

New Women in Colonial Korea

A sourcebook

**Compiled and translated with an
introduction by Hyaeweol Choi**

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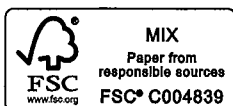
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**To my mothers—Hong Haeng and Jan Devitt—
two truly wise women**



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2 New Woman, Old Woman

Editor's introduction

In the articulation of the *New Woman* (*sin yŏsŏng*), the *Old Woman* (*ku yŏsŏng*), which literally means "old-fashioned woman" was indispensable as the antithesis, providing a contrast between the imagined ideal of woman for the new era and the old (read "backward"), tradition-bound life of woman during the Chosŏn dynasty (Kim 2005: 205–209). Opinions and debates center on what constitutes the New Woman as opposed to the Old Woman and what kinds of right, duty and responsibility are appropriate for women in the new, modern era. The writings by women and men on these topics reveal the widespread stereotyped image of the New Woman as an indulgent, selfish, and decadent individual or a privileged beneficiary of modern education. On the other hand, one detects strong expectations for the newly educated women in the revitalization of the Korean nation under Japanese colonial rule. Anxiety was mixed with exhilaration in imagining, speaking about, or defending the New Woman.

Im Chinsil identifies women's freedom and liberation as the centerpiece of the "woman question" and also as modern ideals in general (Source 13). As she points out, the discourse on New Woman was largely led by male intellectuals from the enlightenment era, but a small group of educated women began to participate in shaping the discourse on New Womanhood from the mid 1910s. In imagining the New Woman, women intellectuals drew on figures of exemplary women from Western and Japanese literature and history. Na Hyesŏk's pioneering essay, "An Ideal Woman," precisely illustrates the transcultural flow of ideas and images of the New Woman that were in constant interplay with local and national circumstances (Source 7). Given the significant influence of Japanese education during the colonial era, some of the prominent New Women in Japan, such as Yosano Akiko and Hiratsuka Raichō, served as models. Indeed, Raichō's influential magazine, *Seitō*, became a template for Korea's first feminist magazine, *Sin yŏja* (*New Woman*).

The inaugural essay of *Sin yŏja* captures the spirit and goal of the magazine to shape New Womanhood in Korea (Source 8). "Reform" (*kaejo*) and "liberation" (*haebang*) are the leitmotifs in this new endeavor. Taking the

formation of New Womanhood as a global trend, the essay effectively frames the woman question as a key issue that needs to be addressed in order for Korea to be on a par with advanced countries. Another essay from *Sin yŏja*, "The Self-Awakening of Woman," highlights the inalienable human rights that are due to women but that have been trampled by customs and laws that have been instituted by men (Source 9). In this vein, the essay calls for women's "self-awakening" as the most important tool for claiming their basic human rights; only then will they become educated, useful, conscientious members of humankind who can assume their rightful place in the social order and offer their full worth to their families and society in general. A woman's self-awakening begins when she comes to realize the oppressive gender ethics that have legitimized the idea that women are inferior, represented by the traditional moral code of the Three Bonds (*samgang*), one of which includes "wife should obey husband" (*puwi pugang*), and Five Moral Imperatives (*oryun*), one of which emphasizes "distinction" and separation of roles between husband and wife (*pubu yubyŏl*) (Deuchler 1992: 110).¹

Yi Chŏnghŭi's discussion of "true freedom" brings to light a certain sense of anxiety about the new gender roles (Source 12). That is, while she challenges the hierarchical human relations in Korean society, she cautions against the uncritical use of newly given freedom, which often takes the form of excessive individualism. Yi advocates freedom as a new moral code that should be accompanied by the acceptance of one's duties and responsibilities for the "mutual prosperity for all humankind."

Emphasizing women's liberation as a requirement for social progress, Ham Sep'ung critiques an "evolutionary theory" that endorses women's intellectual inferiority (Source 11). Instead of relying on biological determination, he urges readers to examine critically the actual causes of such inferiority, and he makes the case that the major cause of women's intellectual inferiority is the lack of education.

Im Chinsil's and Kim Chunyŏn's articles expand the discussion of the woman question by bringing forward the issue of women's legal status in society, arguing that the legal system prevents women from holding political and economic rights equal to those of men (Sources 13 and 14). The lack of legal rights for women, ranging from voting rights to inheritance and adultery, always put women in an inferior and vulnerable position in the family and society. For instance, laws punishing adultery were applied in a discriminatory fashion only to women, as a means of controlling their sexuality, and civil law did not give women any economic rights.

Kim Hwallan's essay urging men to reflect on themselves is an important piece, largely because, in the male-dominated print media, male intellectuals often positioned themselves as superior, playing the role of watchdog to women's bad behavior and offering advice on the proper path (Source 10). Kim's article points to the heart of this trend, critiquing men's ungrounded prejudice against "educated women" and also men's hypocrisy about their own behavior. Kim sharply criticizes the exaggerated portrayal of the New Woman

as wasteful and vainglorious. She argues that the stereotype is based on only a few examples but has been used as a tool for critiquing all New Women.

Yi Kwangsu's "Ten Commandments for New Woman" (Source 15) and the rebuttal by Ko Yöngsuk (Source 16) demonstrate the tensions and conflicts between conservative ideals for women advocated by male intellectuals and new, liberal ideals cherished by New Women.

Chu Yosöp's "objective" characterization of the New Woman and the Old Woman, using the level of Western-style education as a criterion, is quite telling in the sense that he ultimately advocates that, "the fundamental desire or wish of any woman should be to become a wise mother and good wife," reaffirming and reconstituting the traditional notion of "womanly virtue" (*pudök*) with modern sensibilities that include a woman's right to choose her own spouse and to create a "sweet home" (Source 17). The discourse on "wise mother and good wife" became an integral part of the discourse on New Womanhood in the 1920s and 1930s. Not only male intellectuals but also New Women themselves participated in elaborating the modern gender ideology of "wise mother and good wife."

7 Na Hyesök: The ideal woman

["*Isang chök puin,*" *Hakchigwang* 3 (December 1914): 13–14]

What does "ideal" mean? The popular concept of "ideal" is a notion born out of desire. It may be thought of as an "emotional" ideal. In what follows, I will focus on what I call an "intellectual/spiritual" ideal.

So, who could be considered an ideal woman? I do not think an ideal woman has existed, either in the past or the present. It may be because I have not studied the characteristics of women thoroughly enough, but I think it is probably because my ideal of womanhood has an exceptionally high standard. There are any number of female models in various fields. Examples include Katyusha, the female protagonist in Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection*, whose ideal was transformation; Magda, the central character in Hermann Sudermann's novel *Heimat*, whose ideal was self-interest; Nora, the protagonist in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, whose ideal was true love; Mrs. Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, whose ideal was religious egalitarianism; Hiratsuka Raichō, whose ideal was intellectual genius; and Yosano Akiko, whose ideal was a happy family. I do not necessarily admire all of the ideals pursued by these women, but for now, their goals are as close to the ultimate ideal as we can get. Thus I pay homage to them.

Why, you may ask. Most people allow themselves to be governed by destiny. They are afraid to cultivate themselves, fearing any change. They are weak-minded, without any notion of an ideal in their minds, preferring to stay in their static lives of ease and comfort. However, we need to acquire all the strengths 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 further and prepare herself to fulfill future ideals. I also believe that it is not wise to only pursue the customary ideal of "good wife, wise mother" (*yangch'ö hyönmö*). It seems that that ideal is one of the favorite marketing strategies used by teachers. The man is both husband and father; but I have never heard of any curriculum that emphasizes "good husband, wise father" (*yangbu hyönbu*). It is only women whose conduct as good spouse and wise parent is reinforced through our education, making women into mere appendages of men. Such an education does not develop the mind. Also, the idea of a warm and compliant womanhood, a necessary point of propaganda to turn women into slaves, cannot be an ideal for women.

Until now, women have been raised in the ideology that instructs them to devote themselves entirely to the welfare of men. They are so accustomed to the domestic arena that they cannot tell right from wrong in matters that are outside of the private domain. Given this, how can a woman evolve into an ideal woman? Of course, she needs knowledge, skills, and artistic talent. She should be prepared to judge right from wrong in any matter, based on her common sense. She should be self-aware, with the desire to discover her unique abilities in realizing certain goals in life. She must understand contemporary thought, knowledge, and sensibility. Only then can she become a pioneer, equipped with all the power and qualifications that she needs in order to be an enlightened, ideal woman.

Therefore, we contemporaries must expand our knowledge and fulfill our duty by taking full responsibility for our actions. When we confront difficulties, we should think about them carefully and take them as opportunities to learn. As we cultivate our consciences, we get closer to the ideal. By doing so, we won't be wasting our time, and, even if our lives end tomorrow, we can say that we lived an ideal life until the very end.

With the burning desire I have at this moment, I intend to devote myself to art. The path to the ideal is currently invisible. I cannot even see its outlines. But through the countless trials that are ahead of me, I will find my way to the path.

(Written on November 5, 1914)

8 Inaugural editorial from *Sin yöja*²

["*Ch'anggansa,*" *Sin yöja* 1 (1920): 2–3]

Reform (*kaejo*)! This is the outcry of humankind after painfully grieving over the terrifying gunshots of the past five years [referring to World War I]. Liberation (*haebang*)! This is the call of women who have been confined to the deep, dark, inner chambers for thousands of years. Excessively greedy ambition and egoism caused the war, breaking the peace of springtime and bringing mountains of death and oceans of blood. This war opposed the will

of heaven and the correct path of humankind. Similarly, it is an affront to humanity to treat women as slaves, locking them up in the inner quarters because they are presumed to be weak. If this practice is clearly in opposition to the way of humanity, how much longer can it survive? How much longer can it hold its power and influence? That era has come to an end. It is time to rectify the wrongdoings of the past. The cannon smoke of the prolonged war is lifting, and a bright day will break on earth. The auspicious light of peace has shone through, and a new stage is set, filled with hope.

Reform! Reform! This call for reform is echoed high and loud from every corner of the world. Truly the time has come for change. Ah, the new era has arrived. Time has come to break away from old things and bring in new things. The time has come to throw off the wrong-headed, evil practices of the past. The time has come to reform all things.

It is not a matter of selecting this or that for reform. We must thoroughly reform our entire society. In order to reform society, we must first reform the family, society's most basic and fundamental unit. In order to reform the family, we have to liberate women, who are the masters (*chuin*) of the house. And we must first liberate women if we are to catch up with the rest of the world, be competitive, lead lives that can be respected by other states, and transform our entire social structure. We are not interested in seeking an acknowledgment through empty slogans such as "equality" (*tongdŭng*) or "respect for women" (*yŏjon*). We publish our magazine, *Sin yŏja*, with the sole purpose of working in society, gaining emancipation, and finding ways in which we can help build a social order that is the envy of the world.

9 Kim Wŏnju: The self-awakening of women

[*"Yŏja ŭi chagak," Sin yŏja 3 (1920): 1-3*]

Typically, the concept of "human being" encompasses both man and woman, and human society comes from the union of man and woman. This is obvious from the fact that each gender makes up one half of human society, and there are no distinct words that suggest man is human and woman is not human. We do have terms such as "man" (*namja*) and "woman" (*yŏja*), which make a distinction based on biology; however, both terms entail humanness. It is readily understandable that, if either man or woman were not here, human society could not exist. This was an unalterable natural law in the past, and it remains so now. Yet, men have ignored this constant truth and treated women as if they were slaves. The unfortunate result has been that women have lost their rights as human beings. It has become a woman's second nature to think of herself as incapable and weak, so that she yields all of her rights to man and endures the unspeakable brutality of oppression.

Debates on morality and the law have been based solely on men's views, completely excluding the perspective of that half of human society comprised of women. Only men have been entitled to education, which has been

completely denied to women. All of these social practices are certainly counter to the inclusiveness of humanity. With all things related to human society, both men and women should be included. That is to say, we must think of woman's interests and concerns simultaneously with those of man. When I say this, some may argue that men and women each have their own work to do, and their lives are destined for different domains; men and women are "distinct" (*pyŏl*) according to the law of nature, and therefore it is impossible for them to go beyond their designated domain. I would argue that, even if woman is inherently and naturally inferior to man, she is still human. Even if woman's morality is not exactly the same as that of man, even if there is a difference in the degree of morality, one must still acknowledge that they share humanness. In principle, woman's life should be equal to man's life, and the goal of woman's life should be equal to that of man. It is my view that there should be only one morality for humankind. There should not be two moralities applied differently to man and woman, and it should not be assumed that woman is inferior to man.

Think about it. There are 20 million people in Korea. Only half of the population is working—the men. The other half serves at the beck and call of men, like slaves. How terrible are the conditions Korean women live in! The boundary between the worlds of men and women has been created by men. Men have appropriated women's rights. Women have been oppressed by men, have not experienced the pleasures of society, and have spent their entire lives in anguish and sorrow. How miserable they are! However, a more important reason for the condition of women is their own failure to take responsibility [for self-determination], as well as a lack of education and occupation. To rescue these miserable women in contemporary Korea, education should be offered to women, so that they can break the habit of laziness, prepare themselves for the strenuous efforts of life, engage in an occupation, wean themselves from dependence on others to adopt a spirit of autonomy and self-reliance, and awaken to their own responsibilities.

I think that our Korean society is undergoing a transition. Our civilization lost its old ideals but failed to replace them with a new set of ideals, and now there is chaos. We women are in the middle of this chaos. Should we subject ourselves ignorantly to the tricks of destiny? No, that would lead to self-destruction. If we are not fully awake at this time, the future of women in society will be annihilated forever. The key [to our survival] is to be mindful and pave our own way by equipping ourselves with education, work, and responsibility. We do not have to focus on our past. From now on, we must take off the yoke men have placed on us and be prepared to play a role as human beings in the truest sense.

We are [rightful] members of human society and the family. If any one of us does not achieve self-awakening, it is as if human society is losing one of its own, and the family is losing a sound contributor. If that is the case, how can it be said that the impact any one of us makes on the society or the family is negligible? Our relationship to the Korean nation is significant. Therefore,

women's self-awakening is important to enhance women's rights but also to reform Korean culture.

10 Kim Hwallan: Urging men to critically reflect on themselves

[*"Namsöng üi pansöng üi ch'ok ham," Sin yöja 4 (June 1920): 38-40*]

I think that some male readers will dismiss an essay in a magazine called "New Woman" (*Sin yöja*) as impudent, thinking a title such as "Urging women to critically reflect on themselves" is perfectly valid, but "Urging men to critically reflect on themselves" is not. However, women have the right to criticize men's wrongdoings and urge them to reflect on their behaviors. There is sincere appreciation for the efforts gentlemen make to scrutinize, criticize, and alert us to problems in the women's world. We hope they will continue to enlighten us. But I suspect that men are too busy critiquing women to remember to reflect on themselves. Here, despite my shortcomings as a writer, I am going to discuss several issues that I wish our male readers would consider.

First, men are confident in the proposition that they are superior to women; therefore, they feel entitled to lay claim to the most powerful and important positions in everything. I hope that men reflect on this issue and ponder whether their sense of entitlement isn't just a form of self-deceit. Regardless of gender, those who are proud of themselves and only find shortcomings in others, reveling in their own superiority, are destined to become self-defeaters because they gradually lose awareness of themselves.

Second, men should try to improve their own shortcomings before they find fault with women for their limitations. Given some notorious examples we have seen, no one can deny that there are some women who indulge in luxury and vanity. However, we educated women do not apply oil to our hair or wear cosmetics. We wear our simple and plain, coarse cotton clothes during the winter and hemp clothes during the summer. But, when we try sincerely to engage and find a way to contribute to social reform, don't you lash out with all kinds of malicious remarks, saying we are impudent, contemptuous, and full of vanity? So, let me ask: what have men done for our society? Why is it that the majority of men selfishly waste time, entertaining themselves with their drinking and their sexual exploits day and night? I have to wonder how much wealth and knowledge men actually possess, when all I see is their arrogant self-indulgence: wearing suits that cost hundreds of *won*, shiny dress shoes, gold-rimmed eyeglasses and high-collared shirts, with silly accessories such as glittering gold teeth and walking sticks, just so they can cheerfully strut around in public. No one could ever suggest that this is a frugal lifestyle that is good for society. I can say that more than half of the so-called educated class of men leads such a lifestyle. But what I am really curious about is why

these men, who consider themselves especially open-minded and generous, could be so biased. How could they accuse women of being self-indulgent while they engage in exactly the same behavior they criticize? Furthermore, in their irrational criticism and spiteful contempt, how can they generalize the ill-advised behavior of just a few women as something every woman does, and argue against education for women by claiming that women are not prepared for learning?

Third, men should think about their own character and qualifications before they set out to find the ideal wife and dream about raising a happy family. I often encounter men who lack considerable education or knowledge, and yet they deplore women who lack education and knowledge. We know that, once married, the husband is usually responsible for household finances and the children's education. However, it is quite ridiculous to see many men, who are utterly incapable of handling money and have not inherited wealth from their parents—in other words, men who cannot support a family—wish for a wife equipped with good character and knowledge. I also hear that, while men freely frequent brothels, they want wives who are pure and chaste. How shameless! There are hundreds of thousands of men who, though they appear to be perfectly dignified, courteous, and thoughtful, will steal a secret glimpse at pretty young students passing by, then clear their throats and pretend otherwise. Among those who pretend to be devoted Christians, when they go to church clutching their Bibles and hymn books, listening piously, you sometimes see some of them surreptitiously glance down the aisle, examining the women. I do not think these men have true faith. Though they are totally lost, lacking purpose or ideas, without aim or direction, like a ship tossed by waves during a storm at sea, they laugh at women for their lack of will and weak minds. How ironic!

Fourth, I want to urge men who are unhappy in their marriages to reflect on themselves. They have gotten a taste of new civilization and new trends, and so others call them "new men" (*sin ch'öngnyön*). I understand that they might feel dissatisfied and frustrated with their wives, whose only purpose seems to be giving birth to children and sitting in the corner of the room sewing. They feel that their wives don't understand anything about their activities or experience. They feel unconnected to their wives, and as a consequence these men react with resentment toward their parents, anger toward society, and pessimism toward the world. In the end, they turn away from loyalty and ignore morality to search for a woman, a so-called "ideal lover," who will understand them and create a new family for them. I may be able to recognize the source of the feelings that explain their behavior, but I want to offer this advice: instead of doing harm to others and creating tragedy in the family and disorder in society, why don't you expand the perspectives of your wife by trying to liberate her from ignorance and letting her experience life? No one is born with knowledge, and so, when she takes a break from household work, instill new knowledge in her. Do it with love and caring and enthusiasm. You can plant within her learning that will awaken her spirit, and in turn you will be

able to derive the comforts from her companionship that you crave. Who knows . . . she may even reveal special talents in literature, music, or painting. What would you say about a husband and wife who pursue happiness and peace at home together in this way?

What I have written in these pages is not intended to cast personal criticism on any individuals, but rather to contribute to our society in some small way. I think that it is vital for men to deeply ponder the issues I have discussed. This is what I think: if we want to make our society healthy and prosperous, men must advise women on their shortcomings, and women must caution men on their limitations. By doing so, men and women will fulfill their sacred calling and display the genius within themselves.

11 Ham Sep'ung: Women's liberation means social progress³ [excerpt]

[*"Yöja haebang i chük chinbo," Kaebyök (September 1920): 43-45*]

We should celebrate the fact that the issue of women's liberation is emerging in Korean society as a point of discussion. I think this is good for our nation. One might worry about the potential problems that could arise if we simply advocate women's liberation by uncritically imitating the examples of Western countries, where women are allowed to act freely in society, without first considering if Korean women are prepared to take on new freedoms. However, the fact that women's liberation is advocated in Korean society nowadays is an indication that our society is awakening. This is a sign that there is a promise of future happiness in our society. Some argue that there are reasons why women are inevitably in an inferior position to men, but this claim is subject to question. According to a theory of evolution, women's brains are smaller than men's brains but larger than children's, and thus women's intelligence cannot be equal to men's. But I strongly assert that this cannot be used as proof that women are inherently inferior to men. An argument based on evolution focuses on the inferior status of women, without paying attention to its actual causes. Whether women's intelligence is inferior to men's should not be discussed as a matter of their inherent nature. Rather, I argue that it should be understood in relation to the education they are receiving. If we look at the condition women live in at present, they are confined to the home and constrained by a life-long duty of sewing. As a result, there is no way for them to be independent in this competitive society. They are not given the opportunity to become well-trained scholars. That is deplorable! I can say with all confidence that, if the rationale that women are inherently less intelligent than men prevents us from allowing the liberation of women, social morals will eventually be destroyed, and the survival of society could be threatened. For example, if only men are engaged in scholarship, knowledge in certain fields might be developed, but the development of a more comprehensive knowledge for humankind will be hampered. Even knowledge specific to men will tend to lag behind.

It is generally acknowledged that the men of our society are inferior to Western men in intelligence. That means we will need to compete with Western men from now on, and at the same time liberate the women in our society so that they can develop and grow. Otherwise, we cannot be in the same rank as the men of Western countries. We ought to be mindful that only when our compatriot women reach the point where they are able to digest the knowledge that men have can we be as good as Western men. [. . .]

It is a world trend that women should also strive for an independent life. From the standpoint of human morality, once we acknowledge women's need for an independent life, it is only right for us to open doors for them so that they can discover their individual talents. I also believe that we should abolish old customs, which mistreat women, and immediately liberate women, allowing them to have a practical education appropriate to their feminine nature. It is unreasonable to restrict education for women, but it should be practical. For example, cooking is a practical skill to learn. Yet, in order to cook well, one should learn something about chemistry and physiology. Raising children is also practical knowledge. But there is no doubt that one needs to know about hygiene, psychology, and education to raise children well. In order to expand the opportunity for women to acquire practical knowledge, we need to provide them with higher, more professional training. The reason why Greek literature developed was because they had the peerless female poet Sappho.⁴ Building the Great British Empire was possible because of Queen Elizabeth. How can we say that only men can be geniuses? Great women give birth to genius men, so there must be a strong relationship between men and women. The liberation of women is not simply for the sake of women themselves. It is an absolute requirement for social progress. Therefore, I think that no other issue is more urgent than offering equal opportunities to both men and women, in order for us to improve morality and advance sound knowledge for our society.

12 Yi Chönghui: What does freedom mean for women?

[*"Yöja üi chayü nün muöt," Sin yösöng 3, no. 5 (1925): 46-49*]

In the past, our lives were governed by the Three Bonds and Five Moral Rules (*samgang oryun*). Even those who committed minor infractions of these rules were seen as criminal offenders or uncivilized beasts. In the name of the Three Bonds and Five Moral Rules, even when a king made a mistake or issued an errant command, no one would dare to say a critical word. Subjects only obeyed what they were ordered to do. It did not matter whether parents guided children well or not. Children had to follow their parents' directions. Only through this kind of obedience were they considered loyal to the king and filial to their parents. If individuals opposed the king or their parents, they were violating the Five Moral Rules, and therefore were considered disloyal and impious. The king regarded his subjects as mere

pendages to whom he denied any rights to speak against his wishes, and these subjects assumed such a relationship to be natural and good. Parents thought of their children as their toys and did whatever they wanted to do with them. Children understood their parents' actions to be correct and accepted them as part of their duty to obey their parents. But that's not all. The same rules of blind respect held for seniors and teachers. It has always been this way.

The trend of thought that dominates the world nowadays is likewise affecting Korea. The word "freedom" has been introduced to Korea and has become popular since its introduction. The word is on everyone's lips. Adults, youths, even little children who do not understand what the word means let it spill from their mouths again and again. When adults scold their children for their faults, the children reject any negative comment, saying that they have their own freedom, never thinking about whether their actions were right or wrong. When parents try to teach their children, the children reject any guidance, despite the wisdom of the guidance, arguing that parents do not have the right to tell them what to do. Among friends, when one tries to point out the shortcomings of another, the other becomes furious, getting into the friend's face, nose to nose, and accusing the peer of suppressing his or her freedom. These people believe that they should be able to do absolutely anything they wish without restraint. To them, this is freedom. Of course, not everyone shares this view, but there are people who actually act this way. Is this true freedom? Is this the freedom we should hold dear? We need to be more fully aware of the problem, and we must think deeply about the concept of freedom.

So, what is freedom? Is what I described above freedom? I don't think so. At the very least, a sense of duty and responsibility should accompany the quest for freedom. Freedom without an attendant sense of duty and responsibility is not really freedom; it is just self-indulgence. Can we equate indulgence and freedom? Self-indulgence is an act that shows no concern for social manners, morality, justice, or humanity. Is it freedom if a drunkard staggers through the streets, indiscriminately spitting expletives at strangers? Is it freedom if a person takes off his shirt and walks around openly because it is a scorching-hot day in June? Is it freedom if a wife asks her husband to make his own clothes and cook his own meals because it is now a free world? Is it freedom if a person seeks his or her own loving relationship, not listening to the opinions of parents and friends, hastily and casually marrying out of youthful passion, without considering the character, tastes, health, or family background of the person who is to be his or her life partner?

We have major responsibilities. We are responsible for the universe, for humankind, for society, and for our children. How much do we need to cultivate ourselves to fulfill our duties and responsibilities? We should do our best to improve ourselves and think deeply about the importance of our duties and responsibilities. I believe that true freedom is exercised when one takes action that does not violate moral ideas, justice, or humanity. To put it differently, freedom must conform to rationality. If one chooses to act as one

pleases, it will result in an excessive form of individualism (*kaein chu'ii*). Such individualism ignores the suffering of others in order to exercise one's own freedom. Its priority is self-survival, without the slightest interest in whether others live or die. It does not matter if others are starving, as long as one's own belly is full. Ultimately, this type of individualism will destroy the individual and, potentially, the entire world.

In daily newspapers we read incredible, unfathomable, and detestable stories of great misery. The people in those stories think of indulgence as freedom. They dabble in the rampant free choice of their partners and eventually fall into a depraved state. Feeling bitter about their situations, they commit unforgivable crimes. In the end, how many of them take their own miserable lives, abandoning important duties and responsibilities as human beings? Or how many of them, indulging in excessive individualism, create miserable conditions for other people? All this happens when one tries to be free, without a strong sense of duty and responsibility to one's fellow human beings. I am not saying here that one should not pursue one's own choice for love. I am only saying that one should keep in mind one's duties and responsibilities. I am not arguing that one should abandon natural individuality (*kaesŏng*). What I am advocating here is the idea that one can assert oneself and enhance one's freedom in order to pursue a greater way for justice, humanity, and prosperity for all.

I hope my message comes through. To reiterate, blind obedience is the opposite of freedom. Careless behavior is not freedom either. At the very least, freedom can only be meaningful when one is aware of duty, responsibility, justice, humanity, and prosperity for all. We should do our best in cultivating our minds with moral ideas. Freedom in a true sense comes when one strives toward the point of mutual prosperity for all humankind, to become a decent worker for society, to become a good companion for one's family, and to fulfill the parental duties to one's children. Failing to do any of these things results in inhumane acts and thereby defiles the very idea of freedom. Especially in the Korean situation, we expect a lot from you, and we all have great duties and responsibilities. I sincerely hope that all of you give serious thought to freedom and cultivate your minds so that you can march toward true freedom.

13 Im Chinsil: An observation on the status of women

[*"Yŏja ŭi chiwi e taehan il koch'al," Ch'ŏngnyŏn (March 1926)*]⁵

It is a well-known fact that the so-called women's issues (*puin munje*) were influenced by the modern ideals of freedom and equality. The centerpiece in those women's issues is the demand for women's liberation. In general, those who have adopted new ideas tend to support women's liberation, whereas those who have maintained old ideas see it negatively. The old and the new have not yet been reconciled and continue to cause constant conflict in our society, resulting in a non-stop debate. More specifically, what we mean by "women's

issues" is the enhancement of the rights and freedom of women vis-à-vis men and those of proletarian women vis-à-vis bourgeois women. It can be argued that the former refers to the demand for liberation on the part of bourgeois women, while the latter focuses on the liberation for proletarian women. I intend to discuss the former here.

What we see in the public discourse of so-called feminists (*puin haebangnonja*) is that the status of men and women is unequal in contemporary politics, law, economy, and education; that present social institutions are based on men's interests, and thus the structure of these institutions is disadvantageous to women. They argue that these institutions must be reformed. Until now, it was men who advocated women's liberation. However, in recent years our women have acquired more knowledge and, as a result, have begun to call for women's liberation on their own. Young women have developed a stronger faith in gender equality, and all young people support the argument that women are human beings and should be treated as such.

One example of this argument was Miss Kim Hyeryŏn's lecture, entitled "The Past and the Present of Korean Women," which was given at the YMCA building a few months ago, under the sponsorship of the Korean Young Women's Christian Association. Her impassioned argument that women are also human beings still rings in my ears. It is the habit of contemporary men to dismiss women without any good reason, simply saying, "because you are a woman" or "as a woman, you are too impertinent" and so on. How did the status of women become so low? This is something we should give serious thought to. What is the origin of the argument for women's liberation? I think we need to consider this point first. As a woman, I really feel ashamed to talk about the miserable status of our women. But this is the reality, and there is no way around it. Some of the reasons why women have low status can be found in our own shortcomings, but I think that present social institutions and old customs are also responsible for degrading women's status.

To begin, let's think about women's status in legal terms. What legal rights do women have? Legally speaking, we women do not have any rights. First, let's consider women's status in civil law. When the head of the family dies, who inherits his property? It is his eldest son, then his second eldest son, his third eldest son, any other legitimate son, a son born of a concubine, an illegitimate son . . . This way and that way the order of inheritance is thoroughly outlined, but nowhere in that order can women be found. (I did read a newspaper article sometime ago that claimed that women could have the right to inherit.) Second, in the realm of public law, I hear that women's suffrage has been stirring European society, and there are several women governors in the United States. But why not in our society? If we were to demand [women's legal rights], the public would bicker about what is good and bad in it, but I would say that the current status of women in our law is zero.

What about women's status in our social customs? It has been our practice that, when a boy is born, people congratulate the parents on the birth of their son; however, if they have a girl, people think of it as a pitiable thing. In other

words, our women have been treated with contempt and abuse since birth. Is there any worse custom than this? What about [women's status] in a moral sense? I have already written about other issues, so I am not going to repeat them here, but I am going to talk about one thing: the issue of chastity. Why is it that a woman is required to keep her chastity, while it does not matter if man keeps his or not? If a woman has to keep her chastity, a man should have to keep his as well. It is only fair to call it a sin when a man loves someone other than his wife, just as we call it a sin when a woman loves someone other than her husband. However, our contemporaries do not think in these terms. Instead, they believe that chastity is a requirement for women only. Is there a morality that is any more irrational than this?

If you consider what I have written above, you can see that the status of our women is at the bottom, even below the basic level of human rights. If we do not improve the lower-than-zero status of women, there will be no true happiness in human society.

14 Kim Chunyŏn: Nations of gender equality and gender inequality

[*"Namnyŏ p'yŏngdŭngguk kwa pulp'yŏngdŭngguk," Pyŏlgŏn'gon* 8 (August 1927): 110-11]

People make a lot of noise about gender equality or women's liberation nowadays. What has brought about the claims of inequality? In what ways are men and women unequal or women oppressed? I am going to approach the issue by focusing on the status of women under the law. Under current law, the overall status of women is lower than that of men. I will divide the law into public law and civil law, and at the same time I will compare the situation in Korea with relevant examples in Japan.

First, in public and criminal law, women hold lower status. Under our Constitution, only male descendants can succeed to the imperial throne. Women are prohibited from inheriting the imperial line. In terms of voting rights, the law dictates that women should have neither a right to vote nor a right to run for public office, such as congressional seats or other national or regional positions. According to Article 5 of the Congressional Election Law, men who are imperial subjects, aged twenty-five years or older, have a right to vote. Men who are thirty years of age or older are eligible to run for office. As women are not allowed to take the examinations for either the higher level or the common level, they are barred from serving in any public offices that require the examinations as a precondition. However, women can serve as teachers or technicians because these positions do not rigorously screen qualifications. These examples indicate the inferior legal status of women.

Consider another example. The criminal statutes include an item about adultery. Article 183 stipulates that, if a married woman commits adultery, she will be punished with a jail term of at least two years. However, the law

contains no parallel specification of punishment for married men who commit adultery. This example reveals a double standard within the law. The law stipulates punishments in an effort to control women's sexuality, but it is mute on the penalties that should be imposed on men for any equivalent infraction.

Let me turn now to private law. According to Civil Law Article 14, a married woman is regarded as either under age or incapacitated, and thus any legal action she wants to undertake has to be agreed to by her husband; otherwise, the action is considered invalid. In matters of birthright, women generally do not have any rights to inherit. If there is no male heir in the family, a woman can inherit and become the head of the household. Yet, if that woman marries, she has to entrust all her rights and property to her husband. The above-mentioned examples indicate that women hold an obviously lower status than men in terms of the protections afforded by the Constitution, Administrative Law, Criminal Law, and Civil Law.

Let me offer an illustration of how different things are in Europe. In Germany, both men and women have the same right to vote for congressmen once they are twenty years of age. If they are twenty-five years of age or older, they are eligible to run for elective office. In presidential elections, both men and women have the same right to vote and to run for the office. In fact, not only in voting rights, but in all aspects of the law, men and women are equal, without differentiation or distinction. This is also true in England, and equal rights are guaranteed under the law. Men and women are also completely equal in Russia in terms of their legal status.

When we speak of equality, there are two different kinds. One is political equality, and the other is economic equality. When men and women seek equality, first they demand equality in law. Then they demand equality in education and occupation because, if women have political rights equal to those of men but do not have equal economic capacity commensurate to that of men, such equality amounts to nothing, nothing more than an empty shell, with nothing of substance in it. In a democratic society, if laborers and capitalists do not have economic equality, political equality is useless; therefore, the effort to enhance the political status of women should be made simultaneously with the effort to enhance women's economic status. We need to attend to the lack of institutional advancement that has left women less educated and less capable of sustaining themselves economically. Only by actively helping them can we accomplish gender equality. Although gender equality has been realized in Russia, Lenin says:

Women should not relax because they have achieved gender equality. Since women used to be in a position of slavery to men, if they really want gender equality in the truest sense, women should protect themselves. They should create their own organizations that can help women fulfill their potential and advocate for formal regulations specifically to protect women.

In our Korean society, we must remedy the shortcomings in our legal system. At the same time, women must make efforts to improve themselves. In addition, we should remember that women constitute a half of the entire population, and thus we must aim to assist women so they can develop fully for the healthy advancement of our nation. To accomplish this, it is necessary for people to agree that it is vital to enhance the status of women.

15 Yi Kwangsu: Ten commandments for New Women⁶

["Sin yǒsǒng ŭi sipkyemyǒng," Man'guk puin 1 (1932): 100]

1. Pay attention to hygiene, nutrition and exercise, and live an orderly life to maintain your health.
2. Study Korean history, language, literature, and society, and ponder the future of Korea.
3. Firmly adhere to this advice: "Save your first love for your husband."⁷
4. Strictly guard against the temptations of luxury; make a budget in line with your income and expenses in order to practice frugality.
5. For the sake of the national economy, buy Korean products.
6. Stop being shy owing to the traditional "inside-outside" practice, but maintain dignity.
7. Always strive to improve your own life and the lives of your family and your community.
8. Read newspapers, magazines, and books.
9. If you are unmarried, do your best to choose the right spouse. If you are married, do everything in your power to ease your husband's mind.
10. It is the sacred duty of a young woman to bring peace and bright light to her family wherever she is. Therefore, she must strive to develop the virtues of cheerfulness, benevolence, and humility and avoid the appearance of anger, criticism, jealousy, or conflict.

16 Ko Yǒngsuk: A rash statement: Rebuttal to Yi Kwangsu

["Yi Kwangsu ssi ŭi mangdam," Sin yǒsǒng 6, no. 11 (1932): 14-16]

Among those who wish to become great men, some seem to think that they can achieve the status of hero by blindly imitating the life of a hero, without taking into consideration their own situation and personality traits. The heroes and the great men of the past, especially scholars and artists, wrote books of meditation and proverbs from their experiences. It is not particularly surprising that Yi Kwangsu, who has brazenly proclaimed himself to be Korea's most representative writer and a leader of the nation, especially for its young people, has written a book of ruminations plus ten commandments. However, those who want to lead others cannot become great men merely by imitating the lifetime achievements of past heroes. Equipped with a sharp mind and an

acute talent for observation, such an individual must thoroughly examine the historical trends and the workings of social structures. He should also have a passionate consciousness for action to fight side by side with the grassroots [against social injustice]. No hero can exist outside the context of history and society. Therefore, any leader must consider the context of his times!

So I wonder if Mr. Yi Kwangsu is some kind of a dimwit because his thoughts do not reflect historical developments or changes in social reality. He does not seem compelled to work for the good of the masses. And yet, he dares to present the people with this very outdated message in the form of his thoughts and commandments, which go against all historical trends and contradict social reality! Yi is continuing a historical trend, but the format is outdated, and the content is even more obsolete. So let us examine Yi Kwangsu's fantasy as it relates to women.

One can find Yi's "Ten commandments for New Women" on the first page of the inaugural volume of the new magazine, *Man'guk puin* (*Women of the World*). What did he claim there? The first item says, "Pay attention to hygiene, nutrition, and exercise, and live an orderly life to maintain your health." This is thoughtful advice and a serious admonition. However, does he think that Korean women are so ignorant that they do not know how to practice hygiene, eat properly, or lead orderly lives for the good of their own health? How else can we understand this statement from Mr. Yi, who must be blind to social reality in order to engage in such absurd discourse? Does Mr. Yi not understand that women know very well how to take care of their health, but simply do not have the time or money to do so? Of course, there are women who have the means to do it, but they are the wives of the bourgeoisie or high-level salary men. So, perhaps in the mind of Yi Kwangsu, the term "New Woman" refers only to this category of well-to-do women. I realize that Yi Kwangsu is the editor-in-chief of a newspaper run by the bourgeoisie. Maybe that makes him their spokesman.

Items 3, "Save your first love for your husband," and 4, "For the sake of national economy, buy Korean products,"⁸ exude Yi's old-fashioned feudal consciousness. By adhering to the doctrine of "first love to husband," he intends to turn women into men's possessions. Isn't this indicative of his feudal state of mind? Of course, sexual love should be reserved for the husband. However, do women today have to be relegated to the subordinate status as possessions, simply because they are expected to preserve their virginity for their husbands? It seems that in his mind women are primarily possessions of men. He is also lecturing New Women about the use of Korean products for the sake of the national economy. New Women are moving from one frontier to the other. When Yi asks them to replace their new clothes with old-fashioned cotton clothes, or give up dress shoes and go back to wearing straw or rubber shoes, it is nothing but rash, anachronistic babbling! It might have been good if New Women could follow Yi's suggestions, but today's New Women have already been exposed to the civilization of vanity. Such a lecture is useless nonsense. How could he possibly not know this reality? Ah ha, Yi is not simply a

spokesman for the bourgeoisie. He is a spokesman particularly for the indigenous, national, bourgeois class. As the capitalist who provides Yi with his livelihood is in the textile business and produces rubber shoes, maybe he is promoting these products.

What else does Yi tell us to do? Item 9 says, "If you are unmarried, do your best to choose the right spouse. If you are married, do everything in your power to ease your husband's mind." That sounds fine, but does he mean to imply that today's woman has nothing to do other than to choose a spouse or assist her husband? More than anything else, if she is aware of historical and social realities, she should be passionate for social development and be ready on the frontline of the social movement for women who lead inhumane, barbaric lives under feudal morals and capitalism. How could we possibly expect Yi, who is a spokesman for the national bourgeoisie and has already lost his will to act [for society], to think of broader issues beyond marriage?

What Yi Kwangsu advocates in his "Ten commandments" may be an appropriate guide to the wives and concubines of bourgeois men or the wives of well-to-do men. His advocacy makes sense in that he is a spokesman for a class that can enjoy life by faithfully conforming to certain guidelines.

Mr. Yi! If you are interested in becoming a leader, then you should stop pretending to be a hero and stop making passé, anachronistic decrees in the form of commandments or anything else. You must realize that a leader is someone who has a strong will to take action and knows how to fight together with the masses. However, this type of life is absolutely impossible for you. Therefore, Mr. Yi, you must acknowledge your own limitations and give up your arrogant attitude.

Yi Kwangsu still maintains a large readership. I am not certain what impact his trite statements will have on readers, but I would urge caution among his readers in how they heed his rash talk.

17 Chu Yosöp: Characteristics of New Women and Traditional Women

[*"Sin yösöng kwa ku yösöng üi haengno," Sin yösöng 7 (January 1933): 32-35*]

This topic is a very difficult one. It is absurd that someone like me should try to address this issue. First of all, what are the criteria that distinguish the New Woman from the Traditional Woman? Should any woman over forty be included in the category of Traditional Woman, while those under forty be considered New Woman? I do not think so. Ordinarily, people tend to make a distinction between New and Traditional Women even among those who are under thirty years old. Perhaps the most convincing distinction is that those who have received Western-style education are called New Women, whereas those who have not are considered Traditional Women. On top of this, the level of education should be a distinguishing factor, but there seems to be no

agreement on which specific level of educational achievement would be the qualifying criterion. I think that the most appropriate interpretation would be to call those who have completed middle school New Women, and those who have not Traditional Women.

When we discuss the characteristics of New Women and Traditional Women, we will have to divide them into three groups. [Using the educational criterion we laid out above], the first group is aged Traditional Women, the second, young Traditional Women, and the third, New Women (my sense is that we can say for sure that all New Women are younger than forty years of age).

What path are aged Traditional Women following? First of all, they do not understand the contemporary world. Awestruck, they helplessly sit by and watch the contemporary world, which is completely different from what they are familiar with. They ultimately give up on this new world for they do not understand. They are incapable of guiding the young women who are under their care. When they themselves were young, they had a strong faith in obedience, which was the standard in the old days. Based on this belief, they considered their loftiest and most glorious goals in life to be serving their husbands well, working like beasts of burden for their parents-in-law, and continuing the family line by giving birth to sons. They were satisfied by such a life. However, their daughters reject this philosophy. Facing this new generation, the mothers do not have a philosophy, culture, or method to provide for their daughters, nor do they have the power to force their daughters to follow in their footsteps. In the end, they are helpless.

It seems that aged Traditional Women derive some level of satisfaction from the fact that their daughters enjoy freedom that they themselves never even dreamed of. So, while they worry about the freedom that their daughters have, they allow them that freedom (sometimes to a dangerous level). Having said that, it is probably more accurate to say that they have lost the power to constrain their daughters' freedom. On the other hand, when it comes to the freedom of a daughter-in-law, they are exceedingly protective of the established conventions and suspicious of any effort to change them. Here, one can find a great contradiction. It is common in the psychology of aged Traditional Women that, on one hand, they are ready to concede freedom to their daughters and are not seriously concerned about the erosion of maternal rights. On the other hand, they strongly adhere to their rights as mothers-in-law. They hope that their daughters will become New Women, while they work assiduously to get their daughters-in-law to stay on the path of old-fashioned womanhood. They complain bitterly about daughters-in-law who are New Women, grumbling about how these Modern Girls fail to comply with the demands of their parents-in-law as the aged Traditional Women had done. This is perhaps a combination of jealousy and their sense of fair play. When they themselves were daughters-in-law, they worked like servants for their mothers-in-law. The common human psychology of fair play tells them that they should now be able to order their daughters-in-law around as servants. The problem is that

daughters-in-law nowadays resist those traditional expectations. Naturally, to them, this new attitude looks so defiant! It is here that one finds an important element in the collapse of the extended family (*tae kajok*) and the rise of the nuclear family (*so kajok*).

What about young Traditional Women? Like aged Traditional Women, they also do not understand the contemporary world. However, they are different because they are allowed freedom that aged Traditional Women never dreamed of, are exposed to the prevailing trend, "from family to work," and can imitate the appearance of New Women. All of these circumstances are the source of tragedy for them. They do not have an ideal, a goal, or a code of conduct. On top of that, modern civilization has greatly aroused their sense of vanity, and the danger of seduction by men is everywhere, like a spider web. Furthermore, their parents are incapable of guiding them on the correct path. They do not have the examples of senior friends who have pioneered new ways of life. Fragments of decadent civilization are imported directly from Tokyo. Worse yet, the great organic body of Korean society is currently lost for the most part, not knowing what direction it's going in. It is literally "the land of chaos."

The young Traditional Women need lots of money to buy fashion accessories for themselves. Having money to purchase these adornments is more important to them than having money to ensure their families are fed, and so they seek out jobs that will allow them to earn a little extra so they can buy such stuff. However, their wages are far too low. They are not trained to compete in organizations and do not have any power. The number of women who are eager to get even low-paying jobs is ten times, thirty times, even a hundred times larger than the number of jobs available. In the end, they learn to increase their income in other ways. The natural consequence is that they fall into a life of depravity. What I have just described refers to only one cohort of particularly bold women. Other young Traditional Women follow a path very similar to the one followed by aged Traditional Women, accepting their destiny as servants of the family for the rest of their lives. The only difference might be that the younger ones are allowed greater freedom to wander around in the streets than the older ones were.

Last, what about the so-called New Women, who have gotten education? Compared with the other two groups, they tend to understand the modern world. But their understanding is not in the areas of political or scientific modernity, and they understand only a little bit about social and religious modernity. They long for a new life. They urgently cry out for the emergence of a new era in Korea, although their pleas remain vague. They call for gender equality and freedom for romance and so on and so forth! However, they have not established any firm philosophy or developed any concrete programs. Of course, it is the teachers of these New Women who should be held to account for this.

Even though we live in an era when people call for women's liberation and discuss their participation in society, the fundamental desire or wish of any woman should be to become a wise mother and good wife. To be sure, what

it means to be a wise mother and good wife has changed over time, but most women have an instinctive impulse to aspire to this ideal without any outside pressure. New Women are demanding the freedom to choose their own spouse. The reason for this demand is that this freedom of choice will help them to become truly wise mothers and good wives, which they would not become if they simply conformed to social pressure. Their demand for freedom in marriage is nothing more than a sincere desire to fulfill the ideal of wise mother and good wife. Look at any example of New Women. They take their job in the workplace to be a merely temporary experience. Their ultimate goal is to find a good spouse and create an ideal family. Here, New Women have lots of concerns. First of all, as they did not have the right teachers, they do not have a good educational background for managing a home and family. As a result, although they are fundamentally interested in creating a "sweet home," their minds cannot stay focused on it. After marriage, they fail to meet the ideal of wise mother, good wife. They end up becoming the heroine in a tale of agony and lamentation. This tragedy is far more brutal than that of Traditional Women. In recent years, educators have recognized this crisis and tried to adjust certain educational policies, which is a welcome change.

The next issue concerns the ideals of New Women, which are derived from different sources but which have no relevance to the reality of Korean society. This discrepancy makes their agony and tragedy even worse. The ideal family that New Women dream of can never be realized in Korea. It is only possible in the United States, Russia, or other countries. Simply stated, they are aiming too high. The number of Korean men who would meet the New Women's standards as an ideal husband would be one in 100,000 or fewer. New Women could surely imagine a "sweet home" based on images contained in novels or motion pictures. However, in present-day Korea, women are still denied freedom. The means to achieve their imagined ideal simply are not part of our current society. Isn't it a shame? Ultimately, the question is if they have the courage to transcend everything. No, they do not. Instead, they continue wishing for their dreams to come true, while getting older and older. This is painful for them. They even lie about their age by three to five years! However, how can they stop the constant flow of time? This is the great tragedy of New Women in Korea seen daily, monthly everywhere.

On these pages, I have attempted to analyze the trend of Korean women in the most objective manner. I do not mean to suggest any direction for them. Rather, I have only intended to describe the reality as it is. In the end, they seem poised for tragedy. How could we rescue women from this tragedy? I do not know. Perhaps it has to be women themselves who discover and develop a new path out of this problem. There is no doubt that New Women, in particular, are primarily charged with this task. Of course, educators should take some responsibility as well. I believe that it has to be one of the elders among New Women who needs to establish a firm philosophy of education for young women. Unfortunately, I have never encountered a New Woman who could take up this leadership role. It is a huge tragedy for Korea. The

fundamental problem is a lack of courage. Regardless of whether we are talking about men or women, the biggest weakness Koreans have is an absence of bravery. The ultimate solution for this problem has to be accompanied by XXX⁹ in the social structure, but it is not appropriate to discuss that here.

Notes

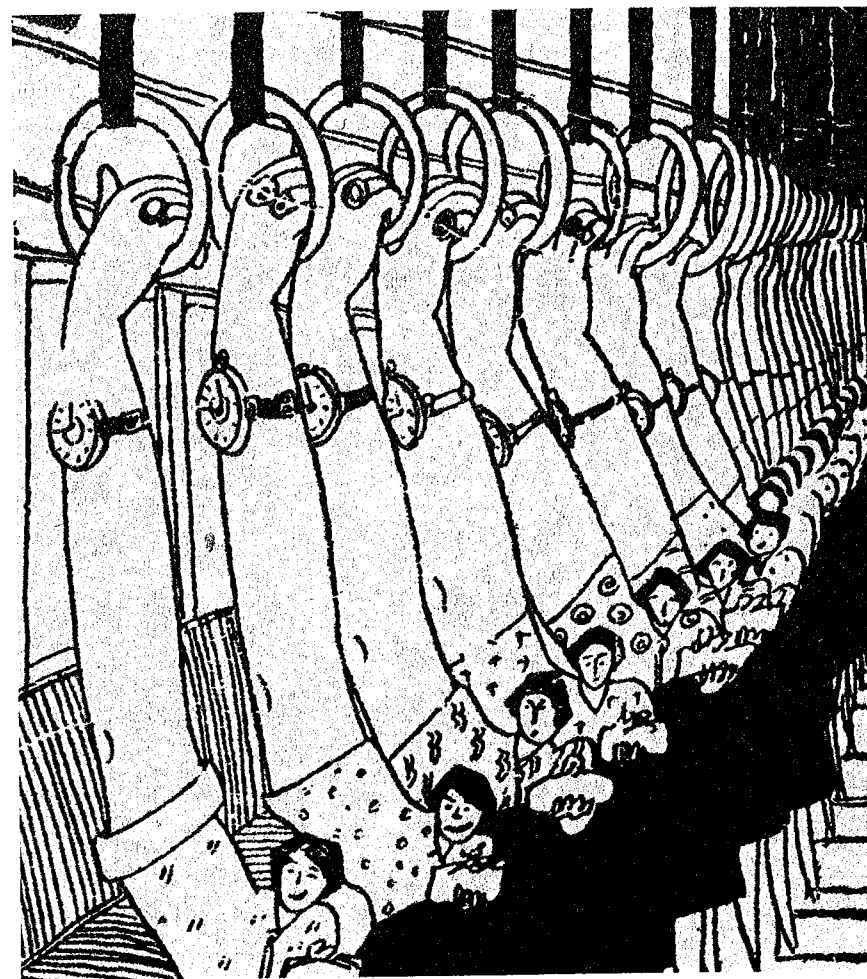
- 1 In addition to *puwi pugang*, the Three Bonds include: ministers should obey the king (*kunwi singang*), and sons should obey fathers (*puwi chagang*). In addition to *pubu yubyöl*, the Five Moral Imperatives include: righteousness between sovereign and subject (*kunsin yuüi*); proper rapport between father and son (*puja yuch'in*); proper recognition of sequence of birth between elder and younger brothers (*changyu yusö*); and faithfulness between friends (*pungu yusin*).
- 2 Although the author of this editorial is not indicated, Kim Wönju as the founder is likely to have been the author.
- 3 A special issue (September 1920) was devoted to the topic of women's liberation in Korea. The magazine, *Kaeböök*, invited a number of leaders in society to hear about their viewpoints on the topic.
- 4 In the original text, the Greek female poet's name is spelled *Ssadek*.
- 5 Cited from Kim (1999), pp. 234–235.
- 6 The main target readers for *Man'guk puin* were girl students and "new housewives" (*sin puin*).
- 7 "First love" is a literal translation, but it is likely to refer to virginity.
- 8 The commandment Ko Yöngsuk intends to cite here is actually item number 5 in Yi Kwangsu's Ten Commandments. The original essay by Yi does not have a number 5 in the printed text. This may be the reason why Ko refers to it as item number 4.
- 9 Articles in magazines were censored by the Japanese colonial government. Particularly rigorous censorship was applied to "political" matters that mentioned socialism or national independence. Marks in the text, such as XXX, often indicate words and phrases removed owing to censorship.

*Cartoon 4 A girl student on the street*Source: *Sin yǒsŏng* 3, no. 6 (1925)

A girl student, who is expected to study hard, is roaming around the street with short bangs, dressed in a short skirt, long jacket, and high heels. A man looks at her disapprovingly, while two other young girl students check her out, as if to look for fashion tips.

*Cartoon 5 "Mo-dŏn kkŏl ŭi changsin undong" (Modern Girls' race for accessories)*Source: *Chosŏn ilbo* February 5, 1928

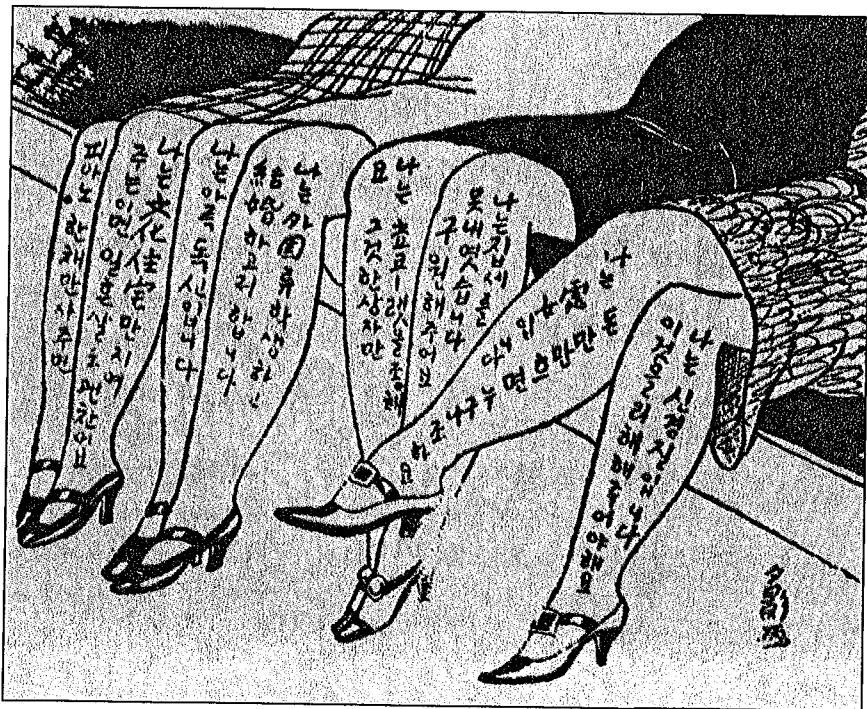
The cartoon is intended to exaggerate New Women's or Modern Girls' obsession with jewelry. The women are depicted riding on a tram, holding the commuter straps with oversized arms, to prominently show off their gold watches and rings.



Cartoon 6 "Yŏsŏng sŏnjŏn sidae ka omyŏn" (What if there comes a time when women can advertise who they are and what they desire)

Source: *Chosŏn ilbo* January 12, 1930.

As women's skirts got shorter and shorter, their legs, in particular, started to attract men's attention. The cartoonist, An Sŏkyŏng, imagines a future in which women use their legs as billboards. This cartoon shows the legs of a group of women sitting side by side, with "advertisements" written on them. The things written on the women's legs include: "I am very sensitive. He [my future husband] has to understand this. I am a virgin. I will accept any man who has lots of money"; "I cannot pay my rent. Help me. I like chocolate. Buy a box of chocolate for me"; "I am still single, and I want to marry a man who studied overseas"; and "If he can build a 'culture house' (*munhwa chut'aek*) for me, I will marry him, even if he is seventy years old. As long as he can buy me a piano ..."



Cartoon 7 "Pulgyŏnggi p'unggyŏng" (A scene from the economic downturn)

Source: *Pyŏlgŏn'gon* (December 1930)

The cartoonist depicts a poor family in the street. The husband pulls a cart and begs for food, while his wife sits idly in the cart, applying make-up, and their child hangs off the back, ignored and untended.

