were more at odds with Korean men than they were with the Japanese in the civil dispute cases.³⁷ Beyond the legal system, the colonial state’s influence is also evident in education. As Chapter 1 shows, the Meiji gender ideology of “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) was effectively incorporated into girls’ education under the topic of morality (*susin*).

In spite of the markers of colonial influence in shaping modern womanhood in Korea, a competing and sometimes more powerful source of “modernity” in the construction of modern womanhood in Korea was the Protestant missionaries, especially those from the United States, who began to arrive in the late-nineteenth century. Much research demonstrates that East Asian countries had some common experiences in terms of the significant role of Protestant missionaries in modern gender politics.³⁸ The missionary impact was particularly evident in the areas of women’s education, medicine, and social work. At the

³⁵ Sungyun Lim, *Rules of the House: Family Law and Domestic Disputes in Colonial Korea* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019). See also Kim Hyegyŏng, *Singminji ha kŭndae kajok ūi hyōngsŏng kwa chendō* (Gender and the Formation of the Modern Family under Colonial Rule) (Seoul: Ch’angbi, 2006).

³⁶ Hong Yanghui, “Singminji sigi hojök chedo wa kajok chedo ūi pyōnyong” (Transformation of the Family System through the Family Registrar during the Japanese Colonial Era), *Sahak yŏn’gu* 79 (2005): 167–205.

³⁷ Lim, *Rules of the House*. For the history of women engaging in legal system during the Chosŏn dynasty, see Jisoo Kim, *The Emotions of Justice: Gender, Status, and Legal Performance in Chosŏn Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017); Jungwon Kim, “‘You Must Avenge on My Behalf’: Widow Chastity and Honour in Nineteenth-Century Korea,” *Gender & History* 26, no. 1 (2014): 128–46; Sun Joo Kim and Jungwon Kim, comp. and trans., *Wrongful Deaths: Selected Inquest Records from Nineteenth-Century Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

³⁸ Karen K. Seat, “‘Providence Has Freed Our Hands’: Women’s Missions and the American Encounter with Japan” (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Rebecca Copeland, “All

same time, however, the differing political situations of the East Asian countries – Japan as an imperial power, China as a semi-colonized country and Korea as a colony of Japan – had an impact on the dynamics of the missionary work. Although it is not to precisely summarize the missionary dynamics in East Asia, as E. Taylor Atkins observes: “Protestant missionaries from North America and Europe had a deeper impact on notions and experiences of modernity in Korea than they did in either China or Japan.”³⁹ In spite of the fact that there were fewer missionaries in Korea than there were in China and Japan, the success of the mission in Korea was remarkable. The phenomenal success seen in the evangelical activities in Korea cannot be divorced from the particular political situation especially after the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), both of which took place on Korean territory. It was at that time that many Koreans “sought refuge in the church,” and the number of Korean converts rapidly increased from 4,356 in 1896 to 106,287 in 1907 to nearly 300,000 by the early 1920s.⁴⁰

What is at work here is not only Koreans’ perception of the “West” as the origin of modernity. Even though Euro-American countries actually were colonizers elsewhere, they were not colonizing Korea. In the eyes of Koreans under Japanese colonial rule, these Westerners represented the strength of the United States or the European nations but did not pose a colonial threat. In fact, they were viewed as potential allies who could support the Koreans in their struggle against the Japanese. This disassociation from colonial ambition in Korea played a significant role in creating the dynamics between various parties involved. In her analysis of the relationship between British women and Pandita Ramabai, an Indian Christian, Antoinette Burton demonstrates how “some Western women’s collaboration in the ideological work of empire” placed limitations on “women’s international solidarity,” as Ramabai found “more sympathy and financial support among American women reformers than among her British ‘sisters’.”⁴¹ In other words, the imperial power relations

Other Loves Excelling: Mary Kidder, Wakamatsu Shizuko and Modern Marriage in Meiji Japan,” in *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, eds. Hyaewool Choi and Margaret Jolly (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), pp. 85–112; Helen Schneider, *Keeping the Nation’s House: Domestic Management and the Making of Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Ellen Widmer, “The Seven Sisters and China, 1900–1950,” in *China’s Christian Colleges: Cross-Cultural Connections, 1900–1950*, eds. Daniel H. Bays and Ellen Widmer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 83–105; Jeessoon Hong, “Christian Education and the Construction of Female Gentility in Modern East Asia,” *Religions* 2019, 10, 467.

³⁹ E. Taylor Atkins, “Colonial Modernity,” in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 124–40, quoted on p. 131.

⁴⁰ Timothy S. Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2010), p. 13; W. Carl Rufus, “The Japanese Educational Policy in Korea,” *Korea Review* 2, no. 11 (January 1921): 13–16, quoted on 14.

⁴¹ Antoinette Burton, “Colonial Encounters in Late-Victorian England: Pandita Ramabai at Cheltenham and Wantage 1883–6,” *Feminist Review* 49 (Spring 1995): 29–49, quoted on 30.